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Option: Civilization

**The U.S. Nuclear Disarmament Policy Imposed towards  
Iran during Obama's Presidency.**

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Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master Degree of Philosophy in Anglophone  
Language, Literature and Civilizations**

**Submitted by**

**LABROUKI Yaakoub**

**Supervisor:**

**Mrs. BARES Meryem**

**Board of Examiners**

**Chairwoman: Mrs. ZIYAYA Rima (M/B)**

**(University of 8 May 1945/ Guelma)**

**Supervisor: Mrs. BARES Meryem (M/B)**

**(University of 8 May 1945/ Guelma)**

**Examiner: Mrs. SADAOUI Lamia (M/B)**

**(University of 8 May 1945/ Guelma)**

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# I

## Dedication

I dedicate this work to my family, my beloved mother, who stayed up all nights with me when I was sick during last few months. I would like to thank her for encouraging me to carry on my academic career and finish university when I was about to leave it for a job opportunity I have received in 2013.

Special thanks for my father who really inspired me to love politics and chose civilization because of his discussions which turn around daily political issues.

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### **III**

#### **Abstract**

The present dissertation discusses the U.S. nuclear disarmament policy imposed towards Iran during Obama's presidency with a focus on the reasons, procedures and implications of this policy. The study comes to conclude that the real reason behind the permanent American interventions to stop the Iranian nuclear program is the protection of its interests in the Gulf and Middle East regions. This study explored the nature U.S-Iran relations before and after the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979. It pointed out the transformation of America from being a trustworthy friend of Iran into a fierce enemy following the fall of the Shah regime and its replacement by an Islamic regime. This work has also traced the evolution of Iran's nuclear program and the pressure this program has endured and resisted. The major findings of the present dissertation include first the validation of the speculations raised around the American attempt to delay and prevent the Iranians from making further advancements in the nuclear field, and second the affirmation of the positive assumptions attributed to Obama's "new policy" towards Iran.

## IV

### Résumé

La présente thèse traite la politique de désarmement nucléaire des Etats-Unis imposé vers l'Iran pendant la présidence d'Obama avec un accent sur les raisons, les procédures et les implications de cette politique. L'étude a conclu que la véritable raison derrière les permanentes interventions américaines contre le programme nucléaire Iranien est la protection de ses intérêts au Golfe et en Moyen-Orient. Cette étude a aussi exploré la nature de la relation entre les Etats-Unis et l'Iran avant et après la Révolution Islamique d'Iran en 1979. Elle a souligné la transformation des U.S.A d'un de l'Iran en un farouche ennemi après la chute du régime du Shah et son remplacement par un régime Islamique. Ce travail a également retracé l'évolution du programme nucléaire Iranien et les pressions que ce programme a soufferts et a résistés. Les conclusions principales de la présente thèse comprennent d'abord la validation des spéculations soulevées autour de la tentative américaine de retarder et d'empêcher les Iraniens de faire d'autres progrès dans le domaine nucléaire, et deuxièmement l'affirmation des hypothèses positives attribuées à la "Nouvelle Politique" d'Obama envers L'Iran.

## ملخص

الأطروحة الحالية تناقش السياسة الأمريكية لنزع السلاح النووي التي فرضت على إيران خلال فترة حكم الرئيس أوباما مع التركيز على الأسباب، الإجراءات والآثار المترتبة عن هذه السياسة. تنتهي هذه الدراسة باستنتاج مفاده أن الأسباب الحقيقية وراء التدخلات الأميركية الدائمة لوقف البرنامج النووي الإيراني هو حماية مصالحها في منطقة الخليج والشرق الأوسط. كما تقوم هذه الدراسة أيضا بالتحقيق في طبيعة العلاقة بين الولايات المتحدة وإيران قبل وبعد الثورة الإسلامية في إيران عام 1979. أشارت نتائج هذا التحقيق إلى تحول أمريكا من كونها صديق جدير بالثقة لإيران إلى عدو شرس بعد سقوط نظام 'الشاه' واستبداله بالنظام الإسلامي. هذا البحث أيضا تتبع مراحل تطور البرنامج النووي الإيراني والضغوطات التي عانى منها وقاومها. وتشمل النتائج الرئيسية لهذه الأطروحة أول إثبات صحة التكهنات التي أثبتت حولا المحاولات الأميركية لتأخير و منع الإيرانيين من تحقيق المزيد من التقدم في المجال النووي، و ثانيا تأكيد الافتراضات الإيجابية حول "سياسة أوباما الجديدة" الموجهة نحو إيران.

## VI

### List of Abbreviations/Acronyms

BBC British Broadcasting Corporation

CIA Central Intelligence Agency

IAEA International Atomic Energy Agency

INTEC Idaho Nuclear Technology and Engineering Center

JCPOF Joint Comprehensive Plan Of Action

LEU *Low*-enriched uranium

NBC National Broadcasting Company

NPT Non- Proliferation Treaty

SAVAK Organization of Intelligence and Security of the Country (Sazman-e Etelaat Va

Amniat Keshvar).

UNSC United Nation Security Council

WMD Weapon of Mass Destruction

## VII

### Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>Chapter One: U.S. - Iran Relations: From Partnership to Mutual Exclusion</b> .....	8
1.1. A Glimpse of History about Iran- U.S. Relations Up the 1980's.....	9
1.2. The Islamic Revolution in Iran: Causes and Effects.....	15
1.3. U.S. -Iran Diplomacies Following 9/11 Attacks.....	22
<b>Chapter Two: Iran's Nuclear Ambitions vs. U.S. Opposition</b> .....	26
2.1. Iran's Nuclear Program: A Historical Overview.....	27
2.2. The Fuel Swap Deal and Obama's Letter.....	32
2.3. The Laptop Incident and Iran-IAEA Modalities Agreement.....	35
2.4. Iran's Violation of The NPT: Truth or Propaganda? .....	38
<b>Chapter Three: Obama's New "direct policy" towards Iran and its Outcome</b> .....	46
3.1. The JCPOA between U.S. Conviction and "Israeli" Obstruction.....	47
3.2. "Israel's" Safety Comes First.....	52
3.3. Obama's View on Islam and the Islamic Republic of Iran.....	57
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	63
<b>Endnotes</b> .....	66
<b>Works Cited</b> .....	67
<b>Appendix</b> .....	81



## Introduction

During the Cold War the U.S.A and the U.S.S.R as the emerging powers in the aftermath of the Second World War distrusted each other to a high degree. This distrust escalated to reach an exaggerated fear from each other engendering huge effort from each side to implement an unbreakable defense and protection for their spheres of influence.

Unfortunately, both powers invested all their efforts to produce and hold nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction. At the beginning, the arms race seemed a great idea, and grace from God for both powers that enabled them to protect themselves. However, within time this turned to become a very reckless endeavor that brings more harm than security, contrary to what was thought.

By being produced and hold by only two powers, nuclear arms strained the less strong. Yet the whole world is unsecure with the existence of such weapons. The entire humanity may get involved in a nuclear war just because some people hate each other's values and ideologies. As a reaction most of western powerful countries tried their best to get an immediate solution to this threat, and the result was to apply a new policy known as Nuclear Disarmament.

Nuclear armament took the attention of many governments around the world, but the issue has also generated popular contention around the world. Ironically, the best popular action against nuclear armament was the New York demonstrations of 12 June 1982 that took place in Central Park. The demonstrators called for the end of the arms race and thus of the Cold War conflict. It was the largest anti-Cold War protest in American history. Despite many efforts to reduce nuclear weapons' possession, more and more countries became eager to start their own nuclear programs to reduce the degree of threat that may be directed to them from some unfriendly nuclear states, as in the case of Iran.

By starting its own nuclear program Iran has entered in competition with the world's powers challenging their rules and restrictions. From U.S. perspective the Iranian nuclear program is a threat to the whole world. Needless to mention that the United States is playing the role of the world's peace maker and therefore is determined to end by all means Iran's nuclear program. In this context, the present work has explored the nature of U.S. - Iran relation before and after the Islamic Revolution of 1979 with a focus on President's Obama "new policy" used to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue.

Successive American administrations consider the Iranian nuclear threat as a high priority, but the rhetoric used to describe the Iranian regime and the way used in dealing with it had differed from one president to another. George W. Bush, the predecessor of Barack Obama has referred to Iran, Iraq and North Korea as the "axis of evil," and has accused these countries of providing arms to terrorists groups and seeking weapons of mass destruction. He also warned of their danger and considered them a direct threat to the United States. Barack Obama also has the same beliefs about Iran, proclaiming it as the greatest nuclear threat, yet his speech has proved to be less aggressive and more flexible than that of Bush.

Amidst the American and international opposition which is combined with severe economic sanctions, and negative media coverage of the Iranian nuclear ambition, Iran is determined to develop its nuclear program while insisting on its peaceful ends. It cannot be denied that Iran is also trying to sustain and expand its hegemony in the Gulf region and to control oil production and prices in this part of the world. Yet, this remains a legitimate right for Iran and part of its national policy and sovereignty. With regard to the following arguments, the question that imposes itself is: why is the United States so nervous about Iran's attempt to control the Gulf region, and to what extent is America right in deterring other countries' ambitions especially with the existence of International organizations which

are supposed to protect the countries' sovereignty and preventing strong states from illegally intervening in the domestic affairs of less powerful countries.

The above questions are the center of concern of this dissertation, in fact this work tried to answer these logical inquiries in an attempt to provide some basic elements related to the Iranian nuclear problem. Therefore, this work will modestly contribute in enlightening some of the obscurity blurring the reality of Iran's nuclear facilities, along with exploring the direct and indirect reasons behind America's permanent attempts to delay Iran's nuclear development by using both legal and illegal procedures.

In general the current study aims at analyzing the disparity between the United States and Iran upon the nuclear disarmament issue. It also seeks to demonstrate the change in the U.S. intention towards Iran's nuclear problem during the presidency of Barack Obama. To fulfill these objectives, this research has used the interpretative and descriptive research methodology to describe and analyzing the nature of U.S. – Iran relations before and after the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Historical and critical research methodology was used to explore chronologically the main historical events that took place in Iran during the Monarchy. Moreover, the discourse analysis methodology was extensively used to interpret and analyze the different declarations, official publications and academic articles that were used as main references for this work.

A considerable amount of literature treating the western opposition to the Iranian nuclear program, and the American determined attempts to deter the Iranian influence in the Gulf and Middle East regions was used in this work. In his book *Between Two Revolutions* Abrahamian Ervand discussed the Iranian society and politics in the period between the Constitutional Revolution of 1909 and the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Ervand tried to illustrate the American negative interventions in the Iranian affairs, and how these interventions set the path for the Islamic Revolution. In the same context, Ali M. Ansari in his book entitled *Social*

*Problems: Community, Policy, and Social Action* demonstrated the Iranian progress in their nuclear program provoking a big crisis in its relation with western powers generally and the United States of America particularly. He predicted the implication of the Iranian nuclear crises in broadening the fissure in the Iran-U.S. relations. The book also presented a historical review of the U.S.-Iran relations since 9/11 attacks.

Anthony H. Cordesman, and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan in *Iran's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Real and Potential Threat* traced the evolution of Iran's nuclear program from its emergence till April 2006 and envisaged a potential U.S. military intervention as an option to resolve Iran's nuclear crisis. The data presented in this book about Iran's nuclear ability is of major importance yet the authors kept most of their sources anonymous due to the sensitivity of the topic discussed. Moving the Islamic Revolution of Iran and its impending results on Iran- U.S. relations, James Buchan wrote *Days of God: The Revolution in Iran and Its Consequences*. In this book Buchan has tried to give a general account of the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979 that destroyed the American and western influence in Iran. He listed the important historical reasons which gave birth to the Islamic Revolution, and how this revolution made a great change at the level of politics in the Middle East and the world to become a turning point in contemporary history.

Among the document that thoroughly explored the new policy of Obama towards Iran is *Terrorism: Commentary on Security Documents: "Chance for a different future" in Obama's Nowruz message* written by Kristen Boon, Aziz Huq, and Douglas C Lovelace. This book describes Obama's national security strategy from the beginning of his career as president of the United States by relying on primary sources. The issue was given a deeper analysis in *Assessing President Obama's National Security Strategy* presented by the same group of authors. This volume highlights and evaluates the specific strategies being used by Obama's

administration to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and reinforce the U.S. national security.

A detailed analysis of the Iranian diplomatic struggle with the United States and the international community was presented by Mousavian and Seyed Hossein in *The Iranian Nuclear Crisis: A Memoir*. The book presents considerable data relevant to this dissertation including the origin and progress of Iran's nuclear program, the first crisis in Iran's nuclear program, the U.S. interventions in the crisis, and finally the divergent repercussions of the crisis. The efforts provided by the International Atomic Energy Agency to limit the spread of nuclear weapons and resolve Iran's nuclear problem is thoroughly illustrated in *Internationalization of the Nuclear Fuel Cycle: Goals, Strategies, and Challenges*. The book which is presented by the U.S. Committee on the Internationalization of the Civilian Nuclear Fuel Cycle studies the different cases of some countries aiming at starting or growing nuclear power program including Iran.

A well elaborated study outlining the American interventions to stop the Iranian nuclear program was provided by Porter Gareth in his article entitled "The Iran Nuclear 'alleged studies' documents: The evidence of Fraud". Gareth discussed one of the recent and the important incidents that affected the Iranian- American relations known as the Alleged Studies which are claimed to be found in a laptop retrieved from undeclared sources. Basing on the information introduced in this article, many views have been raised about the credibility of those document found in the laptop.

Another study about the Iranian nuclear program and the American interventions against the rise of nuclear Iran was presented by David E. Sanger in an article entitled "U.S. to Produce Data on Iran's Nuclear Program". In this article Sanger tries to show the American fear from Iran with nuclear weapons focusing on the presidency of Bush and Obama. As he tries to

show that the Iranian nuclear program has been source of American interest during the past and present days. Again this article tackles the “alleged studies” and the laptop incident.

Bellal Ahmed in his article entitled “USA Foreign Policy towards Middle East” explained and clarified the U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East region taking Iran as an example. Ahmed demonstrated the objectives and backgrounds of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, and then discussed the economy of the Middle East countries including Iran, Iraq, “Israel”, Palestinian territories, Saudi Arabia, and Syria.

As mentioned previously, this study tried to provide answers for several questions among them is: why is the U.S. obliging Iran to apply a nuclear disarmament policy? What is the real intention of United States? Is it really to spread peace and prevent a possible arms race in the Gulf region, or to curb the Iranian influence and protect its interests in this region? Moreover, does “Israel’s” national security have any relation with Obama’s persistence on Iran to apply nuclear disarmament? Why is Iran determined to develop its own nuclear production? Is it safe and peaceful as it presumes? Finally, does Obama have an alternative solution in case Iran rejected the nuclear disarmament policy, and to what extent will the Iranians cooperate and accept the different restrictions on their nuclear program?

Most of the above questions were treated in this dissertation which was divided into three chapters. The first chapter is considered as a general historical background to the Iranian-American relations and how this relation has transformed from partnership to mutual exclusion. It tries to bring and analyze some important events which led to destroy the U.S. - Iran relations. The chapter starts with a glimpse of history about Iran-U.S. relations up the 1980’s. Then it moves directly to talk about the Islamic Revolution in Iran by displaying its possible causes and effects on the Iranian-American relations. Finally it explores the U.S.-Iran diplomacies following the 9/11 attacks which targeted the United States.

The second chapter is a continuation to the first one in which it tries to investigate the Iranian nuclear ambition as opposed to the U.S. will. It is divided into four sub-titles, the first one gives a general historical overview on Iran's nuclear program from 1950's till 2014. Then the title tries to explain the "fuel swap" agreement proposed by the American president Barack Obama and its effects on the Iranian nuclear crises after being rejected by the American officials themselves and accepted by Iran, Brazil and Turkey. The third element discussed is the American determination to end the Iranian nuclear program by fabricating stories such as the "laptop incident." This title therefore demonstrates the strength that America possesses over international organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, which following the laptop story imposed strict monitoring on Iran's nuclear facilities. The last part of this chapter investigates whether Iran is violating the Non-Proliferation Treaty or not to find out that this violation could not be proved by the United States since Iran is showing a great cooperation with the IAEA.

The Third and the last chapter of this dissertation attempts to prove that America's rigid and threaten language with Iran has been replaced by a less aggressive and a wiser rhetoric conducted by Obama's administration. Thus, this chapter explores Obama's new "direct policy" towards Iran and its outcomes. It includes three sub-titles, the first describes the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Actions conducted between the UN Security Council's five permanent members plus Germany and Iran. This title illustrates the "Israeli" opposition to this agreement. The second part of this chapter focuses on the manipulation of U.S. foreign policy by the issue of "Israel's" security. It displays the different diplomatic intervention conducted by Obama to satisfy "Israel." The last title of this dissertation includes different views of Obama on Islam, Muslims and the Islamic Republic of Iran. It aims at investigating the degree of tolerance of the 44<sup>th</sup> President towards the other.

## **Chapter One**

### **1. US- Iran Relations: From Partnership to Mutual Exclusion**

This chapter traces the US-Iran relations from the second half of the 20th century to the early 21st century. This long period encompassed many international events such as the Second World War, the fall of the Soviet Union, but many upheavals also took place in Iran such as the 1953 Coup against the Shah, the fall of the Monarchy and the creation the Islamic Republic, and the establishment of the new regime of a peaceful nuclear power. Yet, this Iranian ambition has faced fierce international resentments led by the United States of America and its historical allies.

Iran's nuclear program has become the issue of the successive governments of the US, upon which all steps towards Iran and its political allies are determined. The incumbent Presidents Barack Obama has not differed a lot from previous American leaders, yet he proves to have a less aggressive policy towards Iran.

The Chapter highlights some possible reasons that deteriorated the relations between U.S.A and Iran starting from the Anglo-Soviet invasion to the Iranian Islamic Revolution in 1979, passing through the Hostage Crisis, and the close relations between Iran and "Hezbollah," to finish with the attacks on New York and Washington on 11 September 2001, and the hysterical phobia the latter events engendered. Therefore, all these events had led to an unprecedented anti-Iran policy in America especially with regard to its nuclear program. In addition, this chapter presents some American interventions in the Iranian national affairs and how they negatively affected and harmed the relation between the two countries. Finally, this chapter discusses some proposed evidences that led Iran to develop nuclear weapons and decide to oppose the United States. Generally, this chapter is primarily intended to provide a summary and overview of how the US-Iran relations established and how it soured.



Iran-USA relations has been a case of study for different scholars, politicians and experts for long time ago and still continued till today. It became one of the most famous headlines in today's political issues. Despite efforts made to explain the nature of these relations, experts failed to give a clear vision and comprehensive coverage to its complexity. Some have explained the Iranian-United States relation in terms of cultural and political gap between the two nations led to wrong interpretations and bad decisions from both nations("Reclaiming Tradition: Islamic...").

However, historically the relations between Iran and the United States had not always been contentious. Originally Iran and USA had good diplomatic relations up to 1979, the year of the Iranian Islamic Revolution. Thus, the nature of the Iran-USA relations is directly affected by the domestic politics of Iran. From an American perspective, the period ranging from (1941-1979) when Iran was under the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah, is noted as a peaceful and a good phase in regard to their relations with the state of Iran. Whereas, the collapse of the royal system and the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran after the Iranian Islamic Revolution in 1979 resulted in a conflict between the two countries which lasted thirty years and extended to be protracted (Bayor and Ronald).

According to Khan who is an English television personality of Pakistani origin, the Iran-US conflict is generally based upon three main components. The first one is ideology. Accordingly both seek to spread their ideological concept. The Second component is religion, which appeared mainly through the Islamic Revolution in 1979. And finally politics, through the United Nations sanctions guided by USA and directed to Iran (66).

### **1.1 A Glimpse of History about Iran-US Relations Up the 1980's**

Before exploring the Iranian -American diplomacies from the 1940's to the 1980's, here is a brief historical review of Iran's position towards Germany and the Allies during the Second World War. By signing the Turkmenchay treaty<sup>1</sup> in 1828 that ended the Russo-Persian

war (1826-1828), Russia took control over several areas. As a response to the Russian hegemony, Iranians started to look for a power that could save them. Therefore, they allied themselves with Nazi Germany the first enemy for both Russia and Great Britain (“Germany-Iran Relations”).

Before the outbreak of the Second World War, both Iran and Germany used to enjoy a relation build on trust. According to Bast, a specialist in Iranian Studies and a Senior lecturer at the department of History at the University of Manchester, there are two qualifications which made this relation happening. First, both countries felt that they have cultural connections and shared history. Second, the Iranian leader Reza Shah saw Hitler as a model he should follow. The attitudes changed when both Soviet and Britain intention in the Iranian territories became different.

By the late 1941, Iran faced the German threat, as a response an Anglo-Soviet force entered Iran under the cover of protection from Germany. The Anglo-Soviet intervention of Iran took place between 25 August and 17 September 1941 while Iran was under the rule of Reza Shah Pahlavi the father. Since the USA, UK and the Soviet Union were allies at that time, US President Franklin D. Roosevelt used to back up both Soviets and Britain in attempt to prevent Germany from occupying Iran. Shah the father in turn tried to defend his territories with low equipment. However, the relations between the Shah and his subjects deteriorated during and after the war. In 1941, he was forced to abdicate and leave the throne for his son Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi (Childs).

The US-Soviet cooperation started to exist sooner after the Anglo-Soviet invasion of Iran and mainly appeared through the Lend-Lease Act. Following the principles of this treaty the United States supplied the Soviet Union with war materials of 11 Billion Dollar, and even sent army troops who helped in building railroad in Iran (Granatstein315). All these supports drove the Russian Red Army to the path of victory against the German Army known as the

Wehrmacht, on the East front. In 1943, Iran was pressured to announce its alliance with the Soviet Union to fight Germany and join the United Nations. By declaring war on Germany, Iran cut all the diplomatic and friendship ties used to exist with Germany for twenty years and sure for the same reason cut the ties with Japan (Mir).

Under the Allies Iran faced lot of problems like food shortage, financial problems and so many other imperfections in different sides of life. However, Iran witnessed little development at the level of democracy and parliament. Although, Iran was able to nationalize its oil resources, it fell into serious economic crisis, due to the fact that Britain has conducted a western boycott to refrain buying oil from Iran (Gasiorowski 199).

The post Anglo-Soviet invasion period would bring more economic and social problems for Iran. In fact, in 1942 an Anglo-Soviet-Persian Treaty was conducted. The treaty known as the Tripartite Treaty of Alliance of Iran reaffirmed the legitimacy of the Anglo-Soviet protection of Iran against any invasion. It also stated that the Soviet and British powers would help in the stability of Iran's economy then withdraw just six months after the end of the war with Germany (Cameron 14-15). However, by signing this treaty, the Shah put his country's oil resources in the hand of Britain, the Unites States and the Soviet Union.

To prove that he was a trustworthy ally, Iran's Shah promised to provide the Allies with military support, despite the fact that the treaty did not include the Iranian military assistance as a condition. In 1943, the three allied powers leaders Franklin D. Roosevelt, Josef Stalin and Winston Churchill met in the Soviet Union's embassy in Tehran. The conference tackled the relations of the three allies with Iran. Moreover, it aimed to construct an additional defensive front against Germany. Finally, the conference recognized of Iranian independence and sovereignty over its territories, and promised to offer an economic assistance to Iran after the war ("The Tehran Conference"). In fact, the Tehran Conference's codes were to pave the path for more oil concessions to the Allies, by have free and unconditioned access to Iran's oil.

Furthermore, the Allies refusal of the Shah's military assistance was a humiliation to him and his country. This incited huge popular discontent against him as Iran's king.

By the end of the year 1943, the Iranian government was involved in deals with American and British oil companies. The deals granted the later concessions to extract oil from south Iran. In the same year, the Soviet Vice-Commissar Sergey Kavtaradze visited Tehran to negotiate oil concession, which resulted in granting the Soviets concession to extract oil from the east of Tehran. However, when the Soviets asked for new oil concession aiming at expanding its oil extraction process over the five Soviet Northern provinces, the Iranian Government refused, as they banned any future concessions to any foreign campaigns (Roy 3).

As a reply to the Iranian decision, the Soviet Vice-Commissar announced in a press conference that the disloyal and unfriendly position taken up by Iranian Premier Mohammad Said Maraghei towards the Soviet Union excluded the possibility of future collaboration with him (3).

Within the Iranian- Soviet dispute over oil concessions, the US took the Iranian side. The American reaction was a challenge to Soviets that marked the first USA –U.S.S.R dispute. Leland Morris, the American ambassador to Tehran, argued that Iran has the right to accept or refuse any foreign request concerning oil concession, justifying his country's position by the Tehran Conference which recognized Iran's sovereignty over its national affairs including commercial concessions within its territory (qtd in "From Encroachment to Involvement" 3). Probably, the American support of Iran against the Russians was either to get oil concession for herself, or a mere opposition to the Soviets.

The journey of PhD. Arthur Millspaugh to Iran was a turning point in US-Iran relations. Prof. Millspaugh worked as an advisor to the Foreign Trade Office of the American State Department. He traveled to Iran to help reorganize the Iranian Ministry of Finance. However,

almost all what Prof. Millspaugh's proposed to organize the Iranian Ministry of Finance was refused, because it lacked the Iranian cooperation. By naming the Iranians as unskilled and incapable of self-governance in a press conference, the Iranian Majles or Parliament fired him for his disrespect. As a response, he wrote another book about Iran entitled *Americans in Persia*. In this book, Millspaugh narrated what he had experienced in Iran in terms of reports.

The reports were taken into consideration by the American policy makers, media, and even by the former American president Harry S. Truman. By following the Porf's reports, the United States showered its true intention towards Iran, in a becoming a permanent partner with the U.S.S.R and Britain in having oil concessions from Iran. Historically, in 1920 the Americans' request to get oil concession faced Iranian rejection. Then, in 1943 they tried to open official negotiations for oil concession but it failed because of the law passed in the Iranian Majles canceling any future oil concessions without the Majles agreement. Interestingly, the United States used to supply Iran with any necessities -military, economic and even political, and support their decision taken towards U.S.S.R even if they were against the American will itself (Dizadji 159-160). Therefore, the indirect support granted by USA to Iran against U.S.S.R can be defined as a cold war. Then, I believe that the US interest in Iran was not only to get oil concession. Instead, they were there to fight the communist ideology when the US-U.S.S.R relations strained.

The high Iranian oil revenues helped to fund many social reforms. According to Ervand Abrahamian, the historian of Middle Eastern and particularly Iranian History, the Iranian king Reza Shah Pahlavi helped modernize the socio-economic structure, but did little to develop the political system (435). During the leadership of Mohammed Reza Shah Iran witnessed a lot of fundamental changes in different aspects of life. These changes satisfied certain social class at the expense of the other (Girgis). This could be a reason for the conflict of ideas that

erupted within the Iranian society between the supporters of modernization, and religious class Shiites who wanted to keep Iran as an Islamic state and purify it from western influence.

The Shah started to follow a dictatorial regime to preserve his position as king, consequently, people started to revolt against his arbitrariness. The oppositions at the beginning appeared to be civic protest through writings and demands of freedom (Abrahamian515). But later on, it turned into revolution especially when Iranians embraced the Islamic nationalism (Ashraf).

In 1941 Reza Shah the father abdicated and left the country into exile. His son, Mohammed Reza Shah was appointed by the Soviet-British alliance as king; in return he was helpful and subjected to them. This cooperation between the Shah, Soviet-British alliance, and America was cut off by Mohammad Mosaddeq who was elected as a Prime Minister of Iran in 1951. Mosaddeq opposed any western intervention in the Iranian national affairs. As he passed law in the Majles to prevent any granted oil concessions without the agreement of the Parliament itself. This was known as the Policy of Negative Balance (Elm 45). Mohammad Mosaddeq gained a huge popular support just because he was against the dictatorial Shah.

In 1953, both United States and Britain tried to help Reza Shah after he was forced to flee Iran. This help was a reason for Iranians to declare their hatred towards America and shape the Anti-American notion later on. Moreover, it was a step towards the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

The Anglo-American interference in the 1953 Iranian coup against Mosaddeq and his cabinets secretly chronicled in a CIA document written by the agency's anonymous chief planner. The document provides evidence of the British intelligence officials' intervention in the operation, and reveals the US-British goals to keep the Iranian oil under their control. Also this document stressed the contribution of the British intelligence officers in assisting the Iranian Royal Army. The operation's code name was TP-AJAX known as "Operation Boot".

The plan of this operation covered a series of bombings and media campaigns held secretly by Iranians who were pretending that they were members in the communist party<sup>2</sup> in order to make it appear as Russian collusion. Despite the CIA plans, Reza Shah was forced to appoint Mosaddeq as a Prime Minister of Iran. This action was seen as a failure of the CIA who was about to leave the country and let the Iranian Royal Army officers finish the operation of removing Mosaddeq and restoring the government (Abrams Hap).

The CIA is also involved in providing financial support to Iran, by supplying the state with 5 million dollars 48 hours after the coup to fix the restored government (“History of Iran: A Short ...”). This financial support was probably to fix the American interest in Iran more than to help them recover what they lost.

The United States admitted its role in the Iranian coup to overthrow the Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq and his cabinet. Thus, the coup was like the final station in the USA-Iran relations (Dehghan, et al). As a result, tension increased between the two nations and people were really upset from the American back up of Shah’s authoritarian regime.

The US coups of 1953 to remove Iran’s Prime Minister, the Shah’s dictatorial regime, and all American and western interventions in the Iranian affairs set the path for Iran to hold an Islamic revolution. According to Jahangir Amuzegar, the Iranian economist, academic and politician, the Iranian revolution was called an Islamic Revolution for three main reasons: it was guided by the Islamic leader Ayatollah Khomeini, the use of Islamic religious logs, and finally the emergence of the Islamic Republic of Iran (24).

## **1.2 The Islamic Revolution in Iran: Causes and Effects.**

The Iranian Islamic Revolution revolves around many pivotal personalities, including mainly Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the father of Iran’s 1979 Revolution. Khomeini entered the world of politics in 1963, his main goal was to obstruct the Iran-US relations through a popular rebellion against the Shah’s regime, known for its deeply rooted diplomacy with the

USA. Khomeini's resistance against US interests in Iran was combined with hostile operations, reported as "terrorist attacks" from the US perspective. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, was arrested for 8 months after calling the Shah as a "wretched miserable man, who had embarked on the path toward destruction of Islam in Iran." His release came after his supporters declared riots. Khomeini's opposed the Shah's regime for its corruption and brutality, but also for its indifference to Islamic identity, and its high estimation of western culture and values (Ruhani 195). This shows that Khomeini focused on two important sides to flame the revolution. Politically speaking he opposed the Shah's policies including the white revolution<sup>3</sup>, and from religious side he was seen as great Islamic leader by Iranians.

The Iranian Shah was among the first to recognize the state of Israel short period after its creation and established strong diplomatic ties with it (Shireen 163 -183). After the Islamic Revolution, Iran cut off all kinds of relations with Israel and declared it an "enemy of Islam" along with United States (Raihan 162). This is what actually makes it difficult to know whether the US today's intention to stop Iranian nuclear programs is for the world security or to protect Israel.

The Idea of establishing the Islamic Republic State of Iran is originally attributed to three Iranians. The first one is the political, thinker and writer Jalal Al-e Ahmad. He promoted the thought that western culture is a "plague" or an "intoxication" to be eliminated. The second figure is the Islamic sociologist Ali Shariati, who claimed that Islam is the only savior from any western restrictions (Keddie 201). The third important figure who participated in shaping the Islamic ideology of Iranian revolution was Morteza Motahhari, cleric and politician. He used to deliver Islamic Shiite lessons in terms of speeches or religious messages to warn people and push them to act (Girgis). Those three figures gained followers, listeners and readers. As a result, the Iranian revolution was Islamic more than political, as well as the slogan of the revolution was "neither east, nor west – Islamic republic" (Ramazani 21).



Based on this slogan, people responded by rejecting Communism and Capitalism influence together. Moreover, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini embraced the idea and aimed at establishing the Islamic government known as Velayat-e faqih in which the Islamic jurist rules the country (Dabashi 419). By doing that, Khomeini tried to prevent injustice, corruption and preserve Islam as a fundamental pole of the government.

During the 1970s, Iran witnessed an oil boom but the major beneficiaries were Reza Shah and his family (Gelvin and James 285). This period also marked wide gaps between social classes and more suppression from Shah. These social problems prompted a sort of intellectual resistance embodied in a group of writers producing anti-government poetry led by Saeed Soltanpour (Daniel). Therefore, intellectuals had enough courage to face the Shah and openly criticize his government with their poetry in public.

The death of the Islamic Sociologist Ali Shariati in the United Kingdom was followed by huge popular demonstrations. The demonstrators accused SAVAK, or the Iranian Domestic Security, Secret Police and Intelligence Service of assassinating him (Sneh 175). The wave of protests following Shariati's death became more intense when the Iranian *Ettela'at* Newspaper accused Ruhollah Khomeini of cooperating with communism, and calling him a "British agent" (Brumberg 92). It was an attempt to weaken the opposition and demoralize Khomeini supporters. Nevertheless, popular protests rose in different cities of Iran ranging mainly from students from Qom city. The protest resulted in the death of two police officers and seventy protestors (Ervand 505).

Following the bloody demonstration, the Iranian government announced 40 days mourning. Khomeini sympathized with the families of the victims saying that "the red blood of martyrs must water the tree of Islam to grow up" (Reuter 45). By the end of the 40 days of mourning, other demonstrations took place in several cities. But this time, number of cities involved in protests increased dramatically to touch 55 including the capital city Tehran.

Security forces could not control riots everywhere and they were ordered to not use force again. The Shah fired certain SAVAK officials as he made replacements at the level of governmental officials (Parvin 299).

With regard to the delicate situation, Reza Shah opted for peaceful solutions which reduced the number of protests. In the United States of America, the CIA commented on the Iranian revolution by saying that: “is not in revolutionary or even a pre-revolutionary situation” (Hayward 40).

On 19 August, the protest renewed due to Cinema Rex fire incident. The operation was done by four unknown persons who burned the theater while people were inside it. Khomeini accused Shah and SAVAK of committing that crime. However, the government denied the act. Protesters went out in the streets and yelled “burn the Shah” “the Shah is the guilty one” (Ervand 513).

It was the beginning of new wave of protests after a period of stagnation. The Situation got more complicated when the Shah declared Martial Law that prohibits marches. However, people went in demonstrations again, but this time they faced a violent repression from the police, causing the death of 64 persons. This day is remembered as “Black Friday” (Kurzman 75). This incident was a rising action in the Iranian Revolution which consisted of four basic elements; Council of the Islamic Revolution, Army of Guardians of the Islamic Revolution, Revolutionary tribunals, and Islamic Revolution court (Sinkaya 81-82).

Amidst the Iranian internal turbulence, the US diplomacy under President Jimmy Carter started questioning, whether they continue to supervise Shah’s government or not (Douglas). This was a clear sign that the American intervention to support the Monarchy in Iran began to decline. Even the American ambassador in Iran sent a telegram to Carter’s administration telling them that Shah had no chance to succeed, and it is better for them to withdraw as well as to convince Shah to abdicate. At the end, Shah abdicated the rule and fled the country and

Abul Hassan Banisadr was elected as the first President of the Republic of Iran on January 25, 1980.

As mentioned previously, the American-Iranian relations were decided after the US support that was provided during 1953 Iran coup to overthrow the Prime Minister Mosaddeq in favor of the monarchy system of Shah. Based on that, the Iranian revolution outbreak was against western influence in Iran more than it was against dictatorial regime of Shah. As result it paralyzed the American interest in the area and blocked any further relations especially after the Hostage crises in November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1979 (DeRouen 319).

Moreover, the Iranian Oil Industry witnessed retreat because of trade sanctions imposed by USA which was justified as a reaction against Iran support to terrorism in Middle East and its ambition to enrich uranium. In addition to oil trade, the United States prevented all kinds of trade with Iran including food and medical products (320).

The Hostage Crisis has been a case of study for many historians and theorists who tried to provide a well and logical explanation. But at the end, the plurality provides reports which do not suit the real events of the “hostage crisis decision making”. Despite the fact that there are no clear accounts about the incident, some sources claimed that the left wing of the Islamist forces, and some other figures like Masumeh Ebtekar, Muhammad Khatami’s Vice President and Hojatul Islam Khomeini were involved in the hostage taking (Hunter 38).

According to O’Hern, the Hostage Crisis was planned to promote the spirit of revolution and to suppress those who were against the rise of Islamic Republic of Iran. Khomeini proposed for Bani Sadr -the Minister of Foreign Affairs at that time and later the President of Iran to support the kidnapping believing that this action for sure is going to help uniting the people, and will end the opposition against them, and hence encourage the people to easily vote for the new constitution. Then, the hostages will be released (27).

In another account for the events, it is believed that the Islamic Student Organization known as “Muslim Students Following the Line of Imam” were behind the hostage operation. This group was calling for the return of Reza Shah from exile for trial and execution. Since the Shah was exiled in America, they thought that if they abduct the American Embassy in Tehran, America will hand over the Shah to the Iranians for trial. On November 4, approximately three thousand students participated in the takeover, plus thousands of other people who just wanted to volunteer and join the event. They drew an image of the imam on their faces as a message to the entire world. The Iranian security forces that were protecting the American Embassy could do nothing and within few hours about 3000 participants entered inside the territory of the embassy (Farber 133).

Despite the inconsistencies in the different stories about the planners and executioners of the attacks, it remains a true fact that during the Hostage Crisis the streets of Tehran were filled with people chanting with one voice “death to America.” Moreover, 55 American hostages were in capture for fourteen months, more exactly it was 444 days, in addition to the confiscation of secret documents from the embassy. Finally the hostages were released when both sides signed the Algiers Accords on January 19, 1981. This treaty ended the US-Iran Crisis. The United States promised to not intervene in the Iranian matters by any way. In addition, both sides agreed to not sue each other for the hostage incidents. Nevertheless, the Hostage Crisis harmed the American prestige especially when the US President Carter failed in his negotiation (Simpson7-16).

To conclude, the Hostage Crisis is still an outstanding issue even after thirty six years. Nevertheless, no one could reach clear evidence about who committed that crime. Actually, what makes it harder to recognize the real doer is that, interpretations and accounts provided by different writers differ from one source to another, yet what is common among the

different accounts is the implications of the incident, being mainly the American humiliation as opposed to Khomeini's growing influence.

There is no doubt that the Hostage Operation and the Islamic Revolution of 1979 which gave birth to an Islamic government shaped the US- Iran diplomacy for the much of the 1980's and 1990's. Effectively, as early as 1980 and more exactly on 22 September 1980, the Iraqi government under Saddam Hussein invaded Iran. Saddam was planning to have a short war with Iran, yet the conflict lasted eight years leaving thousands of dead and injured, in addition to financial losses.

At the beginning, the armed conflict between Iran-Iraq was not a source of concern for the international powers, till both countries started to attack petroleum extraction areas of each. As a result, and since international powers and countries were fed from the Persian Gulf oil, United States decided to take a step and intervene in the war. The United States intervene on the Iraqi side by attacking and destroying many Iranian war ships and fighter jets (Willet 4-5).

Rajaei assumes that US participation in the war with Iraq against Iran is contradictory to its policy of neutrality. However, it seems more as a reply to the Hostages Operation against the American Embassy in Tehran, which was blessed by the Khomeini government. For Iran, the defeat meant humiliation, especially with regard to the glorious past of this country. The once great Persian Empire, which dominated the Middle East region, is now considered as a threat and a danger on the world peace.

So, to what extent is the establishment of an Islamic Republic responsible for this western exclusionist conclusion towards Iran? In other words, is the Islamic Revolution the direct cause behind the deterioration of the US- Iran relations in the post revolution era? In this context, Ali M. Ansari states that:

For Iranian revolutionaries, the Islamic revolution is considered as definitive break with the past only, through cutting ties with United States which can be defined by the takeover of the US embassy ... For the Americans the hostage crisis marked the ended of US-Iran relations. As it seen humiliation ... generally the hostage crisis marked a definitive break with the past for the Americans, much as it did for the Iranian revolutionaries (72).

In other words, the hostage crises for Iranians marked a termination in the diplomatic relations with United States, but for USA it was seen as reason to make Iran its first enemy. Today, the conflict centers on Iran's nuclear program that America seeks to deter with both legal and illegal means.

### **1.3. US-Iran Diplomacies Following 9/11 Attacks**

The terrorist attacks that stoke the United States of America on September 11, 2001 engendered a war on terrorism directed and promoted by the US and its historical allies such as Britain, Canada and France. The war on terror consisted of drawing a list of countries hosting Islamic groups and supporting the idea of Jihad against "Allah's enemies" including all the western countries with America as major threat. Unfortunately, Iran was among the countries that the US consider as "Axis of Evil", or one of the major supporters of Islamist groups. Hezbollah<sup>4</sup> of Lebanon was also listed as a terrorist organization mainly for its close relations with Iran, and its stance against the existence of Israel.

Professor U.N. Gupta, Specialized in Constitutional Law and Public International Law, asserts in his book that after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, Iran was charged by USA of supporting Bin Laden<sup>5</sup> and Taliban organization<sup>6</sup> in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, he proclaims that Iran and Taliban relations were totally based on hatred because Iran is a Shiite state and Taliban are Sunni. Anti- Iran views were strongly reared by Israel. The later, having a border conflict with Hezbollah and the Lebanese government

convinced the United States that Iran was supplying Hezbollah in Lebanon with different war needs and materials. As a result, the political party of Hezbollah in Lebanon was seen as a terrorist organization by both United States and Israel (161). This explains that U.S diplomatic policies and interventions did not come only as a reaction against terrorism, but also it can be considered as support and protection to Israel. However, the Iranians believe that the only way to protect themselves and their country from the American interventions in its internal affairs is to develop nuclear to build a strong national security (Katouzian and Shahidi 162).

Before the American invasion to Iraq, the Iranian government sent a fax containing a list of proposals to the Bush administration. And with the American Iranian councils cooperation they tried to solve the American Iranian conflict by having what is called “grand bargain”. As well, this cooperation aimed at ending the Iranian support to what is known as terrorist armed groups including Hamas and Hezbollah, and more importantly stop the Iranian nuclear program. Unfortunately, Bush administration did not reply for the fax, the opportunity to fix the relations was lost and this failed attempt confirmed the continuation of no diplomatic and official relation between United States and Iran. Moreover, different historical sources approved that since 2003 the United States encroached on the Iranian borders, either through using drones to spy or spread the US armed forces along the Iranian territories. The US security organizations even sought to ignite an ethnic war in Iran through supporting both “Mujahideen e-Khalq” and the “Party for a Free Life in Kurdistan” to bomb the Iranian borders and create a conflict (Tabarani 283).

Joseph Cirincione, the President of Ploughshares Fund<sup>7</sup>, stated that some senior officials have already decided to attack Iran. While Stephan Zunes, the specialist in the Middle Eastern American international relations, claimed that the US government is planning for military attacks against Iran. Despite all these evidence, the American President W. Bush declared in 2006 that there must be consequences for the Iranian opposition to stop enriching uranium, for

him the new Iranian regime is threatening the world peace (285). Therefore, it seems that the United States is the only responsible for losing the opportunity to establish peace with Iran. It is rather engaging in imposing policies and sanctions that Iran sees as humiliating.

In his book entitled "*Unthinkable: Iran, the Bomb, and American Strategy*," the former CIA intelligence analyst and expert on Middle East politics and military affairs Kenneth Pollack stated that the covert actions against Iran included killing their scientists specialized in the uranium industry, hacking their websites and sabotage their missiles stores. However, there are no clear evidence about who did that, he just depended on New York Times and other media reports. He brought information saying that both British secret intelligence service and CIA are involved in the covert action plot against Iran, following one goal to cripple the Iranian uranium program. Even Israelis participated in the covert actions through helping United States to develop viruses to use it in cyber warfare against Iran. Thus, Iran did not have another choice only to defend itself and protect its oil terminals through removing them from internet. Nonetheless, Iran continued to defend itself instead of fighting back. This action led lot of American military officers who knew about covert actions to stand with the Iranian side. They tried to convince the US government that these kinds of actions can bring serious consequences if Iran responds and fight back (148-150).

As mentioned earlier, Iran-US relations are difficult to be defined. The American interventions in Iran marked the beginning of their relations, but the end of it cannot be determined by one reason rather it was due to several reasons including the Islamic revolution, the Hostage Crisis, the terrorist attack on America, and the tight relations between Iran and some powers determined as terrorist groups by America, including Hezbollah and Hamas in the Middle East, and the Taliban Regime in Afghanistan.

The earliest American step in Iran appeared through its support to both Soviet and Britain against German Nazi. This alliance that seemed like protection to Iran from Germany



turned into invasion, and the American intervention did not face any opposition by Iranians. In post Anglo-Soviet Invasion awareness start to emerge among Iranian people, as they start to see America making profit of Iranian oil, with little return for Iranians.

United States tried to compensate these shortages to gain the Iranian intention again through backing their international decisions concerning oil concessions and other issues, but they failed to do so because political and religious awareness dramatically increased. As a result, Iran declared an Islamic Revolution in 1979. This revolution can be explained either as a desire for self-governance or proof for breaking with the past. Further, The US Coup against Mosaddeq, and its attempt to deter the Islamic Revolution in 1979 can be direct reasons for Iranians to develop Anti-American perceptions, and substitute turn the friendly relations into hostility. However, the hostage crisis is seen as the event that cancelled Iran-USA relations.

All the American interventions which came after the decline of the relations with Iran were done for purpose. The United States took Hezbollah actions as an excuse to attack them, justifying their interventions in Lebanon and along Iranian frontiers as fighting terrorism. But in fact, it was for the sake Israel's security, while expanding the American hegemony over the region. As a response, the Islamic Republic of Iran started to develop its proper nuclear program as a defense for a potential nuclear attack.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Iran's Nuclear Ambitions vs. US Opposition**

This chapter tries to demonstrate that Iran's nuclear program is an ancient project that can be traced back to 1950s and before getting involved in a war with Iraq. Initially, Iran started to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes with the help of United States. However, the project was developed to include weapon productions especially from 1990 to 2002. This section of the dissertation will explain how Iran in the period between 1950's and 2000's deviated from peaceful purposes to armament purposes and ignored any international opinions or sanctions aiming to reduce or prevent its nuclear program from being progressed. The chapter explores some of the International Atomic Energy Agency reports and studies made on the Iranian nuclear programs, and spotlights the US political efforts along with other western countries to deter the Iranian production of nuclear weapons. Moreover, it deals with different stages which Iran passed through from announcing the starting of its nuclear program till current times, and their impact on shaping the Iranian political decisions concerning its intention to enrich uranium.

Similarly to the first chapter, the second one again tackles the covert actions against Iran but with a special focus on American secret harassment and termination of Iranian nuclear scientists. It generally assesses Iran's past and present efforts to develop nuclear abilities for both peace and military purposes, and how this nuclear ambition made Iran's future a major issue debated in the international forums in order to find way to resolve it. Finally, it highlights President Obama's foreign policy towards Iran and provides some answers for the reasons behind failing to reach bilateral and unconditional solutions for the nuclear issue.

## **2.1. Iran's Nuclear Program: A Historical Overview.**

According to the International Atomic Energy Agency Iran started to build its nuclear powers for military purpose in 1984, more precisely during the war with Iraq and under the presidency of Ayatollah Ali Hosseini Khamenei (Lerman and Capaccio). This ambition to get nuclear weapons was justified as self-defense against Iraq that was claimed to have nuclear bombs during the war. In order to fully understand the debate over Iran's nuclear ambition, one must understand the history of Iran's nuclear program that can be traced back to 1950's under the rule of the Shah, and after the declaration of the US Atoms for Peace Program. The Professor of Political Science at Gratz College Ofira Seliktar asserts that Iran's nuclear program was announced by the former American President Dwight Eisenhower in 1953 to stop any attempt to develop weapons of mass destruction. In other words, the program aimed at helping countries with technological tools to develop their nuclear programs for peaceful purposes only. In 1967 Iran was officially included in the program, as it signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty<sup>8</sup> and assured to apply it by 1970. Nevertheless, after the decline of oil prices in 1973, the shah tried to compensate this energy shortage by building nuclear power station, and in 1975 Iran cooperated with Germany to build a nuclear reactor, but this cooperation ended short time after the Iranian revolution. Consequently, about 4500 Iranian nuclear scientists migrated to other countries (78).

In the post-revolutionary era (1979-1989) the majority of countries that were cooperating with Iran's to nuclear program retreated gradually. Partly due to its unpaid debts that reached 450 Million Dollars (Prather). While it is also proclaimed that the United States is responsible for this cooperation withdraw ("Internationalization of the Nuclear Fuel..." 37). This assumption is strongly supported by Professor Kapur, from the National Security Affairs Department at US Naval Post-graduate School, and Professor of Political Science Ganguly. Both assume that Iran was forced to close its nuclear reactor for many years, because the USA

and France stopped all kinds of technological support and ended any further cooperation with them (217). Therefore it is clear that U.S.-France interventions in the Iranian nuclear affairs had a great impact on the development of the latter.

Nevertheless, and despite western disfavor to Iran's nuclear project, in 1981 the Iranian government called for the need to recover the nuclear project again. As a part of the plan, Iran informed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that the Esfahan Nuclear Technology Center (INTEC) would serve as the center for the transfer and development of nuclear technology, as well as contribute to the formation of the local expertise and manpower needed to sustain a very ambitious program in the field of nuclear power reactor technology and fuel cycle technology ("Nuclear program of Iran").

Mark Hibbs, the Senior Associate in Carnegie's Nuclear Policy program in Berlin, proclaims that International Atomic Energy Agency agreed to help Iran to develop its nuclear program for peaceful purposes, but the United States intervened to end this cooperation right from the beginning. As a result, Iran asked for the help of China to continue its project, but for the second time the United States intervened and pressured China to prevent this assistance again ("No Bog Iran Work Plan...").

Western strong opposition to Iran's nuclear program even if it is aiming peaceful ends, may be justified by American fears from potential production of nuclear weapons. It was claimed in a report conducted by the German intelligence in 1984 that Iran is not far away from producing nuclear bomb, and it can achieve that only in two years if it continued to use the Pakistani uranium (Cordesman and Al-Rodhan 108). In the same context, Alan Mac Gregor Cranston, the Democratic Senator from California, disagreed with the German intelligence report assuming that Iran needs about seven years to be able to produce nuclear bombs (Polston 72).

During the war with Iraq, Iranian nuclear reactors were targeted and destroyed by Iraqi missiles. Iran reported those attacks to the International Atomic Energy Agency but the whole world kept silent (“International Atomic Energy...”). In fact, the Iranian issue has not received much attention at that time.

Iran started looking for other solutions and be self-reliant. In this context, the Israeli Military Historians Hendel and Katz had claimed that Iran’s nuclear ambition in the age of the Shah was characterized by peace, but when Khomeini took control as Iran’s President it transformed into military and aggressive one. As they reported that Iranians doubled the efforts to fix their nuclear reactor that was damaged during the war with Iraq. In the same article, Hendel and Katz came to call Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the President of Iran from 1989 to 1997 the “Atomic Ayatollah,” since they think that he encouraged the nuclear program and put a lot of plans to make it succeed (“Israel Vs. Iran: The Shadow...”).

The 1990’s was characterized by an Iranian cooperation with Russia through the research organization known as Persepolis. This partnership allowed Iran to benefit from Russian nuclear experience to develop the missile technology. In 1991 France paid Iran about 1.5 Billion dollar in exchange of its investment in the European Gaseous Diffusion Uranium Enrichment known as EURODIF. However, Iran kept asking EURODIF for enriched uranium instead of money (Karoui). By acting in such way, France was rather trying to end Iran’s investment in the EURODIF, and prevent its nuclear project from progression.

Iran’s nuclear project was put under scrutiny by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which paid visit to Iran in 1992 hoping to uncover Iran’s mystery over the development of uranium. After visiting many uranium sites, General Hans Martin Blitx confirmed that Iran is using uranium just for peaceful purpose (Tabarani 171). Therefore, in 1995 and based on contract signed between Russia and Iran at the time, Russia helped Iran to rebuild its nuclear power station in Bushehr (“Preparing America for the Wrath...” 72).

Even though, the IAEA's approved the peaceful ambitions of Iran's nuclear program, the US discourse towards the issue remained prejudiced and suspicious. Actually, American overt and secret pressure aiming to stop Iran's nuclear program was permanent. Tabarani who is an expert in the Middle East affairs asserts that in 1996, the Republic of China was convinced or rather forced by the United States to cancel its cooperation with Iran in the uranium field. However, China continued to supply Iran with technical and material help. Meanwhile, the IAEA continued to visit Iranian uranium sites to clarify the nature of the program and check Iran's cooperators (171).

The Iranian nuclear issue became further problematical by 2003. The International Atomic Energy Agency reported that Iran enriched uranium and separated plutonium without announcing these actions to the agency what make it undeclared nuclear activities (Khana and Suwaed 126). Yet, Iran kept defending the peaceful purposes of its nuclear program (Segell 202). In 2006, the IAEA reported Iran to the UN Security Council arguing that it did not comply with the security conditions imposed on them. As a reaction the UN declared that Iran should stop Uranium enrichment immediately (Barvarz 27). Following the UN decision, the Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced that Iran will neglect the decision made by UN Security Council calling it an "illegal" sanction made by "arrogant powers," and revealing that Iran should continue its peaceful nuclear program ("Ahmadinejad: Iran's nuclear...").

In order to make Iran suspend its nuclear activities, it was offered a long term comprehensive arrangement which would allow for the development of relations and cooperation with other foreign countries based on mutual respect and the establishment of international confidence in the exclusive peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program (Tabarani 166). Based on that UN and USA had no choice against the Iranian will what made them opt to plan B that seemed more diplomatic.

Some of the important United Nations Security Council resolutions imposed on Iran from 2006 until 2011 can be classified as follow. First, resolution 1696 which was approved on July 31 2006, it asked Iran to suspend all activities related to uranium enrichment. Second, on 23 December 2006 came resolution 1737. The later imposed sanctions on Iran in response to its refusal to stop uranium enrichment activities, obliging Iran to work with IAEA instead of acting independently. Then, in the resolutions 1747 and 1803, the UN expanded further sanctions towards Iran, and reaffirmed all previous sanctions in the fifth resolution of 27 September 2008. Yet, the resolution number 1929 of 9 June 2010 was the hardest one for Iran. It imposed an armament embargo on Iran, and it ordered to seize all kinds of undeclared products which can be used to produce arms. On 9 June 2011, the UN Security Council adopted the resolution number 1984 calling for expending the time of surveillance of Iranian nuclear program for one more year. Again on 7 June 2012, the UN Security Council adopted the resolution 2049 that is almost the same as the previous one. In other words they extended the period of monitoring again until July 2013. The resolution 2105 signed on 5 July 2013 again extended the mandate of the experts monitoring Iran sanctions until 9 July 2014 (“Nuclear Program of Iran...”).

Iran ignored the UN Security Council’s sanctions in favor of uranium enrichment. As it was reported by the Persian journalist Hafezi that Iran on 9 February 2010 declared that it would raise the uranium enrichment production up to 20% in order to make fuel to feed the research reactors (“Iran Says Nuclear Fuel...”). The IAEA confirmed that Iran’s uranium enrichments reached 19.8% (Reppy and Kelleher 2009). The Iranian President Ahmadinejad replied to the different comments by saying: “Why do they think that 20% is such a big deal? Right now in Natanz we have the capability to enrich at over 20% and over 80%, but because we don’t need it, we won’t do it” (Jaseb Hossein and Ramin Mostafavi qtd in “Iran says can enrich uranium...”). And in 2010 Ahmadinejad announced that Iran was a nuclear state (Leon

and Guerrero 445). Therefore, Iran turned a deaf ear to both US and UN sanctions by continuing its nuclear activities upholding their legitimacy and peaceful ends.

## **2.2. The Fuel Swap Deal and Obama's Letter.**

On 20 April 2010 the American President Barack Obama sent a letter to the Brazilian President Lula da Silva explaining the proposal of fuel exchange with Iran. The letter translated Obama's concern over whether Iran would accept that deal or not, without mentioning all the Iranian rejections to the past deals, and focusing only on the new deal or the fuel swap ("Obama Administration..."). In his letter Obama said: "For us, Iran's agreement to transfer 1,200 Kg of Iran's low enriched uranium (LEU) out of the country would build confidence and reduce regional tensions by substantially reducing Iran's LEU stockpile" ( qtd. in " The Iranian Nuclear Crises..."). For Obama taking even 1,200 kg of low enriched uranium out of Iran's stockpile would make a difference and may boost the trust between the two countries.

On 17 May 2010 a joint declaration was issued by Iran, Turkey and Brazil announcing that Iran agreed to send low enriched uranium to Turkey and get some fuel to run the medical or research reactors in return ("SIPRI Yearbook 2015: Armaments..." 382). Obama's proposal seemed to work. On 24 May 2010, Iran sent a letter to the International Atomic Energy Agency to officially enunciate its cooperation and agreement with the joint declaration of the fuel swap with Turkey and Brazil. Iran asked IAEA to inform the Vienna and IAEA member states about that, in order to make the next step to hold written convection between the Vienna Group and Iran ("Iran: A Letter to the IAEA").

The Arab nations welcomed the Iranian agreement of fuel swap with Brazil and Turkey (Abdul Ghafour). The French President Nicolas Sarkozy as well saw the agreement a great opportunity to end the Iranian nuclear tensions (Viscusi). Although the agreement received support from some countries, at the same time it faced criticism after being analyzed by



political experts. The Qatari News channel Al Jazeera reported Chatherine Ashton, the President of European Foreign Policy questioning the peaceful intention of this agreement by saying that: “ it does not answer the question of whether the Iranian nuclear program is trying to acquire nuclear weapons or not.”

The comments of the US secretary of the state Hillary Clinton did not differ too much from Ashton’s comments. Clinton stated that Iran acceptance of fuel swap agreement has number of deficiencies, describing it as “transparent poly”. Further, she stated that Iran accepted this agreement only to protect itself from any new UN sanctions, as she claimed that it would continue the Uranium enrichment to high degrees (“Clinton: Iran Fuel Swap...”). The BBC read Iran’s acceptance of the fuel swap as an attempt to deflect pressure for fresh sanctions, and reported that Iran watchers are already criticizing Washington for moving the goal post (Leyne).

On 18 may 2010 and just few hours after Iran accepted the fuel swap, Clinton suggested a draft accord and persuaded the UN Security Council to impose more sanctions towards Iran in an attempt to end the Iranian nuclear enrichment program permanently (Sharma and Gielen 195). Tehran described this action as Obama’s dishonesty with the Turkey’s Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the Brazilian President Lula as well. For Professors Gielen and Sharma the U.S. act is nothing but as a scenario envisaged by Obama’s team, and that the white house never wanted an agreement with Iran (195).

Davutoglu, the Turkish politician and former diplomat criticized the UN new sanctions against Iran saying that: “the swap deal signed by Iran today shows that Tehran wants to open a constructive path...there is no more ground for new sanctions and pressures” ( *Al Jazeera* “Iran Accepts Nuclear-fuel...”). In addition to the Turkish opposition to UN sanctions, the Brazilian Foreign Minister, Antonio Patriota, also denounced the UN new sanctions against Iran saying that: “when we voted no for the new proposed resolution

sanctions, we could not have voted in any different way except against” (qtd. in “Update 1- Brazil still hopeful...”). This shows that Iran was supported by both Turkey and Brazil against the UN Security Council sanctions which were rejected and unwelcomed by both. In addition, that fuel swap agreement strengthened the trilateral relations between Brazil, Turkey, and Iran.

According to the supreme leader of Iran Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the fuel swap deal failed because the domineering powers headed by America are unhappy with the cooperation between independent countries (qtd. in “House of Lords – Persuasion...” 26). What he tries to say is that the trilateral cooperation between Brazil, Turkey, and Iran was not desirable by United States. The former Director General of the IAEA, Mohamed Elbaradei said to Marc Perelman from the French News channel France 24 that:

The only way to resolve the Iranian issue is to build trust. Moving 1,200 kg or at least more than half of the Iranian nuclear material out of Iran is confidence-building measure. It would resolve the dispute and enable the US and the West to gain the space to negotiate... the Iranian issue is not going to be resolved except, until and unless we sit with the Iranians and try to find a fair and equitable solution. (Perelman)

Among the other actions to stop or to obstruct Iran’s nuclear program are the covert attacks that targeted Iranian nuclear scientists. Salon, an Online American magazine had reported the murder of five Iranian nuclear scientists within one year by anonymous killers. Interestingly, the western and the American media in particular did not even focus on the event (Greenwald).

An article published on February 2012 by *NBC News* reported that certain Iranian sources with unrevealed US government officials attributing those attacks to an Iranian group known as *Mujahedin-e-Khalq* or *Mojahedin of Iran*. This organization is an Iranian opposition movement standing against the establishment of Islamic Republic State which is trained and

supported by the National Intelligence Agency of Israel known as “Mossad” (“Israel Teams with Terror...”).

Generally the fuel swap agreement summarizes that despite the fact that United States and UN Security council made attempts to end the Iranian uranium enrichment, it still goes on and Iran continues to develop its nuclear program day after day. Perhaps, this can explain other things including the attacks on Iranian nuclear scientists that are still unidentified. Moreover, the exchange of charges between the West and Iran over this issue explains in turn that these unknown attacks can be either interpreted in terms of western’s plan “B” to end Iran’ nuclear program, or just as an inner conflict of interest within Iran.

### **2.3. The Laptop Incident and Iran-IAEA Modalities Agreement.**

In a Press Conference held in 2002, an Iranian government in exile calling itself The National Council of Resistance<sup>9</sup> accused the Iranian government of building a new nuclear plant without declaring it to IAEA (“Iran’s Nuclear Program...” 4). Undoubtedly, these allegations raised concern in the United States and two years later, the controversy over Iran’s nuclear ambition turned into confirmation from the American perspective.

D. Evans, the American author and journalist, wrote about a laptop computer containing information about Iran’s nuclear program which was retrieved by the US secret intelligence agents from an anonymous Iranian source and handed to IAEA for further verification. The information found on the laptop show details about Iranian plans to build nuclear warheads and missiles capable of reaching Israel and other Middle Eastern countries (36). The laptop incident suggests two different ways of explanation. First, if it is true, it confirms Iran’s ambition to develop nuclear weapons. Second, if it is not, then it must be a scenario created by United States and inflated by IAEA to direct more sanctions towards Iran.

Nevertheless, the unrevealed source of the laptop issue negatively affected the credibility of the story. W. Broad and D. Sangernov from *The New York Times* has reported that the

source remains anonymous for the security of the Iranian providers of the information. Besides, the laptop incident made a lot of controversy over the precision of the Foreign Intelligence Security Service Analysts, putting back in mind their lack of precision over Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) that preceded the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 (13 Nov 2005). Therefore, amidst the intense U.S. -Iran conflict the international views vary between some countries believing that Iran does not have nuclear weapons, and others willing to believe the American Intelligence even if they provide no strong evidence.

On 21 August 2007, the IAEA and Iran held an agreement known as the Modality Agreement or Work Plan. This agreement was achieved through the joint actions made by the IAEA and Larijani's Team, the former Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It aimed at clarifying the ambiguities regarding Iran's nuclear status. The plan focused on checking six important nuclear facilities in Iran which remained ambiguous for IAEA. The cooperation between Iran and IAEA under the Work Plan succeeded to resolve the outstanding issues related to Iran's nuclear program ("The Iranian Nuclear Crisis...").

The Modality Agreement negated the information found in the laptop in 2004 by asserting that there were no other remaining issues and ambiguities regarding Iran's past nuclear program and activities (qtd. in "Iran's Nuclear Program: A collection ..." 100). The Director General for Safeguards at the International Atomic Energy Agency, Olli Heinonnen welcomed the agreement insisting on its importance in resolving the Iranian nuclear issue by stating that:

All these measures which you see there for resolving our outstanding issue go beyond the requirements of the additional protocol ... if the answers are not satisfactory. We are making new questions until we are satisfied with the answers and we can conclude technically that the matter is resolved ... it is for us to judge when we think we have

enough information. Once the matter is resolved, then the file is closed (qtd. in “Head of IAEA Safeguards ...”).

On 22 February 2008, the IAEA issued another report showing the latest status concerning Iran’s nuclear program. This report reaffirmed Iran’s denial of devising nuclear arms, and the absence of the IAEA evidence about present undeclared nuclear activities claimed to be carried out in Iran. The report added that all of Iran’s past undeclared activities included in the Modalities Agreement were resolved except the collection of documents containing information about Iran’s nuclear program claimed to be obtained by United States from mysterious sources referred to as the “Alleged Studies” (“Latest Iran Safeguards...”).

In April 2008, Iran accepted to negotiate the last outstanding issue of the “Alleged Studies” documents in order to resolve the whole problem permanently (“Iran’s Nuclear Program”). Yet, Iran did not have access to U.S presumed documents. The IAEA reported that it received much of the information concerning the “Alleged Studies” in electronic forms only and was not authorized to provide copies to Iran (Fayazmanesh Sasan qtd. in “Containing Iran...” 59). Further, since it was not allowed to get access to those documents, Iran in turn refused to answer the IAEA’s questions concerning the Alleged Studies which caused irritation with the IAEA (Sanger and Sciolino). Ali Asghar Soltanieh, Iran’s former ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency replied to this topic saying that: “The government of the United States has not handed over original documents to the agency since it does not in fact have any authenticated document and all it has are forged documents.” (qtd. in “The Iran Nuclear Issue” 125). This explains the Iranian suspicions about the authenticity of those documents and their existence.

The American Historian Gareth Porter has reported that the IAEA believes that even if it had not received the full documents of “Alleged Studies,” the information provided by some countries seemed reasonable, convincing, and enough to confirm some pretensions about

Iran's nuclear program ("The Iran Nuclear : Alleged Studies..."). The IAEA preferred that Iran cooperates with it over the issue of "Alleged Studies" even without getting access to all the documents. Doubts about the credibility of those documents increased following rumors proclaiming the whole story to "Mojahedin-e-Khalq," the Iranian opposition movement in exile supported by Israel ("Iran and IAEA...").

Generally the laptop incident and the so-called Alleged Studies found in it can neither confirm nor deny Iran's ambitions to develop nuclear weapons. Further, as previously mentioned those documents according to many views including the IAEA are not exempt of suspicion and doubt over their credibility, opening great possibility that they could have been easily fabricated by Iran's enemies. Thus, the United States did not achieve its aim to end Iran's nuclear program through the "Alleged Studies" but it was able to convince the IAEA to put more pressure on Iran.

#### **2.4. Iran's Violation of the NPT: Truth or Propaganda.**

The Non-Proliferation Treaty is traced back to 1968 when it has been approved by ninety-two states ("The Definition..."). This agreement was set to ensure the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and prevent the arms race to achieve the disarmament around the world. The treaty works under what is known as safeguards system, through which the International Atomic Energy Agency monitors the nuclear facilities of states which hold nuclear resources for further verification in order to prevent any nuclear use out of peaceful purpose ("Treaty on ...").

The BBC said that Iran has the right to develop nuclear energy, as far as it is used only for peaceful objectives and remains compatible with the Non-Proliferation Treaty (BBC "Iran Nuclear Crisis..."). Considering Iran's past breaches and failures, the IAEA officials unanimously agreed that Iran violates the Non-Proliferation Treaty Safeguard Agreement (Spies). Yet, the majority of experts stressed that failure to act in accordance to NPT

safeguards agreement does not represent violation neither to the states who signed the NPT nor the Non-Proliferation Treaty itself (Howlett et al).

Moreover, the IAEA does not make decisions in relation to the issue of compliance to NPT or not (“Compliance and the Treaty...”). The UN Security Council as well as cannot intervene in situations such as the violations of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (“Is Iran Violating the NPT...”). Thus, both the IAEA and UN Security Council are not able to react in this case. No party can legally confirm Iran’s violation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The U.S. State Department studies conducted in the field of arms control and non-proliferation agreement confirm Iran’s complacency to provide the IAEA with reports about its nuclear program. For this reason and using the provision of Article III of the NPT and its IAEA safeguards agreement which obliges any non-nuclear-weapon state to accept the safeguard agreement for further verification in order to prevent any nuclear use out of peaceful purpose, the US State Department studies came to conclude that Iran has violated the Non-Proliferation Treaty (“The Nuclear Program of Iran...”). In September 2009, the Congressional Policy Institution Service publically questioned whether or not Iran has really violated the NPT (Kerr 8). This shows a kind of contradiction and variation in analysis among stakeholders.

Again Iran insisted on defending itself against the arguments accusing it of developing nuclear weapons. Belal Ahmad, Curriculum Manager at Sir John Cass Sixth Form College asserts that Iran does not attempt to acquire nuclear weapons because it still lacks the technology that could enable it to become a nuclear weapon state. In addition, the Iranian authorities are not considering the step of acquiring nuclear weapons since it can only bring a nuclear arms race to the Middle East region (“USA Foreign Policy...”).

In the same context, Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations, Mohammad Khonzari said:

It is true that Iran has neighbors with abundant nuclear weapons, but this does not mean that Iran must follow suit... Iran is dependent in its decisions making concerning national issues. In fact, the predominant view among Iranian decision-makers is that development, acquisition or possession of nuclear weapons would only undermine Iranian security.(Afrasiabi)

In an interview with Brian Williams from *NBC News*, the Iranian President Ahmadinejad advocated the same assumptions stated above by Khonzari. Ahmadinejad emphasized on the fact that nuclear program is not necessary nuclear weapon, and that nuclear weapons had never been a solution to the problems which can face any country. Therefore, he neglected the use of nuclear weapons for security purposes by saying: "did nuclear arms help the Soviet Union from falling and disintegrating? For that matter, did a nuclear bomb help the U.S to prevail inside Iraq or Afghanistan? ... Nuclear energy must not be equal to a nuclear bomb. This is a disservice to the society of man" ("Response ... will be a positive one").

Repeatedly the same message was reshaped in a different way by the head of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, Ali Akbar Salehi who stated that if nuclear weapons would have brought security, Iran would have announced to the world that it would go after them. Moreover, Ali Akbar explained Iran's good relation with the neighbor countries and considers it as a good reason to not need nuclear weapons. Ali Akbar said: "We do not feel any real threat from our neighbors. Pakistan and the Persian Gulf, we have no particular problems with them, nor with Afghanistan ... We do not have strategic differences with our neighbors, including Turkey". As he shows the Iranian concern about Russian power by saying: "The only powerful country is Russia in the north, and no matter how many nuclear we had we could not match Russia." Finally Ali Akbar mentioned Israel and USA cooperation to end



Iran's nuclear program, in this context he said: "Israel, our next neighbor, we do not consider an entity by itself but as part of the U.S. facing Israel means facing the US, we cannot match the U.S." (Smyth).

Although, most Iranian politicians and scientists deplored their country's intention to produce nuclear weapons, perpetual allegations from western countries like Britain and the United States remain skeptical over Iran's nuclear program, which still claim to be more military than civil. According to the map presented here, and which was introduced by BBC, Iran has at least one nuclear site for military purpose situated in the city of Parchin.



Right from the beginning of his career as President and even during his campaign, Barack Obama aimed at resolving the US-Iran prostrated conflict that lasted more than thirty years. According to Kenneth Katzman, the Senior Analyst of Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Persian Gulf affairs at the Congressional Research Service, Obama's administration inherited the Iranian nuclear crises for eight years and followed the diplomacy policy of predecessor to

prevent Iran from developing arms of mass destruction, as well as to prevent Iran from any interventions in the national affairs of its neighbor countries and finally reduce some unnecessary American interventions in the region including Iraq. Katzman asserts that unlike President Bush, Obama aims to apply a new approach embodied in direct diplomacy through direct contact in order to encourage Iran to cooperate with United States through non-military means (38).

Obama's different direct talks with Iran under the engagement policy are listed by Katzman as follows. As a first attempt, Obama extended Iran's trade and investment bans only for one more year starting from 15 March 2009. Then, on 21 March 2009 and during the Persian New Year or Nowruz Day, Obama sent a message to the Iranian people to express the acceptance of the Islamic Republic of Iran and reassure them that United States is no longer searching for regime change. The third step of Obama's direct diplomacy with Iran is when he invited Iranian representatives to attend the international conference on Afghanistan hosted by the Netherlands on 31 March 2009. On 4 June 2009 Obama addressed the Muslim World in a speech where he expressed his country's willingness to allowed Iran to develop its nuclear program for peaceful purpose only if it accepts the NPT agreements. Finally, on 4 July 2009 a message was sent to U.S. embassies abroad allowing them to invite Iranian diplomats to attend the U.S. Independence Day (39).

John Limbert, the former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State of Iran in the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs wrote an article about President Obama's contacts with Iran between 2008 and 2009. Thus, according to J. Limbert's assumptions Obama has sent two letters to the Iranian Leader Ali Khamenei, but has received only one response for the first letter known as the "Nowruz Message." Whereas, the Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in turn has sent two messages to Obama, but has never received response for both. An addition, and according to same author since 2009 Iran's nuclear

program has become the major issue in U.S.-Iran relations, with a U.S. focus on how to resolve Iran's nuclear dispute. Moreover, Limbert put all the blame on Iran whose nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili was unwilling to open talks with the American nuclear negotiator, along with the President Ahmadinejad who used a number of provocative statements which kept the relations strained between the two countries. But, the situation witnessed little changed when Hassan Rouhani became the Seventh President of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2013. As a result, Iran decided to follow the diplomatic path in order to resolve the nuclear issue with America ("The Obama administration").

The period of Hassan Rouhani was not much different from Ahmadinejad's presidency in terms of opposing the U.S. propositions concerning the limitation of nuclear production. Obama in turn inherited the political diplomacy of the predecessors in order to reduce Iran's nuclear production or even attempting to end it through diplomatic pressure. Both President Barack Obama and the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani feel the need to stick to their positions against each other.

According to what has been reported by M. Benjamin Zuckerman, the owner and publisher of the *New York Daily News* and the *U.S. News & World Report*, President Obama has said that the sanctions towards Iran will not stop unless Iran's abide by the UN Security Council resolutions. However, the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Khamenei the current Supreme Leader of Iran insist on canceling all sanctions imposed on Iran, and putting an end to the surveillance of nuclear sites. Moreover, both emphasize their continuous support to the resistance groups such as Hamas, and Hezbollah.

Generally, this chapter dealt with the ambiguity and unanswered questions surrounding Iran's nuclear program. Ironically, the United States under President Eisenhower helped Iran to initiate its nuclear program for peaceful purposes for the first time in 1953. The project was

known as the U.S. Atoms for Peace Program, but later it became the first country to stand against Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Actually, Iran problems has begun in the Post-Revolutionary Era of 1979-1989 during which many countries who used to support Iran in developing nuclear program began to withdraw their cooperation gradually. According to what has been collected in this chapter, there are two reasons for this withdrew. First, because Iran had about 450 Million Dollars as unpaid debts in the nuclear field. Second, the U.S. intentional attempts to convince more and more countries to end the joint work with Iran. As a reaction, the Iranian government started to think about single and local efforts to recover what has been lost. Meanwhile, the United States has continued to thwart any cooperation between Iran and other countries or organizations in the nuclear field.

Raising concerns over Iran's nuclear work have pushed the IAEA to search into the Iranian facilities to find out that Iran holds undeclared nuclear activities in 2003. The IAEA reported this action to the UN Security Council as a non-cooperation behavior which resulted in further sanctions aiming at suspending the Iranian nuclear enrichments. Nevertheless, all the sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council on Iran from 2006 to 2014 were ignored by the Iranian government by continuing their nuclear project and insisting on its peacefulness and denying any claims opposing this view.

Moreover, contrary to the actions taken by the IAEA and the UN Security Council to stop Iran's nuclear enrichment, President Obama's administration intervened diplomatically by proposing a "fuel swap" agreement between Brazil, Turkey and Iran hoping to restore the trust with the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, when the fuel swap agreement was accepted by the three parts and almost all the European and Arab states welcomed it, the United States argued that Iran accepted the agreement only to protect itself from future UN sanctions.

After the fuel swap agreement was criticized by the United States and its allies, a new incident known as the “Laptop Alleged Studies” came to appear. The United States was claiming that it has retrieved a laptop that contains secret documents and information about Iran’s ambitions and plans to build nuclear weapons. As already explained, the laptop incident was a weak argument, yet the United States was able to convince the IAEA to conduct what is known as the modalities agreement. This agreement aimed at building the trust with Iran through monitoring their nuclear sites to clarify the ambiguities regarding their nuclear status.

Although, the modalities agreement succeeded to cancel what has been found in the laptop, the United States insisted on Iran to open negotiation about “Alleged Studies” found in the laptop till they accepted. These negotiations have concluded that the laptop had never existed at all or, that it was a joint action between United States and Mojahedin-e-Khalq, the Iranian opposition movement supported by Israel.

Although Iran showed great efforts to cooperate with the IAEA which in fact canceled all the alleged studies found in the laptop, the United States insisted that Iran is violating the Non-Proliferation Treaty what led to a conflict of ideas between U.S. and Iranian leaders. But the Iranian side is permanently stating that Iran’s nuclear program is, and will not be for nuclear weapon.

This chapter comes to conclude that after all analysis made by United States and IAEA, few evidence demonstrate that Iran is developing nuclear weapons. As a result, President Obama opted to use a soft diplomacy with Iran to get their attention and limit their nuclear production instead of ending it through the final agreement known as “joint comprehensive plan of action.”

## **Chapter Three**

### **Obama's New "direct policy" towards Iran and its Outcomes**

Iran's nuclear program has become the core of U.S.-Iran relations during Obama's first term. This chapter aims at highlighting the procedures and reasons behind the U.S. intervention to end Iran's nuclear program under the leadership of President Obama. First, the chapter deals with Obama's administration "new policy" adopted by Obama towards Iran which seems different from his predecessors'. Then it explores the U.S. efforts to protect "Israel" and its interest in the Middle East and Gulf region from Iran. At last, it highlights the American and the "Obamian" view about Islam in general and Islam in Iran with regard to Israel's security, and clarifies the position of some Gulf States towards the Iranian nuclear issue and their cooperation with the United States and Israel against Iran's desire to enrich uranium.

This chapter is related to the previous chapters in terms of reaffirming what has been said about Iran-US relations and Iran's nuclear program. It provides answers for all questions of this dissertation. Thus, it attempts to see whether Obama's intervention to prevent the progression of Iran's nuclear program is for world peace or just for the American national security. In fact, Obama's administration is following the same steps of previous administrations that used to protect and support Israel either militarily or politically. In other words, President Obama like previous presidents has as objective the provision of security and protection to "Israel" from any regional danger especially the Islamic Republic of Iran, however, to get to this objective he is not following blindly past strategies, he is rather applying a different strategy being mainly more diplomatic and requiring direct negotiations with the Iranian side. This strategy is called the "direct policy."

### **3.1. The JCPOA between U.S. Conviction and “Israeli” Obstruction**

When he first came into office President Obama has brought along with him new ideas that resulted in radical changes at the level of the American policy towards Iran. According to these policy changes, Iran was no longer pressed with restrictions leading to the decline of the American policy in the Middle Eastern region and giving space to the Islamic Republic of Iran to extend its influence.

Obama’s Nowruz message to the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2009 represents his earlier effort to make the change in Iran-U.S. relations. The message included a lot of soft diplomatic talks which hoped for better and different future in order to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue. In this letter, Obama recognized Iran’s right to hold peaceful nuclear energy consistent with Iran’s nuclear obligations. He then spoke about mutual respect between the two nations by saying: “We might open a new window and begin a new relationship between our countries...the fact that our country talks to Iran on a regular basis for the first time in decades, gives both of them opportunity, a window, to resolve other issues.” Most important was Obama’s assent to lift the economic embargo on Iran, indeed he expressed his optimism saying that Americans are eager to buy more of beautiful Persian carpets, caviar, pistachios and saffron (“Chance for a Different...”). From that point on, Iran started to cooperate with the United States and agreed on certain restrictions concerning its nuclear program in exchange of releasing its economy from further imposed sanctions.

By 2013 Obama’s administration officially began to realize what have been stated in the Nowruz message. In fact, sanctions against Iran were softened short period after the election of Iran’s new President Hassan Rouhani under what is known as the American Direct Policy. Rouhani’s election was a great opportunity for the United States, Britain, Russia, France, Germany and China to hold a meeting with Iran in Geneva and propose first term agreement entitled Joint Plan of Action. According to this deal, Iran’s nuclear program should be stopped

at least for six months to give space for reasonable negotiation based on four important elements. *The London Telegraph* News paper has published an article detailing the conditions of the Joint Plan of Action. The first key provision asserted that Iran should not extend twenty percent of enriching uranium to not reach the required level of producing nuclear weapons. While the second provision limited the number of centrifuges<sup>10</sup> being used to enrich uranium for power stations, at the same time it allowed Iran to enrich uranium to 3.5 percent just to run those power stations. The third proposed resolution insisted on the need to prevent Iran from activating the plutonium reactor in Arak city to avoid the production of nuclear weapons. The fourth and the last element called for Iranians to not use the IR-2 centrifuges, because it is considered as an advanced model that is able to enrich uranium faster than the traditional one. The article also urged the United States to relieve the economic sanctions imposed towards Iran during the last decade (18 Mar. 2014).

Obama's administration did not inform the "Israeli" about the new deal with Iran. This irritated "Israel" as it was reported by *The Daily Beast*. The American News Website wrote that the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu refused to appear in a joint media with the U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry. Both Netanyahu and Kerry exchanged some bitter talks (11 August 2013). David Hornik in his turn has reported an anonymous Israeli official expressing his opinion concerning the deal between the five proliferation states and Iran stating that: "the Americans capitulated to Iranian maneuvering ... Kerry wants a deal at all costs and the Iranians are leading the Americans by the nose (Hornik).

Meanwhile, when Netanyahu met the U.S. Secretary of State Kerry, he expressed his concern regarding the deal saying: "I urge Secretary Kerry not to rush to sign, to wait, to reconsider, to get a good deal. But this is a bad deal ... a very bad deal. It is the deal of a century for Iran, it is a very dangerous and bad deal for peace and the international community" ("Exclusive: Obama's Secret...").



Despite the “Israeli” opposition to the U.S – Iran diplomatic deals, the first term agreement known as Joint Plan of Action was officially implemented on 20 January 2014 (Dahl and Pawlak). The first agreement led to April 2015 framework agreement, and then to another final agreement on July 2015 entitled the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (“Iran Nuclear Deal: Negotiators ...”).

The *BBC* has reported that the White House affirming that the deal between Iran and P5+1 (U.S. U.K. France, China and Russia and Germany) known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action of 2015, prohibits Iran from any future attempts to acquire nuclear weapons. In turn, Iran promised to continue its nuclear program only for peaceful purpose under the monitoring of IAEA. In accordance to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the 20.000 centrifuges which Iran had in 2015 shall be reduced to 5.060 limited only to Natanz city for ten years. The agreement succeeded to reduce Iran’s nuclear centrifuges by 2016 and to limit the research development only to Natanz facility for the next coming eight years. In addition, Iran agreed to redesign the heavy-water reactor being used in Arak facility, because it was able to produce nuclear bomb despite the fact it was only used to generate nuclear power.

Also, the JCPOA does not allow Iran to have heavy-water reactor for 15 years.

Interestingly, the White House is satisfied with JCPOA efforts and believes in its ability to prevent Iran from being a nuclear bomb state. In turn, Iran promised to accept extraordinary and robust monitoring, verification, and inspection of the IAEA. In case Iran refused this monitoring it will be exposed to UN economic sanctions again. The White House asserted that the JCPOA will prevent Iran from all the necessities to build nuclear bomb, and the IAEA voted in December 2015 to stop its investigation into the sensible Iranian nuclear program sections ( *BBC* “Iran Nuclear Deal: Key...”).

Yukiya Amano, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency has concluded that:

Iran's nuclear program is purified from any attempt to develop nuclear weapons after 2009, and that since 2003 Iran has conducted a coordinate effort on different fields and activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device. But after this period and until 2009 the IAEA inspectors found no credible indications of nuclear weapon production ("IAEA Adopts Final...").

The outcomes of the JCPOA on Iran's economy were of great concern for "Israel" for it cancelled almost all the economic sanctions which were imposed towards the Islamic Republic of Iran ones. In this context Yaakov Lappin, from *The Jerusalem Post* has argued that the deal included the unfreezing of three billion of fuel funds, an easing of sanctions on the petrochemical and gold sectors, an easing of sanctions on replacement parts for planes and a loosening of restrictions on the Iranian car industry(11 September 2013). "Israel" was not the sole opponent to Obama's new policy towards Iran, many expressed skeptical feelings for the different deals with the Iranian government like Tony Badran who is a researcher at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. Badran asserted that Obama's administration became to serve as a legitimization of Iranian spheres of influence throughout the region, especially in Iraq and Syria. He then contradicted President Obama convictions about "the break with the old order" and strongly disagrees with him when he assumed that the United States was comfortable with the existing order and the existing alignments, and that the American allies should adapt to change in the new U.S. policy in the Middle East and to not be scared ("U.S. has 'folded' on Iran..."). From earlier argument, it can be argued that Obama's administration is seriously offering a new chance to Iran.

Objections to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in the Middle East and Gulf regions persisted and comprised overt attacks to Obama's decision. The best example comes from Netanyahu who repetitively objected the JCPOA and made it on the top list of his priorities. Like he opposed the first term agreement of Geneva 2013 describing it as "the

historic mistake”, Netanyahu continued to oppose the final agreement of July 2015 describing it as the deal that facilitate Iran’s path to a nuclear arsenal (R. DePetris). Netanyahu has said that “Israel” is ready to defend itself against Iran by any means, and that they are strong, great and mighty (“Don’t Let them ...”). Therefore, the Israeli government is convicted to conduct military actions against Iran in case America was unable to stop Iran’s nuclear ambitions.

Actually, what is most worrying for the Israeli is that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreement did not include any restrictions which oblige Iran to recognize “Israel’s” right to exist as a state in the Middle East region (“Transcript: President Obama’s...”). Moreover, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action obliges the United States to stand with Iran against any foreign attacks on Iran’s nuclear facilities. In fact the nuclear deal really included Iran’s safety under one of its conditions in the article 10, annex III. It is clearly stated that the P5+1 member which conducted the nuclear deal with Iran will cooperate with it to strength its nuclear security against any foreign threats or attacks on the nuclear facilities. Donald Trump, the American businessman, politician, and the candidate for the U.S. election 2016 has affirmed the previous condition saying: “there is something in the Iran deal that people don’t really understand or know about...if somebody attacks Iran, the U.S. has to come to their defense” (Fiske and Sherman).

The Gulf States views over the deal have varied between supporters and opponents. For instance the foreign Minister of Qatar agreed that the nuclear deal was the best solution to resolve Iran’s nuclear dispute, while Prince Bandar Bin Sultan of Saudi Arabia stated that the deal is a wreak havoc on the region because it not secure enough (Guzansky and Bermant). After all the lobbying which appeared against the agreement, Obama tried to defend Iran’s nuclear deal as diplomacy winning. He argued that the prevention of Iran’s nuclear deal would set the path for Iranians to build nuclear weapons in a short period of time. Adding that, the deal could be a better solution instead of military actions against Iran. Moreover, the

White House has convinced the Congress not to prevent the nuclear deal (Edwards and Chiacu).

In a speech delivered in the American University of Washington, D.C. President Obama defended his new policy in the Middle East saying that he is trying to avoid another war in the Persian Gulf region like the Iraq War of 2003. However, he also recognized the dangers of the Islamic Republic of Iran with nuclear weapons including arms race in the area, threat to “Israel” and coordination with “Hezbollah”. Yet, Obama insisted that the best way to resolve Iran’s nuclear issue is by diplomacy and peaceful means, because the absence of diplomatic resolution would bring war and insecurity in the Middle East. He then replied to the critics being said on the agreement by listing the positive aspects which the deal came with. Obama again tried to convince the Gulf allies and “Israel” that Iran does not and will not threaten their security since its defense budget is eight times smaller than the combined budget of the Gulf allies. He finished by reassuring the Israeli with an official confirmation that Iran’s conventional capabilities will never compare with “Israel’s” (“Remarks by the President...”).

### **3.2. “Israel’s” Safety Comes First**

Similar to the previous American presidents, president Obama also recognizes and protects “Israel” as a state. As he showed a long standing against any power which does not approve the legitimacy of the state of Israel including the Islamic Republic of Iran. For the United States, Iran is a threat on the American petroleum interest in the Gulf region generally, and the Zionist entity in the region of Middle East particularly.

According to the *Journal of Palestine Studies* which is published and distributed by the University of California Press on behalf of the Institute for Palestine Studies Obama is considered as a great guardian of “Israel’s” national security. He recognizes the existence of “Israel” as a Jewish state and defies any future opposition to that fact. Obama has asserted in all occasions that the primary goal of the United States in the Middle East is to protect the

Jewish state from any possible danger, as well as he affirmed that United States would never be separated from “Israel” in terms of providing security for them and be their ally forever. Even before elected as President, the senator Obama backed the Israel’s right to defend its territories from Hezbollah armed actions in 2006 Lebanon war. As he asserted that Israel should not ceasefire till Hezbollah stop their attacks. Moreover, in a letter sent to the European Union Obama has declared Hezbollah as a terrorist organization to gain more support for Israel (65).

Since Obama’s administration was trying to prevent any future Iranian plans that may hurt Israel’s national security, their first mission was to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons by predicting the Iranian next moves and put plans to cancel them. In fact Obama’s strong inclination towards protecting Israel was never covert, he overtly announces his determination to end positional threat including Iran at the first place at different occasions, in this context he said: “Make no mistake, if the Iranians and Syrians think they can use Iraq as another Afghanistan or a staging area from which to attack Israel or other countries, they are badly mistaken” (Paddock qtd. in “Obama, Creator of History” 205). Moreover, Obama asserted that the United States would always provide all required kinds of support in case Israel was exposed to attacks (Bearce223). Therefore, it was evident that from the beginning of his career as president, Barack Obama tried to prove that his administration is able to put an end for Iran’s nuclear dispute. Consequently, Obama came with a substantial change at the level of diplomacy in comparison to Bush administration. In other words, unlike George W. Bush administration that supported the traditional way of involvement with Iran only through International forums and meetings, Obama supported the direct talks which means direct meetings with Iranian leaders or exchanging letters with them.

On the efficiency or failure of Obama’s new strategy, Dr. K Katzman as a specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs has reported that some officials in Obama’s Administration agreed

that the strategy of “direct policy” would be productive as it could bring changes at the level of Iran’s future policies. While others emphasized on the importance of pressuring Iran to limit their nuclear program mainly through introducing to Iran some advantages of accepting limitations. Moreover, Obama’s new policy towards Iran may include some of the direct talks conducted by Obama such as his first message to the Islamic Republic of Iran on the occasion of Nowruz Day or the Persian New Year, then the two letters to Iran’s Supreme Leader, and the 2009 Cairo speech in which addressed the Muslim world (31).

Proofs about Obama’s policy failure to bring peace and resolve Iran’s nuclear issue are abundant and reasons to think that he is more aiming to bring assistance to Israel are getting more and more evident. Professor Nancy Snow from Oklahoma University believes that both Obama and Joe Biden, his Vice President have always been with the foreign aid to Israel both militarily and economically. Further, they tried to fund the helps to ensure that the assistance is achieved, as they have insisted on future US-“Israel” cooperation in the field of military industry (35).

In 2012, the American Congress passed the U.S.-“Israel” Enhanced Security Cooperation Act, which represents the official U.S. cooperation with “Israel” in the military field aiming at reinforcing “Israel’s” defense and protect the American interests in the Middle East. The fourth section of the Act includes a list of actions to be followed by Obama’s Administration in order to assist Israel’s defense. Among the listed actions, providing “Israel” with the appropriate assistance to develop its missiles technology and strengthen its defense against regional threat and to protect the American forces in the region. This section also stressed the need to fund the Israeli aircraft industry project known as “Iron Dom,” an air defense system working as anti-missiles system. Moreover, the United States stocks weapons and military equipment in its stockpiles in “Israel” to be used in case of emergency, and provide Israel with necessary defensive articles and services before withdrawing from Iraq. In addition to

that, the Act reinforced the Israeli role in NATO and offered military training to their Air Force inside the US airspace (Hass). To conclude, this official U.S.-Israel military cooperation is overtly an American strategy to protect the U.S. interests in the Middle East including “Israel,” but covertly it may be interpreted as an American plan to strengthen the defensive line against the Islamic Republic of Iran and reduce the influence of Hezbollah in the region.

As a reply to the American anti- Iran propaganda and heavy economic sanctions, Iran tries to build new relations and alliances so that it can face the fierce campaign that continuous to antagonize its nuclear program. Boon, Huq and Lovelace argue that the Iranian foreign interventions and support to some western countries appeared mainly through supplying oil for both China and Venezuela, and getting involved in business with small non-western banks with non-American currency. Obviously, Iran’s interventions and supplies were carried to protect itself from future sanctions, ensure the continuity of the Islamic regime, reassert its sovereignty and defend its nuclear ambition. But, the most important goal is to influence the countries of the Gulf region and the rest of the Islamic world. Experts argued that Iran’s interventions in regional affairs will continue to exist in the future with its support to Hezbollah (Boon et al. 55).

As Hezbollah’s influence grew up in the Middle East it became a challenge to American interests especially “Israel.” As a result, Obama’s administration has simultaneously found itself scrambling to curb this influence. Even before his election as President, Obama was concerned by Hezbollah’s influence in the Middle East region. This can be witnessed through his standpoint in the 2006 Hezbollah-“Israel” war. Obama called for the end of Iranian rearming of Hezbollah since it shaped a great threat against Israel. He then visited the Lebanese counterpart and tried to convince them to watch their territories from the coming arms shipments and funding provided by Iran to Hezbollah and urged Israel to withdraw from the Lebanese borders (“Obama Urges Lebanon...”).

As part of his plan to prevent the expansion of Hezbollah's influence in the Middle East and secure "Israel," Obama signed in 2015 the Hezbollah International Financing Prevention Act. Throughout this act he was able to pressure the banks and financial institutions which cooperate with Hezbollah to prevent them from future business with the organization that his administration has classified as a terrorist organization. It also placed *Al-Manar* Channel on the terrorist entity list in attempt to limit access to it. In addition, the act insisted on reporting all the Hezbollah operations inside and outside the Middle East to the congress from drug deals and crimes to other embroilments with international terrorist organizations in Asia and South America and put a list of countries which used to provide support to Hezbollah being an illegal political and militant organization (Stoil). Eventually, the International Financing Prevention Act helped Obama administration to gain additional tools to fight Hezbollah's influence in the region and protect "Israel" entity in Palestine.

For the White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest, the Act was a wise step from president Obama which may result in many benefits for his Administration. In this context he states:

If the Administration continue to work with Congress in a bipartisan way to ensure that we maximize the tools available to us to thwart Hezbollah's network at every turn, and we look forward to working together as we implement these new authorities....

The US government has made significant progress and will continue to further disrupt Hezbollah's terrorist capabilities by targeting the group's financial support infrastructure (Rampton, et al qtd. in "Obama signs into law...").

Obama's consistent assistance to "Israel" did not stop at his strategic and military help to the latter. Yet, in addition to the unjustified economic sanctions imposed on Iran and the different accusations directed to its nuclear program, his administration has constantly thought about possible military actions against Iran, all for the sake of "Israel's" security. For this purpose



the United States has set three conditions which should not be violated by Iran, and in case of violation the United States will get involved in military actions against it. Among the conditions, the safety of the American allies generally and particularly “Israel.” The second and third conditions revolve around the Iranian ambition to become a nuclear state, and its intention to sabotage the U.S. oil interest in the Gulf region (Katzman 33). Nevertheless, Obama authority to initiate military actions against Iran is related to the Congress decision. In other words, U.S. president cannot initiate military actions against Iran only if he gets the congressional authorization (Boon et al. 628).

The U.S. cooperation with “Israel” initiated by Obama in an attempt to ease regional rifts with Iran is followed by a strong partnership with the Gulf States aiming at countering Iran’s influence in the region. *The Washington Post* has reported that Obama promised to supply the six Gulf States of GCC with military supports to counter the Iranian growing influence in the Gulf region and urged the leaders of those countries to get involved in direct talks with Iran for further diplomatic negotiations 21 Apr. 2016. Obama’s cooperation with the Arab Muslim Sunni Gulf states may open a debate about his view on Islam as a religion and on Iran as an Islamic Republic.

### **3.3. Obama’s Stance on Islam and Muslims.**

In the course of his campaign and even after he became the 44<sup>th</sup> President of United States of America Barak Obama’s religion and his position toward other religions were the subject of debate in the media. During his January 2009 inauguration, Obama has chosen Ingrid Mattson, the President of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), to recite a prayer. However, the ISNA association is linked to Muslim Brotherhood organization, which is in turn the transnational Sunni Islamist Organization that is claimed to be linked to Hamas organization (Heneghan). This behavior may implicate that the new President does not hold

preconceived views about Islam and Muslims. Yet, it may also implicate other ideas and readings.

Obama's unbiased stance towards American Muslims may also be felt within his appointment of government officials in different positions. Effectively, many Muslim figures were attributed high level positions in the U.S. government. David Mikkelson, the founder of the famous web site Snopes, has reported that in April 2009 President Obama appointed Los Angeles Muslim Deputy Mayor Arif Ali Khan as Assistant Secretary for Policy Development at the Department of Homeland Security<sup>11</sup>, knowing that Arif Ali Khan used to call "Hezbollah" a liberation movement, and has participated in a whip round to help the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) which is linked to the Muslim Brotherhood<sup>12</sup> (Mikkelson). In the same year President Barack Obama has appointed a pro-Sharia advisor, Dalia Mogahed, to his Advisor Council on Faith-Based Neighborhood Partnerships. Mogahed's mission was to improve the image of Islam inside United States and fix the country's relation with Muslim states especially during the year of 2009 (Schulberg). Obama appointments of some American Muslims in high government positions were part of his strategy to build a harmonious multi-religious society based on mutual respect.

While many criticized Obama's appointment of government officials of Muslim faith, proclaiming that this may harm the U.S. national security many like Floyd Brown defended Obama's choice saying that:

The Obama team did investigate thoroughly and they choose precisely. When an administration repeatedly nominates hard-left individuals, it's not a vetting error instead it's a pattern. We should not allow the media to portray these appointments as a series of errors; but rather, we need to realize that team Obama is simply nominating those who share their goal of radically changing America ("Obama Surrounds Himself...").

Actually, Obama did not only focus on fixing the U.S. -Islam relation inside the United States, he rather worked on improving this relation outside the country with the whole Muslim world. As a step to achieve this, on 4 June 2009 he delivered a speech on U.S.-Muslim relations in Cairo. In the beginning of his speech, Obama started with the historical friendly relations between Egypt and the U.S.A. Then he talked about the tensions between Muslims and some western countries in general went on saying: "I've come here to Cairo to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslim around the world." Moreover, Obama listed some sources of tensions which are shared between Muslims and United States interests, and called for the need to treat them. Among the most important tensions that he introduced was the nuclear issue in the Islamic Republic of Iran, in which Obama said: "This is not simply about America's interests. It's about preventing a nuclear arms race in the Middle East that could lead this region and the world down to a hugely dangerous path." At the same time Obama emphasized on the right of any nation including Iran to have peaceful nuclear power if it complies with its responsibilities under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty ("Remarks by the President..."). This passage is crucial since it includes Obama's vision which is clearly different from his predecessors' concerning Iran's nuclear issue. Obama was trying to warn the Muslim countries from Iran's nuclear danger in order to reinforce the defensive line against the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Middle East, while at the same time he was using soft diplomacy to resolve Iran's nuclear issue peacefully through admitting the right of Iran to hold peaceful nuclear program that must be in agreement with nuclear Non-Proliferation conditions.

Another step towards softening U.S. relations with the Muslim world included Obama's approval of Islamic political parties' right to participate on their countries' decision making. In fact Obama did not object the idea of including the Muslim Brotherhood organization (Al Ikhwan Party) to be part of the Egyptian government, knowing that it is the greatest Egyptian

opposition organization which can win a great number of seats in the government. Therefore, it has a great chance to establish an Islamic State (Spencer). Perhaps Obama is really a tolerant man, free from prejudice towards foreign nations, by perhaps an Egyptian Islamic State is not a real threat in the Middle East because Egypt is far away from being a nuclear state.

It was mentioned earlier, the policy of President Obama is quite different from that of Bush in terms of dealing with the Islamic Republic of Iran and the polemic surrounding its nuclear program issue. Ben Cohen an English activist had tried to demonstrate the difference between the two presidents at the level of dealing with the Islamic regime in Iran. Cohen stated that unlike George W. Bush who sought for “regime change” in Iran and included Iran in the “axis of evil,” Obama has come with radical change in the American diplomacy towards Iran calling for trust and acceptance of the Iranian Islamic regime. Moreover, Cohen went back to Obama’s first letter sent to Iran on the occasion of the Persian New Year to reassert the President’s and his country’s willingness in allowing the Islamic Republic of Iran has its place in the community of nations. However, and according to Cohen Obama’s believe in peaceful actions towards Iran is tightly linked to the degree of cooperation of the latter. In that context Obama clearly stated that Iran has its share of responsibility if it wants to be part of the international community and that this place cannot be reached through terror or arms, but rather through peaceful actions that demonstrate the true greatness of the Iranian people and civilization (“Obama’s ‘Islamic Republic’ ...”). Thus, it is getting more and more evident that Obama thinks in a diplomatic way aiming at stabilizing the relations with the Iranian and encouraging them to behave in a responsible way.

In general, during his terms Obama has repeatedly stated that he has no problem with Islam, but with Islamist extremism. *The Washington Times* has covered the meeting of the world leaders at the United Nations on 29 Sept 2015. The meeting aimed at discussing how to

fight the expansion of terrorist group known as the “Islamic State in Iraq and Syria” and other extremist groups around the world. In this meeting Obama said: “Violent extremism is not unique to any one faith, so no one should ever be profiled or targeted simply because of their faith.” The British Prime Minister David Cameron agreed with Obama has replied by saying: “You are quite right, that every religion has its extremists, but we have to be frank that the biggest problem we have today is the Islamist extremist violence that has given birth to “ISIL,” “Al Shabaab,” “Al Nusra,” “Al Qaeda” and to so many other groups” (29 Sept 2015).

In addition to the above arguments about Obama’s good intention towards the Islam and Muslim around the world here are some famous quotes that reaffirm the latter idea and strengthen it. In fact, there are about twenty quotes said by President Obama on Islam, and the majority of them prove his sympathy towards Islam. Like when he said in the Cairo speech: “We will encourage more Americans to study in Muslim communities,” in the same speech Obama said: “Islam is not part of the problem in combating violent extremism, it is an important part of promoting peace ... Throughout history, Islam has demonstrated through words and deeds the possibilities of religious tolerance and racial equality.” Obama also had defended Islam against misconceptions present in the American society and outside it. In this context Obama has said: “Experience guides my conviction that partnership between America and Islam must be based on what Islam is, not on what it is not, and I consider it part of my responsibility as President of the United States to fight against negative stereotypes of Islam wherever they appear.” In the same context Obama has said:” America is not, and will never be at war with Islam” (“40 Shocking Quotes from...”).

The above quotes and earlier arguments may be coherent evidence about Obama’s good will to tolerate Islam and Muslim around the world. Yet, they should not be understood that he totally trusts Islamic regimes including the Islamic Republic of Iran, especially if the latter is capable of developing nuclear arms and supporting some organizations that America

consider as “terrorist groups.” Moreover, the fact Iranian leaders have always called for wiping “Israel” off the map and supporting anti-Semitism, widened the gap between the United States and Iran since America had never dropped its role of “Israel’s” protector. However, despite “Israeli” propaganda and lobbying on U.S. policy makers to put more sanctions on Iran, Obama’s administration had opted for reducing the sanctions gradually and engaging in direct talks with Iran.

To conclude, it is quite evident that Obama’s administration policy towards Iran has shifted from the previous administration but without neglecting the U.S. historical role as a protector of “Israel.” Actually, Obama has continued to guard “Israel” as one of his top priorities as the 44th American president. Among his strategies to protect “Israel” was to restrain Iran’s future nuclear plans that may jeopardize “Israel” national security and the U.S. interests. In addition, he reinforced the “Israeli”- American cooperation in the military field and Obama reasserted in many occasions that United States is ready to provide “Israel” with all required necessities in case of being attacked by Iran.

The military cooperation with “Israel” to stop the expansion of Iran and “Hezbollah” in the Gulf region was accompanied by a U.S. promise to the six Arab Muslim Sunni Gulf states including Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates of military support in case of Iranian attacks. Finally, military action against Iran was also set as a choice by Obama’s administration, yet it remained a weak option.

Obama’s presidency was a great deviation in the U.S. – “Israel” relations. The United States has shifted from a wild supporter and defender of “Israel” at all costs into a wiser and fairer country that recognized Iran’s right to develop nuclear energy as far as it is used for peaceful purposes and respects the list of conditions included in the JCPOA.

## Conclusion

Throughout a well elaborated historical review it became evident that the historical relations between Iran and the United States were initiated by the American interventions within Iran against the German Nazi in 1941. However, the deterioration of the diplomacies between the two countries is rather attributed to many reasons including the journey of PhD. Arthur Millspaugh who called the Iranians unskilled and incapable of self-governance, the U.S. back up in 1953 Coup to overthrow the Prime Minister Mosaddeq in favor of the monarchy system of Shah, the Iranian Islamic revolution in 1979, the Hostage crises, and finally the Iranian support given to some organization which listed as terrorist groups including Hezbollah. These events diminished the trust between the two countries and widened the gap between their leaders and peoples, leading into a complete cut of relations and thus the end of Iran-U.S. relations

Iran's nuclear program was initiated for the first time in 1953 with the help of United States under President Eisenhower who launched the U.S. Atoms for Peace. But the Iranian intention to develop their nuclear program in the post-revolution era transformed to be military more especially during the war with Iraq in 1984. Furthermore, the IAEA reports which revealed undeclared activities being hold by Iranians made Iran's nuclear program a serious problematic issue in 2003. At the same time the United States has begun to launch a series of plans to thwart the Iranian nuclear program starting first with Obama's diplomatic proposal of the Fuel Swap between Iran, Turk and Brazil that was canceled. Then the laptop incident and the "alleged studies" which the United States has used to convince the IAEA to put more pressure on the Iranian nuclear facilities and further UN sanctions.

Despite the persistent American attempts to stop the Iranian nuclear program no concrete evidence was practically identified to prove Iran's violation to the Non-Proliferation treaty, especially that Iran showed a great cooperation with the IAEA under the modalities

agreement. As rescue plan President Obama shifted to another method and engaged in to direct talks with the Iranian leaders in the prospect to limit their nuclear ambitions.

Obama's administration policy towards Iran has changed from his predecessors in terms of directly dealing with the Iranian through media messages and speeches, yet this did not affect the historical role of America as a strong ally to "Israel". Among Obama's strategies to protect Israel is to permanently check the Iranian nuclear program. The role of protector of "Israel" is officially subscribed in the article of the U.S.-Israel Enhance Security Cooperation act of 2012. Furthermore, Obama's administration had always asked Iran to stop supporting Hezbollah which it considers as a threat to "Israel." Finally, Obama had promised the six Arab Muslim Sunni Gulf states including Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates to provide them with military support in case of an Iranian attack. The last American option to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons remains military actions against Iran.

Obama's cooperation with those Arab Muslim Sunni States raised a debate over his position towards Islam and the Islamic regime in Iran. In fact a considerable amount of documents including his official declarations and speech indicate that he is quite far from being an ethnocentric narrow-minded person who hates Islam and Muslims. Nevertheless, this reality does not cancel the American fear from Islamic states holding nuclear weapons. Finally it is found that Obama administration deviated from a great defender of "Israel" to a completely peace maker since it recognized the Iranians right to enrich Uranium and develop their nuclear program under a set of restrictions set out in the JCPOA. This agreement promised to protect Iran from any foreign attack that may damage their nuclear facilities including "Israel" threat.

To conclude the American determination to apply nuclear disarmament on Iran during Obama's first term was performed mainly for the sake of "Israel" security, but things changed



during his second term when the American purpose to limit the Iranian nuclear program under the JCPOA may mark a new step towards world peace. As it can be read as an American attempt to limit the Iranian influence in the Middle East and Gulf region, protect its interest and expand its hegemony in this region.

From the Iranian side the determination to acquire nuclear energy is fertilised by the idea of expanding its hegemony in the Gulf and Middle East regions in order to be able to control oil prices. Finally, the Iranian cooperation with the IAEA and its acceptance of the JCPOA agreement appeased the situation with the United States but did not solve the Iranian nuclear problematic.

The topic debated in this dissertation is significant since it can be used as a historical platform for further researches about U.S. –Iran relations. It gives the researchers willing to investigate about the nature of American and Iranian relations a general overview about the past and present events that bound and divided the two countries.

## Endnotes

- 1- The treaty was signed on February 21, 1828, by Mirza Abol-Hasan Khan and AsefUI- Dowleh, chancellor of faith Ali Shah from Iran's side, and General Ivan Paskievich representing Russia. According to this treaty Iran lost many of its northern territories to Russia after its defeat in 1828, bringing an end to the second Russo-Persian wars (1827-1828)
- 2- It is also known as the Tudeh Party of Iran. It was formed in 1941, with Soleiman Mohsen Eskandari as its head. The party influenced lot of Iranians during the first years of its formulation, as it played a great role in supporting Mohammad Mosaddeq's campaign to become the Iranian Prime Minister and to nationalize the Persian Oil company. But after the 1953 coup to withdraw Mosaddeq, the party has become weak.
- 3- A series of reforms in Iran launched in 1963 by Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. The White Revolution aimed at weakening those classes that supported the traditional system, and excluded religion from government. The White Revolution lasted about fifteen years until 1978.
- 4- It is translated as "the party of God "and it is the Shia Islamist militant group and political party in Lebanon. Hezbollah consist of two wings; the Political Wing is loyal to the Resistance Bloc party in the Lebanese parliament, and the Paramilitary Wing is the Jihad Council.
- 5- His full name is Usama Bin Muhammed Bin Awad Bin Laden from Saudi Arabian decent; he is the founder of "al Qaeda" organization that claimed responsibility for the attacks of 9/11 and many other operations and terrorist attacks.
- 6- It is an Islamic fundamentalist political movement in Afghanistan that ruled the country by force from 1996 to 2001 and imposed strict form of Islamic Sharia law which was criticized and rejected by the international community and Muslims around the world.

- 7- A public grant making foundation that supports initiatives to prevent the spread or the use of all kinds of mass destruction weapons including nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Also it aims at preventing conflicts that could set the path to use those weapons.
- 8- It aims at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and even weapons technology in order to achieve cooperation only in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and realize what is known as nuclear disarmament.
- 9- An inclusive and pluralistic parliament in exile that has more than five hundred member, including representatives of different ethnic and religious minorities such as the Americans, Kurds, Baluchis, Zoroastrians and Jews representing a broad spectrum of political tendencies in Iran.
- 10- A machine used to separate and enrich uranium. The centrifuge creates a force of thousands of times more powerful than the force of gravity to move out a type of uranium toward the walls of the centrifuge and keep the second type used to produce nuclear bombs.
- 11- The American national efforts to ensure a homeland that is safe and secure from terrorism.
- 12- A transnational Sunni Islamist organization founded in Egypt by Islamic scholar Hassan al-Banna in 1928. It aims at putting Quran and Sunnah as sole reference point to organize different sides of life and even has the ambition to rule by Sharia.

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## Appendix

### “A New Beginning,” Obama’s Speech at the Cairo University in Egypt on 6 June

**2009.**

#### **A New Beginning**

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Thank you very much. Good afternoon. I am honored to be in the timeless city of Cairo, and to be hosted by two remarkable institutions. For over a thousand years, Al-Azhar has stood as a beacon of Islamic learning; and for over a century, Cairo University has been a source of Egypt's advancement. And together, you represent the harmony between tradition and progress. I'm grateful for your hospitality, and the hospitality of the people of Egypt. And I'm also proud to carry with me the goodwill of the American people, and a greeting of peace from Muslim communities in my country: Assalaamualaykum. (Applause.)

We meet at a time of great tension between the United States and Muslims around the world - - tension rooted in historical forces that go beyond any current policy debate. The relationship between Islam and the West includes centuries of coexistence and cooperation, but also conflict and religious wars. More recently, tension has been fed by colonialism that denied rights and opportunities to many Muslims, and a Cold War in which Muslim-majority countries were too often treated as proxies without regard to their own aspirations. Moreover, the sweeping change brought by modernity and globalization led many Muslims to view the West as hostile to the traditions of Islam.

Violent extremists have exploited these tensions in a small but potent minority of Muslims. The attacks of September 11, 2001 and the continued efforts of these extremists to engage in violence against civilians has led some in my country to view Islam as inevitably hostile not only to America and Western countries, but also to human rights. All this has bred more fear and more mistrust.

So long as our relationship is defined by our differences, we will empower those who sow hatred rather than peace, those who promote conflict rather than the cooperation that can help all of our people achieve justice and prosperity. And this cycle of suspicion and discord must end.

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

I do so recognizing that change cannot happen overnight. I know there's been a lot of publicity about this speech, but no single speech can eradicate years of mistrust, nor can I answer in the time that I have this afternoon all the complex questions that brought us to this point. But I am convinced that in order to move forward, we must say openly to each other the things we hold in our hearts and that too often are said only behind closed doors. There

must be a sustained effort to listen to each other; to learn from each other; to respect one another; and to seek common ground. As the Holy Koran tells us, "Be conscious of God and speak always the truth." (Applause.) That is what I will try to do today -- to speak the truth as best I can, humbled by the task before us, and firm in my belief that the interests we share as human beings are far more powerful than the forces that drive us apart.

Now part of this conviction is rooted in my own experience. I'm a Christian, but my father came from a Kenyan family that includes generations of Muslims. As a boy, I spent several years in Indonesia and heard the call of the azaan at the break of dawn and at the fall of dusk. As a young man, I worked in Chicago communities where many found dignity and peace in their Muslim faith.

As a student of history, I also know civilization's debt to Islam. It was Islam -- at places like Al-Azhar -- that carried the light of learning through so many centuries, paving the way for Europe's Renaissance and Enlightenment. It was innovation in Muslim communities -- (applause) -- it was innovation in Muslim communities that developed the order of algebra; our magnetic compass and tools of navigation; our mastery of pens and printing; our understanding of how disease spreads and how it can be healed. Islamic culture has given us majestic arches and soaring spires; timeless poetry and cherished music; elegant calligraphy and places of peaceful contemplation. And throughout history, Islam has demonstrated through words and deeds the possibilities of religious tolerance and racial equality. (Applause.)

I also know that Islam has always been a part of America's story. The first nation to recognize my country was Morocco. In signing the Treaty of Tripoli in 1796, our second President, John Adams, wrote, "The United States has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion or tranquility of Muslims." And since our founding, American Muslims have enriched the United States. They have fought in our wars, they have served in our government, they have stood for civil rights, they have started businesses, they have taught at our universities, they've excelled in our sports arenas, they've won Nobel Prizes, built our tallest building, and lit the Olympic Torch. And when the first Muslim American was recently elected to Congress, he took the oath to defend our Constitution using the same Holy Koran that one of our Founding Fathers -- Thomas Jefferson -- kept in his personal library. (Applause.)

So I have known Islam on three continents before coming to the region where it was first revealed. That experience guides my conviction that partnership between America and Islam must be based on what Islam is, not what it isn't. And I consider it part of my responsibility as President of the United States to fight against negative stereotypes of Islam wherever they appear. (Applause.)

But that same principle must apply to Muslim perceptions of America. (Applause.) Just as Muslims do not fit a crude stereotype, America is not the crude stereotype of a self-interested empire. The United States has been one of the greatest sources of progress that the world has ever known. We were born out of revolution against an empire. We were founded upon the ideal that all are created equal, and we have shed blood and struggled for centuries to give meaning to those words -- within our borders, and around the world. We are shaped by every culture, drawn from every end of the Earth, and dedicated to a simple concept: E pluribus unum -- "Out of many, one."

Now, much has been made of the fact that an African American with the name Barack Hussein Obama could be elected President. (Applause.) But my personal story is not so unique. The dream of opportunity for all people has not come true for everyone in America, but its promise exists for all who come to our shores -- and that includes nearly 7 million American Muslims in our country today who, by the way, enjoy incomes and educational levels that are higher than the American average. (Applause.)

Moreover, freedom in America is indivisible from the freedom to practice one's religion. That is why there is a mosque in every state in our union, and over 1,200 mosques within our borders. That's why the United States government has gone to court to protect the right of women and girls to wear the hijab and to punish those who would deny it. (Applause.) So let there be no doubt: Islam is a part of America. And I believe that America holds within her the truth that regardless of race, religion, or station in life, all of us share common aspirations -- to live in peace and security; to get an education and to work with dignity; to love our families, our communities, and our God. These things we share. This is the hope of all humanity.

Of course, recognizing our common humanity is only the beginning of our task. Words alone cannot meet the needs of our people. These needs will be met only if we act boldly in the years ahead; and if we understand that the challenges we face are shared, and our failure to meet them will hurt us all.

For we have learned from recent experience that when a financial system weakens in one country, prosperity is hurt everywhere. When a new flu infects one human being, all are at risk. When one nation pursues a nuclear weapon, the risk of nuclear attack rises for all nations. When violent extremists operate in one stretch of mountains, people are endangered across an ocean. When innocents in Bosnia and Darfur are slaughtered, that is a stain on our collective conscience. (Applause.) That is what it means to share this world in the 21st century. That is the responsibility we have to one another as human beings.

And this is a difficult responsibility to embrace. For human history has often been a record of nations and tribes -- and, yes, religions -- subjugating one another in pursuit of their own interests. Yet in this new age, such attitudes are self-defeating. Given our interdependence, any world order that elevates one nation or group of people over another will inevitably fail. So whatever we think of the past, we must not be prisoners to it. Our problems must be dealt with through partnership; our progress must be shared. (Applause.)

Now, that does not mean we should ignore sources of tension. Indeed, it suggests the opposite: We must face these tensions squarely. And so in that spirit, let me speak as clearly and as plainly as I can about some specific issues that I believe we must finally confront together.

The first issue that we have to confront is violent extremism in all of its forms.

In Ankara, I made clear that America is not -- and never will be -- at war with Islam. (Applause.) We will, however, relentlessly confront violent extremists who pose a grave threat to our security -- because we reject the same thing that people of all faiths reject: the killing of innocent men, women, and children. And it is my first duty as President to protect the American people.

The situation in Afghanistan demonstrates America's goals, and our need to work together. Over seven years ago, the United States pursued al Qaeda and the Taliban with broad international support. We did not go by choice; we went because of necessity. I'm aware that there's still some who would question or even justify the events of 9/11. But let us be clear: Al Qaeda killed nearly 3,000 people on that day. The victims were innocent men, women and children from America and many other nations who had done nothing to harm anybody. And yet al Qaeda chose to ruthlessly murder these people, claimed credit for the attack, and even now states their determination to kill on a massive scale. They have affiliates in many countries and are trying to expand their reach. These are not opinions to be debated; these are facts to be dealt with.

Now, make no mistake: We do not want to keep our troops in Afghanistan. We see no military -- we seek no military bases there. It is agonizing for America to lose our young men and women. It is costly and politically difficult to continue this conflict. We would gladly bring every single one of our troops home if we could be confident that there were not violent

extremists in Afghanistan and now Pakistan determined to kill as many Americans as they possibly can. But that is not yet the case.

And that's why we're partnering with a coalition of 46 countries. And despite the costs involved, America's commitment will not weaken. Indeed, none of us should tolerate these extremists. They have killed in many countries. They have killed people of different faiths -- but more than any other, they have killed Muslims. Their actions are irreconcilable with the rights of human beings, the progress of nations, and with Islam. The Holy Koran teaches that whoever kills an innocent is as -- it is as if he has killed all mankind. (Applause.) And the Holy Koran also says whoever saves a person, it is as if he has saved all mankind. (Applause.) The enduring faith of over a billion people is so much bigger than the narrow hatred of a few. Islam is not part of the problem in combating violent extremism -- it is an important part of promoting peace.

Now, we also know that military power alone is not going to solve the problems in Afghanistan and Pakistan. That's why we plan to invest \$1.5 billion each year over the next five years to partner with Pakistanis to build schools and hospitals, roads and businesses, and hundreds of millions to help those who've been displaced. That's why we are providing more than \$2.8 billion to help Afghans develop their economy and deliver services that people depend on.

Let me also address the issue of Iraq. Unlike Afghanistan, Iraq was a war of choice that provoked strong differences in my country and around the world. Although I believe that the Iraqi people are ultimately better off without the tyranny of Saddam Hussein, I also believe that events in Iraq have reminded America of the need to use diplomacy and build international consensus to resolve our problems whenever possible. (Applause.) Indeed, we can recall the words of Thomas Jefferson, who said: "I hope that our wisdom will grow with our power, and teach us that the less we use our power the greater it will be."

Today, America has a dual responsibility: to help Iraq forge a better future -- and to leave Iraq to Iraqis. And I have made it clear to the Iraqi people -- (applause) -- I have made it clear to the Iraqi people that we pursue no bases, and no claim on their territory or resources. Iraq's sovereignty is its own. And that's why I ordered the removal of our combat brigades by next August. That is why we will honor our agreement with Iraq's democratically elected government to remove combat troops from Iraqi cities by July, and to remove all of our troops from Iraq by 2012. (Applause.) We will help Iraq train its security forces and develop its economy. But we will support a secure and united Iraq as a partner, and never as a patron. And finally, just as America can never tolerate violence by extremists, we must never alter or forget our principles. Nine-eleven was an enormous trauma to our country. The fear and anger that it provoked was understandable, but in some cases, it led us to act contrary to our traditions and our ideals. We are taking concrete actions to change course. I have unequivocally prohibited the use of torture by the United States, and I have ordered the prison at Guantanamo Bay closed by early next year. (Applause.)

So America will defend itself, respectful of the sovereignty of nations and the rule of law. And we will do so in partnership with Muslim communities which are also threatened. The sooner the extremists are isolated and unwelcome in Muslim communities, the sooner we will all be safer.

The second major source of tension that we need to discuss is the situation between Israelis, Palestinians and the Arab world.

America's strong bonds with Israel are well known. This bond is unbreakable. It is based upon cultural and historical ties, and the recognition that the aspiration for a Jewish homeland is rooted in a tragic history that cannot be denied.

Around the world, the Jewish people were persecuted for centuries, and anti-Semitism in Europe culminated in an unprecedented Holocaust. Tomorrow, I will visit Buchenwald,

which was part of a network of camps where Jews were enslaved, tortured, shot and gassed to death by the Third Reich. Six million Jews were killed -- more than the entire Jewish population of Israel today. Denying that fact is baseless, it is ignorant, and it is hateful. Threatening Israel with destruction -- or repeating vile stereotypes about Jews -- is deeply wrong, and only serves to evoke in the minds of Israelis this most painful of memories while preventing the peace that the people of this region deserve.

On the other hand, it is also undeniable that the Palestinian people -- Muslims and Christians -- have suffered in pursuit of a homeland. For more than 60 years they've endured the pain of dislocation. Many wait in refugee camps in the West Bank, Gaza, and neighboring lands for a life of peace and security that they have never been able to lead. They endure the daily humiliations -- large and small -- that come with occupation. So let there be no doubt: The situation for the Palestinian people is intolerable. And America will not turn our backs on the legitimate Palestinian aspiration for dignity, opportunity, and a state of their own. (Applause.) For decades then, there has been a stalemate: two peoples with legitimate aspirations, each with a painful history that makes compromise elusive. It's easy to point fingers -- for Palestinians to point to the displacement brought about by Israel's founding, and for Israelis to point to the constant hostility and attacks throughout its history from within its borders as well as beyond. But if we see this conflict only from one side or the other, then we will be blind to the truth: The only resolution is for the aspirations of both sides to be met through two states, where Israelis and Palestinians each live in peace and security. (Applause.)

That is in Israel's interest, Palestine's interest, America's interest, and the world's interest. And that is why I intend to personally pursue this outcome with all the patience and dedication that the task requires. (Applause.) The obligations -- the obligations that the parties have agreed to under the road map are clear. For peace to come, it is time for them -- and all of us -- to live up to our responsibilities.

Palestinians must abandon violence. Resistance through violence and killing is wrong and it does not succeed. For centuries, black people in America suffered the lash of the whip as slaves and the humiliation of segregation. But it was not violence that won full and equal rights. It was a peaceful and determined insistence upon the ideals at the center of America's founding. This same story can be told by people from South Africa to South Asia; from Eastern Europe to Indonesia. It's a story with a simple truth: that violence is a dead end. It is a sign neither of courage nor power to shoot rockets at sleeping children, or to blow up old women on a bus. That's not how moral authority is claimed; that's how it is surrendered. Now is the time for Palestinians to focus on what they can build. The Palestinian Authority must develop its capacity to govern, with institutions that serve the needs of its people. Hamas does have support among some Palestinians, but they also have to recognize they have responsibilities. To play a role in fulfilling Palestinian aspirations, to unify the Palestinian people, Hamas must put an end to violence, recognize past agreements, recognize Israel's right to exist.

At the same time, Israelis must acknowledge that just as Israel's right to exist cannot be denied, neither can Palestine's. The United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements. (Applause.) This construction violates previous agreements and undermines efforts to achieve peace. It is time for these settlements to stop. (Applause.)

And Israel must also live up to its obligation to ensure that Palestinians can live and work and develop their society. Just as it devastates Palestinian families, the continuing humanitarian crisis in Gaza does not serve Israel's security; neither does the continuing lack of opportunity in the West Bank. Progress in the daily lives of the Palestinian people must be a critical part of a road to peace, and Israel must take concrete steps to enable such progress.

And finally, the Arab states must recognize that the Arab Peace Initiative was an important beginning, but not the end of their responsibilities. The Arab-Israeli conflict should no longer

be used to distract the people of Arab nations from other problems. Instead, it must be a cause for action to help the Palestinian people develop the institutions that will sustain their state, to recognize Israel's legitimacy, and to choose progress over a self-defeating focus on the past.

America will align our policies with those who pursue peace, and we will say in public what we say in private to Israelis and Palestinians and Arabs. (Applause.) We cannot impose peace. But privately, many Muslims recognize that Israel will not go away. Likewise, many Israelis recognize the need for a Palestinian state. It is time for us to act on what everyone knows to be true.

Too many tears have been shed. Too much blood has been shed. All of us have a responsibility to work for the day when the mothers of Israelis and Palestinians can see their children grow up without fear; when the Holy Land of the three great faiths is the place of peace that God intended it to be; when Jerusalem is a secure and lasting home for Jews and Christians and Muslims, and a place for all of the children of Abraham to mingle peacefully together as in the story of Isra -- (applause) -- as in the story of Isra, when Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed, peace be upon them, joined in prayer. (Applause.)

The third source of tension is our shared interest in the rights and responsibilities of nations on nuclear weapons.

This issue has been a source of tension between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran. For many years, Iran has defined itself in part by its opposition to my country, and there is in fact a tumultuous history between us. In the middle of the Cold War, the United States played a role in the overthrow of a democratically elected Iranian government. Since the Islamic Revolution, Iran has played a role in acts of hostage-taking and violence against U.S. troops and civilians. This history is well known. Rather than remain trapped in the past, I've made it clear to Iran's leaders and people that my country is prepared to move forward. The question now is not what Iran is against, but rather what future it wants to build.

I recognize it will be hard to overcome decades of mistrust, but we will proceed with courage, rectitude, and resolve. There will be many issues to discuss between our two countries, and we are willing to move forward without preconditions on the basis of mutual respect. But it is clear to all concerned that when it comes to nuclear weapons, we have reached a decisive point. This is not simply about America's interests. It's about preventing a nuclear arms race in the Middle East that could lead this region and the world down a hugely dangerous path.

I understand those who protest that some countries have weapons that others do not. No single nation should pick and choose which nation holds nuclear weapons. And that's why I strongly reaffirmed America's commitment to seek a world in which no nations hold nuclear weapons. (Applause.) And any nation -- including Iran -- should have the right to access peaceful nuclear power if it complies with its responsibilities under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. That commitment is at the core of the treaty, and it must be kept for all who fully abide by it. And I'm hopeful that all countries in the region can share in this goal.

The fourth issue that I will address is democracy. (Applause.)

I know -- I know there has been controversy about the promotion of democracy in recent years, and much of this controversy is connected to the war in Iraq. So let me be clear: No system of government can or should be imposed by one nation on any other.

That does not lessen my commitment, however, to governments that reflect the will of the people. Each nation gives life to this principle in its own way, grounded in the traditions of its own people. America does not presume to know what is best for everyone, just as we would not presume to pick the outcome of a peaceful election. But I do have an unyielding belief that all people yearn for certain things: the ability to speak your mind and have a say in how you are governed; confidence in the rule of law and the equal administration of justice;

government that is transparent and doesn't steal from the people; the freedom to live as you choose. These are not just American ideas; they are human rights. And that is why we will support them everywhere. (Applause.)

Now, there is no straight line to realize this promise. But this much is clear: Governments that protect these rights are ultimately more stable, successful and secure. Suppressing ideas never succeeds in making them go away. America respects the right of all peaceful and law-abiding voices to be heard around the world, even if we disagree with them. And we will welcome all elected, peaceful governments -- provided they govern with respect for all their people.

This last point is important because there are some who advocate for democracy only when they're out of power; once in power, they are ruthless in suppressing the rights of others. (Applause.) So no matter where it takes hold, government of the people and by the people sets a single standard for all who would hold power: You must maintain your power through consent, not coercion; you must respect the rights of minorities, and participate with a spirit of tolerance and compromise; you must place the interests of your people and the legitimate workings of the political process above your party. Without these ingredients, elections alone do not make true democracy.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Barack Obama, we love you!

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Thank you. (Applause.) The fifth issue that we must address together is religious freedom.

Islam has a proud tradition of tolerance. We see it in the history of Andalusia and Cordoba during the Inquisition. I saw it firsthand as a child in Indonesia, where devout Christians worshiped freely in an overwhelmingly Muslim country. That is the spirit we need today. People in every country should be free to choose and live their faith based upon the persuasion of the mind and the heart and the soul. This tolerance is essential for religion to thrive, but it's being challenged in many different ways.

Among some Muslims, there's a disturbing tendency to measure one's own faith by the rejection of somebody else's faith. The richness of religious diversity must be upheld -- whether it is for Maronites in Lebanon or the Copts in Egypt. (Applause.) And if we are being honest, fault lines must be closed among Muslims, as well, as the divisions between Sunni and Shia have led to tragic violence, particularly in Iraq.

Freedom of religion is central to the ability of peoples to live together. We must always examine the ways in which we protect it. For instance, in the United States, rules on charitable giving have made it harder for Muslims to fulfill their religious obligation. That's why I'm committed to working with American Muslims to ensure that they can fulfill zakat. Likewise, it is important for Western countries to avoid impeding Muslim citizens from practicing religion as they see fit -- for instance, by dictating what clothes a Muslim woman should wear. We can't disguise hostility towards any religion behind the pretence of liberalism.

In fact, faith should bring us together. And that's why we're forging service projects in America to bring together Christians, Muslims, and Jews. That's why we welcome efforts like Saudi Arabian King Abdullah's interfaith dialogue and Turkey's leadership in the Alliance of Civilizations. Around the world, we can turn dialogue into interfaith service, so bridges between peoples lead to action -- whether it is combating malaria in Africa, or providing relief after a natural disaster.

The sixth issue -- the sixth issue that I want to address is women's rights. (Applause.) I know -- I know -- and you can tell from this audience, that there is a healthy debate about this issue. I reject the view of some in the West that a woman who chooses to cover her hair is somehow less equal, but I do believe that a woman who is denied an education is denied

equality. (Applause.) And it is no coincidence that countries where women are well educated are far more likely to be prosperous.

Now, let me be clear: Issues of women's equality are by no means simply an issue for Islam. In Turkey, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, we've seen Muslim-majority countries elect a woman to lead. Meanwhile, the struggle for women's equality continues in many aspects of American life, and in countries around the world.

I am convinced that our daughters can contribute just as much to society as our sons. (Applause.) Our common prosperity will be advanced by allowing all humanity -- men and women -- to reach their full potential. I do not believe that women must make the same choices as men in order to be equal, and I respect those women who choose to live their lives in traditional roles. But it should be their choice. And that is why the United States will partner with any Muslim-majority country to support expanded literacy for girls, and to help young women pursue employment through micro-financing that helps people live their dreams. (Applause.)

Finally, I want to discuss economic development and opportunity.

I know that for many, the face of globalization is contradictory. The Internet and television can bring knowledge and information, but also offensive sexuality and mindless violence into the home. Trade can bring new wealth and opportunities, but also huge disruptions and change in communities. In all nations -- including America -- this change can bring fear. Fear that because of modernity we lose control over our economic choices, our politics, and most importantly our identities -- those things we most cherish about our communities, our families, our traditions, and our faith.

But I also know that human progress cannot be denied. There need not be contradictions between development and tradition. Countries like Japan and South Korea grew their economies enormously while maintaining distinct cultures. The same is true for the astonishing progress within Muslim-majority countries from Kuala Lumpur to Dubai. In ancient times and in our times, Muslim communities have been at the forefront of innovation and education.

And this is important because no development strategy can be based only upon what comes out of the ground, nor can it be sustained while young people are out of work. Many Gulf states have enjoyed great wealth as a consequence of oil, and some are beginning to focus it on broader development. But all of us must recognize that education and innovation will be the currency of the 21st century -- (applause) -- and in too many Muslim communities, there remains underinvestment in these areas. I'm emphasizing such investment within my own country. And while America in the past has focused on oil and gas when it comes to this part of the world, we now seek a broader engagement.

On education, we will expand exchange programs, and increase scholarships, like the one that brought my father to America. (Applause.) At the same time, we will encourage more Americans to study in Muslim communities. And we will match promising Muslim students with internships in America; invest in online learning for teachers and children around the world; and create a new online network, so a young person in Kansas can communicate instantly with a young person in Cairo.

On economic development, we will create a new corps of business volunteers to partner with counterparts in Muslim-majority countries. And I will host a Summit on Entrepreneurship this year to identify how we can deepen ties between business leaders, foundations and social entrepreneurs in the United States and Muslim communities around the world.

On science and technology, we will launch a new fund to support technological development in Muslim-majority countries, and to help transfer ideas to the marketplace so they can create more jobs. We'll open centers of scientific excellence in Africa, the Middle East and



Southeast Asia, and appoint new science envoys to collaborate on programs that develop new sources of energy, create green jobs, digitize records, clean water, grow new crops. Today I'm announcing a new global effort with the Organization of the Islamic Conference to eradicate polio. And we will also expand partnerships with Muslim communities to promote child and maternal health.

All these things must be done in partnership. Americans are ready to join with citizens and governments; community organizations, religious leaders, and businesses in Muslim communities around the world to help our people pursue a better life.

The issues that I have described will not be easy to address. But we have a responsibility to join together on behalf of the world that we seek -- a world where extremists no longer threaten our people, and American troops have come home; a world where Israelis and Palestinians are each secure in a state of their own, and nuclear energy is used for peaceful purposes; a world where governments serve their citizens, and the rights of all God's children are respected. Those are mutual interests. That is the world we seek. But we can only achieve it together.

I know there are many -- Muslim and non-Muslim -- who question whether we can forge this new beginning. Some are eager to stoke the flames of division, and to stand in the way of progress. Some suggest that it isn't worth the effort -- that we are fated to disagree, and civilizations are doomed to clash. Many more are simply skeptical that real change can occur. There's so much fear, so much mistrust that has built up over the years. But if we choose to be bound by the past, we will never move forward. And I want to particularly say this to young people of every faith, in every country -- you, more than anyone, have the ability to reimagine the world, to remake this world.

All of us share this world for but a brief moment in time. The question is whether we spend that time focused on what pushes us apart, or whether we commit ourselves to an effort -- a sustained effort -- to find common ground, to focus on the future we seek for our children, and to respect the dignity of all human beings.

It's easier to start wars than to end them. It's easier to blame others than to look inward. It's easier to see what is different about someone than to find the things we share. But we should choose the right path, not just the easy path. There's one rule that lies at the heart of every religion -- that we do unto others as we would have them do unto us. (Applause.) This truth transcends nations and peoples -- a belief that isn't new; that isn't black or white or brown; that isn't Christian or Muslim or Jew. It's a belief that pulsed in the cradle of civilization, and that still beats in the hearts of billions around the world. It's a faith in other people, and it's what brought me here today.

We have the power to make the world we seek, but only if we have the courage to make a new beginning, keeping in mind what has been written.

The Holy Koran tells us: "O mankind! We have created you male and a female; and we have made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another."

The Talmud tells us: "The whole of the Torah is for the purpose of promoting peace."

The Holy Bible tells us: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." (Applause.)

The people of the world can live together in peace. We know that is God's vision. Now that must be our work here on Earth.

Thank you. And may God's peace be upon you. Thank you very much. Thank you. (Applause.)

Source: "Remarks by the president at Cairo university, 6-04-09." White House 26 May 2010. Web.

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