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UNIVERSITY OF MOHAMED BOUDIAF - M'SILA

FACULTY OF LETTERS AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

N° :.....



DOMAIN: FOREIGN LANGUAGES

STREAM: ENGLISH LANGUAGE

OPTION: LITERATURE & CIVILIZATION

**The American Foreign Policy towards Iran during Obama's
Presidency (2009-2017)**

Thesis Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master in Literature and Civilization

Submitted by:

FATMI Sabrina & BELARBI Zahira

Supervised by:

Miss. HAMOUMA Chahrazad

Academic Year

2016/2017

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Academic Year 2016 /2017

Declaration

We hereby solemnly declare that the work we are going to presented in this thesis, ***the American Foreign Policy towards Iran during Obama's Presidency (2009-2017)***, is our own and to the limits of our knowledge. It has not been submitted before to any other institution or university or degree and all sources that we have used and quoted from have been indicated by means of complete references. This work is to be carried out and completed at Mohamed Boudiaf University - M'sila, Algeria.

Dedication

This manuscript would not have been possible without the help of my family members, friends, and colleagues that withstood the musings of my journey to creating this thesis.

I want to express my sincerest thanks and gratitude to my beloved parents El Fatmi and Ourida for their encouragement, love and understanding I would not be successful without them.

Special thank to my sisters Laila and her cute babies Aya and Aicha. To my sister Hadjer, I am indebted to you for your extraordinary support.

Special thanks also to my Brothers: peerless Nasro who stands by my side in every moment, to my great brother Abd Rahim who have shown me what nobody else would ever have, to my lovely Younes, Mamido and Ilyes.

I also thankvery much my colleague Zahra with whom I finish this work

Indeed it is impossible to acknowledge all the kindly help and support that I have enjoyed throughout my study, but I must express my appreciation of the continuing support of my friends and colleagues. Im also so grateful to:

- *My roommate Chahra, Ibtissam and FouziaII*
- *Soulmates Fulla, Nowara, Habiba, Nassima and Madiha*
- *My colleagues Basset, Alaa and Anwer*

All those who have been supportive, caring and patient may Almighty God bless them and keep them healthy forever.

SABRINA

*This work is dedicated especially to my family
To my dear Father Mokhtar and Mother Safia
The reason of what I become today
Thanks for your great support and continuous care
To my beloved sisters Siham, Sarah, and Samiha
To my brothers Nabil and Yacine
For their support, love, and encouragement to complete this work
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May Almighty God bless you and keep you healthy and happy forever*

ZAHIRA

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Abstract

The United States of America (U.S.A) presented itself as the worldwide power which interfered in the internal affairs of many countries such as Iran. Iran was considered as a threat to the international security due to its enrichment of the nuclear program, this made the US adopt several policies for limiting Iran's nuclear capabilities. The current thesis presents a comprehensive investigation and analysis about the bilateral relationship between the US and Iran. The purpose of this study is to analyze the foreign policy adopted by Barack Obama towards Iran, examine the effectiveness and the outcomes of his policy, and compare his policy towards Iran with some previous president's policies. This research uses the historical and analytical approaches for collecting and analyzing data. The study findings revealed that Obama adopted some strategies that focused primarily on imposing political and economic sanctions against Iran, but later on he shifted to the strategy of negotiations and diplomacy to resolve the conflict. In addition, the study indicated that Obama could elaborate a direct engagement between U.S and Iran that made the relation between the two countries better; thanks to the "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action", which legitimized the use of the nuclear weapons only in peaceful conditions. Moreover, the study revealed that the policy of Obama which relied also on the power of engagement and negotiations was better compared to Clinton and Bush's policies; this is due to the fact that the previous policies were more confrontational.

Key words: U.S.A, Iran, Obama, foreign policy, nuclear program, sanctions.

الملخص

تمثل الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية كقوة عالمية تتدخل في القضايا الداخلية لكثير من الدول ومنها إيران، والتي تعد خطرا على الأمن العالمي وذلك لتنشيط برنامجها النووي. وهذا الذي دفع الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية لتبني العديد من السياسات لعرقلة هذا البرنامج. المذكرة الحالية هي عبارة عن تحقيق وتحليل واسع للعلاقة الثنائية بين الولايات المتحدة وإيران، و يهدف أيضا إلى تحليل السياسة الخارجية المتبناة من طرف اوباما اتجاه إيران و فحص نتائج هذه السياسة مقارنة بالسياسات السابقة. هذا البحث يعتمد على النمط التاريخي و التحليلي لجمع و تحليل المعطيات ، نتائج البحث أيضا تظهر أن اوباما اعتمد على بعض الاستراتيجيات التي ركزت مبدئيا على فرض عقوبات سياسية و اقتصادية ضد إيران لتعود لاحقا إلى دبلوماسية المفاوضات لحل هذا الصراع . إضافة إلى أن هذا العمل يكد أن اوباما تمكن من تعزيز النقاش المباشر الذي حسن العلاقة بين الدولتين و التي تعود بالفضل للاتفاقية النووية التي شرعت استعمال الأسلحة لنووية بشروط سلمية. إن كل من سياسة المفاوضات والنقاش المباشر هما الأحسن مقارنة مع سياسة بوش و كلينتون وذلك لان السياسات السابقة هي سياسة مجابهة.

الكلمات المفتاحية

الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية، إيران، اوباما، السياسة الخارجية، البرنامج النووي، العقوبات

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List of Abbreviations

AIOC	Anglo-Iranian Oil Company
CBI	Central Bank of Iran
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CISADA	Comprehensive Iran Sanctions Accountability and Divestment Act
EU	European Union
FCPA	Freedom and Counter-proliferation Act
HRDF	Human Rights Democracy Fund
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IEE	Iranian Electric Education
IEMF	Iranian Electric Media Fund
IFSR	Iranian Financial Sanctions Regulations
ILSA	Iran-Libya Sanctions Act
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
JPA	Joint Plan of Action
LEU	Low-Enriched-Uranium
NARA	Nuclear Agreement Review of Act
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
NEA	Nuclear Energy Agreement
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PNNR	Persian New Network and Radio
SIS	Secret Intelligence Service
TRSHR	Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act
UNSCR	United Nation Security Council Resolution
U.S	United States
VICA	Victims of Iranian Censorship Act
WWII	World War II

General Introduction

In the section of general introduction, the authors outline the research background of the study, the statement of the problem, and state the research questions. Next, the purpose to be achieved in this study is explained; this is followed by an explanation of the used methodology. This section also provides the significance of study and ends with laying out the structure of the thesis.

The United States (US) foreign policy is designed to defend the country's national interests, national security, ideological objectives and economic prosperity which have been protected through cooperation with other nations, wars, violence and exploitation. Throughout the 20th century, the US's influence has been marked in every country of the world. Thus, it was regarded as the worldwide power which interfered in the internal affairs of many countries, particularly in the Middle East, where the US considered itself the only worthy nation to promote democratic, diplomatic and economic governments, this was the essence of its foreign policy.

In promoting the creation of democratic governments around the world, US gave much more importance to Iran with which it has a long standing conflict. The conflict between US and Iran dates back to the World War II (WW II); exactly to 1953, when the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) organized a military coup to remove Iran's democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammed Mosaddaq. The overthrown Mosaddaq was about to nationalize Iran's oil industry, therefore the coup was clearly a setback for Iran's political development that continued to upset the US. Following the removal of Mosaddaq, US supported the new Iranian regime led by Shah Mohammed Riza, who was unpopular among the Iranians because he led to years of tyrannical rules that affected the Iranians.

During the 1979 Iranian revolution, a great hostility of Iran towards US rose with the arrival of Ayatollah Khomeini, who called for the expulsions of all foreigners as he says" I

beg God to cut off the hands of all evil foreigners and their helpers”(qtd.in Tharoor, 03). The relationship between Iran and US was worsened during the Khomeini era due to the US’s decision to support Iraq militarily during the Iranian-Iraq war (1988); this triggered the Iranian public to gather behind the Anti-American Khomeini.

The conflict between the United States and Iran continued to prevail till the present time. In 2001, the US foreign policy under the administration of George W. Bush was profoundly changed; this was coincided with the 11 September dramatic events. According to Kenneth Pollack, the events contributed in the rebirth of George Bush as a war president who adopted a doctrine for offensive operations including wars against terrorism (01). For this reason, Bush considered Iran as a member of “Axis of Evil”, consequently the U.S –Iranian relations became worsened and more aggressive. The Bush administration placed a high priority on fighting terrorism and opposing nuclear proliferation that would pose a great risk to the United States, since the US concern about Iran’s nuclear activity increased dramatically in 2002, when it discovered that Iran had secretly built a facility in Natanz capable of enriching Uranium for the use of nuclear weapons.

According to Martin and Kenneth G, Barack Obama inauguration as a president of the United States already advanced an ambitious foreign policy, he sought to band the arc of history based on justice, freedom and peace. Obama started his presidency with a great criticism of the previous administrations’ foreign policies, and he promoted a slogan of change as a tool to affect the foreign policy of the United States towards Iran and generally towards the Middle East. Thus, Obama’s conflict with Iran is for promoting the American interests (10).

Obama’s foreign policy would engage the Muslim world without any threat of attacking it, especially Iran in which he would work to change the perception of the Iranians about the United States through dialogue, and diplomacy but not through wars (Nizar, 04). In this

concern, many researchers conducted studies about Obama's foreign policy; some of the most important studies are explained down.

Steven Hurst, in his article "*Obama and Iran*" (2012), discusses the harmful sanctions against Iran as a means to prevent it from achieving the nuclear weapon during Obama presidency, Hurst argued that Obama did not believe that the use of force would eliminate Iran's nuclear program but it would rather risk prompting the region in even deeper chaos, he explained that Obama advocated allies, and domestic interests to undermine the administration's objectives in the Middle East.

The article of "*Obama and Iran: Current situation and future prospects*" by Arslan Ghorbani Sheikhneshin (2009) analyses the conflict between Iran and the US, especially over the nuclear program and terrorism as a main issues. In this article, Sheikhneshin explains that, U.S. foreign policy towards Iran during Obama's presidency shifted in its tactics to reach a policy of engagement and face to face negotiations, in which Obama started to negotiate with the Iranian leaders without any pre-conditions and military force.

"*US Foreign Policy in the Middle East*" by Noam Chomsky (May 25, 2010) analyses the major issue that bathers US and affects its foreign policy, the issue is the threat of Iran as a country holding the nuclear weapon, he claimed that there is almost a universal agreement on what the solution of the issue should be. Chomsky depends on the military report that was given to the Congress in April 2010, he acknowledges that, the threat of Iran is not a military one; it has virtually no aggressive military capacity, Iran military spending is very slight, it is a tiny division of US military spending. Chomsky claimed that the goal of Iranian military strategy is to defend the borders of the country, engage in destabilizing its neighbors, and increase its influence in surrounding countries.

"*The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict Between Iran and America*" is a book written by Kenneth M. Pollack in 2005, it was published to coincide with the twenty-fifth anniversary of

the Iran hostage crisis. Pollack; a former CIA analyst and National Security Council, brings in this book analysis and insider perspective to the long conflict between the United States and Iran, beginning with the fall of the Shah and the attack of the American embassy in Tehran in 1979, he also explains the strategies and motives from the American and Iranian perspectives. Additionally, he examines what behind the story of the confused relationship between the two countries.

Barack Obama's presidency held many promises to restore America's lost image and status in the world, to lead the world again in order to achieve peace and dignity and to start a new beginning with Muslims in the Middle East. Obama started a new era in the American foreign policy. Promoting the notion of "change" as a base to affect the foreign policy of the new US administration, in particular its policy towards Iran, Obama has advocated diplomacy and dialogue, a desire for understanding, and an acceptance of the limits of American power. This research attempts to investigate the conflict between the USA Vs Iran and Obama's foreign policy towards that, it addresses the following questions:

- 1. What was the main foreign policy adopted by Obama administration to resolve the conflict with Iran?**
- 2. To what extent was Obama's strategy successful in dealing with the Iranian issue?**
- 3. How can Obama's foreign policy towards Iran be evaluated in comparison with the previous regimes' policies?**

This research aims at investigating the issue of the US-Iranian conflict and Obama's foreign policy towards that. The study attempts to provide a comprehensive analysis of the US policy towards Iran during Obama's presidency, it specifically aims to:

- 1) Analyze the assessment strategy of Barack Obama towards Iran.*
- 2) Examine the effectiveness of Obama's policy towards Iran, and explore Obama's outcomes in Iran.*

3) Assess the previous regimes' policies to Iran and compare them to Obama's policy.

The current study makes use of the historical and analytical approaches for collecting and analyzing the data. The historical approach is based on the interpretation of events and facts which can be in the form of issues or movements that have occurred in the past. The historical approach is used because the study requires an investigation and explanation of past events that are necessary for understanding the conflict between US and Iran, and for comprehending the events that shaped the US foreign policy towards Iran, thus this approach is used in order to find past information and facts related to the study for reaching the underlying goals.

This study also makes use of the Analytical approach, which is based on involving critical thinking skills as well as the evaluation of facts and information related to the study. The analytical approach is used through analyzing the assessment strategy of Barack Obama and his foreign policy towards Iran, through evaluating the effectiveness of his policy and comparing it with the previous regimes' policies.

In the current study, all the available and reliable sources are used, including the two types; primary and secondary. The primary sources such as books are used, and the secondary sources such as reliable articles, journals and websites are used as well.

With the growing conflict between US and Iran nowadays, studies regarding the subject matter have been increasing in the recent years. Several studies have been conducted about the US foreign policy towards Iran during different presidential eras. Given the fact that numerous studies have evaluated the US foreign policy towards Iran in several doctrines, there are very few studies that explored the foreign policy of Obama to Iran as this is a new emerging topic. Therefore, this study hopes to provide a good analysis and evaluation of Obama's policy to Iran. It is expected that this study could provide information about the current issue that would be beneficial to readers interested in history and politics. The findings of this study can help researchers understand about Obama's doctrine in terms of his foreign

policy towards Iran. They may interpret the findings and apply relevant implications to the Middle East or other countries.

This study is divided into two chapters. The two chapters are preceded by a part for general introduction and ended by a part for general conclusion.

The general introduction provides an overview of the research study that paved the way for the statement of the problem. This section provides a background to the study, statement of the problem, the purpose to be achieved at the end, the used methodology, the study significance and the thesis structure.

Chapter one tackles the background of the American-Iranian relations; it attempts to give a comprehensive overview about the Iranian-American conflict. This chapter discusses the relationship between the two countries during the cold war; it investigates the main events that shaped their relation at this period. In addition, this chapter explores their relationship in the twentieth century, particularly, during Clinton and Bush's era. It tackles the issue of the nuclear program, and then concludes with Obama's presidency and his ideologies about Iran.

Chapter two provides an analysis and critical evaluation of Obama's policy, promises and attitudes towards Iran during his first and second presidential terms. It evaluates Obama's foreign policy, if it was a success or failure. This chapter concludes with a comparison between Obama's foreign policy and some previous regimes' policies in Iran.

The part of general conclusion includes a summary of the major findings, limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

Chapter One: Background of the American-Iranian Relationship

Of all the international relations the United States (U.S) has had with the nations of the world, arguably one of the most controversial relationships has been with the country of Iran. Indeed, for more than hundred years, American eyes riveted on Iran due to its threat of the national security. Consequently, the U.S and Iran have engaged in an ambivalent relationship and although the Americans and the Iranians have usually considered themselves as friends, their governments have often treated each other as enemies.

The first chapter of this research provides a historical background of the American-Iranian relationship, it describes the main events that have shaped the early history of their relation, and it explores their relationship in the twentieth century, particularly, during Clinton and Bush's doctrines. This chapter also introduces the main policies adopted by the former American presidents towards Iran, tackles the nuclear program issue and investigates Obama's ideologies concerning the American foreign policy.

1.1 The Early Diplomacy between US and Iran

The two countries' relationship started mainly in mid 20th century, which was the starting point for the U.S diplomatic, economic, and cultural involvement in Iran. This interference often was the result of the Iranians themselves who pursued and encouraged the U.S involvement, in attempts to counterbalance impertinent British and Russian influence there and elevate the Iranian nationalist claims; those factors helped the US in getting involved in Iran's affaires (Mansour, 09).

Relations between the two nations began in around 1950. Initially, while Iran was very cautious of the British and Russian colonial interests during the Great Game, which was when the two allies of America (Great Britain and the Soviet Union), colonized Iran during the World War II (WWII). Meanwhile, the British owned Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC),

whenever it discovered that Iran was a quite fertile, the British came in and started drilling. The British believed that they were being welcomed when they gave Iran a seventeen percent share of the profits, while assumed the remaining eighty-three percent (Morgan, 01).

The British company received billions of dollars from Iran's oil per year, the British Petroleum(PB) company was furious over the affair, indeed the British Foreign Secretary Herbert Morrison said, " Persia oil is a vital importance to our economy. We regard it as essential to do everything possible to prevent the Persians from getting away with a breach of their contractual obligations" (qtd in. Morgan, 01).

Iran at that time was ruled by Mohammad Mossadaq, who saw his country run by foreign institution and his people felt they were being unfairly exploited. Mossadaq sought to keep oil revenues at home for the improvement of his people and country (Abrahamian, 66). Consequently, Mohammad Mossadaq proposed to nationalize Iran's oil, this nationalization makes Britain's leaders very upset who then set taxes and an embargo on Iran to weaken its economy (Wise, 01), Here Iran was under the threat of economic pressure imposed by Britain.

The United States at that time was seen as a more trustworthy western power for the Iranians to ask for its help. Conversely, the US was worried that Iran would fall into communism, which was considered as a threat because of the ongoing Cold War between America and the Soviet Union since they became two hostile super powers. The British pressure and the fear of the communist spread let the American (CIA) involve in corporation with the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) and planned for a coup in 1953.

1.2 The Operation Ajax

For almost Iranians, the coup was the original sin to join the plot that was done by the British-American to remove their country's democratically prime minister Mohammad Mossadaq , replacing him with a US supported figure ; Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

The restoration of the Shah's monarchy gives hand to Britain and America to establish an Iranian government that they could control, because the restored prime minister was pliant and submissive to the Western interests. In addition to that, the countries which staged for the coup felt that they had the right to control Iran since the Shah Reza was named the as the'' American Puppet''(Wise, 01-02).

By the time the Shah replaced Mossadaq in power during 1953, Iranian were very aware, highly depressed, more sensitive and worried if their leaders are truly seeking for Iran's best interests. Mossadaq, during his severe reign, no matter if he was rough or harsh, he was highly popular and respected by his nation and people. Unfortunately, Iranians would not compare all post-Mossadaq leaders with Mossadaq himself.

The post-coup era was characterized by a very close alliance and friendship between Shah Reza Pahlavi's regime and the U.S government, this flourished term was not created by the Iranian's contentment with the US, but from the Shah's relationships with America (Wise , 02).

1.2.1 Operation Ajax's Factors

In August 1953, the United States with the corporation of Britain started a neo-colonial policies and actions against Mossadaq and Iran itself, resulting in the removal of Mossadaq from power, and the Shah took over it for the second time of his life, because he had fled the country during the turmoil(Malcolm, 02). The CIA spent a great amount of money to secretly influence certain Iranian military officers who were loyal to the Shah. Moreover, Operation Ajax undermined Mossadaq's government by bribing influential figures, planting false reports in newspapers and provoking street violence against Mossadaq (Stephen, 121).

The main reason that drove CIA to make such a decision in 1953 was the Cold War between U.S and the Soviet Union, the CIA could portray that Mossadaq was a communist ruler, and the Soviet Union could take-over at least attempted to take-over Iran. So, it seems

that the risk of leaving Iran open to the Soviet aggression was a significant factor for planning the coup against Mossadaq (Morgan , 02).

Although the British role in removing Mossadaq was limited compared by the US influence, still it should be noted. It was impossible for the CIA to overthrow Mossadaq without the British long presence in Iran because it was very important in providing the CIA and Washington with advices and information about Iran, politically and economically. Britain's secret service was always willing to overthrow Mossadaq, because the AIOC represented Britain as a symbol of a global economic power and empire. But Britain wouldn't pursuit this global economic power when Mossadaq wanted to nationalize the Iranian oil industry, because this nationalization would allow Iran rather than Britain to profit from Iran's natural recourses.

Consequently, thanks to the coup, US could begin a new era of working closely with Iran, which was seen as one of America's most trusted Cold War allies.

1.3 The Post-Coup Period

During the next three decades of Shah Reza's rule, he ruled the country through an extremely repressive regime supported by U.S. Under the Iranian National Intelligence and Security Organization, they employed 30.000 of the Iranians and most of them were tortured, his dictatorial regime killed thousands of his opponents. The U.S benefited from its involvement in Iran by gaining control over Iranian oil and redistributing the British production shares to the US companies. By contrast, the Iranians did not benefit from the change in the government, nor did they reap the profit of their country's natural resources, because the Shah's family and relatives were the only benefited ones from Iran's wealth, whereas the mass population were poor (Wise, 02).

One goal that Shah wanted to achieve was the Modernization of Iran or as it is known the Secularization; this was through making many projects such as land reforms, new elections,

laws including the women's suffrage, national literacy campaigns, etc. The Shah did manipulate such an agenda because the American leaders wanted this plan to be successful in order to enhance the image of Shah's progressivism, and also to make him beloved by his people (Zahedi, 152).

1.3.1 US Assistance for Iran's Nuclear Program

In his article, Tharoor stated that in 1957 US signed a civil nuclear cooperation deal with the Shah Reza of Iran, indeed the American economic and military aids discharge into Iran, pushing Tehran to build its nuclear program (02). Shah with US aid continued the advancement of his military. In this concern Gary Samore states that by 1969 Iran was already presented as America's single-largest arms purchase. Moreover, the US created an exclusive and unprecedented policy with the Iranian government; it was named as the Twin Pillar (Gary, 22). Shah was considered as one of the primary guardians of US interests in the Middle East, and in return Iran was allowed to build a nuclear program.

On March 5, 1957, Iran and the US signed an agreement for cooperation in the civil use of atomic energy for years, and the US also agreed to provide Iran with nuclear reactor technology within the framework of the "Atomic for Peace" program. Under this term, U.S allowed for transfer of technical assistance, the lease of several kilograms of enriched uranium, and cooperation in searching for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy (Ramazani, 109). While Iran's nuclear pursuits were obliged to be just for peaceful purposes and only under the term of the agreement, Consequently, Iran's capacity slowly grew over the following two decades, moreover it had the most highly advanced, and the best trained military in the Persian Gulf area.

Iran had the fourth-largest air force and the fifth-largest military on the globe'' (Wise, 03). All that growth was a reflection of the American military aids, the U.S promoted its military in Iran, and it was seen through the Iranian Air Forces; whose members were almost fluent

English Speakers, and in return the military pay was based on the ability to speak English well. Overall, In the late 1970s American president Jimmy Carter hosted the Shah in U.S and praised him for elevating a strong, stable, and progressive country, he said: “Under the Shah’s brilliant leadership Iran is an island of stability in one of the most troublesome regions of the world. There is no other state figure that I could appreciate and like more” (qtd in. Wise, 07).

In fact, Carter’s foreign policy team were really convinced that the Shah’s policies directly benefited the U.S, they mentioned the advantages of the Shah’s policy towards U.S and the Middle East as well, they stated that the Shah provided economic help in his region; he was a reliable supplier of oil source for Israel (Bill, 233). Months later, President Carter wrote to Shah reassuring him of Iran’s importance to U.S and confirms his support for the Shah, in addition to the broad U.S consensus that the two countries shared different mutual objectives that serves the national interest (Schmitz, 81-82).

On January 1, 1978, Carter visited Tehran, the two countries initiated a nuclear agreement in which Iran guaranteed to protect the Non-Proliferation Treaty’s (NPT) requirements and in return the United States guaranteed the reprocessing nuclear fuel. Then on 1978 the U.S-Iran Nuclear Energy Agreement (NEA) was signed in order to facilitate cooperation and govern the export and the exchange equipment of Iran’s nuclear program. So promoting all this aids was to force Iran to build a nuclear program (Kibaroghi, 214). Meanwhile, this situation continued until the overthrow of the Shah in 1979. And it was marked as the first fundamental step in eventual rupture of Iranian-American relation; this tension was entitled “The Blowback”.

Blowback is a term invented by the CIA to refer to the unintended consequences of American policies in relation to foreign policy and intervention. As Johnson writes in his

book “*Blowback*” in a broader sense, blowback is another way of saying that a nation reaps what it sows”, knowing this concept and the coup mentioned before can clearly show the reasons behind the fall of Shah (Chalmers, 13)

1.4 Reasons behind the Fall of Shah

The U.S contributed enormously to Iran’s nuclear program during the Shah’s reign, both for security and economic reasons. Iran under the Shah was an American ally and its role in the region advanced the U.S interests. As such, Iran received significant help from the U.S in building its nuclear program; indeed the United States aided, supported, and praised the Shah’s repressive regime. The Americans provoked Shah to use ruthless tactics by creating fear in the minds of the Iranian potential protestors, Shah depended mainly on his secret police force “The SAVAK” which itself created much fear and terror using an extremely repressive method; it was strongly disliked by the majority of Iranians.

One of the fundamental and visible reasons behind the fall of Shah was during 1960, when he had the complete control over the region thus he wanted to build a great image of his country abroad, by hosting a large and different ceremonies in the period between 1971 and 1971. Those ostentatious and dramatic events affected badly Shah’s monarchy and Iran’s glorious Persian past, because those ostentatious ceremonies were highly paid with huge sums from the Iranian government treasury, meanwhile poverty was continued to increase in the country (Mansouri, 49).

Shah’s administration was unpropitious by most of people who came to hate the Shah more and more. Needless to say, the Shia clergy in Iran capitalized the anti-Shah awareness, because Shah changed the national calendar from being a typical Islamic to pre-Islamic nation, moreover the Mullah was further angry when Shah changed his name from “Mohammad” to the ancient pre-Islamic Persian name “Aryamehz”, this was not all what Shah did, but he also made sure to include Zoroastrian element- which is an ancient religion-,

and insert new proverbs into the Iranian national anthem. Subsequently, the Shah fueled the Mullah anger because of his clear anti-Islamic tendencies (ibid).

Another key reason for the Shah's fall was the fact that by the 1970's the Shah became highly close to the United States, and he was pleased to work firmly with the U.S administration, in fact he was considered as an important U.S ally. Therefore, the Iranians were quite discontent of this closeness between the two countries; this was a strong reason for hating the Shah much more, especially throughout the 1970's (Daniel, 165).

According to Daniel by 1976 the Shah had approximately 3.000 tanks, 890 attack helicopters, over 200 advanced fighter aircraft, the largest fleet of hovercraft in any country, 9.000 anti-tank missiles and much more equipment either on hand or on order (165). Clearly enough there was an extremely amount of oil revenues that was spent to turn Iran into a regional and a global military nation. This unfortunately irritates the anti-Shah's who saw him as a wide dependent on US help, trade, and support.

The last and the most crucial reason behind the fall of the Shah was the Shah's dependent policy on U.S, which annoyed the most known religious figure in Iran; Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. This gives him more support by the Iranians to launch a revolution.

1.5 The Islamic Revolution of 1979

As a result of two decades of dictatorship under Shah, who relied so much on U.S aids, in addition to the dominance of U.S and its repressive policy, tensions started to emerge in Iran. During this period, the country's society radically shifted and modernized rapidly for some opponents of the regime. Besides, the Iranian people on the other hand grew within repression and corruption; they were aware that this situation is inextricably linked to the U.S. Therefore, they went out to the street forming an angry crowd of Iranians to protest against the Shah's rule, they were surging through the streets, shouting the slogan "Death to the American

Shah”, “Death to America” (kinzer, 202), they did so because they felt that their country was moving away from the Islamic tradition.

According to Wise, such discontentment in the country had three main revolutionary functions which spoke out in opposition to the Shah: Women, students, and religious reformers. Concerning women, they engaged in protests and guerrilla activities in order to oppose the Shah’s authority. Along with women protests, university students, domestic and abroad participated in the revolution; they were intellectuals who held different political ideologies, those who formed the largest student organization were called “The Confederation of Iranian Students”. Almost all of them had grievances against the Shah like the law college acceptance rates, poor university education, insufficient housing and bad conditions. Thus, they protested in the university cities such as Tehran (Keddie, 218).

During the protest, many Iranians were killed while the military of Shah was trying to prohibit the crowds and ban public gathering in an attempt to end up the revolution, but unfortunately this attempt couldn’t hinder hundreds of thousands of rebels protesting in Tehran (Wise, 05). Indeed, many Iranians looked to Ayatollah khomeini for their guidance and leadership in their opposition against the Shah.

Ayatollah Khomeini was the most popular religious figure in Iran, a fervently anti-Western figure who was exiled following the overthrow of Mossadeq for fifteen years, due to his opposition to the Shah. His exile was supported by the Shah who suggested to move him from Iraq to Paris, thinking that the long distance between Iran and the Exiled country will protect him from Komeini’s powerful anti-Shah rhetoric, despite that, his life in France did not prevent him from knowing the incidents in Iran, because of the world media which has a much easier time transmitting and covering events from Paris; yet the communication technology was much better than that of Iraq.

Khomeini, the Islamic fundamentalist, opposed the Shah's policy for two reasons: The American influence, and the Iranian society Secularization (Kaddie, 146). Consequently, Khomeini had begun advocating for the overthrow of the Shah to replace him by an Islamic figure who can rule the country through Islamic law. Eventually, his movement became more powerful than it was, because it gained the military support through those Iranian soldiers who began to defend for his side.

Along with those Khomeini's supporters and protests, the Shah could not control the situation, he sent the SAVAK, police and army to resolve any civil troubles but it did not work. The Shah waited for the instruction from the U.S to show him the way he would react as they used to do, but no answer came. U.S refused to give him a further support or help that returns him to power, so he had no choice except to flee from Iran and sought refuge in Egypt (Morgan, 03).

Soon after that event, on February 01, 1979, Khomeini traveled from Paris to his country to replace the Shah as the Supreme Leader. On February 11, the Pahlavi Shah's dynasty collapsed, and the Islamic Republic was born (Faber, 104-405), and Khomeini promised for a "break from the past and turn toward greater autonomy for the Iranian people" (qtd.in Morga, 05). He also promised that he and the religious reformers would rule the country transparently. According to Khomeini, the key jobs of the government are: Enforcing Muslim law, eliminating corruption and instituting rights for those who are oppressed, extirpating any law that was created by false government and finally, preventing any foreign intervention in his country (J.Ismael and T.Ismael, 611).

1.5.1 U.S Reaction

Khomeini, who referred to America as the "Great Satan", got rid of the Shah's prime minister and replaced him with a conservative politician called Mehdi Bazargan, actually the U.S opposed the new ruler for several reasons. First, they feared if Khomeini came to power he

would prevent and abolish the western influence in Iran and this idea was the primary platform of his promises. Second, U.S firmly attached its concern on the change of economic relations, mainly the issue of oil, because the American leaders feared that if the Iranians participated in the revolution the oil prices would increase and would witness a lack of oil. The third reason that led U.S opposes Khomeini's authority was the communist party (Tudeh), which supported the revolutionary movement in Iran. The Tudeh had been abolished by the shah before, but with the arrival of Khomeini Tudeh's members sought to work with him only if he established a strong new Iranian government (Dulter, 525). As mentioned before, the U.S feared that this party would cause a threat that might spread the Soviet influence in Iran. Meanwhile U.S considered it their duty to contain Soviet impact and preserve its control in Iran.

Ultimately, U.S wanted to establish a mutual dependency in which the US would need Iran as an ally in an important region, and Iran would need U.S aids in order to build itself as a great power. After the coming of Khmeini and the revolutionary movement in 1979, the U.S policy makers wanted to maintain a good relation with Iran because of its interests, but it did not succeed in that. The U.S and Iran relations would never be consistent, and more than that Iran changed into increased anti-Americanism (Sheikhneshtin, 96).

1.6 Khomeini Era

Ayatollah Khomeini knew that the U.S had opposed his revolution. Therefore, he passionately opposed those countries which had positive relations with America; he changed the ideologies in Iran and drove the American-Iranian relation downhill.

Komeini and Iranian leaders identified the U.S as a selfish nation, and they accused it of exploiting Iran's resources and revenues that made the Iranians engaging in such a revolution, where their blood was shed. Komeini was willing to risk his economy just in order to crush the western impact in Iran, he has proclaiming "neither West nor East would interfere in the

Iran, and it considered as an anathema to the Persian Gulf countries” (qtd in. Sreedhar,59). So, the United States’ presence should be over the horizon not on Iran’s ground.

Moreover, when Khomeini first took office in Iran, U.S leaders and officials realized that they should attempt moderate and positive diplomacy towards him, in order to stand up in front of the Soviet Union taking over Iran. By contrast, Khomeini declared the isolationism for Iran only to not have strong ties with U.S. In May 1979, the American Congress criticized the Khomeini’s government and his actions toughly by naming him the Great Satan (Rubin, 308).

Rarry Rubin reported that according to Khomeini all the problems of the East stem come from America, he believed that the U.S was the only source of the Iranian problems and because of his attitude and belief the relation between the two nations continued to be worse, and this poor relation can be best proven throughout six major events in the period of 1979 (308). According to Alvin Rubenstein, those six events are: The removal of U.S containment, the alteration of oil policies, a change in U.S –Iranian arms sale agreement, U.S disapproval for Iran’s “lake” of human rights, the Iranian hostage crisis, and finally the U.S embargo on Iran (599).

1.6.1 Containment

Before the Islamic Revolution, Iran was a league of America against the Soviet Communist which was the key “evil” of the U.S enemies during the cold war, but after the Islamic Revolution things changed, Khomeini eradicated the U.S influence from Iran, and allowed the Tudeh to exist, beside that, he didn’t only allow the pro-Moscow Party to re-emerge in Iran but he also initiated multiple measures that could benefitted the Soviet Union.

Overall, Iran played a major role and had a strategic place for the U.S in gathering information about the Soviet Union. As a result of the Iranian revolution, the American Intelligence in Iran had declined, because Khomeini closed the two American Intelligence Collection Centers, then the American leaders were not able to spy on the Soviet nuclear

missile testing site in Soviet Central Asia (Rubeustein, 599-600). This action from Khomeini caused anxiety and anger among the U.S officials.

1.6.2 Oil Policy

According to the 1980 Economic Report of the President which reported that in the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution, America was worried about the oil industry in Iran, because Khomeini prevented any Western influence in order to let no Western countries to be able to manage or even operate the running of Iran's industry. Thus, Khomeini's government curbed one-fifth of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) production capability, this latter immediately affected heavily on the oil market. Eventually, by December, the world oil prices were approximately 50% higher than when Iran first cut back the oil supply, and America should pay more than it used to be.

Because the price was doubled nearly ten times the price that was paid in years earlier. As a result of this new policy the economy of both countries marked a noticeable shift. Iran started to reap more revenue from the oil industry and America had to pay more for the imported oil; which annoyed the American leaders and decided to decrease its reliance on foreign oil and depended on the domestic energy. (Economic Report, 5-6)

1.6.3 Arms Sales

Krysta Wise mentions in her article that besides limiting the oil capacity in order to hurt U.S economy, Khomeini also was willing to destroy the U.S military by annulling the U.S sale of arms to Iran. This trading system between the two countries had taken place for many decades, and especially in the reign of Shah Reza in which U.S gained billions of dollars that boost its economy. However, Khomeini's arrival cut all the Iranian reliance on U.S and he officially cancelled seven billion dollars worth of U.S arms purchases, which marked an extreme change in the American economy in 1979. During the following years, the arms

exchange remained very low, so U.S had to search about new buyers of the arms to strengthen their economy and preserve it from declining (wise, 10).

1.6.4 Human Rights

As mentioned before, throughout 1979, the relation between Iran and America remained bad. There is a need to emphasize the fact that previously U.S had supported the Shah to rule the country with repressive actions, but after the Iranian Revolution American leaders stopped their support, they actually criticized the government of Khomeini and considered some of its acts as inhuman acts; for example, when the protestors were holding the slogan of “Death to Shah” The American leaders expressed their discontent toward sentencing death to Mohammed Reza Shah (Grayson, 165).

1.6.5 Hostage Crisis

If the Islamic Revolution told the U.S that their policy in Iran was misjudged, another prominent incident- this one was a direct affront to the U.S- called “The 1979 U.S Embassy Hostage Crisis”. On November 4, a group of students who supported Ayatollah Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution demanded that the Shah should return to Iran to face his trail and execution.

In October of 1979, it had become widely known that the Shah had cancer and he asked the American president Carter to allow him enter U.S to get the medical treatment. Houghlon and David Patrick noted that in response to this allowance decision Iranians thought that the U.S and Shah were conspiring against the Revolution (Houghlon, 61); consequently, the Iranian students stormed the United States’ embassy in Tehran and seized nearly seventy US citizens captive. This hostage crisis lasted 444 days and it caused the loss of prestige, and the president Carter himself lost the presidential election campaign. Indeed, the support of Khomeini was the main reason for the crisis to last so long, because although Jimmy Carter made his effort to make peace with Iran, Khomeini continued to permit his militants to hold

the captives to show Iran's independence and opposition to American power (Rubin, 316). He proposed for peace that U.S should apologize for all the previous exploitation and return Iran's money; nevertheless the U.S leaders rejected this condition.

Wise Krysta also stated that Carter made two attempts to reach the reconciliation, but each time it failed. Through time the crisis continued and Khomeini made a second invitation for the reconciliation, which was the obligation for U.S to give back Iran's assets and the wealth of the royal family and it should announce that it wouldn't interfere in the Iranian affaires any more, but US again rejected the offer (11).

In December of 1980, Khomeini made a third proposal to end the crisis, its conditions were: America would have to pay Iran 24 billion dollars to compensate Iran's assets, U.S refused and things became more complicated since the crisis hurt Carter's campaign for his re-election as mentioned before, and consequently he left office and after this event the two countries reached an agreement which was that U.S will return 11 billion of Iran's frozen assets, besides it would not interfere in Iran's affairs. When the agreement was reached, the hostages were freed (ibid). Overall, this event in turn changed the relationships between the two nations forever.

1.6.6 US Embargo

During the hostage crisis in 1980, the United States cut its political relation with Iran. The president Carter passed an Executive Order which declares:

I hereby order blocked all property and interests in property of the Government of Iran, its instrumentalities and controlled entities and the Central Bank of Iran which are or become subject to the jurisdiction of the United States or which are in or come within the possession of control of persons subject to the jurisdiction of the United States. (qtd in.Wise, 11-12)

The Islamic Revolution affected negatively U.S-Iranian relation, and every American president followed Carter when he continued a foreshadowed diplomacy with Iran and the trade embargo as well.

The history of U.S Iran relation saw very crucial events. However, the 1979 event marked the greatest turning point in their diplomatic and economic exchanges between the two nations. The arrival of Khomeini stopped the good relation that was with the previous president Shah, he did not only eradicate the U.S influence from Iran, but he also supported, sponsored and praised all the anti-American sentiments.

Khomeini's term witnessed the anti- Americanism attitude through his policy of removing Iran from the American sphere of containment, and decrease the amount of oil sold to U.S the cancellation of the U.S arms purchase agreement, along with those achievement, he ratified the Iranian hostage crisis. Indeed, his policy was and remained evidence to his following leaders (Wise, 12-13).

1.7 Beyond the Hostage Crisis

According to Bill James who states that immediately after the hostages' freedom Ronald Regan took the oath of presidency, his administration followed the same policy of confrontation. Indeed, his policy towards Iran influenced the Iran-Iraq war because shortly after the Islamic Revolution Iraq launched a war against Iran. As many believed, this war fought on behalf of the West to defeat the Islamic regime in Iran to restore the U.S presence and interests which were neglected by the Iranian administration. Primarily, the U.S held a neutral position in the first two years, nevertheless when Iran succeeded in launching a military campaign against Iraq in 1982, the American officials started to fear about the Iranian victory. Consequently, the U.S developed a series of policies designed to prevent the victory of Iran, and supported Iran diplomatically, militarily and economically (306-307).

In 1982, the U.S declared that Iraq is not considered as a terrorist supporter country. Moreover, American policy makers officially started to visit Iraq, and eventually they had negotiated on the mutual interests and the Iran threat (Freedman, 157). As Ansari, A.M asserts, in 1984 the diplomatic relation with Iran was restored, in addition to the diplomatic and political support, Iraq got the American beneficent from the security intelligence supplied by U.S (105). The American leaders provided billion of arms which were both from many countries like France and China to support Iraq against Iran. As a result of that, Iran found itself quite isolated, what motivates Iran's government to re-build its nuclear program (Bill, 307).

1.8 Iran's Nuclear Program

It should be noted that the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war was marked by the abolishment of the Iranian government to work on the nuclear program. Khomeini was against this notion, because he believed that the use of the nuclear weapon stands against the Islamic principles. However, Saddam Hussein used many times the chemical and weapons against the Iranian soldiers which was forbidden act. Subsequently, Iran became more cautious about their future, security, and stability; then they started to motivate their military service by strengthening its nuclear agenda (Dorraj, 326).

This decision made the U.S administration organize an embargo on Iran concerning the military issues, because the president Reagan believed that Iran would misuse it. So he imposed an embargo on Iran, and he did his best to succeed in persuading many European countries to abandon its cooperation with Iran and its nuclear program (Samore and Einhorn, 52).

However, there is a need to emphasize the fact that despite of all these strategies and obstacles that were made by U.S to slow up the nuclear program, Iran could not be prevented from pursuing its nuclear arsenal, because Iran violated and broke the Reagan's Embargo in

order to advance its security. As stated earlier, Iran's nuclear program began in 1953 with the government of Shah under the strong support of U.S, which initiated the nuclear program under the President Eisenhower's "Atoms for peace" mission that was normally used for peaceful purposes only. So, the U.S itself established the foundation of Iran's nuclear program. (Samore and Einhorn, 54).

1.9 U.S Policies towards Iran

The administration of Clinton, Bush and Obama were confronted with a totally different regime in Iran than the previous presidents, and then each of these administrations would continue its own strategy to cope with the main issue that threatened the world security and American interests as well, the issue of Iranian nuclear program.

1.9.1 Clinton Administration

When president bill Clinton took office in 1993, relations between the U.S and Iran remained hostile because Iran continued its program of the Uranium proliferation, then it also continued to be seen as a major threat to U.S interests.

Clinton's policy was termed as" Dual Containment", directed at isolating both Iran and Iraq via politic, economic and military methods; the main purpose of this was to improve the pressure on the both Middle East countries. Furthermore, Clinton sought to contain Iran, the closer ally of US and exploited it since Iraq's relation with Russia was so close. Despite that, the National Security Advisor of the president Clinton mentioned that Iran could challenge the American interests by Iran's search for weapons of mass destruction; it also sponsored the terrorism, in addition to that, Iran showed its opposition towards the Arab-Israeli peace process.

Those actions led American president use the policy of containment to protect America's interests in the Middle-East, to spread out the international politics, and to enlarge the community of American nations (Mraz. 15).

On March 7, 1955, Clinton punished Iran economically, because Conoco Oil Company declared that it had signed a contract with Iran in order to develop its oil in the Persian Gulf. Consequently, the American president enacted an order to abolish this participation and because of the order, the contract had been cancelled and Iran lost one million (Rex J, 539). Additionally, three month after the cancellation of the Conoco Oil deal, Iran again signed an agreement with Russia in order to build a nuclear research. Because of this attempt from Iran, President Clinton began tightening the noose around the Iranians government by issuing another presidential order in May 1995, prohibiting all trade, investments and commercial transactions with Iran (ibid).

To ramp up further the pressure, the U.S government officials signed the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA) in 1996 which set a number of sanctions against foreign firms who invested the Iran's oil and gas industry, but there were many European countries that were benefiting much more from Iran's oil and limitation. Indeed despite the heavy sanctions that were imposed on Iran, it considerably expanded its nuclear cooperation with other countries and neglected all the sanctions imposed by the U.S on its nuclear activities because, as mentioned earlier, the U.S couldn't prevent the European countries from dealing with Iran, pollak mentioned,

Even by 1995, the U.S was Iran's third largest trading partner, sixth largest purchaser of exports and the largest consumer of Iran's oil. Because of this, Europe, Japan and Russia considered the sanctions imposed by U.S as a barrier with merely reduced their benefits from dealing with Iran, while American companies were hugely benefiting from their transaction with Iranian companies. (270)

By 1997, and with the election of reformist Mohammad khatami, the relation saw a slight thawing, because he was seen as a sense of optimism for U.S-Iran relation, viewed by many as a moderate reformer. Throughout his campaign and post-election, Khatami expressed that

he wanted to enhance the relation between the two nations. In Khatami's first campaign speech, he suggested that if the U.S changed its harsh behavior, Iran and U.S. could have a normal relation, this seemed a nice beginning since it shifted at least the perception of the past leadership of Khomeini who was believing that Iran and U.S could never have a good relation. Although the Clinton administration welcomed Khatami's proposal, it remained aware and cautious of the sincerity of Khatami's speech. Eventually, the U.S lifted some of the sanctions on Iran (Pollack, 310-315). In 2001, Clinton ran for the election but it went to George Bush.

The same hard-line policies continued in the following administration, the military sanction imposed on Iran improved the U.S-Iran poor relation because it precluded Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

1.9.2 The Bush Administration

Kenneth Pollack, a former senior analyst in the U.S National Security Council, states that when George W. Bush won the 2000 Presidential elections Iran was almost at the bottom of Bush's foreign policy list of priorities, actually a little attention was paid to this country in the time of his campaigns and his first years in the reign, indeed it continued to be the lowest priority compared to other countries like Iraq, and Afghanistan (343-345). This ignorance changed immediately after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack took place, thus raising caution about Iran's threat was so required and both countries' governments needed to make considerable decisions about their relation (John 123-124).

1.9.2.1 September 11 Attack

This event was also referred to as 9/11, it was a series of four coordinated terrorist attacks by the Islamic terrorist group Al-Qaeda on the United States during the beginning of Bush's reign. The attacks killed 2,996 people and injured over 6,000 others, the victims were immense because the attack targeted the World Trade Center Complex in New York City, the Pentagon

(the headquarters of the United States Department of Defense) in Virginia and the White House in Washington, the attack caused a mass damage of large structures. The reaction of the Americans about the attack was so harsh, and their president Bush delivered his speech to deter any threat that will violate their security.

1.9.2.2 Axis of Evil

On January 29, 2002, in a speech to the state of the Union, President Bush directly identified Iran, due to its support of terrorism and nuclear ambitions, as being a clear threat to the international security. Bush characterized Iran as a number of “Axis of Evil”. It was one of the three countries –with Iraq and North Korea- that sponsored terrorist groups and was widely believed to be pursuing nuclear weapons. President Khatamie responded on behalf of the Iranian people and the Islamic Republic by denouncing the terrorist attack and expressing his deep sympathy with the American people, but on the other hand Bush was thinking of launching a war on terror, he sought to did his best to fight terrorism and counter any nuclear proliferation, and he announced that the International Community “will not tolerate the construction of nuclear weapons in Iran”(Dietrich 123-124), he made several decisions in which he further elaborated on his presidential doctrine and policy options, Bush said:

After 9/11, I developed a strategy to protect the country that came to be known as the Bush Doctrine: First, make no distinction between the terrorists and the nations that harbor them—and hold both to account. Second, take the fight to the enemy overseas before they can attack us again here at home. Third, confront threats before they fully materialize. And fourth, advance liberty and hope as an alternative to the enemy’s ideology of repression and fear. (Bush 370)

When Bush stated this, the European Union (EU) countries rapidly started negotiations to stop their nuclear cooperation with Iran. Although the Europeans initiated to suspend the nuclear enrichment program of Iran, Iran continued its agenda which led the European and US

have a cooperative relation in order to negotiate about handling the Iran's nuclear program. Bush administration continued to implement different economic and military sanctions, in addition the threat of military invasion against Iran which was used many times, but no reaction from Iran (Arslan, 98).

However, it must be mentioned that in Bush's last year in office and with the election of the Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on 2005, the US changed its position and got involved in several negotiations with Iran through the EU and P5+1 (Permanent five members of the UNSC Plus Germany) because the new president sent a letter to president Bush to propose a "new way" to end Iran's nuclear conflict. He also invited him to a debate at the UN General Assembly to negotiate on the Iran's right to enrich uranium, but this proposal was rejected by the US White House representatives (Vick 104). To sum up, at the end of the Bush administration, the relations between the two countries remained hostile. Eventually, the election of President Barack Obama would represent another shift in U.S. policy toward Iran.

1.9.3 Barack Obama's Presidency

In 2008, two front runners Barack Obama and Hilary Clinton had run for the U.S Presidency, the two nominations enjoyed a great recognition and support at the state level, however; Obama was more highly successful in this stage to win the democratic presidential elections.

When Obama took the Oath of Presidency, he started to initiate a new direction in US policy based on the obligation to protect his country and the Americans (Clack, 07-08). "I do solemnly swear to faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. So help me god". (qtd.in Clack, 17).

His election as the president of the United States gave hope to the creation of opportunities to persuade Iran to stop its expanding of the nuclear program, and the possibility to design a

new framework of a good relation with Iran after many decades of hostility and enmity (Katzman 133). Barack Obama criticized the previous administration by devastating the American leadership and legitimacy, thus he wanted to achieve a new approach that is different from those before his administration.

Bayran Sinkaya states in his article that Obama's first days in the office promoted the slogan of "change" since he wanted not to pursue the same policy as that of Bush, which was based on unilateral behavior and the use of military forces and sanctions, but he wanted to try a policy of negotiation with the country of Iran. It is clear that Iran took a significant place in the Obama's foreign policy agenda thanks to its nuclear proliferation which threatened the national security (01).

In the first half of 2009, Obama did his best to encourage Iran to accept the proposal of engaging in the diplomatic dialogue about its nuclear agenda (Moloney 133). Moreover, Harrop William mentioned that when Obama visited Cairo, Ankara and Prague, he delivered his speeches and repeatedly insisted on the policy of new beginning and engagements based on the mutual interest and respect (67). Hence, immediately after his speech, he could convince the Iranian administration to participate in the Geneva meeting along with the P5+1 in order to negotiate the Iranian nuclear program, this meeting marked a good beginning to both countries.

The meeting proposed to exchange the Iranian major portion of enriched uranium for the Americans, in fact Iran didn't accept the proposal definitively but it stated that it would just discuss this topic with the IAEA. Later on, America clearly realized that the previous agreement didn't work because Iran wouldn't accept the proposal that has been negotiated with IAEA, thus Obama along with some European Countries declared the reduction of their trade cooperation with the Iranian companies and set restrictions and sanctions on its economy (Perthes 105).

To be concise, Obama's hope for engagement and negotiation policy couldn't prevent Iran from enriching its nuclear program. Thus, he changed this in-effective policy through imposing several economic and political sanctions on the country.

To conclude, the relation between the United States and Iran has been complicated since the arrival of Ayatollah Khomeini who destroyed the American entity in Iran, the relation between the two countries before was a very amiable one under the reign of the so called "the American Puppet" the Shah, who was called so because of his American tendencies that supported the U.S presence in Iran. However; most American officials regarded Khomeini as "The Great Satan", because he began his administration by many promises in which he insisted that Iran and U.S would never get a normal relation, and he actually did so. The U.S reaction was to press-on the Iranian policymakers by enacting many acts and imposing several sanctions to weaken Iran's economy and prevent its nuclear program, these procedures continued to be applied by many American Presidents such as Reagan, Clinton, Bush and Obama.

Chapter Two: A Critical Evaluation to Obama's Foreign Policy towards Iran

Barack Obama took office having promised to engage Iran throughout raising the possibility of direct engagement, where the U.S. started sitting across the table, face-to-face with Iran to drift their relation in a new direction. He used a policy of diplomacy without self-defeating preconditions based on mutual respect and mutual interests. Therefore, Obama's policy made overtures to Iran in order to break the ice and gave a new agenda for larger diplomatic initiatives between the United States and Iran.

The second chapter of this research basically sheds light on the main strategies adopted by Obama to deal with Iran in his first and second presidential terms, it also assesses the effectiveness of his policy and provides a comparison between Obama's foreign policy towards Iran and his predecessors' policies.

1. The U.S. Strategy towards Iran during the First Presidential Term of Obama

Obama has acknowledged that, U.S. would seek to lay the foundation for a new course in US policy towards the Muslims. He also affirmed that their relations had to move forward in order to reveal openly to one another the things they hold in their hearts. Moreover, US must redouble its effort to make the Muslims' nations interact with her in order to learn from each other and to respect one another. In this account, Obama repeatedly insisted on avoiding the bad competitions between them. As he declares in his speech in Cairo:

I seek new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world, one based on mutual interest and mutual respect, and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive and need not be in competition. Instead, they overlap and share common principles..... principles of justice and progress; tolerance and the dignity of all human beings". (Obama in Cairo, a Commemorative Transcript, 03)

When Obama was inducted into office in January 2009, he had already developed a vision of his foreign policy destiny. He ran on a platform of restoring the image of the United States abroad to improve its reputation around the world especially in the Muslim World; ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, rebuilding relations with Russia as a step towards leading the world of nuclear weapons, offering an extended hand to Iran, and making peace in the Middle East. Obama sought to make fundamental changes in the sense of justice, peace, and stability in the world (Indyk et al, 2009).

Castiglioni Claudia states that the victory of Obama as the president of the US gave hopes for a change in US policy towards Iran, thus President Obama came to office with a bold agenda on Iran, intending to make his administration different from his predecessor's throughout emphasizing the importance of direct negotiations with the leaderships in Iran and rejecting the aggressive personal diplomacy without preconditions. Obama affirmed his willingness to make a serious, coordinated diplomatic effort to change the world opinion about the American approach to Iran and strengthen the U.S. credibility in the region (1-2). This section discusses the main strategies adopted by Obama in dealing with the Iranian issue.

1.1 The Negotiation Diplomacy

On March 2009, Obama delivered a special message to the Iranian people "Happy new year to Iran", in which he asserted that, the beginning of the new year would carry a chance for both the US and Iran to repair their relations. This new strategy adopted by the US presented a window for breaking the diplomatic plight and paved the way for a good relation between the US and Iran. In addition, Obama acknowledged that his administration is committed to diplomacy to pursue constructive ties between the US, Iran and the international community. This process, which was grounded on mutual respect, was practiced through direct engagement that sought to apply diplomacy with Iran without preconditions. (MacLean, 2009)

The proposal of Obama's negotiation creates a noticeable reaction among the Iranian government, where the Iranian leaders expressed their doubt about the American intention behind this strategy. Their doubt was due to the stereotype of the Iranians towards the Americans and their imperialist arrogant leaders, additionally there is a need to emphasize the fact that the Iranians were incapable of ignoring the multiple grievances of the third world states against the Western power. However, the Iranian government had a strong belief that the Americans would bring deeds not just words which could change the U.S.-Iranian relations in terms of opening a flexible negotiation policy. Such a policy should be based on no contradiction between the Iranians' right for the enrichment of the nuclear program and the world's right to live peacefully.

According to Castiglioni, on October Obama initiated a new round of negotiations. He put the strategy of the negotiation into practice; the first dual meeting between the representatives of the United States and Iran. The meeting led to the agreement of the so-called the "Fuel Swap Deal"; which asserted that in return of a supply of fuel for Tehran research reactor, Iran would ship out an equivalent amount of uranium enriched to 4%, accounting approximately 80% of Iran's Low-Enriched-Uranium (LEU) stockpile at that time. Primarily the agreement has been successful for both sides, but this success was shortly lived because the Iranian leaders started to question the values of the Fuel Swap Deal and the lack of the guarantees from U.S. and the group of p5+1(Permanent five members of the United Nation security Council plus Germany) (5-6).

Gulriz Şen has claimed that, Tehran started to reject the agreement since the deal was not translated into a political agreement and because of Iran's distrust of the Western States in reserving their good will in the agreement (348). In this sense, Parsi Trita states that Iran had reservations about the deal, but it did not have much time to discuss this issue because of the short time that the Obama administration gave for diplomacy. For that reason, Obama faced a

domestic pressure from the Congress to impose sanctions (141). As result, the pressure on the domestic front contributed to give the last warning to Iran, which led to the collapse of the negotiations (Castinglioni, 5).

Obama took a designed risk when he chose to engage the Iranian government so soon after the presidential electoral scandal dispute of Ahmadinajad in Iran. The event highly exhausted the Iranian diplomacy as a whole and led the US-Iranian attempt for engagement to collapse in Obama's first year in office. Obama was confused not about the diplomacy he had been seeking, but rather he fell down on the sanctions that he had hoped to avoid (Parsi, 147).

Maloney Suzanne affirms that Obama's administration determined to plan a new strategy on Iran, but unfortunately this administration found itself suddenly and drastically confronted with the same dilemma of the former regimes in Iran (131). Hence, Obama's foreign policy towards the Islamic Republic of Iran was drifting to implementing sanctions which proved to be an important step in this administration. This shift marked the turning back towards the previous administration's approach through adopting American and international sanctions against Iran (Mac Lean, 34).

1.2 The U.S. Sanctions against Iran

The U.S. has used its authority over all the world's nations to provide and create new unilateral sanctions against Iran. These sanctions were organized by the United States for different priorities; using different tools in order to push Iran to accept initial resolutions about its nuclear program and negotiate its future. Furthermore, Obama has asserted that those penalties have been the core of his agenda to Iran. He declares that he would continue and intensify those sanctions in order to block more the Iranian relations and isolate it far away from the world. As he said "we are showing the Iranian government that its actions have consequences, and if it persists sanctions will continue to mount and its isolation will continued to deepen" (qtd in, khajehpoue et al, 10).

Implementing the US unilateral sanction did not come for nothing but it had various objectives which sought to affect the Iranians to change actions, and oblige them to accept any deal that might enhance and resolve their issue.

As a matter of fact, the U.S. willingness was to change Iran's nuclear calculus through raising the cost of Iran's nuclear pursuit, which made Iranians so exhausted to resist those costs. Additionally, the U.S. government would push the Iranian leaders to go back to the table of negotiation, in return the US promised to end sanctions. Moreover, Obama tended to prevent the military action by America or Israel as an alternative to the war to provide more time for diplomacy. Indeed, the U.S. sought to maintain the unity within the P5+1 throughout preserving the mutual view toward Iran concerning the nuclear issue (Ibid, 10-11). Consequently, the multiple sanctions had touched almost all the domains; these are some of the major sanctions used by Obama administration against Iran.

1.2.1 Political Sanctions

One of the major sanctions imposed by the American congress was called "Victims of Iranian Censorship Act" or the "Voice Act" (VIC). The act was enacted on October 28, 2009; it authorized £30 million in funding for the broadcasting in order to better expansion of the Persian language services at the Persian New Network and Radio. The act also authorized £20 million in funding for the Media Fund and Iranian Electronic Education, it also restricted the Internet censorship. Another key provision in the report is that the US gave funds to the secretary of state to investigate the Iranian abuses for the human rights. (Obama Offer is denounced by Ayatollah, 02).

Actually, the Voice Act which has been passed by the U.S. Congress in 2009 and was renewed in March, 2010 by Obama administration. The American officials created the Iran Electronic Media Fund (IEMF) which had been added to the Voice Act itself, and it was directed to the Human Rights Democracy Fund (HRDF). The aim behind the EMF was to

enrich the technological communication including websites (Mac Lean, 37). In fact, the Iranian reaction was to reject the act by accusing the American government of its attempts to confuse the internal and external Iranian political affairs.

1.2.2 Economic Sanctions

The challenge for the Obama administration was to deal with the Tehran's nuclear ambitions; this pushed US to demonstrate its ability in sanctioning the Iranian economic sector. The Obama administration involved different mechanisms for implementing hard economic sanctions to eradicate Iran's overall economy (Maloney, 1-2). Thus, the US economic pressure could shift the core security goals of the Iranian government and raise political conflicts internally and externally. In this account, the United States issued two types of economic penalties against Iran, trade sanctions and financial sanctions.

1.2.2.1 Trade sanctions

The trade sanctions were penalties that hardly restricted Iran's ability to trade with the United States specifically and the international nations generally. The most influential sanctions are explained down:

Following the United Nation Security Council Resolution of 1929, the US Congress passed the "Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, And Divestment Act" (CISADA) of 2010. President Obama in 1 July signed the act as a new Iran bill. The act strengthened the US sanctions against Iran by restricting activities related to Iran's energy sector, Iran's access to gasoline, and other petroleum production. Moreover, the act set out sanctions on providing gasoline and other fuels to Iran, and abolishing the sale of supplies or services that would help Iran to increase its gasoline production capabilities. Therefore, this sanction caused the shortage of the potential fuel that led to the fall of the Iranian import. (Khajehpour et al,8)

Bryan Gold et al have stated that the trade US sanctions have been applied over Iran since the fall of Shah in 1979. In this concern, the United States in 2011 imposed large unilateral

sanctions and pushed for international action to make a great impact on Iran. Therefore, in November, 2011 president Obama signed the executive order 13590, which was about the regulations on dealing with the Iranian petroleum industry and restrictions on its transactions. In addition, the U.S. Treasury Department passed new unilateral sanctions under CISADA to prevent institutions from conducting any business with any Iranian banks and on any importation of the Iranian goods (3-7).

Obama also passed the “Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act” (TRSR) which reinforced the sanctions against Iran, it imposed sanctions over the companies that conducted with Iran’s energy sector. Thus, this action remained a higher insurance cost for Iranian tanker, and many institutions have refused to ensure its ships. The act under the executive order had designated individuals and entities accused of facilitating serious human rights abuses against the people of Iran, including the Iranian cyber police, broadcasting, and electronic industries. (Gold et al, 6)

It is clear that, those sanctions prevented Iran’s ability to invest its oil production due to prohibiting companies from selling to Iran gas and other fuels. This caused the shortage of the potential fuel which restricted the development of the Iranian oil sector. As a result, it led to the fall of the Iranian import that drove the United States to ban trade and investment with Iran definitively.

The United States continued its penalties to affect the financial sector, which limited the amount of money that Iran received to regulate both the domestic and international finances.

1.2.2.2 Financial Sanctions

According to Gary Samore, a new set of sanctions was imposed by the United States, in which the Treasury Department designated in November 21, 2011 the “Patriot Act” that was about Iran’s entire financial sector, including Iran as ”primary money laundering concern” under the section 311 of this act. The act identified the entire Iranian sector including Iran’s

central bank, private Iranian banks, branches, and subsidiaries of Iranian banks operating outside the country as a danger to the worldwide financial system. (17)

On December 31, 2011, president Obama signed the FY2012 “National Defense Authorization Act” (NDAA), which contained an amendment to prevent foreign banks from opening accounts in US, if these banks refined payments for oil through Central Bank of Iran, the act of NDAA imposed sanctions on the CBI in ways that influence major penalties against entities, including cooperation and foreign central banks which engaged in transactions with Iran. (Gold et al, 7)

In response to those U.S. financial sanctions, the Iranian institutions have employed various plans to escape the U.S. restrictions. Among those tactics Iranians have used non-sanctioned banks to make the transactions mission of the sanctioned banks, or spent their funds throughout exchanging houses and factories to hide the process of sanctioned transactions. (Samore, 17)

Despite all the Iranians attempts for escaping those limitations, the United States continued to impose further financial sanctions. Accordingly, on February 27, 2012, the Treasury Department strengthened the Iranian Financial Sanctions Regulations (IFSR), in order to stretch penalties to foreign financial institutions that made transactions with the Central Bank of Iran, or U.S. designated Iranian financial institutions. It also sanctioned the private foreign institutions (Gold et al, 7). Moreover, on August 10, 2012, president Obama signed into law the “Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act”. The act prevented access to the U.S. market for companies doing business with Iran’s energy sector and froze properties of persons, insurers and lenders facilitating repatriation of the Iranian oil revenues, and doing business with the Iranian national tanker company. (khajehpour et al, 9)

By implementing the harsh financial sanctions, the United States could deprive Iran from financing by the export-import banks, lending guarantees, lending money and export

international insurance. Also the U.S. ordered the representatives in the International Monetary Fund to prevent any kind of help to Tehran. Therefore, this action hindered the Iranian financial oil development projects (Samore, 16).

Sanctioning the Iranian financial and banking system have made a great effect on the Iranian banks by isolating and putting them far away from the international financial system. Meanwhile, the US has cut off their relation with the Iranian banks, and forced foreign institutions to choose business with Iranians or with US.

The U.S. use of sanctions had generally exhausted the Iranian economy. Iran's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) decreased by 1,9% and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) would reduce by 1,3% for the next three years. Thus, the economic sanctions had restricted the Iranian regional influence and had put a hard pressure on the leadership to hinder their objectives. Also, it had altered the core security interests of the Iranian government to change their behaviors. Thus, the United States had made Iran's goal hard to be achieved. (Maloney, 2)

On 2012, the Israelian pressure for the military attack was checked by imposing further sanctions on Iran. As a result, the United States assisted to apply toughest sanctions and diplomatic pressure on Iran in order to push the Iranians to change their behaviors. Besides that, there were three consecutive talks over the nuclear program in Istanbul, Baghdad, and Moscow which failed to bring any progress; unfortunately the negotiations were left on the table. Iran continued enriching at 20% and installing new centrifuges for its security from the Israel air attack and still negotiating for a solution. In this account, Iran sought for a deal that would acknowledge and protect its right for enrichment on its own soil and remove sanctions, US pursued its sanctions policy to put more pressure on Iran to comply. (Gulriz, 353)

By the end of 2012, the democratic president Barack Obama had won a second term in office. Despite the little that has been achieved by Obama's administration in Iran concerning

stopping the nuclear program and promoting democracy in the region, Obama took those two issues to be continued at the fore front in his second term presidency in office. (Mac Lean, 51)

2. The U.S. Strategy towards Iran during the Second Presidential Term of Obama

Castiglioni has argued that Obama's victory in November 2012 was an opportunity to obtain and raise some new hopes to improve the US- Iranian relation. Meanwhile, Obama's administration was asked to reverse America's failing strategy towards Iran and to gain the goals that were established before in 2008 (9). Obama's second term was different in nature as well as in process; it was covered with engagement that revealed a process of regulating the Iranian rebellion, and attempted to create a self-reinforcing network of trust and mutual interest. (Maloney, 101)

Obama in his administration's policy asserted that, there was an opportunity to convince Iran to limit its nuclear program and to rebuild the US-Iran relationship after decades of animosity (Katzman, 19). Nevertheless, Obama faced a severe pressure that came from the congress as well as from his Republican rivals and regional allies to end the Iranian threat of the nuclear program rather than engage in diplomacy. In this account, negotiations could not succeed because the objectives of both Iran and US are so profoundly mismatched; the United States call for ending all Iranian enrichment activities in one side, and Tehran's request to acknowledge Iran's nuclear rights in the other side.(Maloney, 94-95)

2.1 The Updated Economic Sanctions

President Obama faced the same dilemma with Iran as it was in his first term, in the sense that he committed to prevent the country from acquiring the nuclear weapons, which might be not proved without launching a military action that he wanted to avoid. Therefore, the economic sanctions were updated to make a heavy impact on Iran (Michel, 121). For instance, on January 2, 2013, president Obama signed into law the FY2013 "National Defense Authorization Act". It cut off property and imposed sanctions on entities that provide goods

and services to energy, shipbuilding, and port operations; in addition it blocked the blacklists foreign banks which would provide services using the US banking system. (Gold et al, 5)

At the same month, President Barack Obama imposed another sanction called “Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act” of 2012. This act imposed sanctions on entities that provide goods or services to Iranian energy, shipping, and shipbuilding sectors, or provide insurance, underwriting, or reinsurance to the Iranian firms that connected with these sectors. It also sanctioned entities that provided precious metals to Iran (Samore, 35-36). In addition, on February 27, 2013, the United States passed the “Nuclear Prevention Act” which increased the list of blacklists Iranian companies, and restricted business dealing with Iran. (Gold et al, 5)

Iran’s reaction have been mixed as the U.S. sanctions continued to diminish the Iranians’ energy export and revenues, blocked the Iranians investment transactions, and created serious banking and trade problems. Accordingly, the sanctions of 2013 had restricted the foreign trade, collapsed the Iranians reserves, and caused troubles in working with the Iranian financial system. So these sanctions primarily presented an important reason in devastating the economic field. (Ibid, 8)

2.2 Restoration of the Engagement Policy

Kenneth Katzman asserts that the gridlock between Iran and the United States was broken in June, 2013 coincided with the victory of Hassan Rohani in the Iranian presidential election. The event affirmed to increase the chance to put diplomacy back on track, and once again raised hopes in US, Iran, and the international community to be engaged in constructive interaction. The election of Rohani also contributed in the administration’s shift to emphasize diplomacy and in refusing additional sanctions from the United States and the European Union. Thus, Obama’s United Nation Speech on September 24, 2013 emphasized the United

States' willingness to resolve the nuclear issue peacefully and asserted that the U.S. is not seeking to transform the Iranian regime. (19)

Katzman and Paul.K Kerr have stated that on November 24, 2013 the interim nuclear agreement "The Joint Plan of Action" (JPA) was set out to create an approach toward reaching a long-term comprehensive solution to the United States and global interests concerning Iran's nuclear program. The act was signed between Iran and p5+1 countries in Geneva; it consisted of a short- time freeze of portions of Iran's nuclear program in return of reducing the economic sanctions over Iran. In this account, Iran agreed to refrain from any further advances of its activities and it provided the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with additional information about the nuclear program.(1-6)

The JPA also acknowledged Iran's right to have a peaceful use of the nuclear program under Non- Proliferation Treaty (NPT), this was a part of the comprehensive compromise, where JPA sought to make a framework of cooperation to strengthen Iran-US relations in order to resolve the Iranian issue. (Ibid, 7)

2.3 The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)

The JPA began to be implemented on January 20, 2014, and it reached the "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action" (JCPOA); the Iran deal or the Iranian nuclear deal; it was an international agreement on the nuclear program between Iran and p5+1. The JCPOA would involve a mutually defined enrichment program with practical limits and transparency control in order to reach a permanent resolution about sanctions, in exchange for restriction; Tehran would be obliged to resolve interests that dealt with the Iranian reactor, refrain reprocessing nuclear fuel, and accept transparency monitoring. The JCPOA declared that Iran's program would be treated as a non- nuclear nation. (Katzman and Kerr, 8)

Iran and the p5+1 negotiators acknowledged the Joint Plan of Action on November, 2013, in which Iran devoted to place meaningful restrictions on its nuclear program, in response

p5+1 would provide Iran with limited, targeted, and reversible sanctions relief for a six months. The request has been continued to be discussed until November, 2014. However, the deadline was reached without any agreement and Iran and p5+1 continued to extend their conditions until June 30, 2015. (Rennack, 1)

On July, 14, 2015, Iran with the p5+1 have agreed on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in Vienna. The framework of the agreement was about ensuring that the Iran's nuclear program will be exclusively peaceful. In return, the negotiating parties with the United Nation would produce the comprehensive cancelation of all UN security council sanctions as well as multilateral and national sanctions related to Iran's nuclear program, including steps on access in the fields of trade, technology, finance, and energy. (Ibid, 2)

The book which is entitled "*The Foreign Policy Initiatives*" has reported that the Islamic Republic of Iran posed serious threat to the United States and its allies. But in July, 2015, the nuclear agreement with Tehran had exclusively reduced this danger. This agreement contributed in the legitimization of the Iranian nuclear program rather than destroying it and it provided Iran with a plenty of sanctions relief that would develop its goals and regional objectives. Eventually, the deal set out many provisions including:

1. The deal involved weak control measures that are insufficient to prevent Iran from advancing its research of the nuclear weapons. Although Obama's administration stressed the importance of anytime and anywhere inspections, the nuclear deal allowed Iran to deny the inspectors to access all military sites. The deal also emphasized that Iran was able to have a self- military inspection.
2. The nuclear deal provided Iran with almost immediate relief from most international sanctions, including access to the oil revenue that has frozen, and renewed foreign investment.

3. The JCPOA preserved Iran's infrastructure, in which Iran would place some of its centrifuges in storage and accept the limit on the size of its enriched uranium stockpile. Also under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the United States and its allies would have an obligation to help Iran to make the nuclear facilities resistant to any attack.
4. The JCPOA's fault enforcement mechanism would make it virtually impossible to punish Iran for violating the agreement. Obama has emphasized that sanctions would snap back into place if Iran violated the agreement. Hence, the deal also released Iran from its obligations if sanctions were re-imposed.
5. Broader conclusion, the JCPOA indicated that the IAEA will pursue drawing a broader conclusion that all nuclear material in Iran remained in peaceful activities. Therefore, the agency could draw such a conclusion for states with comprehensive safeguards agreements and protocols in force.(31)

The international community has widely accepted the agreement with all provisions. Nevertheless, in the United States president Obama had to convince the American congress and public about this agreement. Primarily, Obama signed the agreement as an executive act, however, under a recently passed statute called "Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015" (NARA), congress may pass a resolution approving or disapproving the agreement. So in stimulating congress to ratify the deal, Obama stated that "if we don't choose wisely, I believe future generations will judge us harshly, for letting this moment slip away". The president also argued that the success of the agreement should not be evaluated by whether the Iranian government is changed or not, but by the goal of the deal that was to stop Iran from acquiring the nuclear weapons, and make the world safer and secure. (Sterio, 79-81)

2.4 The Implementation of the “Iranian Nuclear Deal”

Dianne. E Rennak reveals that, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which was finalized on July, 14, 2015, began into formal implementation on January, 16, 2016. The International Atomic Energy Agency verified that Iran had put into action the measures enumerated in the JCPOA to damage and end its nuclear-related capabilities. The Department of the treasury’s office of foreign assets control with the state department and president Obama started steps for the US to know its obligation under the JCPOA, abolishing a number of executive orders, declaring general licenses to authorize assumption of some trade, transaction related to foreign entities owned or controlled by the United States, and exercising waivers for non- US person as it allowed by various laws. (3-4)

The implementation day of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which was announced by the p5+1 has presented the completion of Iran’s nuclear requirement entering into effect of UN Security Council resolution 2231 that ratified the nuclear deal. The sanctions relief began to be implemented as a part of the conditions in the agreement. And the International Atomic Energy Agency with the US officials indicated that Iran is abiding by the JPCOA because the IAEA have checked and controlled Iran’s nuclear commitments. (Karzman and Kerr, 1)

The p5+1 leaders with Obama affirmed that the nuclear deal represented the most effective tool to ensure that Iran cannot obtain nuclear weapons, and that US was still capable of preventing Iran from its progress concerning its program. Moreover, president Obama asserted that the implementation of the agreement marked an opportunity to reduce the long-standing US-Iran enmity and build a new relationship (Katzman, 1). The deal has likely defused some US-Iran tensions and diminished the possibility of the armed conflict between the two nations. Consequently, The United States and Iran explored cooperation and become more eager to normalize their relations. (Nader, 12)

According to Katzman, after the JPCOA Obama expressed hope that the deal would guide into a new era in US-Iranian relations, however; the agreement expressed interests that the extensive sanctions relief provided under the accord have given Iran more additional resources to extend its influence in the region. As a result, Iran continued to test ballistic missiles, arrested additional US- Iran dual nationals, and conducted high speed intercepts of US naval vessels in the Persian Gulf. Meanwhile, Obama and other senior US officials affirmed that the nuclear deal would show if U.S. national security improved or not. (23)

Obama left Iran as a far more dangerous region than it was eight years ago, since Obama's administration provided support for Iran to emerge over the JPCOA. He helped to transform the Islamic Republic with its extremist hegemonic agenda to rise as a region powered at the expense of the US allies. (Landau, 12)

3. Assessment of Obama Administration's Policy towards Iran

In the high developments flowering in the recent years in the Middle East; the civil wars, terrorism, and the threat of the Iranian nuclear program, Obama's policy has been recently at the center of examination and analysis. Obama's policy towards Iran caused lively debates among experts in which some focused on criticizing on the gap between his policy objectives, while others acknowledged its effects, this section discusses the major effects and shortcomings of Obama policy.

3.1 Effects of Obama's Policy

When President Obama took the office, he chose reaching out the Iranian regime and launching a new round of dialogue and rapprochement as a base for reducing the Iranian dispute. Obama wanted to re-establish permanent negotiations with Tehran to enhance the U.S-Iranian relations under a strategy of engagement (Amir, 1). However, this strategy was assessed in terms of Obama's approach and tactics in resolving the Iranian issue. Therefore, Obama's outcomes have marked a crucial effect on U.S, Iran, and the international interests.

This accomplishment has reached approximately all the domains, here are some of the main effects of Obama policy.

3.1.1. Political Effects

Maloney has argued that Obama administration in Iran could make unprecedented successes in dealing with Iran, and that it realized the ultimate goals of the US policy; reducing the threat of the nuclear capability, support for terrorism, and the abuse of its citizens. For that reason, Obama during his 2008 campaign adopted the notion of engagement to demonstrate American receptivity to a negotiated resolution of the nuclear issue.(5)

Obama started his administration with the tentative fuel-swap agreement, which was as the key that rebuilt the US-Iranian confidence and drove both sides for negotiations in one table. Moreover, Obama has retained the second term Bush policy framework; designating Iran under counter-proliferation and counter terrorism laws to preserve a powerful means for creating an effect across the global landscape of the country's international ties.(Ibid,5-6)

With the United Nation Security Council' sanctions, Obama served a platform for additional measures for individuals' states, as well as European Union. In this way, the president also encouraged cooperation among like-minded states in Europe and Asia, throughout utilizing sanctions policy to highlight human rights abuses in Iran, and restricting the government access to nuclear proliferation (Maloney, 8-9).

Litwak Robert S states that president Obama defended his agreement with Iran and his decision to engage in the negotiations from a position of strength, and affirmed that under the deal, Iran will not be able to achieve nuclear weapons. The deal is not built on trust; it is built on verification and measures. The US-Iranian agreement provided both sides with a winning political narrative; Obama highlighted the constraints of the agreement that has placed on Iran's nuclear program, cutting off plutonium route to the bomb and diminishing the number of centrifuges. In addition, president Rohani with his negotiators have confirmed that they

systemized Iran's sovereign right to manage the Iranian domestic affairs in order to maintain a political stability in the country. (1)

3.1.2 Economic Effects

Obama administration's toughest sanctions over Iran had great effects and consequences; sanctions and the US control of export have played an important role in decelerating Iran's capability to acquire the technology that helped for its sophisticated nuclear program. The sanctions also drove many investors out of the Iranian market place, launching periodic crises for the Iranian currency, and significantly escalating the costs of doing business with or in Iran. In addition, Obama's administration succeeded in extending the reach of unilateral American limitations without estranging the allies by focusing on relatively dull financial mechanisms and targeted designations of the banking sector of Iran. Therefore, these sanctions affected negatively its production and export options and prevented Iran's development and stalled her far behind its goals.

Eventually, the sanctions for the U.S. were the basis to build coalition, in which nations demonstrated unified purposes, and their seriousness of their concerns about Iran's nuclear intentions.(Weighting benefits and costs of international sanctions against Iran, 12)

3.1.3 International Effects

The United States' strategy led by Obama in Iran has affected the international community by putting much higher alert about the threat of Iran's nuclear program. The United States has warned Iran to cost the Iranian economy, stability, and regional influence if it has continued ignoring the conditions of both U.S. and other Western nations. Moreover, Obama's policy has restored reassurance among American friends and allies to maintain their security, and to thank their appreciation about Iran's issue. In this account, the United States has succeeded in converting the international view to become opposite to the Iranian behavior, and raised their support to be an active member in imposing sanctions against Iran. (Ibid, 33-34)

The U.S. foreign policy during Obama's presidency has basically deterred other nations from advancing their nuclear weapons. This was one of the major aims behind its policy in order to extend the scope of abolishing the proliferation states. In fact, as broad countries were sanctioning, U.S. could intimidate them from acquiring nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, Obama foreign policy has succeeded in opening the door for diplomacy and could enhance the Iranian relationship, if the Iranians wanted not to change their behavior, they could also work with one of the most powerful and influential countries in the region.

3.2 Shortcomings of Obama's Policy

Obama's policy towards Iran has also missed to reach some United States' objectives, and left some negative effects. Generally, the toughest sanctions which were imposed by Obama had some negative impacts, these are discussed down.

3.2.1 Political Shortcomings

Sterio Melina has argued that Obama's agreement with Iran in the "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action" had also some negative consequences on US. The deal that restricted Iran's nuclear ambition lacked any reliable protection and it was mainly dependent on fixed string of concession to Tehran. Therefore, it was criticized by several critics for having many disadvantages. The deal was limited in duration and contained several provisions that the US and its allies may view as providing concessions on the behalf of Iran. For instance, under the agreement, Iran was allowed to continue enriching uranium peacefully, but this provision gave Iran approval to preserve a small-scale nuclear program and enabled her to enlarge the nuclear production. (78)

Obama's deal also affected U.S. politically in the sense that it did not lead to a full rollback of the nuclear program progress, because the United States had faced a great pressure from Israel to stop enriching uranium. Moreover, the agreement emphasized that if Iran would violate the conditions of the deal, Obama would snap-back to the sanctions; in fact a potential

violation may affect the Security Council which has 30 days to make a resolution to continue the lifting sanctions. However; if the resolution could not be adopted in 30 days, the sanctions would be re-imposed. Hence, the influence of that action was that the members of the Security Council: US, Britain, France, Russia, and China can veto to continue the sanctions relief but no member can veto the re-imposed sanctions. So the United States and its members will be disinclined to impose snap-back sanctions. (Ibid, 79)

3.2.2 Social Shortcomings

The U.S foreign policy towards Iran has widely influenced the Iranian society welfare by imposing sanctions. Those sanctions have increased corruption in which it lowered the standard of living and well-being of Iran's population. It has also produced human suffering; it has reduced the availability of food and other basic requirements; for instance, the highly expensive food prices, and the lack of medicine and medical devices. Besides, the toughest sanctions over Iran have complicated the humanitarian relief donations such as personal donations to individual Iranians, because the U.S. abolished donated organizations. This abolition is due to the sanctioned Iranian banking system which it has needed a special Treasury Department licenses to provide such donations. (Weighting benefits and costs of international sanctions against Iran, 51)

3.2.3 Economic Shortcomings

Obama's economic sanctions have had a devastating impact on the Iranian economy; in fact, they have caused the current economic problems. As a matter of fact, the Iranian chamber of commerce has announced that 50% of the economic deadlock was a direct consequence of external sanctions, and 50% was because of mismanagement as well as the spread of corruption. Such sanctions cost the Iranian country about \$3.4 billion per month. Therefore, the economic sanctions have damaged Iran's economy. (khajehpour et al, 12)

Obama's foreign policy towards Iran also harmed the global energy supply and the stability of the global energy market. The world oil prices highly increased because of the U.S. sanctions against Iran that caused a great tension with the Iranians. As a result, sanctions have produced a jump in the world oil prices, and pushed Iran for a threat to close the Strait of Hormuz. In addition, the U.S. has diminished Iran's presence in the global oil market where it likely caused Iran's oil and gas to damage; US prevented Iran from accessing the natural gas market and developing the Iranian capacity to export natural gas (Weighting benefits and costs of international sanctions against Iran, 55).

Moreover, US sanctions have also created disputes with US allies and other countries, for example, they had enlarged tensions between the United States, Russia, and China, and this complicated the US efforts to achieve Security Council unity on international issues. (Ibid, 15)

From all what it is mentioned above, one could realize that keeping Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon is one of the central aims of Obama's foreign policy. This goal had been partly achieved through "a nuclear agreement" with the Iranian leaders, which has marked a great victory in Obama's foreign policy.

The agreement could narrowly oblige a framework of inspections and monitoring to make it more difficult for the Iranians to get the bomb. The U.S.-Iran nuclear deal could fulfill Obama's promise in his first inaugural address to extend the hand to the Iranians if they were willing to unclench their fist. In this context, Obama's strategy with Iran has achieved a great success, even if it came at a heavy price regardless of what came after. The U.S-Iranian relationship has been compromised under a tentative deal which has succeeded in reducing the development of the nuclear proliferation without a military force.

4. A Comparison between Obama's Foreign Policy towards Iran and Some Previous Regimes' Policies

The Obama administration's policy has improved, if it is compared to what have been done by the previous US presidents. Looking back at previous policies' agendas helped Obama to know the former mistakes in order to avoid them. For example, in the US-Iranian relations, Obama primarily emphasized on the view that the United States must talk with its enemies, accepting the limits of its power, and constructing strategic accommodations. Nevertheless; the former regimes neglected this view because they sought to transform and dominate rather than manage the national security. (Stanley A, 57-58)

Sheikhneshin shows that the former administrations mainly adopted the same policy of confrontation towards Iran. This means that there is no difference among the approaches that preceded Obama administration. Thus, Obama criticized them and brought a new policy to improve the US-Iran relation. As a matter of fact, Obama brought the policy of "change" that was different from the previous regimes. This section compares between Obama's foreign policy towards Iran and the foreign policies of the two previous presidents: Bill Clinton and George Bush.

4.1 Obama Vs Clinton

Obama and Clinton followed a special policy where they sought to achieve much development which would be better than the preceding policies. Bill Clinton's administration has been seen as the first administration to set out on developing a more consistent and transparent policy compared to Obama's policy, because it was more understandable and clear. The policy of Clinton that came to be known as "Dual Containment policy" was directed at increasing pressure to isolate both Iran and Iraq through political, economic, and military strategies, because the two mentioned nations were considered as a sponsorship of terrorism, in addition to their opposition to the Arab-Israel peace process. Lake Anthony

explains that this policy aimed to counter the hostility of both Tehran and Baghdad but in regular approaches.

Obama's administration in Iran represented a sharp break from Clinton's regime. His doctrine was autonomous and different because Obama did his best to renew the diplomacy between the two sides by introducing his policy of the new beginning, which was grounded on the mutual respect and interest. Obama administration made a great effort both in public and private to persuade Iran to engage in a diplomatic dialogue with the US, under the name of the negotiation policy which had not been US policy towards Iran for decades (Akbarzadeh, 398-399). In addition, another important approach in Obama's agenda was the elimination of any preconditions on Iran's attendance at the negotiation with the IAEA, concerning their nuclear dispute.

Despite all those differences between the two policies, one needs to emphasize the fact that they shared multiple similarities; the main noticeable purpose for the two presidents was to protect America's interests in the Middle-East, stabilize international politics, and extend the nations that committed to the values of America. Indeed, the nation of Iran was one of the most countries which were listed among the priorities in Clinton and Obama's foreign policies, because it represented a threat to the national security through its proliferation of the nuclear weapons.

The policy of Clinton and Obama administration that sought to prevent Iran's acquisition of technology and tools for their nuclear program was a key element of their strategy against Iran. Both of the policies strongly argued that pressure and sanctions were necessarily needed to change the well-known Iranian behaviors.

Parsi argues that Obama's policy towards Iran shifted from engagement strategy to restore the sanctions' strategy as Clinton primarily did. The sanction policy was followed by the two administrations in order to weaken the Iranian economy that would lead immediately to the

end of their nuclear enrichment (208). Obama and Clinton strongly pressured Iran and exhausted its economy through signing many contracts with other countries to sanction Iran. Hence, the American government banned the participation of the Iranian companies in any international investments as mentioned earlier with the “Conoco Oil Deal” in Clinton regime and the “Patriot Act” in Obama administration.

4.2 Obama Vs Bush

According to Steven W and John Spanier, in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks, George W. Bush revealed formally his policy and called it “the Bush Doctrine” or the “Grand Strategy”, in which he immediately shifted his domestically orientation and attitudes into a preemptive war strategy in order to counter terrorism. Bush focused on the international concerns that forced him to follow a new offensive policy to deter any enemies determined to inflict on the U.S (349). Hence, Bush policy sought to reach a global democratization through military unilateralism. Overall, many critics have evaluated that George W. Bush’s grand strategy was aggressive, hegemonic and preemptive (Gaddis, 10)

When Barack Obama took the office of US president, he criticized the previous regime of Bush and tried to build up a new beginning in the American foreign policy. According to Rielly John E, Obama has sought to restore America’s reputation through enhancing the United States’ image in Iran. Thus, he gave a high priority to sophisticate the US-Iranian relation under a diplomatic contact, and rejected the military force of Bush policy when implementing the US foreign policy (2). In this account, Ahmad Khan Tanvir has asserted that Obama adopted the engagement policy to deal with Iran and opened all inclusive negotiations to give new fresh initiatives for Iran and US to talk with each other. (25)

Undoubtedly, both administrations have common similarities. As tackled before, the two presidents’ policies hoped to prevent Iran from enriching its nuclear program, by imposing political and economic sanctions to make Iran comply with the American conditions.

Subsequently, Obama and Bush worked in cooperation with the EU countries to target the organizations and business of the Iranians for sanctions. One perfect key element that was shared between the entire American presidents is the right to advocate for the restoration and maintaining the nation security.

Obama also built a relation based more on conciliation; he basically succeeded in persuading Iran to get in the negotiation table over the nuclear weapon. Although Obama continued to implement a hard-line stance on the nuclear issue and threatened Iran with tougher sanctions as a part of his nonproliferation agenda, he could turn to a diplomatic solution throughout engaging in negotiations that resulted in the best ever reached “nuclear deal” of the century as a tentative resolution of the issue between US and Iran.

Ultimately, Obama’s administration has reached a resolution for the Iranian issue based on mutual negotiations. The nuclear deal, which has restrained Iran’s ability to develop nuclear weapons over the next fifteen years, may lead to global safety, peace in the Middle East, and nuclear non-proliferation. Consequently, if this proves to be true, the agreement will constitute president Obama’s most significant foreign policy accomplishment and will be viewed as a cornerstone of his legacy.

General Conclusion

This thesis is an investigation about the U.S. foreign policy towards Iran during Obama's presidency; it emphasizes the early relation between both countries as a base platform for evaluating Obama's foreign policy in Iran. The purpose of this study was to examine Obama's policy to Iran and analyze its impact on Iran, U.S, and the international community. The study also attempted to show how Obama's policy towards Iran would change the Iranian behavior to stop the nuclear enrichment, and how his policy was different from the previous presidents' policies.

The current thesis is divided into two main chapters. The first chapter provided a historical background of the American-Iranian relations. It presented the historical realm of the early U.S-Iran relation which was arguably a bad relation that continued till the recent time. The second chapter attempted to provide an answer to the three research questions, and a discussion about the main findings of the study. This is a summary of the major findings of the three proposed questions.

1. What was the main foreign policy adopted by Obama administration to resolve the conflict with Iran?

The main foreign policy adopted by Obama towards Iran lays in the utilization of two major strategies "the sanction policy and the negotiation strategy". The first strategy was based on punishing Iran through imposing tough sanctions and setting a hard embargo on its economic sector, this refrained Obama from using the military action. The American foreign policy during this time shifted into the strategy of "one- track" that was based on sanctions rather than diplomacy. As a consequence of these sanctions, the tensions between the two nations started to grow up as the U.S. insisted on applying the toughest sanctions and diplomatic pressure to push the Iranians to change their behaviors.

In addition, Obama used the “negotiation strategy” which focused on opening a new form of direct talk to enhance the U.S. leverage in restricting Tehran’s nuclear program. Obama believed that the negotiations between the United States and Iran would not be easy because the two nations’ interests basically diverge. However, Obama has emphasized that he could create a policy that satisfies all sides; Iran, regional allies, and domestic leaders, and he argued that the diplomatic strategy would result in a mutual deal between Iran and the international community. Thus, this strategy would reinforce the U.S. position in the Middle East through cooperation, not through confrontation.

Although Obama was following hard sanctions on Iran, he preferred the negotiation strategy more and he really could establish a direct engagement between U.S and Iran to make the relation smoother. This engagement has resulted in a tentative solution for the Iranian issue through the “Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action” (JCPA). This action stated that Iran should place meaningful restrictions on its nuclear program; in return U.S would provide Iran with limited and reversible sanctions relief for a temporary time.

2. To what extent was Obama’s strategy successful in dealing with the Iranian issue?

This study provided an evaluation about the US foreign policy towards Iran under the administration of Obama, and it revealed that Obama administration could reach “the nuclear agreement with Tehran”, that is also known as “the great deal”. The nuclear agreement with Tehran has noticeably succeeded in reducing the Iran’s danger by legitimizing the Iranian nuclear program with a condition of peaceful use. This nuclear deal has been considered as the main goal which Obama wanted to achieve a long time ago.

This goal which had been partly achieved through a nuclear agreement with the Iranians represents a great victory in Obama’s foreign policy. The agreement could oblige a framework of inspections and monitoring on Iran in order to make it more difficult for the Iranians to get the bomb.

However, Obama's policy towards Iran was criticized by many for having several shortcomings. Many have criticized the "the nuclear agreement with Tehran because it was limited in duration and for providing concessions on the behalf of Iran. For instance, under this agreement, Iran was still allowed to continue enriching uranium peacefully. Moreover, the sanctions imposed by Obama administration have increased corruption in Iran and lowered the standard of living and well-being of Iran's population, they devastated the Iranian economy. As a matter of fact, the Iranian officials have announced that 50% of the economic deadlock was a result of the American sanctions. On the international level, the world oil prices highly increased, and some tensions rose between US and other countries because of the U.S. sanctions against Iran.

3. How can Obama's foreign policy towards Iran be evaluated in comparison with the previous regimes' policies?

The study also provided a comparative analysis between Obama's foreign policy to Iran and some previous presidents' policies, in particular it focused on making a comparison between Obama's policy and those policies of Clinton and Bush. The study findings revealed that Obama's policy in Iran has represented a sharp break from other regimes; this new foreign policy was different from the ones practiced before. In fact, Obama was different in the sense that he preferred to use the soft power of engagement. Obama stood in contrast to the confrontational policies of his predecessors, but without changing the previous administrations' characterization of Iran as a threat to U.S. national security. Though Obama attempted to use a different policy from his predecessors concerning the Iranian Issue, he still shared the same goals with them that Iran should be prevented from acquiring nuclear capabilities.

Many obstacles have been faced during the conduction of this research; this made the study objectives somehow hard to be achieved. The most faced difficulty when conducting

this study was the lack of available and reliable data, this is due to the fact that the study tackles a new current topic. Moreover, the data gathered for this research was purely qualitative rather than the quantitative, the study lacked the use of other methods such as interviews and questionnaire, which if used, the findings would be so abundant and the scope of results would be larger.

This research is still far from perfection because it has not provided an extensive analysis about Obama's foreign policy to Iran; the current study was limited in scope, methodology and analysis. For this, it is suggested for future researchers interested in this topic to take into consideration these ideas when conducting their studies:

- It is recommended for the other future researchers to extend more about this topic by investigating, for instance, the reasons that led Obama not to use the military forces to resolve the Iranian issue.
- It is also suggested to cover points that are not dealt with in this study, like tackling the aim of Iran behind enriching the nuclear program, which Iran stressed on despite all the sanctions imposed on it.
- Further researches are required to examine whether or not the tentative resolution made by Obama administration will really eliminate the Iranian threat and affect both nations to be engaged in permanent good relation.
- Further studies may deal with the topic using other forms of methodology. While this study uses only the analytical and historical approaches, future researchers are invited to use the quantitative method instead of the qualitative one; it is recommend using other methods as questionnaires and interviews for collecting rich data.

Glossary

- 1. Axis of evil:** It is a term that former United State president George W.Bush used to describe countries which were involved with terrorism and weapons of mass destruction including Iran, Iraq, and North Korea.
- 2. Foreign policy:** It is a plan of action adopted by one nation in regards to its diplomatic dealings with other countries. Foreign policies are established as a systematic way to deal with issues that may arise with other countries in order to achieve national objectives.
- 3. Nuclear program:** It is the use of nuclear reactions that release nuclear energy to generate heat, which most frequently is then used in steam turbines to produce electricity in a nuclear power plant. The term includes nuclear fission, nuclear decay and nuclear fusion.
- 4. Nuclear proliferation:** It is the spread of nuclear weapons, fissionable material, and weapons-applicable nuclear technology and information to nations not recognized as "Nuclear Weapon States" by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, also known as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty or NPT.
- 5. Persia:** Also called Persian Empire, an ancient empire located in West and South-West Asia: at its height it extended from Egypt and the Aegean to India; conquered by Alexander the Great in 334-331 b.c, then it took the official name of Iran in 1935.
- 6. SAVAK:** It is the Organization of Intelligence and National Security was the secret police, domestic security and intelligence service established by Iran's Mohammad Reza Shah with the help of the United States' Central Intelligence Agency (the CIA), SAVAK has been described as Iran's "most hated and feared institution" prior to the revolution of 1979 because of its practice of torturing and executing opponents of the Pahlavi regime.
- 7. Secularization:** It is the transformation of a society from close identification with religious values and institutions toward non-religious values and secular institutions. The secularization refers to the belief that as society's progress, particularly through modernization and rationalization, religion loses its authority

- 8. Strait of Hormuz:** also called Strait of Ormuz, channel linking the Persian Gulf (west) with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea (southeast). The strait is 35 to 60 miles (55 to 95 km) wide and separates Iran (north) from the Arabian Peninsula (south). It contains the islands of Qeshm (Qishm), Hormuz, and Hengām (Henjām) and is of great strategic and economic importance, especially as oil tankers collecting from various ports on the Persian Gulf must pass through the strait.
- 9. The P5+1:** The P5+1 is a group of world powers who have been negotiating with Iran since 2006 with the goal of limiting Iran's capacity to manufacture a nuclear weapon in exchange for relief from certain economic sanctions and the ability to pursue a civilian nuclear energy program. The P5+1 is composed of the five permanent members (P5) of the UN Security Council (the U.S., China, Russia, France and the United Kingdom) and Germany (+1).
- 10. Terrorism:** The use of violent acts to frighten the people in an area as a way of trying to achieve a political, religious, or ideological change.
- 11. Uranium:** Chemistry. A white, lustrous, radioactive, metallic element, occurring in pitchblende and having compounds that are used in pantograph and in coloring glass. The 235 isotope is used in atomic and hydrogen bombs and as a fuel in nuclear reactors. Its symbol is U.

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