

A Workable Alternative to Sanctions and Military Intervention in Preventing a Nuclear Armed Iran

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Submitted to the
Institute of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Arts
in
International Relations

Eastern Mediterranean University
July 2015
Gazimağusa, North Cyprus

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ABSTRACT

For decades, several countries including The United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, Pakistan, North Korea, and Israel have been able to manage the possession of nuclear weapons, but the mere thought of a potential nuclear armed Iran has raised an enormous security concern in the international community because of the devastating consequences that this would cause not just for the Middle East region, but for the entire international community. As much as the international community has agreed on preventing a nuclear armed Iran, the high level of controversy in the international community regarding what policy tool is most appropriate in actualising this objective has divided pundits and foreign policy experts along three main policy lines; sanctions, military intervention and diplomacy.

With a benefit-cost analysis and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the respective foreign policy options available in preventing a nuclear armed Iran, this research hope to ascertain the most effective and less costly policy option in preventing a nuclear armed Iran. In pursuit of this objective, this research is divided into five chapters; chapter one covers the introduction of the subject in focus. Chapter two entails the literature review, conceptualization and theoretical framework. An overview of the Iranian nuclear crisis is provided in chapter three. Chapter four covers a benefit-cost analysis and an evaluation of the effectiveness of all three options. Chapter five is the summary, recommendation and conclusion.

Keywords: Sanctions, diplomacy, military intervention, framework agreement, proliferation, escalation, stalemate, centrifuges, plutonium, enrichment, verification.

ÖZ

Yüzyıllar boyu Amerika, Rusya , Birleşik Krallık, Fransa, Çin, Pakistan, Kuzey Kore ve İsrail gibi birçok ülke sahip oldukları nükleer silahları idare etmeyi başarabildiler, ancak İran'ın nükleer bir güce sahip olma düşüncesi bile sadece Orta Doğu bölgesinde değil, bütün uluslararası toplumda yıkıcı sonuçlara sebep verebilme ihtimali bile uluslararası toplum için ciddi bir güvenlik endişesinin oluşumuna sebep verir.Uluslararası toplum her ne kadar nükleer güce sahip bir İran'ın oluşumunu engellemekte karar kılmış olsa da, bunu hayata geçirmek için hangi politik yönün izleneceği konusunda uluslararası toplumun büyük orandaki anlaşmazlığı uzmanları ve dış politika uzmanlarını üç ana politik alana yönlendirdi; müeyyide,askeri müdahale ve diplomasi.

Bu araştırma elde olan karlılık analizi ve her bir dış politika seçeneklerinin geçerlilik tespiti ile nükleer güce sahip bir İranın engellenmesinde en etkili ve en uygun bütçeli seçeneğin hangisi olduğunu belirlemeyi amaçlar. Bu amaç arayışında araştırma beş bölüme ayrılır; birinci bölüm konuya girişi kapsar. İkinci bölüm konuyu literatür inceleme, kavramsallaştırma ve teorik çerçevede irdeler. Üçüncü bölüm ise İran'ın nükleer krizine bir genel bakış sunar. Dördüncü bölüm tüm üç seçeneğin karlılık analizi ve geçerlilik tespitini kapsar. Beşinci bölüm ise özet, öneri ve sonuçtan oluşur.

Anahtar kelimeler: Müeyyide, diplomasi, askeri müdahale, çerçeve antlaşması, artma, yükselme, çıkmaz, santrifuj, plutonyum, zenginleştirme, tahkik etme.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my immediate family, whose enormous moral and financial support contributed immensely to the success of this work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My unreserved thanks go to God almighty for his overwhelming grace that was sufficient throughout my master's program. I profoundly appreciate the support and encouragement of my family; Mr and Mrs Ayodele Adelana, Mrs Omotayo Salami, Mr Henry Adelana, Ms. Olayinka Adekoya, Mrs Abiodun Alawode, Mr. Olugbenga Adelana, Mr Olufemi Adenana and Mr Oluwole Adelana, who have always seen the possibilities and strived to bring out the best in me. Their moral and financial support has transformed my dreams into a reality.

My sincere gratitude is extended to Dr. Olufunmilade Olufemi, who has been a huge source of motivation from my university days, hitherto. Special thanks are channelled to my thesis supervisor Assist. Prof. John Turner for his constructive input and the enabling environment he created in the course of my thesis. He has inspired me greatly and his soft words of encouragement will forever remain my companion. I acknowledge Assist. Prof. Altay Nevzat and Assist. Prof. Aylin Guzel, who despite their busy schedule took out time to follow up on my thesis presentation, i also recognise the impact of the entire Department of Political Science and International Relation that have positively constructed my thoughts.

To my friends and comrades who made my Master's program an interesting and a memorable experience, i am eternally grateful.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Though the international community have neither confirmed nor clearly stated Iran's possession or pursuit of nuclear weapons, several Iranian illegal nuclear activities and its non-compliance with its safeguard obligations have increased scepticism among pundits and observers in the international community concerning Iran's pursuit of peaceful nuclear technology. Preventing a potential nuclear armed Iran is obviously not an issue of contention among states in the international community, but a growing controversy have been "among all three options (sanctions, military intervention and diplomacy), which will be most viable in achieving this 'ultimate goal' of thwarting the Iranian illicit nuclear weapons ambition".

This study seeks to analyse the benefits, costs and potency of all three policy options, with an aim of evaluating which is most effective and less costly in achieving the ultimate objective of preventing a nuclear armed Iran.

1.1 Statement of Problem and Justification of Study

The question; whether or not Iran should have nuclear weapons has been adequately answered by an unusual consensus in the international community, in fact, policy options have been proffered in line with this objective. However, a major challenge facing the international community in this issue has been the division among pundits and foreign policy makers over what option will be most effective among these objectives.

More than two decades have been dedicated to test the effectiveness of sanctions in achieving this goal, but unfortunately sanctions have resulted to little more than a waste of time. Military intervention has also been recommended by hardliners, but such option has faced huge objections because of its calculated costs that outweigh its proposed benefits. For more than a year now, the balls of diplomacy has been rolling on the international playground with several achievements, but such approach have also not been without criticism as sceptics of such approach have negated this option. The obvious puzzle that has been left unsolved in the international arena, regarding the Iranian nuclear program has been the ability to identify the most effective and least costly option in achieving this objective.

The relevance of this study is to expand our knowledge of the various policy options available in preventing a nuclear armed Iran and provide a basis for proper evaluation of their effectiveness through an analysis of the benefits and costs of the various options.

1.2 Methodology of the Study

This is a case study research that focuses on the Iranian nuclear program. It involves a qualitative research technique, with a collection of secondary data that will help validate the aforementioned hypothesis. The sources consulted in the course of this research include: congress reports, academic journals, articles, newsletters and publications, books and reviews from relevant and credible sources.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the most effective policy option in preventing a nuclear armed Iran?

A comprehensive analysis and comparison of all three policy options, considering their benefits and costs will be provided in an effort to answer this question and ascertain which policy option can best achieve the stated objective.

2. How effective is the present U.S diplomatic strategy in preventing a nuclear armed Iran?

The purpose of this question is to x-ray the on-going diplomatic engagement between Iran and the P5+1, identifying its benefits, costs, effectiveness, limitations and how diplomacy has been able to tackle pivotal questions regarding its potency in achieving its stated objective.

1.4 Hypothesis

Diplomacy remains the most effective and less costly strategy in preventing a nuclear armed Iran.

1.5 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter provides an introductory section of the work that gives an overview of the entire structure of the work, stating the statement of problem, methodology, research questions and hypothesis.

Chapter two enables an expanded understanding of the contexts of sanction, military strike and diplomacy; it also provides an elaborate review of scholarly contributions to the topic in focus, with an explanation of the theoretical background that supports my argument. The third chapter provides an overview of the Iranian nuclear crisis, stressing pivotal issues that requires clarify for to enable proper understanding of the discussion in this thesis.

Chapter four provides a comprehensive analysis of the study, with a focus on the benefits, costs and effectiveness of sanction, military intervention and diplomacy in preventing a nuclear armed Iran. Chapter four is the core of my thesis, as it is aimed at validating the hypothesis.

Chapter five includes the summary, conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The history of Iran's nuclear program predates the recent crisis between Iran and the west and even the Islamic Republic of Iran. As part of the Atom for Peace Program, Iran's nuclear program was set on motion with the assistance of the United States in the 1950s. Iran signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968, which went into force with its ratification by its Head of State in 1970.¹ As events unfold, from the 1979 revolution and hostage crisis at the United States embassy in Iran, to the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, the Iran's nuclear program took a different turn, especially in terms of its foreign support and assistance.

Reports of Iran's clandestine nuclear development and procurement program which was a violation of Iran's non-proliferation obligation, and its acceptance of its enrichment facility at Natanz, a fuel fabrication plant, heavy water production at Arak in 2003, instigated an intense debate among leaders of the west, on how to manage the Iranian nuclear program development. For fear of international isolation and sanctions, Iran suspended its Uranium enrichment, signed an Additional Protocol on Nuclear Safeguard and announced its cooperation with the IAEA in full transparency.² However, Iran has continually failed in its commitment to the IAEA,

¹ Seyed Hossein Mousavian, "The Iranian Nuclear Crisis". Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. July

² Paul K. Kerr "Iran's Nuclear Program: Tehran's Compliance with International Obligations" Conventional Report Service. June 2015. Retrieved from: <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/R40094.pdf>.

by refusing to provide a timely and comprehensive support to the IAEA. It has also denied the IAEA inspectors entrance to several sites. Such actions have led to an increasing level of suspicion and distrust by the U.S led western government.

The international community for years has adopted the use of sanctions against Iran, but the sanctions have failed to hit the right target, and therefore, its effectiveness has been questioned. Military strikes have been proposed by experts, but its calculated cost outweighs whatever benefits the United States and/or Israel would achieve from its employment. With the Joint Plan of Action – a peace agreement that is aimed at reaching a comprehensive solution to the Iran nuclear crisis, the U.S and its partners have drifted towards diplomacy, with an aim of negotiating a comprehensive solution that will ensure Iran’s development of exclusively peaceful nuclear program.

This part of my research seeks to expand on the context of sanctions, military strike and diplomacy, providing an elaborate review of scholarly contributions to the topic in focus, and thereafter analyse the Iranian Nuclear politics through the lens of the mainstream theory of international relations: liberalism.

2.2 Conceptualization

2.2.1 An overview of sanction

According to a former British ambassador to the United Nations, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, “in a modern legitimacy –oriented world, military action is necessarily unpopular and in many ways ineffective and words don’t work with hard regime. So something between these is necessary. What else is there?”³ Sanctions are foreign policy tools, employed by countries or international organisations to persuade a

³ Jonathan Marcus “Do Economic Sanctions Work?” BBC London, July 26, 2010. Retrieved from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-25077839>

certain government or group of governments to change their foreign policy behaviour, by limiting investment, trade and other commercial activities.

Sanctions as foreign policy decisions are normally structured along the parameters of “will this work”. All policy makers want to be convinced that if they conclude on the imposition of sanction on any country, person or entity, it is worth the risk. To ensure this, they try to target the right vulnerability or interest, and they want to be certain that such action will advance their interest by influencing the sanctioned party in their favour.⁴

Sanctions are generally viewed as an alternative to the application of military force. By pushing an offender socially, economically or politically, the enforcer of sanctions anticipate a resolve to a conflict, in the absence of mass suffering and the sacrifices brought by war.⁵ In the light of this, sanctions are considered as foreign policy options that falls between war and diplomatic words. The main pillar of most investigations on the efficacy of international sanctions, is the anticipated change of behaviour of the targeted country.⁶

In line with the objectives targeted by the United Nations Security Council, the utility of sanction can be categorised into five main groups:

- 1) **Conflict resolution:** These are sanctions imposed with the aim of resolving conflicts. An example of such sanction is the 1988 Taliban sanction regime

⁴ Richard Nephew “ Are Sanctions Effective?”, Centre on Global Energy Policy, 2015. Retrieved from: <http://energypolicy.columbia.edu/sanctions-blog-columbia-s-centre-global-energy-policy-post-two>.

⁵ M. Shane Smith “Sanctions: Diplomatic Tool or Warfare by the other Means?” 2004. Retrieved from: <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/sanctions>.

⁶ Francesco Givmelli “Coercing, Constraining and Signalling” ECPR Press, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, United Kingdom, 2011, P.1

- 2) **Non-proliferation:** The principal objective of such sanction is to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. For example, the imposition of sanction on the democratic people's republic of Korea with resolution 1718, following their nuclear weapons test on October 9, 2006
- 3) **Counter-terrorism:** Such sanctions are geared towards preventing terrorism and terrorist activities. Examples of such are sanctions following the pan air 103 flight and UTA flight 772 in 1989.
- 4) **Democratization:** These are sanction impositions with the focus on preservation and sustenance of the democratic rights of citizens. The Security Council sanction with resolution 2048, in response to the April 2012 military coup in Guinea-Bissau, is a typical example of such sanction.
- 5) **Protection of civilian:** These are sanctions targeted towards the protection of civilians from the violation of human right and humanitarian law. The Libya 1970 sanction regime is mostly seen as the first UN sanction, where the pursuit of civilian protection was explicitly started as the main objective.

According to the United Nations Security Council report on sanctions, there are five main classifications of sanctions, they are: diplomatic sanction, arms embargo, trade ban, asset freeze and commodity interdiction. The enforcement of sanctions can take various shapes and forms, depending on the imposing parties. It could be unilateral, bilateral and multilateral.⁷

2.2.2 An Overview of Military Intervention

Foreign policy, once constructed can be executed via various means. An obvious disparity exists between three categories of foreign policy instruments, namely

⁷ United Nations Security Council Special Research Report No. 3, "UN Sanctions" November 25, 2013, Pp. 1-5.

political, economic and military instruments.⁸ Present day states, as in the past, sometimes resort to the use of military force in their relations, as a means of advancing their interest, when diplomacy fails, or is considered to be of little prospect. As an instrument of last resort, the military tool in foreign policy involves the use of force. It could also involve other military techniques void of war, such as military aids and assistance, military threat, military intervention and the deployment of the military in peace support operations.⁹

Some expected utility calculated by some statesmen before employing military strategy includes: the level of importance the nation attributes to the anticipated outcome of a war, the nation's disposition to take the risk, the estimate of key possibilities, such as the likelihood of winning an armed struggle against an opponent, the likelihood of receiving assistance from other states and the likelihood of facing opposition from other states, including non-states actors.¹⁰ Military force may not necessarily be employed against the highest threat in the international system, but against states and non-state actors that poses instant threat to survival and foreign policies. According to Waltz , the quest for survival compel states to forsake mutually beneficial cooperation¹¹

Whether direct or indirect employment, military force has become the sanctioned tool of violence that states employ in the interaction with one another and when required in an international security role.¹²

⁸ Prof. Anton du Plessis "the Military and Foreign Policy: from Final Arbiter to Statecraft" Paper presented at the First South African Conference on Strategic Theory: Stellenbosch University, June 11-12 2009, P. 3

⁹ Ibid, p.5

¹⁰ Sigmund Freud " Civilization, War and Death" Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, Pennsylvania State University, 1953

¹¹ Stephen M. Walt "Origin of Alliance Ithaca" Cornell University Press, 1987, P. 21 & 34.

¹² Bassey C.O "Contemporary Strategy and the African Condition" Macmillan Nigeria Publishers L.T.D, Lagos, 2005, P. 24.

2.2.3 An Overview of Diplomacy

Military force and diplomacy are channels through which government of sovereign states press their agenda on other state governments, in a bid to shape the behaviour of other governments toward them (in their favour). This is why they are often referred to as instruments of foreign policy. While the former forcefully communicate the wishes of a government on others, the later verbally communicate the wish of a government on others. Diplomacy is “the application of intelligence or tact to the conduct of relations between the governments of independent states”. Advancing further, he described diplomacy as the most viable means, civilisation have devised for preventing the relations of states from being governed exclusively by force. In other words, diplomacy has emerged as the most potent alternative to force in the relations of states¹³

The principal purpose of diplomacy as an instrument of foreign policy is to enable sovereign states to achieve their foreign policy objectives, without resorting to force, propaganda or law.¹⁴ In his book, ‘the Politics Among States: the Struggle for Power and Peace’, Hans Morgenthau identifies the primary functions of diplomacy which includes: determining the objectives of a state in view of the power actually and potentially, available for the actualisation of these objectives; assessment of the objectives of a state and the availability of power to pursue these objectives; diplomacy must assess the extent of capability of the objectives with each other ; diplomacy must employ suitable means in order to achieve these objectives.

¹³ Sir Ernest Mason Satow “a Guide to Diplomatic Practice” Cambridge University Press, 2011, P. 1.

¹⁴ G.R. Berridge “Diplomacy: Theory and Practice” Palgrave Macmillan, 4th Edition, 2010, P.1

According to him, the failure of diplomacy in either of these tasks will endanger the success of foreign policy.¹⁵

2.3 Scholarly Explanations

The increasing concerns over Iran's illicit nuclear activities have instigated an intense debate among pundits and experts in the field of International Relations. Even though there has been an unusual high level of international consensus on the need to prevent a nuclear armed Iran, the mechanism or foreign policy tool to be employed in achieving the objective has been an issue of immense controversy. There have been enormous scholarly contributions by authors and writers from around the globe, regarding this very pertinent international issue. Some advocating for continued and increased sanction on Iran, while others in support of military strike are actively negating the idea of sanctions as an effective tool in thwarting Iran's illicit nuclear ambition, owing to the slow and insignificant progress of sanctions over the years. A third group of scholars however, have supported a diplomatic approach in preventing a nuclear armed Iran.

This part of my research will analyse the divergent opinion of scholars, identifying their various views on the efficacy of the various foreign policy options in preventing a nuclear armed Iran.

Supporters of sanctions against Iran have negated the diplomatic efforts by the United States to achieve a comprehensive agreement on the Iran nuclear program. According to James Philip, "the Obama's administration engagement policy towards Iran has failed to diffuse the nuclear standoff. Instead Iran has stalled until it can

¹⁵ Hans Joachim Morgenthau "Politics Among Nations" McGraw Hill, University of California, 6th Edition, 1993, P. 12-18

present the world with a nuclear fait accompli". He further assert that the best option for the administration is to press the UN and its allies towards imposing the strongest possible sanctions on Iran, in order to increase Iran's cost of continuing in its illicit nuclear program.¹⁶ Explained the rationale behind the above statement by James Philip. In his opinion, Iran's missile and nuclear program has been vulnerable to sanctions because of their reliance on foreign supply of vital goods they found difficult to produce.¹⁷ Therefore, international sanctions will help limit Iran's ability to procure ballistic and nuclear program, making the acquisition of such equipment increasingly expensive for Iran. In evaluating the efficacy of financial sanctions on Iran, he added that financial sanctions focusing on Iran's personnel and firms that are involved in the Iran's nuclear program will impede their ability to purchase very sensitive goods, as such firms and individuals will be cut-off from the global financial market, creating a challenge for them to be involved in international transactions of such equipment, using the US dollar or Euro.

According to Katzman, Iran's willingness to be involved in a Joint Plan of Action, can be attributed to the potency of sanctions and this in his word, is an "evidence that sanction is contributing substantially to Iran's willingness to halt further development of its nuclear program" addressing the issue further, he maintains that an additional sanction is necessary to reinforce the pressure that brought Iran to the negotiating table and increase the possibility of reaching a permanent settlement. Proponents of sanctions argue that an increase in sanction will increase the negotiating leverage of the US, preventing the erosion of the effect of sanctions by

¹⁶ James Fallow "Iran's Nuclear Program: What is Known and Unknown" Heritage Foundation No2393. Retrieved from: <http://heritage.org/research/reports/2010/03/iran-s-nuclear-program-what-is-known-and-unknown>.

¹⁷ Peter Crail "Sanctions Seen Slowing Iran's Nuclear Work" Arms Control Association, Vol.41, No.5, June 2011, Pp. 38-48

the perception that the negotiations have brought an end to Iran's international isolation.¹⁸

If Iran's nuclear program was for civilian purpose, it would have made it known; instead it has continually relied on deception in its development of long-range missiles and its request for the right to an unlimited research. Experts in support of sanctions propose that Iran is too adamant and is unwilling to surrender its nuclear weapons program and therefore, there is no ground for negotiation with such recalcitrant nation like Iran. According to Bromund, "we know what nations that give up on nuclear program look like, they look nothing like Iran". To halt this unhappy international situation, he contends that the United States is left with just two options: the threat of military force to compel the Iranian regime to its wish, or better still, impose rugged sanctions on them, with an aim of pressuring Iran into a favourable comprehensive agreement.¹⁹

From a contrasting view point to that of sanctions, advocates of military intervention suggest what they believe to be the most viable foreign policy tool in halting the Iranian illicit nuclear ambition and achieving the foreign policy objective of preventing a nuclear armed Iran (military force). Advocates of this view agree that sanctions have compelled Iran to the negotiating table, but it has failed to persuade it to abandon its illicit nuclear weapons ambitions, therefore they consider the use of force as the ultimate tool in pursuing the relations between Iran and the United

¹⁸ Katzam Katzam "Achievements of and Outlook for Sanctions on Iran" *Current Politics and Economics of Middle East*, 5(1), 2014, Pp. 217-235. Retrieved from: <http://searchproquest.com/docview/162345399?accountid>.

¹⁹ Theodore R. Bromund "on Iran, no Deal is a Good Deal" the Heritage Foundation, December 1, 2014. Retrieved from: <http://www.heritage.org/research/commentary/2014/12/on-iran-no-deal-is-a-good-deal>.

States.²⁰ However, critics of military force have warned that such instrument could likely fail, and even if it succeeds, it would ignite a devastating war that would lead to a global economic crisis. Owing to the fear of a military strike and its consequences, they continue to press for non-military tools like diplomacy and sanctions to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

Matthew Koenig, a strong supporter of military force condemns this view about the Iranian nuclear politics, on the grounds that critics of military actions are illogical in their reasons, because they (critics) assert that if non-military tactics fails, then “the US should learn to live with a nuclear Iran”. According to Koenig, sceptics of military actions have failed to realize the height of danger that an Iran with a nuclear bomb will pose to the interest of the US in the Middle East. He further argued that a well-managed military strike, intended to destroy Iran’s nuclear facilities, could spare the Middle East the imminent destruction and improve the national security of the US in the long-term.²¹

Even though it could be true that it is very difficult for intelligence service to provide military planners with a comprehensive and exact picture of the Iranian nuclear facilities locations, which is needed to perform a complete destruction of the entire Iranian nuclear installations , military force advocates like Inbar Efraim still believe that partial destruction of the Iranian nuclear facilities is imperative, because it would cripple the Iranians ability to build a nuclear weapon in the nearest future.²² To further reinforce this assertion, in an article published by the Iran project, defenders

²⁰ Dr. Mohammed Younus Fahim “Diplomacy, the Only Legitimate Way of Conducting International Relations” Lulu.com Official Publishers Pp. 5-12

²¹ Keonig Mtthew “Time to Attack Iran: Why a Strike is the Least Bad Option” Foreign Affairs, January/February Issues, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://foreignaffairs.com/node/14050>

²² Prof. Efraim Inbar “the Imperative to Use Force against Iranian Nuclearization” BESA Centre Perspective, No. 12, December 15, 2003. Retrieved from: <http://www.biv.ac.il/soc/besa/perspective12.pdf>

of this view estimated that military strike could slow down Iran's ability to develop a nuclear bomb, for duration of four years. According to them, though there are possibilities of Iran rebuilding the facilities after four years, but the United States would achieve a lot from any such military action, because with it, the U.S will be able to destroy a reasonable percentage of the Iranian nuclear installations, leaving behind an increased economic difficulty in rebuilding new installations, such action will help demonstrate the credibility and the seriousness of the United States, in their pursuit for non-proliferation and this will help deter outsiders and insiders from pursuing same ambition, because of fear that such ambition might attract similar response. This in their opinion will contribute to peace and increase the U.S influence in the region. This will be as a result of the assurance regional allies will feel because such action will pass a message that the US will protect their security, meaning an increased credibility for Washington's promise to its allies in the region.²³

Considering the politics surrounding the Iran's nuclear program, the United States is left with two main choices, which according to military force advocates are: either to employ all available instruments (including military force) in preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, or concentrate on deterring Iran from utilizing it, if it eventually does. They negate the latter choice because in their opinion, "a nuclear Iran is not a challenge that can be contained", therefore, as long as Iran refuses to give up its program, military force will continue to remain the best available option.²⁴

The more telling the signs that Iran has resolved to pursue a nuclear weapon, the

²³ The Iran Project "Weighing Benefits and Costs of Military Action Against Iran" New York, the Iran Project 2012, Pp.2,4 & 5. Retrieved from: http://www.wilsoncentre.org/sites/default/files/iranreport_091112_FINA'.pdf

²⁴ Robert Jervis "Getting to Yes with Iran: the Challenges of Coercive Diplomacy", Council on Foreign Relations, January/February Issues, 2013. Retrieved from: http://www.foreignaffairs.com/article/13_8481/robert-jervis/getting-to-yes-with-iran.

more convincing the justification for military force would be to the global community. The refusal of inspectors into the Iranian nuclear sites and other suspicious actions have been indicators that they are bent on acquiring the weapon, and the international community must continue to consider military action in their relations because “the more apparent the decision to make a weapon, the more persuasive the justification for military action would be”.

Away from sanctions and military intervention, some scholars and expert of International Relations have been championing the idea of diplomacy as a foreign policy tool in preventing a nuclear armed Iran. Backers of diplomacy negate the use of force or any form of coercion in achieving the foreign policy objective of the United States. The principal argument held by critics of diplomacy against this view is that diplomacy will only result to a waste of time, since it leaves Iran at an advantage of buying time and advancing their nuclear weapons program, with a key strategy of prolonging the Iran nuclear talks. Supporters of diplomacy oppose such assertion on the ground that sanctions are no different because they are also time consuming and worst still, they leave both parties without any prospect of direct communication or compromise. In contribution, they consider negotiations as the most credible of all policy options because it portrays the willingness of the United States to engage in peaceful resolution of international issues.²⁵

The diplomatic process in achieving these objectives includes several critical issues that has raised the level of scepticisms among critics and has made even advocates of this view to be cautiously optimistic about it. Such issues involve the fact that a

²⁵ Balogh Istvan “the U.S, Israeli and Iran: Diplomacy is still the Best Option- the Good Cop/Bad Cop Approach?” CENAA Analysis, Centre for European and North Atlantic Affairs, 2010. Retrieved from: <http://cenaa-org/analysis/the-us-israel-and-iran-diplomacy-is-still-the-best-option-the-good-cop-bad-cop-approach>.

peace agreement must include a settlement on the size of Iran's uranium enrichment program, the future of the heavy water plutonium reactor at Arak and the Fordo nuclear facility, and finally a conclusion on a verification and monitoring regime in Iran. Critics consider a positive settlement on the issues an impossible task, but proponents of diplomacy like Robert Einhorn argue that despite the complexity of the talks, there are still grounds for optimism because the November 2013 deal suggests that both parties are capable of reaching an agreement and settling their differences. Rezan Marashi, Director of research at the National Iranian-American Council asserts that as a function of the above mentioned deal, both parties have understood the importance of process and patience, and therefore, diplomacy should be given a chance to survive, as new sanctions will frustrate efforts of diplomats in reaching a comprehensive settlement.²⁶

Measuring the effectiveness of sanctions, supporters of diplomacy have held strongly to the view that sanctions imposed on Iran have been dramatically ineffective, as they are hitting the wrong targets, which has consequently been responsible for inflation, pervasive unemployment, medical shortage and food crisis. Diplomats argue that such devastating consequences of sanctions will only be aggravated, if the United States resorts to military force as an alternative to sanctions, because such action will subject the population of Iran to a more devastating inhumane situation²⁷. Considering the failure of sanctions and the anticipated evil of military force, proponents of diplomacy, argue for diplomacy as the best alternative to sanctions and military strike in preventing a nuclear armed Iran.

²⁶ Dale Sprusansky "Prospect of Reaching a Nuclear Deal, Restoring Diplomatic Ties with Iran" Washington Report on Middle East Affairs WRMEA, May 2014. Retrieved from: <http://www.wrmea.org/2014-may/waging-peace-protests-of-reaching-of-reaching-a-nuclear-deal-restoring-diplomatic-ties-with-iran.html>.

²⁷ Glenn Greenwald "Iran Sanctions Now Causing Food Insecurity, Mass Suffering" The Economist, October 7th, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://the-guardian.com/commentisfree/2012/oct/07/iran-sanctions-suffering>

Some scholars posit that a nuclear peace deal will provide Iran with sanctions relief that might be disadvantageous to the United States, but scholars in support of diplomacy have argued that such sanctions reliefs are imperative, as Iran needs such incentives from the deal, in order to make it viable. They propose that Iran craves complete lifting of sanctions and cannot lose focus on such goal because there are still plenty of incentives to broker for. According to Marashi, sanctions relief like the presence of business delegation in Tehran is pivotal for the success of the talks, because it provides Iran with a taste of what it feels like without sanctions and it will make them press for the full package that diplomacy offers.

Some scholars like Ramin Asgard press for further diplomatic move by the United States which should include opening of US interest section in Iran. According to him, since 1979, the US has had limited understanding of the realities in Iran and this has impeded effective policy making towards Tehran and the Middle East. A US interest section in Tehran will increase Washington's level of engagement on bilateral issues with the Iranian government. Even though some opined that normalization of relations with Iran will be perceived as a betrayal of Iranian oppositions and advocates of human rights, Asgard reacted that severed relations for the past 35years has not advanced human right in Iran , but a normalization of relations would conceivably do more to advance such goal.²⁸

Conclusively, after a comprehensive examination of the framework agreement reached on 2nd April 2015, Barak Ravid commented that no other policy option can be more effective than diplomacy because even though Iran achieved some success

²⁸ Dale Sprusansky "Prospect of Reaching a Nuclear Deal, Restoring Diplomatic Ties with Iran" Washington Report on Middle East Affairs WRMEA, May 2014. Retrieved from: <http://www.wrmea.org/2014-may/waging-peace-protests-of-reaching-a-nuclear-deal-restoring-diplomatic-ties-with-iran.html>.

as regards the narrative, the west also made significant advancement alone on critical political issues. Highlighting some of such advancement, he pointed to the 15years duration of limited enrichment of uranium to not more than 3.5 per cent, which could not be used for nuclear weapons, a deal that would allow a 20 to 25 years UN inspection on all Iranian nuclear facilities, including storage facilities and uranium mine, ratification of additional NPT protocol that allows surprise inspection of the UN on any suspected nuclear activity, etc. To him, this brings an understanding that should Iran uphold these agreement, their nuclear weapons program will be halted for two decades, and this he believes is a clear evidence that diplomacy remains the most constructive approach in dealing with a nuclear armed Iran, as military strike proposed by some scholars cannot achieve such advancement.²⁹ Such strike will only increase the cost of direct Iranian retaliation, closing of the Straits of Hormuz, breakdown in the international solidarity against Iran's nuclear weapons program and a moral justification of Iran becoming a nuclear power.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The Iranian nuclear program and the reaction of the United States and the international community can be analysed, using various International Relations theories. For the purpose of this study, i will examine the on-going Iranian nuclear politics through the lens of neorealism and neoliberalism.

Like the neorealist, the neoliberals agree that the structure of the international system is anarchical in nature, and acknowledges states as significant actors in the international arena, that are rational in behaviour. Such 'shared assumption' have brought both theories together in the so-called neo-neo synthesis. My approach in

²⁹ Barak Ravid "Iran Nuclear Framework: Not a Bad Deal" Haaretz 2015. Retrieved from: www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/premium-1650355.

this study rejects the paradigm of the neo-neo synthesis, demonstrating the unique characteristics and distinct differences between neorealism and neoliberalism.

Neorealism emphasises power distribution in the international system, asserting that such power struggle impede international cooperation among states in the international community.³⁰ The neorealist scepticism about the possibility of cooperation between Iran and the West as regards Iran's nuclear program, rests on the neorealist premise that states view the international system as a continuous competition for power, as a result of the fear of uncertainty of the intention of other, which drives them towards self-help and power maximization at the detriment of other states in the system. Hence, the realists see Iran's agreement to any deal that will rip it off its nuclear power in this 'highly competitive' international environment as highly improbable.

Neorealist leverage on the anarchical international system where states exists to justify their quest for relative gains at all cost. According to Grieco, states are 'defensive positionalists' that are always in search of security. He posits that such desire makes them sensitive to relative gains, rather than absolute gains.³¹

Offensive realists argue that the international system exists without a central authority to construct the affairs of states' therefore; there is the need for states to

³⁰ Hansenclever Andreas, Peter Mayer and Volker Rittberger eds "Theories of International Regime" New York, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

³¹ Joseph Grieco "Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: a Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism" International Organization, Vol. 42, Pp 485-507

improve their position via mercantile foreign economic policies (sanctions), opportunistic expansion, force etc.³²

As a consequence of the neorealist idea of relative gains, and their opposition to the neoliberal belief of international cooperation and the role of international institution and regime in enhancing such cooperation among states, the realists support the use of coercion and force in preventing a nuclear armed Iran.

In contrast to the aforementioned neorealist views, liberals “contend that states are not engaged in simple struggle, like gladiators in an arena, but are limited in their conflict with one another by common rules and institution”.³³ The neoliberal dimension of the Iranian nuclear program and the reaction of the international community towards it are centred on the effectiveness of cooperation and negotiation in preventing a nuclear armed Iran.

As opposed to the neorealist support for sanctions and military intervention that depicts the use of coercion and force against Iran; neoliberals hold a positive view of the situation, supporting the application of diplomacy as the most constructive foreign policy tool in preventing Iran from acquiring the weapon. Their support for International Institutions in resolving the on-going international crisis is grounded on the neoliberal’s idea of cooperation among states.

According to Immanuel Kant, “human character is marked by self-interest and a desire for self-preservation, yet also possessing the capacity for moral thought,

³² Jeffrey W. Taliaffero “Security Seeking Under Anarchy: Defence Realism Revisited” *International Security*, Vol.25, No. 3. P. 128

³³ Bull Hedley “The Anarchical Society” New York Columbia University Press

reason and human sympathy”.³⁴ In essence, regardless of the interest of states and the environment states find themselves, neoliberals still see the possibility of cooperation among states in the international community.

Contrary to the realist claims, neoliberals argue that cooperation among states can be met, if states are concerned with pursuit of absolute gains that can be achieved through a non-zero-sum game that leads to a win-win outcome.³⁵ As noted by Mohammed [2014] “it is important for everybody to realize that the only way to deal with Iran is through respect and negotiation and meeting on a non-zero-sum game”.³⁶ Neoliberals applaud the diplomatic approach of sanction relief, as it correlates with the idea of a non-zero-sum game, which will enable both parties benefit from the good of a peace deal.

In contrast to the neorealist view on the role of international institutions and regimes, neoliberals emphasise the importance of international institutions in promoting cooperation among states, reducing the risk of war by guaranteeing the independence of states (sovereignty), constraining the over ambitious desires of states and reconciling the differences among states.³⁷ For neoliberals, the advancement in relations between the United States and Iran, as regards the talks over Iran’s nuclear program can be attributed to the importance of international regime (IAEA). In Robert Keohane’s work, ‘International Institution: Two Approaches’, he explains harmony as a state where the behaviour of actors that are involved are mutually

³⁴ Martin Griffiths “International Relations for the Twenty First Century” Routledge, Abingdon, New York, P.22, 2007

³⁵ Filippo Andreatta and Mathias Koenig-Archbugi “Which Synthesis? Strategies of Theoretical Integration and the Neorealist-Neoliberal Debate” International Political Science Review, 31 (2), P.212, 2010

³⁶ Mohammed Javad Zarrif “Only Way to Nuclear Pact is Negotiations Based on Non-Zero-Sum Game” Tehran Times, Volume 1221. Retrieved from: <http://tehrantimes.com/politics/121729-only-way-to-nuclear-pact-is-based-on-non-zero-sum-game-zarif>.

³⁷ Martin Griffiths “International Relations for the Twenty First Century” Routledge, Abingdon, New York, P.21, 2007

beneficial, and can be achieved where it is not currently present, via cooperation, mainly with an international institution or regime.³⁸

A major responsibility of the international institution and regime in such situation as the Iran nuclear crisis is to provide an increased volume of transparency, via the monitoring of each country's behaviour, that will ensure that interactions are not soaked in uncertainty. This has been evident in the on-going nuclear crisis, as the presence of international organisation and regime have built an assurance that the action of the West is not entirely parsimonious and malicious, and consequently, the nuclear talks between Iran and the West have been navigating towards high level of coordination, which have increased the chances of a harmonious relationship between Iran and the West.

The base of my argument in this study rests on the neoliberal theory of International Relations that posits cooperation and diplomacy as the most constructive foreign policy option in preventing a nuclear armed Iran.

³⁸ Keohane Robert "International Institutions: Two Approaches" *International Studies Quarterly* 32.4 Pp 379, 382 & 386, 1988.

Chapter 3

AN OVERVIEW OF THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR CRISIS

3.1 Introduction

The complex politics surrounding the on-going nuclear struggle between Iran and the West cannot be understood without a substantial knowledge of the history and evolution of the Iran's nuclear program. This part of my work provides a background study of the Iranian nuclear program, from its inception in the 1950s, to the current diplomatic engagement.

3.2 Evolution of Iran's Nuclear Program

3.2.1 Atom for Peace: 1950s and 1960s

In a 1953 address to the United Nations General Assembly, then – American President Eisenhower articulated the Atom for Peace Program. He called for the use of nuclear materials for civilian purpose, and the establishment of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), under the United Nations. In his words, “a special purpose would be to provide abundant electrical energy in the power starved areas of the world”. Under this program, nuclear cooperation with Iran and several developing countries was established. In the late 1950s, Iran's nuclear program began under Shah's regime, with the United States' supply of a small 5Mwt research reactor (TTR) to the Tehran Nuclear Centre, which was later fuelled with highly

Enriched Uranium (HEU) in 1967. In July 1968, Iran signed the Non-proliferation Treaty, on the same day it was declared open for signature.³⁹

3.2.2 Iran Seeks Nuclear Power: 1974 – 1979

In 1974, the Iran Atomic Energy Organisation (IAEO) was established, and in the same year, Iran announced its intentions for a nuclear program that would include above 20 nuclear power reactors. Major western powers supported this program, as they sought the sales of nuclear power reactors to Iran. To develop the first power reactor located at Bushehr, Iran got into a contract with Kraftwerk Union (a German firm), and spent hundreds of millions of dollars in the Eurodif's Uranium enrichment plant in France, in a bid to acquire the required enriched uranium fuel. Iran also declared its interest in obtaining a domestic plutonium separation; the United States was opposed to this action because it was wary of Iran's actions and the IAEA's ability to safeguard such plant.

In February 1975, Shah clearly stated his nuclear ambition when he said that Iran had “no intention of acquiring nuclear weapons but if small states began building them, Iran might have to reconsider its policy”. In this period, Tehran recorded significant advancement in its nuclear program and was involved in the nuclear training of Iranian technicians abroad.⁴⁰

3.2.3 The Revolution and the Iran-Iraq War: 1979 – 1988

The 1979 Iran revolution and the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s brought a dramatic change in the Iranian nuclear energy program. The active participation of the United States in Iran's nuclear program was terminated by the establishment of Iran's revolutionary government in 1979. The new government (Ayatollah Ruhallah

³⁹ The Institute for Strategic Studies “Iran's Strategic Weapons Programmes: A Net Assessment” London, 2005, p.12

⁴⁰ David Albright “is Iran Running Out of Yellow Cake?” the Institute of Science and International Security, February 11th, 2009.

Khomeini) suspended the on-going nuclear project, (Bushehr nuclear plant construction), but the project recommenced, this time without the German cooperation that was halted as a consequence of the 1980 Iran-Iraq war. Iran's vulnerability was made apparent as a result of the 1980s Iran-Iraq war, and this rationalized the acquisition of valid deterrent force. Then-speaker of Iran's parliament, Hashemi Rafsanjani in 1988 requested the development of nuclear and other unconventional warheads in a response to the 1980s wartime experience. Addressing the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps, he said "we should fully equip ourselves both in the offensive and defensive use of chemical, bacteriological and radiological weapons".⁴¹

3.2.4 Advancing Under the Radar of the Global Community: 1989-2003

Liberated from the highly expensive Iran-Iraq war, Iranian leaders increased their pace in the pursuit of nuclear technology. In 1987 and 1990, a long-term nuclear agreement was signed with Pakistan and China respectively.⁴² China accepted to supply Iran with two 300MW Qinshan Power Reactor and 27KW miniature neutron source reactor (MNSR), and Russia in January 1998 announced its willingness to complete the Bushehr's construction and build additional three reactors.⁴³ An increasing U.S. suspicion of Iran's implicit nuclear program, led to the U.S pressure to halt potential suppliers to Iran, in order to thwart its nuclear weapons bid.

A bilateral nuclear cooperation was signed between Iran and Russia in August 1992, and Russia agreed to secretly supply a fuel fabrication facility, a large research reactor and a gas centrifuge plant to Iran. With the knowledge of such implicit

⁴¹ Middle East Defence News "the China-Iran Nuclear Cloud" July 22nd 1991. Retrieved from: <http://isis-online.org/country-pages/iran>

⁴² Joseph Cirincione, John Wolfsthal and Miriam Rajkumar "Iran, in Deadly Arsenals: Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Threats" Washington, D.C, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005, Pp. 9 & 13.

⁴³ Nathan E. Busch "No End in Sight: the Continuing Menace of Nuclear Proliferation" Lexington, the University Press of Kentucky, 2004, P. 265

agreement, President Bill Clinton communicated his concern over such transfer of technology to his Russian counterpart, who eventually agreed to halt such cooperation.

3.2.5 A Diplomatic Stalemate between Iran and the International Community: 2003-2009

In October 2003, Iran got into multilateral negotiations with the EU-3 (Germany, France and the United Kingdom) and accepted to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency, and also sign an Additional Protocol and suspend its conversion and enrichment project temporarily. However, in response to the information that Iran was improving the nose cone of its Shahab-3 missile to be able to convey nuclear warhead, the IAEA in 2004 demanded increased cooperation and transparency of the Iran's past and present centrifuge technology.⁴⁴

Diplomatic process stalled, when Iran informed the IAEA of its desire to resume its Esfahan uranium conversion activities on 1 August 2005. Iran rejected the Long-Term Agreement of the EU-3 on 5 August because Tehran considered the proposal to be over demanding, with little incentives for Iran. As a result, Iran was found in non-compliance with the Safeguards Agreements by the Board of Governments. President George W. Bush on 28 June 2005, signed an Executive Order that blocked the financial assets of firms and individuals supporting the proliferation of WMD in Iran.⁴⁵

On 14 June 2008, the Foreign Policy Chief of the EU, Javier Solana, met with Manoucher Mottaki - Iran's foreign minister in Tehran to deliver a new incentive

⁴⁴ The Institute for Strategic Studies "Iran's Strategic Weapons Programmes: A Net Assessment" London, 2005, p.9

⁴⁵ Federal Register "the President" the Daily Journal of the United States Government, Vol. 70, No. 126. Retrieved from: www.satet.govt/documents/organisation/135437.pdf.

package by the P5+1 proposal, which included access to LWR technology, economic incentives and a nuclear fuel supply guarantee, should Iran freeze its enrichment efforts, but Ayatollah Khomeini replied that Iran would “continue with its path” of nuclear advancement, and in response to this statement, the UNSC on 27 September 2008, adopted Resolution 1835 against Iran.⁴⁶

Tensions aggravated in the international community, when Iran declared its intention to construct 10 more uranium enrichment facilities, and on December 2009, the House of Representatives in the U.S passed a bill setting forth sanctions on foreign firms that assisted Iran with the supply of gasoline.⁴⁷

3.2.6 Stalled Talks and Increased Sanctions: 2010 - 2013

The production process for 20 per cent enriched uranium started in February 2010. In a joint declaration issued by Turkey, Iran and Brazil, in a bid to revive the fuel-swap proposal, Iran accepted the shipment of 1,200Kg of 3.5 per cent enriched uranium to Turkey in exchange for TRR fuel from Russia and France. This deal was rejected by the U.S, France and Russia, and in June 2010, Resolution 1929 was adopted by the UNSC, with an aim of expanding sanctions on Iran, and preventing it from acquiring nuclear weapons by imposing arms embargo on shipment of major weapons systems into Iran.

In this period (2010-2013), several meetings were held between the P5+1 and Iran, but for several reasons, chief of which was the rejection of Iran’s preconditions by the P5+1, the meetings were unproductive. The failed meetings attracted series of tough and unbearable unilateral and multilateral sanctions that were imposed against

⁴⁶ Graham Boweley “Despite Call to Halt, Iran Says it Will Continue its Nuclear Program” the New York Times, July 31th, 2008. Retrieved From: <http://www.newyorktimes.com/2008/07/31/iran.html?>

⁴⁷ Tom Doggett “House Passes Iran Gasoline Sanctions Bill” Reuters, December 16th, 2009. Retrieved from: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/12/16/US-USA-Iran-sanctions-idUSTRE5BE61K20091216?type>.

arms shipments to Iran, Iran's oil industry, and its central bank. This period accounted for the highest amount of sanctions against Iran. Such sanctions against Iran, made it extremely difficult for Iran to maintain its pace in the pursuit of its nuclear ambitions.⁴⁸

3.2.7 Advancement in Diplomacy: the Joint Plan of Action (2013)

Iran's position on nuclear agreement witnessed a dramatic change with the victory of Hassan Rouhani in the 2013 Iranian Presidential election. The possibility of a resolution to the Iranian crisis became apparent, when President Rouhani and President Obama spoke by phone on 27 September 2013, the first of its kind between Iranian and U.S leaders since 1979.⁴⁹ In his speech at the UN General Assembly, President Rouhani reiterated that "before the next meeting in Geneva, Iran will prepare its plan for the P5+1, more effective steps towards solving the nuclear issue will be made in Geneva". Of all previous negotiations between the P5+1 and Iran, the negotiations at Geneva was most remarkable because it brought a significant push towards a probable agreement, as an agreement was reached on the Joint Plan of Action (JPOA) and Iran and the IAEA also agreed on a framework for cooperation (FFC) on November 24.

After several high level diplomatic engagement between Iran and the P5+1 on a Joint Plan of Action, the declaration of an agreed nuclear framework between Iran and the West on 5 April marked a significant success in diplomacy and heightened the hopes for a successful diplomatic resolution to the nuclear crisis between Iran and the West.

⁴⁸ Kelsey Davenport "Timeline of Nuclear Diplomacy with Iran" Arms Control Association, March 31, 2015

⁴⁹ Dan Robert "Obama Holds Historic Phone Call With Rouhani and Hints at End to Sanctions" The Guardian, September 27, 2013. Retrieved from: <http://www.theguardian.com>.

3.3 The Non-Proliferation Treaty and Iran's Right to Peaceful

Nuclear Program

As negotiations intensified between Iran and the West, the demands of the United States and its partners have been misinterpreted by many international observers, painting a portrait of the western demands on Iran as highly malicious and parsimonious. It is imperative at this point to note that the U.S and its partners, in their negotiation with Iran, acknowledges Iran's right to a peaceful nuclear program, as stipulated in the non-proliferation treaty, to which Iran is a signatory. This fact was reiterated by the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in a statement, that "the deal reached in Geneva shows that the world powers have recognised Tehran's nuclear rights".⁵⁰ As talks continue, this seemingly controversial issue have left one question on the hearts of international observers-does Iran have the right to a nuclear program?

In conformity with Article IV of the non-proliferation Treaty, Iran has the right "to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purpose without discrimination and in conformity with Article I and II of the Treaty".⁵¹ In exercising this right, the treaty permits international cooperation with Iran in order to benefit from non-military nuclear energy.

Iran tags its nuclear ambition to its rapidly growing population, its regular reliance on the importation of gasoline and electricity, the devastating impact of the use of fossil fuel on Iran's environment and its diminishing reserve of oil that may not last

⁵⁰ President Rouhani "Deal with Iran Recognises Iran's Right" Reuters November 24th, 2013. Retrieved from https://www.google.com.tr/?gws_rd=ssl#q=Rouhani%2C+deal+with+iran+recognises+iran%27s+right

⁵¹ The IAEA Information Circular "Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, INFCIRC/140, 22 April, 1970. Retrieved from: https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/eda/en/documents/topics/Atomwaffensperrvertrag_en.pdf

for the future generation, if Iran continues to rely heavily on it. With these claims, Iran rationalises its diversification of its energy sources and contends for the right to uranium enrichment for peaceful purpose.⁵²

Like other states, Iran's rights to nuclear technologies are restricted by an obligation in Article II of the Treaty, "not to receive the transfer From any transferor whatsoever of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or of Control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly; not to manufacture or Otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; and not to seek or Receive any assistance in the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive Devices".⁵³

As argued by Perkovich, failure to comply with the obligation of not seeking or receiving assistance in the acquisition of nuclear weapons might lead to a loss of NPT right for the defaulting state(s).⁵⁴

According to Article X of the non-proliferation Treaty, "Each Party shall in exercising its national sovereignty have the right to withdraw from the Treaty if it decides that extraordinary events, related to the subject matter of this Treaty, have jeopardized the supreme interests of its country. It shall give notice of such withdrawal to all other Parties to the Treaty and to the United Nations Security Council three months in advance. Such notice shall include a statement of the

⁵² The United States Energy Information Administration "Country Analysis Brief: Iran Official Energy Statistics" 2012. Retrieved from: <http://www.eia.doe.gov/cab/iran/oil.html>.

⁵³ The IAEA Information Circular "Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, INFCIRC/140, 22 April, 1970. Retrieved from: https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/eda/en/documents/topics/Atomwaffensperrvertrag_en.pdf

⁵⁴ George Perkovich "The End of the Non-Proliferation Regime?" current History, 2006, P.355. Retrieved from: http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/perkovich_current_history.pdf.

extraordinary events, it regards as having jeopardized its supreme interests”.⁵⁵ This creates a provision for Iran to withdraw from the Treaty, if it decides that its supreme interest is jeopardized by the Treaty. Leonard Specter, a research analyst at the Monterey Institute warns that if Iran feels threatened by the U.S or any other international players, it could opt out of the Treaty and manufacture the bomb.⁵⁶ In view of this provision by the treaty, the U.S statement that “all options are on the table”, as regards Iran’s nuclear program, could justify Iran’s withdrawal from the treaty on the ground of ‘threat to its supreme interest’.

However, should Iran opt for a withdrawal from the Treaty, it will only aggravate the situation and subject itself to the bounds of international law. In essence, the Security Council of the United Nations may stipulate that international law forbids the withdrawal of any state from a Treaty in a bid to escape the consequences of violating it beforehand. Iran’s non-compliance with its NPT guidelines and its denial of full supervision to the IAEA are important issues that may questioned the exercise of such right of withdrawal by Iran. This is because Iran has already been found in non-compliance with the NPT guidelines; hence, any attempt to withdraw from the treaty at this point will be interpreted by the international community, not as a bid to protect its interest (as stated in Article X), but as an effort to escape the consequences that are attached to such violations and enjoy the fruits of non-compliance with impunity.

⁵⁵ The IAEA Information Circular “Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, INFCIRC/140, 22 April, 1970. Retrieved from:

https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/eda/en/documents/topics/Atomwaffensperrvertrag_en.pdf

⁵⁶ Leonardo Specter “From Assistance to Sustainable Partnership” Defence Threat Reduction Agency. Issue 18. 2007. Retrieved from: <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/12005/the-biological-threat-reduction-program-of-the-department-of-defense>.

In response to such action, the UN Security Council could adopt Article 39 under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter that states that “a country’s withdrawal from the NPT after being found by the IAEA to be in noncompliance with its safeguards undertakings, constitutes a threat to international peace and security” and this could attract strict military and technological measures against Iran in an attempt to prevent it from violating its IAEA guidelines and escaping the consequences.⁵⁷

In summary, Iran possesses the right to the development of nuclear program, but such right is restricted to the development of nuclear technology for civilian purpose, and any action that violates its obligation to the NPT guidelines of confinement of nuclear program to civilian purpose, will subject Iran to an unfavourable reaction from the international community. As stated by the United States, President Barack Obama, “we have made it clear that if Iran lives up to the obligations that every nation has, it will have a path to a more prosperous and productive relationship with the international community”.⁵⁸

3.3.1 Iran’s Violation of its NPT Obligation and its Suspected Nuclear Weapons Program

Determining whether or not Iran has violated its NPT obligation has been a difficult task, because the treaty does not contain a formal structure or mechanism for determining states’ violation to their obligation. Neither the UN Security Council, nor the General Assembly has been able to declare Iran to be in violation of the non-proliferation treaty, because neither of them have a responsibility to judge treaty violation. However, actions have been taken by the Security Council, as regards the

⁵⁷ Pierre Goldschmidt “Safeguard Noncompliance: A Challenge for the IAEA and the UN Security Council” Arms Control Today, Arms Control Association, 2010.

⁵⁸ Iran News, November 4th, 2009 “Barack Obama’s Message to Iran”. Retrieved from: <http://www.irannews.com/2009/11/barack-obama-message-to-iran-on-november-4/>

International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors' determination of Iran's violation of its safeguard agreement.

Violation of Iran's safeguard agreement, seem to comprise of violation of Article III, which compels non-nuclear-weapon states-parties of the NPT to accept the IAEA safeguard statutes, "for the exclusive purpose of verification of the fulfilment of its obligations assumed under this treaty with a view to preventing diversion of nuclear energy from peaceful uses to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices."⁵⁹

The IAEA has continued investigations for evidence of "possible military dimensions to Iran's nuclear program", as noted by Mohamed El Baradei, then-IAEA Director General (2008). Such activities may show Iran's violation of the provisions of Article II. Furthermore, a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) in November 2007 proved that Iranian military entities, until fall 2003 were acting under the direction of the government to develop nuclear weapons.⁶⁰ Such program could account for violation of Article II. Although the IAEA has not clearly stated that Iran has been pursuing nuclear weapons, and it has also not been able to resolve that the Iranian nuclear program has been exclusively for civilian purpose.

Notwithstanding the IAEA lack of conclusion on the Iranian nuclear program, The State Department in a 2005 report as regards the compliance of states with the non-proliferation agreement, have argued that Iran had violated Article II of the NPT:

"The breadth of Iran's nuclear development efforts, the secrecy and deceptions with which they have been conducted for nearly 20 years, its redundant and surreptitious

⁵⁹ Paul K. Kerr "Iran's Nuclear Program: Tehran's Compliance with International Obligations" Congressional Report Service, 2014. Retrieved from: <http://fas.org/spg/crs/nuke/R40094.pdf>.

⁶⁰ National Intelligence Council "Iran: Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities" National Intelligence Estimate, 2005. Retrieved from: http://www.dni.gov/press_release/2007/203_release.pdf

procurements channels, Iran's persistent failure to comply with its obligations to report the IAEA and to apply safeguards to such activities, and the lack of a reasonable economic justification of this program leads us to conclude that Iran is pursuing an effort to manufacture a nuclear weapons and has sought and received assistance in this efforts in violation of Article II of the NPT".⁶¹

Such assertion by The State Department seems to be grounded on NPT interpretation that stipulated that a wide range of nuclear activities could account for violation of Article II. The 2005 report also cited the declaration of William Foster, then - Arms Control and Disarmament Agency Director, during a Senate Foreign Committee hearing in 1968. He noted that "facts indicating that the purpose of a particular activity was the acquisition of a nuclear explosive device would tend to show non-compliance", in accordance with Article II. Foster highlighted two examples: "the construction of an experimental or prototype nuclear explosive device" and "the production of components which could only have relevance" to an explosive device. He also pointed out that a blend of other Iranian activities could account for violation of Article II (NPT 1968). Some of Iran's nuclear activities that have been considered as violations of its NPT obligations are highlighted below:

Iran's Violations

Iran has been considered on several occasions to have violated its IAEA safeguard agreement by refusing to declare its numerous activities, as required by its safeguards agreement with the IAEA. Though several reports from the IAEA have highlighted these violations, a very detailed summary of the Iranian nuclear program and its NPT

⁶¹ The United States Department of States "Country Report on Terrorism" Bureau of Counter Terrorism, 2005. Retrieved from: <http://www.states.gov/j/crt/2013/224826.html>.

violations are provided in the November 2004 IAEA report. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Iran has failed in its obligation to declare the under listed nuclear activities

Uranium Imports

Iran failed to disclose to the IAEA, its purchase of natural uranium (1,000kg of UF₆, 400kg of UO₂ and 400kg of UO₂) in 1991, from China. This import, Iran only acknowledged in February 2003.

Uranium Conversion

Iran failed to disclose to the IAEA, its use of imported uranium for the test of its uranium conversion processes, and also its “uranium dissolution, purification using pulse columns and the production of uranium metal, and the associated production and loss of nuclear metal”. This failure, Iran acknowledged in February 2003.

Hidden Sites

The Laser enrichment plants at the Tehran Nuclear Reactor Centre and also at Lashkar Ab’ad, and a Pilot enrichment facility at the Kalaye Electric Company Workshop were not declared to the IAEA by Iran, because the experiment of those sites made use of nuclear material equipment. Iran was required to report these activities and site to the IAEA.

Laser Isotope Enrichment Experiment

Iran’s 1993 importation of 50kg of natural uranium and its use of 8kg of the imported natural uranium for Atomic Vapour Laser Isotope Separation (AVLIS) experiment at Tehran Nuclear Research Centre from 1999-2000, and the activities between 2002 to

2003, involving 22kg metal for AVLIS experiment at Lashkar Ab'ad were not reported to the IAEA. Such activities were later acknowledged in the October 2003 declaration.

Plutonium Experiments

Iran's production of uranium dioxide (UO₂) and their radiation in the Tehran Research Reactor and also the separation of plutonium from the radiated targets were not brought to the notice of the IAEA. It also failed to declare the transfer and production of waste that are associated with such activities, and also the storage of unprocessed irradiated target at the Tehran Nuclear Research Centre. Later in a meeting with the IAEA, Iran acknowledged its plutonium separation experience that was conducted between 1988 and 1993.⁶²

With such high level of secrecy that have characterised the Iranian nuclear program and their increasing quest for enrichment, which scientifically exceed the required level of enrichment for civilian purpose, the Iranian nuclear program have attracted the security concerns of the international community, as the only way to rationalise Iran's nuclear ambition (considering these development) is a pursuit for nuclear weapon. In the following part of this work, I will analyse the global security and economic implication, should Iran acquire the bomb.

3.4 The Implications of a Nuclear Armed Iran on Global Security

An Iran equipped with nuclear capabilities will further undermine the security of the 'vulnerable' Middle East region. The troubled region (Middle East) have been plagued by ethnic and cultural violence, territorial disputes, extremist Islamic

⁶² Jacqueline Shire and David Albright "Iran's NPT Violations: Numerous and Possibly On-going" Institute for Science and International Security, 2006, Pp 1-3. Retrieved from: <http://www.isis-online.org/publications/iran/irannptviolations.pdf>.

terrorism etc. and the last thing the international community needs at this very crucial time in the Middle East history, is an Iran equipped with nuclear warheads, as such will aggravate the present security situation in the region, leaving enormous repercussions, not only for the region, but for the entire globe. This part of my study will identify the numerous implications that a nuclear armed Iran would have on global security.

3.4.1 Proliferation Regime

An event of Iran acquiring the bomb will send a negative message that states can be signatories to the NPT and secretly utilize their civilian nuclear development to conceal their nuclear weapons capability, avoid the IAEA restrictions and other counter-proliferation efforts, and finally attain the status of a nuclear-state. Such action will undermine the competence of the NPT and the IAEA in preventing nuclear proliferation, sparking a nuclear arms race in the region, as other states in the region might be tempted to acquire same capability. If Iran acquires the weapon, other states will consider it a weakness on the part of international organization and this will also signal a reduction in the ability of the United States and other world powers to curtail the ambitions of states striving to become regional powers. As a result, states will resort to nuclear weapons as a viable means for survival, deterrence of other nuclear powers and attaining a status quo that will provide them a seat at the international table, when pivotal regional or global matters are being addressed.⁶³

3.4.2 Israel and other United States Allies.

One issue that is always seriously considered, whenever the Iranian nuclear program is discussed in the international arena is the fear of a possible nuclear engagement between Iran and Israel, should Iran acquire the bomb. For Israel and other U.S

⁶³ Dr. Henry H. Gaffney, Dr. Lucio Martino & Dr. Daniel J. Whiteneck "A Nuclear-Armed Iran's Impact on Global Security" Security Supply No. 11, Military Centre for Strategic Studies, Rome, 2005,

allies, an Iranian acquisition of nuclear weapon will present a complex problem to solve in the region.

“Two Scorpions in a Bottle” a metaphor used by J. Robert Oppenheimer to describe the nuclear deterrence between then-USSR and the U.S, could also provide an understanding of the Israeli-Iranian situation. A rational Israeli scorpion and/or a rational Iranian scorpion could actively calculate that the cost of passively waiting to be struck first would outweigh the cost of stinging first. Hence, due to the uncertainty of the intention of nations that have led to constant fear among states in the international system, such rational calculation could result in a nuclear engagement between Israel and Iran (should Iran get the bomb).⁶⁴

3.4.3 Nuclear Leak

Considering the impact of the 9/11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre, the devastating consequences of a nuclear terrorist attack on humanity is best prevented, than experienced. According to the 2013 Country Report on Terrorism by the U.S Department of States, Iran was ranked one of the world’s prime state sponsors of terrorism, as a consequence of its operational and financial support for such group as Hamas, Hezbollah and other terrorist groups.⁶⁵ Such terrorist-related activities by Iran have heightened the security concerns of the U.S and international community, as regards Iran’s nuclear program. Nuclear weapons in the hands of such state like Iran would increase the possibility of nuclear leak to terrorist organization, exerting unimaginable devastation on humanity (one luxury the United States and the international community cannot afford). Though Iran has not been seen to support ‘high profiled’ international terrorist groups like Al Qaeda ISIS that have attracted

⁶⁴ Louis Rene Beres “Iran’s Strategic Threat to Israel” the Jerusalem Post, 2014. Retrieved from: <http://www.jpost.com/opinion/op-Ed-Contribution/Irans-strategic-threat-to-israel-355702>

⁶⁵ The United States Department of States “Country Report on Terrorism” Bureau of Counter Terrorism, 2005. Retrieved from: <http://www.states.gov/j/crt/2013/224826.html>.

tremendous global concern, it is highly probable that a nuclear leak to regional groups like Hamas and Hezbollah that enjoy the support of Iran could get to the hands of more advanced global terrorist networks, because of the recent afflation among terrorist organisations globally. Hence, relentless efforts have been focused on the Islamic Republic of Iran as a potential state source of nuclear terror, should Iran acquire the bomb.

It would be in Iran's best interest to desist from its illicit nuclear ambition, as any terrorist activity involving the use of nuclear technology (after Iran's acquisition of the bomb), could be traced back to Iran, attracting unbearable consequences of such actions to Tehran. Iran might face retaliation for any such terrorist act, perpetuated by any group backed by Iran faction or office, regardless of whether or not such groups are recipient of "direct support from official Iranian government sources".⁶⁶

3.4.4 Economic Impact

"Whatever the main dangers of Iranian acquisition of nuclear weapons, it would also wreak havoc in the international oil market. That too, would have major strategic consequences".⁶⁷ Economic sanctions in a bid to prevent Iran from acquiring the bomb, has already caused negative impact on its oil export, reducing Iran's oil and consequently exerting pressure on global oil prices. Yet refusal to prevent Iran from acquiring the bomb would have dramatic consequences on the global oil prices.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Dr. Henry H. Gaffney, Dr. Lucio Martino & Dr. Daniel J. Whiteneck "A Nuclear-Armed Iran's Impact on Global Security" Security Supply No. 11, Military Centre for Strategic Studies, Rome, 2005,

⁶⁷ Matthew Kroenig and Robert McNally "Iranian Nukes and Global Oil" the American Interest, Vol.8, No.4, 2013.

⁶⁸ Charles Robb, Dennis Ross and Micheal Makovsky "The Economic Cost of a Nuclear Iran" Wall Street Journal, December 17, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-economic-cost-of-a-nuclear-iran>.

The level of global dependence on the flow of fossil fuel cannot be overestimated. Virtually all human activities depend either directly or indirectly on energy sources of coal, gas and oil. As technology advances, the world has been pursuing alternative sources of energy to reduce global dependence on these traditional sources, but such dreams cannot be actualized overnight. Transportation, which is very vital for the supply of food depends on oil, an overwhelming percentage of global electricity are fossil-fuel powered. Therefore, any reduction in the supply of oil, and rise in the prices will switch our currently dependent global economy into crisis.

History has confirmed that almost all post-war recessions were as a result of oil price shock, and most of these shocks were pegged to disruption in supply, as a result of geopolitical instability, especially in the volatile Middle East region. For example, the November 1978 Iranian Revolution resulted in the disruption in Iranian production of above six million barrel per day, and this triggered a 75% increase in oil prices. The eight-year Iraq-Iran war that followed was not without negative economic impact, as it contributed immensely to the 1980s economic recession.

If such conflicts involving Iran could lead to a serious economic turmoil, because of Iran's strategic position among the highest world oil producers, a possible (increased) instability and unrest that could erupt if Iran acquire the bomb, would definitely lead to a higher disruption of oil supply, that would cause serious havoc on the global economy, as a result of an increase in oil price. For example, a possible Iran-Saudi nuclear exchange could cause a 12 million barrels disruption per day or

thirteen per cent of global oil supply as a result of stoppage of export by both countries for a period of one year and partial stoppage for their neighbours.⁶⁹

Apart from a possible disruption in the production of oil, as a result of conflict, in an event of a nuclear armed Iran, sanctions on Iran would either remain at the same level, or intensified to roll back Iran from its nuclear capacity. As discussed earlier, sanctions have already affected the global economy negatively, but new and increased sanctions on Iran as a result of its acquisition of nuclear weapons will cause a further disruption in the Iranian production and effort of oil, leading to spike in the price of oil.

3.4.5 Consequences for the United States

A nuclear armed Iran would pose a huge threat to the influence and position of the United States in the Middle East region. U.S forces might not face direct military threat, as Iran does not stand a chance, considering the nuclear capability of the U.S, except in an event of U.S invasion of Iran that would leave Iran with no other option than to protect its territory with their available military capabilities. But the leadership role of the United States will be highly questioned. Those states in the Middle East who have relied greatly on the U.S as a guarantor for the protection of their sovereignty, resources and their citizens will further question the U.S ability to effectively protect their interest, security and otherwise in the region.

“The emergence of the war with the global extremist Islamic terrorist and with the U.S getting bogged down in Iraq, has now raised some doubts” among such states in the region, and an Iran with nuclear bomb will further complicate the situation for the

⁶⁹ Charles Robb, Dennis Ross and Micheal Makovsky “The Economic Cost of a Nuclear Iran” Wall Street Journal, December 17, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-economic-cost-of-a-nuclear-iran>

U.S and reduce the confidence of such states in the strength of the U.S because it would only be logical for such states to reconsider the efficacy of the U.S promise of security in a region where it (U.S) with cooperation of other world powers could not contain the illicit nuclear ambition of Iran.⁷⁰

Such situation could lead to two possible options: it would either push these countries closer to the U.S for increased security in an environment with a nuclear armed Iran; or it would draw some weak U.S allies to a nuclear armed Iran, as a viable source of protection in the region. However, for the United States to retain its leadership possible in the region, should Iran get the bomb, this will mean an increased budget for the Middle East, with an overwhelming military cooperation that would provide high level information gathering, surveillance, air and naval presence and when necessary, missile defence systems for such countries in the region.⁷¹ Only with such increase engagement and cooperation will the U.S be able to retain its leadership position in the region, if Iran acquires the bomb.

Considering the devastating consequences that a nuclear armed Iran would have on global security and economy, the most annoying foreign policy challenge facing the United States and the international community have been how to thwart the illicit nuclear weapons ambition of Iran. This debate has been marked by an increasing pessimism about the viability of diplomatic approaches, economic sanctions and military intervention in preventing a nuclear armed Iran. In the following chapter, i will provide a cost –benefit analysis of the various policy options facing the United

⁷⁰ Dr. Henry H. Gaffney, Dr. Lucio Martino & Dr. Daniel J. Whiteneck “A Nuclear-Armed Iran’s Impact on Global Security” Security Supply No. 11, Military Centre for Strategic Studies, Rome, 2005,

⁷¹ *ibid*

States and the international community, evaluating their efficacy as foreign policy instruments in preventing a nuclear armed Iran

Chapter 4

BENEFITS-COSTS ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SANCTIONS, MILITARY INTERVENTION AND DIPLOMACY IN PREVENTING A NUCLEAR ARMED IRAN.

4.1 Introduction

Preventing a nuclear armed Iran is obviously not an issue of contention among states in the international community. However, what policy option would be most effective in achieving this objective has been a question that has launched pundits and foreign policy makers into a heated international debate. In a bid to answer this question, this chapter provides benefits-costs analysis of the three main policy options (sanctions, military intervention and diplomacy) available in achieving this objective.

4.2 Sanctions against Iran

The United States, the European Union and the United Nations have imposed various sanctions against Iran in an effort to impede its illicit nuclear weapons activities and since its commencement (over two decades ago) sanctions against Iran have taken different shapes and sizes.

4.2.1 The United States Sanctions against Iran

Series of sanctions have been imposed by the United States against Iran, some of which will be discussed in this section. As a result of the 1979 hostage crisis, the U.S imposed a 'Hostage Crisis Sanction' that froze assets of the Iranian government in

the United States. New embargo were also imposed on Iranian goods and services in 1987 in response to Iran's support for terrorism.⁷²

With the 1996 Iran-Libya Sanction Act legislation, the United States sanctioned foreign firms that invested majorly in Iran's oil sector, with an intention of reducing Iran's revenue from oil and gas.⁷³ In 2010, a Comprehensive Iran Sanction, Accountability and Divestment Act were signed (CISADA). This Act increased previous sanctions on energy, by imposing sanctions on gasoline and gasoline production equipment sales to Iran. It also expanded the 1996 Iran Sanction Act on banks that have financial dealings with Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and blacklisted those individuals and entities suspected to be involved with the Human Right violation in line with the Iranian 2009 presidential election. A 2012 Executive Order (13622) imposed sanctions on foreign financial institutions engaged in the purchase of Iran's petroleum, oil or petrochemical products.⁷⁴

4.2.2 The European Union Sanctions against Iran

The European Union have subjected Iran to series of sanctions, as a consequence of its illicit nuclear programs. Some of which include the 2010 sanctions that prohibit member states from providing Iran with dual-use technologies that could enhance Iran's weapon development. In 2012, the European group SWIFT stopped transactions with banks in Iran that have been blacklisted by the European Unions. Later same year, the EU placed an oil embargo against Iran, and also banned insurance for oil shipments from Iran. Trade in precious metals were ban with Iran,

⁷² Ari Kattan "Fact Sheet: Iran Sanction" the Centre for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, retrieved from http://www.armscontrolcentre.org/issues/iran/article/fact_sheet_iran_sanction/

⁷³ William Luers, Iris Bieri & Pricilla Lewis "Weighing the Benefits and Costs of International Sanctions Against Iran" the Iran Project, 2012, P. 23

⁷⁴ Ari Kattan "Fact Sheet: Iran Sanction" the Centre for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation. Retrieved from: http://www.armscontrolcentre.org/issues/iran/article/fact_sheet_iran_sanction/

and properties of Iran's Central Bank and other firms were frozen. Additional sanctions were also adopted in 2012 by the EU, including a transaction ban between Iranian and European banks, natural gas importation ban and a ban that prohibits exportation of several sensitive nuclear materials to Iran.

4.2.3 United Nations Sanctions against Iran

The United Nations Security Council has imposed four major sanctions against Iran since 2006. The first were the sanctions imposed by the 2006 Resolution 1737 against individuals and entities that were associated with Iran's illicit proliferation activities. Member states were also prohibited from any transaction involving the sales of equipment that could enhance Iran's ballistic missile development. In 2007, another Resolution was passed by the UN Security Council (1747), prohibiting the purchase of arms related equipment from Iran, and forbids member states from financial commitments with Iran.⁷⁵

Travel ban was placed on a list of entities and individuals associated with Iran's weapons activities by Resolution 1803, and member states were urged to inspect Iran Air Cargo and shipping lane cargo that were suspected of transporting WMD-related materials. A 2010 UN Security Council Resolution (1929) increased the names on the sanction list, tightening sales ban on heavy weaponry and urges states to inspect any cargo suspected of transporting WMD-related materials and impose financial sanctions on firms in connection with Republic of Iran's shipping lines (an Iranian company suspected of WMD financial involvement).⁷⁶

4.2.4 Benefits of Sanctions against Iran

Decades of sanctions against Iran have had some undeniable (minimal) benefits:

⁷⁵ Lauren Weiss "United Nations Security Council Resolution on Iran" Journal of Arms Control Association, 2012, Pp. 3&9.

⁷⁶ Ibid

A Demonstration of International Solidarity

The United States and its partners have enjoyed a high level of support in their bid to thwart the illicit Iranian nuclear weapons ambition and the participation of several states in the various sanctions regime against Iran have demonstrated a high level of solidarity among states in the international community in addressing a pertinent international issues.

Reassurance of Security in the Middle East

The solidarity among states and the intensity of the sanctions against Iran have explained the commitment of the international community to the ‘world’s most delicate region’ (the Middle East) and this have practically illustrated the zeal of the international community in ensuring peace and security in the region, reassuring states in the region of the international concern towards them. This is mainly beneficial to the United States, as Israel and other allies in the region have been reassured of the determination of the United States in ensuring their security. Sanctions against Iran have clearly demonstrated the U.S commitment and this has prevented military actions by U.S allies against Iran’s nuclear program.⁷⁷ However, there is disagreement with the U.S approach and criticisms from Israel and Saudi Arabia.

A Form of Deterrence

The non-proliferation regime has been strengthened by sanctions against Iran. Sanctions have clearly expressed the determination of the international community to deter states from developing nuclear weapons. The Iranian example will deterred

⁷⁷ James Zanotti, Kenneth Katzam, Steven Hildreth & Jeremiah Gertler “Israel: Possible Military Strike Against Iran’s Nuclear Facilities” Congressional Service Report, 2012, Pp. 1-3.

states from pursuing nuclear weapons because of the fear of attracting similar response.⁷⁸

Reducing the Pace of Iran's Nuclear Program

A major contribution of sanctions in preventing a nuclear armed Iran has been the reduction in the pace of Iran's nuclear program. The ban on dual-use technologies, Iran's financial institutions, supply of advance military technology and the exportation of Iran's oil have posed serious constraints to Iran, reducing its speed in the development of its nuclear program. Proponents of such approach have argued that without sanctions, Iran would have developed the bomb.⁷⁹

Reducing Iran's Influence

International sanctions against Iran, mainly the European Union oil embargo and various steps taken by India, South Korea, Turkey and Japan against the purchase of Iran's oil have had dramatic negative impact on the Iranian currency receipt and economy in general.⁸⁰ The 2010 UN Security Council Resolution 1929 has impeded Iran's ability to advance its military force and its ability to acquire contemporary military warheads have been reduced by several sanctions in a period when several of its regional neighbours are enjoying the assistance of the U.S in the advancement of their military strength. Several negative developments in Iran's economy, technology

⁷⁸ William Luers, Iris Bieri & Priscilla Lewis "Weighing the Benefits and Costs of International Sanctions against Iran" the Iran Project, 2012, P. 35.

⁷⁹ David Albright & Andrea Stricker "Iran's Nuclear Setback: A Key for U.S Diplomacy" the United States Institute of Peace, 2011. Retrieved from : <http://www.iranprimer.usip.org/bllg/2011/jan/18/iran%E2%80%99s-nuclear-setback-key-us-diplomacy>

⁸⁰ James R. Clapper "Worldwide Threat Assessment of the U.S Intelligent Community" the Senate Armed Service Committee, 2011. Retrieved from: http://www.dni.gov/files/documents/Unclassified_2011_ATA_-_SASC_FINAL.PDF

and military as a result of sanctions have reduced Iran's ability to interfere in or influence states in the region and the world at large.⁸¹

Bringing Iran to the Negotiating Table

Proponents of sanctions against Iran have argued that stringent policies accompanied by harsh technological, economic, political and military sanctions against Iran, have been the major factor behind Iran's acceptance of a peaceful settlement for the Iranian nuclear crisis. Regardless of such claims, the imposition of additional sanctions on Iran will be disadvantageous, rather than beneficial, as it will jeopardize the on-going nuclear talks between Iran and the west.⁸²

4.2.5 Cost of sanctions against Iran

Some of the costs of sanctions against Iran are identified below:

Humanitarian crisis in Iran

Rather than constructing the behaviour of the Iranian leaders and elites, sanctions against Iran have regrettably hit the wrong target (Iranian population). The most devastating impact of the Iranian sanctions regime have being felt by the Iranian citizens, as sanctions have increased the level of poverty and hunger among the population. Such suffering among the citizens ignited a riot in July 2012 in the Iranian city of Nishapur over increasing food prices in Iran.

Donations of relief supports from U.S to Iran have been increasingly difficult due to several sanctions against Iran. Following the difficulties involved in relief supply after the 2012 earthquake in north-western Iran, relief groups demanded a

⁸¹ Dan Murphy "Iran's Threat Over Strait of Hormuz: Understandable But Not Easy" The Christian Science Monitor, 2012, Retrieved from: <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Backchannels/2011/1228/Iran-s-Threats-over-strait-of-Hormuz-Understandable-but-not-easy>

⁸² John Cassidy "Iran Nuke Deal: Do Economic Sanctions Work After All?" the New Yorker, November 25th, 2013. Retrieved from: <http://www.newyorker.com/news/john-cassidy/iran-nuke-deal-do-economic-sanctions-work-after-all>

clarification from the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) on the application of sanctions to relief effort.⁸³ Donations to individual Iranians were not restricted, but donations to relief groups working in Iran were challenging because it involves transaction with the Iranian banking system and this could only be achieved through a special Treasury department License.⁸⁴ Acquiring such license involves a very cumbersome process that in most cases discourages donors and leaves Iran's humanitarian crisis without international supports.

The most effective pharmaceutical products are manufactured by western pharmaceutical companies, and sanctions have made it almost impossible for Iran to benefit from global pharmaceutical advancement. Though sanctions were never targeted at food and medical supplies to Iran, sanctions on Iran's banking sector and restrictions on trade have worsen medical situation in Iran. According to Ban Ki Mon-UN Secretary General, "Even companies that have obtained the requisite license to import food and medicine are facing difficulties in finding third-country banks to process the transactions. Owing to payment problems, several medical companies have stopped exporting medicine to the Islamic Republic of Iran, leading to a reported shortage of drugs used in the treatment of various illnesses, including cancer, heart and respiratory conditions, thalassemia and multiple sclerosis".⁸⁵

Economic Cost for the United States and the European Union

⁸³ Treasury Department, Office of Foreign Asset Control "Clarifying Guidance: Humanitarian Assistance to Iran" 13th August, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://www.treasury.gov/resource-centre/sanctions/programs/pages/iran.aspx>

⁸⁴ William Luers, Iris Bieri & Pricilla Lewis "Weighing the Benefits and Costs of International Sanctions Against Iran" the Iran Project, 2012, P. 46

⁸⁵ United Nations General Assembly Report A/67/327 "Situation of Human Right in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 2012. Retrieved from: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/IR/AHRC-22-56_en/pdf

As increasing sanctions cripple the Iranian economy, the economy of the United States and countries in the European Union also had significant share of the consequences of the stringent economic policies against Iran.

According to a report published by the National Iranian American Council (NIAC) in 2014, U.S sanctions against Iran have been detrimental to the U.S economy, as estimated in the report, between 1995 to 2012, (a period when the U.S imposed sanctions on several trade with Iran) the U.S sacrificed between \$134.7 and \$175.3 billion in potential export to Iran. In calculating the cost of Iran sanctions on the U.S economy, there are also human elements in terms of jobs that are needed to enhance the level of exports. The lost export revenue is translated to between 51,043 and 66,436 loss of job opportunities every year. In 2008, the number attained an unusual height of 214,657 to 279,389 losses of jobs. Due to their sizes and the attractive nature of their industries to the Iranian economy, Texas and California are likely to suffer most.⁸⁶

The economic cost of Iran's sanctions on the EU states between 2010 and 2012 doubled that of the U.S in terms of loss of trade revenue. Among the EU states, Germany incurred more cost, losing between \$23.1-\$73.0 billion from 2010 to 2012. France \$10.9 - \$34.2 billion, and Italy \$13.6 to \$42.8 billion.⁸⁷

Impact on Global Oil Market

Sanctions against Iran have dramatically reduced the flow of oil into the global oil market in a time when the demand for oil as a primary source of global energy is

⁸⁶ Jonathan Leslie, Reza Marashi & Trita Parsi "Losing Billions: the Cost of Iran Sanctions to the U.S Economy" National Iranian American Council, 2014, P. 3

⁸⁷ Ibid, P.13

increasing. From an export of 2.5million barrel per day in 2011, tough sanctions by the U.S and E.U that are targeted at Iran's export has reduced its export to about 1.1 million barrels per day in 2013. As a consequence of the withdrawal of competent international firm from Iran, some of oil and gas fields have deteriorated because Iranian firms lack the capacity to effectively manage and develop fields that would match the production of firms that are internationally managed. Hence Iran has been struggling to maintain minimal production of oil.

Sanctions against Iran have reduced Iran's production and exportation of oil and this have caused a devastating negative impact on global oil production, resulting negatively on the global oil price because the global oil market has been deprived of the enormous oil wealth of one of the world's leading producers and exporter of oil. According to an EIA report, a 'reunion' of Iran to the international market have a possibility of boosting Iran's output by at least 700,000 barrels a day at the end of 2016 and this could result in a drop of oil price to as low as \$5 to \$15 from the recent price if sanctions are lifted.⁸⁸

Prolonged Hostility in the U.S- Iran Relations

Sanctions against Iran have sown a seed of hatred and dismay in the heart of Iranians who have been affected by the resulting of the economic hardship it has unleashed on the Iranian population. Such feelings have also been instigated as a result of the Iranian regime's propaganda. As the situation escalates with increasing sanctions, Iranians have misinterpreted the intentions of the United States and the international

⁸⁸ Catherine Ngai "Oil Price could be \$5-\$15 Lower in 2016 if Iran Sanctions Lifeted" EAI, Reuters, April 7th, 2015. Retrieved from: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/04/07/us-eia-oil-outlook-idUSKBN0MY1OF20150407>

community, and have assumed the U.S as the number one enemy against the freedom and prosperity of the Iranian population.

Decades of sanctions have caused severance in the U.S-Iran relations and continuous sanctions will roll back this diplomatic progress between both countries, as Reform-minded Iranian might conclude that their utmost priority is to defend their government and country against any presumed external enemy or threat. This will impede any prospect of normalizing between Iran and the United States.⁸⁹

Strengthening Anti-Reform Voices

Tough international sanctions have indirectly provided assistance for groups like the Iran Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) to gather support from the Iranian populace, under the guiles of protection from a U.S-led aggression against Iran. As it is a usual occurrence in the international arena, citizens have the tendencies of ‘rallying round the flag’ in such situation as Iran’s, where the state is under tremendous pressure from external factors.

Iranian leaders in the past have leveraged on international sanctions to encourage the turnout of voters in the 2012 parliamentary election, holding that the Iranian citizens have an obligation to display their solidarity in a time of increasing international threats. At the end of the election, the regime accounted for a turnout of almost 65%, calling it a confirmation of public support for Iran’s resistance of international pressure. Rather than shaping the behaviour of leaders to the will of the international community, sanctions might be a tool with which Iran repressive leaders and several

⁸⁹ William Luers, Iris Bieri & Pricilla Lewis “Weighing the Benefits and Costs of International Sanctions Against Iran” the Iran Project, 2012, P. 48

anti-reform groups will gather the sympathy of the Iranian citizens against the international community.⁹⁰

Weakening the Civil Society

Sanctions have negatively affected the civil society activists in Iran. Sanctions imposed to prevent the Iranian government from acquiring equipment that could be useful in monitoring the internet have also restricted reformists and the internet – savvy Iranian population from accessing technology that would be helpful to communicate more freely via the web and social media.⁹¹ The CISADA law acknowledges this problem and tried to redress it by exempting the export to Iran of freely available software and other media technology from the sanction but the exemption was exclusively applicable to free software, due to restrictions of financial involvement with the banking system in Iran.

Companies that sought the sales of software and equipment to nongovernment customers could apply for export license from the Treasury department, but obtaining this license involves a cumbersome process that deters several potential exporters. This has presented huge challenges for dissidents and reformists that lack the access to the social media technology they demand to contact the broader international community.⁹²

Aviation Dilemma and Civilian Casualties

⁹⁰ Mohammed Ali Shabani “Portrayed a High Turnout as a Way to Slow Unity and Resistance in the Face of Sanction” March 2012

⁹¹ James Ball “Sanctions Unintended Target Opposition” Washington Post, August 15TH, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://www.bakerinstitute.org/files/1339/>

⁹² Janos Drabik “Sanctions on Iran Amount to Economic Financial Aggression” Merh News Agency, October 14, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://http://www.scribd.com/doc/115678817/IranReport2-120312-2#scribd>.

Sanctions have attracted supports from scholars and experts who are opposed to the use of military intervention as a foreign policy option in constructing the behaviour of leaders, primarily because of the human cost of military intervention and war. Unfortunately, sanctions against Iran have resulted in the loss of hundreds of civilian lives. A report from the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) in 2005, warned against U.S sanctions that are placed on dual-use aircraft technologies, arguing that such actions were putting the lives of Iranian citizens in danger by denying access of necessary parts to the Iranian aviation system. According to the report, the U.S is “taking an action that puts passengers on Iranian commercial airlines at risk, including thousands of people from other countries traveling to and from Iran”

In 2009, a Russian-built Tupolev en route to Armenia, crashed, killing all 168 persons on-board. More than 40 passengers on-board Tupolev 154 were injured when it crashed-landed at Mashhad in 2010. Iran has had poor aviation safety history, accompanied by several crashes, since it was prevented from accessing reliable western planes and aircraft parts in 1995. These incidents have left an obvious question mark on the intention of the U.S sanctions on Iran, whether its banning of civilian airlines parts depicts ‘smart’ sanction that are aimed towards their nuclear policy, or whether it subject innocent travellers to high aviation risk?⁹³

In sum, the long list of the costs of sanctions outweighs its benefits, making sanctions a very expensive policy option

⁹³ James Deneselow “Iran Sanction Dilemma” the Guardian, 1st February, 2010. Retrieved from: <http://www.the-guardian.com/commentisfree/cifamerica/2010/feb/01/iran-sanction-us-airline>

4.3 military Intervention on Iran

The debate over the use of military intervention against Iran has ignited a high level of controversy among states in the international community and as expected, military intervention has attracted more opponents than proponents because of high cost of military intervention. However, Proponents of military intervention have capitalised on the failure of sanctions and the ‘excessively’ long process of diplomacy to rationalise the employment of force against Iran, asserting that the potential cost of a nuclear armed Iran outweigh whatever cost that a pre-emptive attack on Iranian nuclear facilities would attract. On the other hand, opponents of military intervention have also expressed their scepticism about such approach, arguing that the benefits of such approach is nothing commensurate to its catastrophic human, economic, military, political and environmental costs. Though military actions have not been taken against Iran’s nuclear facilities, such options have also not been completely erased from the table as the exposure of Iran’s clandestine nuclear activities have increased the security concerns mainly for Israel and the U.S. While the United States views military strike against Iran as a last resort, Israel considers it as the most effective policy option that should be employed as quick as possible if Iran’s nuclear weapons ambition would be stopped.

This part of my study analyses the cost and benefits of a potential military action against the Iranian nuclear facilities.

4.3.1 Benefits of Military Intervention

In support of the utility of military instruments against Iran, proponents of military intervention have argued for some possible gains that could be made from a military attack on Iran's nuclear program. Some of which are:

Delay in Iranian Nuclear Program

Achieving a comprehensive destruction of the entire Iranian nuclear facility by a unilateral or bilateral military action from Israel and/or the U.S is highly unlikely, but a potential military strike against Iran possesses the capacity to reduce Iran's ability to pursue its illicit nuclear ambition and delay its nuclear program for several years. Even though, this might not completely terminate the Iranian nuclear ambition as in the case of Iraq and Syria because of the improbability of achieving a complete destruction of Iran's nuclear facility and the availability of human capital that possesses the expertise to regenerate the program, according to a report published in the 'Iran Project' such strike could severely damage major 'known' Iranian nuclear facility at Natanz, Esfahan, Fordow, Tehran, Arak etc. impeding the Iranian nuclear development for an estimated period of two-to-four years.

Impact on Non-Proliferation

Proponents of military strike have argued that a military strike on Iran would dramatically reduce the need for other states in the region to pursue similar program for the purpose of deterrence; as such action against Iran facility will dramatically reduce the potential Iranian threat, and reassure other states (especially western allies) of security in the region. Furthermore, a military strike against Iran would demonstrate the determination and commitment of the U.S and the international community towards non-proliferation. This will serve as deterrence to potential

proliferation in the region because of the fear of attracting similar response if they embark on the same nuclear adventure as Iran.

Weakening Iran's Proxies

Apart from the direct benefit of severely damaging Iranian nuclear facilities and weakening Iran's military strength as a consequence of potential military campaign that could cause painful destruction on Iran's military capability, Israeli military analysts have also argued that a military strike against Iran could have a long-term effect on Iran's proxies. According to an independent Israeli commentator on security and strategic affairs-Yossi Melman "if the Iranian regime weakens as a result of a successful attack, this would undoubtedly have an impact on Hamas and Hezbollah".⁹⁴ The effect of a dreadful blow to Iran would also have a profound negative effect on Iran's proxies like Hezbollah and Hamas that are heavily dependent on Iran and this will present a sense of security relief to Israel, who fears that such groups would be strengthened by a nuclear armed Iran.

4.3.2 Cost of Military Intervention

Whatever the objectives are, a military action against Iran will attract tremendous regional and global cost. Some of which will be felt immediately, while others would be felt in a long-run. Some of the costs of a potential military strike against Iran are highlighted below

Direct Retaliation

⁹⁴ Guy Azriel "Israel Weighs Risk, Benefits of Iran Strike" CNN News, 9th March, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://www.edition.cnn.com/2012/03/09/world/meast/Israel-attack-risk-benefits/>

Unlike the military strikes against the Iraqi and Syrian nuclear facilities, experts have presumed that any similar attack on Iran would attract Iranian military response, resulting in massive loss of lives and properties. The ballistic missile program in Iran has advanced alongside its nuclear program (though the imposition of sanctions have reduced the pace of the development) and Iran will not hesitate to employ its military capacity in its defence from external aggression.⁹⁵

In response to a potential unilateral military strike from Israel or a joint U.S-Israeli military campaign against Iran, Iran might attack U.S assets in the region, which could include the U.S Naval assets in the gulf and this might inflict painful destruction on some elements of the 5th Fleet. The U.S personnel in neighbouring Middle East countries could also be exposed to attacks. In an event of an Iranian retaliation, Israeli would incur more cost as Iran might launch its missiles towards Israeli cities. Although the Israeli defence system (that would receive support from U.S system) could obstruct some of Iranian weapons, there would inevitably be human cost and destruction of properties.⁹⁶ Such Iranian military response, if not properly managed could draw other states in the region, leading to a full-fledged regional war, will unimaginable catastrophic consequences.

An Iranian retaliation could also involve the closure of the Strait of Hormuz through which almost 20% of global oil flow. Such an attempt would cause a dramatic disruption in the flow of global oil; Iran might consider such attempt as a calculated effort to compel the U.S and Israeli forces to de-escalate as a result of the consequent

⁹⁵ International Institute for Strategic Studies, London "Iran's Missile Capabilities: a Net Assessment" 2010, Pp. 29 & 38. Retrieved from: <http://www.iiss.org/en/publications.strategic%20dossiers/issues/iran-39-s-ballistic-missile-capabilities-a-net-assessment-885a>

⁹⁶ Michael Eisenstadt & Michael Knights "Beyond Worst Case Analysis: Iran's Likely Response to an Israeli Preventive Strike" Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2012, P.4

hike that it will cause on the global oil and natural gas price with negative impact on the global economy.⁹⁷

Indirect Iranian Retaliation

Indirect response by Iranian-backed proxies cannot be ignored. Hezbollah for example has made significant military advancement, relative to the time of the 2006 war. The group is currently armed with thousands of long-range missiles and rockets that are capable of reaching central Israel.⁹⁸ Such heavily armed irrational group could engage Israel in a deadly conflict, in response to a potential attack on Iran.

Iranian proxies or intelligence services have been implicated in bombing or attempted bombings outside of the region, in Bulgaria, Thailand, India and Georgian (probably in response to the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientist by the Israeli).⁹⁹ Such attacks interpret the ability of such groups in launching targets outside the region. Iran could utilise such medium to attack the United States or Israel, as this will make deniability easier and reduce the risk if escalation against Iran.¹⁰⁰

Threat to International Solidarity

Should the U.S launch a military campaign without the support of its international partners, the hard won support for sanctions against Iran will be affected negatively and this might lead to states pulling out of the sanction regime. Iran will be considered a victim of unjustified Israeli and/or American attack and the resulting

⁹⁷ Hamed Aleaziz & Robin Mills “Do We Even Need the Straits of Hormuz?” the Atlantic, 13th January, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/01/do-we-need-the-strait-of-hormuz/251348>

⁹⁸ Michael Eisenstadt & Michael Knights “Beyond Worst Case Analysis: Iran’s Likely Response to an Israeli Preventive Strike” Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2012, P.4

⁹⁹ Nicholas Kulish and Eric Schmitt “Hezbollah is Blamed for Attack on Israeli Tourist in Bulgaria” New York Times, 9th July 2012. Retrieved from: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/20/world/europe/explosion-on-bulgaria-tour-bus-kills-at-least-five-israelis.html>

¹⁰⁰ Joel Greenberg “Israel Says Thai Bombs Similar to Those in India, Georgia” the Washington Post, 16th February, 2012. Retrieved from: http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/israel-saysthai-bombs-similar-to-those-in-india-georgia/2012/02/15/gIQA0pDkFR_story.html.

weakness in the sanction regime would hurt international solidarity against Iran's nuclear program. Such collapse in international efforts might present Iran with an opportunity of new military support that will advance its nuclear program.¹⁰¹

Impact on the U.S International Image and Influence

The United States' reputation has been on the decline, particularly because of its experience with the Muslim community, especially in the Middle East region that has misunderstood the U.S actions as a 'war against Islam'. The U.S President Barack Obama has been working relentlessly to correct this perception and restore the falling United States' reputation among the Muslim community. In an address at his summit on "countering violent extremism" President Obama reiterated that "we are not at war with Islam. We are at war with people who have perverted Islam".¹⁰²

In light of this, any unilateral military action taken by the U.S or a bilateral action with Israel against Iran without substantial evidence to Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons will frustrate the efforts of the U.S president and cause increased damage to the reputation of the United States among Muslims in the international community. This could be misinterpreted as a support for Zionism against Islam and provide concrete evidence for their claims that the U.S is engaged in a 'war against Islam'.

A motivation for Iran's Acquisition of Nuclear Weapons

There is no concrete evidence as regards Iran's pursuit for nuclear weapons, but many international observers believe that the Iranian leaders are bent on moving the

¹⁰¹ Kim Sengupta "America's Most Senior General Warns against Rash Actions on Syria and Iran" the Independent, 31st August, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas-most-senior-general-warns-against-rash-actionon-syria-and-iran-8096881.html>.

¹⁰² Aljazeera "Obama Says U.S at War with Those Perverting Islam" 19th, February, 2015. Retrieved from: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/02/obama-islam-extremism-conference-15021813833.html>

country to a military status where it will be able to produce the bomb, in case it is needed. A military campaign on Iran would convince Iranian leaders on the need to develop the bomb, rationalising such effort as a pursuit for national security in order to prevent a future attack on their territory. Such attack on Iran would make it impossible for the U.S and the international community to prevent Iran from acquiring the bomb, as Iran could withdraw from the NPT in line with Article X that creates a provision for states' withdrawal from the treaty on the grounds of 'threat to their national security and interest'. This will pose a significant challenge to the international community to inspect and monitor the progress of the Iranian nuclear program and the resulting conclusion would probably be uncertain.

Catastrophic Human Cost

In a report written by an Iranian-American scientist 'The Ayatollah's Nuclear Gamble' a number of the Iranian nuclear sites are positioned close to major civilian centres. One major site that would most likely be targeted in a military campaign would be the Uranium conversion facility at Isfahan that houses about 371 metric tons of uranium hexafluoride and is positioned at the doorstep of the city. The report estimated that a military strike on the facility would release toxic plumes that would get to the city centre in a duration of an hour, causing the death and injuries of as much as 70,000 and exposing more than 300,000 to radioactive material, which could result in blindness, severe skin burn, destruction of lungs, damage of tissues and other terrible medical situations, excluding the "long-term toxicity and facilities that are equally starved".¹⁰³ The devastating human cost of a potential attack on Iranian nuclear facility outweighs whatever benefits such action seek to achieve

¹⁰³ Khosrow Semnani "the Ayatollah Nuclear Gamble: Human Cost of Military Strike against Iran's Nuclear Facilities" The Hinckley Institute and Omid for Iran, 2012, Pp. 25-35

4.4 Diplomacy: the Joint Plan of Action

This section of my study will analyse the benefits and possible costs of the employment of diplomacy, in an effort to thwart the illicit nuclear weapon ambition of Iran

4.4.1 The Joint Plan of Action

With the increasing failure of sanctions in achieving its objective, several diplomatic efforts have been made to bring Iran to negotiation and ensure its commitment to a diplomatic solution to the Iran's nuclear crisis. However, the most productive of such efforts that brought a dramatic change in the diplomatic process was the 2015 Geneva talks between Iran and the P5+1 (United States, Russia, U.K, China, France and Germany) that officially set the balls of a Joint Plan of Action rolling in a positive direction.

On 24 November 2013, Javad Zarif Iranian foreign minister and Catherine Ashton-P5+1 negotiating team leader signed the Joint Plan of Action agreement that structured a specific six-month step for the first-phase agreement and guidelines for negotiating a comprehensive solution that would be monitored by a Joint commission in collaboration with the IAEA. These were wrought with an intention to put a hold to further advancement of the Iranian nuclear program, set back significant elements of the program like the 20% uranium enrichment stockpile and demand an increased access and monitoring of Iranian nuclear sites. In compensation for this, Iran would receive some amount of sanction relief, refund of some of its frozen assets and an assurance of no further imposition of sanctions for the length of the agreement.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ Anthony H. Cordesman "the P5+1 and Iranian Joint Plan of Action on the Islamic Republic of Iran's Nuclear Program: Assessing the Details and Risks" Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2004. Retrieved from:

On January 20, 2014, as announced by the P5+1 and Iran on January 12, 2014, the implementation of the JPOA began. But on June 19, an announcement was made by both parties for the extension of the talks through 24th November 2014. Additional commitments were added to both parties to undertake during the period, but the agreed measures to the interim deal remains intact. A second extension was announced by both sides on November 24th, with an aim of reaching a political agreement in four months and thereafter, conclude technical annex by 30 June 2015 (as in the first extension, more commitments were added, but the interim agreement remains in place). Several moves that indicated the increasing scepticism about the success of the talks were made; most significant was the Israeli Prime minister visit and speech to congress on March 3 2015. In his speech, he clearly stated that the Iran talks “would all but guarantee Iran gets nuclear weapons, lots of them”. This atmosphere of scepticism was clouded by a renewed spirit of hope that resulted from the April 2 announcement by both sides on a general framework agreement at Lausanne that outlines the basis for a nuclear deal and sets the talks on a positive lane that will lead towards the completion of the deal by June 30 2015.¹⁰⁵

Speaking after the framework agreement, President Obama clearly stated his contempt with the current deal and his optimism for a comprehensive agreement. According to him, the framework agreement is a “good deal; a deal that meets our core objectives. This framework would cut off every pathway that Iran could take to develop a nuclear weapon. Iran will face strict limitations on its program and has also

<http://www.csis.org/publication/p5-and-iranian-joint-plan-action-islamic-republic-irans-nuclear-program-assessing-detail>

¹⁰⁵ Kelsey Davenport “Timeline of Nuclear Diplomacy with Iran” Arms Control Association, 2015. Retrieved from: <http://www.armscontrol.org/factsheet/Timeline-of-nuclear-Diplomacy-with-iran>

agreed to the most robust and intrusive inspection and transparency regime ever negotiated for any nuclear program in history”.¹⁰⁶

4.4.2 Benefits of Diplomacy

A Boost in Iran’s Economy

Iran is set to dive into a new era of fortune as a peace deal will launch the country into a new phase of economic prosperity. Tightened sanctions that were imposed since 2012 have led the country into deep economic recession that has crippled its economy, causing increased poverty and suffering among the Iranian population.

The suspension of tough nuclear related sanction on Iran that will accompany a peace deal is something to be excited about, as it will expand Iran’s export and import, open the country to a huge flow of foreign investors, lift the oil embargo on Iran, reintegrate Iran into the international financial network, return into the Iranian economy more than a hundred billion dollars of oil revenue that has been locked abroad and boost the local and foreign businesses as a result of openness to the global economy.¹⁰⁷

Impact on Global Oil Market

Apart from a boost in the Iranian economy, a nuclear deal with Iran will positively impact the global oil market. As a result of limited exports and sales of Iran’s oil, Iran has massively increased its storage of oil and the country is waiting for an opportunity to flood the world with its huge oil reserve. According to data from Gibson’s, a British tanker company, Iran already has about 37million barrels in

¹⁰⁶ Rose Garden “Statement by the President on the Framework to Prevent Iran from Obtaining a Nuclear Weapon” 2nd April, 2015. Retrieved from: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/04/02/statement-president-framework-prevent-iran-obtaining-nuclear-weapon>

¹⁰⁷ Lawrence Norman “Iran’s Economy Stands to Get Boost if Nuclear Deal Reached” Wall Street Journal, 2nd April 2015. Retrieved from: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/irans-economy-stands-to-get-boost-if-nuclear-deal-reached-1428019653>

storage, waiting to be flushed into global oil market. As the atmosphere surrounding Iran nuclear deal brightens, the global market anticipates one of the biggest reunions in years and a successful deal with Iran would lower global oil price because of the resulting high supply of oil to meet the global demand. According to the Head of IEA's oil industry and market division – Anotoine Halff, “we could see a new leg in the downward slide of prices” if a deal is met.¹⁰⁸

United States-Iran Relation

The nuclear deal that has been on-going for over a year has transformed relations between the U.S and Iran. According to a former U.S diplomat at the Tehran- U.S. embassy, John Limbert, “a deal will demonstrate to both sides that there is a better way of dealing with the relationship”. Though it will not create an immediate alliance between both countries, a nuclear deal will underpin the basis for cooperation and to a large extent crack the rock of hostility that stood between both countries.

The taboo of ‘No Contact’ has been broken as top officials of both countries have been engaged in bilateral talks between their respective foreign representatives. A historic phone call was also made possible between the U.S and the Iranian president on September 2013, all of these has been impossible since the 1979 revolution. This is a sign that the over 30years ice of fierce anger and distrust is gradually melting.¹⁰⁹ With a nuclear deal, the U.S will be able to correct the impression among Iranian citizens and work toward complete normalization of their relations.

¹⁰⁸ Bill Spindle & Benoit Faucon “Iran’s Nuclear Deal Could Open Oil Flood” the Wall Street Journal, 2015. Retrieved from: <http://www.wsj.com/article/iran-nuclear-deal-could-open-oil-flood-14265240>

¹⁰⁹ Trita Parsi “Truce: Iran, the U.s and the Middle East After the Nuclear Deal” National Iranian and American Council, 2015.

An Option for Stability in the Middle East

A successful nuclear talk with Iran will contribute constructively to stability in the region in numerous ways. Firstly, the security concerns of Israel, Saudi Arabia and other U.S allies in the region, regarding Iran's nuclear activities will reduce drastically, making the perceived nuclear war that could erupt as a result of Iran's acquisition of the weapon more improbable. A peace deal with Iran will also eliminate every possibility of a U.S and/or Israeli military intervention that could lead to a devastating war in the region.

Iran occupies a very significant position in the region and its actions in the region have had profound impact in worsening or mending the security situation in the region: Iran has greatly supported Hezbollah with which it advances its interest and determines if the Israel-Lebanon border will remain peaceful or not; Bashar Assad has retained power in Syria, thanks to numerous supports and backings he gets from Iran; Massaud Barzani –President of the Iraqi Kurdistan has openly commended Iran for its contribution in defending Erbil from the Islamic State (IS); Iran has been believed to indirectly support the Yemen Shitte Houthi rebels that have ousted the government and occupied much of the country.¹¹⁰ If the Israeli-Lebanon border will experience calm, if Syria will have a taste of peace, if the Islamic States will be combated in the region, if Yemen will be settled etc. it depends greatly on the decisions of Iran.

The international community is aware of the impact of Iran's cards in the region, but its greatest challenge is getting Iran to play its cards constructively in ensuring peace

¹¹⁰ Will Fulton, Joseph Holliday & Sam Wyer "Iranian Strategy in Syria" a Joint Report of AEI'S Critical Threats Project and Institute for the Study of War, 2013. Pp. 6, 7 & 13.

in the region. Resolving the above mentioned issues in the Middle East depends greatly on Iran's decision and at this point, the international community must not undermine the importance of cooperation with Iran, as this could be a viable means to encourage Iran to contribute positively in the region. Sanctions or military strike would provoke Iran and lead to an escalation of the security issues in the region.

Impact on Non-Proliferation

Stopping or slowing down Iran's nuclear program will mean huge success for the non-proliferation regime and this will further strengthen non-proliferation efforts. A peace deal with Iran will reassure others of the potency of the regime and send a vital message to the global community that though the regime seems messy, it still works. The quest for the acquisition of nuclear weapons in the region that would be ignited should Iran acquire the bomb will drastically fade off as a result of a successful peace deal with Iran.

As the IAEA advances its experience with an increased verification regime in Iran, it could also apply this gained knowledge in its dealings with other countries. An Iran deal will boost the profile of the Additional Protocol and more advanced safeguard measures. The widespread implementation of such Additional Protocol will boost the ability of the inspectors in detecting unannounced nuclear activities by granting them broader access and knowledge to nuclear facilities of other countries. This will promote confidence in the non-proliferation regime and increase its ability to function more effectively.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Jeffery M. Kaplow and Rebecca Davis Gibbson "the Days After a Deal with Iran: Implications for the Nonproliferation Regime" Rand Corporation, 2015, Pp 3-5

4.4.3 Costs of Diplomacy

Unlike sanctions and military strike that have a long list of regional and global costs, the more than one year of diplomatic engagement with Iran has not attracted any particular cost, rather it has been perceived to be of tremendous benefits not just to Iran and the United States, but also to the entire international community. However, sceptics have not failed to express their fears and concern, which they assume to be the potential costs of the Iranian nuclear talks.

Risking Relations with Regional Allies

As the looming deadline approaches, the U.S regional allies are increasingly alarmed that the U.S is about to trade its long-standing relationship with its regional friends, to attract the love of their rival at a time when this rival is on the offensive across the Middle East. The United States commitment to its regional partners is already in doubt as most regional allies believe that a nuclear deal with Iran will divert the U.S attention from its partners. According to Mishaal Al-Gergawi, a prominent political commentator in the UAE, “the gulf thought it was in a monogamous relationship with the west, and now it realises it’s being cheated on because the U.S was in an open relationship with it”¹¹²

Several efforts have been made by the Obama’s administration to reaffirm its regional partners of its unshaking commitment to their security, but such efforts have barely had impact as its regional partners believe strongly that a normalisation of the U.S –Iran’s relations that could result from such deal would jeopardise their long standing relations with the U.S.

¹¹² Yaroslev Trofimov “Like Israel, the U.S Arab Allies Fear Obama’s Iran Nuclear Deal Nuclear Deal” the Wall Street Journal, 4th March, 2015. Retrieved from: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/like-israel-us-arab-allies-fear-obamas-iran-nuclear-deal-1425504773>

Increasing Iran's Ability to Acquire the Weapon

Though several parameters have been put in place to ensure Iran's compliance to the framework agreement if the deal is implemented, opponents of such diplomatic policy have argued that the possibility that Iran would cheat cannot be completely erased. Sanctions relief provide so many benefits for Iran and Iran could exploit such incentives provided by the deal to advance its capacity to develop nuclear weapons.¹¹³ Such situation would leave Iran with a regrettable military strength and influence, leading to catastrophic consequences (as stated in the impacts of a nuclear armed Iran above.)

4.5 In Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Sanction, Military

Intervention and Diplomacy in Achieving in Preventing a Nuclear Armed Iran

After a comprehensive analysis of the benefits and costs of all three available policy options, the concluding part of this chapter will evaluate their effectiveness in preventing a nuclear armed Iran, stating their weaknesses and strength in the pursuit of the stated objectives:

4.5.1 Effectiveness of Sanctions

International sanctions were imposed against Iran with an aim of isolating and pushing Iran to alter its illicit nuclear ambition, but unfortunately, the effectiveness of the more than two decades of sanctions has been under siege as a result of clever Iranian government policies and its constructive response that have limited the anticipated impact of sanctions on Iran. Iran's response to international sanctions have clearly demonstrated the ability of states to contain the economic slowdown induced by sanctions, through clever policies and careful economic planning and

¹¹³ Ryan Mauro "Deal Allows Iran to Retain Ability to Build Nuclear Weapon" the Clarion Project, 2015. Retrieved from: <http://www.clarionproject.org/analysis/deal-allows-iran-retain-ability-build-nuclear-weapon>

such Iran's defiance in the face of though western sanctions could serve as a motivation for other states in the Islamic world to emulate Iranian revolutionary example.¹¹⁴ So far, Iran has proven to be bigger than the western cage of sanctions; hence, sanctions could not contain or determine the Iranian nuclear behaviour. Rather than pushing Iran to the demands of the west, Iran has always exploited the weaknesses of sanctions that have often provided escape routes through which Iran has been able to render western sanctions impotent and reduce its impact on its economy and people.

Sanctions imposed with an intention of impeding Iran's trade and importation of several goods from various countries were rendered impotent as Strategic goods which included sophisticated electronic gadgets, aircraft components etc. were smuggled through Oman and the UAE to the Iranian Island of Qesh and Kish until 2010 when immense pressure was kept on the Omani and Emirati government from the U.S to desist from such activity or risk assess to U.S market and technology. Though Oman and the UAE responded positively to the U.S threats, such U.S action yielded minimal results as Iran immediately utilised its strong relations and its 910 miles border with Iraq as a smuggling hub for key sanctioned goods that were important to Iran.¹¹⁵

Iran's continuous smuggling activities have blunted the supposed sharp sword of tough sanctions imposed by the EU and the US on gasoline and oil import to Iran. Iran was able to smuggle hundreds of millions of dollars in refined products and crude oil through the Kurdish regions of Baija and Kirkuk. As noted by San Dagher,

¹¹⁴ The Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs "Iran Sanctions are Dangerously Ineffective" 16th July, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://www.jinsa.org/publications/jinsa-reports/iran-sanction-are-dangerously-ineffective>

¹¹⁵ Ibid

more than one thousand tankers were transported daily to Iran without Baghdad's formal authorization. Iran's constant access to refined oil product in the face of such sanction rendered it ineffective.

With the use of secret private banks in Iraq and front companies in Iraq and the UAE, some of which belong to Iraqi, Lebanese and Syria citizens, Iran was able to purchase sanctioned goods that were shipped legally from UAE to Iraq and later smuggled via land route to Iran. Such Iranian activities were facilitated as a result of Iran's influence on Nouri al-Maliki, then-Iraq Prime Minister, Iran's cordial relationship with the ruling Kurdistan's clan and several Shai faction that were located in the central and southern Iraq.¹¹⁶

Iran was smart enough to identify the 'golden loophole' in the western sanctions and with the energy-for-gold-trade; Iran was able to sustain its economy in the face of tight sanctions. In the same month that Tehran was bar from SWIFT global payment network that blocked Iran from financial transaction, Iran's import of gold from Turkey attained its peak, serving as an alternative means of international transaction with the traditional gold system of trade. An estimate from the a report published in the Foundation for Defense of Democracy indicated that Iran could generate up to \$20billion per year in its revenue from gold if it maximally utilises this loophole . Iran's gold import from Turkey rose significantly to \$1.6 billion (28.1 metric tons) per month in the months of June and July 2012.¹¹⁷ Such switch in the medium of exchange to the traditional gold system enabled the sales of Iranian resources and

¹¹⁶ Ibid

¹¹⁷ Gary Clark, Rachel Zeimba & Mark Dubowitz "Iran's Golden Loopholes" Robin Global Economics and Foundation for Defence of Democracy. Pp. 1-5

also to purchase most of its needs via the use of gold, since it was cut off from the international financial transaction.

Iran's continued defiance to western sanctions has boosted the confidence of Iranian leaders to explicitly challenge such policy, expressing their unwillingness to desist from its nuclear activities if sanctions continued. According to Ramin Mehmanparast, then-Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman "this sort of act will encourage the Iranian nation to continue on its way strongly".¹¹⁸ Such confidence stems primarily from Iran's ability to contain the impact of sanctions and sustain its economy under such stringent policies. In response to western sanctions, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei confirmed that "if their interest is to retain sanctions, the Iranian nation can go that route as well".

The severe humanitarian crisis, civilian casualties, medical retardation and global energy and economic consequences of the Iranian sanctions regime have exposed the United States and the international community to expanded criticism, as international observers are beginning to question the morality of the international community. Though sanctions against Iran have attracted a couple of benefits to itself, these limited benefits are nothing commensurate to the tremendous costs of sanctions, as the devastating costs of sanctions outweighs whatever benefits sanctions against Iran has had, yet proponents of sanctions are ignorantly pushing for increased and new sanctions against Iran, after more than two decades of sanctions against Iran, that have resulted to only little more than a more than a complete waste of time. It is no doubt that sanctions have reduced the pace of Iran's nuclear program, but its capacity

¹¹⁸ CBSNEWS "Iran Calls New EU Sanction Inhuman, Ineffective", 16th October, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/iran-calls-new-eu-sanctions-inhuman-ineffective/>

to put a hold to Iran's nuclear weapons ambition remains highly improbable as Iran has been able to play around tight western sanctions without sustaining any significant wound, as expected by imposers of sanctions.

4.5.2 Effectiveness of Military Intervention

Though proponents of military intervention have argued for its effectiveness in preventing a nuclear armed Iran, opponents of such approach have warned against a potential military intervention, arguing that “even if it succeed, it would spark a full-fledge war and global economic crisis”. To enable a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of military intervention against Iran, three vital questions ought to be addressed: is a potential military action against Iran legal? What are the potentially? And how rational can such action be?

Article 51 of the United Nations charter that acknowledges the “inherent right of individual or collective self-defence” provides a platform on which states can legally justify their attacks on other states for the purpose of self-defence. However, there are limitations in the right of self-defence, as stated further the Article 15 that such rights can be use “if an armed attack occurs against a member of the United Nations”. As explained in Webster's letter to Lord Ashborton – (in the Caroline case), such right to self-defence can only be used in cases where the “necessity of that self-defence is instant, overwhelming and leaving no choice of means and no moment for deliberation”.¹¹⁹ As specified in the IAEA resolution GC (XXIX)/RES 1444, “any armed attack on and threat against nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful

¹¹⁹ Anthony Clark Arend “International Law and the Pre-emptive Use of Military Force” the Centre for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, *The Washington Quarterly*. 26. 2, 2003, P.91.

purpose constitutes a violation of the principles of the United Nations charter, international law and the statute of the agency”.¹²⁰

A potential Israeli and/or the U.S military action against Iran cannot be classified under such case of self-defence as Iran has not made any direct threat of use of nuclear weapons against the U.S or Israel. In fact, Iran has vehemently denied every accusation against it to be in the pursuit of the weapons and no credible evidence of such claim has been provided. Therefore, regardless of the accusations against Iran, the Iranian nuclear program remains peaceful. And the present status of Iran’s nuclear crisis (unless otherwise if any dramatic changes occur in the future), the U.S and Israel have not met the criterion for the use of self-defence and an attack against Iran will also be a violation of the IAEA resolution GC (XXIX)/RES 1444. Therefore any such action will be considered illegal, attracting international condemnation.

Apart from the legal condemnation of a proposed Israeli and/or U.S military action, several US and Israeli top military officials and experts have expressed their scepticism about the effectiveness of military strike in preventing a nuclear armed Iran, yet proponents of such action still push for its application because of the catastrophic consequences they perceive from a potential nuclear armed Iran. Retired colonel John A. Warden III, a United States’ Air force combat veteran and former commandant of the Air command and staff college have warned the United States against any military intervention in Iran because of the improbability of completely crippling Iran’s program. According to him, the successful June 1981 Israeli attack

¹²⁰ IAEA General Conference “Record of the Eleventh Meeting: GOV(53)/OR.11” 2009. Retrieved from: http://www.cns.miis.edu/nam/documents/Official_Document/gc53or-11_en.pdf.

on the Osirak nuclear facilities in Syria was a lesson to Iran. Osirak was installed in a single location that was above ground and was not properly defended. This enabled Israel to severely damage the nuclear program in one strike. As a function of such lesson, Iran now has its facilities spread across different locations of the country, most of which have been installed deep underground with security mechanism to deter anticipatory attacks. Though some military experts like Ashton Carter – Secretary of Defense has claimed that the U.S possesses the capacity to set back, shut down and destroy Iran’s nuclear program, more realistic military officials have presented the U.S with the bitter truth that such attack will likely fail and even if it succeed, it would instigate a full fledged war, as no single strike can completely damage Iranian facilities.¹²¹

It has become a common knowledge that a military strike against Iran can only provide a short-term solution (even if it works) to the Iranian nuclear crisis, as military experts like Warden has confirmed that “military actions is reversible overtime”. Robert Gates, former U.S Defence secretary has argued that such approach can only delay and not halt Iran’s nuclear progress.¹²² In fact, such action will make Iran’s nuclear efforts go deeper, more secured and more covert, making it incredibly difficult for subsequent strikes to have impact on Iranian facilities. Experts have predicted that even with a successful military strike, Iran nuclear program could be reinstated within a period of two to four years. Given these challenges, Warden concluded that if Iran is determined, “no amount of airstrike will stop them”

¹²¹ James S. Robbins “A Grim Prignosis” the U.S News and World Report, 24th April, 2015. Retrieved from: <http://www.usnews.com/opinion/blogs/world-report/2015/04/24/ending-irans-nuclear-program-would-require-more-than-a-few-airstrikes>

¹²² Robert Gates “Bombing Iran Would not Stop Nuclear Threat” the Telegraph, 1st May 2009. Retrieved from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/5257343/robert-gates-bombing-iran-would-not-stop-nuclear-threat.html>.

Several U.S and Israeli military experts have out rightly condemned such approach, calling it an unreasonable option. Kobi Ritsher –Israeli airforce veteran of 20 years stated that “an Israeli attack on nuclear compound in Iran would be an act of madness”.¹²³ Addressing the reckless optimism of proponents of military strike, General Anthony Zinni- former CENTCOM Commander stated that “I think anybody that believe that it would be a clean strike and it would be over and there would be no reaction is foolish”.¹²⁴ According to Meir Dagan, Former head of Israeli Mossad, an attack on Iran is “the stupidest thing I have ever heard... It will be followed by a war with Iran. It is the kind of thing where we know how it starts, but not how it will end”.¹²⁵

Apart from being illegal and ineffective, military intervention against Iran is highly irrational and unreasonable. After an analysis of the cost and benefits of such approach, we can only but agree to General Anthony Zinni’s statement that only a fool will think of such an option against Iran. For the fear of the devastating outcome of such approach, some pundits have resolved that even if other non-military strategies fail to impede Iran’s nuclear development, the U.S and the international community should learn to live with a nuclear armed Iran rather than contemplating a military intervention because “the challenges posed by a nuclear Iran are more subtle than a direct attack”.¹²⁶

Before taking such sensitive and critical military decision, I think proponents of such attack should pause for a while and think logically about their actions, putting some

¹²³ Haaretz . 20th July, 2012.

¹²⁴ PBS News 4th August, 2009.

¹²⁵ (Haaretz 7th May, 2011.

¹²⁶ Jeffery Goldberg “The Point of No Return” the Atlantic, September 2010. Retrieved from: <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2010/09/the-point-of-no-return/308186/>

factors into consideration: the illegality of such approach is a serious issue to be given lengthy thoughts, as it will attract international condemnation and criticism, and destroy the reputation of the attackers. The U.S as a result will lose their hard won international solidarity regarding the Iran nuclear crisis and its morality will be greatly questioned; secondly, even proponents of such attack have confirmed that such attack may delay but not halt Iran's nuclear development. Hence, it only provides a short-term solution as analysts predicts a rebuild period of 2-4 years. The question here is- what will happen when Iran rebuilds after the strike? (Diplomacy will definitely not be an option then) most probably, another strike will be contemplated. Now, how long will this continue? Thirdly, even if it works, the catastrophic consequences discussed earlier in this work which include: millions of civilian death, global economic pains, a possible regional war, expanded terrorist activities by Iran's proxies etc. outweighs whatever benefit the attackers hope to achieve. Scholars have also argued that this will rationalise Iran's acquisition of the weapon and this time, the program will go deeper, more covert and more secured, deterring subsequent attacks.

In fact, military strike will be the most unreasonable thing to do as it does not provide a lasting solution to the problem at hand. In the words of Sam Gardiner-retired Air force colonel "you have no military solution for the issue of Iran. And you have to make diplomacy work".¹²⁷

4.5.3 Effectiveness of Diplomacy

The less than two years of diplomatic engagement between Iran and the P5+1 have proven to be more productive than the more than two decades of sanctions against

¹²⁷ James Fallows "Would a U.S Strike Against Iran Actually Work?" the Atlantic, 27th^t January, 2010. Retrieved from: <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/01/please-read-jeffrey-goldbergs-netanyahu-analysisand-this-other-one-too/384888/>

Iran. With the framework agreement in April, the atmosphere of scepticism about a possible nuclear deal with Iran has been replaced with one of cautious optimism as international observers patiently awaits the proposed June 30th deadline to reach a comprehensive solution to the Iran nuclear crisis. Details of the Lausanne framework agreement are available in the White House fact sheet on “the parameters of joint comprehensive plan of action...”

If fully implemented, the Iranian nuclear deal will provide the most effective, less costly and long-term solution to the Iranian nuclear crisis. Though a number of important details are yet to be resolved, the parameters structured by both parties of the framework agreement set the foundation for an agreement that meets the major aims of the United States and the international community: blocking all potential Iranian pathways to develop nuclear weapons using highly-enriched plutonium and uranium, and protecting against any implicit weapons program. To ensure the effectiveness of the deal, several restrictions, verification and monitoring mechanisms have been put in place.

Rolling Back Iranian Uranium Enrichment Capability

Iran has significantly advanced its nuclear program to an alarming state that has attracted international concerns, but with a nuclear deal, Iran’s nuclear advancement and its capacity to achieve nuclear weapons via uranium enrichment will be dramatically set back. Iran has agreed to about a two-third reduction in its installed centrifuges. It’s currently installed centrifuges that is about 1900 will be reduced to 6,104 and only 5,060 of the enriching uranium be operated for a period of 10 years. Under this deal, Iran has also agreed to significantly reduce its about 10,000kg stockpile of Low-Enriched Uranium to just 300kg and its uranium enrichment will

not exceed 3.67 per cent for a minimum of 15 years. As a result of this, excess enrichment infrastructure and centrifuges will be placed under strict monitored storage of the IAEA and access will only be granted for the purpose of replacement for centrifuges and equipment. New nuclear facilities that could enhance uranium enrichment would also not be built by Iran for the duration of 15 years.

These limitations in the framework agreement will push the currently estimated two-to-three months Iran's breakout timeline backwards as the breakout time will be extended to a minimum of one year, for a period of 10 years.

Restructuring Fordow

Under the nuclear agreement, enrichment of uranium at the Iranian Fordow facility will only be done using Iran's first generation centrifuges (IR-1 Models) for 10 years. More advanced centrifuges like its IR-2, IR-4, IR-5, IR-6 and IR-8 models will not be used for uranium enrichment for 10 years and its 1,000 IR-2 model Natanz centrifuges will be removed and placed under strict IAEA monitored storage for 10 years. Enrichment and enrichment research at the facility will be significantly limited for the duration of the agreement. These limitations of Iran's research and development on advanced centrifuges will impede Iran's knowledge and efficiency to quickly and easily breakout, using such advanced technologies even after the agreed time.

Obstructing Iran's Plutonium Pathway

Iran's heavy-water reactor at Arak could be used to produce sufficient weapons-grade plutonium that is needed for nuclear weapons. This program has also been taken into consideration by the framework agreement and appropriate steps have

been taken to redress the security concerns it poses. Iran has agreed to modify and redesign this facility for exclusively peaceful nuclear purpose. The core of this facility will be destroyed or moved out of Iran. Spent fuel from the facility will also be moved out of Iran for the reactor's lifetime. Iran will not be allowed to build a new heavy water reactor for a minimum of 15 years and its remaining heavy water will be sold on the international market. This will drastically impede Iran's ability to advance nuclear weapons production, using plutonium.

Monitoring and Verification

Based on previous Iranian attempts to implicitly develop nuclear facilities and engage in weapons-related nuclear research, critics have raised the concern about enforcing Iran's compliance. One major issue that has raised serious concerns about the effectiveness of the Iran nuclear deal is the belief among sceptics that Iran would cheat. According to a senior Israeli official "Netanyahu said... it would be impossible to catch the Iranian cheating simply because they will not break the agreement".¹²⁸

The framework agreement have adequately addressed this concern as , the IAEA inspectors will have access to not just Iran's facilities, but also to the chain of supply that supports the Iranian nuclear program. A 25-year access to Iran's uranium mines has also been granted. A 20 years surveillance of the Iranian centrifuges Bellows and Rotors storage and production facilities by inspectors will be enabled and Iran will establish an agreed parameter to address the concerns of the IAEA as regards the Possible Military Dimension of its program. An implementation of Modified code

¹²⁸ Barak Ravid "Netanyahu Told Cabinet: Our Biggest Fear is that Iran Will Honour Nuclear Deal" Haaretz, 2015. Retrieved from: <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/premium-1.650355>

3.1 that requires early notification of any construction of new facilities have also been agreed by Iran with the Additional Protocol of the IAEA that will provide wide access and information on Iranian program.

Speaking at the White House after the framework agreement, President Obama clearly addressed such fear. According to him, “the deal is not based on trust, it’s based on unprecedented verification” he stated that if “Iran cheats, the world would know it. We see anything suspicious, we will inspect it. Iran’s past efforts to weaponize its program will also be addressed. With this deal, Iran will face more inspection than any other country in the world” With such parameters put in place, the possibility of a secrete Iranian nuclear activity that could enable cheating is most unlikely.¹²⁹

Sanctions Relief

Iran has invested an overwhelming amount into its decades long nuclear program, hence, no amount of pressure will compel it into abandoning this expensive nuclear program. The only feasible solution to this nuclear dilemma between Iran and the west will only be a solution that will present a win-win outcome for both parties of the conflict. The sanctions relief provides Iran with some benefits for cooperating with the west in stopping the illicit nuclear weapons program. Critics have argued that Iran will exploit these benefits to rebuild their economy and continue their illicit nuclear program with a stronger financial base. However, it is important to note that sanctions relief does not open an economic broad-way for Iran without the necessary instruments to check its speed and curtail its excesses.

¹²⁹ Gardon 2015

A striking point of the Iranian nuclear deal is the pace at which sanctions will be relieved. While Iran demands an immediate lifting of western sanction, the west prefers sanctions to be rolled back gradually following vital Iranian steps taken in line with the nuclear deal. The EU and the U.S nuclear related sanctions will only be lifted after proper verification by the IAEA that Iran has made all necessary nuclear related moves. Hence, should Iran default in its commitments, sanctions will be snapped back. Previous UN Security Council Resolutions placed on Iran will also be lifted only when Iran has taken all key actions to address the concerns over its program, as regards: Arak, Fordow, PMD, Enrichment and transparency. There will be a re-establishment of sensitive UN Security Council Resolution that involves the transfer of sensitive military technologies and activities. Significant restrictions on arms and ballistic missiles will be structured by a new UN resolution and procurement channels will be created to ensure transparency. To enable fairness and avoid disagreement regarding Iran's performance and compliance, a dispute resolution mechanism and process will be established and if issues regarding Iran's performance cannot be resolved, sanctions will be snapped back. Other U.S sanctions on Iran for terrorism, human right abuses and ballistic missiles will remain in place under the deal. With such parameters in order, an exploitation of the benefits of sanctions relief is highly improbable as all sanctions relief are accompanied with a clause that leaves Iran with two main options: comply with the framework agreements or head back to tight and tough sanction.

Important Phases

The framework agreement set a foundation for an effective, multipurpose, verifiable and comprehensive solution to the Iran's nuclear crisis. The currently negotiated deal

will via its several parameters verifiably impede Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons which is in the interest of International security. A number of agreements have been made to ensure the effectiveness of this deal, once it is signed:

- For 10years, several limitations will be placed on Iran's enrichment, research and development capacity to ensure a breakout time limit of a minimum of one year. Additional elements of Iran's program like the building of new facilities for enrichment or heavy water reactor and stockpiling of uranium will be limited for fifteen years and for this period; Iran will be placed under tight transparency procedures.
- For beyond fifteen years, Iran will be subjected to significant and tight transparency measures. Its adherence to the IAEA Additional Protocol is permanent which includes important access and transparency obligations. The supply chain for Iran's uranium will also be robustly inspected for 15years.
- To continually impede Iran's acquisition and development of nuclear weapons, even after the stated period, Iran will remain a member of the NPT

Currently, there are no better policies to impede Iran's nuclear weapons ambition than a successful Iranian nuclear weapons deal, as Iran cannot be forced to abandon its decades long, very expensive nuclear investment without adequate compensations that will convince Iran that the Western demands is in its best interest. If fully implemented, the deal will completely cripple Iran's ability to develop the weapons as all possible Iranian routes to the acquisition of nuclear weapons will be blocked by the deal. The deal presents a long term solution to the Iranian nuclear crisis with all necessary measures put in place to verify and ensure Iran's compliance to the agreed framework that will make any potential nuclear weapons development unlikely, without attracting several military, political, economic and human consequences.

Based on the given analysis and evaluation of all three policy options, my concluding chapter will provide a comparison of all available policy option, pointing to the most effective, as stated in my hypothesis.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The last thing the international community needs at this crucial point is an Iran armed with nuclear weapons because of the devastating consequences it would have on not just the Middle East region, but the entire world at large. Iran's non-compliance with its safeguard obligations, coupled with its several unlawful nuclear activities have increased scepticism among experts and observers in the international community concerning Iran's pursuit of peaceful nuclear technology, but till date, Iran has vehemently denied all accusations that it is advancing towards nuclear weapons development. Preventing a possible nuclear armed Iran is obviously not an issue of contention among states in the international community, but a growing controversy have been; what foreign policy tool will be most viable in achieving this 'ultimate goal' of thwarting the Iranian unlawful nuclear weapons ambition.

Sanctions have been employed against Iran in a bid to thwart its illicit nuclear weapons ambition, but its effectiveness have been under siege as Iran has identified several loopholes through which it has been able to limit the impact of sanctions on it. Hence, the more than two decades of sanctions have resulted to only a little more than a waste of time. Moreover, its long list of costs outweighs its benefits. As an alternative to such approach, military intervention has been proposed as an effective tool with which Iran's presumed nuclear weapons program can be halted, but the

proposed benefits of such approach is nothing commensurate to the anticipated catastrophic costs which will include an incredible amount of civilian casualties. Its costs, coupled with the undeniable fact that such approach can only provide a short-term solution to the Iranian nuclear crisis, have made such policy option to be considered irrational and ineffective. With the signing of a Joint Plan of Action between Iran and the P5+1 (United States, Britain, Russia, France, China and Germany) on 24 November 2015, the international community switched into a diplomatic engagement with Iran, and this less than two year of engagement have yielded tremendous achievements and progress in the pursuit of its stated objective of preventing a nuclear armed Iran. Despite the numerous achievements of diplomacy in this short duration, opponents of such approach have not failed to express their concerns and scepticisms about the on-going Iranian nuclear deal, but with the recent framework agreement, most of such concerns have been adequately addressed with several agreed parameters that will impede Iran's ability to pursue nuclear weapons developments, and ensure its compliance with the deal. Hence, if this deal is fully implemented, it will provide a long term solution to the Iranian nuclear crisis, with very minute cost (if any).

5.2 Conclusion

This research provides an analysis of the three main foreign policy options (sanctions, military intervention and diplomacy) facing the United States and the International community in a bid to prevent a nuclear armed Iran, asserting that diplomacy, of all three options is the most effective and less costly instrument in achieving this objective. To further validate my hypothesis, my conclusion will draw a brief comparison of all three foreign policy options, based on their benefits, costs and effectiveness, as stated in chapter four above.

The employment of military force has always attracted huge scepticism in the international community because of its inevitable human cost. This rationalises the limited support for the employment of military intervention against Iran. But unfortunately, the morality of the international community has still been questioned as a result of the imposition of sanctions against Iran that have not only subjected the Iranian population to extreme poverty and suffering, but also resulted (indirectly) in the death of hundreds of civilians in Iran (chapter four above). Apparently, diplomacy remains the only foreign policy option that can effectively prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, without the devastating human cost.

Time has always been a crucial factor in evaluating the effectiveness of foreign policy instruments in the pursuit of their objectives. Putting the time factor into consideration, diplomacy can be regarded as the most favourable of all three policy options. The more than two decades that have been dedicated to sanctions against Iran has resulted to a little more than a waste of time as sanctions have had little impact on Iran with minimal contribution to its stated objective, relative to diplomacy that have recorded tremendous achievements and progress in the pursuit of the same objective in less than two years. On the other hand, though military intervention will have an immediate impact on Iran's nuclear program, experts have predicted three-to four years rebuild period because of its inability to completely halt Iranian nuclear program. In essence, such approach only provides a short term solution to the Iranian crisis compared to the proposed long-term diplomatic solution that is expected to last for a minimum of ten years.

Hostility in the U.S-Iran relations have been aggravated by the imposition of sanctions against Iran, as such action have instigated a deep feeling of anger and

hatred among Iranians for their supposed enemy (the U.S) that has subjected them to hunger and poverty. Military intervention however, will not only increase this feeling of dismay for the U.S, it will also destroy the fragile United States relations with the outside world and attract international condemnation to itself. Unlike sanctions and military intervention, diplomacy has been effective in easing the hostility in the relationship between both countries and has instigated communications between foreign representatives and executives of both countries, breaking the more than three decades non-contact taboo between them. Though normalisation between both countries cannot be instantaneous even with the success of the Iranian nuclear talks, diplomacy has succeeded in setting a foundation for such possibility. Hence, of all three options, the U.S-Iran relations can only be mended by diplomacy.

Decades of sanctions have caused severe damage to the Iranian economy, with resulting negative impact on global economy. The probable blockade of the straits of Hormuz in a possible Iranian response to a military attack on its facilities would inflict further economic pains on the international community. But with the reintegration of Iran into the global market, diplomacy has proposed a strategy that would dress the sanctions inflicted economic wounds and rescue the world from the anticipated economic damage that a potential military strike would cause.

Sanctions have made it increasingly difficult for the international community to ascertain the status of Iran's nuclear program as Iran's reactions have reduced access to its nuclear facilities, giving it an opportunity to conceal its nuclear activities from the world. Military intervention is obviously not a solution at this point because it will motivate Iran and provide it with an opportunity to rationalise its suspected nuclear weapons program on the basis of deterrence from a future attack. Such

uncertainty regarding the Iranian nuclear program can only be addressed with a diplomatic approach that will either provide Iran with an opportunity to substantiate its claims for peaceful nuclear development by its compliance to the agreed framework, or provide evidence for the suspicion of the international community if Iran fails to comply with the its framework agreement.

In sum, beyond just preventing Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons, the on-going diplomatic engagement proposes a multipurpose solution to the Iranian nuclear crisis by amending the damages of sanctions and averting the devastating consequences of a potential military intervention against Iran's nuclear facilities. Hence, if the status of the Iranian nuclear program will be ascertained, if a long-term solution to the Iranian nuclear crisis will be achieved, if the strained U.S-Iran relations will be amended, if the damaged Iranian economy will be revived, if the world would benefit from the enormous resources of Iran, if global oil price will reduce further, if diplomacy will be embraced as a means of resolving international conflict, if the Middle East region will be given a chance of stability, then a diplomatic tool must not be ignored or discouraged, as it provides the best alternative to sanctions and military strike in achieving the ultimate objective of preventing a nuclear armed Iran.

5.3 Recommendations

All necessary parameters have been put in place by the framework agreement to ensure the success and effectiveness of the proposed Iranian nuclear deal. However, there exist some crucial issues that if not adequately addressed, could limit the success and effectiveness of the diplomatic engagement between Iran and the P5+1. This part of my study identifies such issues and provides recommendation that could help address such issues in a bid to ensure the maximum impact of the deal.

The republican dominated congress has expressed their displeasure concerning the on-going Iran's nuclear deal, and they are working relentlessly to frustrate Obama's efforts towards achieving a comprehensive peace deal with Iran. The open letter sent by the group of 47 GOP senators to Iran's leaders, claiming that congress could quickly discard or change any agreement immediately Obama leaves office explicitly explains the resolve of the congress to sabotage the deal. Though Secretary of States have rebuked such assertion that the congress such assertion that congress possess the capacity to nullify the nuclear deal, claiming that "they don't have the right to modify an agreement reached, executive to executive between countries-between leaders of a country" (Schwartz 2015). The republican dominated congress poses a major threat to the success and effectiveness of the deal.

Whether or not congress has the capacity to nullify or alter the deal, an undeniable fact remains that an Iranian nuclear deal achieved with the cooperation of the executive and the legislature will be more effective than a nuclear deal achieved with a division between the legislature and executive. The present legislative-executive battle in the U.S would distract Obama and his team, who will now have to work towards Iran's compliance and at the same time, strive towards limiting the ability of the congress to negatively impact the deal. Rather than ignore or boycott the congress in the process of an Iranian nuclear deal, the executive should exert more efforts towards reconciliation with the congress, to enable it contribute constructively to the strength and success of the deal, instead of posing challenges to it.

Finally, Israel and other U.S allies have been wary of the Iranian nuclear deal because of the Iranian nuclear deal because of the perceived damage that this would cause to their relations with the U.S Israel has been on the front line in this match

against the deal, pointing to the chasm that has opened further between the Obama's administration and its closest ally in the region. Several efforts have been made by the Obama's administration to redress this situation and reassure its allies of its unshaking commitment to their security and interest in the region even in the face of an Iranian deal, but such actions have yielded little fruits, as the U.S allies have continuously expressed their scepticism about the deal.

While U.S regional allies, particularly the Gulf states demand an increased political commitment that will ensure a regional order in which their increasing relevance and influenced in the region can be maintained, Iran is presumed to have accepted the nuclear deal in order to free itself from international isolation and enable it play an increasing role in the region. This competition between Iran and its neighbours has been contributing to the conflict in Yemen and Syria, and if not adequately addressed, it would negatively impact the much anticipated Iranian nuclear deal. As long as the U.S allies and Iran continue to perceive themselves as rivals and threats, their cooperation which is vital for the success of the deal remain very unlikely. Moreover, the minimal approach of the U.S to reassure its allies of its unshaking security commitment would not be enough to attract the cooperation of their allies towards the deal. Hence, beyond Camp David, the U.S should strive towards a diplomatic process that would resolve the issues between Iran and its regional allies. This will reduce the perceived threat and change the disposition of its allies towards the deal, encouraging cooperation, advancing the success of the deal and promoting regional peace and security.

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