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Thawing Relations: Reaching the JCPOA

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Thawing Relations: reaching the JCPOA

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements of the Renée Crown University Honors Program at
Syracuse University

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and Renée Crown University Honors
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Abstract

Speculation surrounds the JCPOA amongst nearly all of its signatories. This project seeks to understand how the agreement commonly known as the “Nuclear Deal with Iran” came into being. The relationship between the US and Iran in recent history requires special attention for understanding both the difficulty and the significance of reaching the negotiating table. However, the other members of negotiations also enabled the process as a whole and had unique national interests driving their participation. Analyzing this context and depth of incentives reveals political and economic incentives for all seven of the relevant nations. For Iran and 5 of the world powers, economic growth drives the soft power initiative. However, the unique situation of US-Iran tension suggests the United States cooperated with the deal for political purposes. Additionally, the economic need coincides with unique domestic political structures in most of the relevant nations. This project considers the US-Iranian relationship from the 1950s in the time of the Shah in Iran up to the 2016 presidential elections in the United States in 2016.

Executive Summary

With the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on July 14, 2015, the international community demonstrated a persistent commitment to diplomacy with special implications for nuclear and non-proliferation agreements and the bilateral relationships of those involved in JCPOA negotiations. Known commonly as the “Iran nuclear deal,” the JCPOA brings Iran’s nuclear program under the regulation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and, from an international standpoint, adds a perceived element of stability to the currently volatile Middle East region. The deal faced and continues to strain against opposition from many sides and factions within Iran itself, nations involved in the negotiations, and other regional actors. However, it also acts as a framework for future nuclear negotiations, proves the possibilities of mediation, and suggests room for growth in tense bi-lateral relationships such as that of Iran and the United States. This project assembles the historical and diplomatic context of the negotiators with the main events of the meetings which resulted in the JCPOA to analyze what made the landmark agreement possible. Such an analysis requires consideration of all main actors, but the bi-lateral relationship between the United States and Iran requires additional focus because of its unique level of tension and subsequent progress in relation to the negotiations.

To form a complete picture of the JCPOA, this project is split into five sections of explanation and analysis: an introduction, historical context, negotiators, timeline, and outlook. The methodology of these sections varies slightly but largely consists of contextual analysis with events as case studies where applicable. Historical context refers to the main events and ideologies making up US-Iran relations from the mid-20th century when the Shah ruled Iran to the modern era of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This section provides the necessary background for understanding the intensity of the US-Iran dynamic, main events that led to the political

freeze, and begins to suggest the significance of both nations signing any kind of diplomatic agreement such as the JCPOA. Negotiators refers to the main actors of the diplomatic meetings and collaboration that resulted in the agreement, with a focus on each corresponding nation's motivations for signing a nuclear deal. These motivations generally break down into political and economic considerations. The timeline outlines significant meetings and events enabling the JCPOA's final form, including the early 200's meetings between Iran and Europe which act as a foundation of the final deal. Finally, outlook presents the main argument for explaining the success of the extended negotiations. The main conclusion states that the current generations in power in Iran and the United States reflect similarly divided political climates which aligned on the side of international cooperation for this period of negotiation.

Aggregating the context and corresponding diplomacy of the JCPOA agreement and negotiations offers insight on a significant political shift. Though the US and Iran remain largely at odds with each other, these elements of the JCPOA suggest an alternative path of international discussion may be alive in each country. Therefore, the agreement goes beyond its nuclear focus and extends into both domestic and international politics. This project highlights the new step of communication to identify the generations and changes that make an agreement such as the JCPOA possible despite recent history between the main actors. In the long term, these insights can extend beyond current political regimes into a general trend toward productive interaction. In some cases, the interaction will likely take the form of direct economic cooperation, though other bilateral relationships such as that of the United States and Iran are expected to remain limited.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The recent global nuclear deal with Iran, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), suggests the beginning of serious shifts in inter-state relations. Of particular interest is the relationship between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States, a relationship virtually frozen in sanctions and political disagreement since the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Though the sanctions persist and diplomatic relations remain strained where they exist at all, this deal marks tangible interaction and cooperation of the two countries, an extremely rare occurrence in the last 38 years. The US retains significant influence in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, constituting a major international actor through its arms sales and diplomatic ties to Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the Gulf states, primarily. Since the revolution, this influence has typically manifested opposite the national interests of Iran, enforcing the rifts solidified in 1979.

Occasionally, regional conflicts have resulted in the confluence of the states' national interests, such as recent developments in the governments of Afghanistan and Iraq. Diplomacy regarding these matters proved arduous (*source this*), and it is significant that they played out in third nations. These instances of confluence act almost as proxy to direct cooperation between Iran and the US, since they deal with regional conflicts rather than the relationship of the two countries themselves. This emphasizes the significance of the JCPOA as a positive diplomatic

progression dealing uniquely with the countries' direct relationship. A warming of the diplomacy between the two nations holds the potential to disrupt current balances of power through the manner that the US works politically and economically with the Middle East region as a whole, proving this change in communication a significant development.

In order to gauge the likelihood of any such warming and understood how it came to be, this paper seeks to analyze the JCPOA in light of the negotiations which formed it. These negotiations consist of both the conversations that ultimately led to the creation of the agreement, as well as the primary motivations of each major actor involved. To understand the full impact, a contextual review of the United States-Iranian relationship serves to outline the reasons for the current tensions, namely the diverging perspectives leading up to and surrounding the Iranian revolution of 1979. Such a review defines the sources of conflict and tension and provides the perspective of each nation. These points in turn suggest what may need to change in order for each state to reconsider its opposition to the other, as well as beginning to define the economic and political magnitude of any potential warming.

An analysis of the recent negotiations and the events which enabled the dialogue will highlight, on the Iranian side, an analysis of the political factions within the country and the motivations behind the political actors seeking increased conversation and change. The hypothesis is that these motivations include strategic geopolitical actions in response to current tensions and wars in the Middle East, effectiveness of US and international sanctions on Iran, and/or political transformations in one or both countries. This last point naturally requires research into the United States's political landscape and any significant alterations in its plans regarding action and its role in MENA.

With respect to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action itself, which constitutes the bulk of this analysis, key points include what the talks and agreements mean for each nation, including the pros and cons of signing onto the deal. This seeks to explain how agreements made parallel to the deal came to be and whether they would have been possible without the international collaboration of the JCPOA. Finally, this project seeks to hypothesize whether the JCPOA does indeed demonstrate the potential for increasing interaction between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States, or whether their participation is negligible in regard to their inter-state relations and the outlook remains stagnant. The initial hypothesis is that the agreement is a result of progression in each state's national interests that can guide the nations toward greater cooperation, but that further developments will remain sluggish due largely to the generation of political actors of each country. As these generations see increasing turnover, the relationship can expect, or at least effectively work toward, greater cooperation. The JCPOA serves as a sign of this upcoming, though not yet present, full potential.

Chapter 2

Historical Context of US-Iran Relations: Relevant events and ideologies from the era of the Shah to the 1979 Iranian Revolution

The conflicts, tensions, and opinions leading up to and surrounding the 1979 revolution continue to characterize US-Iran relations today. This revolution marked a drastic change in the countries' policies, with Iran quickly changing from one of the US's greatest allies to one of its greatest perceived threats. For Iran, the change signified the ultimate independence from foreign Western influence and a significant step toward true national sovereignty. Prior to Iran's current Islamic Republic, Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi led the government as the second, and ultimately final, figurehead of the Pahlavi dynasty, and he did so with the full support of the United States for decades. This time marked the height of the US-Iran alliance through the twin-pillar policy, where Saudi Arabia and Iran were purportedly defining actors in the US's planned alliances. The perceived goal of these alliances was the maintenance of the US's prominent influence in the MENA region. From the US perspective, the need arose out of Cold War fears in the superpower balance with the Soviet Union. As the two largest nations, economically and geographically, in MENA, these nations presented a strong regional presence which the US wanted to set up friendly relationships with and use for mutual advantage. For Saudi Arabia and Iran, the alliance offered assistance in establishing the nations' own regional power and influence, enhanced by the technical support of advanced US arms and the political will of the

superpower. Sanati draws the parallel as US desires toward global hegemony in comparison to Iran's search for regional hegemony¹.

One interpretation of these benefits is that they were short-lived, and although there was potential for the US international interest to coincide with the "twin-pillars" interests, there was also room for drastic separation. The global hegemonic goals of the United States clashed with the regional desires of Saudi Arabia and Iran, causing the powers to oppose and act against each other. This could stem from feelings of international manipulation, or baser problems of economy and geopolitics. In this understanding of events, the geopolitical developments in MENA manifested in the divide between the US and Iran, turning the relationship into an ideological battle playing out in the entirety of the region. However, Saudi Arabia's maintenance of its relationship with the US shows that convergence was also possible.

Some argue that the twin-pillar plan overstates US concern with Saudi Arabia, and that Iran was the foremost goal of US efforts in forming Middle East alliances². Regardless of the magnitude affiliated with each policy, the importance of establishing Iran as an ally in opposition to the Soviet Union so overwhelmed US considerations that Iran was able to play the threat of turning to the Soviets to bend US policy in its own favor. The strongest example of this would be the Shah's arms deal which Nixon agreed to, then forced his own government's compliance in implementation. One interpretation of this manipulation and the ultimately divergent paths of Saudi Arabia and Iran's opinions on how best to address the US suggests that Iran separated its national interest from the global superpower more successfully because it existed as a stronger

¹ Sanati, Reza. "Beyond the domestic picture: the geopolitical factors that have formed contemporary Iran-US relations." *Global Change, Peace & Security*. vol. 26, no. 2. pp. 126. *Taylor & Francis*.

² McGlinchey, Stephen. "Richard Nixon's Road to Tehran: The Making of the U.S. Arms Agreement of May 1972." *Diplomatic History*. vol. 37, no. 4. pp. 841-860. *Oxford Journals*.

nation-state than Saudi Arabia³. The Shah's ability to confer his importance to Nixon and solidify the arms deal that defined the relationship directly before the revolution provides one example of the Iranian state's ability to operate fully in the face of the superpower counterpart.

Unfortunately for the Shah and the US's comfortable status quo, arms agreements could not atone for decreasing political freedom and economic opportunities. Repression and inflation served as a constant reminder of the Shah's shortcomings as a statesman, and when compounded with the public's perception of the Shah's increasing "Western" materiality, public frustration escalated steadily. The Shah's insufficiencies alienated his public enough to cause mass riots in 1978 and ultimately the revolution in 1979. Multiple divisions of the Iranian population found cause in the Shah's repressive policies, economic failures, personal opulence, and the perception that the West in general, and the United States in particular, acted as the ruler's puppeteer⁴.

Emphasizing the role of the West and the US became a rallying cry of the religious and traditionalist arms of the revolution as they attempted to consolidate support and power. It was a particularly effective strategy because it played off pre-existing and deeply rooted sentiments of nationalism in the face of global power intervention. Iran has a deep history of foreign control across the political, economic, and military realms of its state. The origins can be traced conservatively to the Treaty of Turkmenchay in 1828, when modern-day Iran still identified as Persia, then consistently followed through the nation's growth up to 20th century capitulations

³ Ibid.

⁴ This report focuses on the relevant perceptions and role of the United States. For more comprehensive reviews of the tensions, complaints, and events of the Iranian revolution, see Zaman, M. Q.'s *The ulama in contemporary Islam: Custodians of change* and Kurzman, C.'s *Structural opportunity and perceived opportunity in social-movement theory: The Iranian revolution of 1979*.

and interventions⁵. The prevalence and extent of these interventions, which often clearly served only the benefits of the invading country, integrated a demeaning tone to international relations in Iran. It was a global abuse of power and lack of balance that helped to ultimately alienate Iranians from foreign intervention and aid. These ideas led to the extreme opposition to a US presence characteristic of the Islamic Republic. Regardless of potential gains from cooperation with the United States, the revolutionary forces manipulated frustration with Western influence into an ideological principle of their new government, and acted with corresponding force (i.e. hostage crisis).

The anti-West and nationalist rhetoric recalled two emotionally-charged (and largely justified) grievances: historical objections to British control and the more recent and highly contested overthrow of Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq in 1953. Equating the US with Britain brought the former into a legacy of exploitation defined in modern times by oil concessions. Oil concessions were perhaps the application of the abuse, but the ideological principles of control in the defiance of Iranian sovereignty truly define the principles that the traditionalists managed to capitalize. It was an appeal that crossed societal sectors and ultimately assisted in power consolidation, largely due to the manifestation of the demeaning atmosphere explained above.

The US had retained a degree of separation from the stigma of Western intervention in its earlier interactions with Iran in part because of a shared history of defying British control. The United States stood as an example of an advanced nation that had thrown off foreign influence in a relatively efficient and successful manner. Perhaps more importantly, that personally achieved national independence grew into a strategic and respected place within the world order.

⁵ Mirfendereski, Guive. *The Privileged American: the U.S. Capitulations in Iran 1856-1979*. Mazda Publishers, 2014.

Therefore, the US could act as a model for Iran in its rebuilding attempts of the 20th century. For example, Iran welcomed American economic advisors as early as 1911 when the Majles appointed American William Morgan Shuster as treasurer-general, then again with the advising of Arthur Millspaugh over Iran's financial sector⁶. Though the American government did not send the aid directly, they encouraged qualified members of the private sector to assist, and the Iranians in turn placed these men in position of relative importance in their fledgling government. The terms ended due to British and Russian interference, which Shuster especially condemned as gross violations of Iran's sovereignty. These men, however, showed the initial respect inherent in US-Iran relations and the potential for the two to build together. In other words, the United States was meant to be the Western model to defy history, a role the US failed progressively and completely. This failure was a gradual process with loose origins in the Second World War. But the defining moment coincides with the traditionalists' national appeal: the fall of Mosaddeq.

Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq retains renown as Iran's foremost precedent of democracy. He came to power through legitimate means and is perhaps best well-known for his work to re-nationalize Iran's oil industry. In seeking to abolish Britain's remaining oil concessions, Mossadeq affirmed his position as an Iranian nationalist truly taking the impetus of the country's sovereignty. It was, therefore, particularly notable when in 2013 the CIA public acknowledged their fundamental role in his overthrow 60 years prior. This acknowledgement authenticated decades of Iranian claims of American orchestration of the coup, which on the larger scale, affirmed the US as a hypocritical actor in terms of its relations with Iran. The American duplicity, largely accepted as fact in Iran prior to the intelligence agency's admission,

⁶ Ibid.

provided an apt example to the traditional revolutionists anti-West/US rhetoric. With these ideas, the factions of the revolution could have a common enemy and cause against foreign hypocrisy, as well as justification for their distrust of the international system as a whole. The lack of repercussions for the global powers allowed the Marxists of Iran to highlight the idea that “international law was simply one ideological weapon in the bourgeois arsenal of oppression”⁷. Since Iran was already acting on its aforementioned goals of national and regional influence, the mobilization proved largely effective and the US became the new enemy, with Britain slipping into the past. This was a particularly impactful change in relations because of the hopes and close-knit ties of Iran and the US in previous nation-building and supporting initiatives. The conflicts were ultimately more personal than a general Western evil ideology. The leftist lead in condemning the attack also helps add context to the cross-sector appeal of the later cry of the traditionalists.

It was the full impact of the cry against the West that resulted in the hostage crisis amidst the revolution. When students took hold of the US embassy in Tehran, they had no direct ties to the religious revolutionaries who were simultaneously cementing their role as the new ruling elite. However, their use of nationalism and anti-US rhetoric likely added ideological legitimacy to the takeover and influenced the extended time of the crisis. Additionally, Ali points out that students, especially those educated in the United States, already moved within a revolutionary atmosphere and contempt for power. With the United States struggling with Nixon’s Watergate scandal and the country’s controversial escalation of the Vietnam War, much of the youthful generation of the United States was feeling a similar contempt to their counterparts in Iran. The feelings compounded primarily in the 1960’s, also the culmination of frustration with the Shah.

⁷ Ansari, Ali M. *Confronting Iran: the failure of American foreign policy and the next great crisis in the Middle East*. pg. 30. Basic Books: Perseus Book Group, 2006.

Therefore, the leftist and student-led opposition groups that ultimately participated in the revolution held many frustrations against governmental abuse of power. This allowed for the temporary unifying element within the revolutionary factions. Unfortunately, the temporary nature of the unity had long-lasting effects on the international stage. Misunderstanding and miscommunication surrounding the Iranian hostage crisis can be seen as representative of the overarching trend in US-Iran relations since the advent of the Islamic Republic⁸. One important element to note is the difference of perspective between the US and Iran. While the media outsourced the crisis to the American public and stirred outrage, Iranians debated a sense of retribution for years of intrusion by foreign nations' policies. Though ultimately understood as a wrong, the full impact on the American psyche was undervalued by the Iranians, just as the Americans underestimated Iranian unrest over their previous transgressions. In this way, the two nations established a norm of "just missing" each other in their understandings and policy attempts.

Additional examples of tension and aggravations include the Contra Affair, the missed opportunity of former Iranian president Mohammad Khatami's speech before the United Nations⁹, and former US president George W Bush's inclusion of Iran as part of the "axis of evil". Ansari (convincingly) attempts to categorize these miscommunications into international theory by assessing the similar educational background of the actors in each nation. He argues that many of the Iranian nationals had received realist-centered educations in the West before returning to Iran, and therefore expected the United States to act along the principles of realism.

⁸ For additional information on the hostage crisis, see Farber, D.'s 2009 *Taken hostage: The Iran hostage crisis and America's first encounter with radical Islam* and Brulé, D.J.'s 2005 *Explaining and forecasting leaders' decisions: A poliheuristic analysis of the Iran hostage rescuer decision*.

⁹ Ibid. supra note 7. Chapter 5.

However, the United States' response proved reactionary and ideological rather than realist, especially after the public's access to the hostage crisis. This outlines a fundamental disconnect in expectations versus reality from both sides of the relations. With such complex and close-knit history to this fundamental conflict of understanding as a foundation, most attempts at diplomacy were brushed aside by the receiving nation. It took time and a "perfect storm" of political actors at each national level to be able to come to the international agreement that came to be known as the JCPOA.

Chapter 3:

Negotiator Motivations: primary actors' motivations and contributions to JCPOA negotiations

The primary negotiating actors of the JCPOA (excluding Iran) can be described as the P5+1 and EU or the EU/E3+3. The first description highlights the UN Security Council affiliation while the second emphasizes the role of the European Union. Regardless of descriptive form, the countries involved were Russia, China, the United States, France, Britain, Germany, an EU representative and Iran itself. Germany and the EU participated in the JCPOA negotiations because of their active role in earlier nuclear diplomacy with Iran prior to the US, China and Russia becoming fully involved. The group taken as a whole may hide some of the international dynamics at play. For example, France, Germany, Britain, and the EU representative naturally held coinciding motivations and intentions because of their common European identity¹⁰.

However, a second dynamic appears between these European countries and the United States, frequent allies. From the ally partitioning, Iran, Russia, and China form a second side of negotiations. Though the relationships also contain complex histories, Russia and China align with Iran on economic and international issues more frequently than the “Western” negotiators. This is not to say that there was a clear divide between East and West during the negotiations,

¹⁰ “Statement by France, Germany, United Kingdom, United States and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on Post-JCPOA Business with Iran.” *European Union External Action*. 19 May 2016.

but begins to reveal a few of the dynamics and motivations, as well as how the countries may have aligned on certain points of contention during negotiations due to their pre-existing alliances. Additional insight can be drawn from a more detailed review of the main negotiating countries' actors and motivations for completion of the nuclear deal.

Russia

Head Delegate to Negotiations: Foreign Minister Sergey V. Lavrov

All of the countries or “powers” involved in the negotiations shared the goal of a diplomatically settled nuclear deal. However, in Russia there was some debate over the economic repercussions of such a change in global relations with Iran. Russia’s defense and private companies, in the energy sector in particular, perceive Iran as potential growth territory¹¹. Conversely, the level of investment Russia expects to sustain in Iran is not enough to overcome the negative economic impacts of additional foreign sanctions on non-nuclear actions. Other countries, primarily in Asia, also maintain economic relations with Iran and prevent a Russian monopoly on investment opportunities¹³. Additionally, similarities between Russian and Iranian oil product pit the two as export competitors, and Russia benefitted from European and UN sanctions against Iran’s oil market¹⁴. Therefore, fewer sanctions and a return to oil trade between Europe and Iran would hurt Russia’s share of the market. Together, these factors result in a level of ambiguity over the economic returns to the JCPOA in Russia and the need to consider other motivations for assisting or blocking a deal.

¹¹ Kramer, Andrew. “An Embargo and a Boon.” *The New York Times*. Feb 16 2012.

¹² Khlopkov, Anton. “JCPOA and Russia’s Interests in the Iranian Nuclear Market.” *Moscow Defense Brief*. Apr 2016. *CAST*

¹³ Maloney, Suzanne. “Three Reasons Why Russia Won’t Wreck the Iran Nuclear Negotiations.” *The Brookings Institution*. Mar 25 2014.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* footnote 1

Russia's security and geostrategic concerns push the debate largely onto the side of cooperation in the agreement. The primary outside view of the JCPOA is that it is a stabilizing, if temporary, deal. Russia's proximity to Iran and the recently volatile Middle East, as well as its own border controversies with Ukraine and the area of Crimea, exacerbate the desire for a stabilizing force in the region¹⁵. Relative to its neighbors, Iran is a consistent and central figure in the MENA. Therefore, Russia has good reason to pursue diplomatic and even friendly relationships with whichever regime is currently in place¹⁶. This is especially true since Iran's weapon capabilities extend far enough to reach Russia easily should the relations sour dramatically, and so limiting that potential to non-nuclear risk holds obvious appeal. Non-proliferation is also generally a tenet of Russia's international preferences, and so there is little reason for them to pursue an opposite policy in a neighboring country. In addition to the appeal of regional stability, Russia and Iran share national goals and perspectives for their roles in the international community and MENA region.

Russia and Iran share a relatively unique appreciation for the other's reasoning because of their similar aspirations regarding the world order and complaints of the current balance. Both seek autonomy and recognition of their power and potential role as an international political actor. Russia can prove its willingness to contribute constructively by helping to form a successful diplomatic agreement on the global stage that is the JCPOA negotiations¹⁷. It is a step toward the status of "power" that the country has sought since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The JCPOA negotiations present an opportunity for normalcy and patience in

¹⁵ Paulraj, Nansi. "The JCPOA and Changing Dimensions of the Russia-Iran Relations." *Contemporary Review of the Middle East*. vol. 2, no. 1, 2016. pp. 95-110. SAGE.

¹⁶ Borshchevskaya, Anna. "Russia's Cooperation on the Iran Deal is No Favor to Washington." *The Washington Institute*. Jul 7 2016.

¹⁷ Ibid.

negotiations, a more internationally respected platform than Putin's reputation of reactionary history. The importance of Russia's involvement also pulls from their understanding of Iran. The two have a relatively rare relationship of begrudging respect between the current regimes, despite a tenuous history that could topple relations if handled without care¹⁸. Because of this relationship, it is possible that Iran would not be willing to debate as candidly without Russia's presence and understanding, making Russia an essential actor. In fact, the current US President at the time, Barack Obama, recognized that role, saying "we would have not achieved this agreement had it not been for Russia's willingness to stick with us."¹⁹ Russia can, in turn, use that need to promote their own image and pull in future world order negotiations.

People's Republic of China

Head Delegate to Negotiations: Foreign Minister Wang Yi

China is the second primary actor with a perceived understanding of, or perhaps sympathy for, Iran's positions and negotiating requirements. In fact, there is an argument that China pushed Russia enough to overcome the latter's qualms on the economic gains and losses from an Iranian nuclear agreement²⁰. This intense desire to see the deal go through likely stems from perceived Chinese diplomatic and economic gains. As the negotiating power with the least contentious bilateral relations with Iran, China's history and existing economic policies suggest they may be able to expand a cooperative and friendly bilateral relationship, at least within the limits of United States scrutiny.

¹⁸ Trenin, Dmitri. "Russia and Iran: Historic Mistrust and Contemporary Partnership." *Carnegie Moscow Center*. Aug 18 2016

¹⁹ Friedman, Thomas L. "Obama Makes His Case on Iran Nuclear Deal." *The New York Times*. Jul 14 2015.

²⁰ Baev, Pavel K. "The China factor in Russian support for the Iran deal." *The Brookings Institution*. Jul 21 2015.

Prior to 1997, China contributed the most direct aid to Iran's nuclear ambitions. However, a change in the Chinese global policy regarding nuclear acquisition became necessary when they signed the non-proliferation treaty (NPT), and this aid largely stopped²¹. For approximately the last two decades then, China's view of nuclear power centered on security, a perspective that continues regarding Iran's nuclear abilities. This security perspective works alongside China's self-defined foreign policy principles, which emphasize sovereignty and non-intervention, and in tandem with adherence to the principles of the UN Charter²². The security focus holds special significance for China's interests in the Middle East because the region holds strong economic potential for the nation. Iran's acquisition of a nuclear weapon, for example, could incite a military response from Israel, causing extreme conflict for those living in the MENA and area and economic distress for those invested in it. To prevent such a struggle for power, China works to create a balance in its relations, avoiding sides in the primary Arab-Israeli and Sunni-Shia divides which often define the Middle East²³. Such a balance and near-neutrality poses a maintenance challenge, but the economic incentive is a strong motivation.

Both China and Iran place great value in their history, including past national actions and foreign interactions²⁴. Unlike the US and Russia, who (from the Iranian perspective at a minimum) betrayed Iran in the ousting of Mossadeq and Treaty of Turkmenchay, respectively, China's empire lay far enough from Persia that relationships managed to remain trade-based and

²¹ Scott, Emma. "A Nuclear Deal with Chinese Characteristics: China's Role in the P5+1 Talks with Iran." *The Jamestown Foundation: China Brief*. vol. 15, no. 14. Jul 17 2015.

²² Aghaie Joobani, Hossein and Nadia Helmy. "China's Role in the Iran Nuclear Deal: Perspectives from Mainstream Chinese Media." *Asian Politics & Policy*. vol. 8, no. 2. 2016. pp. 382-6.

²³ Wuthnow, Joel. "Posing Problems without an Alliance: China-Iran Relations after the Nuclear Deal." *Strategic Forum*. vol. 290. Feb 2016. pp. 1-12. *ProQuest*.

²⁴ Garver, John. "China and Iran: An Emerging Partnership Post-Sanctions." *Middle East Institute*. Feb 8 2016.

cordial rather than territorial²⁵. This is true more generally in that there is no ugly imperial history in the MENA region at the hands of the Chinese power. This stable foundation highlights the unique and valuable nature of Sino-Iranian diplomacy, and led to repeated comments during JCPOA negotiations that the deal would be impossible without China's drive and support²⁶. In fact, this is true of most, if not all, international policies directed to Iran. With China's influence and share of the economy, the nation's unity on efforts such as sanctions proves essential for meaningful impact²⁷. This is true because of China's position as the second largest economy in the world and more specifically as Iran's largest export destination²⁸.

Potential areas of expanding economic cooperation concentrate in the investment and security sectors as evidenced by previous actions of the two states. One example of existing security cooperation is the Chinese navy's public appearance in Iran's ports in recent years, previously considered taboo but now tolerated by the international community²⁹. Given this pre-existing relationship, it is a reasonable jump to consider additional points of security partnership. The Middle East Institute suggests that this would take the form of defense systems sales since China specialized select systems to counter US-made weaponry. Security is also a natural Sino-Iran partnership as opposed to technology at large, where Europe would hold appeal as the most advanced producers³⁰. In addition, China temporarily encouraged Iran's bid to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization³¹. Though China later rejected the bid, the initial verbal support suggests a level of willingness to negotiate investment opportunities. These, admittedly slight,

²⁵ Ansari, Ali M. *Confronting Iran: the failure of American foreign policy and the next great crisis in the Middle East*. Basic Books: 2006. pp. 7-12.

²⁶ Ganan Almond, Roncevert. "China and the Iran Nuclear Deal." *The Diplomat*. Mar 8 2016.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid. supra note 14

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid supra note 13

points of cooperation may also play into China's larger international strategy of the "One Belt, One Road" policies. Prior to signing the deal, Iran and China shared proposals under this policy, which could be expanded and accomplished with greater ease given increased cooperation and less international scrutiny. Such investments would follow the outlines of "One Belt, One Road," and would likely include investment in energy, infrastructure development, and finance. China has the income flexibility to take on such a role in Iran, in contrast to Russia's weakened economy³².

It is also worth noting that international backlash for significant cooperation with Iran is expected to persist even as the nuclear deal progresses. Despite the JCPOA as a sign that Iran-US relations possess the potential to improve, it is a small step in the overall tensions of the two nations. For example, Iran will still face strict US sanctions for human rights violations and missile actions. Therefore, any country forming new security and business bonds with Iran will need to balance the economic and stability opportunities with the risk of alienating the United States. Since the US remains the world's largest economy, a loss in relations holds greater risk for most nations than the benefits of working with Iran. One repercussion of this dynamic is that China will likely feel more comfortable making military arrangements with Iran than Europe because they have less direct ties to the United States and would be less cautious about exacerbating US tensions³³. On the other hand, China must also consider the economic fallback of upsetting the US, and may ultimately limit their expansion into Iran to avoid such a problem³⁴.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid. supra note 14

³⁴ Ibid.

*France**Head Delegate to Negotiations: Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius*

As EU members (at the time of negotiating and signing the JCPOA), the remaining negotiators (Britain, France, Germany, and the EU representative) largely share motivations for the nuclear deal. However, France stands out as the hardliner of the negotiations overall, with stricter requirements and stances than even the United States, notorious for tense bilateral Iranian relations and predicted to be the staunchest negotiator³⁵. Evidence of France's adamancy appears most strongly in initial talks in 2013. There was a strong push by the United States to sign a deal with Iran, but France effectively stymied the process, saying it was rushed and too weak to contain the nuclear threat³⁶. This hardline stance continued into the final months of negotiations two years later, as even in March 2015 France warned of the risks when pushing a deal through to meet a deadline³⁷. France's strict diplomacy on this issue stems from its national political trends and its recent experience with Iran's nuclear program. With Sarkozy's selection to the presidency, France significantly increased its hardline stances internationally and took greater use of military power in its stances. Despite disagreement on many political debates, Sarkozy's successor Hollande largely continues this trend and uses the crackdown approach to maintain France's influence in the world order³⁸. The harsh positions stand in strict contrast to French policies of the early 2000's, when the nation opposed the Iraq war and suffered from a weak reputation on using its force.

³⁵ Gordon, Michael R. "Kerry Pushes Iran Nuclear Deal Timetable Amid Differences with France." *The New York Times*. 21 Mar 2015.

³⁶ Lynch, Colum and Yochi Dreazen. "How France Scuttled the Iran Deal at the Last Minute." *Foreign Policy: The Cable*. 10 Nov 2013.

³⁷ Collinson, Stephen. "How did France become more hawkish on Iran than the U.S.?" *CNN*. 1 Apr 2015.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Despite a departure from the diplomacy strategies of the early 2000's, this was also a significant time in France's involvement in Iran's nuclear development. In 2002-3, France initiated the European effort to form a nuclear deal with Iran. They garnered British support by requesting the stoppage of uranium enrichment in the hopes it would bring the United States on board as well. The French decided to initiate the negotiations after the revelation that Iran violated previous agreements and lied about its actions by building the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant in secret. Fordow caused immense international backlash, but for France it also acted as a reminder of 30 years of tensions over Iran's nuclear program. France, like the US, was an early investor in Iran's nuclear program under Reza Shah Pahlavi. This relationship fell apart and became a violent conflict over investment in Eurodif³⁹ 40. With the discovery of Fordow, France was reminded of Iranian duplicity over this previous conflict and a deep mistrust grew again. This presents an additional reason France took such a hardline stance during later negotiations. Unfortunately, temporary suspension of nuclear activities fell through when hardliner Ahmadinejad took the Iranian presidency⁴¹. However, the strict French guidelines and repeated returns to the negotiating table also show the nation's persistence in creating a deal.

Their hardline stance reflects strict adherence to national interests in overall international diplomacy, but also a deep commitment to the non-proliferation regime and an open economy. Diplomat and former French director for strategic affairs, security and disarmament (2000-3) Gérard Araud lists sustaining the non-proliferation regime as one of two primary reasons France revived nuclear diplomatic relations with Iran in the early 2000s. He argues that Iranian

³⁹ Ibid. supra note 27

⁴⁰ For a more complete picture of this conflict, see ???

⁴¹ Araud, Gérard. "A French View on the Iran Deal: an Interview with Ambassador Gérard Araud." Interview by Kelsey Davenport and Elizabeth Philipp. *Arms Control Association*. Jul-Aug 2016.

acquisition of nuclear weapons would escalate tensions in the MENA region and result in either an attack by nuclear-enabled Israel or additional proliferation by Iran's neighboring countries⁴². This would threaten both France's balance in the world order and stability in the region. France's current foreign policy also favors the Sunni Arab states in the Gulf and Saudi Arabia. Existing arms deals and relationships would be threatened if not destroyed by even more violent conflict in the Middle East⁴³. Additionally, the nuclear deal could allow France to pursue a similar relationship with Iran, or at least the beginning of one. With advantages in the energy and transport sectors, fewer international sanctions on Iran holds opportunity for France financially⁴⁴. Expanding their balance of diplomacy in the region and exploring these economic options likely contribute to France's continued participation in nuclear negotiations and ultimate willingness to compromise.

Germany

Head Delegate to Negotiations: Minister for Foreign Affairs Frank Walter-Steinmeier

In its relationship with Iran, Germany largely stands with the international community. This includes the use of sanctions and condemning Iranian human rights abuses. However, Germany also seems to attempt a balancing act between this allegiance to the international stance and exploring economic opportunities⁴⁵. Compared to other European nations, Germany has

⁴² Ibid. supra note 29

⁴³ Kayali, Laura. "France's Approach to a Nuclear deal with Iran." *The European Institute*. 28 Apr 2015.

⁴⁴ "Respecting JCPOA vital for France." *Mehr News Agency*. 31 Jan 2017.

⁴⁵ Küntzel, Dr. Matthias. "Germany and a Nuclear Iran." *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*. 1 Mar 2015.

enjoyed a strong economic relationship with Iran in the past⁴⁶. However, the strength peaked with former heads of state in both countries. Since 2009, Germany has largely reflected the international community's decisions and opinions of Iran, shifting the balance to the diplomatic politics and away from monetary incentives⁴⁷. In other words, Germany acts in unison with the UN and supports the use of sanctions as a response to Iran's nuclear activities⁴⁸.

Despite this context for the most recent negotiations, former policies that favored both states economically remain recent enough that Germany was able to act as a go-between for Iran and the other European nations. Germany's overall relationship with Iran since the revolution in 1979 proved positive enough to maintain a level of trust between the two nations. This is especially obvious since Germany's Economy Minister was the first European power to fly to Tehran and begin talks of sanction relief and new joint business ventures after the deal was signed⁴⁹. Without an European nation with decent bilateral relations with Iran, it is possible the East-West divide of the world powers would have been insurmountable. Instead, Germany's recent allegiance to the international standards balanced effectively with its economic cooperation with Iran and allowed the nation to take part effectively and productively in the negotiations. This was an especially significant development for Germany since it is not a permanent member of the security council of the United Nations.

⁴⁶ Fallows, James. "The Normalization of Iran: Another View From Israel." *The Atlantic*. 27 Aug. 2015.

⁴⁷ Farrar-Wellman, Ariel. "Germany-Iran Foreign Relations." *Critical Threats*. 27 Jul 2010.

⁴⁸ "Cameron, Hollande and Merkel: Why we support the Iran deal." *The Washington Post*. 10 Sept 2015.

⁴⁹ Uniyal, Vijeta. "German business goals played key-role in Iran Nuclear Deal." *Legal Insurrection*. 27 Jul 2015.

United Kingdom

Head Delegate to Negotiations: Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Philip Hammond

The United Kingdom's relationship regarding Iran and nuclear negotiations with the country can be summed into three main areas: past imperialism, large EU economy⁵⁰, and United States' ally. In some ways, Iran-UK bilateral relations are marred with a past similar to the of Iran with the United States and Russia. Prior to the era of the Shah, Iran felt misguided and abused by the imperial powers of Russia and Britain. Ever since, relations have been strained, with diplomacy halted and embassies removed periodically. This sets a foundation of mistrust and disillusionment for all present opportunities for cooperation.

As an EU member, and a significant portion of the EU's economy, the UK does have financial interest in a more collaborative relationship with Iran. These interests overlap with EU's general motivation to seal a nuclear deal, and circulate primarily around the lessening of international sanctions. The UK promotes active participation and competition in the global economy, and so the large consumer market and desire for foreign direct investment (FDI) in Iran offer a prominent new venture area⁵¹. Additionally, Iran is the Middle East's second largest economy after Saudi Arabia despite current sanctions. These economic elements poise Iran for vast economic growth with a freer market. The UK would capitalize on this potential in the sectors of infrastructure, healthcare, retail, airports and aviation, mining, and water⁵².

From a political standpoint and the more vocalized motivation, the UK's relationship with the US and a corresponding emphasis on safety is more prominent than national economic

⁵⁰ At time of negotiations, subject to change with Brexit vote and repercussions

⁵¹ "Notice to exporters 2017/08: Itan list removed from GOV.UK." *Gov.UK*. 22 Mar. 2017.

⁵² "Doing business in Iran: trade and export guide." *Gov.UK*. 2 Nov. 2016.

gains. This can be seen in France's political strategy in early 2000's negotiations and more recent rhetoric from the UK's prime minister and ambassador to the UN. In the 2002-3 negotiations, France targeted British safety concerns when forming its hardline stances because British support had a high potential for bringing the United States on board with the diplomacy as well⁵³. United States' support was essential for a lasting agreement because it has especially tense bilateral relations with Iran, as explained above. This makes the US more likely to impose secondary sanctions that would hurt third nations trading with Iran. The close partnership between the UK and US make the two a natural pair in negotiations, and the EU used its economic ties to the UK to help garner political support in the US. This process is reflected again in more recent negotiations with UK figureheads references to safety, not money.

In his supporting statements of the JCPOA, UK Ambassador to the UN Mission Matthew Rycroft emphasizes the significance of the deal in relation to MENA regional stability. He presents the nuclear agreement as a stabilizing factor for proliferation and a starting point for future negotiations on other regional concerns such as migration and narcotics⁵⁴. Prime Minister David Cameron emphasizes similar points in an interview with NBC, when he emphatically states that the most likely alternative to the JCPOA is Iran's quick acquisition of a nuclear weapon. Cameron emphasizes the regional balances this kind of weaponry would exacerbate and reiterates that the non-proliferation agreement operates along safety standards and validation checks, as opposed to trust mechanisms⁵⁵. These rhetorical supports for the Iran nuclear deal

⁵³ Ibid. supra note 31

⁵⁴ Rycroft, Ambassador Matthew. "The comprehensive nuclear agreement with Iran is in all our interests." Statement by Ambassador Matthew Rycroft of the UK Mission to the UN at the Security Council Briefing on the 1737 Committee (Iran). *Gov.UK*. 15 Sept. 2015.

⁵⁵ Cooney, Dan. "British Prime Minister David Cameron: Iran Deal 'Better Than the Alternative.'" *NBC News*. 19 Jul. 2015.

closely mirror US concerns over safety standards and other violent conflicts in the MENA region, suggesting that US and UK political motivations for peaceful nuclear negotiations with Iran are the closest of the main negotiating partners.

Europe/European Union

Head Delegate to Negotiations: EU High Representative Federica Mogherini

[Early negotiations: former EU High Representative Catherine Ashton]

In addition to a general stance of non-proliferation, Europe used the JCPOA negotiations as a chance to demonstrate the region's ability to work as one unified political entity. The opportunity was especially appealing because of the tense political climate, varied previous national interactions with Iran post-revolution, and the potentially extended timeframe that the diplomacy would require. The platitude "high risk, high reward" reflects the overall nature of the decision to make a European attempt at leading the negotiations. Since the EU's ability to function as one is often doubted on the international stage, the high-risk topic of a nuclear Iran offered a chance to prove their political power as a Union.

Europe initiated significant dialogue on Iran's nuclear proliferation in the 1990's. When it became clear in 2002 that Iran's actions were duplicitous, the EU made a second major push for diplomacy. These were the negotiations that culminated in the Tehran Declaration^{56 57}. In this push for diplomacy and soft power instead of strong-arming, Europe aimed to demonstrate its own negotiation abilities and keep the repercussions for Iran's nuclear activities away from the

⁵⁶ Beehner, Lionel. "IRAN: Nuclear Negotiations." *Council on Foreign Relations*. 16 May 2005.

⁵⁷ "Full text: Iran declaration." *BBC News*. 21 Oct. 2003.

UN Security Council, where the US might force a reactionary or violent response⁵⁸. However, the EU's efforts in this regard ultimately saw little success as Iran violated the agreement within the year. When Ahmadinejad came into the Iranian presidency, the hopes for Europe's progress on the negotiations virtually disappeared.

In addition to an attempt to assert their soft-power prowess, the EU holds economic motivations for keeping the international reaction to Iran calm and open. In the early 2000s, Europe was Iran's largest source of imports at 37%⁵⁹. Therefore, Europe faces business losses whenever the international community enforces sanctions on Iran. They were politically forced to comply with nuclear sanctions during the Ahmadinejad presidency, but the JCPOA negotiations offered a point of re-opening and progress that would allow a return to investment. Common business interests between the EU and Iran include energy, transportation, and agrobusiness. The EU also prefers to have the option to import Iranian oil when tensions rise with Russia. Using these business opportunities, it seems that Europe maintains a soft power approach⁶⁰. When dialogue began after Implementation Day, topics went beyond the expected economic spheres and into areas such as human rights and civil protection⁶¹. This shows Europe's continued effort to use dialogue to fight instability and danger, an adherence to a soft power stance. The approach is summed up by the EU High Representative as "a dialogue of the 4 C's: comprehensive, cooperative, critical if needed, constructive always."⁶²

⁵⁸ Martin, Garret. "European diplomacy and the Iranian nuclear negotiations." *The European Institute*. May 2015.

⁵⁹ Ibid. supra note 47.

⁶⁰ Shirvani, Tara and Siniša Vuković. "After the Iran Nuclear Deal: Europe's Pain and Gain." *The Washington Quarterly*. vol 38, no. 3, pp. 79-92. 2015. *Taylor & Francis*.

⁶¹ "Iran and the EU" *European Union External Action*. 22 Oct. 2016.

⁶² Ibid.

United States

Head Delegate to Negotiations: Secretary of State John Kerry

[Early negotiations: Undersecretary for Political Affairs Wendy B. Sherman]

Support for the JCPOA in the United States continues to be controversial, with domestic political allegiances factoring heavily into individual's considerations. In the Obama administration's efforts to unify the national position on the issue, safety and security rhetoric prevailed as the factors necessitating diplomacy. Negotiators and supporters emphasized the realistic benefits of the deal and lack of reliable alternatives. They also stressed the significance of the world power coordination in the overall agreement and length of negotiating process. In contrast to other nations, economic considerations took a lesser role, with the finance ministry's involvement serving as expertise on the sanctions regime rather than assessing potential for forthcoming business opportunities if a deal were to be signed⁶³.

The primary refrain, and consequently primary motivator, of the United States during the JCPOA dialogue was the importance and goal that Iran not obtain a nuclear weapon⁶⁴ ⁶⁵. This included details on the four pathways to a bomb and constant reminders of Iran's nuclear abilities up to that point⁶⁶. The non-proliferation focus included mention of the NPT, but greater emphasis appeared in relation to regional stability. However, while other countries kept this notion fairly broad, perhaps mentioning Israel or violent conflicts but not their own national interest, the US adamantly listed support of their allies under reasons to support the political

⁶³ Kerry, John. "Remarks Before Meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif." *U.S. Department of State*. 22 Apr. 2016.

⁶⁴ Sherman, Wendy R. "Iran Policy and Negotiations Update." *U.S. Department of State*. 4 Feb. 2014.

⁶⁵ Sherman, Wendy R. "Remarks on P5+1 Talks." *U.S. Department of State*. 20 Jun. 2014.

⁶⁶ Kerry, John. "Iran Nuclear Agreement: The Administration's Case." *U.S. Department of State*. 28 Jul. 2015.

dialogue with Iran. Their argument was that a regulatory agreement that limited current nuclear capabilities and installed IAEA mechanisms for the foreseeable future protected Israel and the Gulf states from the looming threat that was a nuclear Iran^{67 68}. This is a significantly less friendly stance than many of the other P5+1 contributors, and yet still faced backlash nationally.

Hardliners maintained a stance that negotiations were rushed, completed for time rather than the necessary precautions that would restrict or even remove Iran's nuclear capacity. An important counter to that stance, which reinforces the ideas of safety and security, was the power and repercussions of the world powers agreeing on the deal. After a year and a half of dialogue, the United States would be the only nation to step away from the agreement if they so chose. This would be an isolating action for all international policy moving forward, but also undermine the work of the sanctions regime⁶⁹. Some considered continued and more severe sanctions an alternative to the soft power communication, but those involved insisted that sanctions motivated Iran to the negotiating table, they served their purpose on the nuclear topic. Therefore, the US found two primary motivations as the talks progressed: the ally-focused safety they spoke about before the process and international cohesion which they realized midway.

Some speculation remains about former president Barack Obama's underlying motivators. Since the US-Iran cooperation on the JCPOA marks such a drastic change in bilateral relations, even those that take place within a multilateral framework, questions persist about whether Obama had long-term goals attached to the JCPOA beginnings⁷⁰. Namely, whether the

⁶⁷ Kerry, John. "Remarks on Nuclear Agreement with Iran." *U.S. Department of State*. 2 Sept. 2015.

⁶⁸ Obama, Barack. "Remarks by the President at Veterans Roundtable on the Iran Nuclear Deal." *Obama White House*. 10 Sept. 2015.

⁶⁹ Sherman, Wendy R. "U.S. Policy Toward Iran." *U.S. Department of State*. 15 May 2013.

⁷⁰ Goldenberg, Ilan. "U.S. Strategy After the Iran Deal: Seizing Opportunities and Managing Risks." *Center for a New American Security*. 15 Jun. 2015.

far-reaching plan of the United States was to warm relations with Iran, lessening the sense of enemy so that common ground and more intense cooperation would be enabled in the future. The long-term outlook is certainly a possibility. Obama was nearly one generation removed from the Iranian Revolution, and may not have felt the underlying mistrust as strongly as his predecessors. Just as the United Kingdom and Europeans suggest working outward from the nuclear topic into other human rights violations and concerns, cohering one topic at a time, the United States could be considering a very gradual change in approach to its relationship with Iran. Enabling economic growth in Iran and attributing that progress to Rouhani would also theoretically promote the Reformist political movement in Iran's domestic politics. This would encourage future cooperation with the West⁷¹. If the Obama administration is thinking and acting according to long-term considerations, future cooperation would be a third cause of US support for the JCPOA, one masked by the rhetoric of stability, safety and security needed to keep hardline US politicians satisfied.

Iran

Head Delegate to Negotiations: Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammad Javad Zarif

Iran's participation and cooperation in the JCPOA negotiations depended on the nation's cost-benefit analysis of nuclear sovereignty and economic mobility⁷². It was a balance between hardliners in the government and IRGC who opposed international cooperation and moderate elements who saw a need for sanction relief and considered the nuclear problem the best option for the problem. While the former place extensive value in the ideological opposition to the

⁷¹ Nephew, Richard. "What the nuclear deal means for moderates in Iranian politics." *Brookings Institution*. 16 February 2016.

⁷² Pollack, Kenneth M. "The Iranian Nuclear Program: Motivations and Priorities." *Brookings Institution*. 17 May 2016.

West, the United States in particular, their rhetorical hardlining was increasingly jeopardized by the effect of sanctions on the overall economy⁷³. Ayatollah Khamenei's rhetoric maintained the strict anti-West stance even after the deal was signed, but he also approved the deal as he spoke against its limitations⁷⁴. The contradiction grew from a recognition of need, an argument perpetuated and encouraged by President Rouhani.

In his support of negotiations and the finalized deal, Rouhani often focuses on the repressed oil sector and overall depression of the economy resulting from international sanctions. In the 2000's, the international community increased their sanctions against Iran with each additional nuclear discovery⁷⁵. Even Iran's typical allies and oil export destinations limited their intake and communication. When this international economic squeezing compounded with plummeting oil prices, Rouhani pushed enough emphasis behind the need to receive Khamenei's approval for dialogue⁷⁶. For added safety and concern, Rouhani supplemented the discussions with the international threat of war against Iran⁷⁷. This economic motivation coincides with the public's idea of the worth of the JCPOA, as they expected and hoped for better access to foreign medication and equipment, an increase in investment, decrease in unemployment, and higher living standards as a result of the lowered sanctions which the international community conceded with the JCPOA⁷⁸.

⁷³ Abulof, Uriel. "Revisiting Iran's nuclear rationales." *International Politics*. vol. 51, no. 3. May 2014, pp. 404-415. *ProQuest*.

⁷⁴ Lob, Eric & Amir Hossein Mahdavi. "Understanding Iran's supreme leader on the nuclear deal." *The Washington Post*. 14 Apr 2015.

⁷⁵ Coulsdon, "Iran's government has few options to compensate for reduced oil income, increasing motivation for nuclear deal." *Jane's Intelligence Weekly*. vol. 7.9, 4 February 2015. *ProQuest*.

⁷⁶ Lucas, Scott. "Rouhani—Nuclear Deal Saved Our Economy." *Iran Daily*. 2 Jan 2017.

⁷⁷ Serjoie, Kay Armin. "The Divide Over the Nuclear Deal in Iran." *TIME*. 2 Aug 2016.

⁷⁸ Gallagher, Nancy, Ebrahim Mohseni, & Clay Ramsay. "Iranian Public Opinion on the Nuclear Agreement." *Center for International & Security Studies at Maryland*. Sept. 2015.

However, underlying political strategy is also relevant in Iran. If Ayatollah Khamenei is a proxy for the traditionalist and hardliner elite and President Rouhani is his moderate counterpart of a younger time, both took a gamble on the JCPOA in the hopes of stabilizing their political ideologies and actions. Both politicians saw potential benefit in a stronger economy. For Khamenei, economic growth would stabilize his position and ensure that retained Guardian Council support. If the country's economy can grow while he continues his anti-West rhetoric, there is no need for a change. Rouhani, on the other hand, wanted to demonstrate how much potential increased world cooperation and sanction relief could affect. As a the moderater of the deal and driving force behind Foreign Minister Zarif's negotiating tactics, his campaign for re-election would be supported by the improved economy. Perhaps the public would see him as a positive change and offer the reform ideas more support, instead of limiting their view to the status quo. Therefore, Iran's national motivations for entering the deal depended on economic incentives. However, the economic incentives also drove individual's political aspirations.

Chapter 4:

Meeting Progression⁷⁹

Tehran Declaration

The Tehran Declaration was the 2003 culmination and temporarily successful result of the European powers nuclear negotiations with Iran. It followed the discovery of Iran's secret nuclear facilities in Natanz and Arak, a revelation provoked by the National Council on Resistance in Iran, an Iranian opposition group. France and the European Union's JCPOA motivations above outline the basic elements and progressions of the negotiations which followed from the announcement. Iran was likely motivated to participate because of IAEA and United Nations resolutions condemning their actions.

The main consequence of the agreement was that Iran would suspend its uranium-enrichment activities. This was a departure from Europe's initial goal of eliminating all enrichment rather than simply suspending it, but marked significant improvement in overall regulations. The deal was signed in October, but broken by June of the following year when the IAEA reported violations and a lack of cooperation by Iran. Negotiations were meant to continue to try to reconcile the differences, but subsequent election of former President Ahmadinejad effectively negated this progress. In 2004 and 2005 the violations escalated, with the UN Security Council finally stepping in. The entire project of diplomacy was marred by the back-and

⁷⁹ There is general consensus on this timeline framework. Sources include the Arms Control Association (Davenport), IAEA, and Center for Strategic & International Studies.

forth nature of the agreements. Negotiations were disjointed until approximately 2012, but the P5+1 began to collaborate almost immediately, offering proposals for constructive means of cooperation.

JPOA

The JPOA was signed in November 2013 after the initial positive negotiations of the P5+1 and Iran. Productive meeting began in April 2012 and were gradual. Rouhani's June 2013 election arrived with promises of increased transparency, giving the efforts motivation to continue in the meantime. Overall, the JPOA marked the progress made so far, main points and goals of each side of the negotiations, and stood as political representation of progress with a promise for additional cooperation to finalize the details of a full agreement. The document resembles the final JCPOA agreement, but lacks the descriptive detail and step-by-step processes that make the comprehensive deal unique.

The JPOA operated along a six-month first phase for Iran to begin scaling down its uranium and nuclear activities as a further sign of support for the dialogue and potential for continued progress despite the lengthy nature of the negotiations. Implementation truly began in January of 2014 with IAEA support and monitoring. The organized implementation process and signing of this interim agreement acted as a calming measure for the negotiations. It was an international symbol of progress and continued effort as well as an appeal to outside leaders and actors showing that the conversations were worthwhile and worth continuing. Since the negotiations took place over such an extended period and had such a vast history of violation and disruption, this partial agreement aimed to counteract any fears or misgivings mounting with the

passing of time. It also set up the Framework for Cooperation Agreement which initiated IAEA's full return to Iran.

JCPOA

The JCPOA is the finalized agreement between the P5+1 and Iran. It operates along a 20 year framework, sets limitations on Iran's uranium enrichment and centrifuge and heavy water production, effectively extending Iran's breakout time and transforming the nuclear sector into a peaceful and energy-focused body. The agreement was signed in July 2015, but implementation was gradual and included affirmation by the Iran and US national governments. The following mark the primary developments and are interspersed with IAEA reports tracking Iran's adherence to coinciding agreements and the JPOA:

- February 2014: The seven negotiating nations agree on a framework and schedule for negotiating the final, "comprehensive" deal
- May 2014: comprehensive agreement drafting begins
- November 2014: an extension is required, moving the political agreement goal to March and technical annexes to the end of June
- 14 July 2014: Finalization Day, this means the deal is announced approximately two weeks after the deadline and in spite of French concerns over rushed final details
- 20 July 2014: the UN Security Council endorses the deal and proposals for lifting UN sanctions
- September 2014: oppositionists in US Congress fail to garner enough support to block the deal
- October 2014: Iranian lawmakers approve the deal, leading to the Guardian Councils ratification. Formal adoption (Adoption Day) occurs on the 18th.

-16 January 2015: Implementation Day, this means that the IAEA verified Iran met its de-nuclearization commitments and EU and UN sanctions officially lift

From this point on, the provisions are to be continued and reviewed by the IAEA. Two remaining dates will occur if the process is implemented on all actors' parts:

-20 October 2023: Transition Day, this day will mark the permanent lifting of all thus-far provisionally-lifted sanctions and Iran will begin the process of ratifying the Additional Protocol

-20 October 2025: UNSCR Termination Day, this day will mark the United Nations decision to close the case on Iran's nuclear program, essentially resolving the issue as within international norms and standards

Beyond these two days, the agreement sets up general monitoring procedures that transition into the longest-term accomplishment: the Additional Protocol.

Chapter 5:

Conclusions & Moving Forward

After splitting motivations for a nuclear deal with Iran into the national interests of each primary negotiating nation-state, it becomes clear that incentives flow from political and economic foundations. Political can be further divided into international community reputations and MENA region stability. The former of these political motivations refers most significantly to Iran, Russia, China, Germany, and the EU. The remaining actors, the United States and United Kingdom, enjoy a safer position in the existing world order, and so their political standpoint on a nuclear Iran revolves more strongly around the latter incentive, MENA regional stability. However, all actors cite regional stability in their support of the JCPOA deal as an international accomplishment.

Regional stability considerations frequently occur in tandem with declarations of allegiance to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and, in some cases, global nuclear disarmament. When brought into the context of MENA and current violent conflicts, frequent references include the safety of the Israeli state, human rights violations in general, migration concerns, and the violent conflicts in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen. When dealing with Iran, the international community is especially concerned that a nuclear acquisition would incite a military response from already nuclear-armed Israel, or that it would add extreme measures of military support to oppressive regimes in Iran and Syria because of the Islamic

State's political alliances. Others fear nuclear capabilities reaching Hezbollah, heavily present in Lebanon, supported by Iran, but considered a terrorist organization by international standards.

These regional concerns form the basis of many arguments brought up against the JCPOA, but the agreement attempts to standardize and add a safety-structured monitoring element to the Iranian nuclear program. Given the existing rate of nuclear development, most of the primary actors cite the JCPOA as the safest and most realistic alternative to Iran's nuclear weapon acquisition. For this reason, the agreement is largely considered a stabilizing factor, as it brings in new regulations and IAEA review systems and adds nuclear activity restrictions that significantly extend Iran's breakout timeline. The overall concern for safety enumerated by the world powers repeatedly in press statements during and after the negotiations suggest a prominent concern for international well-being. However, when economic considerations are compared to the safety-rhetoric, national interests prevail as the true motivations.

All members of the P5+1 excluding the United States enjoy recent or current economic relations with Iran that are restricted by international sanctions against Iran's human rights violations, missile activity, and nuclear program. Recent UN sanctions in particular focus on the nuclear developments, and so all countries subject to the UN Charter face business limitations. With a large population, space for foreign investment, weak infrastructure, consistent oil sector, and projected economic growth, business investment in Iran offers many paths for expansion. Russian, Chinese, and European finance administrations began to explore these possibilities as soon as possible after the JCPOA signing. Though some conversations coincided with regional safety and humanitarian concerns, economic opportunities dominated the main points of dialogue. With these actions and considerations in mind, the concern for international safety

argument loses potency. Regional stability still matters to foreign actors, but national economic interests and growth potentials constitute the true motivation for that stability and safety concern.

One possible exception to this underlying economic drive is the United States. Though private companies based in the US look forward to the opening Iranian market as sanctions slowly decrease, as evidenced by the Boeing contracts pending official government approval, the national stance demonstrates a lesser focus on finances and continuously circles back to safety rhetoric. The safety and NPT focus with a constant reiteration of assessment standards based on review not trust by JCPOA-supporters reflects the atmosphere of distrust that continues to underlie and taint all interaction between the United States and Islamic Republic of Iran. The events leading up to and embodying the 1979 Islamic Revolution continue to impact the country's perceptions of each other, particularly among conservative hardliners, as outlined in Chapter 2 above. This prevents full realization of bilateral economic potential and puts dialogue into a refrain of safety concerns.

The national dynamics of reformist ideology and conservative hardline stances play a prominent role in the motivations and considerations of Iran and the United States, in particular. The ability to sustain dialogue across a multi-year span and amidst additional international disagreements shows a shift in balance in the dynamics of both countries. One example of the change in the United States political sphere can be seen by comparing the JCPOA negotiations to the Tehran Declaration attempts. In the early 2000's, Europe found it wise to garner US support through soft power means because they feared a reactionary and violent response if the UN Security Council, where the United States holds veto power and significant influence, took control of the Fordow revelation response. The European fears stemmed from US political and military decisions under recent administrations, such as President George W. Bush's entrance

into war in Iraq and overall inauguration of the War on Terror. Strict and military actions from hardline stances predominated the US action on the world stage in general and MENA region in particular. Combining this trend with the historical tensions perpetuating a freeze of US-Iran relations created a dynamic too risky to have the US forming responses to Iran. However, the Obama administration created a new international dynamic for the United States, working with hardliners to reinforce ideas of safety in relation to Iran while also exploring diplomatic options that allowed the JCPOA.

In Iran, the change of presidencies also reflects the balancing acts of traditionalist and reform ideologies. When Europe initiated diplomacy in the early 2000's gradual, though inconsistent, progress prevailed until the election of former Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. At that point, all dialogue and cooperation ceased until his successor, current President Hassan Rouhani, stepped into the role. Rouhani represents the Reformist movement in Iran and an overall recognition of the importance of international participation. In the latter perspective, he reflects former president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's recognition of Iran's potential gains from cooperation on the world stage. President Rouhani enabled increased dialogue with his reformist rhetoric nationally and globally in his UN speeches, demonstrating that Iran's government included rational actors willing to negotiate for its country's best interests.

The changing dynamics in these countries therefore coincided in the mid-2010's in a spirit of reform and recognition of the role of international diplomacy. The other P5+1 members supported and recognized these trends and the roles they could play nationally to enact a nuclear deal. The dynamics in their own governments show a variation in hardline (France) and sovereignty-oriented (China) stances, but the group as a whole focused on the potentials and soft

power opportunity to add stability and economic potential on the global market. The unique combination of actors in all parties, then, enabled the JCPOA signing.

Additional research is necessary to assess the validity of conclusions drawn here regarding reform actors and economic motivations taking primacy over political incentives. Motivations in particular offer an opportunity for further investigation. To weigh the relative effects of political/humanitarian and economic determinants, future research should review the meetings of P5+1 members and Iran since the signing and implementation of the JCPOA. To the extent available, the focus of this additional investigation should be the primary topics of subsequent dialogue. Categorizing the interactions according to the titles and national roles of the diplomatic leaders participating in the dialogue against the publicized reports on main discussion topics would provide additional insight into the true nature of JCPOA motivation.

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