



Is the JCPOA-2015 deal a solution to Iran's nuclear crisis?

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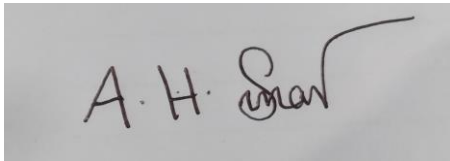
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Declaration:

I, Md Abdul Hamid, do hereby declare that this Thesis is the creation of my own knowledge and effort which is a requirement to achieve the Master Degree of Development and International Relations. This research is supervised by Associate Professor Pauline Stoltz from the faculty of Social Sciences, Development and International Relations of Aalborg University. To the best of my knowledge, this research contains unique materials created by me and the existing work of this thesis was not published before for any purpose or obtaining any degree from any institution except where due acknowledgement has been made in the writing.



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Date.....

I would like to thank **Pauline Stoltz** for her extraordinary guidance and effort during the supervision of this thesis. I also thank her for her constructive criticism of my work which taught me a lot about academic research and its procedure

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(except bibliography, cover pages, the index, declaration, and the abstract).

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Abstract:

The world has seen a great deal of efforts by the international community to find a peaceful solution to Iran's nuclear crisis since the last few decades. The key effort to reach an agreement was taken when the US agreed to join the negotiation in 2012. Before that, the EU3 countries, such as the United Kingdom, France, and Germany, primarily initiated the negotiation process since 2002 which was an unsuccessful attempt to find a solution to the nuclear controversy. As a result, a second attempt was taken to find remedy to the problem which resulted in the JCPOA-2015 negotiation agreed by the P5+1 nations and Iran which aimed to solve the nuclear crisis. One of the the key aims of this thesis is to present the negotiation procedure that was followed by both parties. Also, investigating the merit and demerit of the deal was also a top priority as it is perceived that both perspectives will help sketch out both angles of the negotiation scenario which will offer a well-constructive and balanced view of the negotiation to the readers. In analyzing the theory, the analysis part was divided based into three different sub-research questions. The key tasks of these sub-research questions were to ask the thesis such questions which will help to explore the result of the main research question. While finding answers to the sub-research questions, historical developments, and attitudes of the parties between each other was taken into consideration. All the sub-research questions ask a very specific question to the thesis which demands an analytical answer. Also, a venture was taken to show the evolution of change of mind between both parties about dealing with each other and reaching into a common term between the parties.

This study also focuses on presenting several aspects and events of the negotiation process along with the result and achievements of each sitting. First, the thesis introduces the JCPOA-2015 agreement to its readers along with providing the background information of the deal. Secondly, the thesis focuses on operationalizing some key words, for example to sketch out the actual picture of the negotiation scenario. Almost all the sources of data are secondary data, consequently; though this thesis does not guarantee the high relevance of data selection, a great effort to apply the relevant data to this thesis was endeavored. In order to find out a clear result of the formulated problem and find the result through applying the academic approach, this thesis uses several specific theories for different sub-research questions. Also, the analysis and opinions of a number of researchers' and academics were presented in order to compare the views of various experts about the deal. Claim and counterclaim about theoretical perspectives relevant to the JCPOA-2015 deal carried out by several political analysts was also presented in order to bring a balance between the proposition and opposition of the JCPOA-2015 deal. Furthermore, this thesis draws a clear picture of the events that the JCPOA-2015 deal went through during President Obama and President Trump's period. Also, this investigation offers finding the key philosophical reasons for President Obama's and President Trump's approach towards the deal. To make the investigation more insightful, this thesis finds the main reasons behind the US's withdrawal from the JCPOA-2015 deal during President Trump's period.

Keywords and phrases: JCPOA-2015, Negotiation, Nuclear. Deal, Nuclear Energy, Peace, stability, effective, success, Realism, Liberalism, Iran, International, Research.

1. Introduction:

The research design of this paper focuses on various angles of Iran's nuclear issue, from where the problem can be seen differently. Iran's nuclear crisis is currently regarded as an international issue rather than a domestic issue of the country. Despite a heavy influence of the hard-liner conservatives in Iran's foreign policy, the Rouhani government managed to strike a deal with the world power of which many people inside Iran were skeptical. Besides, Israel, another key player in the Middle East's geopolitics, has continuously opposed such a deal. Beside focusing on the merit of the JCPOA deal, this paper also investigates how over the time Iran has evolved and transformed its policies which involved the country into the JCPOA-2015 deal. One of the core tasks of this finding would be analyzing Iran's nuclear policy considering IAEA's nuclear policy standard followed by investigating the reasons of its failure (in 2018, President Trump pulled out the US from the deal).

It reflects on the nuclear strategy of the IAEA, the international community, the US and other United Nations security member states and Germany as well as Iran's nuclear policy which will aid to sum up the puzzle of this investigation. This paper investigates the merit and necessity of the JCPOA-2015 deal to maintain peace and stability in the world as well as in the Middle east. Moreover, this writing will also look to solve the puzzle of whether the deal is genuinely a solution to Iran's nuclear crisis or not. Both the admiration, and criticism of the deal will be investigated thoroughly to sketch the real picture and effectiveness of the agreement.

To add, while analyzing the case, the paper focuses on investigating IAEA's and Iran's nuclear policy considering expectations from the international community. Which means, a key focus of the starting of analysis will be to find out to what extent Iran has followed the standard and conditions set by IAEA and world powers according to the deal during the post JCPOA-2015 period. Also, to sketch a clear picture of the scenario, this paper analyzes the Pre-JCPOA and Post-JCPOA situation of Iran's nuclear activity and the rest of the world's reaction. Another matter of interest to this analysis would be to inquire into why President Trump withdrew from the deal and what went wrong with the deal which would provide a thorough insight of the events that the signatory parties went through. Eventually, finding the necessity of the deal for the peace and stability of Iran, Israel, the P5+1 nations and the rest of the world would be a top priority for this thesis.

1.1 : Various events that the negotiation process went through:

No.	Time	Events	Venue	Results
1	5 & 6 February-2013	Talk based on 2012 package, (Davenport, 2021).	Kazakhstan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No progress was made.

2	March-2013	Secret bilateral talks with Iranian officials by the US officials, (Lyons, 2015).	Oman.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both parties agreed to discuss further.
3	11 November-2013	Talk between IAEA director Yukiya Amano and Vice-president Ali Akbar Salehi, (Davenport, 2021)	Iran.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both parties signed an agreement on a framework of cooperation.
4	24 November 2013	Interim agreement of JCPOA-2015 signed by P5+1 and Iran, (Gearnan & Warrick, 2013).	Switzerland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iran agreed to partially freeze its nuclear activity. Decreased economic sanction
5	17-20 February 2014	Negotiating for comprehensive agreement. (Davenport, 2021).	Austria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both parties agreed on an agenda and framework to direct the negotiation further.
6	14 July 2015	All parties agreed to the final comprehensive nuclear deal, (Mullen & Robertson, 2015).	Austria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iran's reduction of nuclear centrifuges, (Bradner, 2015). Reducing the stock of uranium from 10,000 kg to 300 kg (Bradner, 2015). Iran is obliged to enrich a maximum capacity of 3.67% uranium. (Bradner, 2015). IAEA's inspectors' free access to Iranian nuclear sites, (Bradner, 2015). All the economic sanctions imposed

				<p>to Iran were removed, except sanctions related to human right, support of terrorism and missile technology, (Whitman, 2015).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No fresh sanction to Iran by the UNSC, the USA or the EU will be imposed, (Simeone & Kaphle, 2015).
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1.2 Aim of this thesis: One of the key aims of the thesis is to explore whether the nuclear negotiation that was struck by both parties is a remedy to the nuclear crisis of Iran or not. As the negotiated deal affects most of the parts of the world politically and economically, it is necessary to find a constructive remedy to this problem. Besides, understanding the background of the crisis and the negotiated deal is also another priority of this thesis. This report will investigate the deal's success and failure during President Trump era (2016-2020) and before his period as well. Since long, especially, after the Islamic revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini, how Iran managed its nuclear program, and based on which philosophy the country has developed its foreign policy that led the country to remain isolated for a long time and later it came back to the negotiation table: presenting that to the readers would be another aim of this paper. Eventually, exploring the effectiveness of the negotiation in light of the current geopolitical situation would be put at the heart of the thesis.

1.3 The Background:

The beginning period of Iran's nuclear activity was in the late 1950s which was a project of Atoms for peace venture aided by the western powers, to be specific, by the United States. Several countries from the western bloc continuously helped Iran on developing and building nuclear facilities and infrastructures till 1979 (the year the Islamic Revolution started, and the Shah was ousted). Iran made a deal with the United States in 1957 to form a cooperation between both countries on peaceful nuclear activity. Iran's key target was to diversify its energy resources, while the United States' ambition was to turn Iran into a buffer zone against the USSR, (Mousavian S. H & Mousavian M. M, 2018). Following this, in the late 1960s Tehran Nuclear Research Centre was formed which helped the country to move towards its nuclear ambition- reducing reliance on traditional fossil fuel-based energy. To add, in 1968 Iran became a signatory member of the NPT and in 1970, the country authorized the NPT (Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear weapons). The key aim of this treaty is to ensure peaceful use of nuclear activities.

However, Iran's nuclear future was in turmoil during the Islamic Revolution when almost all major countries who were the contributors to generate its nuclear energy pulled out of the project resulting in a sudden halt in the country's nuclear program. Another reason for the

halt to Iran's nuclear program was the Supreme leader Ayatollah Khomeinei's lack of interest in nuclear power. Just after the Iraq-Iran war, Iran started to show interest to restart the nuclear program again, and this time they turned to Pakistan, China, and Russia for nuclear cooperation. After death of Ayatollah Khomeinei, Rafsanjani came into power who was massively favored by the technocrats and bureaucrats who followed both, the North and South strategy to transform Iran into a modern state which resulted alliance with many countries on nuclear and other matters including Russia, (Sartepe and Kaya, 2015). A slightly similar but more open stance was taken by the current Iranian president, Hassan Rouhani, in dealing with the world powers on nuclear activity. While Rafsanjani continuously looked for alternative alliances, Rouhani focused on negotiation with the rivals and maintaining the first one. As a result, the JCPOA-2015 deal was struck between Iran and major world powers.

The full form of JCPOA is the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action which is an agreement between Iran and five permanent members of the UN security council (The United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China) adjoined with the Federal Republic of Germany and the European Union. The deal is also known as Iran vs. P5+1 agreement. This agreement allowed the international community to have more grip on monitoring Iran's nuclear program which will ensure that the nuclear program is run for peaceful and civilian purposes. After nearly one and half-year's drastic interlocution, Iran and six world powers agreed to adhere to a joint comprehensive plan of action to resolve the nuclear issue of Iranian July 2015, (Mousavian S. H & Mousavian M. M, 2018). According to the agreement, Iran must follow a much stricter rule when it comes to dealing with uranium enrichment or other nuclear activities. As a result, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has frequent and constant access to all of Iran's nuclear facilities ensuring that the country is complying with what was agreed on. The deal was struck to end Iran's nuclear crisis by obliging the country to abolish its medium-enriched uranium stockpile and reduce its bank of low-enriched uranium to 98 percent.

In addition, the country also committed not to build any fresh heavy-water infrastructure which are used to produce a high-level of plutonium which can be used for both civilian and non-civilian purposes. Also, Iran agreed to reduce around 66% of its gas centrifuges used to enrich uranium. In return, the world powers agreed to lift all sanctions (related to the country's nuclear program) if Iran complies with the deal. To ensure Iran's compliance, the International Atomic Energy Agency has got the opportunity to take the investigation of Iran's nuclear activity to a further level by analyzing various nuclear facilities' data, relevant documents as well as surveillance camera's photos. The agreement ensures an extensive trade that the United States and its allies regard that could stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, while it also ensures relief to Iran's vulnerable economy, (Rayman, 2015). All parties, Iran, P5+1 and the international community, saw the struck deal as a win-win deal where nobody loses anything, and everybody wins something. Although Israel considered the deal as a bad deal and its prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu thinks it will lead the middle east towards a nuclear arms race and such a deal would jeopardize the survival of Israel, (Toosi, 2015). Such a claim was bypassed by the world leaders, specifically the P5+1 leaders who believed that the JCPOA deal is the most realistic option that the world can have right now which will solve the nuclear crisis related to Iran.

1.4 Nuclear energy for civilian purposes:

In general, nuclear power is or can be used for several civilian purposes. Basically, nuclear energy is currently being used to generate heat which produces energy for various purposes. For example, at present, nuclear energy is used in one of the most power-hungry sections

which is producing electricity. Several countries, for instance, Russia, China, Japan, and France are heavily reliant on nuclear energy to produce electricity. Most recently India has joined the league to nuclearize its power sector. “The global nuclear order is changing. Concern about climate change and volatility of oil prices and the security of energy have contributed to a widespread and still-growing interest in nuclear in the future use of power. Thirty states operate one or more nuclear power plants today and according to the International Atomic Agency (IAEA), some 50 others have requested technical assistance from the agency”, (Miller E. S, et. al. 2009, p. 7). Such a statement depicts the popularity of nuclear power for civilian purposes where a race between several states to acquire nuclear power and technology has already been started.

Another important use for nuclear substances is being widely followed in the health sector where nuclear medicines are used for radioactive iodine therapy which is mostly used to treat cancer patients. Besides, nuclear substances are also being utilized in order to get an image of the human body to identify the exact area of the body which is affected by illness. Agriculture sector is also another beneficiary of nuclear power by which farmers utilize nuclear radiation to get rid of harmful insects from crops. At present radiation is also being used to control bacteria and harmful contents in food. Moreover, nuclear power is also being used to desalinate water which is an important tool to provide fresh water to the dry regions of the world. And space exploration is another one of the most important sectors which is getting the benefit of advanced nuclear technology by the help of which spacecrafts are powered to reach their destinations.

1.5 Nuclear energy for Military purposes:

After the second world war the world has seen a significant rise in use of nuclear power. Though during the beginning of use of nuclear weapons, the basic idea of using such weapons was limited to making bombs. However, over time and especially during the cold war period, some unimaginable nuclear discoveries took place in the military sector. There is no doubt that the cold war has a contribution to escalate a nuclear race between both parties (the USSR and the Western bloc), nevertheless; the incidents of that era does still influence many countries and the weapons that have been developed by both parties (now Russia instead of USSR) may be obsolete, but they were smart enough to update the cold-war era weapons. At present nuclear power is used for a number of military purposes. Nuclear submarines, for example, can dip underwater for a longer period without the need of refueling thanks to the development of nuclear technology by which a nuclear reactor is set in a submarine which provides fuel to the ship without any interference. Such achievements made the submarines more deadly, as a result; they can travel thousands of miles more than non-nuclear-powered submarines.

In addition, at present, nuclear powered inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBM), and hyper-supersonic missiles are massively being built in many of the NATO member countries as well as in Russia and China. A single use of any of these missiles can wipe-out a certain area within a minute. Also, modern aircraft carriers are powered by nuclear fuels offering longer durability in order to conduct a longer mission.

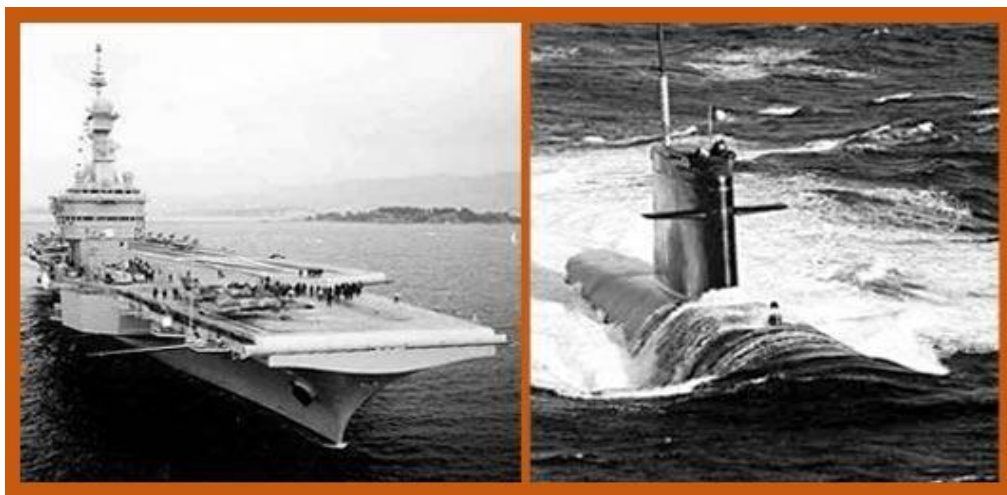


Fig 1: A nuclear powered aircraft carrier and a nuclear-powered submarine. (available at: [Radioactivity : Military Applications](#):

Moreover, nuclear power can be used in many other known and unknown military activities. But the problem here is such activities are always kept hidden from the public and a very tiny proportion of such information comes out of such activities. The civil nuclear power infrastructure was raised through the atomic bomb project between 1940 and 1950, and in the United Kingdom, the nuclear project for non-military use was utilized intentionally to hide the military activities related to nuclear weapons, (CNDUK, 2020). Such a notion demonstrates a traditional trend on how the already nuclear-powered countries developed nuclear activities for military purposes which pose a serious puzzle whether Iran is doing the same or not.'

2. Literature review:

This section is outlined to elucidate literature review to display the process of contribution of previous and existing research about the selected problem of this thesis. The key intention of this specific section is to elaborate the existing research related to the JCPOA-2015 deal. This part of the thesis also contains latest data relevant to the research question. In addition, providing analytical data and reference of documents connected to JCPOA-2015 negotiation is also another venture of this section. The theme of this thesis research that includes finding out the effectiveness of JCPOA-2015 negotiation is already a known area to academics and researchers.

Mousavian S. H & Mousavian M. M, (2018) provides an overall situation of the JCPOA-2015 deal where the paper keenly focuses on examining the major factors that led both parties (Iran and P5+1) agreeing a deal. The writers also analyzed the shifting geopolitical situation where both parties carefully utilized their bargaining chips in the negotiation. Philips et. al. (2020) try to sketch out a future scenario of the deal that would create a more stable world and provide a guideline on what the next steps could be taken to make the deal more restrictive, effective in order to have a permanent deal. What is more, Bowen and Moran (2014) investigate Iran's nuclear proliferation attitude through the view of hedging. The paper analyzes how hedging as a proliferation behavior has not been a well-documented area which indicates that this field is not a fully explored one which results providing the nuclear issue a distinct angle. Ariel Levite defined hedging as follows: "A national strategy of maintaining, or at least appearing to maintain, a viable option for the relatively rapid acquisition of nuclear weapons, based on an indigenous technical capacity to produce them within a relatively short time frame ranging from several

weeks to a few years”, (Bowen and Moran, 2014, p. 689). This paper will help understand Iran’s long standing nuclear attitude and its position which will aid to perceive the type of negotiation that Iran wants to have with the P5+1 nations.

While, Samore, Gary et al. (2015) scrutinize the agreement where the authors provide detailed information about handling of various materials, for example, uranium and plutonium, by Iran which is regularly inspected by the IAEA-officers. Also, the authors took the paper into a different level by investigating a military dimension of the nuclear program and an assessment on the possibility of weaponization. In addition, Rezai, (2019), deeply explores whether the existing nuclear proliferation will be intact or not as the deal collapsed in 2018. The paper emphasizes on Iran’s nuclear ambition and its prospect in light of international standard and expectation including Israel’s reaction to Iran’s activity and the JCPOA-2015 deal. The paper offers its readers to perceive the background of the agreement’s collapse and its further consequences.

As well as Sartepe and Kaya, (2015), analyzes the post-revolutionary foreign policies of Iran in light of factional rivalries which offers the readers a clear view of evolution of Iran’s foreign policy which led the country towards an international negotiation. The paper also contains the foreign policy goals of Iran and the process of implementing them through the international context. The writers identify the JCPOA-2015 deal as a natural result of present local and international problems and developments. Lodgaard (2016) took the investigation into a further level by not only analyzing the JCPOA-2015 deal but also putting the same structure of negotiation in case of the North Korean problem providing a thorough guideline by which North Korea’s nuclear problem can be handled. In short, besides exploring the effectiveness of the JCPOA-2015 deal, the writer also ventured to apply the similar strategy that learnt from the JCPOA-2015 agreement when dealing with North Korea. Furthermore, Juneau (2019), finds the post-deal (JCPOA-2015) hindrance on Iran’s power along with finding whether Iran really emerged as winner from the nuclear deal. The paper highly focuses on the comments and analysis of critics of JCPOA-2015 deal where many of them claim that after being relieved from all sanctions, Iran will become more aggressive militarily which paves the way to the country’s possibility to become a dominant power in middle east stressing that Iran is the major advantage taker from the deal. To add, Stein et. al. (2016), assess Iran’s nuclear deal after one year of its implementation where the assessment begins with Iran’s nuclear activities and capabilities which tries to draw an accurate picture of the current scenario of Iran’s nuclear program. It is a matter of interest that that paper also offers recommendations for Israel on how to deal with the post-JCPOA situational activities.

Mulligan, (2018), inquired into the legal authorities and implications of withdrawal from JCPOA-2015 nuclear deal where the author thoroughly analyzes President Trump’s action on the deal and its consequences. Also, the writer evaluates the matter into two different frameworks which are domestic legal authority for withdrawal and international legal authority impacted in withdrawal. Oppermann & Spencer, (2017) inspects the success and failure of the agreement which allows its readers to perceive both angles of the deal leading the article into whether it was a failed negotiation or not. The paper also demonstrates how the US congress struggled to find an accurate and concrete definitive position of the deal being unable to determine whether the deal was a success or a failure.

The problem formulation of this thesis is: **Is JCPOA-2015 negotiation a solution to Iran’s nuclear crisis?** According to the problem formulation, this paper strives to solve the puzzle on whether the JCPOA-2015 deal is a solution to Iran’s nuclear problem or not. In another word, it is a matter of interest to this paper to find out the effectiveness of the negotiated deal in light of current world order and its situation based on judging its merits and demerits. Furthermore, this

thesis would like to contribute a great deal of investigation on whether the JCPOA-2015 deal is feasible or not in the current era and the prospect of it for a longer term. This exploration also focuses on pros and cons of the deal for both parties and the international community followed by the extent of its influence on maintaining the stability of the world's peace.

Another matter of interest of this paper is to assess the negotiation process followed by both parties (used in JCPOA-2015 deal) and the feasibility of the deal which will determine the merit and demerit of the negotiation leading toward whether JCPOA-2015 was a failed negotiation or not. Furthermore, a venture will be taken to investigate and find out exactly what went wrong in 2018 which obliged President Trump to withdraw from the deal. Finding the future prospect of re-negotiation by the new (President Biden) administration and its effectiveness to ensure a tangible and effective deal would also be a top priority. Eventually, what lessons can the world learn from the North Korean and Cuban nuclear crisis will be another matter of priority ensuring that the international community does not repeat its mistake done in the past while dealing with North Korea and Cuba. Although Iran's nuclear crisis is the key focus of this paper's problem formulation, a general and overall sketch of this matter is anticipated to acquire.

3. Methodology:

Case study investigates through reports of previous research which ascribes the quest and cognizance of complex issues, (Zainal, 2007). Since the agreed JCPOA-2015 negotiation saw its ups and downs, an in-depth investigation is needed to draw a clear picture of that scenario. In this regard, the case study method will help to reach the very core of that issue and provide various angles to the problem. "Case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used", (Yin, 1984. p. 23). This case contains three major parts of analysis. First, it focuses on the background of the negotiated deal and the background of Iran's nuclear activity. Secondly, the case study emphasizes investigating various events that took place during the negotiation. And finally, the case study investigates what went wrong during President Trump's period along with exploring whether or not the deal is a failed deal. Furthermore, to collect data Qualitative methods will be utilized in order to analyze the thesis puzzle; however, in a few areas quantitative methods may be followed but it does not play a major role in this paper. It is observed that in order to find an answer to the research questions and puzzles to this thesis, qualitative data is found to be more effective than quantitative data. For example, various statistics, graphs, or numerical data have very little connectivity to this case. Instead, various research documents, newspaper articles, and various experts and bodies' obsecration to the nuclear scenario are found to be mostly helpful to reach a conclusion. The qualitative research study will be implemented to dig into the case aiming to gain a full picture of the scenario.

In pursuance to explore the merit of negotiation done by both parties in the JCPOA-2015 deal as well as its prospect to solve the nuclear crisis, qualitative method offers a great deal of depth of the case to investigate. To add, the research design of this thesis requires very less use of quantitative data. Moreover, in order to ensure relevance and quality of the data, data collected from various journals, academic scholars from relevant fields, the IAEA's report on Iran's nuclear activity, relevant data collected from the United Nations' and the security council. This thesis aims to investigate the key features of the JCPOA-2015 deal with the level of its effectiveness and drawbacks which will shed light on the level of cooperation and relationship between Iran and P5+1 countries on nuclear issues.

3.1 Research question:

This paper seeks to explore the following research questions. The key research question of this thesis is, **how effective are the JCPOA-2015 negotiations in light of ongoing geo-political changes (including the period of President Trump 2016-2020) of the world in order to bring peace and stability?**

Besides, in relation to research questions, this paper focuses on finding various facts, prospects, and gaps that were created because of the deal. As a result, this paper would also like to investigate the followings are the sub-research questions:

1. *What is the background of the JCPOA 2015 negotiation?*
2. *Can the negotiations that took place between 2013 and 2015 be considered a failure or a success?*
3. *Since the negotiated deal is still active technically, has it failed during the President Trump period?*

On analysis part, point number 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 will answer the sub-research question number 1. Besides, point number 5.4 and 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7 will answer the sub research question number 2. Also, point number 5.8 will answer the sub-research question number 3. Eventually, all the points of the analysis part are designed to help find answers to the key research question.

2.2 Data collection method: Data collection is one of the most vital parts of any research which aids to write an informative research study. The investigation of this paper is based on secondary research. As mentioned above that it is a qualitative research-based thesis, most of the data are collected from secondary sources. In pursuance of most relevant data, the documents and journals containing nuclear policies and assessment of various bodies were utilized to analyze this thesis. Furthermore, a wide selection of empirical sources were used to explore the answer to the research questions. Hence, documents are the major source of data in this thesis. Among these, most of the data are relevant to the JCPOA-2015 deal, liberalism, negotiation, and failed negotiation. Ritchie et al. (2013) elaborates research can be directed with various procedures, but every research is dependent on the data which is analyzed and further clarified to acquire information.

3.2.1 Secondary data: Since this thesis does not generally produce primary data, the main contributor of data collection of this paper is external sources. *“Secondary data is originally collected for a different purpose and reused for another research question”* (Hox J. J, & Boeije H. R, 2005, p. 593). One of the key criticisms of secondary data is that the outcome of this research based on secondary data is already known. In addition, the academics and scholars are already familiar and informed of such results since before though the writer of secondary data-based thesis or paper has no control over it. Utilizing secondary data hand over the investigators with several characteristics’ complications including locating data and the relevance of it followed by the quality of the data used in the investigation, ((Hox J. J, & Boeije H. R, 2005). However, some may argue that secondary data-based research papers lack uniqueness or creativity, but this does not reduce the importance of such papers in the research field. It is acknowledged that plenty of research based on primary and secondary data have been done about the JCPOA-2015 deal and Iran’s nuclear crisis; conversely, very few papers focused on the actual reasons behind the failure to keep the deal alive in light of negotiation. Beside finding the answer to research questions, this paper will also try its level

best to draw a clear picture of the JCPOA-2015 deal from both angles (the Iranian side & P5+1 side).

Several research documents, nuclear energy related journals and articles, JCPOA-2015 related articles and some policy documents are the main sources of this report's secondary data collection. For example, data collected from Wyn Bowen & Matthew Moran (2014) *Iran's Nuclear Programme: A Case Study in Hedging?* will aid to find answers to the sub-research question number 01. While collected data from Farhad Rezaei, 2019, *JCPOA Collapse: Will Proliferation Follow?*, Anda Ghilescu, 2018, *An attempt at diplomacy: how the pursuit of a nuclear deal with Iran affected the United States- Israel relations*, Kai Oppermann, 2018, *Narrating success and failure: Congressional debates on the 'Iran nuclear deal*, will help to find answer of sub-research question number 02. Moreover, collected data from Mousavian S. H & Mousavian M. M, 2018, *Building on the Iran Nuclear Deal for International Peace and Security*, Sartepe and Kaya, 2015, *Contentious Politics in Iran: Factions, Foreign Policy and the Nuclear Deal*, AXELROD, ROBERT and ROBERT O. KEOHANE. 1985. *'Achieving Cooperation under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions*, LIPSON, CHARLES. 1984 and other documents will help find answers to the sub-research question number 03. Also, *International cooperation in Economic and Security Affairs* etc. and more documents have been utilized as a source of data. Furthermore, plenty of news websites, various security organization's websites and other research documents also played a vital role to enrich the qualitative data collection of this thesis. Since most of the data are collected from research papers and well-known news websites, it will be appropriate to say that the source of assessed data used in this paper is generally trustworthy.

3.3 Limitations: This thesis includes the following imitations. First, even though both parties have an agreement, the US pulled out itself by President Trump calling the deal a bad deal causing a dilemma for other signatory countries. However, the negotiated deal still, technically, exists as other signatory countries acknowledge the value of the deal. While writing the thesis, at the same time, the agreement seems to have failed while in paper it still exists. Here the possibilities are a new process of negotiation may start at any moment regarding Iran's nuclear issue which may cause several changes of terms or the situation remains the same as usual. As a result, all sorts of scenarios had to be considered during the analysis period of the report including the possibilities of opening a new trend of that agreement. Secondly, a deep concentration was needed while collecting data as the sources may be partially or fully inspired by political philosophy or ideology of both parties, if not biased; though partiality of collected data should not be a problem to analyze the case. For example, data collected from any Iranian based news website, Presstv, Tehran times, or Irna, can consciously or subconsciously provide a biased view to Iran's nuclear activity. On the other hand, western and Israeli based news sources, e.g; CNN, BBC, Foxnews, Haartez.com etc. may be overly critical of Iran's nuclear program and may provide data which is based on unnecessary scrutiny. The same applies to the Iranian or western writer-based document, even though the chances of biasness are less in case of academic research documents. In this regard, it can be said that ensuring the credibility of collected data was also a big challenge to this thesis.

3.4 Methods: *The following chapter contains the methods of the thesis followed by how a qualitative method was utilized to analyze the report. Besides, in order to establish the understanding of the operation of tracing and analyzing, this section presents an in-depth document analysis.*

3.4.1 Qualitative method: Qualitative research investigates the way researchers acquire knowledge about which make sense of themselves and others and the procedure of these research provide meaning to their everyday life, (Hox J. J, & Boeije H. R, 2005). So that it can be observed that such kind of research offers the investigators a range of flexibility regarding the way the research is planned to be executed or conducted. To investigate and analyze the research questions, gathering and finding relevant data related to the topic was necessary. In general, such research is carried through conversational communication aiming to connect the gathered data to the respondent or people's view on a specific subject or research. "Research is a systematic and unbiased way of solving a problem (by answering questions or supporting hypotheses) through generating verifiable data" (Shone, B. J, 2015, p. 14). Hence, a structural system is followed to carry out the investigation of qualitative research aiming to gather and analyze collected data. One of the key characteristics of this research is regardless of the method of collection of data, interviews, events, for instance, it offers flexibility in exploring regarding the research done by already existing data.

Moreover, the key concepts of qualitative research are more diverse than those in quantitative research, (Flick, 2009). From the above statement, it is clear that qualitative and quantitative research methods are far different from each other. In other words, it can be said that both approaches are used to carry out thorough research but the way they work are different to each other. In this thesis, a qualitative approach was carefully used to sketch out a clear conclusion of the thesis. To add, a calculated attempt to get the previous, present and a possible future scenario of JCPOA-2015 deal and the negotiation was taken to lead the research towards an in-depth analysis. To ensure that, analysis of various researchers, comments of several security specialists and political leaders were added to various parts of the thesis. Brannen, (2005) identifies both, qualitative and quantitative methods, as two different sorts of paradigms. Since the contents of this thesis has a limited use of statistical data, the utilization of a qualitative approach to explore the case was a planned idea. The use of a qualitative approach helped the thesis to identify the problems related to the JCPOA-2015 agreement that were the key factors behind hindrance towards the success of the agreement as well as drawing a conclusion of the report. As identified by Cropley, A. J, (2009), that the basic element of the quantitative method is that it investigates the way people think of their real-life experience relying on their mentality and self-script. The thinking and experience of political leaders, diplomats, security analysts and researchers on Iran's nuclear crisis was clearly reflected in this thesis as a result of using the qualitative research method.

3.4.2 Document analysis:

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material (Bowen, G. A. 2009, p. 27). Such analysis helps to draw a clear picture of events that the researcher wants to express through the paper by allowing the researcher to analyze documents through a systematic process. Such a process is utilized in investigations to present the literature in a combinative manner which aids to visualize a fresh perspective of problems that are being studied. Qualitative document analysis is a research system for carefully and systematically assessing the objects of written documents, (Watch et. al. 2013). Furthermore, it helps build the connectivity between the basic arguments of the used documents and the thesis's self-founded conclusion. The information and data collected from used documents aided to perceive the JCPOA/2015 deal from various angles where both parties analyze the situation in their own perspective along with helping the international community regarding what it

(the JCPOA-2015) for them and Iran. In addition, the empirical materials supplied an abundance of data and a number of points that were necessary to be analyzed and discussed in the thesis to reach a meaningful conclusion. Since a major collection of data is gathered from qualitative documents, another task of this chapter will be to help understand the process of gathering documents.

Since the major amount of collected data and documents are based on qualitative research, this section will aid to sketch out the relevance and depth of used documents and materials in this thesis. In general, document analysis this section provides an opportunity to analyze various factors which are related to the thesis topic- JCPOA-2015 agreement. When there is a concern of nuclear power and nuclear related issues, instead of acting by one single country, it becomes a top priority matter to solve for the international community as the matter is a concern for the world's security. No country or body single-handedly can act or work to solve the matter when it comes to the nuclear crisis. As a result, consultation between bodies, states and various agencies take place aiming to tackle the crisis through forcing or obliging the nuclear ambitious country to follow the international standard set by the IAEA when dealing with nuclear materials. As this thesis follows the JCPOA-2015 negotiation thoroughly, the majority of reviewed documents focuses on negotiation, nuclear risks, nuclear security and regional and international cooperation between various bodies and countries among the international community. Hence, the document analysis was structured to facilitate credibility to the findings analyzed from selected documents which supplemented the use of multiple origins of used data in this thesis. For instance, Rezai, (2019) investigates the possible survivability of the JCPOA-2015 deal by noting the historical roots of the deal along with providing a realistic scenario of the present situation of the deal. Besides, other authors focused on drawing a possible sketch of the deal based on the current geo-political situation. A balanced comparison between documents that were used in this thesis was possible because of document analysis which aided the thesis to gain insightful angles from various views.

4. Theoretical framework: *The following section aspires to present Liberalism- one of the mostly used and analyzed international relation theories for research- which functions as a theoretical framework intending to help analyze this thesis. The chapter presents the background information, historical aspects as well detailed information about Liberalism. Also, it elaborates how Liberalism relates to the thesis and from which angle this theory analyzes the JCPOA-2015 deal. Also, this section provides a description about the reasons behind choosing Liberalism as theory to analyze the thesis. Besides, narrowing down the theory into a specific point of view by analyzing the case using negotiation theory in light of Liberalism is a planned endeavor. This section intends to describe how the process of negotiation had a big impact on the JCPOA-2015 deal and made a difference to a long-awaited negotiation. Besides, an endeavor was taken to see and analyze the case in light of collective security theory where associated countries agree to work together to counter security issues. Sub-research question number 1 and 2 will be analyzed by applying the liberal view of Negotiation theory of International Relations. However, to get a clear picture of the whole scenario, sub-research question number 3 will be analyzed based on Realism theory or International Relations.*

4.1 Liberal view on negotiation theory:

Theory is similar to a map narrating a specific geographic zone from a certain functional outlook, (Murray, S. J, 1986). Theories help analyze a case or situation from a particular perspective. When it comes to the negotiated JCPOA-2015 deal, the negotiation theory of IR

offers various investigative and analytical facts to the deal. For instance, the theory can offer analysis on the background, limitations, success, failure, and future perspective of the deal. One of the key reasons why negotiation theory was selected to analyze the thesis is this theory will be able to help understand the negotiation process that both parties have gone through during the negotiation period. It will also help to visualize the ups and downs moments of the negotiation when suddenly it seemed like there was no hope to have a successful negotiation, while after a while, the negotiation process showed some positive signs of improvement. To be specific, negotiation is considered as a formal way of solving any conflict or dispute. It helps to build trust between parties which leads them towards a shared ambience and goal. This is the common and general understanding of the idea of negotiation. The traditional period of negotiation is generally in a time of conflict, dispute, or war. However, Salacuse, (2003) identifies negotiation as generally a method of contact by which two or more individuals look to move forward their own interest by taking joint steps. Although some diverse views regarding its use and application of negotiation are available from some analysts. For example, Watkins (2003) in analyzing complex negotiations finds that the negotiations in which several parties are involved are unclear and complex. The key reasons behind this complexity and vagueness can be various participants' different types of interest and opinion based on the negotiation. However, more common views are found than diversion. For instance, this theory connects the analysis of negotiation procedure of JCPOA-2015 with the problem formulation of this thesis. Ikle, (1964) identifies two elements that need to be present in order to strike a deal: common interest and conflict over that interest.

By applying the negotiation theory, it is possible to investigate whether such elements were present during the negotiation process between both parties. Also, if these elements were present, then what went wrong with the deal that President Trump had to abandon it, will be analyzed by the use of negotiation theory. Conversely, if the necessary elements to strike a successful negotiated deal were not present, this theory would also help analyze the reasons for which both parties failed to achieve such elements. Regardless of the presence of these elements, the negotiation process seems to have experienced a hard time and went through ups and downs several times as both parties agreed and disagreed on many matters several times during the negotiation process. One of the key requirements of making a negotiation successful during any conflict is involving skilled and experienced negotiators while dealing with it. In case of the JCPOA-2015 negotiation, the world's top negotiators and politicians were involved aiming to get the best out of the deal.

Moreover, this theory will also help gain insight of whether or not the JCPOA-2015 was a failed or successful agreement. If it failed how it failed, and if it was successful, how it was a successful negotiation. During the time of President Obama, the deal was struck successfully and seemed that it was working perfectly as both parties were fulfilling their commitments. The JCPOA-2015 negotiation which includes Iran getting full relief from all kinds of sanctions, while in return Iran has to obey the limitation on enriching its uranium set by the IAEA and P5+1 nations. According to the deal, Iran can enrich Uranium only up to 3.67%. To acquire a nuclear bomb, around 90% uranium enrichment is necessary. Conversely, when President Trump took office, he dubbed the JCPOA-2015 as a bad deal and later withdrew the USA from the deal. The negotiation theory of International Relations will help understand the actions taken by both presidents on the nuclear issue and their view to finding a solution to the crisis.

4.2 Liberalism: The modern journey of Liberalism starts with the work of John Locke who is widely accepted as the founder of the modern idea of Liberalism. However, the early concept

of Liberalism dates to late 1600 during the time of British Glorious Revolution. After the French revolution, the concept started getting international attention, especially to the western philosophers and economists, and was widely used across many parts of the world. The idea and basic philosophy of Liberalism is to adhere to equality before the law, consent of the governed and liberty. Such values aided Liberalism to become one of the most popular political and moral guidelines among the scholars, politicians, and philosophers. Conversely, as time passes-by, Liberalism also has seen the other side of the coin, receiving scrutiny and criticism from Politicians, academics, and scholars. Several scholars opined that Liberalism encountered daunting challenges during the early 1990s, (Damrosch et al. 1995). Conversely, the core idea of Liberalism which encourages maintaining adherence to individual civil and human rights, gender and racial equality, democracy, secularism, freedom of speech including freedom of press and religion has kept the concept as one of the most widely followed and accepted views in the present world. “The aim of liberalism is to ensure the freedom of individuals by securing the intrinsic processes and exchanges within society rather than to intervene too much in the affairs of individuals and the organization of social relations” (Munster, 2005, p. 3).

One of the key reasons why Liberalism was selected to analyze the thesis is the general idea of solving an international problem is to cooperate. During the King Shah’s regime, Iran’s nuclear activity did not catch much international attention as almost all major powers considered the nuclear program peaceful which serves civilian purposes. Another thing here is that Shah has cooperated with the international community on nuclear matters, nuclear activities during that period was visually transparent to the international community. As a result, cooperation and negotiated steps between the international community and Iran resulted in peaceful use of nuclear energy. Liberal International Relations academics cherish international bodies for their effort for encouraging international cooperation, (Axelrod and Keohane 1985; Haas et al. 1993; Keohane 1984, 1989; Keohane and Nye 2000; Lipson 1984; Milner 1992).

On the other hand, North Korean nuclear activities did not seek any kind of international approval nor cooperation. So that, no matter how strict the punishment North Korea received from the international community including sanctions and isolation, the country eventually ended up acquiring nuclear weapons. “Liberal theories can best be collectively described as drawing on a set of assumptions about how the world works, ranging from an optimistic belief in human reason to the perceived positive effects of institutions in moulding anarchy or mitigating conflicts” (Jørgensen & Aarstad, 2012, p. 30). In contrast, even a few years back, it seemed like Iran was following North Korea’s footsteps which may end up with another nuclear catastrophe. However, the country showed a positive sign to negotiate the nuclear issue and sit on the table after Hassan Rouhani was elected as president. After the JCPOA-2015 negotiation a deal was struck which drew a positive picture of hope that Iran is not turning into another North Korea- thanks to the joint effort of the international community including P5+1 countries and Iran. From the above mentioned scenarios, it seems obvious that till today, a few alternatives are available to the nuclear issue than viewing the matter in a liberal way which will encourage both parties to sit on the negotiation table and find a better solution for the world. A liberal individual is the one who trusts in liberty, (Cranston, 1967). The JCPOA-2015 deal, for at least a few years, brought political stability and economic freedom to the Iranian nation because of relief from western imposed sanctions. Similarly, Western countries also had the opportunity to continue trade and transactions with Iran. This matter inspired me the most to apply Liberalism as theory to analyze the thesis. This provides

the thesis the structural basis that Liberalism is deeply connected with the case although it needs further discussion.

4.3 Liberal view on collective security theory as an alternative theory: The idea of collective security is infamously hard to define, as the connotation is connected with a loose set of suppositions and ideas which remains as a contested idea, (Dunchin, P. G, 2009). To be specific, collective security, a branch of Liberalism theory, generally pertains recognition of different countries, organizations, and bodies of a common security impedance. In this regard, the countries, and bodies acknowledge that an impedance to one individual or more countries or bodies is a threat to all. The basic philosophy of collective security is preventing any kind of menace or intimidation in any of the partner state or region as this affects in the other parts of neighboring or associated countries. As a result, those countries take joint steps to prevent any such unwanted issues. Kapuchan et al. (1995) observes collective security contracts between countries to follow some specific rules and regulations to keep up stability when necessary and stick together when facing hostility. In the current era, the world has become a global village where any incident or issue occurring in one part of the world can impact on other parts of the world directly or indirectly. That idea motivates countries and organizations to work together, make deals and negotiate with each other regarding security issues. Points to be noted here is whether the incident occurred when the country shares borders with other countries or does not bear less or no importance in the matter of security.

4.4 Realism:

Realism theory of International Relations will be used to analyze the part of President Trump's period (2016-2020) and his administration's way of handling the JCPOA-2015 deal. Realism is one of the most used theories of IR which is widely regularly applied by the academics and researchers to study various research and cases. Also, such a methodological paradigm offers explanation, description, and prediction of various international occurrences. Generally, this theory of IR provides the opposite view of any events to Liberalism theory of international relations. However, "Realists believe that their theory most closely describes the image of world politics held by practitioners of statecraft," (Antunes and Camisao, p. 2). The realists can be separated in three different categories, e.g., classical realist, neo-realists, and neo-classical realists. Realism is a very wide methodological paradigm that generally seeks possession and application of power. In general, two of the most important propositions of realism is narrating that states are the most important factors, and the international system is anarchic, (Antunes & Camisao, 2018). In such a way, the basic philosophy realism contains anarchy and power. In brief, Realism is connected to a certain part of the thesis which is to analyze President Trump's steps and handling towards the JCPOA-2015 deal which was established by President Obama. In this regard, President Trump's action regarding the handling of the JCPOA-2015 agreement will be analyzed by using the theory **Offensive Realism** of International Relations. However, Iran's reaction towards the United States' withdrawal from the JCPOA-2015 deal will be analyzed by using the theory of **Defensive Realism** of International Relations. Detailed theoretical analysis regarding both party's action and reaction will be discussed in the analysis section.

President Obama was widely recognized for his liberal views and steps that he had taken to resolve various international issues. As a result, one of the most critical issues that the world powers were struggling to deal with that no US president could solve, Iran's nuclear issue, was solved by President Obama. Realists' study during the beginning of the cold war on nuclear strategy introduced the concept of security studies in political science and political circles, (Walt, 1987). For several reasons, this theory is relevant to this part of the thesis. First,

President Trump's view on the JCPOA-2015 deal was totally opposite to President Obama's view which President Trump described as a bad deal. Since President Trump was not a fan of the JCPOA-2015 deal, he pulled out of that deal ending a hard-worked negotiated deal signed by the major powers. In that case, since the cooperation between countries and international communities including the US, the EU, other countries of P5+1 and Iran broke out, a realistic approach arises to disallow the cooperation. President Trump's approach can be dubbed as a realist approach which ended the security cooperation between countries. As a result, it is highly appropriate to analyze the President's Trump period in light of Realism. Secondly, following the break-up of the deal, the traditional mistrust between both parties had risen again. As a result, the scenario went back to its previous stage where both parties used to blame each other for any kind of lack of cooperation and unwanted events. It would be appropriate to analyze such events in light of Realism of international relations.

5. Sub-research question number 1: *What is the background of the JCPOA 2015 negotiation?*

This section of the analysis is designed to answer sub-research question number 1 which provides the background of the negotiation process. Moreover, the Negotiation theory of Liberal perspective will be used to analyze and illustrate the part as I believe this theory will suit the best when it comes to analyzing the background of a negotiation.

5.1. Parties that were involved in the negotiation:

The European Union, The USA, The UK, France, Germany, China, Russia, and Iran were involved in the intense negotiation process. The whole negotiation took around 1.5 years (20 months) where the P5+1 and the EU vs. Iran sat on the table aiming to reach a peaceful solution to Iran's nuclear crisis. Firstly, the European Union as an organization was highly enthusiastic and focused on solving Iran's nuclear crisis in a peaceful and diplomatic way. "The EU's manner of dealing with the problem by peacefully deterring Iran from developing a nuclear weapon significantly differed from the approach of the US", (Fiedler, Radoslaw, 2018, p. 295). The EU realized that making Iran completely abandon its nuclear activity is unrealistic and almost impossible. While the approach of the USA was based on severe sanctions along with applying diplomatic pressure to Iran, and a military strike on Iran as the last solution.

The EU, in general, played the role of mediator between both parties even though the organization was on the P5+1 side. During the negotiation, the EU helped facilitate creating a smooth environment for both parties to negotiate and offered space where negotiation talks can move forward without interruptions. Furthermore, the EU's role was similar to a link-up bridge between Iran and P5+1 countries. In that sense it is apparent that the EU was involved in dealing with the procedure of negotiation with both parties, where the primary aim of the organization was to connect both parties. The EU's foreign affairs' and security policy's high representative Catherine Ashton (from 2010-2014) and later Federica Mogherini played the role as neutral facilitator between P5+1 nations and Iran, (Baume M. D. L, 2015).



Image 2, the JCPOA-2015 Negotiators, available at, [Iran nuclear deal: Key details - BBC News](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-150715).

The USA, The UK, France, Germany, China, and Russia acted as the involved key parties whose primary aim was to protect the international interest in terms of nuclear and military security during the negotiation. A number of demands were made indicating several restrictions in Iran's nuclear activity. In this regard, a number of proposals were put on the table from both sides based on which the negotiation went forward. Besides, a handful desire was expressed from P5+1 countries to limit any kind of nuclear activity that is or will be connected to Iranian military which may lead the middle-eastern country acquiring nuclear weapons. Iran's ballistic missile program was put on table, but after a strong denial from the Iranian side indicating that the Iranian military activities are to be out of the negotiation process, the matter was put out of the talk. In addition, while negotiating with Iran, Israel's security was also a top priority for the negotiators of western bloc. In that sense, Israel was invisibly present in the negotiation process even though in pen and paper the country was out of the process.

President Obama's view on Iran and its nuclear activity has taken a swift turn in 2013 meaning that he has accepted and agreed with the EU's view that forcing Iran abandoning its nuclear activity was unrealistic, (Fiedler, Radoslaw, 2018). As a result, the USA has taken a soft approach to solve the matter diplomatically along with its other security partners (P5+1 countries). As a result, the P5+1 countries acknowledged that Iran's enrichment of uranium for civilian purposes only is a realistic agenda. As a result, the same year (in November 2013) saw a primary agreement between both parties which laid the foundation of a future negotiation process. Plus, the support from the EU for a peaceful solution of the crisis brought more energy and enthusiasm to the negotiation process. Consequently, between 2013 to 2015, a series of negotiations done by both parties led to the final nuclear deal called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in short which is called JCPOA.

Iran, on the other hand, in general, from the Iranian perspective, the western bloc has never taken the agenda of mutual solution to the nuclear crisis seriously. The nuclear solution was dubbed "would have been easy" by the Supreme leader Ayatollah Khomeini, if the west were serious about it, (Haartz, 2013). After the victory of President Hassan Rouhani in 2013,

the political scenario of Iran had started to change. At his first press briefing just after the victory, Hassan Rouhani promised the Iranian nation to restore the country's ties with the rest of the world soon. As a result, President Rouhani has massively changed Iran's nuclear policy towards a flexible approach where President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was a strict follower of Iranian old school policy when it comes to dealing with nuclear matters. During the eight years reign of President Ahmadinejad, the country saw a series of failed talks which cleared the path of the Iranian political moderates to come into power after 2005, (Mousavian S. H & Mousavian M. M, 2018).

During the negotiation process, the key demand from Iranian side was the removal of all types of sanction given by the UN security council, the EU, the USA and any other bodies which are harmful for the Iranian economy. From the Iranian perspective, that deal would strongly help Iran to return into the international market and get access to its long-awaited frozen assets in various countries. As a result, all the sanctions were removed that were imposed on Iran, in return, Iran agreed to reduce 66% of its used centrifuges and decrease the stockpile of its enriched uranium by 97%, (Rayman, 2015).

5.2: Why was a successful negotiation so important? For a number of reasons, a successful negotiation was crucial for both parties. In regard to endorsing the JCPOA-2015 negotiation, the Image below illustrates the benefits of JCPOA-2015 deal briefly.



Image 3: Available at, wh.gov/iran-deal

5.2.1 Military strike proved ineffective: A military strike to solve any dispute historically proved as a very wrong strategy. Attack on Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, for example, did not bring any expected result to the international community. Rather, the US and NATO are still carrying out expensive military strikes on those countries without gaining any clear advantage. Previous results of a military strike do not provide any hope of solving any international crisis. Moreover, the failed military strike by NATO and gulf countries on Libya, Iraq and Syria led the pathway to the extremists to partially occupy lands causing insurgency, civil war, sectarianism, and conflicts, (Mousavian S. H & Mousavian M. M, 2018). In this regard, negotiating with Iran was the only pragmatic way to solve the nuclear crisis.

5.2.2 Present geopolitics: The geo-political order and situation of the current era does not support another war and chaos in the world. Especially, the geo-political situation of the Middle East looks so messed up that it is hard to explain or assume who is fighting whom. For example, Bashar-Al-Assad is allied with Russia and Iran, on the other hand, Iran and Russia are building close ties with Turkey, but Turkey is one of the biggest critics of the Assad regime. Similarly, Bashar-Al-Assad claims that his government is fighting against ISIS (Islamic State of Syria and Iraq), at the same time the western blocs and Israel attacked various facilities of Assad regime; at the same time the western bloc is also operating targeted attacks on various ISIS facilities. The whole scenario elucidates the middle east as Pandora's box where problems get complicated and worse.

In this case, another unstable country as well as a region in the middle east would be catastrophic for the world and perhaps the consequence of this tragedy would be far more than one can imagine. Plus, the very first country that offered help to Iraq to fight against ISIS was Iran, which provided its military equipment and ground aid, (Guimaraes B. G, & Muller M. S, 2014). As a result, the P5+1 countries had to choose their options which were available on their hand when negotiating with Iran. Any further escalation with Iran would have definitely created a massive advantage for the middle east-based extremist groups. In this very moment of political instability and crisis, having Iran on the same side was a better idea than just keeping the country isolated from international affairs.

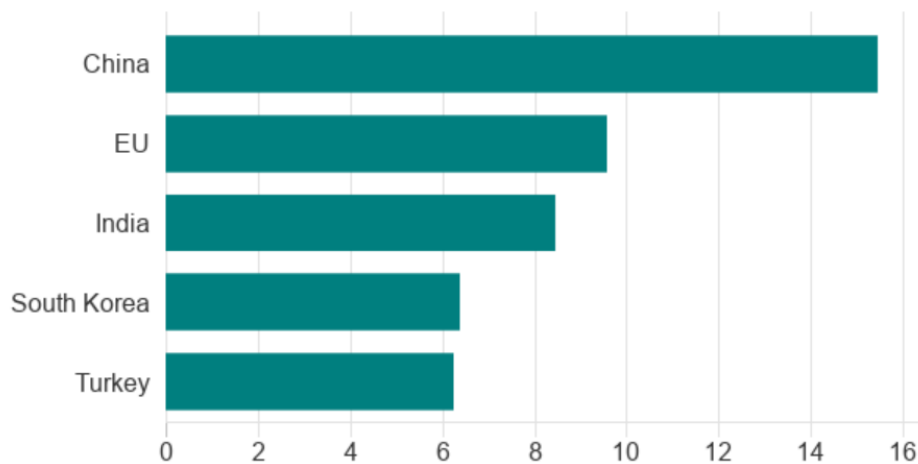
5.2.3 Interest of international community in negotiation including Russia and China:

Starting with the EU which always considered the Islamic Republic as a great potential for trade and commerce. A number of European countries have full diplomatic relations with Iran and continuously get involved in economic matters. Also, the EU considers Iran as an alternative source to Russia regarding getting easy access to Gas and oil, (Fiedler & Radoslaw, 2018). The Crimea conflict between Ukraine and Russia caused several interruptions in trade and commerce between the EU and Russia. As a result of the conflict, the EU and its allies put several sanctions on Russia. For that, the EU, currently, is in a dilemma whether or not to put severe sanctions on Russia. Point to be noted here is that the EU is heavily reliant on Russian gas which compelled the organization not to give any hard punishment to Russia. The future gas supply from Russia to the European countries through pipeline is expected to rise from 130 BCM a year in 2020 to around 150 BCM per year by 2040, (Elliott, 2021). As a result, finding an alternative source of energy was always on the Europeans' priority. Besides, in 2017, the EU exported its goods to Iran amounting around 10.8 billion euros, while at the same time its member countries imported from Iran around 10.1 billion Euros amounts of goods, (BBC, 2018). The line charts below depict the figure for import and export of Iran with several countries and with the EU, indicating that despite sanctions, the EU and China are Iran's two of the biggest business partners. The overall scenario of the graphs presents why a deal with Iran was necessary for the EU and other countries.

Iran's exports

Top 5 trading partners 2017

■ Value (Euros bn)*



Iran's imports

Top five trading partners 2017

■ Value (Euros bn)*

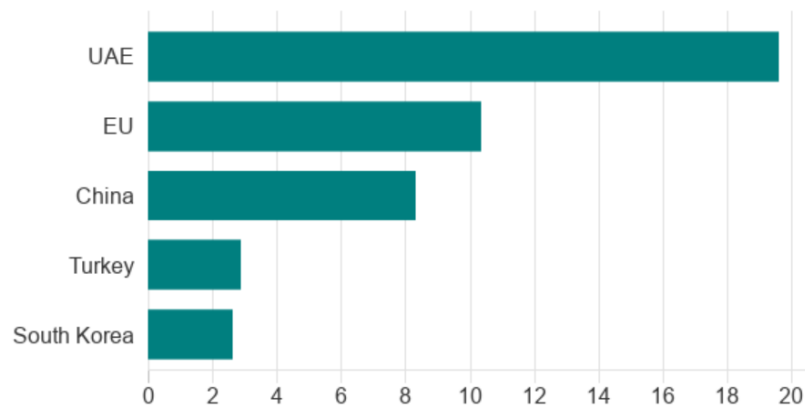


Image 4 & 5, available at, [Iran nuclear deal: The EU's billion-dollar deals at risk - BBC News](#)

In addition, despite harsh economic sanctions on Iran, China remained the biggest importers of Iranian oil. China continuously got immense pressure from the US on not to buy oil from Iran, which the Asian giant was able to bypass in most cases. But China and Iran both struggled to pay and receive the money of sold oil as Iran was barred from doing international transactions. Similarly, Russia supplies Iran military equipment on a regular basis, but the trend was interrupted for severe military and tech sanctions put on Iran. As a result, Russia was losing its one of the key markets and Iran struggled to update its military industry. In that sense it is perceived that the P5+1 went through the negotiation process for their own sake too.

5.2.4 Interest of Iran in negotiation: After suffering heavily from harsh economic sanctions from the US and the UN security council, Iran's economy has become vulnerable to a greater extent than it was ever before. Iran estimated that the reduction in oil export due to economic sanctions is costing Iran around \$4-8 billion per month, (BBC, 2019). Furthermore, the EU's harsh decision on not to buy any Iranian oil and gas resulted in a huge drop of the middle

eastern country's total export. In 2011 Iran's estimated export to the EU was around EUR 27 billion which reached at around EUR 6 billion in 2013, (Mousavian S. H, 2016). Such heavy economic pressure from the international community resulted in financial instability in Iran. Consequently, the inflation rate was uncontrollable, and the number of unemployment was continuously rising inside Iran. Such a deal was a turning point to re-organize Iran's economy by boosting up international trade and commerce.

Iran's oil output

Production in millions of barrels per day

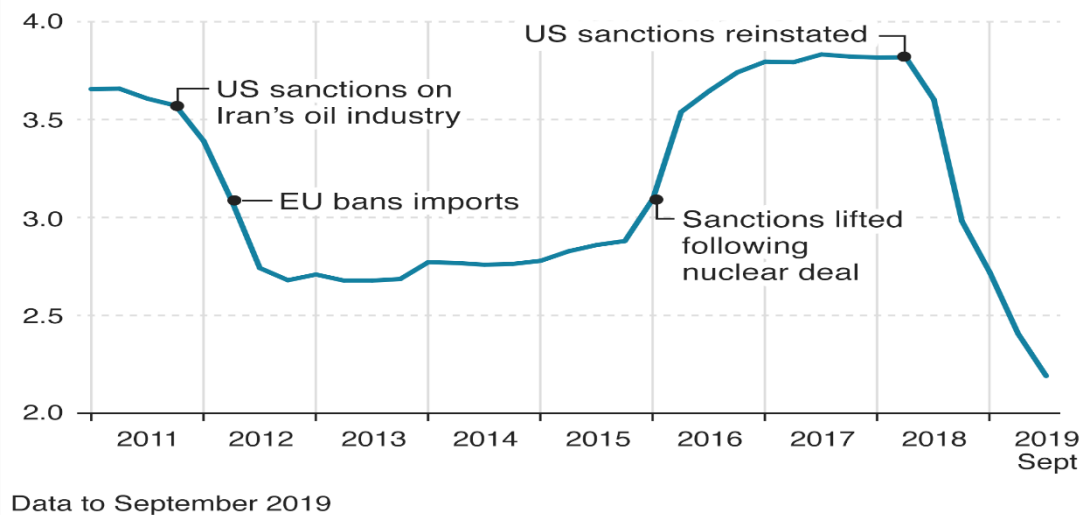


Image 6: available at, [Six charts that show how hard US sanctions have hit Iran - BBC News](#).

As a result, in 2013, during the President election campaign, President Hassan Rouhani promised the Iranian nation that he will improve Iran's relation with the rest of the world; as a result, he was elected as the 7th President of Iran. It seems that the present leadership of Iran acknowledged the concept that being isolated from the world would bring no benefits to the country and its people. Therefore, the country sat on the negotiation table and carried on the process with the Powerful countries of the world patiently.

5.3: IAEA's monitoring on Iran's nuclear activity: The International Atomic Energy Agency regularly provides its analysis on nuclear activity reports of various countries. So that there is no difference in case of Iran's nuclear activity. Even though the nuclear program of Iran first came into international notice in 2002 (August), the IAEA first publicly expressed its worry about Iran's nuclear program in November 2011 which can be used to develop nuclear weapons, (Davenport, 2020). However, Iran has always claimed that its nuclear activities are only for peaceful purposes, research, medicine, and producing electricity, for example. Claim and counterclaim from both parties did not help finding any solution to the crisis. The JCPOA-2015 agreement ensured that Iran did not get any opportunity to build a nuclear bomb by keeping the country under strict surveillance and scrutiny. After the JCPOA-2015 deal, the IAEA confirmed several times that Iran is obeying the rules and conditions set by IAEA, (Katzman & Kerr P. K, 2016). It was visible that the IAEA was focused to maintain President Obama's philosophy regarding handling Iran's nuclear issue. President Obama changed his mindset towards Iran from no nuclear enrichment to no nuclear bomb policy, (Parsi, 2017). The chart below shows the Iranian nuclear sites which are under the IAEA's inspection.

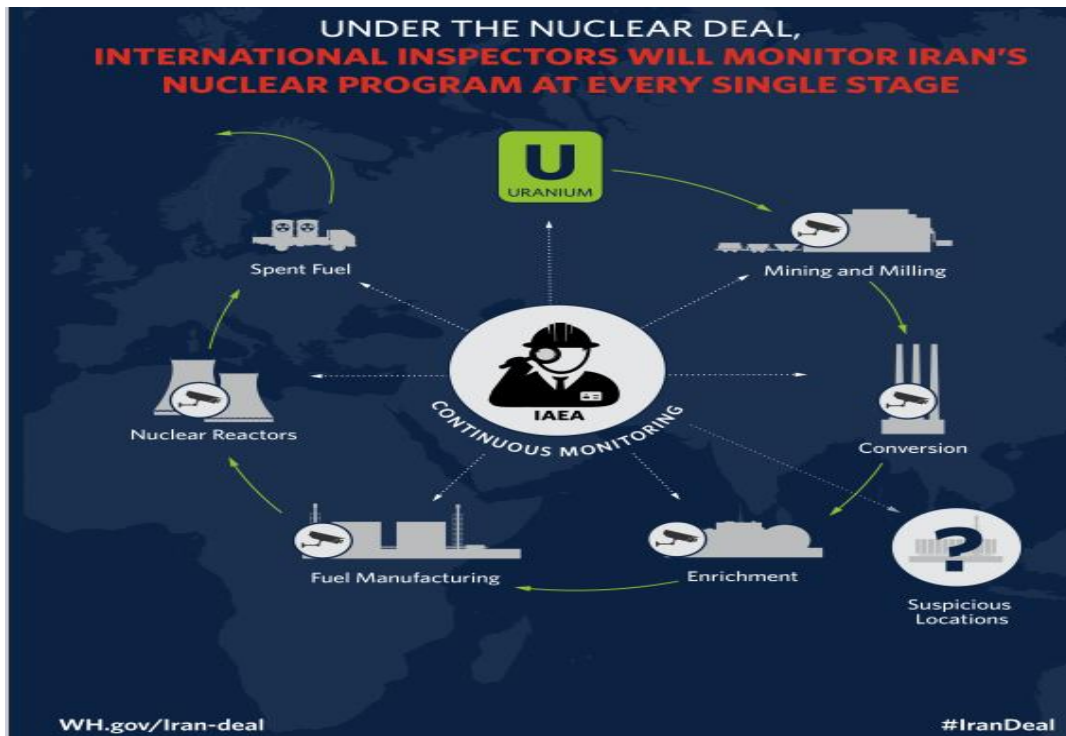


Image 7: source, wh.gov/iran-deal.

The image above represents how the IAEA has access to almost all parts of Iran's nuclear related facilities which will keep Iran under international scrutiny in a well-structured way.

Summary of the section: It is clear that the nuclear crisis of Iran was an unsolved problem for a long time. Before the JCPOA-2015 negotiation, there was a similar type of negotiation between Iran and three European countries, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom (the EU3). Which means the world powers previously attempted to reach a similar deal but did not get success. Consequently, the JCPOA-2015 agreement had a background which was well-founded, and it seems that both parties had some strong and logical reasons to sit on the table and negotiate to reach an agreement.

6. Sub-research question number 2: *Can the negotiations that took place between 2013 and 2015 be considered a failure or a success?*

This part of the analysis is designed to answer sub-research question number 2. As Oppermann & Spencer, (2017) observes, the question about whether the JCPOA-2015 deal is a success or a failure is open for debate, this section of the thesis will be analyzed by utilizing the negotiation theory of International Relations. This section will investigate whether the JCPOA-2015 negotiation (2013-2015) was a success or a failure.

6.1. Merits and objectives of the negotiation: The JCPOA-2015 deal has several merits in terms of ensuring the order of peace in the world and bringing political stability. Especially just after the deal was struck, during the presidency of President Obama, the world has seen a radical political and security change in the Middle east. His key strategy to solve Iran's nuclear crisis was to bring Iran into the table of negotiation with the international community. For several decades threats and counter threats have been sent and received from Iran and the powerful nations regarding the nuclear issue. The given chart below categorizes the short-, medium-, and long-term objectives of both parties based on the JCPOA-2015 negotiation.

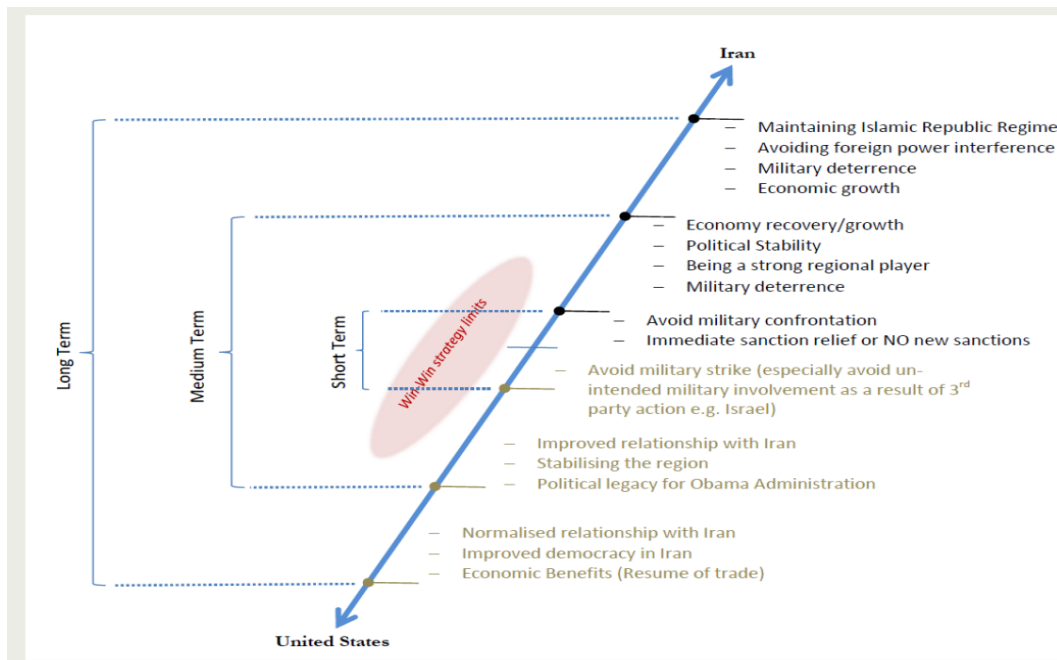


Image 8, source, Mossadegh, 2015, an agreement based on mutual distrust.

However, President Obama's initiative to solve the dispute through dialogue and negotiation paid off after more than 1.5 years' negotiation. "In international relations when we think of negotiation what comes to mind is diplomacy and treaty negotiation.", (Iragorri A. G, 2003, p. 92). The key elements referred to by Iragorri are diplomacy and treaty negotiation in order to negotiate with a body. In that both elements were present while negotiating with Iran as the maximum diplomatic endeavor was taken by involving several powerful countries as well as the European Union to avoid any kind of mishap regarding the nuclear issue with Iran. The JCPOA-2015 negotiation was a fine example of using the power of diplomacy over threats and sanctions to solve an issue. Besides, the following merits of the deal are found as a result of the analysis.

6.1.1 A win-win situation: The JCPOA-2015 deal was considered as a win-win deal by both parties after striking a successful deal for 15 years. The P5+1 considered the deal effective as they believed that such a deal would keep Iran into IAEA's monitoring and international scrutiny. President Obama considers the JCPOA-2015 deal made the world and the US a more secure place, (Berkowitz A. E, 2016). Such a statement from the President reflects the merit of the deal and its level of effectiveness in order to ensure international peace and security. Similarly, as a worry regarding the Iran nuclear issue was arisen, the European Union's key target was to avoid any military confrontation with Iran which will repeat the United States' involvement in the Iraq war, (Cronberg, 2017). In this regard, both parties were not only able to avoid a war but also created a precedent for the other issues around the world, indicating that no matter how big and complicated the issue is, any dispute is solvable if parties are sat on the negotiation table.

On the other hand, the Iranian view regarding the negotiation was not different at all. Instead, the country's officials, more specifically, foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif dubbed the JCPOA-2015 agreement as a win-win result, (Conca. 2015). The background behind such claims bears huge economic and political benefits to Iran as the JCPOA-2015 deal ensured relief from sanctions imposed by the USA and the UNSC members. Such a deal also opens the door for Iran to join with the International community in every aspect of life including

Trade and commerce. As a result, Iran got a chance to restructure its economy by reducing the rate of inflation, unemployment, and trade deficit with the rest of the world.

6.1. 2 Ensuring peaceful use of nuclear energy: For a long time, especially after Iran's nuclear program came into international attention, there was heavy suspicion regarding Iran's handling and purpose of its nuclear program. Even during the primary part of the negotiation process, the French foreign minister Laurent Fabius expressed his frustration about Iran's behavior by expressing that, "We do not accept the initial text, and the western negotiators should not be playing for fools", (Peterson & Scott, 2013, p. 2). Even though Iran being a signatory of IAEA's Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) there was no clear indication whether the country will follow IAEA's standard in handling its nuclear matter or not. Since long the US, its western allies, and Israel were opining that Iran's nuclear handling and its policy is not transparent enough to the International community. The question here now is how transparent can be called transparent enough when it comes to nuclear activity? Is a country also obliged to allow the IAEA inspectors to enter its military facilities as well? Perhaps these questions can be open for debate, but it is clear that the international community was not satisfied about the handling of Iran's nuclear activity before the JCPOA-2015 deal.

Conversely, the other side of the picture indicates a hopeful scenario to the peace lovers of the world. It is widely believed that the JCPOA-2015 deal ensures and guarantees Iran's peaceful use of nuclear energy. Several confirmation of Iran's compliance with the international rules and regulations in handling its cooperation with the nuclear materials have been expressed. For example, in 2017, IAEA's director general Yukia Amano announced that the IAEA is continuously monitoring Iran's nuclear related commitments and declared several times that Iran is complying with the JCPOA-2015 nuclear deal, (Basravi. 2017). Such expression from the IAEA's director general represents that one of the key objectives of the deal, ensuring Iran's use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, was achieved. Also, from 10th to 16th September 2015, several debates took place in the US congress where President Obama expressed that his administration's goal is to meet every single target of the JCPOA-2015 deal which ensures to cut all the pathways of Iran to acquire nuclear weapons, along with stressing that if Iran ever cheats, they will be caught. (Oppermann & Spencer, 2017). Such high confidence from President Obama represents the assurance of acquiring peace, security, and stability-thanks to the JCPOA-2015 agreement.

6.1. 3 Activating multilateralism: The below presented table sketches out a quick insight of the position of the EU and the US and the evolution of their mindset towards Iran's nuclear situation since 2003.

	Persuasive engagement: 2003–05	Coercive containment: 2006–10	Dual track: 2010–13	Political will: 2013–15
US policy	Isolate Iran; regime change	Report Iran to the UN Security Council; exert pressure; no normalization	Dual track with focus on diplomacy	Bilateral negotiations within the P5+1
EU policy	Negotiate with Iran; achieve a deal	Report Iran to the UN Security Council; work on plan to resolve outstanding issues	Dual track with focus on sanctions	Facilitating the P5+1 (France had a tougher position)

Image 9, source, Tarja Cronberg (2017), No EU, no Iran deal: the EU's choice between multilateralism and the transatlantic link, The Nonproliferation Review.

The key differences between the US's stance and the EU's mentality towards Iran and its nuclear issue since 2003 can be seen in the table given above. It is visible in the table that from 2003 to 2005, the United States' political strategy to confront Iran's nuclear issue was solely based on isolating the country from the international community and till 2010 the country did not even think of normalizing its relations with Iran. While the EU from 2003 to 2005 believed that negotiating can bring results and end such complex issues and till 2010, the organization kept its focus on resolving issues with Iran through initiating plans and seeking help from the UN's security council. At last, during the JCPOA-2015 negotiation (2013-2015), both the EU and the US shared the same philosophy on the way of handling Iran's nuclear crisis through bilateral negotiations where the EU hosted the negotiation events.

Since long the EU has followed effective multilateralism as its key principles, while the US followed the assertive multilateralism principle when dealing with any international matter or issues, (Cronberg, 2017). In general, the European principle of effective multilateralism focuses on solving various issues, such as; working for common European autonomous identity, and tackling the EU's absence of authority globally, while the United States' idea of assertive multilateralism is based on bringing global agendas which are beneficial to the US as well as to the world, provided that it sets the USA at a global leadership position (Cronberg, 2017). The number of steps that the negotiation process went through was unprecedented and the international effort to succeed was a true demonstration of multilateral diplomacy. Such a multilateral non-proliferation agreement paved the path to resolve many more unresolved issues between both parties. Through this deal, the US had pulled itself out of its core philosophy of dealing with Iran, the maximum pressure, and joined its European and UNSC counterparts in resolving issues through dialogue and mutual respect. By agreeing such a deal, both parties agreed to work together to solve outstanding issues which helped build trust and reliance between both parties.

6.1.4 Delaying Iran's progress on acquiring nuclear weapons: If not preventing, at least delaying the acquiring of Iran's nuclear weapon was a great strike of several decades in international politics and diplomacy. Probably obliging Iran to cooperate with its nuclear activities is one of the biggest achievements of the JCPOA-2015 negotiation. A comparison with North Korea can sketch the picture out more accurately. The international community including the IAEA are not in frequent touch with the country's leadership and officials who are responsible for handling the nuclear matter of the country. A similar (JCPOA-2015) type of negotiation with North Korea may have brought the country into the international atmosphere and obliged the country to negotiate with various international bodies regarding the country's handling and use of its nuclear activities. Consequently, such negotiation may have prevented the country from crossing the limits by acquiring nuclear weapons. Until now, very little information regarding North Korea's nuclear activity and its nuclear capability is known to the world. In comparison, the IAEA's inspectors have the access to routinely visit Iran's nuclear facilities which ensures that the country does not cross the nuclear red line.

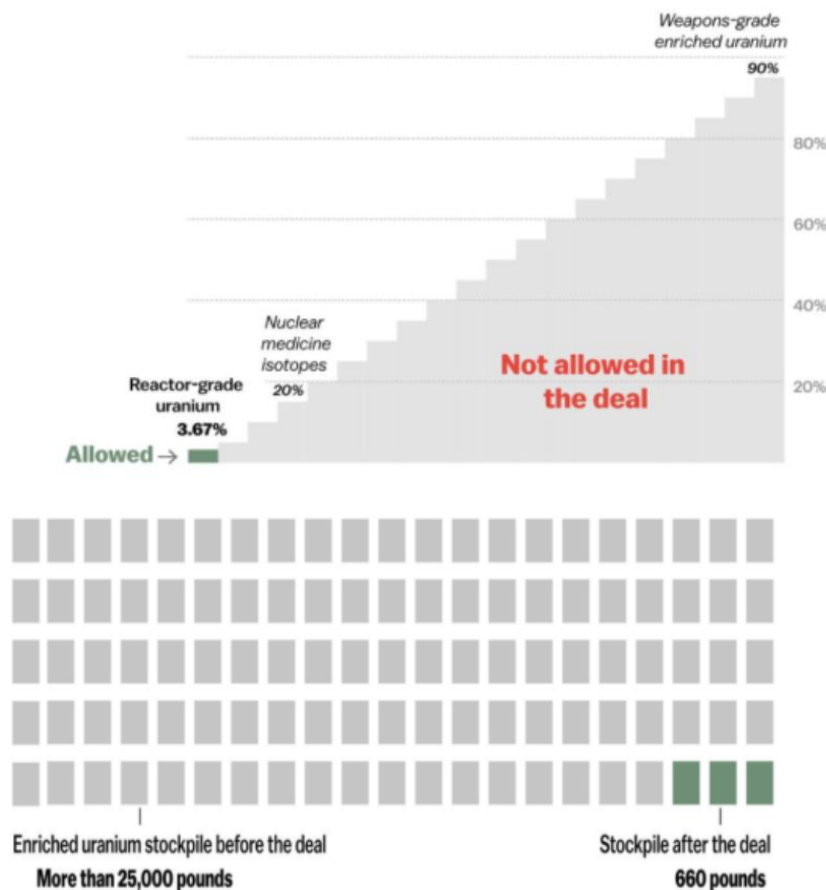


Image 10 and 11, source, Akar, 2020, *Revisiting the Role of the European Union on the Iran Nuclear Deal (JCPOA)*

The given first chart above delineates the maximum percentage of nuclear enrichment that Iran is allowed to conduct under the JCPOA-2015 deal. In general, around 90% enriched uranium is needed to produce nuclear weapons. Whereas, under the deal, Iran can only enrich up to 3.67% uranium which makes it almost impossible for the country to acquire such devastating weapons. On the other hand, the second chart illustrates the maximum capacity of Iran's uranium stockpile that Iran is allowed to have under the JCPOA-2015 deal- a reduction of around 97% of Iran's nuclear stockpile. As a result, according to the deal, the surplus uranium stocks of Iran are to be transferred to Russia. In December 2015, after Iran's transfer of 25,000 pounds of low enriched uranium to Russia, the US secretary of State John Kerry expressed his satisfaction on Iran's compliance with the deal expressing that Iran is fulfilling its main nuclear commitments, (Smith, 2015).

6.2 Shortcomings of the negotiated agreement: The critics of the JCPOA-2015 agreement may claim that the deal is not perfect and contains several demerits. In naked eye the deal may look imperfect, but the basic philosophy of negotiation is about making concessions in order to achieve a bigger goal. The critics of the deal or any analyst may interpret such concessions or compromise as a gap in the deal; however, in my understanding the success of a deal relies on to what extent the involved negotiators or parties convince each other on assuring that a little compromise may lead to a bigger success. Negotiation pursues compliance to compromise and both parties must be willing to make concessions, (Iragorri, 2003). In that sense, such compromises and concessions may be taken both positively and

negatively and can be interpreted in both positive and negative ways which are open for discussion. However, the visual shortcomings or compromise that the JCPOA-2015 deal entails are analyzed below.

6.2.1 Ambiguity: Since striking the JCPOA-2015 deal both parties were alert and careful about any clause of the negotiated agreement not being misinterpreted which may lead to ambiguity. However, it is apparent that both parties were informed that such a matter may arise in future and consequently they have to deal with it. As a result, both parties invested a great deal of time to scrutinize various aspects of the deal. Whether the agreement will reach its goal targeted by P5+1 to refrain Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons will solely become visible in a longer term, probably not before the end of current deal-a time frame of fifteen years' time, (Oppermann & Spencer, 2017). Which means in which period of time the main objectives and goals are to be achieved is unknown and a great effort to find an answer to this puzzle may go in vain. Although there are plenty of questions and counter questions available among the scholars and International Relations experts whether or not the nuclear proliferation deal should be measured in terms of success or failure. Regardless of the type of standards that are followed to measure the merit of the deal, the JCPOA-2015 deal's being vague is a matter of concern for both parties (P5+1 and Iran). In that case the parties that are critical to the JCPOA-2015 deal, Israel, for example, may have a point to argue that such an unclear timeframe will help Iran to buy more time to run a secret nuclear weapon project and succeed in building nuclear weapons.

In addition, the negotiated deal may contain several more vagueness that may provide skepticism about the actual success of the negotiated deal. For example, it is still unknown the exact number of nuclear centrifuges that Iran has. Nuclear expert and former deputy director of IAEA Olli Henoinen expressed his concern in front of the US congress that the USA actually does not know how many active centrifuges Iran possesses that are used to enrich all ranges of uranium, (Washington Free Beacon, 2014). It is apparent that the deal has been agreed without prioritizing to have the exact information about such a critical but important component to enrich uranium.

6.2.2 Paving way for a strong nuclear and military infrastructure for Iran: As a result of the deal, Iran's frozen assets from abroad are supposed to be released. Besides, since international restriction on Iran's trade and commerce is to be lifted, because of this the export of Iranian items, gas, and oil, for instance, will continuously increase which will boost the Iranian economy massively. It is unclear how Iran is going to spend its money which the country got as a relief from sanction. Since Iran is accused of being a financier of several armed groups, Hezbollah, and Hamas, for example, it is unclear to what extent the country is going to use the money for its people, and what proportion it will cast for its proxies. Plus, Iran is an open supporter of Bashar-Al-Assad, President of Syria. It is also a matter of concern that such monetary gain of Iran may bring fortune for the Al-Assad regime who continuously gets military support from Iran. Furthermore, since Iran will have a handy grip on more money from selling its products abroad, it is unpredictable exactly where the money will be invested. Instead of improving local health, education, cultural, economic and other sectors, there is a good chance that a great deal of money will be spent on building weapons and war machines, Missiles, Tanks, and War ships, for example. Such a situation places Iran in a stronger position not only economically but also militarily.

Another reason why such a deal may aid Iran in gripping more military technology is that the country's ballistic missile program (Short, medium and long range inter-continental ballistic missiles) was out of the table and was not negotiated. In 2020 in a cabinet meeting, President

Hassan Rouhani expressed that Iran's missile program is non-negotiable and if the US wants to restore the JCPOA-2015 deal, the missile program must be out off the table, (Arouzi and Smith, 2020). Iran has been maintaining that stance since long which resulted in keeping the missile development off the original deal. Critics of JCPOA-2015 may claim that only stopping Iran's nuclear ambition is not enough, since the developed ballistic missiles can carry nuclear warheads. Additionally, Iran already has several medium and long-range ballistic missiles which covers the entire middle east including Israel, (Tien, 2019). A report published in 2019 by Center for Strategic and International Studies claimed that Iran possesses the largest military arsenal in the Middle east, (Stewart C. H, 2020). During the period of sanctions and Isolation Iran grew its missile arsenal to a greater extent and focused on self-dependent in acquiring military technology.

Summary of the section: "The old saying 'negotiation is an art', is not far from the truth", (Iragorri A. G, 2003, p.101). Such art presented the world a peaceful solution to a crisis which was unsolved for a great deal of time. It is undeniable that the JCPOA-2015 by no means is perfect, however; the minimum compromise to achieve a goal or target can not nullify its bigger success. In spite of having some demerits and criticism of the JCPOA-2015 deal, I believe this deal is important to stabilize the nuclear and arms race of the world. As a result, it would be fair to claim that the deal that took place between 2013 to 2015 was a success.

7. Sub-research question number 3: Since the negotiated deal is still active technically, has it failed during the President Trump period?

This section of analysis is designed to answer sub-research question number 3. In order to find a precise answer to the given sub-research question, this section of the analysis will investigate what made President Trump withdraw the USA from the deal during his period. To analyze the section, Realism of international relations will be applied which will provide the readers a view of alternative thinking. As Riley, (2008) in the research paper, How realistic is realism? finds that "Realism is extremely realistic as a theoretical framework for analysing conflict in the contemporary international system", (Riley, 2008, p.1). There is no doubt that Iran's nuclear program is an issue and conflict for the international community which was unsolved for a long time. To find an answer and analyze such an issue, Realism is a perfect match for the investigation. To be specific, structural realism will be utilized to take the investigation into a deeper level, where offensive structural realism will be applied to analyze President Trump's action, and defensive structural realism will be applied to analyze Iran's causes and actions behind running the nuclear program.

7.1 What went wrong during President Trump's period with the deal?

Before jumping on to finding the key reasons regarding exactly what went wrong during President Trump's period, it is important to discuss the nature and philosophy of President Trump's politics. Also, it is a big question why President Trump cancelled the JCPOA-2015 deal? Is it because he thought that the deal was ineffective in stopping Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon? Or is it because that in his view the deal does not serve America's interest? Or some may also argue that the JCPOA-2015 deal was nullified by the Trump administration because the deal was agreed by President Obama. Hypothetically speaking, a group of thinkers may think President Trump is a populist politician whose political philosophy is based on people, while others may argue that he is a nationalist politician who puts national interest before anything. Whether president Trump is a nationalist or a populist,

in one case it can be confirmed that his ideas and views regarding world politics are far from the liberals. In that sense President Trump looks more like a nationalist leader than a populist one. In general, nationalist leaders have a general tendency on prioritizing their own country's interest in terms of foreign policy and matters.

Regarding the withdrawal from the JCPOA-2015 agreement, all the actions taken by President Trump can be analyzed by using **Offensive Structural Realism** theory of International Relations. The core idea of offensive realism is dominating other countries in various political and international sectors in terms of ensuring self-security. The philosophy of offensive realism is based on an eternal struggle for power between states (which derived from *animus dominandi*) which is a general trait of human beings to control others, (Morgenthau H. J, 1948). In terms of not only America's peace and security, but also world's peace and security deeply rely on the world power's handling of Iran's nuclear program. A short sighted wrong or uncalculated step may take the world into a race of nuclear weapons where the possibilities of taking part of potential nuclear power seeking participants will continue to accelerate. As a result, the USA is very much desperate to gain control of Iran's nuclear situation, aiming to access the authority of such a critical situation. Such a heavy grip of Iran's nuclear crisis would ensure the United States' control over Iran's nuclear issue, resulting in a wide opportunity of a hard grip ensuring and maintaining the interest of the US in the Middle east, as well as in the world.

Another offensive realism theorist, Waltz K. N, (1979) argues that the global state order system generates powerful motivation for countries to investigate opportunities to obtain power at the cost of competitors and take advantage of the situation when the benefits surpass the cost, (Waltz K. N, 1979). In that case president Trump's office took full advantage of the situation (nuclear issue) at Iran's cost, compelling its European partners to behave the same way that the US was doing during President Trump's presidency by isolating Iran again in order to take control back of the situation. Pinto J. P, (2018), on Trump, a Nationalist, and a populist leader, observes that, "President Trump was just an American refusing external superiority and a citizen worried with the presence of immigrants considering the fact that they were not only stealing jobs from American unemployed people but also destroying American identity", (Pinto, 2018, p. 1). In that case, it seems like President Trump's political philosophy was based on a mixed ideology which is a combination of nationalism and populism. In that regard, in naked eyes it seems like that all the treaties and agreements that President Trump disagreed with or pulled out from, e.g; Paris climate agreement, JCPOA-2015 deal, UNESCO and so on, were mostly based on national interest of the United States of America which confirms that President Trump's 'America first' policy kept a great contribution on him disagreeing with these international treaties and bodies.

The core idea of realism is state centered rather than working with countries, communities, or organizations together in order to achieve a specific goal which solely focuses on serving the state or the country's interest. Tagma H. M. E, & Lenze P. E, (2020), on Understanding and explaining the Iranian Nuclear crisis, Theoretical Approaches, identifies that American foreign policy behavior towards Iran can be analyzed with the aid of offensive realism, while Iran's action on its nuclear crisis can be analyzed by the help of defensive realism. Offensive realism inspires a state to build its foreign policy based on building more security for the state; as a result, any threat to the state is confronted seriously. Such philosophy does not allow any third country to gain political and military strength that might be a threat for the state in near or far future. There was no difference in the case of Iran. After the fall-out of the deal, Iran's diplomatic and military power became limited again as the country was facing

economic sanctions again, and all the military equipment acquisition from external sources or import of the country were restricted. Such a scenario indicates that Iran is in trouble again after being isolated from the world community, and that serves America's national and foreign interest as such action would help prevent Iran from becoming a hegemonic power of the middle east.

Conversely, in 'Realism, Revisionism, and the great powers' Chan, (2004) disagrees with the core idea of Realism in terms of presenting the Western view of International relations, arguing that Realism failed to illustrate the exact western view of International Relations. Wang Y. K (2004), challenges Professor Chan's (2004) idea of realism in western viewpoints, criticizing that Chan has understated the depth and variation of Realism by being unable to acknowledge that realism is not only a theory but also a paradigm. Whether Realism has been a success or failure in terms of presenting the western philosophy of International relations is a debatable matter which can be taken into a deep level of investigation. However, in one point, at least, probably we all can agree that the westerner's use of realism ensures and presents the interest of Western countries in or against any matter or countries; be it Iran, China, Russia, or any other countries. In the case of Iran's nuclear issue, there is no difference and President Trump perfectly applied this philosophy in dealing with the JCPOA-2015 agreement.

7.2 A state centered approach by President Trump: State centrism is one of the key reasons behind America's, specifically President Trump's, lack of interest towards the JCPOA-2015 deal. A similar approach was followed by him in many other cases. For example, in 2019 after a meeting with NATO's secretary general Jens Stoltenberg, President Trump expressed that other NATO members must increase their defense contribution to NATO claiming that the USA is paying way too much for NATO's defense, (Holland & Wroughton, 2019). Such a statement threw a serious question about other NATO members' dedication towards ensuring peace and security of NATO countries who are America's most trusted allies in almost all sectors. Regardless of the strength and bonding between NATO countries, President Trump never hesitated to speak out on any matter or issue whenever he felt that America's interest and purpose was not served or maintained. Such action is a true reflection of a leader's nationalistic philosophy which is the key theme of Realism.



Donald J. Trump ✓
@realDonaldTrump

Following

Many countries in NATO, which we are expected to defend, are not only short of their current commitment of 2% (which is low), but are also delinquent for many years in payments that have not been made. Will they reimburse the U.S.?

Image 12, President Trump's Tweet regarding NATO's military contribution by the member countries, available at, [Trump touches down in Belgium for NATO summit with Melania || Express Digest](#)

President Trump's political slogan, America first, is a true reflection of his political philosophy of prioritizing the US's interest in all sectors. Also, the border wall with Mexico, Criticizing and disagreeing with the European allies on various issues, for example, military spending, and climate change, and asking Japan, Korea, and Saudi Arabia to pay more money to the US for taking care of their security, (Seligman & Gramer, 2019) are motivated by a state centered approach. In that sense, President Trump's behavior with Iran was no exception or beyond imagination. Another reason influenced President Trump to withdraw the US from the deal is Iran's growing political and military influence across the middle east. Iran got the opportunity to use the defrosted money and asset which was under sanction to use at a number of sectors and organizations. Iran's support for Lebanese Shia militant group Hezbollah has been very open to everyone for a long time. Besides, Tehran is a strong supporter of Hamas and Yemen's rebels. As long as Iran keeps getting money, they will keep supporting those armed groups. Since Iran's foreign policy is determined or influenced by the Supreme religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini, changing the country's attitude in foreign matters is unlikely. Such political and military support to various arms groups by Iran is a direct conflict of interest against the US creating drawbacks for the US foreign interests. Also, Thompson et. al. (2018) in a research paper which analyzes and monitors various political decisions, titled, Trump preparing to end Iran nuke deal, observes, President Trumps is confirmed that the JCPOA-2015 deal plays a very minor role in stopping Iran in developing a nuclear weapon.

As a result, such a deal offers no political or military benefits that the US needs currently. Such benefits and political gains are the most important matters to the US interest. After learning that the political, military, and economic advantage in the middle east might be absent even though a nuclear deal still exists, President Trump withdrew the USA from the JCPOA-2015 deal. In general, all US presidents considered Iran's nuclear program a threat to its interest as well as for the entire world (except the nuclear program run by Shah which was heavily backed and set up by the US and its western allies). Also in this regard, the interest and security of the United States is also related. Another key point behind President Trump's withdrawal from the deal could be that such agreement serves the EU's and Iran's political and economic purpose more compared to the United States'. Since the last few decades, the United States has severely limited trade, commerce and economic transactions with Iran, while the EU member countries as well as Russia and China, more or less, have continuously maintained their economic and political connectivity with Iran. As a result, despite international sanctions in place, most of the EU countries continued trade and commerce import and export with Iran.

European Union, Trade with Iran

Total goods: EU Trade flows and balance, annual data 2010 - 2020

Source Eurostat Comext - Statistical regime 4

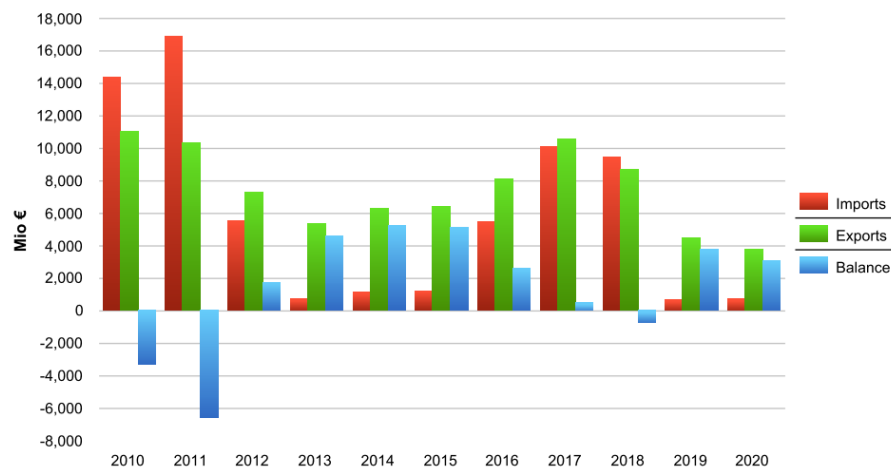


Image 13, Source, European commission's director general for trade's report.

2020 : U.S. trade in goods with Iran

NOTE: All figures are in millions of U.S. dollars on a nominal basis, not seasonally adjusted unless otherwise specified. Details may not equal totals due to rounding. Table reflects only those months for which there was trade.

Month	Exports	Imports	Balance
January 2020		3.7	0.2
February 2020		3.9	2.6
March 2020		5.0	0.1
April 2020		1.7	0.0
May 2020		2.8	0.0
June 2020		3.6	0.1
July 2020		2.1	0.2
August 2020		3.9	0.1
September 2020		2.7	0.2
October 2020		1.7	0.2
November 2020		1.4	0.2
December 2020		3.5	0.0
TOTAL 2020	36.3	3.9	32.4

Image 14, available at, [Foreign Trade - U.S. Trade with Iran \(census.gov\)](https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/iran),

The given bar chart and table above illustrates the trade relations between Iran and the European Union and Iran and the United States. The above charts clearly depict that the trade and commerce between the EU and Iran is much stronger than Iran's connectivity in the trade and commerce with the US. In this regard, it would have been much harder for President Trump to withdraw from the JCPOA-2015 deal if there were frequent trade and commerce activities between the USA and Iran. As a result, taking such a decision of withdrawal from the JCPOA-2015 deal was an easier decision for President Trump as the US had very few to lose by that decision. On the other hand, the United States' European allies along with China and Russia had much more things to lose including the gas, oil and internal market of an emerging economy like Iran.

7.3 Why does Iran carry out such a controversial program? It is difficult to express the exact motivation behind Iran's nuclear program in one sentence. However, to dig further to

investigate the matter in an academic manner, **Defensive Structural Realism** of international relations will be applied to analyze the motive behind Iran's such controversial step. The idea of defensive realism conveys a country's effort to protect its interest against international powers and hegemony by taking defensive measures of protection in international relations. In the case of Iran there is no difference. The country has offered the highest effort to protect its security and international interest against the hegemonic powers who are trying heartsoul to put a cap or a certain restriction on its nuclear program. The supporters of defensive realism may come up with the idea that Iran is to carry on its controversial nuclear project as the country is surrounded by hostile states and powers. Apart from the theory, in practice, in the middle east, for example, the US has more than a hundred military bases which surround Iran and its interests. Plus, there needs to be a balance of military power with Israel being the only country in the Middle East having nuclear weapons who continuously and openly desires to strike Iranian interests across the region. A country's military effort along with the diplomatic effort to protect its sovereignty from outer attack sounds very practical which exist in the current geopolitical order of the world. The militarization of India, Pakistan and Israel's nuclear sector are a fine example of this trend.

Waltz, (1989) in providing the characteristics of a state which follows defensive realism argues that those states that strive to ensure their own security are less fearful and are eager to accept risks and can easily lead a life with the minimum amount of security, (Waltz, 1989). In that sense, Since the Islamic Revolution, Iran has been trying to protect its security interest against the hegemonic powers by taking several measures and negotiations and living with a minimum assurance of security. However, sin order to lead the argument between offensive structural realism and defensive structural realism dig deeper, let's have a glance in the comparison and variation between both:

Table 1. Categories of Contemporary Realism.

Phenomena To Be Explained ^a	Assumptions about Anarchy	
	Defensive realism	Offensive realism
Neorealism	The international system provides incentives for expansion only under certain conditions.	The international system always provides incentives for expansion.
Theories that seek to explain international outcomes—for example, the likelihood of great power war, the durability of alliances, or the likelihood of international cooperation	<i>Balance-of-power theory</i> (Kenneth Waltz)	<i>Hegemonic theory of war</i> (Robert Gilpin)
	<i>Dynamic differentials theory</i> (Dale Copeland)	<i>Power transition theory</i> (A.F.K. Organski and Jacek Kugler)
	<i>Great power cooperation theories</i> (Robert Jervis, Charles Glaser, and Benjamin Miller)	<i>Balance-of-interests theory^b</i> (Randall Schweller)
Neoclassical realism	<i>Balance-of-threat theory</i> (Stephen Walt)	<i>Theory of great power politics</i> (John Mearsheimer)
Theories that seek to explain the external behavior of individual states—for example, military doctrine force posture, alliance preferences, foreign economic policy, or the pursuit of accommodative or belligerent diplomacy	<i>Domestic mobilization theory</i> (Thomas Christensen)	<i>State-centered realism</i> (Fareed Zakaria)
	<i>Offense-defense theories</i> (Stephen Van Evera, Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder, and Charles Glaser and Chaim Kaufmann)	<i>Theory of war aims</i> (Eric Labs)
		<i>Hegemonic theory of foreign policy</i> (William Wohlforth)

Image 15, source, Taliaferro, J. W, (1999), Security seeking under anarchy, Defensive realism revisited.

The chart above illustrates the underlying assumption of anarchy according to the theme of offensive and defensive realism which helps the reader to differentiate both type of theories. In order to get a clear answer to whether or not Iran has a right to enrich nuclear materials and defend its interest by carrying such program or so, let's have a glance on some questions that Taliaferro (1999) kept in his writing, Security seeking under anarchy, Defensive realism revisited by asking:

- Should the US put and carry on protecting its security interest through following a massive strategy of predominance? Taliaferro (1999).
- Should the US strive to weaken its competitors in order to protect its security? Taliaferro (1999)
- And, lastly, does the international system allow more incentives than incentives for aggression? Taliaferro (1999)

Probably the answer to these questions is not as straightforward as the questions look. In general, the defensive realism theory allows a country to step forward in taking action to protect its security and interest against the hegemonic powers. In that sense, from the perspective of defensive realism, Iran's nuclear project looks more logical than it is considered by the western powers, specifically. The critics of defensive realism, for example, Andrew Moravcsik and Fareed Zakaria, have kept a significant contribution in documenting criticism and flaws of the paradigm. Which means the criticism of defensive realism is now a well-documented area, providing a different angle to the readers and academics. Fareed Zakaria (1992), in *Realism and Domestic Politics, A Review Essay*, heavily criticized defensive realism by stating that it is unable to illustrate state expansion because defensive realism supports that there is no room in the international community for such conduct, (Zakaria, 1992). Jones S. M. L, (1998), on 'Realism and America's Rise, A Review Essay, scrutinized Zakaria's (1992) observation regarding defensive realism by stating that in this analysis, Zakaria, did not explain enough the concept of defensive realism, nor offered an alternative to the idea. Furthermore, I would like to argue that Mr. Zakaria's view on defensive realism sounds pretty much one-sided and expansion of a state and its power does not always offer a pragmatic solution to a crisis. In this regard, the power expansion of the US kept almost no contribution in solving international issues like Iran's and North Korea's nuclear crisis. Instead, Iran's approach of defensive realism helped keep a political and military balance in the region.

Summary of the section: Regarding pulling out from JCPOA-2015, President Trump acted in order to ensure the protection of America's interest, while Iran's approach was to protect its interest against a hegemonic power. The first approach was a reflection of offensive realism's philosophy, while the latter one was followed in accordance with defensive realism. In naked eyes it may look like that the JCPOA-2015 deal failed during President Trump's period, but the reality is that the deal had to go through a philosophical transformation, where it was agreed on Liberal perspective by President Obama, however; it faced a perspective wise transformation during President Trump's period. In that case it can be said that the JCPOA-2015 was agreed upon Liberal perspective which was led by President Obama; however, President Trump does not share the same Liberal political philosophy as President Obama does, which led the deal into the withdrawal of the USA.

8. Conclusion:

To conclude my argument, I would like to state that the critics of the JCPOA-2015 deal, in general, may find the negotiated deal imperfect or full of compromise, however, I would like to argue that such harsh criticism should not take place to such an important deal which ensures peace and stability of the world unless a better alternative is offered by the critics and alternative thinkers. A general reflection of this deal entails a positive view and appreciation of the international community. In my view, the critics of the JCPOA-2015 have failed to provide a better solution to Iran's nuclear issue than the JCPOA-2015 deal. The realist's approach of dominance and use of power has been followed since the last few decades which brought almost zero result to the crises. If a similar sort of deal like JCPOA-2015 had been ventured in case of North Korea's nuclear crisis, probably the Korean territory would have been a nuclear arm free zone like Iran is now. Those who clapped on President Trump's approach on handling the JCPOA-2015 deal have failed to explain what alternatives President Trump had under his sleeves before jeopardizing such a hard-earned deal by the international community.

Also, I would like to add the summaries of all three sub-research questions which ask some vital questions to this thesis. Firstly, the background of the JCPOA-2015 deal is strong enough to find a remedy of its own type and can be agreed by the international community again no matter what the deal went through during President Trump's period. A great deal of time has been invested behind the deal and it received a handy international attention since the last 40 years. Secondly, I would like to argue that almost no negotiation is perfect, and perfection has nothing to do with negotiation. Negotiation is about giving space to each other and making compromises in order to ensure a comparatively bigger goal. Despite the JCPOA-2015 negotiated deal being not perfect, it is one of the best peace and security cooperation that the international community has offered since the last few decades. Also, in open eyes the current situation of the negotiated deal may look blurry, however; the reality is since President Obama left office, and President Trump taking charge, the deal had to go through some philosophical transformation. That being said, since the Democrats are in the President's office again, it is not far from the reality that President Biden will re-open or re-negotiate the deal again. The newly elected US President Joe Biden is considering to re-negotiate with Iran again, (Ravanchi, M. T, 2021). I believe President Biden's liberal perspective in politics will play a big role in taking such a decision which will bring peace and stability in the world. As a result, in light of the above discussion and analysis, it can be strongly claimed that the JCPOA-2015 deal is the best solution that we have in our hands right now to solve Iran's nuclear crisis.

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