

## Iranian Nuclear Deal: Challenges for Regional and Global Strategic Management



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- Vol. II, No. I (2017)
- Pages: 1 – 12
- DOI: 10.31703/gpr.2017(II-I).01
- p- ISSN: 2521-2982
- ISSN-L: 2521-2982

### Key Words:

Peaceful nuclear program, nuclear proliferation, the nuclear deal

### Abstract

*Reza Shah Pahlavi laid the foundations of the Iranian nuclear quest in the 1950s by getting nuclear assistance under reciprocal arrangements in the US-sponsored Atom for Peace program. Iran is a signatory of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) since 1970, and by their perspective, all protocols under NPT have fully complied. The 1979 revolution in Iran proved a watershed in relations with the USA due to the hostage crisis and increased hostility, which resulted in economic sanctions and isolation. However, Iran covertly pursued its nuclear program, which remained the subject of international debate until the nuclear deal of 2015 aimed at limiting Iran's nuclear capability for the lifting of sanctions and breaking isolation. On 16 January 2016, in response to Iran's compliance with the provisions of the nuclear deal, all nuclear-related sanctions were lifted. President Trump since taking over office has repeatedly criticized the agreement and decertified it unilaterally. This article analyses implications on regional and global strategic management.*

## Introduction

The change of government in the USA redefined US national security priorities and long before taking office, President Trump was voicing his concerns on the Iranian nuclear deal. He defined it as “the dumbest deal ever” and that “terrible, disgusting, categorically bungling deal with Iran”. Even though this pomposity has been toned down, since Trump took office, there are anxieties that the Iranian nuclear deal in its existing form swings in the balance. Iran has a history of sanctions from the international community, which badly affects Iran's economy, its domestic affairs, and reputation among the regional and global politics. To counter this, the permanent five members of UNSCR, Germany and the European Union (P5+1) proposed a nuclear deal later named as a joint comprehensive plan of action (JCPOA). The IAEA has been playing the role of global nuclear watchdog and investigating this in parallel to the main nuclear talks. President Trump has called the JCPOA “The worst deal ever” (CNN Politics, 2017). Where there are numerous prospects and diverse aspects of this deal, there exist some grave challenges too. Most important of them are the Saudi-Iran power rift, Iran's economic crises, US commitments to non-proliferation regimes and a dependable international partner.

## Significance of Article

The Middle East is transforming rapidly and so is a regional and global balance of power with changing dynamics of intrastate conflicts in the entire region. President Trump's usual harsh posturing while it has been criticized by the wider international community, but despite that, he has vehemently announced to decertify the Iranian nuclear deal due to several pitfalls which have been discussed in this article. While a comprehensive international agreement has been concluded, and EU partners are not in favor of stepping down, while President Trump after his unilateral withdrawal is pushing others to follow the suit. While,

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JCPOA is still intact, and other signatories are trying to keep the treaty alive, US President Trump, Israel, and Saudi Arabia have been voicing and lobbying against the deal. This article highlights the evolution and journey of Iranian nuclear capability along with international efforts to contain it. Being a hot spot and contemporary issue has huge implications for the regional as well as international security matrix and global strategic management; therefore, it is an original contribution towards academic literature from a neutral perspective.

## **Research Methodology**

The research article has been developed by adopting a qualitative method using both primary and secondary data.

## **Research Questions**

The article explores answers to the following research questions;

- How has the Iranian nuclear quest evolved over different periods?
- What are the fundamental assumptions of the Iranian nuclear deal of 2015 including its strategic contours?
- What are the challenges and prospects after decertification by the USA has materialized?

## **Theoretical Framework**

The Iranian Nuclear Deal is a manifestation of the Theory of Liberalism and complex interdependence, for pulling Iran out of sanctions and restoration of Middle Eastern security and stability. The deal was not only a depiction of cooperation and agreement among the P5+1 states, but it also established Iran's amicable posture towards the comity of nations. However, USA's bid to decertify the US – Iran Nuclear Deal presented a classic application of the theory of Realism, where power politics and hegemonic posturing was aimed at correcting Iran's behavior and restraining it from interfering in the affairs of Middle East. The stability, which the deal has brought to Iran, has led Iran to re-emerge as an influential state in Middle Eastern politics. Sound the US – Saudi relations demand the USA to undermine the functionality of the US – Iran nuclear deal, as it will have detrimental effects on Iran's economic and foreign policy. Decertification of the deal will also destabilize the Middle Eastern region; a prospect, which forms the USA's another major interest in the region. (The Historian, 2016). As Saudi Arabia continues to buy weapons from the USA to protect it against the alleged nuclear Iran, the USA's economy thrives (Durden, 2015). Therefore, to keep the economy running, the USA's national interest seeks international conflicts, whereas the US – Iran Nuclear deal was a strong means of defusing an international conflict.

## **Evolution of the Iranian Nuclear Program**

### **The Establishment Process: 1950-1988**

The nuclear program in Iran started at a very slow pace in 1950 as the environmental dictates did not put national security compulsions for fast pace development. In 1967, the USA facilitated Iran by providing the Tehran Nuclear Research Center (TNRC) with a small 5MWt exploration reactor, which was fueled by highly enriched uranium (HEU). However, in 1973, the Shah of Iran proposed striving plans to set up 23,000MWe of nuclear power in Iran by the end of the century with the oversight task assigned to the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) (NTI Iran, 2017). After five years, Iran signed several nuclear technologies related to projects with foreign suppliers also invested in nuclear education and technology for its personnel (Meier, O, 2006). Iran signed an ambitious US\$700 million contract with South Africa for purchase of uranium yellowcake including training of Iranian engineers and potential scientists. At the time of the 1979 revolution, Iran had developed reasonably sophisticated nuclear technology and capability to pursue weapons programs. However, as a fallout of revolution, significant nuclear experts fled to other

countries, which temporarily slowed down this process. Ayat Ullah Khomeini the supreme leader of Iran was also not favorably poised towards the acquisition of the nuclear capability and imposed Fatwa on its development. With the changing regional dynamics, core national interests of Iran were realigned and in 1984, Khomeini redirected efforts for completing Bushehr Power Plant with the help of international assistance (NTI Iran 2017).

### **Transformation Years 1989-2003 –Concerns of International Community**

In 1980 Iraq attacked Iran from the western border and claimed that Khuzestan belongs to their territory resulting in a long military conflict between the two states. The fighting ended with a ceasefire agreement on 16 August 1990. After being freed from the costly war, Iranian leaders started focusing again on the acquisition of nuclear capability. "China also started developing a 27KW miniature neutron source reactor and two 300MW Qinshan power reactor"(Joseph Cirinocione M R, 2005). In 1995 Russia showed a willingness to rebuild the Bushehr Reactor with three additional reactors. US intelligence agencies claimed that Iran is developing a nuclear capability under the civilian nuclear program and the US also started pressurizing the suppliers of nuclear technology to limit their nuclear collaboration. Resultantly, China did not supply the reactor which could have been used in enrichment of plutonium and also withheld previously agreed Qinshan reactor. The USA also obstructed Iranian agreement with Argentina for uranium enrichment and heavy water production facilities. Despite international pressures, both Iran and Russia signed a nuclear cooperation agreement in 1992 according to which, "Russia agreed to complete the Bushehr I reactor" (IISS, 2005). Later on due to US pressure, "Russian President Boris Yeltsin decided to scale down Russian-Iranian nuclear cooperation at least until Bushehr's construction" (Ibid). In 2002, the National Council of Resistance of Iran revealed the undeclared nuclear facilities in Iran which included Natanz Enrichment Complex, the Kalaye Electric Company, heavy water production plant at Arak (under construction) and the names of various organizations involved in the nuclear program. In response to growing international concerns, The IAEA conducted inspections and met with Iranian officials to ascertain the Iranian perspective on such developments. The Board of Governors of IAEA adopted a resolution and Iran signed Additional Protocol to suspend the enrichment. The IAEA suspected that Iran present nuclear facilities information contradicted Iran's previous information regarding nuclear facilities. In 2003 the Board of Governors of IAEA requested the Governor-General to take all the necessary steps to ensure the Iran present and past nuclear facilities.

### **Years of Stalemate with the International Community: 2003 to 2009**

Iran commenced negotiations with EU-3 i.e. France, Britain and Germany in 2003. Whereby they agreed to sign the "Additional Protocol, cooperate with IAEA and stop any further enrichment activities" (EU Foreign Minister, 2003). In 2004 Iran though already facing sanctions finalized the Paris Agreement with the EU-3 (IISS, 2005). In 2005, Iran compelled by the domestic and regional environments recommenced enrichment activities and also rejected the long-term agreement with EU-3 because "Iran felt that this agreement is heavy on demands and was not incentivizing Iran to larger extent" (Iran Framework Agreement, 2005). After Iran's non-compliance with the IAEA safeguards further sanctions were imposed by "freezing the Financial assets of Iranian entities and individuals and alleged them as agents of proliferation" (Executive Order, 2005). The Iranian President in the same year highlighted that Iran possessed another enrichment facility. It was proposed to Iran by P5+1 that Iran would be provided with civil nuclear technology if they give up their enrichment facilities and adhere to the Additional Protocol of IAEA. Iran showed the least flexibility and in response had to face sanctions through the UNSC. Interestingly Iran admitted that they had been taking assistance from the illicit global nuclear trafficking network of Dr. Abdul Qadir Khan (NPT Safeguards, 2006 & 07). All this time statements from the Iranian officials seemed to be provocative whereby they said that Iran would continue the path of Nuclear Development. In 2009 Iran resumed talks with P-5. In these talks "both parties agreed to the fuel swap arrangements"(Geoffrey Forden,

2009). which was later rejected by Iran subsequently and proposed swap arrangements of 400kg of LEU for fuel on the Gulf island of Kish, which was not agreed by. IAEA and the United States. The tensions further increased when President Ahmadinejad announced that "Iran will continue to construct 10 additional uranium facilities" (David Sanger and William Broad, 2009). In December 2009, the House of Representatives passed another bill to impose additional sanctions on companies supplying gasoline to Iran (Reuters, 2009). In the same year, the IAEA inspectors voted to rebuke Iran for building a Fordow enrichment facility. This resolution demanded Iran to clarify that there are no more undeclared Facilities. Being part of NPT Iran was found cheating because it had undeclared facilities where they carried out uranium enrichment for weapon purposes.

### **Renewed Sanctions – Events from 2010-2013**

In the mid of 2010, another set of sanctions was approved by United Nations Security Council under the UNSCR 1929. It was primarily related to the Iranian nuclear-related investments. The companies facing sanctions included the Islamic Republic of Iranian Shipping Lines (IRISL). In 2011 Unites States imposed more sanctions and took control of some IRISL vessels (Supreme Court of New York County, 2011). Same year Brazil and Turkey brokered another fuel swap arrangement, but the west did not accept the proposal as they saw it very little and late. In another round of talks in Geneva where P5+1 requested assurance that the Iranian program would remain peaceful in turn, Iran demanded that the sanctions should be lifted. The talks again broke down because Iran insisted on lifting the economic sanctions as a pre-condition to start any further talks (UNSCR 1929, 2010). In June 2011 Russia proposed a phased approach whereby if Iran agreed to each Phase sanctions would be lifted simultaneously. Although Iran welcomed this proposal US France and the UK did not agree to lift sanctions at very early stages (Global Security Newswire, 14 July 2011). The IAEA report alleged Iran had intentions on a nuclear explosive device. It further alleged Iran being involved in the development of dual-use equipment. This report further increased the concerns of the board of governors of IAEA. After the report, Russia and China opposed the new set of sanctions and the other P5 states went for unilateral measures. Sanctions were imposed on the Central Bank of Iran and other financial institutions. In 2012 the US ordered the freezing of Iranian assets and other financial institutions. In 2012 Iran announced that it would allow the IAEA inspectors to visit its sites, but these talks did not reach any agreement (Reuters, 2012). In May 2012, a new round of talks initiated between P5+1 and Iran in Baghdad (Muhammad Sahimi, 2012). Iran was requested to limit its enrichment to 20% and close the Fordow enrichment plant. In return, Iran was to get cooperation in nuclear safety and parts of its civil aviation. They were also offered that no more sanctions would be imposed on Iran from the UNSC. The deadlock remained over the lifting of sanctions whereby Iran insisted on its inalienable right of uranium enrichment. Without any agreement reached these high-level talks were also suspended. Meanwhile, the European Union further tightened the trade restrictions on Iran. When Hassan Rouhani was elected as a President in Iran, there was a shift in Iran's stance on nuclear negotiations. Following the elections, there were secret bilateral talks between Iran and the US (Hassan Rouhani, 2013). The first round of talks among Iran and P5+1 after Rouhani's election started in Geneva, after two further rounds of talks a Joint Plan of Action achieved although it was not a comprehensive plan as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action was not achieved until 2015 (IAEA, 2013).

### **Iranian Nuclear Deal - 2015**

#### **Assumptions of by the US Administration**

Iran successfully concluded a historic agreement with world powers, which was based on different assumptions. The US feared that Iran is very near to collecting enough fissile material for an atomic bomb. Under JCPOA Iran is limited to use its centrifuges, the IR-1 for the 10 years period following its 2015 agreement. The I09-page document has many facts and figures, but the 5 main areas were;

## **Iran Uranium Stockpile**

This is a very important segment required to operationalize the nuclear program. As a consequence of this deal, Iran is supposed to give up 97% of enriched uranium lowering its stockpile from 1000kg to 300kg, which will reduce its capacity to fuel even one nuclear weapon. In retrospect, Iran maintains the capability to quickly develop its fuelling capacity to the previous level.

## **Enrichment of Uranium**

The purity of 90% is essential for developing a nuclear weapon. Iran can manufacture modest uranium enriched to the low elevation of 3.67% and by that standards, Iran's capability is capped for 15 years (The Economist, 2015).

## **Centrifuges Reduction**

A centrifuge is a machine to enrich uranium and Iran must surrender its 2/3 of its centrifuges. Some 19,000 used for enrichment need to be reduced to about 5,000. Iran can also use 1000 more for research and development purposes (Ibid.). So, what this deal shows if Iran obeys by the deal for the next decade, it will take around at least 12 months to manufacture enough fuel for a nuclear weapon and to make sure they don't cheat.

## **Inspection**

Iran will allow UN inspectors for uninterrupted on-site monitoring to ensure transparency in implementations. However, Iran reserves the right to report and even detain the inspectors if the threat to Iranian national security is observed during the inspection process.

## **Sanction Relief**

Iran has faced serious economic and societal consequences of pursuing a nuclear program, albeit with varying perceptions by Iran and the majority of the western world. De-facto recognition with capped nuclear capability was interpreted as a diplomatic victory by Iran, while the west led by the US made the assumption that Iran has been strictly tied from overt nuclearization and put under continuous international inspections and monitoring regime. The world at large always looked at these developments with cautious optimism, while Israel and Saudi Arabia were voicing their concerns about the deal. On high moral ground, Ali Akbar Saheli, the Head of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, warned west that Iran can mass-produce more advanced centrifuges if the other party violated the agreement. The promised sanctions relief has not been fulfilled, and US President Trump made his election promise complete by withdrawing from the deal, thus causing serious concerns about the legitimacy of future US commitments on a host of global and hotspot issues. Instead of sanctions relief, renewed sanctions have been imposed on Iran by the USA, despite such odds, JCPOA is still intact with dwindling future prospects.

## **Important Contours of Iranian Nuclear Deal 2015**

Iran and P5+1 gave a pleasant surprise to the world by signing a historic nuclear deal after exhaustive sessions on July 14, 2015, which later named Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The New UN Security Council Resolution was adopted after 90 days of the Agreement. The Resolution 2231 was placed on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015 and adopted on October 18, 2015 (Kerr K.K, 2017). Finally, it was a time for something better in international politics having Iran on the table to discuss and halt its ambitions for acquiring nuclear technology for Military purposes. The Agreement allowed the International Community and IAEA Safeguards to inspect Iranian nuclear-related facilities and Research and Development centers. In return, it will end most of the nuclear-related sanctions over Iran. Inspectors will be able to monitor uranium mills, where Iran produces yellowcake since last 25 years (Lausanne, 2017). It is much easier now to have full

oversight on Iranian nuclear-related developments, and activities as the Director-General of IAEA Mr. Yukiya Amano said in meeting held at Copenhagen at Danish Institute for International Studies on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2017 that “Iran is fulfilling its part of agreement, which warrants to report any new nuclear facility to the Agency (IAEA, 2017). It was because of the implementation of JCPOA as agreed upon by all concerning parties, which will cover the enrichment process of Tehran at every facility. Iran for 15 years will reduce enrichment to 3.67% and centrifuges from 6104 to 5060 IR-1 for 10 years. At Fordow Facility, enrichment is disallowed for 15 years. Uranium stockpile will be cut down to 97% to 300kg or less for 15 years. All sites will be under IAEA monitoring safeguards for the above-mentioned period (Arms Control Association, 2017). Removing or disabling the original core of the Arak nuclear reactor. No accumulation and processing of spent nuclear fuel and no heavy water and its accumulation at the plant. By replacing the core of Arak to reduce weapons-grade Plutonium certified by the joint commission. Commitment to permanent ship out spent nuclear fuel. Iran will somehow continue its enrichment R&D that will not be able to enrich weapons-grade uranium for this purpose the JCPOA has set the enrichment parameters for such isotopes that can be used in Medical, Biological and Agricultural researches not for making nukes for example. “Iran’s enrichment R&D with uranium for 10 years will only include IR-4, IR-5, IR-6, and IR-8 centrifuges as laid out in Annex I, and Iran will not engage in other isotope separation technologies for enrichment of uranium as specified in Annex I. Iran will continue testing IR-6 and IR-8 centrifuges, and will commence testing of up to 30 IR-6 and IR-8 centrifuges after eight and a half years, as detailed in Annex I” (US State Department, 2015). Sanctions also include 5 years arms embargo on certain conventional weapons and sanctions on acquiring Ballistic Missile technology or systems for 8 years (European Council, 2017). Iran’s compliance with this agreement will have long term implications for Iran, the US and the Region, after all, it was the problem for regional and international security. In return, the international community and other international regimes will cut or reduce the previously placed sanctions over the Islamic Republic of Iran that are destabilizing the country’s economic potentials and prosperity of the future. “Following the issuance of the IAEA report verifying implementation by Iran of the nuclear-related measures, the UN sanctions against Iran and some EU sanctions will terminate and some will be suspended. Once sanctions are lifted, Iran will recover approximately \$100 Billion (US Treasury Department estimate) frozen in overseas banks. Eight years into the agreement, EU sanctions against a number of Iranian companies, individuals and institutions (such as Iranian Revolutionary Guards) will be lifted”. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action will have three phases known as “Adoption Day October 18, 2015, then Transition Day that is after 8 years 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023, and after ten years there is the Termination Day 18<sup>th</sup> October 2025” (ibid).

## Recent Developments

“Obama made it, I broke it, you fix it” is the statement that concludes all the statements, policies, decisions, strategies of President Donald Trump. Other than the recent issue of Iran nuclear deal, he has also attracted the international community by showing his willingness to undo the long-standing policies of the past like Obamacare, NAFTA, global climate accord, and domestic clean power initiative. The rumors in the USA and in the international community reflects that he is taking decisions on various economic, political, health issues without consulting the experts (Friedman, T, 2017).

The Iran nuclear deal involves eight signatories but two among them vis a vis Iran and have more stakes involved in the deal. By signing agreement Iran will face a softening of economic, political, trading and other sanctions along with all these Iran will also receive its share of frozen assets. When Donald Trump declared the 2015 agreement between Iran and (p5+1) as “the worst ever agreement” he was confronted by his German, French, Britain, and EU counterparts. Federica Moghironi the European foreign policy chief said that “The JCPOA is not a domestic issue, but a UNSC resolution, the international community and European Union with it has clearly indicated that the deal is and will continue to be in place”. Rex Tillerson the secretary of state has also differences with Trump’s perception of the deal. The Russia and China, the important parties to the deal have claimed that the deal is working, the Russian foreign

minister quotes" We hope this step will have no adverse impacts on the implementation of the deal, but it is obvious that it runs counter to the spirit and letter of the JCPOA. Prime Minister Theresa May has also raised the support of Britain's for the deal (May, T, 2017). On the other hand, Saudi Arabia has welcomed the aggressive approach of President Trump on the deal. Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister has congratulated the president for confronting Iran (Fox News, 2017).

### **The Reaction of Britain, France, the European Union on Iran Nuclear deal**

France, Britain, and countries of the European Union share the same economic and political order with the USA, so the world looks very critically at their reaction to the deal. The USA reiterates that Iran is supporting radical proxies in Syria, the Middle East and that Iran is also supporting groups like Hezbollah. The USA also criticizes the development of ballistic missiles and other capabilities of Iran that creates a sense of imbalance in the region. The real point that Britain and other EU members reiterate is that this deal was exclusively about the Nuclear issue, it has nothing to do with the regional behavior of Iran, domestic human rights violation, missile testing, Sir Simon Gas the leading negotiator from the UK stressed that "Iran`s regional behavior" was completely off the table (Aarabi, K, 2017). In the paragraph reaction of these countries has been mentioned, but the real question is how will this opposition shape the Iran nuclear deal?

### **Britain's Justification**

Britain has justified its stance by presenting the reports of the United Nations atomic watchdog, Amnesty International, and the International Atomic energy agency in its favor. Yukiya Amano the secretary-general of the International atomic energy agency said that "The nuclear-related commitments undertaken by Iran under [the 2015 deal] are being implemented," "From a verification point of view, it is a clear and significant gain (Al Jazera, 2017). Speaking at Harvard University, Yukiya Amano said that due to JCPOA, the IAEA has increased its inspection, and Iran also agreed to a maximum number of inspectors. "Without the JCPOA, we would have much less knowledge of Iran's nuclear program," He also emphasized the struggle of IAEA for maintaining inspection activities by saying that "The sun does not set on IAEA safeguards" (Dhal, 2017). The white house has also emphasized that Iran has abided by the commitments (Seftel, 2017).

### **Analytical Debate of Potential Implications of Decertification**

#### **Challenges**

US-Iran Nuclear Deal ranks amongst the most acclaimed works of the Obama Administration as the deal effectively pulled bad-economy stricken Iran out of sanctions thus improving its economy and promising a safe and secure Iranian Nuclear Program. However, President Donald Trump's decertification of the deal and convincing other partners to follow the suit, pose various challenges on different levels.

### **Iran's Pursuit of Nuclear Program**

Iran's response to Trump's allegations to the Iranian Nuclear Program has been very resolute. The Iranian President asserted that the state will abide by the deal as long as the other signatories also do so. Once the signatories refuse to comply with the deal, Iran shall do the same (Erin Cunningham, 2017). This statement by the Iranian Head of State may lead us to the assumption that Iran might revert to the military nuclear Program. Reversion to Nuclear Program might become a necessity for Iran for balancing power in the Middle East once it loses diplomatic support from the United States of America. Also, the national pride of Iranians might call for extreme actions as in response to US Allegations the Rouhani said, "The Iranian nation is not a nation that will easily retreat in the face of a dictator". He also said, "his country has never bowed down to any power, and will not do so in the future" (Tedd. Regencia, 2017). Therefore, it is probable that the decertification of the deal might lead to Iran's reversion to its nuclear program. This will have serious implications for regional as well as international security.

## **Saudi – Iran Tension-Implications for Middle East**

Middle Eastern politics are highly characterized by the rift between Sunni dominated Saudi Arabia and Shiite dominated Iran. The two states have always been at odds since the Iranian Revolution of 1979. If the Iranian government reverts to its prior nuclear program and acquires nuclear weapons (as claimed by the Iranian President), this would have detrimental effects on the Saudi – Iran relations. While on the outset, the Saudi government has shared its sense of approval with Trump's Iran Policy. Riyadh has claimed that the terrorism-sponsoring state (i.e. Iran) needs to be met with such firm and aggressive policy. However, the Saudi government needs to keep in view that the foremost affected would be Saudi itself. Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons will not only undermine the national security of Saudi Arabia but will also take Saudi Arabia into a security dilemma. This will make the already tense relations between the two states even more strained, effectively contributing to regional instability to the Middle East.

## **Implications of Economic Crisis on Iran**

Decertification of the Nuclear Deal holds the potentials of severe challenges to the Iranian Economy. The sanctions imposed on Iran by the United Nations, USA and European Union in the 2000s as a punishment for its nuclear program had crippled the Iranian economy. The era of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was essentially characterized by inflation and economic stagnation. Financial investment in the corporate sector was minimal and economic income was low. However, the US – Iran Nuclear deal served as an impetus for the economic boost of the country. Most of the sanctions mainly secondary sanctions imposed on the Central Bank, commercial banks, oil and gas projects, oil exportation, shipping lines, transportation, and commercial aviation industry were lifted. Resultantly, the country opened itself to international business (after a decade of economic isolation) (Euro News, 2017). The country's economy grew at a rate of 6.5% in the year 2016 following the nuclear deal (Financial Tribune, 2017). However, now the deal left de-certified and sanctions re-imposed will challenge the economic stability of the state as well. The probable economic instability might lead to domestic unrest in the state which might further trigger regional stability as well.

## **Impact on US Obligations to Non-Proliferation**

The United States of America has boasted always itself as the biggest supporter of nuclear non-proliferation. Ironically, the current government has pronounced the 'Iran Nuclear Deal' as one of the biggest mistakes of the country. Whereas, realistically this deal is one of the biggest establishments of the non-proliferation regime which has effectively committed Iran to arms reduction. Iran over the period has shipped fulfilled the demands of JCPOA by shipping the specifies quantity of enriched uranium out of the country, by dismantling and removing 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of its centrifuges, by dismantling its heavy water reactor and by providing unprecedented access to its nuclear facilities and supply chain (The White House - President Barack Obama, n.d.). the deal presents the prime implementation of nuclear non-proliferation. Therefore, President Trump's condemnation of the deal has critically undermined the current government's commitment to nuclear non-proliferation.

## **Implications for the US Alliances**

The announcement of de-certification of the deal by the USA and its allies by President Trump can be viewed as the USA's overt attempt to invade the power of the P5+1 states. As the decision was announced without taking the other signatory states on board. Many states backlashed Trump's policy in Iran claiming that the USA does not hold the capacity to terminate a multi-lateral treaty unilaterally (Al Jazeera November 2017). While Russia declared it as aggressive and threatening rhetoric, EU foreign policy chief said, "The President of the United States has many powers but not this one". In a joint statement Emmanuel Macron (French President) Angela Merkel (German Chancellor) and Theresa May (British Prime Minister) that USA



needs to aptly consider the security implications of USA's Iran policy for itself and for its allies (Al Jazera October 2017). Such unilateral decisions of USA and power projection might halt the USA's relations with its allies and the P 5+1.

## **Prospects**

As the nuclear deal finalized between the EU3+3 and Iran after the two years of negotiation so now the international community is looking for the future effects of JCPOA on Iran, America and its allies and the entire international community. The possible prospects of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Agreement (JCPOA) or Iran's nuclear deal are highlighted in ensuing paragraphs.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime (NPR) had a great threat from the nuclear project of Iran because from 1998 it faces the violation of its agreement points of non-proliferation of nuclear weapon among the international community, of which the first case was India and Pakistan while the second case is Korea and final one is Iran who started enrichment of Uranium of nuclear weapon-based. It had a devastating result if Iran had made possible to acquire nuclear weapon because Iran's nuclear program had a chain reaction effects due to its rivalry in the Middle East, so a nuclear weapon acquisition chain might become start.

Among the states who might possibly start the development of nuclear weapons were Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Israel but this agreement prevents the chain. After the successful finalization of the deal, President Barrack Obama gave a statement that this deal made their country and the world safer and more secure so from his statement, it made proved the NPR and the international community is safe from the great threat of spreading of nuclear weapons. So, it can be said that the existence of NPR was strengthened by the JCPOA and that no future threat of nuclear weapon acquisition exists in the Middle East.

The deal also made the restriction on Iran's ballistic missiles program which is used as a source for use of a nuclear weapon for at least 8 years which means that Iran can't test ballistic missiles for 8 years (National Interest, 2016). It also put a limitation on Iran's conventional military advancement for 5 years which stop Iran to modernize its conventional weapon and made the proxy war in the Middle East least disastrous in terms of casualties.

After this deal, the value of diplomacy also increased in the world for resolving international disputes and conflicts. This deal paves a way for North Korea in the same way as it did for Iran to discuss its nuclear program, usage and getting benefits from its diplomatic discussion. It also provides a chance to North Korea to express its concerns with the international community, its national security and security dilemma to join the mainstream international community.

Another factor of this deal that needs to be considered is the regional security and Stability and regional trade chances in the Middle East. After this deal, the regional security of the Middle East and the Persian Gulf has increased much and a chance of nuclear attack eliminated both by Iran on US allies in the Middle East and the attack on Iran by the US to save its allies, which US mentioned in its nuclear posture review (US Department of Defence, 2010). According to the US Nuclear Posture Review 2010 of the department of defense, the US can use its nuclear weapon in case of nuclear usage on its land, assets, military and its allies (Ibid). From this posture, in case if Iran acquires a nuclear weapon and used it against its rivals, so in reaction, US will also use its nuclear weapon at his disposal to punish Iran and fulfill its commitment of safeguard its Allies which means the catastrophe in the Middle East.

This deal guarantees safety to the US and its allies, Iran and in whole humanity. Although this deal did not stop or prevent the animosity between the two rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia in the middle east it prevents the severe condition between the two and made possible in the future to discuss their problems in the absence of nuclear weapons. While if they get nuclear weapon so it made the case of India and Pakistan or US and Soviet Union where there were no return points except the destruction of their ideology which evaded the international peace during the cold war era and made the world under the threat of the nuclear weapon, while today, the world after the deal is much safer and secure.

The reimposition of sanctions against Iran has hurt the country most and the resultant fuel price hike has created serious internal security problems with Iran. Additionally, Saudi and Israeli harsh posturing has also created a sense of insecurity in Iran. On regional and global strategic management plane, Iran is looking towards other signatories and wider international community about their commitments and has threatened to increase the enrichment process. While the international system is still being governed by uni-polarity, yet such agreements should not be subjected to domestic politics of great power. Iran deserves to be reintegrated back in the community and the deal must hold on to recreate the legitimacy of international agreements.

## **Conclusion**

While Iran has justified the pursuit of the nuclear program as a national security compulsion in a volatile regional and international security environment, where it feels surrounded by the hostile elements and sole guarantor of national security and strategic balance with Israel another rival in this quest. While a dignified agreement was reached between Iran and P5+1 which has forced Iran to limit its ambitions in exchange for the removal of sanctions that have been abided by Iran. However, unilateral action if at all taken by the USA will seriously undermine the legitimacy of such agreements in future undertakings. While the offensive realist's version of might is right can be interpreted in President Trump's assertions, but it is full of risks and explosive consequences. The international community has to do everything possible to save this deal for the long-term benefits of Iran and the region.

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