

Politics of US Sanctions against Iran: An Analysis of the time period from 2000 to 2020

Dr. Sadia Rafique*
Daman Nadeem**

Abstract

Sanctions have been a regular feature of U.S. policy toward Iran for more than three decades. The paper has its roots in a detailed analysis of the relations between USA and Iran in the time frame of 2 decades, 2000 to 2020, changing trends in the aforementioned relation upon the basis of economic sanctions imposed by the USA. The paper is categorized into the administrations of three US Presidents (Bush, Obama, and Trump) and traces all the sanctions imposed throughout their presidencies. It focuses on the difference between the administrative sanction policies of Bush, Obama, and Trump towards Iran despite the country being acquiescent with its obligations based on the nuclear deal; JCOPA (The Iranian Nuclear Deal). The study is conducted in the light of two theories of International Relations: realism and liberalism.

Keywords: Sanctions, Obama, Trump, Bush, JCPOA (Iranian Nuclear Deal), Realism, Liberalism

Introduction

United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran have had adversarial relations since 1979 (The Iranian Revolution), both countries have remained hostile towards each other despite brief periods of cooperation, and the countries have been in conflict with no formal diplomatic relationships since 1980. US has always taken a confrontational approach towards Iran, accusing Iran of sponsoring terrorism, developing mass destruction weapons, and initiating nuclear programs. The sanctions have been a constant part of US foreign policy towards Iran. Washington on Iran imposed the first set of sanctions in 1979 because of the seizure of

* Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, GC University Lahore, Pakistan. Email: sadia_july2007@hotmail.com

** Student of BA (Hons) Political Science, GC University Lahore, Pakistan. Email: daman.nadeem45@gmail.com

US Embassy in Iran after the Iranian Revolution. These sanctions got uplifted after the release of hostages in 1981. Iran's ambition to initiate a nuclear program and get hold of these weapons of mass destruction along with its support of various terrorist organizations and sponsoring terrorism in the region resulted in the re-imposition of sanctions in 1984. (Clawson, 2010)

The Sanctions placed by US on Iran have faced a lot of criticism from the International community but the intensification of these sanctions during the administration of the last three US presidents suggests a broad bipartisan agreement that sanctions are an important feature of US policy towards Iran. While there is a strong consensus that multilateral sanctions are most effective, the role of U.S. sanctions is more controversial. U.S. sanctions were widely criticized in the 1990s for being unilateral. U.S. action, however, eventually spurred a broad international consensus, including a series of U.N. sanctions since 2007 and E.U. action since 2010. (Katzman 2010) After 2005, the United States stepped up its enforcement of sanctions and took measures to restrict access to the U.S. financial system, with considerable impact. US officials disagree on the specific objectives of sanctions on Iran, which makes it difficult to judge how successful they have been. U.S. policymakers are persuaded sanctions were the key reason Iran returned to nuclear negotiations in 2013 and prepared to compromise (BBC News, 2019). A new area of debate in Washington became how much and how quickly to relax U.S. sanctions in the event of a nuclear accord, given that Iran and the United States will continue to disagree on many other areas cited as reasons for sanctions. In the vigorous U.S. debates about sanctions, all parties agree in principle to target the regime rather than the Iranian people and to encourage Iran to engage and compromise. (Fayazmanesh, 2008)

Since the 1979 Iranian revolution, the most important USA's public engagement with Iran was during the administration of President George Bush; these talks were based on Afghanistan and Iraq issues mainly. This interaction and hopes of good relations were short-lived as Iran revealed its nuclear facilities and support for the extremist group; these new revelations caused tensions between Washington and Tehran relations. The Iran Nuclear Program was a threat to US's power game in the Middle East; the Bush administration adopted the strategy to rely on the International community and peace organizations to confront Iran regarding their nuclear facilities. (Mead, 2010) The relations have seen drastic contrary changes in

Obama and Trump's administrations. Upon Obama's inauguration, the diplomatic ties seemed to improve as Obama's liberal Internationalism was focused on reconciliation and the promotion of peace and cooperation in the region. (Jacobson, 2008) The Iran Nuclear Deal was a positive step forward toward the relationship, the US uplifted all the sanctions and both countries mutually cemented their previously troubled history and moved towards cooperation that benefited both nations. This short-lived peace was disrupted as President Trump came into power, he promoted political realism that resulted in the withdrawal of US from the JCPOA (The Iran Nuclear Deal), and Iranian government had to face economic and energy sanctions once again (Arms Control Association, 2020). While Bush and Obama's administrations were to comply with International norms, Trump's was to favor his country's national interest regardless of International norms and regulations. Bush placed a high priority on fighting terrorism and countering nuclear proliferation and in doing so forced sanctions through United Nations platform. Obama's administration chooses National interest as well as strengthening International laws, and in his view, Iran's Nuclear program was affecting International peace and was against the norms of International community. He opts the policy of liberalism and imposed sanctions, to make Iran concede to International norms. The cooperation between US and Iran would be in favor of both countries as well as the International community. (Kokabisaghi, 2018) President Trump played the opposite role, his administration made it clear that following International laws wasn't the motive. The policies were based on unilateral arrogance; the evidence of this can be seen in US withdrawal from JCPOA against UN Security Council's resolution. This political realism of Trump was based on offensive realism, as US seek power as both means and an end. Trump's policy rejected cooperation and alliances and focused on US hegemony in the World Order. Sanctions against Iran Trump weren't just to secure International peace by terminating Iran nuclear program; it was in favor of US national interest.

The paper is divided into five sections, the first section introduces the purposes of sanctions in International community; the second section focuses on the theoretical framework of US-Iran sanctions and how the change of administration affects the policies; the third section covers the era of US President Bush and the sanctions he ordered as a result of Iran nuclear program; the fourth section covers JCPOA and Obama's administration attempts for favorable relations with Iran; the last part focuses on President

Trump regime. The paper attempts to give an overview of the intensification of sanctions imposed by the last three presidents of United States; George Bush, Obama, and Donald Trump respectively.

Research Methodology

Data analysis sources have been used to conduct this research. It is qualitative in nature and the method that we have applied to study the politics of sanctions is descriptive and comparative. The purpose of this research is to analyze the sanctions imposed by United States on Iran and provide a comparative analysis of three regimes. Since the Revolution, the tension between the two countries is evident and this dissension has taken political, economic, and military sanctions. The research will take an unstructured approach to explore the nature of sanctions and how these factors contributed to escalating the strain on their bilateral relations.

Theoretical Framework

In an attempt to study the basis of US's sanctions on Iran, one needs to understand the complexity of US-Iran Relationship. The basis of their relationship can be studied using international theories. Sanctions have a political basis, and in International relations, different school of thought has different understanding of sanctions. The two major theories that admit sanctions to be an important instrument in International relations are Realism and Liberalism. **Realism** believes that the main motive of International sanctions is to secure a country's national interest, as these provide a framework of power policies. According to Realists the idea of maintaining the integrity of International community is a false notion, they argue that organization such as the United Nations take decisions with the consent of five permanent members, so in reality, the nation interest of these powerful states prevail, which makes third world countries dependent on the relationship with these states. According to Morgenthau, states respect the international community but the final deciding factor is always the "national interest", hence they continue until the country's interest is achieved. (Schepp & Schmergal, 2017) Liberalism, however, believes that sanctions are imposed against the states that violate international norms to maintain the integrity of International laws and to protect international peace. From a Liberal perspective, all the states have agreed to behave under the values and norms provided by the International system, in order to maintain these International organizations like the United Nations and the International Court of Justice. The purpose of these organizations is to

prevent wars and provide security to states as well as take actions against the violators; these actions are in the form of sanctions and embargos. These sanctions continue until international peace is maintained. (Post, 1994)

The Example of US-Iran relationships and their politics of sanctions can be first analyzed in the light of Realism, US has maintained its hegemony in the world order, and the Iranian attempt to become regional power has been seen as a threat to USA national interest. In an International system, creating a balance of power is important. In the system of anarchy, every state has to take measures for its security and protection. Iran is no different, although it's hard to determine the general intentions of the country behind its nuclear program it is evident that the major reason is to defend itself against the great external powers. Iran's closest foe Iraq being under US control, and US thereof being a nuclear power created a sense of insecurity. In order to show deterrence, Iran in the past few decades has been determined to become a nuclear power. Other than this, it's of symbolic importance as Iranians take great pride in them and see western countries as interference to their centuries of authority in the region. Iran however has affirmed this nuclear program to be a peaceful one and has denied all forms of aggression and offense. (Fisher, 2015) Following the signing of the nuclear deal, the liberal theory of International relations is put into order to explain the relationship between US and Iran.

This theory is opposite to realism, while realism is about the gain of power, liberalism is about how institutions mitigate the violent tendencies of a state. The highest goal is the protection of individuals and devising a foreign policy that not only protects a state from external threats but also tries not to do it at the expense of individuals. Liberalism is the theory of International Relations that focuses on peace and order in the world through cooperation, the basis of international sanctions can be derived from this idealistic perspective. The democratic peace theory is part of liberalism as it suggests that democracies tend to prevent war with other democracies. In US-Iran relationship, the US government has tried to approach Iran in a peaceful manner, by introducing a nuclear deal, and as a result of non-cooperation the arms embargo and sanctions were imposed for the sake of peace in the region. (McGlinchey, 2017a)

Nature of Sanctions

The International system of the world is based on liberal world order. After the destruction and terror of World Wars in a such short span, the

institutions like the United Nations came into being, this was to restrain the violent power of states and to build peace and order. In this regard, the idea of International sanctions gained popularity, the function of these sanctions was to counteract a state's violent tendencies by excluding it from economic, military, and trade benefits. It's to build pressure on the states that violate liberal norms.

“Sanctions are restriction of economic cultural and political activities by countries or international organizations against other states, the purpose of these restrictions are:

1. Protection of the national interest of a state
2. Maintaining the International peace. (Hufbauer, 2007)

Sanctions are imposed to change the behavior of a state without waging war against it, there are different types of Sanctions but the two most prominent are Arms embargoes and Economic Sanctions.

Arms Sanctions: The aim of Arms Sanctions is to detain the provision of military assets and arms to the targeted countries, these sanctions have a visible effect during the war, as a country needs all the help it can get during the war. Agreements like the "Non-Proliferation Treaty" work under a similar concept.

Economic Sanctions: Economic Sanctions are to cut trade and stop the provision of Economic Aid to a country, these sanctions directly affect the country's national economy and thus its stability. Although the main aim of these sanctions is to "change countries' behavior" there can be hidden motives to boost one's economy and destroy the economy of the rival state, in this way, sanctions can be described as "economic hardship in return to political interest" (Wallenstein et al., 2005)

US Sanctions on Iran: Bush Administration

Retrospect of the Sanctions: Sanctions have been a prominent feature of US Policy towards Iran. The first set of sanctions was imposed during President Carter's administration due to U.S Embassy seizure in 1979 (Post-Revolutionary Iran). Embargos and sanctions have been re-imposed by successive United States governments due to major concerns about Iran sponsoring terrorism as well as Iran's pursuit to acquire weapons of Mass Destruction. These sanctions have only intensified over the years and

become a constant threat to Iran's political, economic, and social development.

Iran's Nuclear Enrichment Program (2005): Since the 1979 Iranian revolution, the most important USA's public engagement with Iran was during the administration of President George Bush, these talks were based on Afghanistan and Iraq issues mainly. This interaction and hopes of good relations were short-lived as Iran revealed its nuclear facilities and support for the extremist group, these new revelations caused tensions between Washington and Tehran relations. (Hadley, 2010) The International sanctions faced by Iran were because of its clandestine nuclear program. This program was an indirect violation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty signed by Iran in 1967. The Iran Nuclear Program was a threat to US's power game in the Middle East, the Bush administration adopted the strategy to rely on the International community and peace organizations to confront Iran regarding their nuclear facilities. The strategy was to make Tehran verifiably give up its intentions to pursue the nuclear program and seal the Natanz uranium enrichment facilities, in return for economic and security benefits from the International community. These incentives would include not only support for the Iranian peaceful nuclear program and provision of nuclear fuel in place of enrichment facilities but also removal and relaxation of economic sanctions. The refusal to act accordingly with the International community could result in isolation, further economic sanctions, and military actions against Iran (Dunn, 2007)

Iranian-Sponsored Terrorism (Axis of Evil): Another reason for targeting Iran with the sanctions was to withdraw its support from promoting and sponsoring terrorism. Iran has been a vigorous supporter of Hezbollah, Hamas, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad groups. The highest priority of the Bush administration was to counter nuclear proliferation and also bring terrorism under control and fight the organization that advocates terrorists. After the incident of 9/11 and the attacks by Al Qaeda, the international community feared the merging of terrorism and nuclear assets that would create something even more disastrous and would pose threat to every nation. The countries known for sponsoring terrorist organizations and holding nuclear programs included Iran. President Bush in his State of the Union address targeted the three states sponsoring nuclear terrorism; Iraq, North Korea, and Iran. He called these states "an axis of evil" (Gardner, 2003) because all these states were interlinked with terrorism and nuclear

destruction. The Iranian administration criticized the term as it sounded like an alliance since the times of World War II.

US Unilateral Sanctions on Iran

In addition to the International sanctions by United Nations Security Council (UNSC) that sanctioned Iranian missile and nuclear entities, has imposed asset freezes and travel bans, and demanded international vigilance over arms sales, the United States unilaterally has imposed a set of sanctions. The Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and the Banks owned by the state of Iran has been sanctioned by the Bush administration. These sanctions on the entities owned by the Government of Iran and the Iranian pillar of security IRGC has sent a strong signal to the people of Iran about the United States serious opposition to the Iran Nuclear Program. The US administration has not only sanctioned Iranian Banks but it also has forced foreign companies and foreign banks to drop out of their businesses in Iran, this was a global campaign and the foreign authorities had no option but to follow International banking practices. These foreign banks and multinational companies were convinced by US Treasury Department regarding the reputational risk that is carried by continuing business in Iran, as they could also be potentially accused of being part of the practices in which Iran is involved. International companies have pulled out their business in Iran as a result of these economic sanctions. As all the nuclear programs needed financing, these banking sanctions proved to be difficult for the Iranian government (Fayazmanesh, 2003)

Executive Order 13382: In 2005, US President George Bush signed Executive Order 13382, "Blocking Property of Mass destruction Proliferation and their supporters". This order has given the President and US government the authority to freeze the assets of the nuclear program and those organizations supporting it, leaving them in financial isolation. Under US jurisdiction all kinds of transactions have been banned between designees and the United States.¹

Banking Sanctions: The US placed sanctions on all financial institutions of Iran, preventing them from directly engaging with the financial system

¹The list of entities sanctioned can be obtained from US Department of State website, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/t/isn/c22080.htm>

of USA. Although these sanctions were directly linked with US and Iran was allowed to engage in activities with foreign banks. But, in 2006, Washington imposed sanctions on Bank Sedrat, and all financial dealings have banned directly or indirectly. The Head of US Treasury Department forcefully persuaded all the financial institutions in Europe, that they have been barred from accessing the Iranian banking system. The following Iranian banks were banned by US government in November 2007: (Ferrari, 2017)

- i. Arian Bank
- ii. Bank Kargoshee
- iii. Bank Melli Iran
- iv. Bank Sepah
- v. Bank Saderat

Sanctions against IRGC: In 2007, US government banned all transactions between the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and US citizens by freezing its assets in reference to Executive Order 13224. The Quds Force was recognized as a terrorist organization by Bush administration, and being part of IRGC and provided support to the terrorist groups based in USA. The Bush administration-imposed sanctions and had some initial success however it did not garner any positive response from Iran. It provided successive governments with a tool to politically and economically put pressure on a regime if it fails to comply.

US Sanctions on Iran: Obama Era

Strategic Shift: Bush to Obama: Bush's foreign policy after 9/11 was influenced by the Jacksonian school of thought, as the country's honor and its hegemony were in question. The decision of the War against Iraq and Saddam Hussain was to prevent an Anti-US alliance formation, but when US lost its interest in the War, the Strategy of American president Bush adopted the Democratic Peace theory in response to promote the democratization process in the Middle East. President Obama has the opposite approach to Foreign policy; Obama has followed Jeffersonian approach to limit USA's intervention in Middle East and at the same time committed to Wilsonian approach to promoting democracy and human rights. This strategic approach of President Obama is seen in his relationship with Iran (Mead, 2010) (Kaufman, 2012)

Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010: President Obama took office in 2009; he offered cooperation and

extended support for Iranian government only if only Iran would convince the world powers that they were not working on their nuclear program. "The United States and its European allies suspect Iran was trying to build an atomic bomb, despite Tehran's insistence that its nuclear program is for the peaceful generation of electricity."(Reuters, 2010) After President Ahmadinejad's announcement of the construction of uranium facilities, the US House of Representatives imposed the "Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010", this law has given the power to Obama to put sanction the US central bank and foreign banks if they would not reduce the import of Oil and petroleum products from Iran. The result of this sanction was drastic for the Iranian economy. In response to this Act US president issued Executive orders. (Al Jazeera, 2009)

Executive Order 13553: In September 2010, Obama issued Executive Order 13553, blocking the properties of Certain Persons with respect to serious human rights abuses by the Government of Iran.

Executive Order 13574: In May 2011, Obama has issued Executive Order 13574, authorizing the implementation of sanctions set forth in the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996.

Executive Order 13590: In Nov 2011, Obama issued Executive Order 13590, authorizing the Imposition of Certain sanctions with respect to the provision of goods, services, technology, or support for Iran's energy and petrochemical sectors. In 2013, US House of Representatives favored strictly adhering to the sanctions against Iran and becoming harsher as well.

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA 2015)

The groundwork for Iran Nuclear Deal: In 2013, Hassan Rouhani has elected as Iranian President, with the aim of improving Iran's diplomatic relations as well as uplifting the economy. In order to achieve the goals, Rouhani had to compromise on Iran's stance on the nuclear program. The sanctions imposed by the US and other countries due to Iran's nuclear program had a drastic effect on Iran's economy.

Behind the curtain the officials from both countries held secret talks regarding nuclear issues, these talks intensified when Obama spoke to Iranian President on the telephone in September 2013. The result of these talks has laid the groundwork for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. (Staff, 2016)

Joint Comprehensive Plan Action of 2015: Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is commonly referred to as the Iran Nuclear Deal, this is an agreement signed between Iran and five permanent members of United Nations Security Council (USA, Russia, China, France, United Kingdom) plus Germany. The agreement was on Iran Nuclear program, as Iran for decades had tension with the United Nations over the development of Nuclear Weapons. Although Iran kept insisting the program was peaceful, the World powers suspected undeclared nuclear facilities in Iran that has resulted in multiple economic and arms sanctions on Iran. (Wolf, 2018) To restore the relationship and uplift the degrading economy as a result of these sanctions, Iran has agreed to limit its nuclear activities in return for the lifting of sanctions. The deal was signed in Vienna on 14th July 2015. It was adopted in October and Implemented in January 2016 as IAEA issued a certificate that Iran has restricted its nuclear program which was under strict monitoring. (Arms Control Association, 2020) The commitments made in JCPOA are as follows.

Nuclear Provisions

Uranium Enrichment: Enriched uranium would not only be used as fuel in nuclear reactors but also to make weapons. In Iran, Natanz and Forodo were sited to centrifuge weapon-grade uranium out. Iran had 20,000 centrifuges that were reduced to 5060 under the JCPOA. Uranium Stockpiles were reduced by 98%, the research was only allowed at Natanz and limited under monitoring. No enrichment was allowed till 2030 at Forodo, and the nuclear facilities were turned into technology centers (BBC News, 2019)

Plutonium Pathway: In Arak, Iran had been constructing a heavy-water nuclear facility; the fuel contains plutonium that could be used to make a nuclear bomb. There's a high risk of proliferation, so under JCPOA, Iran would redesign the reactor to stop the production of plutonium and they were not permitted to build heavy-water reactors till 2030 (BBC News, 2019)

Covert Activity: Inspectors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) were required to monitor the sites of nuclear production to make sure no fissile material was produced and they were given additional protocols to inspect any site they suspect in the country. In case of Iran refuses, the Joint Commission would take steps like re-imposition of sanctions. (BBC News, 2019)

UN Sanctions

1. Under JCPOA agreement, all The United Nations Resolutions that were targeting the Iran Nuclear program i.e. 1969, 1737, 1747, 1803, 1835, and 1929 from 2006-10 were to be terminated on the Day of implementation of the deal.
2. For 10 years all sanctions regarding suspension were to be vetoed
3. UN will not have hold of Iran nuclear files after 10 years
4. Heavy arms embargo for 5 years will remain in place
5. Ballistic missile restriction for 8 years (Arms Control Association, 2020)

US Sanctions

1. All the Economic and banking sanctions imposed by US are to be lifted.
2. Iranian banks were given permission to reconnect with the International system.
3. Non-US entities to get engaged in activities with Iran
4. License is given back to Import Iran's product e.g. carpets and foodstuff in USA
5. If IAEA's monitoring concludes no nuclear activities in Iran for 8 years, the US will legally terminate nuclear sanctions
6. US Sanctions targeting human rights and terrorism still remain in place (Arms Control Association, 2020)

EU Sanctions

1. The previous European Union provisions regarding Iran nuclear program to be lifted
2. EU would refrain from imposing these sanctions under JCPOA
3. For 8 years, the arms embargo and ballistic missile transfer restrictions remain in place (Arms Control Association, 2020)

Lifting the Sanctions

In 2014, Iran has released 10 US sailors after having them in custody for 24 hours as they had breached the Iranian territorial water. US-Iran announced a prisoner swap in 2016, Four Americans from Iran and 7 Iranians in USA were released. After the report from International Atomic Agency that Iran has positively restricted its nuclear program, US has lifted economic and nuclear sanctions under JCPOA (*The History of US-Iran Relations: A Timeline*, 2020)

Analysis of JCPOA

The deal proved to bring a positive turn to US-Iran relationship. It was quite successful in halting Iran's path to nuclear weapons as the country did abide by the terms of the agreement. It was a realistic and peaceful approach to blocking Iran's path to a nuclear bomb and it also insured regular international monitoring. As for Iran, the lifting of sanctions was a relief to the economy and the suffering of the people due to financial implications. However, it did not ensure to address the concerns like Iran's ballistic missile development; Iran's involvement in Syria and Yemen; and Iran's support for terrorist groups.

US Sanctions on Iran: Trump Administration

Withdrawal from Iran Nuclear Deal: The Iran Nuclear Deal is one of the biggest diplomatic achievements of US under President Obama, although the then Presidential Candidate Donald Trump criticized the deal and called it the worst negotiation. It was part of Trump's presidential campaign to restore sanctions on Iran and walk out of JCPOA, although the other signatories of the deal defended it. Trump reemployed the sanctions that targeted Iran's shipping, financial, and energy industries.

Trump's Criticism on the Nuclear Deal: President Trump stated that the Iran deal had much relaxation for Iran and nothing in return. According to him "it fell short of addressing Iran's regional behavior or its missile program". Trump along with the republicans referred to Iran deal as "the worst deal ever" due to its many loopholes and flaws. In his response, he included 12 demands by US to be added to the Iran Nuclear deal.

The 12 demands are as follows:

1. Permanently abandon the nuclear program and issue a report of military dimensions of the program to the IAEA
2. Close all the plutonium-generating reactors
3. Provide International Atomic Energy Agency access to all sites in the country
4. Perpetually end the development of ballistic and nuclear missile system
5. All US citizens must be released
6. Iran must terminate support for terrorists groups, that includes Hezbollah, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad
7. Respect the Sovereignty of the Iraqi government

8. Terminate military support for Houthi rebels
9. Terminate support for Taliban in Afghanistan and Al Qaeda
10. Withdraw all forces from Syria
11. End support for all Islamic revolutionary terrorist groups
12. End threatening behavior towards US allies i.e. Israel, Saudi Arabia, and UAE

These demands were rejected by Tehran that resulted in the re-imposition of sanctions (Al Jazeera, 2018)

Re-imposition of Sanctions: Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear deal would mean the re-imposition of Economic sanctions on Iran. The sanctions include a 90-Days and 180-day wind-down period for foreign companies to terminate all business and investment out of Iran. These companies include US-based GE and Honeywell; France-based Total, and Danish shipping line Maersk. All business with Iran was terminated. These sanctions canceled the \$20bn deal to sell 110 Boeing planes to Iran Air and Aseman Air. (Regencia, 2018). In the global market, 30 percent of shares are controlled by Iran's hand-woven carpets, these are means of employment for 2 million Iranians. The United States is the biggest market for these Iran Carpets, the sanctions will lead to a huge loss worth \$424 million to Iran's Carpet industry. Iran's auto industry was also affected by US sanctions as Iran is the world's 12 biggest market in the world for cars. The French-based Peugeot Company terminated its market links with Iran due to US sanctions. The acquisition of the dollar is prohibited by Iranian government; it would result in the devaluation of Riyal. The sanctions will put pressure on the banking system. The second phase of sanctions followed the first phase that targeted Iran's energy sector (Regencia, 2018)

Sanctions during Trump Administration

1. Iran Space Agency along with Iranian Astronautics Research Centre and Space Research center was added to the list of Sanctions
2. Sanctions imposed on Central Bank of Iran and National Development Fund of Iran and all Iranian companies that were required to transfer money for defense and logistics purposes
3. Construction companies owned by Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps were placed under sanctions
4. Sanctions imposed on advisers of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Head of Iran's Judiciary and the Chief of Staff

5. In 2020, further sanctions were imposed on 19 Iranian banks, targeting the financial sector of Iran

Analysis of Trump's Administration

President Trump has played the opposite role; his administration has made it clear that following International laws were not the motive. The policies were based on unilateral arrogance; the evidence of this can be seen in US withdrawal from JCPOA against UN Security Council's resolution. This political realism of Trump was based on offensive realism, as US seek power as both means and an end. Trump's policy rejected cooperation and alliances and focused on US hegemony in the World Order. Sanctions against Iran for Trump were not just to secure International peace by terminating Iran's nuclear program, it was in favor of US national interest. (Azizi et al., 2020)

Conclusion

Since the founding of the Islamic Republic of Iran, all sorts of sanctions have been imposed on the country. As a result, Crude oil exports decreased sharply, the inflation rate increased, domestic production fell, unemployment grew, the currency decayed, and the prices of consumer goods rose. After the initiation of its nuclear program from 2005 to 2013, Iran has become one of the most sanctioned states worldwide. Comparing the foreign policy of US towards Iran under the three Presidents suggests that they held very opposite viewpoints. The Bush administration's engagement with Iran began positively. The two nations worked together to form a new Afghan government after the 2001 ouster of the Taliban. U.S. and international concern about Tehran's nuclear activity increased dramatically in 2002 when an exile group revealed that Iran had secretly built a facility in Natanz capable of enriching uranium for use in nuclear weapons as well as civilian nuclear power reactors. After Iran reneged on an agreement to suspend uranium enrichment in 2005, the White House backed an international campaign offering Iran a choice: aid and engagement or economic pressure. While Obama has strengthened relations with Iran through the Nuclear Deal and Trump not only resumed the sanctions lifted during Obama's period but also added more sanctions. Trump's actions were based on political realism, and the sanctions he imposed were in line with America's national interest even though they were against international norms. Obama, on the other hand, has opted the liberal Internationalism, which meant US would play with the International rule

book and not only strengthen cooperation with allies but also with International organizations. The global position US holds should be used to ensure multilateral cooperation, which will in return favor United State's national interest. Obama's administration has chosen National interest as well as strengthening International laws, and in his view, Iran's Nuclear program was affecting International peace and was against the norms of the International community. He has opted the policy of liberalism and imposed sanctions, to make Iran concede to International norms. The cooperation between US and Iran would be in favor of both countries as well as the International community. JCPOA is considered one of the greatest diplomatic moves; it has not only reduced nuclear activity in Iran but was a step forward toward International peace and harmony.

Bibliography

- Amuzegar, J. (1997). Adjusting the Sanctions. *Foreign Aff.*, 76, 31.
- Al Jazeera. (2009, June 25). *Timeline: Iran-US relations*. Middle East News | Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2009/6/25/timeline-iran-us-relations>.
- Al Jazeera. (2018, May 21). *Mike Pompeo speech: What are the 12 demands given to Iran?* Middle East News | Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/05/21/mike-pompeo-speech-what-are-the-12-demands-given-to-iran/>.
- Arms Control Association. (2020). *The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) at a Glance* | Arms Control Association. <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/JCPOA-at-a-glance>
- Azizi, H., Golmohammadi, V., & Vazirian, A. H. (2020). Trump's "maximum pressure" and anti-containment in Iran's regional policy. *Digest of Middle East Studies*, 29(2), 150-166.
- BBC News. (2019, June 11). *Iran nuclear deal: Key details*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33521655>
- Betz, B. (2020). *US sanctions against Iran: A timeline*. Fox News. <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/us-sanctions-against-iran-a-timeline>

- Clawson, P. (2010). *The George W. Bush Administration*. The Iran Primer. <https://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/george-w-bush-administration>
- Clawson, P. (2010). US sanctions. *The Iran primer: power, politics, and US policy*, 115-118.
- Dunn, D. H. (2007). ‘Real men want to go to Tehran’: Bush, pre-emption and the Iranian nuclear challenge. *International Affairs*, 83(1), 19-38
- Eckert, S. E. (2010). United Nations nonproliferation sanctions. *International Journal*, 65(1), 69-83.
- Fayazmanesh, S. (2003). The politics of the US economic sanctions against Iran. *Review of radical political economics*, 35(3), 221-240.
- Fayazmanesh, S. (2008). *The United States and Iran: sanctions, wars and the policy of dual containment*. Routledge.
- Ferrari, E. (2017, March 3). *OFAC SDN List Removals; OFAC SDN List Designations* -. Sanctions Law. <https://sanctionlaw.com/ofac-sdn-list-removals-ofac-sdn-list-designations/>
- Fisher, M. (2015, February 25). *The real reasons Iran is so committed to its nuclear program*. Vox. <https://www.vox.com/2015/2/25/8101383/iran-nuclear-reasons>
- Gardner, F. (2003). *BBC NEWS | In Depth | Who’s who in the “axis of evil.”* BBC News. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1988810.stm>
- Hadley, S. J. (2010). The George W. Bush Administration. *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and US Policy*, 142-45.
- Habibi, N. (2010). The impact of sanctions on Iran-GCC Economic Relations. *Middle East Brief*, 45(1).
- Hufbauer, G. C. (2007). *Economic sanctions reconsidered : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive*. <https://archive.org/details/economicsanction0000unse/page/5>
- Jacobson, M. (2008). Sanctions against Iran: A promising struggle. *Washington Quarterly*, 31(3), 69-88.

- Kaufman, S. J. (2012). US National Security Strategy from Bush to Obama: Continuity and Change. *National Security under the Obama Administration*, 11-28.
- Katzman, K. (2010). *Iran sanctions*. Diane Publishing.
- Kokabisaghi, F., Miller, A. C., Bashar, F. R., Salesi, M., Zarchi, A. A., Keramatfar, A., ... & Vahedian-Azimi, A. (2019). Impact of United States political sanctions on international collaborations and research in Iran. *BMJ global health*, 4(5), e001692.
- Kroenig, M. (2018). The return to the pressure track: The trump administration and the Iran nuclear deal. *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 29(1), 94-104.
- McGlinchey, S. (2017a). Liberalism. In *International Relations Theory* (pp. 22–27). E-International Relations.
- McGlinchey, S. (2017b). Realism. In *International Relations Theory* (pp. 15–21). E-International Relations.
- Mead, W. R. (2010, January 4). *The Carter Syndrome*. Foreign Policy. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2010/01/04/the-carter-syndrome/>
- Post, H. (1994). *International Economic Law and Armed Conflict (NOVA ET VETERA IURIS GENTIUM SERIES A, MODERN INTERNATIONAL LAW)* (1994th ed.). Springer.
- Regencia, T. (2018, August 6). *What sanctions will the US reimpose against Iran on Tuesday?* Middle East News | Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/08/06/what-sanctions-will-the-us-reimpose-against-iran-on-tuesday>
- Schepp, M., & Schmergal, C. (2017). *The Boomerang Effect: Sanctions on Russia Hit German Economy Hard*. Spiegel Online.
- Staff, R. (2016, January 17). *TIMELINE-U.S.-Iran relations from 1953 coup to 2016 sanctions relief*. U.S. <https://www.reuters.com/article/iran-nuclear-usa-timeline-idUSL2N1500R1>
- The history of US-Iran relations: A timeline*. (2020, January 3). The World from PRX. <https://www.pri.org/stories/2020-01-03/history-us-iran-relations-timeline>

- Wallensteen, P., Staibano, C., & K A Elliott, K. A. (2005). Trends in Economic Sanctions Policy: Challenges to Conventional Wisdom. In *International Sanctions: between Words and Wars in the Global System* (pp. 25–28). Frank Cass.
- Wolf, A. B. (2018). After JCPOA: American grand strategy toward Iran. *Comparative Strategy*, 37(1), 22-34.
-