

An Analysis of Iran's Strategies for United States of America's Withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)

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Abstract

Present article studies the behavior of the Islamic Republic of Iran towards the United States of America on the nuclear issues. This article's question is that what are the Islamic Republic of Iran's strategies before and after withdrawal of the United States and what challenges and opportunities are these strategies associated with? The article's hypothesis shows that Iran's strategies have fluctuated before the United States withdrawal from the JCPOA based on "compliance with commitments" and after the withdrawal based on "reduction of commitments" and probably "re-negotiation with the United States". The strategy of compliance with commitments has provided opportunities for Iran, but the strategy of reduction of commitments and re-negotiation with the United States faces many challenges including the gap between the supporters of JCPO and moving away from Iran and putting more pressure on Iran to accept the new conditions and demands of the United States. This will put Iran at a weaker position than the current one. Present research method is descriptive and analytical.

Key terms: United States, Islamic Republic of Iran, The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) America's withdrawal from the JCPOA, Re-negotiation

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Introduction

Negotiations of the western countries including the European Union and the United States with the Islamic Republic of Iran over nuclear activities have had a very long process. Late in the presidency of George Bush, Iran's nuclear program provided the grounds for Bush's proximity to Iran but, with an ideological government, he had begun a discussion over wickedness and the heavy pressures in relation to Iran and he could not question all of his previous strategies to the end of his carrier term. Accordingly, he used the regime change issue about Iran to the very last moments. But when Obama started working, he had to redefine America's foreign political strategies due to the need for a review of US foreign policy in the world and withdrawal from Bush's unilateralism(Barzegar, 2010).

In this regard, he discussed theories related to smart power and negotiations with friend or rival powers to solve global and regional problems, especially in the Middle East. With Iran's nuclear issue, for the first time, Washington found that Iran had achieved a strategic card, namely, an emphasis on continued independent nuclear enrichment that would give Iran the role of a regional or even global power that would not only unbalance the traditional power in the middle east, but it is a serious challenge to the traditional hegemony of the great powers. This forces America to engage in strategic talks with Iran to restrain the country. Accordingly, the signs of proximity of the two countries are increasing (Barzegar, 2010). During Obama's presidency, Iran and America took some steps toward strategic talks. Although Obama's character had a role in this regard, the elements and timing conditions and arrival of a strategic issue into the relations between the two countries, the nuclear issues, led Iran and America to a real dialogue for the first time and this trend still continues (Barzegar, 2010). In particular, negotiations on the Iranian nuclear program continued from September 2003 to June 2015 for 12 years. Eventually, on July 14Th, 2015, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was signed in 109 pages and 5 annexes between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the so-called P1 + 5 group (including China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, theUnited States and Germany)at the Coburg Hotel in Austria.The JCPOA

agreement took place when one and half a year was left from Obama's presidency. Thus, after this agreement, the issue of the JCPOA's future was seriously followed by the US presidential election in 2016. 2016 Election, a rivalry between Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton and Republican candidate Donald Trump, left the JCPOA's future in an ambiguous condition and what was less predicted was Trump's victory. In general election of November 8th, 2016, Trump was elected by defeating his rival as the 45th US president.

During the election competitions and also after the election victory, he put opposition to Obama's policies on the agenda. These disputes were based on the issue of Social Security Bill "Bill for Patient Protection and Affordable Care" known as the "Obamacare" in field of domestic policies and on criticizing the JCPOA in foreign policies. Following the America's endeavor to withdraw the JCPOA, the United States officially withdrew the JCPOA on May 8th, 2018, announcing the resumption of sanctions as the past and described it as "giving it up". He called this agreement as a horrible one-sided one that should have never been signed. This agreement did not bring peace and it will never do. Trump said: "today, I declare that the United States will withdraw from Iran's nuclear agreement" and the highest level of economic sanctions will be applied to Iran (Wikipedia, 2019).

Donald Trump believed that the JCPOA was harmful to the United States and that the new round of talks should be resumed and it can be said that Trump wanted to create a new negotiation in his own way. In fact, Trump left the JCPOA regardless of what would happen after withdrawal from the nuclear agreement. Maybe he just wanted to destroy the agreement obtained during Obama's presidency. During a meeting after Trump's withdrawal, a senior US State Department official said: "one of the problems with the treatment was that it reduced our ability to apply pressure on Iran". Therefore, maybe the White House's goal for withdrawing from the JCPOA was to achieve greater freedom of action in putting pressure on Iran (Latest News, 2018).

Regarding the other parties of JCPOA agreement, Islamic Republic of Iran, Russia, Britain, France, Germany and China took different processes. The European countries along with China, in response to withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA, they

emphasized maintaining and sustaining the JCPOA. As a result of this stance, the Islamic Republic of Iran also supported these countries' positions and by this positioning, it expected to persuade the European Countries and China to encourage the United States to return to the JCPOA by putting pressure on it.

Despite these efforts, withdrawal of the United States continued, and this country imposed new unilateral sanctions to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Therefore, withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA practically divided the contracting parties of this agreement into two different spectra and categories. The first party includes the United States which withdrew from the JCPOA under Trump's command and through formal and informal statements, he calls for renegotiations over the issues concerning the Islamic Republic of Iran; and the other party including the European countries such as France, Britain, Germany and Russia, along with China, emphasize the issue of adherence to and full implementation of the JCPOA. In this situation, the Islamic Republic of Iran is practically in a dilemma of maintaining the JCPOA with cooperation from its supporting governments or to accept starting a new round of negotiations with the United States.

Theoretical Framework

The development process leading to JCPOA primarily indicates a conflict between the goals and interests of the actors over a problem (the nuclear program of the Islamic Republic of Iran), then encouraging cooperation in form of an international agreement and again the tendency to existence of conflict among the parties to this agreement in the international politics' environment. The situation is a reminder of the undeniable fact that the international relation is an area based on conflict and competition on one hand, and cooperation and compromise on the other hand among its actors. Regarding the subject of the article that discusses the strategy of renegotiation with the United States, we practically face 3 important variables: firstly, an international agreement called "JCPOA", secondly, governments of the two parties of JCPOA and thirdly, the issue of objectives and interests of the parties in JCPOA.

Conclusion of an international agreement among the actors of international system is a reminder of the assumptions of the liberalism theory, which emphasizes the "cooperation" element in international politics' environment. The United States government's decision on withdrawal from the JCPOA reflects a conflict among the governments over the national purposes and interests and the realism theory can be cited in this regard and the issue of the goals and interests are also the essence of all behaviors and actions in the field of political science and international relations.

Liberalism is a theory based on the possibility of cooperation in a conflicting state among the governments. The Macro approach of liberalism toward the international politics is based on three elements of "cooperation, reducing conflicts and ultimately achieving the global peace"(Moshirzadeh, 2005, 27).

The basis of this theory's argument for implementation of the above three elements is the element of human "rationality" to pursue the benefits through application and deployment of a rule-based governments. Issue of the possibility of reducing conflicts reflects the belief that liberalism accepts some other assumptions of the theories, especially realism, including the existence of governments with conflicting interests and existence of security problems in the international arena. It also believes that the atmosphere of interactions among actors in the international system is a spectrum of cooperation to competition and conflict, however, due to its specific view toward wisdom and rationality of human beings, it insists on the resolution of conflicts among the governments.

The optimism of liberalism theory to adjust the anarchic condition of the international system and solve global problems is based on changing the approaches of the actors and then applying effective mechanisms. In fact, they argue that "conflicts between governments are not caused by fundamental disagreement between their interests, but due to temporary misunderstanding" (Moshirzadeh, 2005, 26).

Regarding effective mechanisms to achieve cooperation and an order-forming factor in international policy, they are related to "interactions between many layers of governing arrangements,

namely, laws, agreed norms, institutional provisions and also international regimes" (Ghavam, 2005, 36).

Possibility of cooperation in theory of liberalism is based on the legal structures developed by the agreements between actors. One of the agreed structures is the international regime. "Regime is a framework for rules, principles, procedures, expectations and prescriptions among actors that governs certain subject areas in international relations". Regimes may be formulated in form of conventions, international agreements, treaties and international organizations (Ghavam, 2005, 41).

There are various sets of international agreements in form of a regime in the international community. In the economic area, the regimes derived from the World Trade Organization's (WTO) competencies, World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF); in the environment field, Paris Convention on Climate; in field of the human rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; regarding arms control and disarmament, numerous disarmament conventions, as well as the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) are among the regimes formed so far. The existence of such regimes is a proof of the liberalistic view that, despite the conflicting nature of international relations, there is the possibility of establishing partnerships between the actors. Certainly, approaches of strong and effective governments in the international system are very determining in sustainability of international regimes. In particular, "hegemony can play a very important role in creation and maintenance of regimes, and on the contrary, collapse or abandonment of the hegemony is a necessary condition for regime change" (Ghavanm, 2005, 42).

Another approach to the nature of international policy and international relations is the theory of realism. This approach emphasizes the issues such as statism, superiority of governments in global equilibriums, prioritization of governments to their own national interest detriment to others, assumption of conflict and competition in relations between governments and belief in the fragile weakness of collective mechanisms against the excessive demands and the monopoly of powerful governments. In fact, realism represents a highly conflicting and security-centered image of international policy atmosphere. Morgenthau, the father of

realism in the twentieth century believes: "This world is inherently consisted of conflicting interests and the quarrel among those interests" (Morgenthau, 2006, 109).

A key element in calculating and explaining the behaviours and actions of governments in the theory of realism is "interests". In their point of view, "as long as the world is politically divided into countries, national interest is actually the last word of the global policy." "The concept of benefit is in fact the essence of politics and accordingly, the time and place conditions do not influence it (Morgenthau, 2006, 123).

According to realism's point of view, national interest is a tall platform from top of which behaviours, objectives and policies of the present governments can be analysed and reasons for the events can be found. In their view, existence of national interests and efforts to achieve them is undeniable, and it is harmful for governments to deny national interests; Thus, "realism actually believes that interests are the standard criteria for judging political behaviours and conducting them" (Morgenthau, 1995, 18). National interests are adopted from the national goals of governments. National goals are, in fact, the presentation of the priorities of an actor on the international scene. The goals and interests of countries respond to changes in the domestic and international system.

Therefore, given the acceptance of changes and conditions at the national, regional and international levels, it can be predicted that the national goals and interests of the countries also change under various conditions. Nevertheless, realism insists on the importance of existence of the benefits and the high degree of its determination in the behavior of the countries. With the acceptance of the possibility of changing priorities and the hierarchy of goals and national interests, several factors can be considered as effective in this shift. "The internal conflict between the political elites, increasing maneuverability, meeting the domestic needs, and finally changing the behavior of other actors" are among these factors (Ghavam, 2005, 299). Usually, the issue of "hierarchy of national goals" is not the same from the factional point of view of various political groups and parties. For example, one group prioritizes military and security issues, while others may insist on

economic development and welfare issues as their first priority" (Ghavam, 2005, 299-300).

Necessity of JCPOA's Formation

Since advent of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, proximity turning points of Iran and America followed a specific need, a sense of mutual threat and were based on the necessity of time, and thus did not endure. Among all presidents of the United States, the real turning point in the proximity of the two countries took place during Obama's presidency when a strategic issue, the Iranian nuclear program, and the need for mutual cooperation provided the fields for proximity of the two parties. And before Obama, the kind of topics that arose between Iran and the United States was not a serious strategic challenge to the interests and national security and the regional and global position of the United States. All of these collaborations were subject to a two-way need that took place at a specific time. Only during the late presidency of George W. Bush and Obama's time, we observed a serious issue in the relationship between the two countries, namely the Iranian nuclear program (Barzegar, 2010).

Nature of the nuclear program is completely different from all the factors that have emerged between the two countries. The nuclear program from US's perspective is a strategic issue. To maintain its supremacy in the world, the main element in preserving the American civilization, the United States needs to maintain its supremacy over the existing political and security trends in the Middle East, and preserving, and controlling the Middle East primarily requires restraining Iran, and restraining Iran needs controlling Iran's nuclear program. For US strategists, an atomic Iran will disturb balance of power in the region which is detrimental to the United States and its regional allies. In Iran's view, the nuclear program is a geo-strategic and national issue linked to identity, value issues and progress of the country on one hand and the regional and global position of Iran on the other, and Iran is not willing to abdicate its legitimate rights. None of the past issues between the two countries had the potential for serious US strategic negotiations with Iran (Barzegar, 2010).

Nature of the former issues was such that the two countries were diverted from each other. But the nuclear program has the

nature of forcing Iran and the United States enter the game because they both have to resolve the issue in a way that it is in the interest of both parties. Americans must choose to enter a war on Iran's nuclear issue or with Iran, or resolve this problem in a win-win format (Barzegar, 2010).

JCPOA Agreement

"Negotiations between Iran and the so-called P5 + 1 group started in 2006 in accordance to the third column of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, in order to assure global powers of Iran's avoidance from production and development of nuclear weapons and to assure Iran of its right to enrich civilian nuclear fuel for civilian purposes. During the negotiations, the United States, the European Union and other organizations imposed sanctions on Iran. After several rounds of talks, on 24th of November 2013, a Geneva interim agreement was signed on Iran's nuclear program between Iran and the P5 + 1 countries in Geneva of Switzerland. As the countries worked on a long-term deal, it was accompanied by stopping some parts of Iran's nuclear program in exchange for reducing the economic sanctions against Iran. Settlement and implementation of the agreement began on January 20, 2014. Eventually, after twenty-two months of talks of Rouhani's government along with the Iranian negotiating team and after a 17-day intensive negotiation, they managed to reach a comprehensive and final agreement with the P5 + 1 group over the future of Iranian nuclear program on Tuesday, 14th of July 2015 in Vienna, the capital of Austria (Wikipedia, 2019).

United States 2016 Election

The presidential election of 2016 in the United States was interesting in some aspects. In this election, a person outside the political system came to presidency that had no previous political and governmental experiences and his electoral campaign was directly in opposition to the political situation of that time. Victory of Trump in the US presidential election of 2016 occurred while the pre-election polls and analysis predicted Hillary Clinton to win the competition. National polls are said to have been quite accurate. But at the state level, the error of the polls is huge and considerable. National-level polls predicted that Clinton would be ahead of Trump with a three percent difference in the popular vote, and this prediction came almost right and eventually Clinton

exceeded trump in the popular vote with a 2 percent difference. But, state polls showed a strong and uncertain competition and underestimated the level of support for trump in western and northern parts of the country (Shokri, 2017). Finally, despite all of these predictions, the Republican candidate Donald Trump eventually won on the Election Day after a controversial election campaign. Trump not only won 290 electors (electoral), but the absolute vote count also showed that nearly 48 percent of the qualified voters in the United States voted for him (Deutsche Welle Farsi, 2016).

Trump and his Foreign Policy:

Based on the theory of realism, one of the factors of the shift in national goals and national priorities and interests is the shift in internal structure of power or the change of political elite of a country. From this perspective, policy-making, both in domestic and foreign domains is a purely objective subject that can be changed by the ruling individuals and elites. This also applies to the US government. Thus, After the new elites were powered in the united states led by Donald Trump at the beginning of 2017, the issue of how he and his colleagues viewed the macro goals and national interests of the United States became the focus of political, scientific and research circles, speciallythat Trump talked about changes in many national goals and priorities of the country during the campaign. In fact, with rule of the new government in the United States and after the first months, changes in national priorities, goals and interests began to emerge in the country, and then its dimensions became more evident which was the most important headline of these changes in the field of foreign policy. Despite all of the weaknesses attributed to Trump in foreign policy, after gaining power he defined the principles and objectives of his government in various areas. In this regard, within the framework of the doctrine of the “revival of American majesty”, some principles and axes are defined in the foreign policy of the United States which have been the guide to foreign policy of the country over the past year. The principles are those strategies that are based on specific values and guide foreign policy behavior. In fact, the fundamentals and basic foundations determine the policy and orientation of each country's diplomacy and guide the

implementers and are policy makers of the foreign policy systems of that country (Shokri, 2017).

The first pillar of Trump's foreign policy can be found in his slogan of "America's precedence", which he emphasized during the election campaign days. The second principle in the foreign policy of Trump is the guarantee of peace through the exercise of power. Another rotation axis in Trump's foreign policy is his critique of democracy promotion policy, although from the time of Reagan almost all of the leaders of democracy promotion and the observance of human rights in the world have always been included as a strategy in the national security strategy documents, but this policy had become increasingly important during Obama's presidency. The other axis of Trump's foreign policy in the first year of his presidency is the unilateral withdrawal from organizations or international agreements. (Shokri, 2017)

Trump's Middle-Eastern Policy

It should be noted that what forms the main framework of Trump's Middle East policy is his perception and understanding about the increase of factors empowering the Islamic Republic of Iran in the region in the post-JCPOA atmosphere. Such an approach can be also found well among Trump's regional allies, so that it can be said that Saudi Arabia and Israel consider the JCPOA not as a factor in increasing the stability of the region by eliminating the danger of war, but as a factor increasing Iran's strength factors in the region and a factor of increasing the treats from Iran (Anatolian News Agency). One of the main axes of Iran's control by Trump is to shape and strengthen regional alliances against it. By applying a strategy of "transfer responsibility", Trump tries to use the regional actors to control and restrain Iran. The United States said in a statement to Iran: "The time is for the whole world to join the United States and ask the Iranian government to end its destruction and follow-up to kill". It is also emphasized that "the United States will restore its alliance with traditional allies and regional partners and balance of power in the region." (Shokri, 2017)

A regional coalition strategy against Iran is being pursued simultaneously on two fronts. The first is the coalition of Arab countries against Iran led by the Saudi Arabia. The choice of Saudi Arabia as the axis is because of various reasons, including some of

the identity and ideological conflicts with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Also, since Saudi Arabia has felt the greatest danger from improvement of Iran's strategic dignity in the region over the past few years and considering the heavy failures experienced in Iraq and Syria, as well as the changes it has made in terms of building internal power, it is considered as the best pillar of the regional coalition against Iran in Trump's view. For the same reason, despite the negative propaganda he made during the campaign against Saudi Arabia, Trump made his first foreign trip to Saudi Arabia, signing an arms deal worth over \$ 300 billion in Riyadh on his trip to Saudi Arabia. The second coalition front is the formation of an Arab coalition with Israel against Iran. Trump is building a coalition of Arab states with Israel against Iran, using the power struggle between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and taking into account the Zionist regime's concerns about Iran's growing influence on the region and presence in Syria (Shokri, 2017).

Trump's Foreign Policy towards Iran

Trump's general approach to Iran initiates from his macro politics in opposition to the performance of former US President Barack Obama. He has had meaningful actions towards Iran since the first days of his establishment at the White House. Criticisms on Barack Obama's policies towards the Islamic Republic of Iran and attempts to terminate the JCPOA and imposition of immigration restrictions against Iranian citizens represented his anti-Iranian face from the beginning. Moreover, his apparent support for the country's popular and economic protests shows that he is the most anti-Iranian president of political history of the United States. In Trump's foreign policy towards Iran, there are some military and militant figures that are highly ideological compared to Obama's cabinet. In his aggressive foreign policy towards Iran, he uses various people in his government, each of which has a share in the strategy of the Trump's government toward Iran. People like Steve Bannon, Jeff Sessions, Mike Pompeo, Nikki Haley, Michael D'Andrea, Rex Tillerson, Dina Powell and Herbert McMaster have played key roles in shaping US foreign policy toward Iran (Shokri, 2017). Though at first glance it seems that Trump's policies towards Iran have been shaped since the election campaign, the reality is that Donald Trump did not

have a clear strategy toward Iran until his strategy was announced against Iran in October 2017, and his main position in this period of time was the subject of a nuclear deal and criticizing it. Donald Trump's new strategy, published after consulting with his national security team and after 9 months of scrutiny with the Congress, he has tacitly stated the strategies against Iran, by making claims against Iran, including logistical and financial supports for terrorism and extremism, supporting the regime of Bashar al-Assad against the Syrian people, a continuous hostile approach to Israel, a constant threatening of the maritime freedom, especially in the Persian Gulf, cyber-attacks against the United States, Israel and other allies and partners of America in the region, human rights violations and abuses, and finally the arrest of foreign citizens, including US citizens with spying charges.

America and Withdrawal from the JCPOA Agreement

On 13th of October 2017, coincided with 21th of Mehr of 1396, Trump announced a new strategy of his government against Iran during a speech, with a strong face and tone. The core of this strategy is a strict policy against Tehran. Relations between the United States and Iran, after a brief period of relative tranquility during Barack Obama, have returned to the tension and hostility circuit of the past few decades once again. Donald Trump announced that the Iranian government is responsible for many international crises and assassinations and bloodshed and the deaths of many Americans around the world, so now he wants to punish the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps with new sanctions (Moj News Agency, 2017).

America under leadership of Trump is severely under the pressure of Iran-fearers and lobbies of the Zionist regime which demand confrontation with Iran in any possible way and do not tolerate withdrawal of Trump from its anti-Iranian stand. On 18th of July 2018, coincided with 22th of Dey 1397, Donald Trump the US president, after several days of media outlets about the possible withdrawal of the country from the International Atomic Energy Agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran known as JCPOA, practically affirmed his country's presence in the agreement by renewal of the suspension of the US sanctions (Jamekurdi News Agency, 2017).

Following America's effort to withdraw from JCPOA, Donald Trump officially announced withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA on 8th of May 2018, coincided with 18th of Ordibehesht 1397, declaring this move as "giving up" on it which is an incorrect technical term because this agreement is not a treaty and the United States can only enforce or violate the provisions of this international agreement. Trump called this agreement a "horrible" one-sided agreement that should never have been signed. In his view, this agreement did not bring peace and it won't. Trump said: "Today, I announce that the United States will withdraw from Iran's nuclear agreement", and "the highest levels of economic sanctions" will be imposed on Iran.

Announcement of positions regarding the one-sided withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA were different. France, Germany, and Britain said they were sorry for Trump's withdrawal from the treatment and will try to persuade him to remain in it. Out of the signatories, none has expressed their support for Trump's decision for withdrawal. However, Israeli's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says he fully supports the "brave" withdrawal of Trump from a "catastrophic" deal. Also, Saudi Arabia, the regional rival of Iran says that it "supports and welcomes" Trump's movement towards withdrawal from the agreement (Wikipedia, 2019).

America's Options in JCPOA

Trump's position towards the Middle East shows that he wants formation of a new order in the region. An order defined based on his and his colleagues' macro policies, especially in the ring of the National Security Council. On this basis, the axis of this order is based in the Arab part of Saudi Arabia and the non-Arab part of Israel. One of the signs of this new order was withdrawal of the United States from JCPOA agreement that generally the governments apposing to the Islamic Republic of Iran including the Saudi Arabia and Israel call for cancellation of the agreement and initiation of strict policies against Iran. The subsequent developments in Trump's government were proofs for this.

A few minutes after US's withdrawal by Trump, the US Treasury Department issued an instruction on withdrawal from JCPOA during a statement and announced that he would take an

immediate action to implement the president's decision. The statement says that sanctions against Iran will be resumed within 90 days and 180 days, so that at the end of these periods, the applicable sanctions will be fully effective. This includes actions in the framework of both primary and secondary sanctions. During his speech at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, United States Secretary of State Mike Pompeo presented 12 Washington's conditions to reach a new agreement with Iran. During his speech titled "After the Agreement; A New Strategy against Iran", the US Secretary of State spoke about "imposing the strongest sanctions of the history" against Tehran. These terms include that Iran is required to: 1. announce all military aspects of its previous nuclear activities to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); 2. Terminate uranium enrichment and do not process Plutonium. This condition involves shutting down heavy water reactors of Iran; 3. Grant the IAEA access to all its nuclear facilities throughout the country; 4. Abandon its ballistic missile program and refrain from producing missile systems capable of carrying a nuclear warhead; 5. Free all American citizens and citizens of America's allies; 6. Do not support "terrorist groups" in the Middle East, including Hezbollah of Lebanon and Palestinian groups of Hamas and Islamic Jihad; 7. Respect the independence of Iraq and allow Shiite militant to be disarmed and dissolved. 8. Refuse to support the Houthi Shrouds in Yemen and allow the crisis in Yemen to end with a political and peaceful solution; 9. Iran will withdraw all troops under its command from Syria; 10. End its support for the Taliban and other "terrorist groups" in Afghanistan. Also not to refuge al-Qaeda leaders; 11; The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps must end its support for the "terrorist groups" and "Paramilitary militias" of the Revolutionary Guards; 12. End its threatening behavior against the neighbors, many of which are US allies. This condition includes the threat of Iran to destroying Israel and launching missiles to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. This condition also includes threats to international shipping and malicious cyber-attacks. According to the US Secretary of State, although the list of conditions is long, it includes US's "fundamental" demands from Iran.

Mike Pompeo gave a speech less than two weeks after the announcement of the unilateral withdrawal of the United States

from JCPOA. The US Secretary of State spoke about the "most powerful sanctions against Iran" while the European Commission launched a program to fight US sanctions against Iran. The purpose of the program is to protect the interests of European companies in Iran (Euro News, 2018).

Iran's strategy towards the United States

Formation of a cooperation and compromise approach between 2003 to 2015 among the powerful governments and the Islamic Republic of Iran and the negotiations between them on the issue of nuclear activities, eventually led to concluding the JCPOA agreement. Strategic importance of the nuclear issue and governance of the cooperative atmosphere between the two parties had a significant impact on this agreement. The cooperative approach from point of view of the theory of liberalism also makes the same impression. They argue that conflicts among governments can be adjusted through cooperation in a limited and specific area. This is an optimistic view offered by liberalism from international politics. Although this view is also empirically defensible, the developments in international relations are not merely related to this conception, and its other side is a struggle for the goals and interests that destroy the agreements between governments once more.

JCPOA agreement is a prototype that shows both conceptions of international politics, including the theory of liberalism in form of cooperation and the theory of realism in form of conflict. The following discusses the strategies of Islamic Republic of Iran in three sections based on developments occurred after signing the JCPOA agreement:

Strategy of Keeping Promises

Since withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA at the beginning of 2018, Islamic republic of Iran based the policies towards JCPOA on keeping promises and commitment to JCPOA. This policy is based on the fulfillment of commitments toward JCPOA and also putting the other party (the United States) under psychological pressure for unilateral withdrawal from an international commitment and also applying pressure to the European and Chinese parties to persuade the united states to return

to JCPOA as well as Consultation with European parties to secure Iran's rights arisen from JCPOA.

“Commitment to international obligations” is one of the important principles of international law and one of its basic rules. The Islamic Republic of Iran, by announcing its commitment to fulfill its obligations toward JCPOA, virtually removed the other JCPOA contracting countries from the United States’ approach toward the JCPOA and caused the other JCPOA’s parties to put full implementation of this international agreement in the agenda. On the other hand, the strategy prevented formation of any new coalition to examine alternative options regarding Iran's issues, including Iran's nuclear issue. Another effect of this policy was the accompaniment of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with the issue of JCPOA’s continuation. This international agency related to the nuclear issue, has repeatedly confirmed Iran's commitment toward the JCPOA which caused more tension on the other party.

Another issue that justified the strategy of adhering to the commitments was ambiguity in the post-JCPOA atmosphere. The reason for this ambiguity was that the new US government was naturally not satisfied with content of the agreement, but it was not clear about what new demands it was going to make; certainly, Trump’s demands in the negotiations with Iran will not be in the same level with JCPOA, because otherwise there would be no need for reopening the talks. The twelve conditions of Mike Pompeo confirm the correctness of this extravagance. The other point about correctness of the strategy of adherence to an agreement is related to violation of an agreement by the other party, which simultaneously called for a new agreement. Iran's synchORIZATION with the United States would mean ignoring the agreement and co-operation with the government violating the agreement. In one of his recent speeches, Hassan Rouhani has stated that Iran will never enter negotiations with a party that has violated the previous agreement and imposed unlawful sanctions on Iran. In addition, relying on the policy of a resistance economy that is one of the strategies of the Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, can successfully withstand sanctions (Yadlin, 2018). Iran's ambassador to France, Bahram Ghassemi, also said that Iran would not return to the talks on nuclear issues; he added: Tehran will attempt to

maintain the JCPOA and will not precede in violating it (Fars News Agency, 2018). Using the strategy of adhering to the commitments by Iran, while the European parties were insisting on maintaining them was reasonable. On the other hand, with this policy the Europeans were considering to confront United States' unilateral policies and, if possible, return the country to the JCPOA agreement. The Europeans' efforts did not effect and they eventually assured the other party, Iran, to create a solution for Iran's benefit from JCPOA in exchange for Iran's commitment to it.

A Strategy to Reduce Commitments

Islamic Republic of Iran, by keeping Europeans away from the US's approach based on agreement in form of a new negotiation, hoped to be able to benefit from its rights created by JCPOA through these countries in exchange for compliance with its commitments. Consultations between Iran and the 1+4 countries in this regard took place in 2018, and eventually the European party (France, Germany, and Britain) introduced its own special financial strategy and mechanism. This special financial mechanism, the Persian equivalent of which is the "Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges" (INSTEX), is a special financial instrument created by France, Germany and the United Kingdom in January 2019 to facilitate non-dollar trade with Iran. INSTEX is based in Paris headed by the German Per Fischer, a former director of the Commerzbank. Instruments in support of the trade exchanges enable the European companies to trade with Iran without the risk of violating the US sanctions legislations. In order to enforce this issue on Thursday, 31th of January 2019, a company with a capital of 3,000 Euro was established in Paris. The mechanism of this special financial instrument is such that barter among the exporters and importers of a single European country takes place without direct financial connection with Iran (Wikipedia, 2019).

Performance of the financial institution specified to the Europeans or the INSTEX is still in a state of ambiguity. Several criticisms have been made by the Iranian authorities to this institution. The economic problems of Iran in the last months of 2018 and beginning of 2019 in food, medicine, housing, and automobile sector which has emerged in form of the lack of these

items and the high inflation and cost of goods shows that the INSTEX monetary and financial exchange system (bank) INSTEX has not been useful to Iran, and virtually no opening has been made in the constraints created by United States' withdrawal from the JCPOA. On the other hand, the successful implementation of the INSTEX depends on acceptance of the provisions of the FATF and the four bills from Iran, as well as acceptance of the positions and demands of the three mentioned countries. Europeans also announced that INSTEX is merely a special financial channel with Iran on its commitments to JCPOA, so that, in case of Iran's withdrawal or not compliance with its obligations to JCPOA, this financial institution will actually be deactivated. INSTEX showed that the three European countries practically did not do any effective work and they put Iran in a state of inferiority between adhering to JCPOA and withdrawing it.

In response to the delay and weak performance of the three European governments and financial channel of INSTEX, on 8th of May 2019 (one year after withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA), Iran's President Hassan Rouhani, under the Article 36 of the JCPOA agreement, informed the remaining parties of the JCPOA (4+1) about the reduction of a part of Iran's commitment toward JCPOA during a letter. In this letter, he cited the reason for the reduction in Iran's commitments as the European's overwhelming delay toward their commitments and ineffectiveness of INSTEX financial channel. The Iranian government has adopted the strategy of commitment reduction under article 36 of the JCPOA. Article 36 says: "If the parties fail to comply with their obligations, the other party can suspend a part of his own cooperation cited in the treaty." Iran's citation to JCPOA treatment to reduce the commitments meant that Iran does not want to abandon JCPOA and merely wants to use capacities of the agreement to put the European countries under Pressure.

Response of the European countries to the letter of the Iranian president was disappointing. One day after the letter from the Iranian president, Federico Mogrini, the EU Foreign Policy Chief, along with the Secretary of State from Germany, Britain and France, stated in a joint statement that they would not accept the 60-day deadline and asked Iran to continue to fulfill their commitments toward JCPOA as well as the provisions of the Non-

Proliferation Treaty. The European party also stated that the problems with JCPOA should be referred to the JCPOA's Joint Commission predicted in Article 36.

The positions of the European governments showed that the strategy of reducing commitments cannot be a good tactic to get out of a deadline in implementation of JCPOA. It seems that implementation of any strategy that leads to ignoring the JCPOA agreement by Iran would face challenges. An analysis shows that determination of a 60-day deadline for the Europeans by Iran includes the message that Islamic Republic of Iran insists on maintaining JCPOA and commitment to it and despite withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA, it also acted so, but position of the European governments merely include apparent preservation of JCPOA and Iran's unilateral adherence to it; therefore, in a situation where the three European countries did not take appropriate steps to implement JCPOA, Iran will have to adopt further strategies that the issue of negotiation with the US can be one of the options. The story of announcing a phone number to the Swiss embassy by Trump, as well as saying that "I'm waiting for a telephone call from Tehran" (Aftabe Yazd, 2019.5.2) showed that the United States is pleased with fading of the JCPOA and withdrawal of Iran from it, therefore, immediately after the disappointing response of European leaders to Iran, the United States tried to raise the issue of re-negotiation with Iran.

Strategy of Re-Negotiation with the United States

The choice of Donald Trump in 2016 and his actions from the beginning of 2017 were surprising. Regardless of his choice as President of the United States, his performance is more considerable. It is customary that the presidents of the United States are generally focused on the areas of domestic policy in the first four years of their presidency. This section includes a wide range of activities in the economic, educational and health field. Then by creating a domestic support, they try to win the next round of the elections, and in this round they may seek foreign adventures. This case usually takes place when the international situation is normal and the international peace and security is not in danger.

From the beginning of his work in the White House, Trump got involved in several adventures. In field of domestic policy, he executed the social security law known as "Obamacare", reducing its taxes and regulations, restricting immigration to the United States, especially on the border with Mexico, and building a retaining wall with the country, as well as prohibiting the immigration of citizens of six Muslim countries, and in field of foreign policy, ignoring important domestic rules, withdrawal from international treaties, including the Paris Agreement, the Arms Trade Treaty, UNESCO, JCPOA and leaving the Trans-Pacific's Partnership, the implementation of a policy of reducing commitments and costs for the NATO organization as well as some allies in different regions, including the Middle East and instead, strong support of the Israeli government and criticism of the interventionist policies of previous governments, especially in Afghanistan and Iraq, are the most important aspects of foreign policy of Donald Trump's government. Based on the mentioned aspects, Trump got involved in a wide range of topics both in the domestic and in the foreign aspects. The 2020 election in America will show whether the division of work among former US presidents is rational or not, and how will an all-out conflict affect the political future of Trump.

One example of Trump's foreign policy was his withdrawal from the JCPOA and as he claims himself, the withdrawal means giving opportunity to form a new agreement. Since withdrawal of the UNITED States from the JCPOA, the issue of re-negotiation with this country was raised. Implementation of this strategy faces major challenges and obstacles both within Iran and internationally which we briefly discuss:

First, the strategy faced clear opposition from the Iranian authorities. The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Khamenei stated: "It is a clear mistake to imagine solving the country's problems through negotiation or relations with the United States. The United States has a fundamental problem with the principle of the Islamic system, so negotiating with America is useless. Even if we suppose that we were going to negotiate, we would certainly not negotiate with present government"(Euro News Agency, 2018). Iran's President Hassan Rouhani talks about the possibility of negotiations with the United

States: "It's crazy to come to negotiate with you, since you do not adhere to what you are committed to" (Basirat News Agency). The domestic political activists have more or less opposed to re-negotiation with the United States. The so-called conservative groups who were strong opponents of the JCPOA, have seen the withdrawal of the United States as a confirmation of the correctness of their points of view toward JCPOA and criticized Rouzani's government for this excuse. Other groups, of course, reject the re-negotiation strategy for other reasons. One of these reasons is the historical record of US hostility and failure to comply with the agreements.

The second challenge goes back to the other party, the United States. There are too many reasons for the United States. Trump's approach to international agreements is inappropriate and has declined a wide range of international agreements since his arrival. The most important of these agreements was the JCPOA. Correct analysis has been documented historically in terms of failure in keeping promises. Seyed Hussein Mousavian, a former Iranian expert and diplomat who has also been involved in nuclear talks, has recently discussed four clear cases of the American's failure in keeping promises by mentioning historical cases during an article. In this regard he writes: "First: In the late 1980s, the US president asked Iran for help to release the American hostages and offered goodwill for goodwill. In the Secretary of State of Iran, I was given the mission to pursue the matter by the time president, Mr Hashemi Rafsanjani. During this period, with the help of the Quds Force Revolutionary Guard's, Iran liberated American and Western hostages in Lebanon but Washington did not fulfill its promises about mutual goodwill; Second: After the terrorist attack to Twin Towers in New York on September 11, 2001, the US president asked Tehran to help fight the assassination in Afghanistan. Iran decided to help the United States to fight assassination in Afghanistan. Iran's Quds Force played the main role this time too which led to the fall of Taliban. Unfortunately, president of the United States responded by calling Iran "the axis of evil", which was a shameful response; Third: In 2003, after the invasion of Iraq, the United States again needed support from the Iranian Quds Force Revolutionary Guard to organize Iraq after Saddam. All the

important jihadist groups of Iraqi armed forces were in Iran in the days of Saddam's dictatorship. Also this time, with consent of Quds Force Revolutionary Guard, the major anti-Saddam Hussein Shiite groups went from Iran to Iraq and cooperated with CENTCOM to establish a new political system and provide Iraq's stability and security after Saddam. The United States responded negatively to Iran's goodwill in Iraq this time too; Four: During the nuclear talks, when 16 American sailors illegally entered Iran and got arrested, John Kerry immediately contacted Zarif and asked for help, and within less than a day, every 16 CENTCOM military forces were released without trial. ... These four cases show that the United States has never responded goodwill with goodwill" (Mousavian, 2019).

The third challenge is about the US domestic political transformation. Trump has created lots of tensions in the American society since his arrival. Due to these conflicts, the issue of Trump's political future and whether he can win the election in 2020 is a determining factor in conducting negotiations with his government. Importance of this issue is such that less than two years left to the presidency election, "The 2020 Donald Trump Presidential Campaign" has been held by him. The experts believe that because of his weaknesses in performance, especially in the field of foreign policy, Trump tries to repair this weakness in the remaining opportunities. In this area, Trump has been involved in tensions with three countries, namely North Korea, Iran and recently Venezuela and has not succeeded in any of these cases. Regarding Iran, he demonstrated disregarding an important international agreement. About the JCPOA, Trump failed to bring the other contracting countries of the JCPOA along with him; therefore, by applying unilateral sanctions, he is trying to persuade other parties, including Iran to negotiate. The negotiations with North Korea have been abandoned unfinished. The reason for this problem has been mentioned as Trump's excessive demands by "Kim Jong-un" the Leader of North Korea. In case of Venezuela, by supporting the opposition leader, Trump was considering to overthrow Maduro's government that he did not succeed; while he had heavily criticized the aggressive policies of the former presidents in other countries, including Afghanistan and Iraq and the excessive costs. According to above analysis, Trump practically

has not had any achievement in field of foreign policy. For the same reason, some believe that Trump's efforts for re-negotiation with Iran is a cover for foreign failures and possibly restoration of his image to win the election 2020. "Therefore, it is unlikely that Trump would succeed in surrendering the Islamic Republic of Iran before the presidential election of 2020, especially since the Iranians are well aware that the shortfall in his pressure near the election would increase his political capital in the election campaign." (Al-alam News Agency)

The Final Word

The perceptions of liberalism and realism about an international agreement called "JCPOA" were measured in this paper. An agreement on the Iranian nuclear issue was possible when the parties had a common understanding to reach the important goals and to remove each other's concerns and the proximity of the positions of decision-makers. This is the same conception of liberalism as an element of cooperation in international politics. This image is an important part of the developments in our world that has emerged more and more and it will exist in the future too. Another perception is the realist view emerged with providing the atmosphere for controversy and competition among actors in the new US Cabinet in the case of withdrawal from JCPOA. This is also an image that discusses the controversy and competition elements in the international politics' atmosphere. The desire to cooperate or fall into conflict, competition and, ultimately, the war are the realities of our time.

The JCPOA agreement is a sign of simultaneous existence of elements of cooperation and conflict in the structure of international policy. Strategies of the Islamic Republic of Iran based on cooperation in form of agreement, commitment in form of fulfilling obligations, reduction of obligations to governments violating the agreement and re-negotiation were studied and analyzed in this article. Challenges and barriers of each were far more than their strengths. With this description, Iran is practically in a state of uncertainty toward JCPOA. The excessive reliance on three European countries (France, Germany and Britain) did not provide Iran's interests. There is a fear that in case of Iran's

withdrawal from the JCPOA, these three countries will tend towards the United States and in addition to the issue of nuclear activities, make excuses on other issues including human rights, missile issues, and Iran's regional influence and politics, and form a new coalition with the United States against Iran. This will put Iran in a weaker position. The strategy of negotiation with the United States is basically lacking in the necessary grounds and makes more challenges for Iran. In other words, in a new negotiation with the United States, Iran lacks the ability and means to equalize the other parties to earn privileges in its own favor. A more logical strategy for Iran until 2020 seems to be adhering to commitments and pursuing a policy of patience and waiting. This strategy can keep Iran from dangers. However, continuation of this condition may lead to numerous economic and social crises in the society and reduce the government's ability to deal with international pressures.

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