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UNITED STATES POSITION TOWARDS IRAN' S NUCLEAR PROGRAM

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Abstract - The research paper highlighted the United States position toward the Iranian nuclear program and its threat against the U.S. Policy in the Middle East. The study explained the strategy of the United States and how it dealt with the Iranian nuclear program in a positive way before the revolution of 1979 and a negative way till now. It is also discussed how the United States can deal with the Iranian nuclear program and which ways are suitable for now and the future. The study included an introduction, the stages of the development of the Iranian nuclear weapon, the locations of the nuclear facilities and the policy of the United States toward the Iranian nuclear weapon before and after the revolution of 1979. Additionally, and it compared the policy of the United States toward the Iranian nuclear weapon to the policies of other countries, as well as Iran's position of the non-proliferation treaty. It is also covered the IAEA position of the Iranian nuclear file. The study concluded with the possible ways can be followed by the United States to deal with Iran after the American withdrawal of the nuclear deal on May 5, 2018.

Keywords - Iran, Iran Nuclear Program, United States, Middle East, International Atomic Energy Agency (Iaea), United Nation,

I. INTRODUCTION

The U.S. has tried to stop the Iranian nuclear program since the1990s. Iran's nuclear file wasn't developed yet. However revealing the fuel enrichment in 2002-2003 raised great concerns in the international community toward the incentives of the Iranian Nuclear program that Iran claims to be peaceful. "Iran's nuclear program is a fundamental threat to international peace and security" a repeated judgment of the U.N. Security Council. What was the United States position toward Iran's nuclear proliferation activities? How did they deal with it? What is the role of the United Nations? Have the diplomatic efforts been fruitful to stop Iran's nuclear program? All these questions alongside with many others are raised whenever Iran's nuclear weapon issue rises. The U.S. policy toward Iran is clear - to deter Iran's nuclear program. United States is trying to achieve that goal via diplomatic efforts, which has been progressing under the auspices of the United Nations. The UNSC sanctions were great pressure on the Iranian economy since 2006. International Sanctions dragged Iran to the negotiations table. A military strike has been always an option to deter Iran, but here again more questions arise: can the U.S. attack Iran after what happened in Iraq and what is happening in Syria? Is the U.S. able to get into another war in the region? Especially after the withdrawal of the United States on 5 May 2018 from the Nuclear Deal signed in 2015, and imposing more economic sanctions.

Iran is not in a good situation as well. They might be in a powerful position in the region when they complete proliferating their weapon; yet their economic situation is worsening. Are they able to face a long-term sanction that is parallelizing their economy, and are they able to face such international pressure? Economic and local pressure might make them reconsider their decision to have their nuclear weapon and drag them to negotiations table. Iran claims that their nuclear activities are merely peaceful, but all that has been found lately by theInternational Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)contradicts with what Iran says. Iran's nuclear program is a challenge for the United States foreign policy. U.S. is trying to prevent Iran from preceding its nuclear proliferation, however only diplomatic efforts are the one seems to be working. Finally, Will Iran be able to acquire its nuclear weapon, and will the U.S. accept Iran as a nuclear state? If not, what are the U.S. options to deter Iran's Nuclear weapons? The research will handle this topic and give a historical review for the U.S. Iran relations and how the U.S. participated in putting the seeds for this dilemma.

II. NUCLEAR WEAPON RISING

Iran's nuclear activities go back to the era of the Shah Mohamed Reza Pahlavi (1941-1979). The United States encouraged Iran to expand its nuclear energy program, prompting the Shah to build nuclear reactors to harness nuclear energy. The United States showed its readiness to assist Iran in this field with return of oil and a promise to buy the U.S. arms. In 1978 the U.S. signed an agreement with Iran only seven months before the Islamic revolution in Iran, according which the U.S. started moving equipment and nuclear material to Iran. Thereby the U.S. contributed in planting the seed of the Iran's nuclear program that became one of the most important foreign policy challenges for the U.S. faces today.(1)

Iran leaders have worked on pursuing nuclear weapon since the 1950s, where they established the Iranian

Atomic Energy Organization and the Iranian Nuclear Research Center. As soon as the center started working, the United States granted Iran a five-megawatt nuclear reactor for research purposes, which helped in producing 600g of plutonium of nuclear fuel yearly. The support of the U.S. and Western Europe continued until the fall of the Shah in 1979 and the rise of the Iranian revolution, Iran disbanded the elements of the program that revived again in the 1990s.(2)

III. LOCATIONS

There are six nuclear sites for the Iranian nuclear program. First, Nantanz, a station for uranium proliferation was discovered in 2003 in a report to the International Agency of Atomic Energy, it is in the heart of Iran's dispute with the United Nations Security Council. Second, Bushahir, a nuclear power station with which Iran's nuclear program started in 1974 with German assistance, this site was abandoned after the Iranian Revolution 1979, but revived again in the 1990s with Russian assistance. Third, Cachin uranium site started operating in 2004 and in December 2010. Iran said that from this site it delivered its first domestically produced uranium "the yellow cake" to a plant that make it ready for enrichment. Fourth, Isfahan site is a nuclear facility to convert yellow cake into three forms. Fifth, Qom, this facility has been revealed in 2009, the IAEA said that this facility will start enriching uranium in 2011. Sixth, Ark first emerged with the publication of a satellite image in December 2002, established close to a heavy water facility to moderate the nuclear fission chain reaction.(3)

IV. UNITED STATES POSITION TOWARD IRAN BEFORE AND AFTER THE REVOLUTION

Iran is one of the main countries that planned to build its nuclear arsenal since the 1960s. They started building research centers for nuclear researches, after the signing non-proliferation treaty in 1968 and its approved in 1970.(4) The United States offered building 5-7 nuclear reactors, but the Shah preferred the German company Kraftwerk Union Siemens offer due to the high cost of building the reactors. Therefore the German company became in charge of building two nuclear reactors in Bushehr which started in 1974. It also established Atomic Energy Agency in 1970 to monitor implementing nuclear projects.)5(The United States rejected these Iranian intentions, because it wanted to have the supervision on its nuclear program, therefore it sent State Department representative, Sydney Sober, to negotiate with the Shah about the nuclear program when the U.S. faced some challenges with the Shah, especially after he signed agreements with India and France to slowly dispense the U.S. nuclear experts in 1977.In these negotiations Iran agreed upon canceling all their agreement with other States on the condition of providing Iran with eight nuclear reactors by the U.S. to generate electric power. The agreement was signed on July 18, 1978, they agreed upon providing Iran with all what the nuclear reactor needs including nuclear fuel, how to develop it and its main materials.(6)

The U.S. agreement didn't even get to start. In 1979, after the Islamic Revolution in 1979 and the fall of the Shah, Iran lost the ability to develop their nuclear energy and their nuclear reactors except through some simple research in the Iranian universities. However, in 1992 Iran started reactivate their nuclear reactors. Since then Iran is trying to build its nuclear reactor in Bushehr, but U.S. puts pressure on those countries that try to help Iran to make any deal or agreement. The reason is not to prevent Iran from having a peaceful nuclear power but they are concerned about the amount of plutonium generated from the use of nuclear fuel to generate electric power. Bushehr project can generate about 23 kilograms of plutonium yearly, which mean Iran can build a nuclear weapon easily through changing any peaceful nuclear reactor into a nuclear reactor for weaponry research.(7)

V. COMPARISON BETWEEN THE U.S. POLICY TOWARD IRAN AND OTHER UNCLEAR STATES

Why United States doesn't object to other nuclear states, such as Israel, Pakistan and India but object to the Iranian nuclear activities? There are many different reasons: India and Israel are allies of the United States. They are democratic states. Their foreign policy and United States foreign policy are going on the same track. Pakistan is one of the most important allies to the United States in their war against terrorism because of their geographical situation and it has been playing a very important role to fight with the United States against Al-Qaida and Taliban. The United States objects to Iran having a nuclear weapon because nuclear Iran would put a devastating weapon in the hands of a radical authoritarian regime, which is swimming in a sea of oil.(8)

VI. IRAN AND THE NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION TREATY

The nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty aims to limit the spread of nuclear weapons; it came to action on March 5, 1970, the Treaty interpreted as three pillars system: Non-proliferation, Disarmament and The right to peacefully use nuclear technology. The NPT is considered a capstone for the world system in order to limit the spread of nuclear weapons. 189 countries joined the treaty five of which are the 5 permanent members of the UNSC. India, Pakistan, North Korea

and Israel are not members in this treaty. Iran signed the NPT in July 1968, and it was ratified in 1970. Signing this treaty gave Iran the right to peacefully use nuclear energy. In accordance with the articles of the treaty, the 5-P will provide the members who signed the treaty with nuclear technology. Therefore, Iran has the right to get nuclear technology assistance from any state of the 5-P, yet the United States strongly objected to any cooperation with Iran. The U.S. presumes that Iran would transfer the atomic technology and the materials that they receive for peaceful purposes into military purposes. (9)

VII. INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA) AND IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM

The crisis started in 1995 when Iran signed a treaty with Russia to build a nuclear energy station in Bushaher, which is south of Iran. This agreement might be the one that initiated the dispute between the U.N. and Iran. It raised doubts against the Iranian intentions in that agreement. Iran is very rich with oil and natural gas; therefore, it doesn't need nuclear energy to generate power. United States lead the countries who were suspecting Iran's intentions and referred to secret articles of this agreement that would allow Russia to provide Iran with nuclear fusion station to proliferate uranium. During the1990s, Iran was developing its nuclear program for peaceful purposes and kept cooperating with the IAEA by opening their station for inspection. Suddenly, the United States started an international campaign against the Iranian nuclear program, especially after the U.S. military invasion to Iraq. Meanwhile, the IAEA started pressuring Iran to sign a new agreement to expand the inspection process in the Iranian nuclear facilities as well as the right to pay sudden visits to them. From 1990-2002 the United States and allies doubted the intentions of the Iranian nuclear program, yet Iran kept saying that their intentions were merely peaceful. (10)

In 2002 the Iranian opposition revealed new information show that the Iranian government has been producing 40 megawatt of heavy water since 1996 in the city of Arak.(11) which is enough to make a nuclear weapon. Therefore, the IAEA issued a resolution on September 12, 2003 obligating Iran to stop all its proliferation activities and sign the Treaty of Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 1997. This treaty allows to search the Iranian nuclear facilities, but Iran didn't care and continued developing its program, which lead the IAEA to issue a resolution on November 25, 2003 accusing Iran of developing a nuclear weapon for 20 years.(12) As a result to Iran's strict position, the IAEA submitted the issue to the U.N. Security council, which its five members issued resolution number 1737 in March 2006 to prevent any country from selling any nuclear related equipment to Iran and freeze assets of ten companies.(13)

Until 2012, Tehran was only able to freeze 20% of Uranium and its right to proliferate 30% of it, which can be used for nuclear energy stations, but the IAEA stated that Iran increased its proliferation by 20% instead of 30% which makes it close to produce 90% of Uranium that can be used for nuclear weapons.(14)

On 24 November 2013 (America, France, Britain, Russia and China) and Germany 5+1 reached an initial agreement in Geneva held Tehran to stop proliferating Uranium more than 5% and allows the IAEA inspectors to search their nuclear facilities, in order to reduce the sanctions and release $700 million a month of Iran's assets till they reach a full agreement.(15)

After 18 months of negotiations and on 2 April 2015, 5+1 countries reached an agreement with Iran in Lausanne to stop the progress of the Iranian nuclear program for at least 10 years and complete suspension for uranium proliferation in Iran for a gradual lifting of the sanctions.(16) However all these efforts were in vain, because of the withdrawal of the United States; the main party in that agreement on 8 May 2018 and raise the economic sanctions on Iran, which brought the whole deal back to the beginning point.(17)

CONCLUSION

The Iranian nuclear program has always been a nightmare for western countries headed by the United States, because Iran has an ambition in the region and the Middle East, which will hit the interests of western countries in the future, if they owned such a destructive weapon. Therefore, there are three ways can be followed by the United States after the withdrawal from 2015 deal on 8 May 2018, these ways are:

First: continue the economic pressure on Iran through sanctions to bring it to the negotiations table again and impose its conditions to stop Iran's nuclear file, but how it can do that under this strict Iranian government?

Second: use the military option and target the Iranian nuclear facilities in order to stop them.

Third: Accept Iran as a nuclear power by the United States. The first option is the one that is more probably to happen, but the military option is still available.

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