
United States-Iran Conflict and Its Security Implications for Middle East

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Abstract

This study examined the United States-Iranian conflict and how it would affect Middle East security. This study used a historical research design, and the trend analysis technique was used to analyze the data. It was determined that the exploratory and qualitative trend analysis technique was appropriate for the type of study. This study was based on Zagare's (1996) deterrence theory, which was seen as a re-evaluation of the traditional balance of power theory. Findings showed that the core reasons for the dispute between the United States and Iran were the U.S. foreign policy, the failed extreme pressure strategy of the Biden and Trump administrations, state behaviour in the global order, innovation, domestic politics, and control and deterrence. The conflict between the United States and Iran has undermined regional security and peace. The main causes of the sanctions' futility against the Islamic Republic of Iran include Iran's economic diversification, its technological advancements, its nuclear program, its geopolitical location, people's support for the system as well as political engagement, the continued implementation of Iran's regional policies, political countermeasures, and other countries' lack of political support following Trump's decision to withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The Middle East's security was viewed as being threatened by Iran's nuclear program by the United States, Israel, and other countries in the region. The study concluded that, despite the two states' numerous problems and obstacles impeding their attempts to normalize, opportunities and hopes have always existed. The study concluded that despite their ongoing hostility and tense relationship, both nations occasionally communicate because it is in their specific national security goals. Therefore, the study suggested, among other things, that to prevent the United States from isolating itself from significant actors in the Middle East, the country should work to restore relations with Iran and discover productive means of resolving disagreements, starting with a return to full adherence to the JCPOA for both parties.

Keywords: United States, Iran, conflict, security, Middle East

Introduction

To draw comparisons with the present state of relations between the United States (U.S.) and Iran, one must first look at their historical background, considering the importance and controversy surrounding U.S. influence on Iranian politics and security. Following the arrival of American missionaries in Persia in the 19th century, the United States established a diplomatic mission there in 1883. But prior to the uncovering of oil in Iran, U.S. objectives globally took precedence over the U.S. presence in the region, particularly in Iran. With the rapid development of commercial interests by the nation's oil giants, Iran became the focal point of U.S. economic interests. However, the US's safety goals did not materialize until August 1941, when Iran turned to the U.S. as a natural ally in response to the Anglo-Soviet invasion. Along with enormous financial support, the United States also dispatched 30,000 soldiers to be stationed in Iran. With the assistance of the United States, Muhammad Reza Shah succeeded his father as the head of the Iranian regime, and the United States' influence in Iran intensified (Ochim & Hassan-Haruna, 2023). The Islamic ministers and separatist groups did not view the increasing American influence on Iran favorably, and in 1953 Mohammad Mussadiq led a nationalist coup that overthrew the Shah of Iran. Muhammad Reza Shah was reinstated once more thanks to the US-backed counter-coup, which also increased the US footprint in Iran. Iran emerged as the US's most powerful Middle Eastern ally and the "Policeman" of the Persian Gulf following Britain's withdrawal from the region in 1969. The Shah grew increasingly repressive at home and assertive in his regional policies (Nazir, 2015).

Ochim and Hassan-Haruna (2023) assert that the Islamic clergy in Iran had already been awakened by the nationalist coup of 1953, and that Ayatollah Khomeini had come to represent resistance and hope for the common Iranian against the repression and suppression of Shah. It took Ayatollah Khomeini more than twenty years to gather sufficient backing to bring about an uprising of the people and remove the Shah of Iran in 1979, as well as the influence of the United States. This historical analysis allows for the drawing of several parallels. First, the U.S. believes that regime change, even in a revolutionary Iran, is feasible to bring about the desired changes because it has participated in two attempts at regime change in Iran, in 1942 and 1953. While Mir Hussain Mousavi received support to run for president in 2009, the U.S. did attempt this strategy. However, when it became apparent that Mir Hussain Mousavi also adhered to the same nationalistic Iranian philosophy, this option was abandoned halfway through. Furthermore, the public's unhappiness and anti-Americanism have been stoked by the U.S.'s ongoing involvement in Iran, and this has

later become a defining feature of novel Iran's foreign policy stance. Crucially, in post-revolutionary Iran, the U.S. has failed to comprehend the Iranian national mood and character, which are rich in religious ideology (Ibrahim, 2021).

Furthermore, Iran's aggressive and confrontational behaviour paid off domestically but at the expense of its isolation from the rest of the world. This trend persisted under Ayatollah Khomeini's leadership and subsequently under Mahmood Ahmadinejad. The U.S.'s influence in the Middle East was severely diminished with the fall of the Shah of Iran. The Iranian leadership's revolutionary fervor and the U.S. countermoves that followed strained ties between the two countries. The policy of "neither East nor West" was vehemently adhered to by revolutionary Iran, which also strongly condemned the current bipolar political climate (Tabatabai, 2020). The first moves and counter-movements from both sides were the Iranian students seizing control of the U.S. embassy employees in Tehran and thawing Iranian assets in U.S. banks. The Iran-Iraq war (1980–88), U.S./Western support for Iraq, and the U.S. downing of an Iranian traveler's plane carrying 370 people in July 1988 all contributed to the infuriation of the Iranian leadership (Mohammed & Moorthy, 2020).

According to Mirza, Abbas, and Qaisrani (2022), the US implemented the "dual containment" strategy in opposition to Iran and Iraq following the Kuwait crisis (1990–1991), but it did not have the intended effect. Iran has gained popular support in the region because of its disagreement to the U.S.'s activities in the Middle East as well as its ongoing support of Israel. Iran has discovered two regional proxies, HAMAS and Hezbollah, to subvert the U.S./Israeli position in the dynamics of regional security. The US's ongoing military and diplomatic backing for Israel in opposition to the Palestinians, coupled with Iran's rejection of the "Peace Process", further cemented Iran's stance against the U.S.; The use of derogatory language by the U.S. and Iran, such as "Islamic Fundamentalism", "Rough State", and eventually "Axis of Evil", as well as by Iran as the "Great Satan", served to stoke tensions in the two countries' bilateral relations. As a result, the U.S. failed to influence Iranian policy through "dual control" or "regime shifts" (Tabatabai, 2020). Maher (2020) contends that the U.S. and Iran's rapprochement was aided by the post-9/11 regional security the natural world. As the U.S. eliminated two of Iran's principal regional adversaries, the Taliban, a religious and political risk in Afghanistan, and Saddam, an Iranian security threat in Iraq, in 2003; Iran did offer logistical support for U.S. operations in Afghanistan and shifted its stances regarding the U.S.'s involvement in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Nevertheless, the 2002 disclosure of Iran's nuclear program added another point of contention between the two nations. Both sides' opposing positions on the nuclear issue proved unpersuasive: the U.S. claimed that Iran was pursuing WMDs, while the Iranians claimed they had a "right to make peaceful use of nuclear power under Article IV of the Prohibition of proliferation Treaty." Iran viewed the UN-imposed regime sanctions towards it since 2006 and the agreement on the further protocol to the NPT as injurious (Tehsin, 2017).

Crucially, the U.S. and Iran have made positive overtures, despite their divergent stances on a wide range of bilateral and regional issues. Hashmi Rafsanjani and Mohammad Khatami, the two moderate Iranian presidents, persisted in their "critical engagement" with the EU-3, the U.S.'s European allies. To foster greater understanding between the U.S. and Iran, President Mohammad Khatami suggested in a January 1998 CNN interview that academics and writers from the U.S. and Iran should organize visits. Positively, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright offered to normalize relations with Iran during her speech to the Asia Society in June 1998 (Tabatabai, 2020). Nevertheless, due to a significant "trust deficit" in their bilateral relations, both countries were unable to see these encouraging developments come to pass. During his election campaign, President Barak Obama advocated for "Change," and he did address the Iranian issue. When Nowruz, the Persian national holiday, he congratulated the Iranian people and called for the restoration of diplomatic ties (Hussain, 2022).

However, any prospects of reconciliation were eliminated by the Congress's opposition to the President's actions and its firm stance against a nuclear agreement between the P5+1 and Iran. Additionally, Iranian President Ahmadinejad's 2008 controversial speech at Columbia University, his rant in opposition to the Holocaust and "wiping out Israel," and the Israeli authority and neo-conservatives in U.S. politics all became even more enraged. Additionally, it shows how differently Americans feel about normalizing ties with Iran (Mallard, Sabet & Sun, 2020). The 2010 Arab Spring forced the U.S. to reconsider its policy of "denial" to "engagement" with Iran, as it damaged U.S. credibility at the expense of "democracy vs. stability," growing Iranian regional influence, and "chaos and unrest" throughout the Arab world. Iran reevaluated its foreign policy strategy because of the ongoing sanctions imposed by the UN, the country's failing economy, and social unrest. While a few scholars (Fraser, 2019; Ibish, 2021; Hussain, 2022) contend that Iran has pursued the nuclear path to address its security concerns, others think it is doing so to gain regional hegemony. As a result of the, this study investigated the U.S.-Iranian conflict and its effects on Middle East security.

Literature Review

United States-Iran Rivalry in the Middle East

The Islamic Revolution's victory drastically altered the region's power dynamics and upended U.S. security strategy in the Persian Gulf. However, Iran's regional power was diminished and its role in the Middle East was thereby constrained by the Iran-Iraq war, the enforced war, and the structural challenges of the global framework (Shariati & Ghafari, 2019). In fact, U.S. Middle East policy following the dissolution of the Cold War appeared to be based on the Dual Containment theory against both Iran and Iraq. According to the former Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs in the Clinton Administration, "the administration concluded that both Iran and Iraq pursue policies that are directly at odds with U.S. interests." This conclusion gives rise to the concept of dual containment (Axworthy, 2013). Iran presents an illogical dual threat to our regulations, posing both a lesser as well as greater threat. Lessened in that, compared to Iraq about five years ago, Iran does not now represent the same a danger to our interests. Our current mission is to prevent Iran from becoming over five years from now a threat comparable to that posed by Iraq five years ago (Doko, 2014). Notwithstanding these claims, Iran started combating the Taliban as soon as they appeared in the

Middle East following the September 11, 2001, attacks, in addition to its domestic issues. Iran was even prepared to work with the U.S. to combat the Taliban at this point.

Barzegar (2016) contends that Iran's regional power increased proportionately with the start of the twenty-first century. Shiite organizations were strengthened, and a regional coalition headed by Iran was formed because of regional developments like the Arab Spring in 2011 and the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. The Middle East faced a security threat during this time due to the rise of ISIS. However, Iran used its military forces in Syria and Iraq as well as proxy organizations to combat this wave of terrorist attacks as a regional leader. Iran's regional efficiency demonstrates that one of the primary tenets of its foreign policy over the past fifty years has been "counterterrorism" (Mossalanejad, 2020). According to Shakoori and Vazirian (2019), Iran's government supports a variety of regional armed forces, including some Foreign Terrorist Organizations that the United States has classified as terrorist organizations, to weaken American influence in the Middle East and portray influence over the neighboring nations. Since the start of the war in Gaza, groups supported by Iran in the Middle East sometimes referred to as the "axis of resistance" have attacked American forces in Syria and Iraq as well as maritime vessels in the Red Sea, prompting American military action in retaliation. The risk of conflict may rise even though neither the U.S. nor Iran seems to be seeking a direct military confrontation. This is because various parties in a dynamic warfare environment may have shifting opinions about the threat and different political alongside strategic objectives.

Joukar and Sazmand (2020) assert that Congress has been instrumental in determining U.S. policy toward Iran through the enactment of legislation granting Congress the authority to review agreements pertaining to Iran's nuclear program, a major area of concern for U.S. policymakers, the authorization of broad sanctions, attempts to influence diplomatic relations with Iran, and financing and approving assistance to U.S. partners that faced Iranian threats. Meaningful congressional attention has been drawn to the October 2023 attack on Israel by the Palestinian group Hamas, which the United States has officially classified as a terrorist organization and which Iran has long endorsed. Other groups supported by Iran have also continued to attack US troops and other targets in the Middle East. Although Iranian governmental backing for Hamas has led U.S. and Israeli officials to view Iran as broadly involved in the October 7, 2023, attack, they have not found evidence of direct Iranian government role in the attack. The United States faces difficulties due to the Iranian government's gross human rights infractions and its close ties to China and Russia (Pirani & Naderi, 2024).

Pirani and Naderi (2024) claim that Iran has established a variety of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and keeps what the U.S. government describes as "the most significant inventory of ballistic missiles in the continent" to back its associated groups throughout the Middle East. Iran has significant regional power because of these activities, which the Iranian government has attempted to bolster by forging closer military and economic ties with Russia and China. For instance, by selling oil to China and exporting UAVs to support Russian military operations in Ukraine. To counter what U.S. officials, describe as Iranian threats to U.S. interests, the U.S. government has employed a variety of policy tools, including broad sanctions, restricted military action, and diplomatic engagement with leaders in Iran and other nations. The Iranian government is facing some domestic issues as of 2024, but it still has a lot of influence in the Middle East, is forging new relationships with China and Russia, and can oppose US interests there and abroad (Pirani, & Naderi, 2024).

Sanctions imposed by the U.S. against Iran are some of the oldest in the world. Jimmy Carter issued executive orders 4702 and 12170 in 1979, coinciding with the takeovers of host of American Embassy staff members in Tehran. Over time, the scope of the sanctions grew. The opposed actions of the U.S. government in previous years have resulted in several decrees and different statutes. The United States has implemented several broad initiatives in recent years to formalize and arrange sanctions against Iran, some of which include executive orders 12613, 12957 and 12959, 13382, 13553, 13574, 13590, 13599, and so forth (Pirani & Naderi, 2024). The recent wave of U.S. sanctions towards Iran can be examined to determine that they have not been effective because the desired outcomes have not been met. These actions peaked during the Obama and Trump administrations. The two main objectives of all the sanctions imposed on Iran over the past 40 years have been to alter Iran's behaviour and the Iranian regime (Pirani & Naderi, 2024).

Shariati and Vazirian (2024) contend that although Iran has faced numerous difficulties because of the sanctions, the country has not been able to satisfy the primary demands of the sanctions' creators. More specifically, from the perspective of assessing effectiveness, given that the creative actor and designer's initial intentions have not been realized, it can be noticed that, although the sanctions have caused issues for Iran's socioeconomic situation, they lacked usefulness for the U.S. because their ultimate objectives have not been met till date. On a macro level, neither dietary nor behavioural changes have occurred. Experts claim that Iran is becoming more influential in the Middle East (Pirani & Naderi, 2024). In theory, the logic of four decades of sanctions ought to have prevented Iran from becoming more powerful and influential in the Middle East, but this has not happened (Jones & Portela, 2020). The sanctions appear to have had little effect on Iran for a variety of reasons, including political concerns, destiny, paradoxical sanctions in the global political economy, Iran's internal circumstances, specifically the actions of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its citizens, and lastly the sanctions' limited capacity to function as an impartial and deciding parameter (violation of ability).

United States-Iran Relations: Areas of Common Interests

Ironically, despite their differences and tensions, Iran and the U.S. have a great deal in common that can overcome their differences and counterbalance each other. Despite this, their relations have historically been marked by hostility and persistent issues of concern. The desire of both nations for peace and security in the Middle East, the Caspian Sea,

and Southwest Asia is the most notable expression of these shared interests. Following 9/11, there has been a renewed and urgent desire, which has led to U.S. military involvement in the Middle East, for the following reasons:

1. **Iraq:** Although Iran is a factor in all of the U.S.'s major regional concerns and preoccupations, none is as immediate, significant, and has as many domestic, international, and regional ramifications as the future of Iraq. There is no need to explain the size of U.S. stakes in Iraq; what is less frequently understood or appreciated is Iran's influence on Iraq's future. Iran is and will continue to be the most significant and powerful state character in Iraq outside of the U.S. All of the U.S.'s significant geographic worries and the interests are influenced by Iran, but none are as pressing, consequential, or having as many local, global, and regional implications as Iraq's future. The extent of American involvement in Iraq is self-evident; what is less often recognized or acknowledged is Iran's impact on Iraq's future. Outside of the United States, Iran is and will remain the most important and potent state actor in Iraq.
2. Much more difficult tasks include regaining peace and security, defeating terrorism, and persuading the Iraqi, Arab, and Muslim populace that the United States is not an invading power, that it has no grandiose plans to redraw the borders of the Middle East, and that it does not intend to plunder Iraq's oil and wealth. Radicalization against Americans in the form of suicide bombers and terrorism will undoubtedly rise, and it will be seen as one of the few options left by Arabs and Muslims who believe that the use of U.S. force is unfair and harmful. The Ba'ath party apparatus of Saddam Hussein destroyed all viable forms of civil society over the course of the past few decades, preventing the emergence of any independent associations and establishments.
3. **Afghanistan:** Iran and Afghanistan share an extensive and fluid border, and both countries place a high value on Afghanistan's security and stability. Due to the large number of Afghan refugees living in Iran, the loss of over 3,000 Iranian lives in conflicts with narco-terrorists, and the availability of low-cost drugs on Iranian streets, Iranian policy makers are resolute in their pursuit of a more powerful and reliable central government in Afghanistan. In addition, the United States' war on terrorism makes it imperative that Afghanistan remain secure and stable. The United States and, more significantly, Europe struggle with the drug problem. For the sake of Afghanistan's prosperity and advancement, cooperation is essential rather than rivalry and viewing one another as threats that could endanger the country's entire situation. Iran has the option to use its facilities to contribute positively to Afghanistan or not, depending on how the United States treats it.
4. **Azerbaijan:** Azerbaijan may experience instability in the future due to Ilham Aliyev's lack of legitimacy, but Iran has a fascination in seeing a prosperous and secure Azerbaijan to the north due to lingering conflicts with Armenia and a sizable Azeri population in Iran. Similar interests exist for the United States in Azerbaijan. Thus, both countries need to contribute to reducing tensions between the Armenia and Azerbaijan. Respect for one another would be greatly beneficial to Iran and the U.S., rather than turning it into a point of rivalry and enacting prohibitive policies. Most Iranians will view any secretive or overt American support for an irredentist Azerbaijani shift in Iran as hostile.
5. **Pakistan:** Iran and the United States share a common interest in preventing a nuclear-armed Pakistan from becoming a failed state. Extremism is on the rise in Pakistan, where the country's multiethnic society, poverty, and conflict with India could create a dangerous situation for both the world and the region. Iran places great importance on stopping the flow of drugs through its borders, keeping its borders safe, resolving the issue of the Baluchistan minority, and defending the civil liberties of Shiites in Pakistan. The security of Pakistan's nuclear weapons is one of them. The United States is interested in a democratic Pakistan that is not ruled by extremists and does not end up in the wrong hands with nuclear weapons. Iran and the United States both want to see extremist groups in Pakistan under control.
6. **The Persian Gulf:** The safe transit of oil through a secure and peaceful Persian Gulf is of mutual interest to both Iran and the United States. It is imperative for both nations and the global community that producers and consumers work together to maintain the stability of the global markets for energy.

Theoretical Framework

The United States and Iran are engaged in a complicated conflict. Iran's provocative Middle East policies and its nuclear program are, in the eyes of the United States, the main sources of animosity. The major concerns from Iran's point of view are the U.S. denial of Iran's proper security objectives in the region and its role as a regional player, as well as the U.S. demeaning approach regarding the Islamic Republic. Iran's nuclear program has therefore grown to be a significant problem in U.S. - Iran relationships since 2002. In the framework of the IAEA, the US pushed for stringent actions against Iran, which ultimately resulted in the UNSC being tasked with overseeing Iran's nuclear program and the application of harsh economic sanctions. But the big-stick diplomacy and global dominance strategy, particularly during the tenure of President Bush, has hurt the nuclear aspirations of rival regional powers. This illustrates the situation with the nuclear program in Iran. The United States provided Iran with a strong incentive to develop a nuclear deterrent by labelling it as part of the "axis of evil" and attacking it with military action and regime change. Nevertheless, the authorities of the Islamic Republic had to reconsider a potent deterrent after threats of potential strikes were made by Israel and the United States under the administration of Donald Trump. Thus, Zagare (1996)'s deterrence theory served as the foundation for this investigation.

A body of scholarly work that was prominent in post-World War II Western literature is defined by deterrence theory. The animosity between the United States and the Soviet Union predominates the world stage after the war. Control of the worldwide order was in jeopardy because of the dramatic and potentially catastrophic global dispute between the superpowers (Zagare, 1996). Nonetheless, realist political theory and equilibrium in power dynamics are

where classical deterrence theory first emerged (Zagare, 1996). Following the war, the realism paradigm of war mitigation was improved to modern deterrence theory considering the newly formed truths in the post-war global order. As a result, it would be considered that contemporary deterrence theory is an adjustment of traditional balance of power theory. The conceptual boundaries between the deterrence and balance of power will be considered when considering how to balance deterrence. Deterrence involves decision-making, motives, and motivations (Wilner, 2015).

One persistently useful tool in international politics is deterrence. Its application, however, needs to be modified to consider significant changes in the regional and global systems, not just the way each actor reacts to a particular security threat. According to Morgan's (2012) theory, deterrence was once a common tactic that could be employed in conjunction with other security measures, such as diplomacy, espionage, or warfare. Furthermore, the foundation of traditional balance of system of power was deterrence, which was used by actors not only to stop wars but also to wage them. However, Morgan (2012) contends that as efforts to understand deterrence including how it functions, where it could be most effectively applied, and what kinds of capabilities are needed to maximize its effectiveness accelerated in the early part of the 20th century, this conception began to shift. Because of this, there has been a growing fascination in deterrence as a tactic to stop potentially extremely violent and harmful wars. The idea was even made popular by the rise of the Cold War; since nuclear deterrence is at the core of the national security tactics of the major powers, which are tasked with ensuring their survival, it became imperative to have it function at both the highest echelons of warfare and, more frequently, at lower levels or in more serious disputes that do not escalate to war (Morgan, 2012).

Other works refuted the conventional wisdom on deterrence and illustrated some important theoretical advances made by the first waves of deterrence theory to the field of deterrence studies as well as security analysis in general (Lupovici, 2010). In this regard, it is possible to distinguish three main waves of deterrence theory: the first wave, which emerged in the wake of World War II and saw little effect on policy, the second wave, which arose in the late 1950s and included game theory models to help comprehend actors' tactics, and the third wave, which battled with the shortcomings of the second wave, including its strong reliance on inference and lack of evidence to back up (Lupovici, 2010). According to Lupovici (2010), the interpretive strategy to deterrence primarily contributes by recognizing the social context that helps deterrence concepts be better accepted and understood as well as how actors' behaviour is influenced by them. By the end of the Cold War, a fourth wave of deterrence nuclear deterrence was fostered by the emergence of new threats like rogue states and terrorists as well as the development of analytical approaches (Nwador, Sanubi & Clark, 2023b). Through this wave, constructivists and other interpretative scholars began concentrating primarily on nuclear deterrence between the superpowers.

Notwithstanding the allegations, Iran, for example, used the US invasion of Iraq to further its own national goal of nuclear proliferation. Experts believed that Saudi Arabia would eventually be forced to resurrect its own nuclear program if Iran is granted nuclear weapons (Feickert 2013; Huwaidin, 2015). Saudi Arabia started to worry that Iran would use it as a pawn in its fight to take control of the Islamic world. Iran would undoubtedly gain unmatched power if it assumed Islamic leadership and dominance in the region, something that the other major countries would be reluctant to challenge. Iran's fiercest adversary, Saudi Arabia, does not care if Iran uses a bomb in opposition to them, Israel, or the US (Barzegar, 2012). The concept of deterrence is still in effect, but if Iran is permitted to develop nuclear weapons, Saudi Arabia might not permit the use of diplomatic, political, or military force. The growing threat of Iranian provocation of nuclear weapons, along with Ahmadinejad's hostile remarks and foreign policy, has forced Saudi Arabia to reevaluate its role in the Middle East and investigate its own nuclear choices. What international actions can be taken to counter Iran arose when the Iranian government threatened to harm the economies of oil-exporting countries (Huwaidin, 2015).

According to Zagare (1996), for deterrence to be effective, the person posing the threat needs to be able to follow through on it, be credible, and be stable that is, it should not promote the unacceptable conduct. Thus, by threatening to impose unacceptable costs on B should B choose to pursue a course of action that A deems undesirable, party A hopes to discourage party B from acting in accordance with the principle of mutual deterrence. Furthermore, according to Zagare (1996), the criteria of capability, trustworthiness, and stability in this deterrence relationship imply a relationship between the potential results of a mutual deterrence game that is structurally identical to the Prisoners' Dilemma, in which two rational parties decide against cooperating to achieve the best result because of their own personal motives. As was previously mentioned, there is a conceptual line that separates deterrence from balance of power when discussing how to balance deterrence (Nwador, Sanubi & Clark, 2023a).

The U.S. army is now stationed along Iran's borders because of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, making the US and Iran strategic rivals in their shared neighborhood. The United States and Iran possess certain common interests and policies, despite their many differences. In its 2004 report, the Zbigniew Brzezinski and Robert Gates-chaired Independent Task Force declared that continuing to engage with Iran would be detrimental to U.S. national interests in this vital region of the world and that political talks with Iran should not be postponed until important disagreements regarding regional conflicts and Iran's nuclear program have been resolved. The Task Force recommended that the best way to resolve the issue would be to engage political engagement with Iran. To effectively address the differences and investigate areas where their interests converge, the Task Force recommended selective political involvement with Iran while continuing to oppose its unacceptable policies.

The theory states that the Islamic Republic currently projects itself as a constructive force in terms of regional security and bases its approach to international relations mainly on realistic principles and national interests. Given that the United States, which has a significant military presence in the region, has consistently stated that "all options are on the table" regarding Iran, the Iranian policies that challenge America's dominance in the Middle East and alter the regional equilibrium may be seen in the framework of defensive structural realism. Furthermore, Iran still aspires to reclaim its former status as a regional powerhouse. As a result, rather than facing off against one another's strength, the

U.S. and Iran are facing power threats. De-securitization and stability in the region can be promoted by more cooperative relationships that are cultivated through a shift in each other's views of power, which is reinforced by organizational obligations and commercial ties. Iran's geopolitical position as a pivot and a bridge between different regions (Europe-Iran-Middle East, Europe-Iran-Asia) on the Eurasian continent can also effectively support US offshore balancing strategy in the face of present and future security threats facing other regional great powers. The possibility of commercial relationships with America and programs for geo-economic links with Europe could provide the United States a powerful regulations asset and greater leverage in turning Iran from a foe to a friend, given the growing influence of economic interests in shaping Iran's both its internal and external policies.

Conclusions

In conclusion, though the two states have had numerous problems and obstacles that prevent them from normalizing, hopes and opportunities have always existed. Despite their ongoing hostility and tense relationship, both nations occasionally communicate because it is in their respective national security interests. Furthermore, the occasional positive overtures from both parties also show a desire for normalization. Iran's geopolitics, expanding regional power, and shifting regional dynamics have forced the United States to explore for alternatives. Similarly, Iran should stop talking and start negotiations because of the uni-polar global framework, the U.S. military and economic might, the ongoing sanctions that severely damage the Iranian economy, and the U.S. regional interests. Iranian leaders understand that in the face of a faltering economy, they will have to deal with growing domestic unrest that may turn violent if they don't implement changes to their foreign policy and strengthen their ties with the US. In addition, the corporate sector in the United States stands to gain directly from reconciliation between Iran and the U.S. Some of the profitable endeavors for U.S. firms, which have suffered because of their Chinese, Russian, and European counterparts, are Iran's depleted industrial infrastructure, outdated aviation, and pharmaceutical industries.

Looking at things more broadly and drawing from the research's findings, sanctions may pose a problem for the international system, particularly the global economy. Studies and findings demonstrate that the sanctioning territories are not resistant from the effects of the sanctions and endure damage, despite the common belief that the sanctions only affect the sanctioned countries. The crucial thing to remember is that, out of all of these, the competitors who impose the sanctions that is, rival nations are the ones who gain the most from them. The diplomatic community and global economic experts have voiced grave concerns regarding the efficacy of sanctions. Iran is therefore able to benefit from the difficulties the sanctions present for the global economy in adjusting to them. Nonetheless, other embargoed nations' successful experiences in this area demonstrate the possibility of this problem. Alternatively, it can form an alliance with other sanctioned nations in the world and the region to counter the sanctions. It should be noted that the country's susceptibility to sanctions will be further decreased by growing and diversifying its domestic economy. Based on the study's conclusion, the following suggestions are put forth:

1. The United States should work to normalize relationships with Iran and find innovative methods to resolve disagreements, starting with a return to full compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action by both parties, to prevent the country from isolating itself from significant actors in the Middle East.
2. The United States should stop maintaining an artificial power balance based on enormous arms sales, a constant military presence, and military assistance. This will significantly lessen the current wave of foreign terrorism in the Middle East.

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