

SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENTIFIC

Aliyev, T. (2021). "The Evaluation of the Nuclear Weapon Agreement with Iran in the Perspective of the Difference between Obama and Trump's Administration", R&S-Research Studies Anatolia Journal, Vol:4 Issue:1; pp:30-40.

Anahtar Kelimeler: ABD, İran, Nükleer Güç, Obama, Trump. **Keywords:** The USA, Iran, Nuclear Power, Obama, Trump

Makale Türü Araştırma Makalesi

THE EVALUATION OF THE NUCLEAR WEAPON AGREEMENT WITH IRAN IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OBAMA AND TRUMP'S ADMINISTRATION

İran ile Nükleer Silah Anlaşmasının Obama ile Trump Yönetimi Arasındaki Fark Açısından Değerlendirilmesi

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Geliş Tarihi / Arrived Date
11/12/2020

Kabul Tarihi / Accepted Date
31/01/2021

Yayınlanma Tarihi / Published Date
31/01/2021

ÖZ

Bu makaleyi yazmanın temel amacı, İran ile Batı Blok Devletleri arasındaki nükleer güç sorununu incelemektir. Bu araştırma yapılarak nükleer silahların tehlikesi İran krizi üzerinden ifade edilmeye çalışılmaktadır. Bu anlamda mevcut çalışmada İran ve ABD ilişkilerinin nükleer enerji açısından tarihsel geçmişi irdelenmektedir. İran'ın nükleer girişimlerinin tarihsel gelişimi aydınlatıldıktan sonra, sorun çözme perspektifinden İran ile P5 + 1 devletleri arasında imzalanan anlaşmaya odaklanılarak Obama ve Trump yönetimlerinin faaliyetleri analiz edilmesi hedeflenmektedir. Nükleer sorunun ve P5 + 1 anlaşmasının tarihsel gelişiminin yanı sıra, mevcut araştırmanın ana vurgusu, menfaatler çerçevesinde devletlerin dış politikalarından zarar görebilecek demokrasi ve barış koşulları ile ilgilidir.

ABSTRACT

The main aim to write this article is to examine the nuclear power problem between Iran and the Western Block States. By doing this research, it is tried to express the danger of nuclear weapons through the Iran crisis. In this sense, in the existing study, the historical background of Iran and the US relations in terms of nuclear energy was scrutinized. After enlightening the historical development of Iran's nuclear initiatives, the activities of the Obama and Trump administrations were analyzed, focusing on the agreement signed between Iran and the P5 + 1 states from a problem solving perspective. Besides historical development of nuclear issue and P5+1 agreement, the main emphasis of the research is related to the democracy and peace conditions that can suffer from the foreign policies of states in the frame of interests.

INTRODUCTION

Since the last periods of World War II, specifically after the first usage of atomic nuclear bombs by the USA in Japan in 1945, nuclear weapons and their utilization have been an important issue for the states. Although states with international power and influence have tried to limit the acquisition of nuclear weapons by other states from this time forward, it cannot be said that they have been successful which attempts of obtaining a nuclear weapon of the states continue during the end of XX century and nowadays. One of these kinds of problems is about Iran and its intention to have a nuclear weapon.

In this article, it is tried to emphasize the attitudes of Iran and the USA towards Iran's nuclear weapon issue and its reflections on the other regional and international actors. In this sense, the main aim is to focus on relations between the USA and Iran from the perspective of American

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administrations during the office of Obama and Trump. In this way, it is planned to determine which factors have been effective between sides that made them sign an agreement and step back. Hence, it is found important, to begin with, a glance at a history of relations between the USA and Iran. By investigating these relations, it is planned to get a piece of information on what kind of events have been dominant between sides.

After this part, it is introduced the main aspects of Iran's nuclear weapon endeavors and the agreement signed between Iran and other states. Through explaining these issues showing the importance of the problem for all sides, which are even not included in the agreement, is one of the aims of the article. In the next part, the manner of both the Obama and Trump administrations towards Iran's issue is scrutinized. In this sense, the main focus is on the major approaches of sides.

The history of the USA - Iran relations

Due to the issue which is the topic of the existing research, it is looked at the relations between the USA and Iran since World War II, specifically from the period of 1950s. In this decade, Iran had been ruled by Mohammed Rza Pehlevi Shah, who had been supported by the British - USA alliance; however, Prime Minister of Iran, Mohammed Musaddik, had an intention to nationalize Iranian petroleum. In 1953 Musaddik was overthrown by the USA forces with the coup that went down in history as "Ajax operation" (Kuduoglu, 2019, pp 39).

After this incident, bilateral relations developed further between these countries. During the Cold War, the issue of Iran's nuclear power, which had an opportunity to play an important role in the fight against the USSR, came to the fore. In this way, the US and Iran signed a civil nuclear cooperation agreement in 1957. The agreement included a commitment to Iran to enrich uranium for use in the nuclear power industry (Mousavian & Mousavian, 2018).

Bilateral relations continued with a rising trend in the 1960s, and the issue of nuclear power was the focal point of these relations. Nevertheless, the biggest crisis of the 1960s, the Cuba crisis, compelled the US to be more careful about the nuclear weapons issue. Although the USA gave nuclear reactors to Iran in 1967, depending on the agreement signed in 1957, with the agreement signed a year later, it was committed by Iran not to use nuclear power as a weapon.

During the 1970s, Iran had a problematic situation in the perspective of the weakening of the Shah Regime and the increasing power of nationalist groups. In the late 1970s, a turning point in US-Iran relations broke out. In 1979, the Shah regime was overthrown in Iran, and the religious leader Khomeini, acting contrary to the US ties with Iran, took power through revolution. This event was the end of close bilateral relations between the USA and Iran since the first time diplomatic relations were established (Buchan, 2013).

This revolution executed by nationalists and Khomeini was also the beginning of ideological differences and oppositions between sides, which has continued until nowadays. After only nine months of passing from the revolution, another diplomatic crisis occurred between parties. In November 1979, Persian students raided the US Embassy in Tehran and took 52 employees hostage. Despite all the efforts, employees remained hostage for more than a year. Even the military action made by the US soldiers also failed. As a consequence, for the first time during the US and Iran relations, the USA has declared that it has stopped diplomatic relations with Iran. This event affected the US foreign policy, and after the unsuccessful military operation in 1980 to rescue American hostages, Ronald Reagan replaced President Carter in 1981 and only after this changing Iran released the US Embassy employees. This incident proved that already Iran, with religious leadership, was an active foreign policy center in the Middle East, which is the region full of energy sources (Farber, 2006).

At the same time, with a hostage crisis Ayatollah Khomeini announced the 'Great Satan' statement for the US, and in return, the US included Iran in a list of countries that support terrorism in 1984. The US and Iran opposition continued during the 1980s years while Iran was in a war situation with Iraq. The USA to weaken Iran and its dangerous expansion in the region helped Iraq by

providing chemical weapons. During the war, the US not only helped Iraq by giving very high developed intelligence but also implemented an arms embargo on Iran. Iran was also trying to press the US and Iraq by using its all existences in the region, and it was not a surprising fact that the bombing of the USA Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon had done by Hezbollah forces, a legal organization supported by Iran. After this fact, the American administration was face to face with a new hostage problem in Beirut. When Iran sent a secret request to buy weapons from the USA, because of the insufficiency due to long-lasting war, the Reagan administration saw this fact as a chance to release their hostages and improve their bilateral relations with Iran. In this perspective, some weapons were sold to Iran in return for releasing three American hostages, but as the situation did not change for the US, bilateral relations could not be fixed until the 1990s years. In contrast, the shooting down of the passenger plane of Iran by the US, which was expressed as an accident that happened 'by mistake' made mutual relations worse (Morgan, 2015).

At the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, some developments happened in Iran, as the death of Ayatollah Khomeini. After the death of Ayatollah Khomeini, Khamenei replaced him, and Rafsanjani was elected as the president of Iran. The whole of those events affected Iran's foreign policy in the frame of relations with the USA. Despite the good-manner changing in Iran's leaders' attitude toward their opponent, mutual relations still could not be fixed because of the energy resources and power rivalry. Iran, during 1990s, tried to make good relations with China and India to keep a balance against the West block. In response to this, the US tried to penetrate the Caucasus and the Middle East. It was also clear that there were military groups in the region that had support from the US and Iran, as an example of Taliban and Hezbollah. Despite Rafsanjani's pragmatist attitude, the Clinton administration presented a different kind of approach toward Iran and in this way, the US and Iran relation kept its shape (Naji & Javak, 2011).

With the beginning of a new era, the US – Iran relations came to the new level, by George Bush's coming to power in the USA. Bush denounced Iran as a state supporting terrorism and included it in a list of Axis of Evil which will be on the target of US administration. In light of these developments, 9/11 terror attacks were the turning point of relations between the US and Iran. Bush in June 2003 announced that the US will not show tolerance toward Iran' nuclear weapon issue and by attacking to Iraq the US started direct war not only Iraq but also against Iran which continued till the end of George Bush administration. Obama's election as a president has been the next stage in the US and Iran relations in the frame of democratization and nuclear weapon issues (Ansari, 2006).

The main parameters of Iran's nuclear weapon issue

As it is known the nuclear energy is such an energy that can be used in two ways: peaceful actions and nuclear weapon production. The usage of this energy depends on the fact that to what extent uranium enrichment has been done. For example, to produce electric energy, it is required only 2 or 3 percent enrichment of uranium, for the medical purpose 20 percent and to make the nuclear energy useful for military utilization the dimension of enrichment is about 80 percent (Akbash & Bash, 2013). The surveillance on the size of enriched uranium is an important issue because of these measures. In this sense, to protect abusing nuclear energy in terms of military purpose, the International Atomic Energy Agency had been created in 1957.

When taking into consideration Iran's geopolitical importance, according to the geopolitical situation of the country, it comes to be clear that with huge energy resources including almost 10 percent of petroleum and gas reserves of the whole world, Iran is one of the powerful regional actors. Also, it is considered by Western centered view, the religious power of Iran and its existence in the region indicate that Iran as a state with a nuclear weapon can be dangerous not only for the region but also all over the world.

Iran's first nuclear power initiative date back to 1957, the term of Shah Reza Pehlevi, when the US had a rivalry with the USSR. In the framework of the USA's encircling policy and according to good

relations with Shah Regime, for the first time in 1967, the US has also sold 5 MW light water research reactor (Caman & Dagci, 2013). This reactor was provided with 93% enriched uranium. Moreover, in 1977 the US and Iran signed a nuclear partnership agreement, which let Iran have more eight power plants. An only a short time later, France joined this initiative as a side, committing to build the next two nuclear plants. Also, the Atomic Energy Institution established by Shah Reza Pahlavi in Iran was later turned into a nuclear research and engineering education center, and experts started to be trained in Tehran and Shiraz Universities.

The first nuclear plant of Iran, Bushehr, was started to construct by German company Siemens Group but the Islamic Revolution happening in 1979 Iran made it stop, by the ideology of the religious leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini. After the end of the Cold War and because of the conflicted relations between Iran and the Western block, Iran agreed in 1990 with Russia to complete the nuclear infrastructure. In 1995 the agreement was signed between sides, and the Russian state company started to build the facility left unfinished by the Germans (Kibaroghlu, 2013). Iran had also signed an agreement with China in 1984, which aimed to build facilities for the enrichment of uranium. These works came out in 2002, and since this time, Iran's nuclear weapon issue has been a crisis affecting all the Middle East and adjacent regions.

In this sense, it would be better to take a look at the ideas of Iran about the reasons why it wants to have nuclear power and nuclear energy plants of Iran, their indicators and capacities. By doing this, it is planned to realize to what extent Iran's claims are realistic and what kind of dangers the other actors can meet due to Iran's nuclear power.

Iran plans to build 20 more nuclear power plants in the medium and long term and bases these efforts on the need for energy in the field of medicine and agriculture. Chairman of the Islamic Advisory Council of Iran, Ferhangi had claimed that the Western states do not want Iran to get this kind of power because they are arrogant against other country's development. But when it is considered that Iran is one of the richest countries with energy resources, these claims of Ferrangi are away from reflecting the real situation (Usakli, 2007).

When taking a look at the numbers of nuclear plants and their capacity, it is seen "the real status" is that Iran has 4 nuclear plants (Kose, 2008, pp 19):

- Bushehr Nuclear Power Station. This is the first facility which should be built by Germans, but its construction was stopped by the Islamic Revolution in 1979. The plant has two pressurized water reactors, one of which is about to be completed.
- Isfahan Uranium Conversion Plant. Iran tries to transform the uranium mine into three forms in its work here: Hexafluoride gas used in gas centrifuges; Uranium oxide gas used to fuel reactors; Metal gas used in the cores of nuclear bombs. IAEA is particularly uncomfortable with this because Metal gas is not required for reactors.
- Natanz Uranium Enrichment Plant. There are different estimates of Natanz's capacity. According to one estimate, when the facility is completed, there will be 50,000 advanced gas centrifuges that will produce enough uranium to produce up to 20 nuclear weapons a year. According to another estimation, after the completion of the first stages of the project in Natanz, 5 thousand centrifuges will be put into operation, and Iran will be able to enrich enough uranium every year to produce a small number of nuclear weapons.
- Arak Heavy Water Plant. One of the uses of heavy water is plutonium production, which is used in nuclear bombs.

After even this kind of short information about the numbers and capacities of Iran's nuclear plants, it comes to be clearer that the aim to have nuclear power is not only for the peaceful issues as denounced by Iranian officials. The possibility of Iran's obtaining the nuclear weapon is normally accepted as a danger and threat by the other states.

Since 2015 Iran's nuclear power issue has turned to be more dangerous, and the crisis escalated due to the election of Ahmadinejad as a president of Iran and his threatening rhetoric against the

US and Israel (Jane, 2017). Ahmadinejad announced that he started his activities on uranium in Isfahan on August 10, 2005, after taking office. This development has been interpreted as the complete end of the second détente period in nuclear negotiations between the West and Iran. So the issue passed to a new phase, and sides started to care more about an agreement.

During the talking process of P5 + 1 in Vienna on June 1, 2006, the US agreed to directly negotiate with Iran. In 2007, the US and Iran met for the first time after the 1979 Revolution on an official visit at the ambassadorial level (Jane, 2017). Obama's coming to power in the USA, and following the election of Hasan Rouhani as the president of Iran, the negotiations gained momentum, and the suitable ground was ready for agreeing. Of course, Obama's appointment to the presidency showed itself in the process. For this reason, it is necessary to look at the role of the Obama government, especially until the signing of the agreement.

The Role of Obama administration on the Nuclear Weapon Agreement between P5 + 1 and Iran

Obama's election as the president of the USA was of great importance, particularly, while the rhetoric of military intervention in Iran that continued during the Bush administration also reduced the opportunities for agreement between the parties, Obama's coming to power with democracy-based rhetoric increased the hopes for the agreement to be reached. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the period when Obama came to power, there was a perception on the Iranian side that Obama was the goal of capturing Iran through diplomacy (Sinkaya, 2009).

The beginning of Obama's diplomacy is known as a reflection of 'messages'. President Ahmadinejad's greeting message to Obama and Obama's 'Nevruz' holiday message to Iran. At first sight, it is seen that these messages had been sent mutually. But in the content of messages, there are differences. When the message of Ahmadinejad has been sent, Obama's rhetorical answer had warned Iran officials so that Obama's answer to journalists was full of ambiguity and distressing expressions like 'making Iran not to support terrorist groups and stop its nuclear weapon threatening'. In contrast, Obama's holiday greeting message to Iran showed a good-manner attitude to build diplomatic relations by using the 'Iran Islamic Republic' statement instead of the 'regime' term used by George Bush (Telatar, 2012).

The most important point of Obama's diplomacy had been seen in April 2009, the announcement that there will be no preconditions for negotiating with Iran on the nuclear issue. This step of Obama constitutes an important difference from the position of the George W. Bush administration, which put Iran's nuclear activities as a prerequisite for negotiations to begin. Washington's insistence on halting nuclear activities was the most important obstacle to diplomatic negotiations with Tehran (MacAskill, 2009).

In support of this step, Obama stated in his speech on the Middle East in Cairo on June 4, 2009, that every country, including Iran, has the right to have a peaceful nuclear power provided that it fulfills its responsibilities arising from international law (nytimes.com, 2009). The Obama administration also did not choose to impose additional sanctions and emphasize the option of military power, although it extended the duration of the unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States on this country to force the Tehran administration to sit at the negotiating table.

Obama preferred to remain neutral in the events that took place in Iran after the controversial presidential elections in June 2009. It showed that his administration was dealing with the current regime. In the meantime, Ahmadinejad, who saw that the events that took place after the presidential elections and that his legitimacy in the country started to be questioned, decided to negotiate with the West with the concern that the problems in foreign policy might put him in a more difficult situation in domestic politics and this context with 5 + 1 countries ([USA, Russia, China, France, England] + Germany) suggested discussions on many issues. Obama administration, which does not want the change it aims to realize in its policy towards Iran to remain only at the level of rhetoric, responded positively to this call, thinking that this meeting would also help to make progress on the nuclear program (El-Khawas, 2011).

Tehran agreed to an agreement in October in Geneva that requires Iran to send its low-enriched uranium to a third country (Russia and/or France) to process it and convert it into fuel, and in return, it will buy fuel for its nuclear reactors. The Geneva talks, which enabled the US and Iranian officials to get in direct contact, were also positive in terms of mutual trust. However, Ahmadinejad, who was under the pressure of the opponents due to the intense discussions in Iranian politics after the elections in June, took a different attitude during the implementation of the agreement and offered different alternatives that provide more guarantees to Iran in the implementation of the agreement (Bowen & Brewer, 2011).

Despite this willingness, the Obama administration's efforts to find a solution to the problem of Iran's nuclear activities by giving priority to diplomacy have failed. When the Obama administration failed to achieve the desired results by the end of 2009 from its diplomatic efforts with great hopes, it abandoned its initial optimistic approach. Thus, Obama started to adopt an approach close to the policies of his predecessor, George W. Bush, in his policy towards Iran and began to focus more on increasing the political pressure on Iran and imposing sanctions. In this context, Obama made efforts to impose new sanctions on Iran and tried to convince the permanent members of the UN Security Council, Russia, and China, to ensure this (Lane, 2010).

Washington's persuasion of Russia and China was the result of intensive efforts that lasted nearly six months. Meanwhile, some developments have made the USA's job easier. IAEA's auditors' first announcement in February 2010 on Iran's issue that it had evidence of secret nuclear activities to acquire nuclear weapons, caused Russia to question its support to Iran on the nuclear program, disturbed by Tehran's failure to comply with the agreement signed in Geneva in October. However, China, which provides 13% of its imported oil from Iran, continued to oppose the sanctions, fearing that the oil flow would be stopped if it supported the sanctions to be applied to this country. The USA's negotiating with Saudi Arabia and committing that this country will complete the decrease in oil supply was enough to relieve China's concerns (El-Khawas, 2011).

After six months of diplomatic efforts of the United States, permanent members of the Security Council agreed on sanctions, and resolution 1929 was adopted on 9 June 2010. The report published by the IAEA on November 8, 2011, stating that Iran's nuclear activities are related to the development of a nuclear device rather than nuclear energy, escalated the tension again. Mahmud Ahmadinejad claimed that this report, which is the harshest report of the UN weapons inspectors on Iran so far, is a fabricated document created by the efforts of Iran's enemies, especially the USA. Tehran has also boycotted the IAEA meeting in Vienna on November 21 to discuss nuclear issues concerning the Middle East. This report, in which Iran's nuclear activities are explicitly associated with nuclear weapons for the first time, has rekindled the debate in the West and Israel on whether current policies can prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. At a time when these discussions were taking place, on January 18, 2012, Iran announced that they could resume negotiations with 5 + 1 countries (after this proposal, the negotiations took place in April), and the negotiations would probably be held in Istanbul. While this statement is considered by some in the West as Tehran's step towards gaining time, Iranian officials defiantly stated that a uranium enrichment facility built underground and protected against any attack in Natanz could start production in a very short time. After these events, the sanctions implemented by the US and other Western block states had been more aggravated (Telatar, 2012).

Iran's heavy sanctions threatening to close the Strait of Hormuz in late 2011 and the US announcing that it would respond to it, the possibility of a hot conflict emerged. However, the tensions were partially alleviated by the fact that neither country was in favor of engaging in military conflict. After the Hormuz crisis, the dialogue environment provided by the talks between Iran and 5 + 1 countries in Istanbul in April 2012 and Baghdad in May 2012 has further reduced the possibility of a hot conflict.

When we come to 2013, the new developments come out, Hasan Rouhani was elected as the president of Iran, and due to the conjuncture, all of the sides of the crisis had hopes that this change will be effective in the negotiations between the West and Iran. During his visit to New

York on 23-27 September 2013, Rouhani expressed that he had the authority given by the religious leader of Iran to move diplomatically for the resolution of the crisis (Qarayev, 2016). In this way, in February 2014, sides started negotiations for a comprehensive agreement, and the meetings resulted in an agreement by P5 + 1 and Iran on 14 July 2015.

The Content of Agreement and Obama's Attitude towards It

For the Iranian side of the agreement, the terms mainly included the limitation of the nuclear program. Iran's two nuclear facilities, Natanz and Fordo, had centrifuges in which the degradable isotope called U-235 was separated by giving uranium hexafluoride gas. In the world, low-level enriched uranium, which contains a 3 percent compressed form of U-235, was used in the production of nuclear reactor fuel, while 90 percent enriched uranium was used in nuclear weapons production. At the time the agreement was signed, Iran had 20 thousand centrifuges and tons of uranium. It was claimed that this would be enough to make 8 to 10 nuclear bombs in a few months (Cham, 2018).

With the agreement, the number of centrifuges was limited to 5 thousand 60 for ten years until 2026. Moreover, these were the oldest and least efficient centrifuges. Also, Iran's uranium stock was reduced by 98 percent to 300 kilograms. It was stipulated that Iran should not exceed this amount by 2031. Iran also agreed to keep the enrichment rate of its uranium stock at 3.67 percent. This was the enrichment rate used only in reactor fuel production. Tons of Iranian uranium was transported to Russia until the agreement went into effect, and the number of centrifuges also decreased. Before the agreement, Iran was continuing to build a heavy-water nuclear facility in the city of Arak. Countries across Iran wanted the facility in Arak to be destroyed, as the nuclear fuel spent in the heavy water reactor contained plutonium used to make nuclear weapons. With the deal, Iran agreed to redesign the facility so that it would not produce enough plutonium to be used in nuclear weapons production. The clause that Iran should not be allowed to build a new heavy-water reactor until 2031 was included in the agreement. Thanks to the agreement, Iran was able to continue to resell oil to international markets. Besides, the Iranian administration gained access to nearly \$ 100 billion worth of frozen assets abroad. Tehran has also gained the ability to use the global financial system for trade (bbc.com).

Trump, who came to power after Obama, showed that he has a negative attitude towards the agreement even before he came to power. When US President Donald Trump started his presidential race in 2015, he immediately objected to the agreement with Iran. Trump, who opposes the agreement signed by the Obama administration, described it as "the worst deal in the world" before and after the presidential election in November 2016. In his speech at AIPAC, which is seen as the Israeli lobby in Washington on March 21, 2016, Trump stated that if he is elected president, his priority will be to abolish the Iran agreement (Sarah, 2016).

After Trump was elected president in November 2016, one of the biggest questions that came to mind was about the future of the Iran nuclear deal. With the Trump administration's inauguration, both relations with Tehran and the Iran nuclear deal were placed on the agenda of the United States and the international community, and multidimensional analyses were made regarding this agreement (Gladstone, 2016).

In the early days of Trump's presidency, most of these analyses had predictions that the deal would not be canceled, but later this trend changed. One of the most important reasons for this was that Trump started to fulfill his promises on issues such as Jerusalem, especially the Iran issue. At this point, the evaluations and suggestions made by the institutions responsible for foreign policy and security were constantly in the background.

Although Trump has developed negative rhetoric about the Iran nuclear agreement from the very beginning in his speeches and social media, he had to acknowledge Iran's compliance with this agreement after he took office. The Iran Nuclear Deal Assessment Law, issued by the US Congress in 2015, had its president every three months obliged to certify whether Iran acted by the agreement and whether the agreement was still in American interests. This is also called the

certification process. On May 17, 2017, Trump lifted a sanction that should be lifted in accordance with the Comprehensive Joint Action Plan on Iran's Nuclear Program. He reluctantly acknowledged Iran's compliance with the agreement on July 17, 2017, after a short while (Baker, 2017).

In each of these ratification processes, Trump specifically stated that this agreement had to be renegotiated, the terms of the agreement were not in the interests of the United States, and it was even one of the worst deals in American history. Trump emphasized that, as with all multilateral agreements made before his presidency, this agreement would have a much more positive result if it was made by him. On October 13, 2017, Trump made a statement on the US strategy on Iran. Trump said here for the first time that he did not ratify the Iran nuclear deal. Trump stated that the current agreement would be completely withdrawn from the agreement indefinitely unless it is amended in a way that would eliminate Iran's nuclear weapons potential and prevent the production of intercontinental ballistic missiles (White House, 2017). With his statement, he revealed that he had more expectations from the Iran agreement, which was framed as a nuclear agreement. Accordingly, Trump stated that he preferred a longer-term agreement with Tehran that would halt the ballistic missile activities of Iran and prevent its destructive activities in the regional sense (Landler & Sanger, 2017). Later, the news reflected in the press revealed that Trump did not give up on this decision, despite the approval of both Defence Minister Mattes and Foreign Minister Tillerson during the ratification process.

Trump's decision, of course, did not mean to withdraw from the deal altogether. With this statement, he threw the ball to Congress and offered Congress the opportunity to impose new sanctions on Iran. In addition to this, the US allies who are parties to the agreement also asked them to help renew the deal by doing the work. Germany, France, and Britain underlined in their joint statement that the USA should remain loyal to the agreement. Trump has made it clear that if Congress and its allies fail to come up with another result on this agreement, Trump will retake the ropes and withdraw from the agreement (Landler & Sanger, 2017).

Trump, who continued his negative attitude regarding the agreement after this decision, extended the duration of the exemptions for the sanctions to be imposed on Iran for the last time on January 11, 2018. However, he set out several conditions for the agreement to remain in effect. These conditions included the elimination of the date when the agreement would expire, Iran's granting all observers access and inspection permission to all nuclear facilities, ensuring that it would never come close to obtaining nuclear weapons ever again, and imposing harsh sanctions in the event of ballistic missile testing (Katzman, 2018). However, in a statement made with this decision, Trump said that he will now meet with allies in Europe and try to solve the problems in JCPOA. Thus, he demonstrated that he would take a tougher attitude towards Iran. Also, in the statements made during this process, it was stated that if there is no change in the articles of the agreement after 120 days, the USA will unilaterally withdraw from this agreement (Holland, 2018).

After this 120-day process, Trump announced that he withdrew from the agreement unilaterally on May 8, 2018, as he stated before, in a very determined manner. Of course, before this announcement, Trump's replacement of his national security and foreign policy team with names that are very important on Iran played an important role in his decision. Even just before the week he made this statement, Defence Minister James Mattes made statements that he did not agree with the complete cancellation of the Iran nuclear deal (Mitchel, 2018). Before that, it was reflected in the media that both Mattes and former National Security Advisor McMaster supported the agreement not to be canceled (Betsy & Spencer, 2018). In his speech that he withdrew from this agreement, Trump also stated that the sanctions over the Iran nuclear program would be reinstated and new economic sanctions will come with it (nytimes.com, 2018).

Conclusion

As a result of the existing study, it is seen that the nuclear power issue of Iran and the whole crisis about this problem between sides have not resulted in a final act. Accordingly, it can be claimed that due to the danger of the usage of nuclear weapons not only in any region but also in the whole world, this matter remains one of the most dangerous problems in front of the states. In this perspective, the agreement signed between P5 + 1 and Iran, which was the result of diplomacy of the Obama administration, would be effective in reducing the tensions in a long-time period.

Trump administration has put the situation in a big ambiguity, which can endanger the democracy and peace conditions for the Middle East. The discourses announced by Trump are still questionable in the framework of reaching peace and make all researchers examine that the aim of the Trump administration either is keeping the peace or securing state interests without caring about the future of other states and societies.

After defining the whole historical past of the relations between the US and Iran, it comes to be clear that, due to their attitudes and policies, leaders of both sides have been able to affect bilateral relations. Especially in the new era leaders' role on the political and diplomatic sides have been more effective in the perspective of Barack Obama and Donald Trump.

If it is summarized the whole policies of them, it is possible to determine that the Obama administration's attitude and approach to the crisis are more peaceful and strong, which was planned to be implemented by the usage of soft power and diplomacy. In the first stage of his policy, Obama tries not to interfere with Iran's domestic policy and issues to show that he has respect for the opposite side, and he aims at getting a positive return. But also when he sees that Iran's attitude turns to be tougher, Obama modify his policy toward Iran by implementing successful diplomacy, and he was able to make Iran agree with his deal offer.

But unfortunately, it is not possible to express the same successful course about the Trump administration. For Trump, who lacks the use of soft power and is incapable of paying attention to diplomatic relations, the harsh stance against Iran overshadowed all previous success. Considering the longstanding Iranian attitude towards America, the threats and rhetoric of the use of force by Trump make a successful deal almost impossible.

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