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**Iran's Nuclear Program: The US Misses Opportunities?
–An Examination of US Policies in the Middle East and
Implications of those Policies on the US Global Position–**

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Abstract

US actions in Iraq and Afghanistan cause people to think that the US can resort to military measures against Iran as well. However the US invasion of Iraq and the uncertainties prevailing because of the invasion make analysts to question the necessity of military operations, because it might bring further uncertainties to region and to world politics. In this paper, it is argued that the US priorities in the Middle East are not well-defined and its policies are contaminated with cultural misperceptions, as seen in the case of the Iran's nuclear program. Historical, technical and international law aspects of Iran's nuclear program would be surveyed and the US policies regarding Iran's nuclear program would be analyzed. The US interests in the region would be discussed and the most known clichés regarding Iran and US relations would be questioned. It is the argument that US policies in the Middle East are not well-calculated in terms of the US global realpolitik concerns; and current US policies in the region harm the US interests in global stage. Thus, the US confrontation with Iran makes the potential cooperation opportunities with the Middle Eastern countries missed.

Key words: Iran's Nuclear Program, US, The Middle East

Introduction: The US and the Middle East

The United States is a global player, and its decisions influence the entire world. On the other hand, the United States needs support of ally countries in order to enhance its position against its rivals. Thus, although the United States could influence the world politics with its decisions it is also vulnerable in the lack of the alliances; hence the US needs to calculate well its decisions and policies. The support of the allies is necessary if the United States wants to keep its superior position in world political arena. Furthermore, the United States needs to have a stable communication with its actual and potential allies or partners in world politics. That is to say, if the United States is going to ask for the alliance of a country or a block of the countries in a region, it needs to signal its intention clearly, and the signals should have been as much free as possible from negative bias.

That being said, in the current global order, there are many big players and some of them are candidate to overtake the US position in terms of political influence exercised in the world politics. This paper assumes that, in the current conjecture, the Middle Eastern countries are potential allies of the United States, and the security and foreign policy establishment of the US is aware of this potential. However, other parties in US domestic political and cultural structure have the reverse view, namely they perceive most of the Middle Eastern countries in the opposite side. Therefore, the US is not able to mobilize support of the Middle Eastern countries because its policies are culturally contaminated and its communication ability is restricted because of the biased policies adopted against countries in the region, especially to Iran.

This biased approach simply sabotages the communication lines of the United States when delivering its message to the people and decision makers in the region. The bias makes people to think that the United States does not act realistic or rational in the region because of its cultural perception. And other great powers provoke this cultural perception and worsen the US conceptions in the Middle East. The US stance in the region in many cases and especially in case of Iran is not legally, politically and morally justified among the people and decision makers of the Middle East. This situation weakens the communication ability of the United States and harms its interests.

An examination of Iran's nuclear program and US policies regarding that program would be a good case to see how misguided are, and how legally, politically and morally are unjustified the policies applied in the Middle East and Iran.

Iran's Nuclear Program in Broader International Intellectual and Political Context

Iran has long been subject to monitoring by international community because of its nuclear program. The United States is the leading country in this monitoring initiative with the aim of halting Iranian nuclear program.¹ Because the United States pushes for the efforts; United Nations Security Council,² European Union and IAEA have become key players regarding Iran's nuclear program, along with Russia and China,³ the two countries involved in construction of nuclear power plants in Iran.

This picture gives us the idea that Iran's nuclear program has been an item of the international community's agenda, and there is a pressure on Iran to stop its nuclear program. On the other hand, Iran does not accept the demands of the United States and/or international community. United Nations Security Council decreed five resolutions⁴ since 2006, in order to force Iran to stop its nuclear program. However, even though Iran's nuclear program has been slowed down a bit with the pressure, the concerns of involved international actors are alive because Iran continues its program.⁵

Despite the fact that the United States pushes for the efforts to prevent Iran from going nuclear, the policies the US adopted till now and the policies it needs to adopt from now on are not agreed issues. Thus, in light of the legal and political aspects, both Iran's nuclear program and the US projections need to be examined. But this examination would never be satisfactory if we analyze the issue only in terms of scientific/technical and nuclear-related concerns. What is more, analyzing the issue by considering regional, political and economic clichés would also leave some dimensions not addressed. Why is this claimed? Because it will be argued that the US decisions are highly influenced by non-technical, non-political and non-economic considerations. For that reason the US approach to Iran in general and the US's dilemma in respect to world politics also need to be included to understand US policies adopted regarding Iran's nuclear program.

In line with this claim, firstly, technical and international legal aspects of Iran's nuclear program will be surveyed and then the most known approaches about the program and US involvement would be elaborated. The technical and legal aspects of the issue would be covered in an extent to include almost all the important elements. Then, the most known analyses regarding Iran's nuclear program would be criticized. Some experts propose to the United States

to take diplomatic and/or economic measures, and some others propose limited or total military strike. The difference between these suggestions is in the method they think is the best to employ in excluding Iran from the equation, and all these approaches exclude the other option; making most from the relations with Iran, which is heavily shadowed with misperceptions. Such an approach would not only be profitable but also would contribute to the regional peace.

Those suggesting the US to prevent Iran from going nuclear also expect to see a regime change in Iran either by using soft power or military action or let Iran to change its regime via internal dynamics,⁶ but in any case, the regime change, sooner or later, is expected to occur. Some observers even put the regime change ahead of a nuclear Iran as a priority.⁷ The problem with this regime obsession mostly arises from the uncertainties caused by the civilizational concerns produced by some intellectuals, who give priority to cultural values/religions/civilizations⁸ as the most important motives that should manage foreign policy actions. Other great powers also feed the cultural concerns as a vital issue in the international political agenda.

Secondly, the paper would examine the problem inherent in the premises of current policy options and approaches suggested to US authorities. Then what is missed both by experts and by US policy makers in regional and global level would be addressed. The reason to think that the US authorities and experts are missing a chance is Iran's latest approachment with China and Russia, which is not something that Iran does willingly. It is a result of the hesitation that the US witnesses in its policy toward to Iran; as a result of the clash between the cultural (religious) perception and regional/economic (oil, Israel) interests and global interests of the United States (sustaining the superior position of the US) as the most powerful state in the world, today.

In this context, it will be seen that with regard to international law Iran's program is not a violation of the rules. Furthermore, all of the major powers, like the USA, Russia, China, Germany, and France have been involved in certain stages of the Iran's nuclear capabilities. And despite the fact that Iran's program is constructed with contribution of international community, the same community now isolated Iran, and the isolation is not because of violation of international law but because of the international political calculations. However the political calculations are somehow contaminated by the cultural mis-perceptions, which are neither justified in terms of fairness nor in ensuring the interests of the countries concerned, especially those of the USA. In addition to the cultural misperception, the political measures adapted to

achieve the national interest goals prove to be counterproductive, in the case of the United States. It seems that the US confrontation with Iran lacks political and legal justification, which is necessary to guarantee the success.

Thus it will be argued that the US confrontation with Iran, at its current form, is neither suitable nor profitable nor well defined; because, 1) Confrontation with Iran on its nuclear program is not because of technical/legal and political reasons; rather it is because of misconceptions. 2) The United States is hesitant about the policy to adopt, because its global political calculations and its cultural perceptions contradict with each other. 3) The interests of the United States and Iran in region do not clash, yet if the United States prefers to confront, Iran has some leverage to use against US actions. 4) Regional allies of the United States are not willing to support the US in its confrontation with Iran. 5) The US misses the chance of making most out of cooperation with Iran in the global politics, from which China, Russia and India benefit most. 6) US perceptions about Iran and Islamic politics do not reflect the truth, and this perception is not a result of political calculations. 7) If the United States adopts a less biased policy, while the United States would benefit from the good relations, Iran could have been convinced that it does not need nuclear weapons to guarantee its security and that nuclear weapons could produce some unforeseen circumstances which could be detriment of Iran itself.

It is hoped that, at the end of the paper, the reader gets the impression that the US policies in the Middle East and in particular regarding Iran's nuclear program suffer from the same misconceptions and miscalculations.

What is the Nuclear Program of Iran?

Historical Background

Iran's nuclear program dates back to 1960's, and it was designed to build nuclear power plants, which are the units utilized to produce energy for industry. The US was the first country signing an agreement with Iran to help it acquire nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.⁹ Until 1979, beside technical support of the United States, some German and French companies, which were competent in the nuclear technology, also involved in the project of constructing a nuclear power plant in Busher.¹⁰ Iran declared that Busher power plant was designed for energy production but

there were claims arguing that, even before the revolution, Iran had the goal of obtaining nuclear weapons.¹¹

The US authorities and European firms fulfilled their commitments until the Iranian Revolution took place; and when the revolution occurred, the nuclear facilities were half-finished. Once the revolution broke out, cooperation between the contractors and Iran ceased, and the controversies regarding contracts between Iran and European companies have been an issue throughout the 80's.¹²

Thus, Iranian Revolution marked a new phase with regard to the Iranian nuclear program. After the revolution, Iran declared that it halted its nuclear program, but the commitment to this declaration seems a little bit ambiguous because of the facts observed in the following years.¹³ Iran's nuclear program remained as an issue, although in an unheated pace, during 1980's and in an increased pace in 1990's. Several Iranian attempts to complete Buser power plant in 1980's in cooperation with some European companies have been abortive because of the US pressure.¹⁴ Also, several attacks by Iraq to Buser nuclear power plant during the Iran Iraq war in 1980's are worth to mention because of its impact on Iran's following nuclear-related decisions. That experience drove Iran to consider on the security of nuclear facilities against foreign attacks in its following initiatives to run a nuclear program.

Almost all the nuclear activities of Iran in 1980's were related to Buser power Plant, although there has not been any progress recorded in that project either. Compared to other nuclear-related facilities of Iran, most of which were built after 1990, construction of Buser power plant has cost too much to Iran, because it has been half-built, ruined and rebuilt several times because of the attacks, change of the contractors, and incompatibility of the technologies of different contractors.¹⁵

In 1990's Iran gunned up its nuclear power plant building activities, this time with non-western countries, Russia and China.¹⁶ These plants were essentially designed for energy generation and their construction was/is totally contracted to institutions in Russia or China. Russia also cooperated on uranium mining capabilities with Iran, and according to the contract between Russia and Iran, the fuel for the power plant contracted to Russia would also be procured by Russia.¹⁷

These attempts of the Iran to get nuclear technology have been blockaded by the USA; however the real concern of the United States has always been Iran's attempts to have nuclear indigenous technology which can be either utilized for peaceful or military purposes.

Beside trying to build nuclear power plants, Iran also began to establish its indigenous uranium enrichment capabilities in 1990's.¹⁸ Yet these activities were not a major issue in the agenda of international community. The incident that triggered the current debate was a leakage of information in 2002. The National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCR) leaked some information about Iran's undeclared nuclear activities in 'Natanz (uranium enrichment) and Arak (heavy water production)' facilities.¹⁹ Soon, IAEA inspections also revealed that Iran undergoes an indigenous program to advance its nuclear capability, and some equipment necessary for nuclear facilities has been procured illegally from two countries and A.Q. Khan Network. According to NPT rules these activities and transfers are subject to IAEA safeguards and IAEA should have been notified, yet, these transfers between the foreign suppliers and Iran have not been reported to IAEA and were violation of NPT rules.²⁰

Technical Aspect

The indigenous nuclear program of Iran has various dimensions, and each of which constitutes a different aspect of a complete and self-running nuclear capability. Moreover, the facilities are many. These facilities are located in different parts of the country and each facility has a different function from the other, some of facilities are concentrated in research while some others process sensitive material. For example, the facilities in Natanz are under the control of IAEA and are dedicated to uranium enrichment, and partly constructed underground.²¹ In 2006, Iran declared that it enriched Uranium to 3.5 %, ²² while IAEA report indicates that Iran enriched the Uranium to a higher degree but less than 5%.²³ However, it can be argued that the report of IAEA imply that 5% is not the limit that Iran could reach. It is rather the degree that Iran does not exceed with its own will.

Some other facilities are designed for some other purposes: For example, the facility in Bonabis designed for research in the use of nuclear technology for agricultural purposes.²⁴ Isfahan nuclear technology centre is designed to train personnel for power plants,²⁵ and some parts of it are built underground. Meanwhile there are facilities producing some alloys necessary

to build machines and devices needed for constructing a facility and/or device to produce enriched uranium and reprocess the spent fuel for production of plutonium.²⁶

Another facility (Tehran Nuclear Research Center) is designed for plutonium processing experiments and also beryllium and bismuth elements related experiments.²⁷ Each of these activities constitutes a different component of the entire nuclear technology capability. Squassoni argues that Iran also attempts to develop laser enrichment technology, which doubles the speed of enrichment and is suspected to increase the speed of weaponization.²⁸ Yet, the facilities involved in the nuclear technology development program of Iran are not limited to those mentioned here; noting, however, that even this limited information shows the complexity of Iran's nuclear program.²⁹

Now, it is predicted that Busheh power plant would be ready to operate in 2010.³⁰ The completion of power plant would give confidence and experience to Iran in dealing with nuclear technology, and would diminish the international pressure on Iran to stop its nuclear research.³¹ On the other hand, the fuel spent in the power plant seems to continue to be a cause of concern. Since the spent fuel is some kind of substance that could be reprocessed in order to produce plutonium, the scrutiny of international community will continue and IAEA would keep the nuclear activities of Iran under control.³²

EU, UNSC, IAEA and Recent Developments

The aim of the efforts in international community is to convince Iran to suspend its 'enrichment and reprocessing' program 'indefinitely'.³³ In the meantime Iran's nuclear power plant cooperation continues with the Russia and it is legal. In order to keep the program within the limits that international community is ready to let, some diplomatic initiatives are resorted.

In 2003, EU3 (Germany, United Kingdom and France) began to talks with Iran to persuade it to halt its nuclear enrichment program.³⁴ Although Iran declared that it stopped its nuclear enrichment program with these talks, in 2005 because the pledges made to Iran has not been met; Iran declared that the program restarted. In 2006 IAEA board 'passed a resolution' reporting the Iran's non-compliance, to UNSC. The resolution passed 'without consensus'. Afterwards, several other resolutions of IAEA passed and called the attention of UNSC.³⁵ In 2006 United Nations Security Council decreed a resolution³⁶ calling Iran to halt its nuclear enrichment projects and imposed sanctions on exportation of nuclear technologies and some dual

use materials from any country to Iran.³⁷ Iran didn't stop and continued to advance its program and UN security Council decreed two other resolutions in 2007 and 2008 which imposed more strict measures, including; freezing Iran's nuclear related personalities' assets, prohibiting Iran from selling arms to outside of Iran, and a strict monitoring exportation of material and technologies that can be used both for military and civil purposes.³⁸ The call of the resolutions is the 'suspension of all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities and all work on all heavy-water-related projects, to be verified by IAEA'³⁹

But none of these international attempts made a progress in halting Iran's struggle to obtain nuclear indigenous technology.

In 2004 Iran declared that it plans to construct 7 nuclear power plants. This projection of Iran raises the suspicion of some authorities because Iran already has huge oil and gas reserves. Nevertheless Iran argues that, the nuclear power plants are 'necessary for rising domestic consumption, while oil and gas are needed to generate foreign currency'.⁴⁰ Iran argues that it doesn't plan to develop nuclear weapons but its undeclared activities cause suspicion.⁴¹

In one of the recent reports of Secretary General of IAEA to the board of the governors, it is emphasized that some documentation and information regarding conversion is provided from some member states, and the Agency corroborated some of these information. Report says that the Agency requested from Iran to answer if these allegations about the conversion of nuclear material for military purposes is correct or not. At the same report it is pointed out that Iran has provided some information about these allegations but still there are some issues that need to be answered by Iran.⁴² On the other hand, the same report stresses that Iran collaborated with IAEA to improve safeguard measures in the nuclear enrichment facilities and provided access to these facilities.⁴³ As another positive development in the report, it is noted that Iran provided to IAEA the right make announced and unannounced inspections, and since March 2007 IAEA conducted 29 unannounced inspections in Iran.⁴⁴

In response to this report of Secretary General of IAEA, in Iran's official letter to IAEA, some western countries: US, UK and France are blamed because they prevent the agency work efficiently and technically.⁴⁵ The second point that Iran mentions is about privacy of the information. Iran argues that IAEA does not care enough about the privacy of information it gets about Iran/s nuclear program, and most of the classified information is being leaked to press.⁴⁶ Thirdly, Iran stresses that IAEA's wide coverage of the alleged studies of the member states, in

the report, harms the steps to be taken by Iran.⁴⁷ According to Iran's claims, most of the alleged studies are fabricated and the documents are not original. Fourthly, Iran blames IAEA because it doesn't act in compliance with the accord agreed between Iran and IAEA regarding alleged studies.⁴⁸ Iran also blames IAEA on the grounds that IAEA sometimes raises some issues that are not in the mandate of IAEA and this attitude harms the confidence among the parties.⁴⁹

Legal Aspect of the Iran's Nuclear Program

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

The most referred legal framework regarding nuclear technology acquisition and transfers is Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). According to NPT's Article 4, each state party has the right to acquire nuclear technology for the peaceful purposes. And each state party can make cooperation with other parties, especially in the territories of the non-nuclear states, for the peaceful use of the nuclear technology.⁵⁰ This provision of the NPT gives the legitimacy to the Iran's nuclear program as far as Iran does not convert the fissile material to weapons.

However this provision of the Treaty subject to criticism. Some of the authorities argue that the NPT needs to be revised, since this provision gives the state parties to have indigenous nuclear research: they consider it as a loophole.⁵¹ In line with this argument, there have been some attempts in NPT review conference in 2005 to revise the 4th article. However, Iran prevented this maneuver.⁵²

As an alternative, in order to prevent non-nuclear states to obtain nuclear weapons, the idea of internationally controlled fuel centers is proposed by some authorities. Although, according to NPT, each state has the right to develop indigenous nuclear fuel facilities for peaceful purposes, there are suggestions for constructing nuclear fuel centers which would be under the international control. Those centers would produce fuel that is enriched to the grade that can only be used for peaceful purposes.⁵³ Nevertheless, no progress has been recorded on this option either.

There are two phases of nuclear technology in respect to nuclear weapons; one is the phase of the production of the fissile material which would be the harmful component of a nuclear weapon. The other phase of nuclear weaponization is acquiring devices that would deliver and ignite explosion of the material. The fissile material to be used for military purposes

needs to be enriched and the degree of the enrichment necessary for nuclear weapon is much higher than the grade necessary for energy production.⁵⁴ And IAEA didn't find any credible sign showing diversion of nuclear material to weapons, and delivery and explosion material, which means that there is not evidence indicating that violation of NPT provisions.⁵⁵ However in the reports of the IAEA it is noted that Iran does not collaborate on every aspect (for example on the implementation of additional protocol) so that IAEA can be able to completely exclude the possibility of diversion of fissile material for military purposes.⁵⁶

Iran, various times, declared that its program is for peaceful purposes⁵⁷ not for acquiring nuclear weapons thus in compliance with NPT provisions. Meanwhile, some recent news indicates that Iran is ready to accept alternative solutions, which international community would offer.⁵⁸

Sovereign Rights?

Considering the sovereign rights of the states, Iran has not so much leverage in respect to its nuclear program. By signing the NPT, Iran restricted its sovereign rights on the issue of the nuclear technology and weapons. That is to say, Iran has to act in accordance with the NPT rules which give the right to have nuclear technology only for peaceful uses. From this perspective, although it seems that NPT has a negative impact on Iran's nuclear program, in fact, the NPT gives Iran the leverage to argue that its program is for peaceful purposes. Additionally, as stated above, Iran's membership to NPT gave it the opportunity to prevent the revision of the Treaty which was intended to restrain acquiring peaceful nuclear technology too. Yet if Iran withdraws from the Treaty, then it would have the full sovereign rights but the consequences of that move might not be so favorable. Iran would lose its negotiation power if it withdraws from the Treaty.

Additional Protocol

One of the aspects of the legal issues regarding Iran's nuclear program is the implementation of additional protocol.⁵⁹ Both the IAEA and United Nations Security Council Resolutions calls Iran to implement the additional protocol as a confidence building measure.⁶⁰ The additional protocol is a 'strengthened safeguard system'.⁶¹ Article 3 of the NPT requires the non-nuclear states to sign a safeguard agreement with the IAEA, which enables IAEA to make inspections, and sets the rules of the inspections.⁶² Iran signed the safeguard agreement in 1974 with IAEA.⁶³ Thus,

additional protocol contains strengthened measures foreseen in the safeguard agreement. Iran argues that additional protocol implementation is not an obligation under NPT rules and points out that already about 80 countries do not implement additional protocol, not just Iran.⁶⁴ Iranians also argue that they implemented the additional protocol two and half years voluntarily but because their nuclear program has been conveyed to UN Security Council, they stopped to implement the additional protocol.⁶⁵ Considering the report of the IAEA it seems that additional protocol is something that is required for the technical considerations, but it can be argued that Iran seeks a way to decrease the international pressure in return for the implementation of the additional protocol.

An Evaluation of the Historical, Legal and Technical Aspects of the Program

The historical experiences show that Iran's nuclear program is contributed by almost all of the major powers in the world. Those countries helped to Iran most when they had/have close relations with Iran, thus the threat allegedly posed by Iran's nuclear program to the peace in the Middle East and world changes according to the alliance situations.

Technically, Iran's nuclear program is complicated and Iran apparently wants to have an indigenous nuclear capability. The facilities are constructed and designed dispersedly and partly underground to be able to protect them from foreign attacks. But technically, there are not proven signs of weaponization, it is still in the margins of the peaceful purposes.

Legally, Iran didn't seriously violate any international rule; at least there is not a proven violation.

Considering these facts it seems that the confrontation of international community is not justified in terms of technical, historical and legal aspects. Now let's examine the US interests in the Middle East; and evaluate its political and strategic calculations in order to see if, in these respects, the US confrontation with Iran is justified or not for the good of the USA.

US Interests in the Middle East

As stated at the beginning, the agenda of international community regarding Iran's nuclear program is determined by the United States. Thus US motivations, interests and concerns needs to be examined. This examination is necessary in that it would indicate how the US engagement in the region is constructed on wrong premises. In this context, firstly one needs to know about

the US interests in the Middle East region. The US, as a global player, has interests in the Middle East as it has in other parts of the world. The interests in the Middle East are mainly linked to oil. Does really oil matters for USA? Yes it does. There are several reasons to think that oil matters. First of all, oil is one of the most vital extractives for the economies⁶⁶ of every country but more than any country this resource is a necessity for the use of great powers like the USA.⁶⁷ The United States is the largest oil consumer, 20 percent of the produced oil is consumed in the United States.⁶⁸ Second, oil has been a part of the US cold war strategy, United States and Soviets have been rivals in Middle East. In the cold war period, there were concerns that Soviets could penetrate to the gulf region by exercising influence on Iran.⁶⁹ Thus it means that oil is a subject of great power competition. Third, US let the oil companies benefit from the judicial protection,⁷⁰ because it is believed that the privileges of those companies in oil business would serve to the interests of the United States. Fourth, oil, today is the most needed resource of meeting the energy needs.⁷¹ Fifth, oil is not only a resource necessary for economic activities it is also somehow a financial tool to influence the economic stability. Thus any country which wants to both maintain and develop its economic capability needs this precious mineral.

So, for every country, but more than any country, for great powers there are two necessities in respect to oil. 1) Keep the oil be safely and steadily extracted and flow to world markets, 2) Keep the price of the oil steady.⁷² What does make these facts so substantial in respect to the Middle East? The Middle East is the region having the 60% of global reserves of this precious mineral,⁷³ that means the control over this mineral is necessary both to maintain this commodity to flow for the needs of the home country (great powers) and to gain a leverage against other great powers.⁷⁴ The great power that controls this region can threaten the economic stability and sustainability of the development of other great powers, thus oil is a part of great power politics, and United States has this projection.⁷⁵

In this context, for the US, controlling the flow and extraction of oil is a primary goal in the region. Another interest of the USA is supposed to be Israel's survival⁷⁶ as an equally vital interest like oil. However Israel's survival is only a variant of the oil control for the United States. First of all, neither the United States nor any other country can stick to a country with which cooperation is no longer profitable. And Israel is not the first nation that has a special relationship with US. For example, once upon a time the US, had a special relationship with France which had helped to the United States to gain its independence from United Kingdom. However, when

the French Revolution took place in France, the United States just ‘dismantled’ the special relationship.⁷⁷ The second nation that had/has a special relationship with the US is United Kingdom.⁷⁸ If the special relationship means that the relations would never be sour, we should expect that the relationship between the US and Britain would have never been a matter of controversy. In fact, there have been some occasions that the US and British controversy rose. One of the occasions that we see the controversy rose is the Suez Canal crisis. The United States opposed to United Kingdom’s and France’s actions to protect their interests in the region.⁷⁹ Another occasion has been the clash of the US and British oil interests in the Middle East.⁸⁰ Britain and the USA were in a big competition regarding oil privileges in the Middle East. Britain at first was trying to prevent the US from taking part in extraction and marketing of Middle East oil. However, soon, the US authorities decided to break British dominance in the field and take part in the game.⁸¹ So, to mention a special relationship between the USA and another country there must be vital and mutual interests on the grounds. Then what are the factors that make Israel an ally of the United States? What makes Israel a special partner is its role as a balancer in the Middle East. It manages to be able to blockade the maneuvers of the Middle Eastern countries. For example, the triumph of the Israel in 1967 war made the US feel that Israel is a strong ally who could defeat the Soviet-backed Arabs.⁸² This triumph was important because it prevented Arab nationalism from being a uniting discourse among Arab people, which was deemed as harmful to western interests.⁸³ Thus it can be easily argued that Israel was accepted as the proxy to balance the ambitions of the countries having oil. On the other hand, once the US chose Israel to have better relations, this selection also created the US dependency on Israel, and this could be termed as path dependency.⁸⁴

The other interest of the US in the region is the regional stability and the concerns of its allies in the region,⁸⁵ which is also based on the security of oil in lack of the Soviet Union, and might be utilized in the competition with China. Many observers also mention the Iranian regime as a threat to US interests.⁸⁶ And the outcome of this perception is that the nuclear weapons would be a tool for the Iranian regime to use against US interests. The global political calculations and regime change issues would be elaborated below.

WHAT MEASURES DO AUTHORITIES SUGGEST TO THE US DECISION MAKERS? AND WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE IRANIAN RETALIATORY ACTIONS?

Under the assumption that US interests are threatened by Iran and its nuclear program, it is suggested that US should not let Iran have nuclear weapons which would make Iran stronger and harm US interests. Accepting this causation, what do the authorities suggest to the USA? Should it attack to Iran or impose stricter sanctions to force it stop going nuclear? The scenarios vary.

The scenario one is hitting the nuclear facilities of the Iran via air strike or missiles.⁸⁷ Observers believe that in such a situation bombing the nuclear facilities of Iran would be either performed by USA, or by Israel or by both.⁸⁸ In either case, the problem is the sporadic locations of nuclear facilities,⁸⁹ and some of the facilities are built underground.⁹⁰ This would make difficult for the US and Israel to penetrate all the facilities. This situation can make the attack even a failure.

The scenario two is attacking to 'strategically important economic infrastructure' and nuclear facilities of Iran which would seriously damage Iran's vulnerable economic capability and demolish its nuclear facilities thus create the popular outcry⁹¹ which will tame Iran not to dare again to construct nuclear capability.

The third scenario is invading Iran as Iraq invaded. In this option also the regime change would be put into practice.⁹²

These scenarios that foresee a military attack of varied intensities may cause the retaliation of Iran. The retaliation most probably would be asymmetrical because the power of Iran is not equivalent to that of the US.⁹³ However the weigh of the retaliation would range from giving orders to Iran backed-armed groups⁹⁴ and some sleeper al-Qaeda cells under the control of the Iran,⁹⁵ to sabotaging the oil flow in the Strait of Hormuz.⁹⁶ Iran backed-armed groups would either attack to direct US targets or vital targets of the US allies, thus harming the US relations with their allies. The groups/organizations that can attack US targets are not only in Lebanon but also in Syria, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, Iraq, Sudan and Turkey, which makes these countries unwilling regarding a possible US attack.⁹⁷ On the other hand the closure of Strait of Hormuz would be a shock for the global markets that would cause the dissent of the other influential governments in the world.⁹⁸

Another important development is recent news in the press regarding Iran's nuclear program. It is argued that some evidence showing that Iran developed some devices that can only be used for the military purposes have been reported to the governments of the countries involved.⁹⁹ On the other hand, Iran has recently conducted a military exercise. The exercise covered 600.000 square kilometers and aimed to increase air defense capabilities. If Iran can successfully manage an air defense, attacking to Iran may cause a serious failure and a loss of credibility for the attacking parties.¹⁰⁰ The recent intelligence reports implies that international community may take action while the military exercise of Iran shows that the option of an attack to Iran is not an avoidable matter still and Iran prepares itself to confront such an attack.

Other scenarios are those suggesting either to impose more harsh sanctions and exert diplomatic pressure¹⁰¹ to force Iran stop its program, or to ease the Iran's security concerns¹⁰² by giving the necessary guarantees to Iran that it would not be attacked by any country and drive Iran to normalcy. In this scenario, supporting internal opposition groups or ethnic or sectarian groups to foster their positions¹⁰³ to topple the ayatollahs is still considered.

Even in the case of adopting non violent measures, there is the risk of increasing the popular support to the regime because of the external interference to the internal affairs of Iran. It shouldn't be forgotten that Mosaddaq was not an Islamist and was against the foreign domination, so a different regime other than Islamic one can also be anti-American if the wrong policies applied by the USA.

Consequently, it is obvious that confrontation with Iran has a cost and may doom to fail. Thus we can argue that, as stated at the beginning, confrontation with Iran, because of Iran's capabilities to retaliate, is not a suitable option. That is not to say that Iran can not be defeated, but it is to say that it will be costly while that cost would not worth to shoulder, given the fact that Iran does not harm the US interests in the region, as will be discussed below. Meanwhile as discussed in detail by Anthony and Sullivan, the possible repercussions of a harsh confrontation with Iran may be an uncontrollable catastrophe that none of the regional governments would like to see, and global politics can not be able to absorb.

But if the material fact indicates that confrontation with Iran is neither necessary nor profitable, then why does everybody assumes that Iran should be confronted? It seems that the reason is cultural perceptions rather than political calculations.

Does really Iran Pose a Threat to US Interests?

What about to reverse thinking about Iran, its nuclear program, regional dynamics and Iran's regime? In fact, none of the approaches that discuss the possible confrontation methods touches on the essence of the subject. What are the failures of the analysts?

Oil

To begin with it is widely accepted that secure extraction and flow of oil is the most obvious interest of the United States. The problem begins when many analysts do not show any hesitation when saying that Iran threatens the US's oil related interests in the region. Would really the secure flow and extraction of oil be something that Iran like to sabotage? Given the Iranian economy's heavy dependence on oil revenues¹⁰⁴ it is not wise to imagine that Iran would be a threat to US interests on oil flow. In contrast, Iran would really like to benefit from both extraction and flow of oil. On the other hand, Iran extremely needs the investment in its oil fields which suffers from the old technology and blockade of USA; actually, White argues that Iran looks for American investment more than that of any other country.¹⁰⁵ Meanwhile, Vakil argues that Iran looks to west not to east.¹⁰⁶ So why people fear that a strong Iran would threaten the US interest in expense of undermining its own economy? The answer is the perception about its Islamic identity. The equation goes like this line; Islamic politics is anti-American. Its adherents are blind and the only thing that should be expected from them is destruction of the American/western civilization. They can not cooperate! Cooperation would embolden them. Do whatever you can to stop its rise! Iran has a regime oriented on political Islam Block it whenever you can! Isolate it! Don't let it go nuclear! If it acquires nuclear weapons, it would not make rational political calculations. It would act differently from any other nation. What it would do is blindly attacking to US interests.

This is the line of the thinking about Iran which causes the people to think that Iran is a threat to secure flow of oil.¹⁰⁷ When closely examined neither the facts support this line of the thinking nor there is a claim of Iran saying that if Iran go nuclear it would directly blockade the flow of oil, nor Iran's nuclear capability would be able to do this blockade, the only thing that this capability would serve is deterring other states from attacking on it¹⁰⁸, because it could be able to harm the attackers seriously with nuclear weapons.

Special Relationship with Israel

Second interest of US is supposed to be Israel's survival and its qualitative military superiority in the region.¹⁰⁹ Many sources accept the survival of the Israel as a primary interest of the United States without questioning. However, first of all, it should be noted that Israel has not a status that would never be discarded by the United States, even when Israel's interests contradict with those of the United States. The United States is a global player¹¹⁰ while Israel is a regional player.¹¹¹ As once the US dismantled its special relationship with France and showed it can dismantle with Britain, it can also dismantle with Israel. This needs to be expressed in order to avoid misconceptions. It is not proposed that the US should break its relations with Israel. However it is to say that Israel is not a national interest of the US. Even if in a particular period of time, in the cold war period, Israel's survival has been accepted as an interest of the USA, it should be expressed that it was situational not perpetual. For a fair and stable future for both Israel and other regional countries, Israel needs to pave the way of survival by employing policies other than reliance on special relationship with USA. An Israel which only relies on the security measures would not be able to protect its security, Israel needs to develop less problematic relations with its neighbors and thus prevent them to use an anti-Israel discourse.¹¹² Furthermore, Israel's heavily reliance on military approach was something that goes beyond reliance on Israel's own capabilities.¹¹³

Second, Iran is not the enemy of the Jews, and is not so irrational to attack Israel. Iran is not the enemy of Jews because there is a wide community of Jews who has not left Iran until now.¹¹⁴ There is a bias that Iran would launch a nuclear attack if it acquires the weapons, because it is a 'fundamentalist' state.¹¹⁵ Iran would not launch a military attack because Israel and USA had an absolute nuclear advantage compared to Iran. If Iran attacks first then it will be the end of Iran.¹¹⁶ Moreover, there is Iranian approachment to Israel, including Israel-Palestine and WMD issues.¹¹⁷ Considering these fact, it seems that, the fear of Israel is not justified on the technical and political grounds, and the current considerations need to be reviewed in light of the new world political conditions.

Third, Iran uses anti-Israel language because it plays a regional role and it has to voice its existence, because Israel's actions in the region influence whole of the regional politics, which almost none of the states in the region embrace. The reason behind the view of some authorities

that Iran would use these weapons is because of the bias against the Islamic politics. It is believed Islamic politics is blind and would cause irrational moves. However, it is interesting, when analysts examine the Iranian retaliation in a case of the American or Israeli attack, they really rationally think in their analyses, and say, for example, that Iran doesn't use its cards now, but if it is attacked then it will use its cards. This is a very rational reasoning, and reveals that Iran is not so lunatic to use every kind of violence in any case; it would use violence if when it is under pressure. So if Iran would not be attacked then it will not use those weapons and may manage very well like it manages its cards today, regarding its proxy violent groups in the Middle East.

Fourth, in the global play today between USA, China and Russia,¹¹⁸ Israel has little to offer, while Iran has much to offer to the USA.

Relations with Iran and Its Implications on Global Politics: What is the Cost to the USA?

Russia cooperates with Iran to 'minimize the US presence in the region'.¹¹⁹ China's economic development has a tremendous impact on the 'international political economy'.¹²⁰ These great powers are global players, and to deal with these powers the USA needs the cooperation of other nations. Let alone the possible implications of positive contribution of oil and gas reserves and geopolitical position of Iran to the US global position,¹²¹ an engagement with Iran would have tremendous implications on the imagery of the USA in Muslim people's mind all around the world, which would considerably contribute to the enhancement of US position in world politics. What about Iran? Would Iran accept being a partner of the most powerful global player, the USA? Iran, in contrast to general perception, is a country looking to west. Even the Iranian revolution was not anti-western; it was for mitigate the uneven pro-western linkages, not to end those linkages. The aim was to make a balance between east and west.¹²² However, after western blockade of Iran from world affairs, beginning from 1979, Iran became to be a player looking toward eastward, to China and Russia. China made huge deals with Iran and also undermines¹²³ the US efforts to blockade Iran.¹²⁴ Sanam Vakil gives a lot of details about the cooperation between China and Iran. On the other hand, indeed, historically, Iran and Russia are structural foes.¹²⁵ A geopolitical Chinese and Iran confrontation is also inevitable because the sphere of influence of these two countries overlaps with each other. A stronger China would try to exercise hegemon-like behaviors in its sphere of influence. Central Asian republics and Afghanistan are two regions on which Chinese and Iranian interests would structurally contrast. That would not

be because of the policy failure or choices but because of the inevitability. Therefore, if Iran is not forced to have close relations with China it would be a structural ally of the United States in the global game between China and United States. But the policies of the US drive Iran to have close relations with China and Russia, in a political milieu in which the United States try to contain China.¹²⁶

What is going on in the side of China? Although there are views claiming that China would not utilize its economic power to political power,¹²⁷ there are several evidences showing that China has a global agenda and makes global political projections.¹²⁸ However the reason behind Chinese political projections is not Chinese ill wills. It is international political system that drives China to make these calculations. China, since the midst of the 19th century, has been subjected to the pressure of great powers. Until the emergence of the Japanese imperial conquests, western countries were the major attackers that compelled China to accept unfavorable conditions in international politics. Then, the beginning from early 20th century to the end of the Second World War Japanese pressure has been main concern of China.¹²⁹ In the cold war period, at first, China made alliance with USSR against the containment policy of the USA, and when USSR became a threat in the Chinese perception then China approached to the USA. In the post-cold war period China still felt the pressure of the most powerful state in the world, the USA.¹³⁰ The US's engagement with Japan on military issues in 1990's and US's backing of Taiwan are some examples of the external pressures that China perceived in the post-cold war period from USA.¹³¹ Thus it can be argued that China has been subject to a continuous external pressure which compels Chinese authorities to take steps to avoid this pressure.¹³²

China started its projection for current economic fast growth in 1979, and this projection is not a result of social dynamics, rather it is the result of state planning.¹³³ The logical interpretation of this situation is that Chinese state made a decision to be economically powerful because it wanted to increase its political power, not because it wanted to increase the life standards of its citizens. However, as stated above it is not the ill wills of Chinese state to make these calculations. It was the anarchical structure of the international political system that drove China to have its current position.

What are the evidences to think that Chinese economic growth has political motivations? First of all, China wanted to see a multipolar world in aftermath of the cold war.¹³⁴ Is there any country that has not global calculations and want to see a multipolar world? China also regrets

about some USA actions in post cold war period. In her article, Rosemary Foot argues that China is not a realist player and doesn't plan to confront USA. Ironically when Foot tries to convince the reader that China is not motivated with realist principles of international relations gives such security related examples as NATO's intervention in Kosovo, the US's anti-terrorist campaign which enabled a strong US presence in the Central Asia, US military intervention in Iraq, and the US and Japan's revision of their defense guidelines etc. as main international developments concerning China in the post cold-war period.¹³⁵ If China doesn't act in accordance with the great power politics motivations, why does it care about these actions of USA? In line with the Chinese global calculations China also try to establish a regional (Thailand, India, Russia, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Malaysia)¹³⁶ and global (Iran, Sudan, Venezuela, Brazil, France, Germany)¹³⁷ network with other countries to further its influence. Furthermore, China in recent years increased its military spending, although not in an exhaustive way as Soviet Union did.¹³⁸

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, China could stay at the side like Germany and Japan did, but it took initiative in balancing US power. Rosemary Foot notes that China expected to see the world as a potential multipolar world with a super power, USA. In accordance with this reasoning China wanted to see Europe and Japan take initiative to establish a more balanced world. But EU and Japan disappointed China by not taking initiative to balance the US dominance.¹³⁹ This is exactly what Mearsheimer calls as buck-passing.¹⁴⁰ This means that EU and Japan passed the buck to China and China caught it, because China can not stop its development. Thus, the US and China confronted.

In respect to Chinese calculations,¹⁴¹ US's isolationist policy toward Iran provides a gate to China to enter the Middle East easier than Soviet Union could be able to.¹⁴² Soviet Union lacked a direct contact chance to the Middle East energy resources because the United States made a good alliance chain against Soviet Union. Until 1979, including Iran, all the oil countries of Middle East were allies of the USA. After 1979, even though Iran was not a pro-American country, it was not an ally of USSR either.¹⁴³ However, today, the US let Iran, a country holding the fourth largest oil reserves and second largest natural gas reserves in the world, to look toward to Chinese and Russian alliance.¹⁴⁴ This is something that Iran does unwillingly but forcibly. A militarily stronger China would someday have the opportunity to control all the gulf oil which would demolish whole US interests in the region.¹⁴⁵ Additionally China would have the chance to access to Caspian Sea basin natural resources through an alliance with an Iran isolated by

USA.¹⁴⁶ Together with Russian and Middle East reserves, Caspian Sea basin is the third pillar of energy politics of the Eurasia.¹⁴⁷ Although Russia has a total control on its energy resources; Iran has access to these three energy basins. In the Middle East and Caspian Sea basin it is a direct player. China now is the 'third-largest net importer behind United States and Japan' and this 'compelled China to embark on a global hunt for energy. Since the early 1990's, Chinese oil companies have cemented large deals with producing states from Africa and the Middle East to Latin America'.¹⁴⁸ This increase in the demand for natural resources makes USA, and China competitors in 'energy security arena'.¹⁴⁹

Hall remarks that in today's multipolar international system, whether China's would be offensive and increase its military capability or would adapt peaceful means still needs to be seen. However there are some initiatives of China and Russia to establish a military pact against the US/NATO intrusion in the region, Shanghai Cooperation can become an organization to balance the NATO presence.¹⁵⁰

Looking from this perspective, it can be easily inferred that, US opposition to Iran endangers both the US regional policies and, most importantly, its global status. In addition to the argument that the US military action against Iran would produce harmful retaliation of Iran, and loss in the credibility of the United States among its regional allies; the confrontation, also would not be profitable for the US because it will lose many opportunities to its rivals (China, Russia, India) while would be devoid of those opportunities. On the other hand, Israel is not as much a vital interest of USA as it was in the cold war period because of the current global competition having many players. What is necessary today is taming Israel's policies toward its Middle Eastern neighbors¹⁵¹ and drive it to pursue more modest policies instead of endangering US global interests. This policy would both ease the Israel's security concerns and make its survival sustainable, and would give the United States more flexible cards in its relations with the countries in the region.

Should the US stay indifferent to Iran's Nuclear Program? Indeed, the United States without confronting Iran should diplomatically do whatever it can do to prevent Iran go nuclear, because, let alone Iran, the proliferation of nuclear weapons endanger the whole security of globe since it increases the possibility of accidents and transfer of technology,¹⁵² but if the diplomacy doesn't work, it would not be the end of the world,¹⁵³ the USA can find a way to live with a nuclear Iran, as it managed to live with a nuclear Soviets and a nuclear North Korea.¹⁵⁴ However,

from the perspective of Iran, it should be noted that a nuclear Iran may face a dilemma. The increased expectations attached to Iran's nuclear program might cause Iran lose prestige. Because, somehow because the Iran's nuclear program is perceived as the weapon of the Muslims, the acquisition of this weapon would bear with itself the implication of using the nuclear weapon. If a country insists on obtaining a weapon there must be a reason, if, at the end, Iran would not use that weapon then for what purpose it tries to get that? In a paper referring Abdullah GUL, the President of Turkey, the same argument is spelled out, that a nuclear Iran could commit mistakes.¹⁵⁵

Regime Change and Perceptions

The last US interest that some experts argue is the regime change in Iran. Actually this idea lies in the root of misperceptions related to Iran. Just because of this idea, people think that Iran is a threat to the oil interests of the United States and survival of Israel, despite the fact that material reality does not support these arguments. This idea says that Iranian Regime is hostile to US interests with no clear reason. Iran is assumed to be irrational completely because what is inherent in Islamic thought. There is an orientalist and confrontational assumption that Muslim people or Islamic countries act with an inherent hatred against western countries,¹⁵⁶ and there is not a western input causing these anti-western sentiments.¹⁵⁷ This sentiment about the Islamic thing has been also directed to Islamic identity based politics.¹⁵⁸ However, this suspicion, as stressed above, is not political; rather it is a cultural perception. On the other hand this perception is not correct because it omits the fact that Islamic politics is, in fact, reconcilable¹⁵⁹ with democracy and western ideas.

What is the source of this cultural perception? The thing making this cultural perception widespread is the orientalist approach and scholars, who produce the imagery about the middle eastern/Islamic/Iranian issues. The orientalist perception makes a clear distinction between the “western” and “eastern” and assumes that east and west are two ways of living, making politics, practicing religion, and thinking.¹⁶⁰ Meanwhile between these two perceptions there is a hierarchy. The western one is superior to the eastern one.¹⁶¹ This distinction between these two ways o life is assumed to be really important in the way the people act. At least, it is assumed that, the eastern one may sometimes act irrationally¹⁶² and thus unexpectedly. Not only

unexpectedly but also with hatred.¹⁶³ Thus if they acquire power they may destroy the “western” thing.

Because of this perception, the US interests and Iran interests are deemed as irreconcilable, because they represent different cultures. ‘Iran is centre of new comintern’,¹⁶⁴ it is the centre of political Islam. The Iranians don’t rationally as we rationally. So we can’t or shouldn’t make empathy with the Islamic countries. The only thing that we can do is to confront them¹⁶⁵ and their irrationality. Although, as stated above, the calculations and assumption about US interests and Iran's position do not correspond to the reality, if people or politicians endure their perception that the interests of Iran and USA are irreconcilable, we can say that it is not because of the political reasons but because of the cultural perceptions that heavily influence US policy in the Middle East and in particular in Iran.

On the other hand, the political perceptions drive the USA to take a different route. Some US political elites, military authorities and intelligence service representatives are hesitant about attacking to Iran and have doubts about harsh confrontation with Iran.¹⁶⁶ Katzman notes that congress also opposes to a military action, and without Congress’s approval, military action against Iran is forbade.¹⁶⁷ So the US neither acts decisively to stop the Iran’s program like it did in Iraq and Afghanistan because that will harm US global interests, nor let Iran have cooperation with it. This hesitation causes Iran to go alliance with eastern countries, the rivals of the United States, while the US loses its concentration and rationality.

Furthermore, it should be noted that, other great powers like China, Russia and India, in every occasion try to address the threat posed by the so-called Islamic. These maneuvers of China and Russia, and India, however, obviously aim distracting the US attention from them and weaken the US global position. In contrast to the general perception that there is an alliance between Islamic countries and Confucian countries, in fact these two blocks are quite separate and clash with each other because of the structural reasons, namely the power of the one side increases in expense of the other’s. A wise eye would see that there are only Muslim countries are there to have alliance with the United States in designation of its global perspective. India can not be an ally of the United States in the global politics, because it is another spot of the increasing economic and political power, thus it is a potential rival. On the other hand, the Muslim countries are all located around of these two rising powers (India and China) and the sleeping giant Russia. In the meantime, none of the Muslim countries are able to become a global

power, because, all of them are behind the great powers in terms of the territorial and population sizes. The US authorities are aware of these facts and these facts make them hesitant to totally confront Muslim countries and in particular Iran.

Some might argue that in the case of a confrontation between China and the US some of the Middle Eastern countries would be allies of the China and some others would be the allies of the United States as it was the case in the cold war period. However, there are some differences between the cold war Middle East and contemporary Middle East. When the cold war began, most of the Middle Eastern countries have just won their independency from the colonial powers, their state institutions were weak, and extreme nationalism was dominant; thus the Middle Eastern countries were overly reactionary. However, today, most of the Middle Eastern countries have a state tradition and can manage calculating their interests better. Wise policies of the United States would reveal the natural alliance between the Middle Eastern countries and the United States. The confrontation of the United States with Iran without moral and legal justification weakens the will of the Muslim countries to approach the United States, because they think that the United States confront Iran since the US has an enmity to the Muslims.

Furthermore, cultural perception cannot be a source of politics in this political global milieu. However, public opinion, media and other global forces cause confusion and hesitation in the minds of US politicians, which is a common flaw of the US foreign policy. Kissinger throughout his book, *Diplomacy*, emphasizes that US foreign policy has always been indecisive when it needed to make a choice between the cultural perception priorities and political perceptions/calculations. Kissinger also notes that the United States utilized the ideological/cultural bias during the cold war period in confrontation with Soviet Union; however in today's multipolar world there is a need to adopt a more pragmatic approach to succeed.¹⁶⁸

Conclusion

Iran's nuclear program has long been subject to monitoring. Iran's program, from the legal perspective has not been a violation of its international commitments. The regional dynamics are not appropriate to confront and there is not an actual clash of interests of the USA and Iran. Moreover, even though the USA seems as if confronting Iran decisively, in fact, the USA is hesitant about the way to deal with Iran's nuclear program, because its political/global perceptions does not overlap with its current policies and its cultural conceptions. On the other

hand, the cultural conception is not constructed in a fair way, rather it is shaped by some influential orientalists, intellectuals, and more importantly by other great powers like China, Russia and India who want to distract the US attention on them.

The USA misses the chance of, from a political pragmatic point of view, accommodation of Iran because of its hesitations. Obviously the problem is not whether to let Iran go nuclear or prevent it from that goal. Neither is it a problem of how to encounter it, because it is very obvious that it is neither to the US interests to be negatively biased against Iran and its nuclear program nor that program is a threat to US interests. What drive us to think that Iran is a threat to interests of the US are, however, cultural misperceptions, and these perceptions harm the US global interests. Unfortunately the same misperception and miscalculation prevails in all of the US policies in the region.

Unless these misperceptions and wrong calculations are overcome, it would not be possible to look with a fresh and more realistic approach to the problem of Iranian nuclear program, and to adopt more convenient policies in the region which would contribute to the US global interests. A new and unbiased approach in the region would make Iran's nuclear weapon ambition, if there is, pointless and Iran would not risk its whole future and shoulder unforeseen consequences of being a nuclear power. A nuclear Iran would be both more aggressive which could endanger the survival of the country, and also trigger irrational or reactionary attitudes from the countries in the region, which would make Iran to live in a more ambiguous environment that could incur further irrational moves. But Iran would act the way it acts if the current policies are continued to apply.

NOTES

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¹ Katzman reports that the USA is the country that led the multilateral economic and diplomatic pressure on Iran. See, Kenneth Katzman. "Iran: United States concerns and policy responses." *DISAM Journal* 31.2 (2009): 75+. *Academic OneFile*. Web. 01 Dec. 2009. pp. 75, 77

² *Ibid.*, p. 75

³ See, Andrew Koch, and Jeanette Wolf. "Iran's Nuclear Facilities: a Profile." *James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS)*. James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS), n.d. Web. 1 Dec. 2009. <http://cns.mis.edu/pubs/reports/pdfs/iranrpt.pdf>, p. 5. Darkhovin power plant in Iran has been contracted to Chinese firms but the program is on hold because of the cash problem of Iran and China's ill preparedness. However, China provided several elements of indigenous nuclear studies to Iran. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7

⁴ UNSC resolutions 1696, 1737, 1747, 1803 and recently 1835 are the examples of the efforts of UNSC.

⁵ See, Katzman, *op. cit.*, p. 77

⁶ For a summary of these options, see, Nihat Ali Ozcan and Ozgur Ozdamar. "Iran's Nuclear Program and the Future of U.S.-Iranian Relations." *Middle East Policy*, Volume. XVI.No.1 (Spring 2009): 121-33., p. 8

⁷ See, Ozcan, *op. cit.*, p. 129

⁸ See, Samuel P. Huntington, "The clash of civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72.3 (1993): 22+. *Academic OneFile*. Web. 15 Dec. 2009.

⁹ Peaceful purposes are the nuclear technology use in the fields like agriculture, energy production, medical science... etc. Some influential US authorities argued at that time that Iran's acquisition of nuclear technology does not pose a proliferation threat. Chomsky cites from a newspaper, and says that Cheney and Kissinger were some of these influential figures. See, Noam Chomsky, and Gilbert Achcar. *Perilous Power: The Middle East and U.S. Foreign Policy Dialogues on Terror, Democracy, War, and Justice*. (Expanded ed. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2008.), See, pp.233-234.

¹⁰ See, Ozcan, *Iran's op. cit.*, p. 122

¹¹ Yet it should be noted that there is also a claim that Shah of Iran had the aim of developing nuclear weapons. Squassoni argues that intelligence reports suggested that Shah had a secret group to work on nuclear weapons. See, Sharon Squassoni, "Congressional Research Service Reports." Iran's Nuclear Program: Recent Developments, *Federation of American Scientists*. Congressional Research Service Reports, 9 Feb. 2007. Web. 6 Dec. 2009. <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/RS21592.pdf>. Cover page, Footnote 1.... The claim about the Shah's intention to have nuclear weapons is also noted by Koch. See, Koch, *op. cit.*, p.11.

¹² See, Koch, *op. cit.*, p.2

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 123,

See also Squassoni, *Iran's op. cit.*, pp.1-2

¹⁴ See, Koch, *op. cit.*, p. 2

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2

¹⁶ Iran began to talks with Russia and China in 1990. See, Koch, *op. cit.*, p. 2

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.1

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 14... Enriched uranium is important for both nuclear fuel in the power plants and for nuclear weapons.

¹⁹ See, Squassoni, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Also, Afrasiabi notes the Pakistan's involvement. See, Kaveh Afrasiabi and Mustafa Kibaroglu. "Negotiating Iran's Nuclear Populism." *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* Volume XII.Issue 1 (Summer / Fall 2005): 255-68. P. 259.

²¹ See, Squassoni, op. cit., p. 3

²² Ibid., p. 3

²³ See, IAEA August 28, 2009 Report, -"Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and relevant provisions of Security Council resolutions 1737 (2006), 1747 (2007), 1803 (2008), and 1835 (2008) in the Islamic Republic of Iran- GOV/2009/8." *International Atomic Energy Agency*. 19 Feb. 2009. Web. <http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Board/2009/gov2009-8.pdf>, p.2

²⁴ See, Koch, op. cit., p. 5

²⁵ Ibid., p. 6

²⁶ For details See Koch, ibid.

²⁷ See, Squassoni, *Iran's* op. cit., p. 3

²⁸ Ibid., p. 3

²⁹ For an account of the number of facilities and other qualifications of Iran's nuclear program see, Koch, ibid. However it should be noted that every step of the process of nuclear capability of Iran needs the foreign input. This information is derived from Andrew Koch's study... Özcan also notes that Iran is dependant on foreign technology. See, Ozcan, op. cit., p. 123.. On the other hand it is surprising to hear Iran's report saying that it will produce reactor domestically. See, IAEA August 28, 2009 report, p. 3. Thus it can be assumed that Iran's dependence on foreign input gradually decreases.

³⁰ Vladimir Soldatkin, "Exclusive: Russia to start Iran nuclear plant in 2010." *Reuters*. 30 Nov. 2009. Web. 15 Jan. 2010. <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE5AT32H20091130>

³¹ For details see, Koch, op. cit., pp. 3-4

³² Ibid., pp. 4-5

³³ See, Squassoni, op. cit., p. 2

³⁴ See, Ozcan, op. cit., p. 124

³⁵ See, Squassoni, op. cit., p. 5.

³⁶ UNSCR 1737

³⁷ See, Ozcan, op. cit., p. 124

³⁸ For the details see, Katzman, op. cit., p. 75

³⁹ See, Squassoni, op. cit., p. 6.

⁴⁰ This information is summarized from Suassoni, p.2... Also, Afrasiabi argues that "If a viable solution can be reached, Iran may soon emerge as an alternative supplier, inter alia, of nuclear fuel for light water reactors—or as a constructor of complete heavy water reactors, especially for the Muslim countries as well as Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) countries, who are also keen to invest in the nuclear field." See Afrasiabi, op. cit., p. 255,

⁴¹ See, Squassoni, *Iran's* op. cit., p. 2.

⁴² This information is summarized from IAEA August 28, 2009 report, see, pp. 4-6.

⁴³ Ibid, pp 2, 6

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 2.

⁴⁵ See, Communication dated 4 September 2009 received from the Resident Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Agency regarding the implementation of safeguards in Iran INFCIRC/768.” International Atomic Energy Agency, 7 Sept. 2009. Web. <http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Infcircs/2009/infcirc768.pdf>, p. 1

⁴⁶ Ibid, p.2

⁴⁷ Ibid, p.2

⁴⁸ Ibid, pp. 4-9

⁴⁹ Ibid, pp. 4-9

⁵⁰ See, “NPT Treaty.” *Welcome to the United Nations: It's Your World*. N.p., n.d. Web. 29 Jan. 2010. <http://www.un.org/events/npt2005>, article 7

⁵¹ See, Chomsky, op. cit., p.141.

⁵² See, Affrasiabi, op. cit., p.265

⁵³ See, Chomsky, op. cit., p. 233

⁵⁴ For the technical details see Squassoni, op. cit., and Koch, op. cit.,

⁵⁵ See, IAEA August 28, 2009 Report, p. 259

⁵⁶ Ibid, p.6

⁵⁷ See, Ozcan, op. cit., p. 127

⁵⁸ For the related news see <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,581139,00.html>

⁵⁹ IAEA emphasises in its report that Iran should implement the additional protocol... IAEA August 28, 2009 Report, p.6... Also, UNSC resolutions: 1696, 1737, 1747, 1803, 1835 also stipulate the implementation of the additional protocol.

⁶⁰ See, Communication dated 3 December 2009 received from the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Agency concerning statements made by the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Board of Governors. <http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Infcircs/2009/infcirc779.pdf>, p.2

⁶¹ http://www.iaea.org/OurWork/SV/Safeguards/sg_protocol.html

⁶² <http://www.un.org/events/npt2005/npttreaty.html>

⁶³ The text of the agreement is accessible online. <http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Infcircs/Others/infcirc214.pdf>

⁶⁴ See, Communication dated 4 September 2009 received from the Resident Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Agency regarding the implementation of safeguards in Iran INFCIRC/768.” International Atomic Energy Agency, 7 Sept. 2009. Web. <http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Infcircs/2009/infcirc768.pdf>, p. 4.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 4.

⁶⁶ Little cites from a US congress report. See, Little, Douglas. *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945*. (With a New Preface by the Author ed. United States of America: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008.) p.72

⁶⁷ Little reports that US markets has been dependent on oil even in 1973, *ibid.*, p. 69

⁶⁸ http://www.citris-uc.org/files/OIL_OVERVIEW_OF_5DECADE_HISTORY_AND_TODAYS_CHALLENGES.doc page 1

⁶⁹ See, Little, *op. cit.*, p. 51

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 56, 53

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 312

⁷² In a discussion among the governmental officials and oil companies in the US; in order to explain the contributions of oil companies to the advancement of the US foreign policy goals, the oil company attorneys, use these two criteria. This means that if these criteria are met, then the oil policy is successful in respect to foreign policy..., *ibid.*, p. 72... Also, when the 1973 oil shock took place, the major problems appeared regarding oil were the safe extraction and flow of oil and price stability... *ibid.* p. 70... Callinicos also mentions about these elements as vital for the great power politics. See, Held, David, Anthony G. McGrew, and Gareth Schott. "Globalization, Imperialism and the Capitalist World System." *Globalization Theory: Approaches and Controversies*. (1 ed. London: Polity Press, 2007._ 62-78., p.73

⁷³ See, Little, *op. cit.*, p. 312

⁷⁴ See, Chomsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55

⁷⁶ See, Ozcan, *op. cit.*, p. 125

⁷⁷ The argument about France, Israel and United Kingdom is exploited from Little, see, Little, *op. cit.*, p. 79

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* p. 79.

⁷⁹ For a detailed analysis of the Suez Canal crisis see, Little, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-181.

⁸⁰ The United States, for example, didn't hesitate to frustrate English and French petroleum companies in the Middle East. For the details, see Little, *ibid.*, p, 52. Also,.

⁸¹ For the details, *ibid.*, p. 51

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 102, See also p. 110.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.181

⁸⁴ Israel's role in handling some of the US demands in some problems of Jordan, Syria and Palestine in 1970 proved to the US that Israel is a good strategic partner... *ibid.*, pp.105-106... So the US perception was grounded on strategic calculation not on brotherhood with Jews.

That perception about Israel also created the US dependency. However, still US expectations from and dependence on Israel is related to national interests not the brotherhood or some religious commitments.

There are some facts that will support the idea that the relationship between the USA and Israel is based on the national interests. First of all, there is not a unique US voice in its relations with Israel: a wide array of influential authorities who are comprised of the US business people and diplomats are against to a blind US-Israeli special relationship...*ibid.*, pp. 77, 82... Secondly, even the supporters of the US and Israeli special relationship kept their support because they considered Israel's military prowess as valuable against Soviet incursion into the Middle East... *ibid.*, p. 78 ... Thirdly, although there was a special relationship between the US and Israel, the US was not an unconditional supporter of Israel in the case of the armament; for example, US politicians were seriously concerned about the Israel's search for the atomic bomb...*ibid.*, p.102... Fourthly, the US, in the past was not completely unresponsive to Arab demands, and the US, beside protecting Israeli interests, was also trying to convince Israel to start peace talks and make some territorial concessions..*ibid.*, pp. 6-7... So in either case the special relationship was based on situational interests not on moral attachments.

Moreover, some influential figures in US academia like; John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, nowadays question the special relationship with Israel and express the view that "cold war ended and close relations with Israel poisons US relations with Arab states.... *Ibid.*, p. 115

It should be noted however that although all the signs show that Israel is not any more a strategic asset for the United States as it was once, the problem facing the US is the path dependency. That is to say, once the US chose to be on the side of the Israel, that choice brought costs too. Although the United States never blindly supported Israel's causes, the United States didn't complain about the image that there is a special relationship between the United States and Israel either. This has been another factor creating the path dependency. States chose a path because they think that is the best choice, and for a period the path chosen may lose its function. Yet states continue to follow the path for a while, because they fear the unforeseen consequences of exiting the path they entered. The unpredictability makes the states to be hesitant to leave the old habits. Only if there is no choice other than to exit the path the states would exit that path and prepare themselves to undertake all the costs of leaving the path. (See, Wohlfort, William C.. "The Russian-Soviet Empire: a Test of Neorealism." *Review of International Studies* 27.Sp. Iss. SI (2001): 213-235. *ISI Web of Knowledge*. Web. 21 Nov. 2009. pp. 215, 216)... as would be discussed below when mentioning Chinese emergence in world politics and its implications on US position, it will be seen that there are serious threats to US interests in global scale which would cause questioning the path dependency. Once upon a time the US interests cause it to have special relationship with Israel, but most probably the same motives, the national interests of USA, would compel the USA this time to exit the path, because of the emergence of new global players.

Given the global politics' harsh conditions, alliance with Israel might be harmful for the US global interests, if that alliance is established in expense of the Middle Eastern countries. But, how much harmful? The scale of the harm would depend on global stakes; the harm might be as much as to feel the need of opting out the path that the US entered with Israel. If the assumption that the competition between the US and China is unavoidable and is a matter of life and death, then the path dependency may cause so much comparative power lost that the special relationship may become meaningless in respect to world politics, something that nobody would care about any more.

⁸⁵ See, John D. Anthony, Jean-Francois Seznec, Tayyar Ari, and Wayne E. White. "War with Iran: Regional Reactions and Requirements." *Middle East Policy* 3.15 (2008): 1-29., p. 13.

⁸⁶ See, Ozcan, op. cit., p.126

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 128 and Anthony, op. cit., p. 9

⁸⁸ See, Anthony, op. cit., p. 13

⁸⁹ See, Afrasiabi, op. cit., p.261, see also, Anthony, op. cit., p. 17

⁹⁰ See, Ozcan, op. cit., p. 128,... locating the facilities in different parts of the country and constructing some of them under surface seem to be a lesson Iran learned from the Iraq's nuclear facility Osiraq's fate, which has been ruined by Israel. See, Anthony, op. cit., p.17.

⁹¹ See, Ozcan, op. cit., p. 128

⁹² Even though the authors do not argue that it is a viable option, they notes that the invasion is an option. See, Ozcan, op. cit., p. 128, and also although in the Anthony does not celebrated, as an option the war is discussed.

⁹³ See, Özcan, *Nuclear Program and the Future of U.S.-Iranian Relations*, p. 128

⁹⁴ See, Anthony, op. cit., p. 13

⁹⁵ See, Antony T Sullivan, "Wars and rumors of war: the Levantine tinderbox." *Middle East Policy* 15.1 (2008): 125+. *Academic OneFile*. Web. 05 Dec. 2009., p.129

⁹⁶ See, Anthony, op. cit., p. 13

⁹⁷ See, Özcan, *Nuclear Program and the Future of U.S.-Iranian Relations*, p. 130

⁹⁸ For a detailed concerns of gulf states and Saudi Arabia in the region regarding to US military action see Anthony, op. cit., pp. 2-4, and for the Turkey's stance, see, *ibid.*, p. 12

⁹⁹ For the details of this news see, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/middle_east/article6955351.ece

¹⁰⁰For the details of this news see, Seattle Times: http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/2010327223_iranwargames22.html

For a detailed inventory of military exercises Iran conducted in the gulf, see also Katzman, op. cit., pp.79-80.

¹⁰¹ See, Ozcan, op. cit., pp. 126-127

¹⁰² See, Alon Ben Meir, "Negotiating Strategy to Prevent a Nuclear Iran." *International Journal on World Peace* Volume XXVI.No.1 (March 2009): 69-89., p. 73

¹⁰³ See, Ozcan, op. cit., pp. 127-128. Also Katzman notes that some amounts of funds have been allocated by the Congress for supporting the dissidents in Iran. See, Katzman, op. cit., p. 82

¹⁰⁴ See, Ozcan, op. cit., p.127 and also see, Anthony, op. cit., p. 6.

¹⁰⁵ See, Anthony, op. cit., p. 27

¹⁰⁶ See, *Sanam Vakil*, "Iran: Balancing East against West", *Washington Quarterly*, Autumn2006, Vol. 29 Issue 4, p51-65. *Academic Search Premier* Web. 02 Dec. 2009., p.52 Also, Koch argues that because Iran was unable to attract western investment because of the US blockade, Iran turned to Russia and China to have nuclear technology. In either case, the first choice of Iran was west not east. See, Koch, op. cit., p. 2

¹⁰⁷ Anthony points out that it would be a hara-kiri to close the Hormuz strait., see, Anthony, op. cit., p.5

¹⁰⁸ Chomsky says Iran needs weapons because it wants to protect itself. See, Chomsky, op. cit., p. 141

¹⁰⁹ See, Ozcan, op. cit., p.125

¹¹⁰ Mearsheimer notes that the US is the strongest country today. See, Mearsheimer, John J.. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003.), p. 42

¹¹¹ Mearsheimer notes that Israel with its 6 million population can never reach a great power status. *Ibid.*, p. 61. It means that Israel's capability to play a global role is limited.

¹¹² See, Anthony, *op. cit.*, p. 26

¹¹³ In his book, Little shows how the US supported Israel, how the special relationship was built. See, Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945*, pp. 77-115

¹¹⁴ See, Anthony, *op. cit.*, p. 20

¹¹⁵ See, Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests?*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.), p.12

¹¹⁶ For the details of this reasoning about the irrationality of launching nuclear weapons, see, Chomsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-139 and also Anthony compares the capabilities of Israel and Iran and shows how it is not possible for Iran to launch an attack on Israel., see, Anthony, *op. cit.*, p.15.

¹¹⁷ For the details see, Chomsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 232, 233

¹¹⁸ See, Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 362. In her study, Rosemary Foot tries to show that China is not motivated by power politics, but the questions she adopted to analyze Chinese politics totally indicates that China has a great power agenda. The headlines are; "1-) How do Chinese elites characterise the current global order? 2-) How does that characterization affect Chinese perspective on the country's relations with the United States? 3-) What have been China's policy responses to that global order? In particular, is China involved- as realists would suggest- in either internal or external balancing against, or bandwagoning with the US hegemon? 4-) What would China see an alternative, fairer, global order?" See Rosemary Foot, "Chinese strategies in a US-hegemonic global order: Accommodating and hedging", *International Affairs* 82.1 (2006): 77-94. *Academic OneFile*. Web. 29 Jan. 2010. p. 78. These elements show that China paves the way for its own hegemony, and it seems that China would also try construct an alternative discourse and even an alternative international law and justice definition.

¹¹⁹ See Kavus Abushov, "Policing the near abroad: Russian foreign policy in the South Caucasus", *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 63.2 (2009): 187-212 . *ISI Web of Knowledge*. Web. 25 Nov. 2009., p. 203.

¹²⁰ See, Gregory Hall and Tiara Grant, "Russia, China, and the Energy-Security Politics of the Caspian Sea Region after the Cold War." *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Spring2009, Vol. 20 Issue 2, p113-137, 26p, 1 chart; (AN 39979251) Database: Academic Search Premier. p. 113

¹²¹ See, Anthony, *op. cit.*, p. 28

¹²² See, Vakil, *op. cit.*, p. 52

¹²³ De Bellaigue argues that China makes deals with Iran 'in the face of American disapproval'. For the details see, Christopher de Bellaigue, "Iran." *Foreign Policy*, 148 (2005):18-24. ... Also, Hall notes that Russia and China try to make cooperation against USA with Iran. See, Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

¹²⁴ Russia also undermines the US policies in the region by selling military equipment to Iran. See, Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

¹²⁵ Vakil gives examples from history of relations between Iran and Russia which indicates that in Iran's imagery Russia is not a so reliable state in terms of Iran's security. For the details see, Vakil, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-57

¹²⁶ See, John J. Mearsheimer, "Chapter 4: Structural Realism." *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*. (2nd revised edition, London: Oxford University Press, 2009) 71-88. p. 84

¹²⁷ See, Hall, op. cit., p. 126 and also see, Foot, op. cit., p.93

¹²⁸ See, Hall, op. cit., p.125

¹²⁹ For the details of the Western inclusion and Japanese pressure on Chinese perception, see, Shambaugh, David, and Michael Yahuda. "Evolving Asian System: Three Transformations." *International Relations of Asia (Asia in World Politics)*. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008.) 35-56.

¹³⁰ For the details, see, Foot, op. cit., pp. 78-79

¹³¹ Ibid., pp. 79, 81

¹³² The pressure on the US decision makers in world politics is omitted in this paper.

¹³³ China, beginning from 1979, knowingly chosen to go the development way. *ibid.*, p. 78

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 81

¹³⁵ For the detail, *ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 86

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

¹³⁸ For the details, *ibid.*, p. 83.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 81

¹⁴⁰ Mearsheimer points out that the great powers, to avoid paying the bill, do not take initiative to balance potential hegemonies, instead they want to pass the buck (balancing the potential hegemon) to other great powers. For the details of a historical inventory of buck-passing, see, Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, pp.266-333

¹⁴¹ Hall reports the elements of the tenth five-year plan's energy strategy for the country's development. "1-Diversify sources of supply (increase imports from Russia and Central Asia). 2-Enhance overseas energy investments by state oil companies. 3-Increase investment in oil and gas infrastructure. 4-Establish government-controlled strategic; petroleum reserves. 5-Adjust energy consumption structures and reduce dependence on oil through coal gasification, liquefaction, and development of nuclear power. 6-Work to establish a regional (energy-security system)." See, Hall, op. cit., pp. 124-125.

¹⁴² Mearsheimer notes that Soviet Union has never been successful to dominate the gulf oil. See, Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 41

¹⁴³ See, Vakil, op. cit., p. 52

¹⁴⁴ Vakil mention about the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Also, Hall notes that Russian and Chinese cooperation is not limited to military issues; resolve of the border problems between Russia and China, establishment of new trade and political agreements, are the other approachment subjects. Hall calls approachment of Russia and China as a strategic partnership. See, Hall, op. cit., p. 119.

¹⁴⁵ For Chinese aspirations regarding Iranian natural resources see, Vakil, op. cit., p. 54. Today Russia is another country benefiting from the sour relations between the USA and Iran. See, Ozcan, op. cit., p. 127

¹⁴⁶ Abushov notes that Iran is a key player in the Caspian Sea basin. op. cit.,

Also, Hall argues that China became interested especially in oil fields in Iran and Iraq beside the Caspian sea basin after it became a net importer of oil in 1990's. See, Hall, op. cit., p. 124. Chinese oil demand increased 250 % since 1980. This shows how Chinese economy is in desperate need of oil.

¹⁴⁷ See, D. Ulke Aribogan and Mert Bilgin, "New Energy Order Politics Neopolitics: From Geopolitics to Energeopolitics", *Uluslararası İlişkiler-International Relations* 5.20 (2009): 109-131. *ISI Web of Knowledge*. Web. 3 Dec. 2009, p. 118.

¹⁴⁸ These quotations are from Hall, op. cit., p. 114.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 114

¹⁵⁰ For the details, *ibid.*, pp. 125-128.

¹⁵¹ See, Anthony, op. cit., p. 26

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 24

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁵⁴ This argument is expressed in Mearsheimer and Walt's article about Israel Lobby. See, <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v28/n06/john-mearsheimer/the-israel-lobby>

¹⁵⁵ See, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/04/01/is_turkey_trying_to_sink_or_save_iran

¹⁵⁶ Little mentions about this assumption of American administrators. See, Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945*, p. 27

¹⁵⁷ For an inventory of the western policies causing anti-western sentiments see, U. Makdisi (2002) "Anti-Americanism' in the Arab World: An interpretation of a Brief History", *Journal of American History*, Sept. 2002 (EJ)

¹⁵⁸ Gerges cites from Bernard Lewis, that Islam's inclusion in politics, made the regimes in the Middle East worse. See, Gerges, op. cit., p. 22.

¹⁵⁹ Armstrong quotes from Muhammed Abdu a perfect excerpt that shows how the essence of Islam is not a barrier to democracy. "Muhammad Abdu (1849-1905), grand mufti of Egypt, feared that the vast majority of Egyptians would not understand the country's nascent democratic institutions unless they were explicitly linked with traditional Islamic principles that emphasised the importance of "consultation" (shura) and the duty of seeking "consensus"(ijma) before passing legislation." See, Karen Armstrong, "God: " *Foreign Policy* 175 (2009): 54+. *Academic OneFile*. Web. 18 Nov. 2009. P.55.

Furthermore a history based reading of the Islamic politics would give a fairer understanding about political habits of Muslims, which would foster confidence in the mindset of the western people regarding Muslims. For a good account of the historical and political background of Islamic politics, see, Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror*. (Pretoria: Unisa Press / Uitgewers, 2004.)

¹⁶⁰ Se, Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*. 1st Vintage Books Ed ed. New York: Vintage, 1979., pp. 2-3.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 40.

¹⁶³ An argument that Bernard Lewis and Daniel Pipes use.

¹⁶⁴ See, Gerges, op. cit., p. 25

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 25-26.

¹⁶⁶ For example International community and US elites began to think that attacking Iran is not a good option. See Chomsky, op. cit., p. 231, also Katzman reports that there is a great degree of approachment of USA regarding its interests with Iran. See, Katzman, op. cit., pp. 84-86

¹⁶⁷ See, Katzman, op. cit., p. 81

¹⁶⁸ See, Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Paperback, 1994.), p. 803.