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***The Impact of Trump's Foreign Policy on Iran:  
The Withdrawal from the nuclear Deal (2018)***

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Requirement for The Degree of Master in Civilization and Literature*

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## **Dedications**

*To my dear parents, for all their sacrifices, their motivations to continue discussing this profound topic, their support throughout my studies.*

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## Abstract

The thesis takes the impact of Trump's withdrawal from Iran's nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2018; As a case study to shed light on a major aspect of US foreign policy towards the Middle East in the 21st century. The Trump's administration claimed that the Obama-era nuclear deal in 2015 included defects because its provisions did not guarantee the complete elimination of the nuclear program. Consequently; The decision was drafted with the aim of reaching a comprehensive agreement that permanently eliminates Iran's nuclear aspirations and protects its allies in the Middle East from interference by sectarian proxies supported by Iran. However, using the analytical and historical approach, the study sought to reveal a possible repercussion behind this decision, in which Trump tried to implement the policy of maximum economic sanctions on Iran as a result of its concern of escalating its influence through the development of nuclear activities. But the work eventually concluded that destabilizing activities continued as a result of the escalation of the conflict between Iran and US allies at the expense of the Persian Gulf regions. Iran also resumed its nuclear program, despite all European efforts to persuade it to abide by the deal. In return, it tried to renew its economic relations through alternative mechanisms to compensate for its losses and avoid sanctions.

**Keywords:** The US Foreign policy, The Nuclear Deal 2015, U.S. withdrawal, Maximum economic sanctions, Sectarian Proxies, Renewal of economic relations.

## المخلص

تتناول الأطروحة تأثير انسحاب ترامب من الإتفاق النووي الإيراني، المعروف رسمياً بإسم خطة العمل الشاملة المشتركة في عام 2018؛ كدراسة لإلقاء الضوء على جانب رئيسي من جوانب السياسة الخارجية للولايات المتحدة إتجاه الشرق الأوسط في القرن الحادي والعشرين. زعمت إدارة ترامب أن الإتفاقية في عهد أوباما تضمنت عيوباً لأن بنودها لم تضمن الإزالة الفعلية للبرنامج النووي. بالتالي؛ تمت صياغة القرار بهدف الوصول إلى اتفاق شامل يقضي بشكل دائم على تطلعات إيران النووية ويحمي حلفاءها من تدخل الوكالات الطائفية التي تدعمهم إيران في الشرق الأوسط. غير أن الدراسة سعت، باستخدام المنهج التحليلي والتاريخي، إلى الكشف عن التداعيات المحتملة وراء هذا القرار، حيث حاول ترامب تطبيق سياسة العقوبات الاقتصادية القسوى على إيران نتيجة حرصها على تصعيد نفوذها من خلال تطوير الأسلحة النووية. خلص العمل في النهاية إلى أن الأنشطة المزعزعة للإستقرار استمرت نتيجة تصاعد الصراع بين إيران وحلفاء الولايات المتحدة على حساب أقاليم الخليج الفارسي. كما استأنفت إيران برنامجها النووي من جديد على الرغم من كل الجهود الأوروبية لإقناعها بالالتزام بالصفقة في المقابل حاولت تجديد علاقاتها الاقتصادية من خلال آليات بديلة لتعويض خسائرها وتجنب العقوبات.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** السياسة الخارجية للولايات المتحدة، الصفقة النووية 2015، انسحاب الولايات المتحدة، العقوبات

الاقتصادية القسوى، الوكلاء المذهبيون، تجديد العلاقات الاقتصادية.

## List of Acronyms

<b>CIA</b>	Central Intelligence Agency
<b>TNRC</b>	Tehran Nuclear Research Center
<b>CENTO</b>	Central Treaty Organization
<b>NPT</b>	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons
<b>GAT</b>	General Atomic Technologies
<b>GD</b>	American company General Dynamics
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>IAEA</b>	International Atomic Energy Agency
<b>AEOI</b>	Atomic Energy Organization of Iran
<b>ENTEC</b>	Esfahan Nuclear Technology Center
<b>KWU</b>	German Kraftwerk Union
<b>JPA</b>	Joint Plan of Action
<b>JCPOA</b>	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
<b>P5 + 1</b>	the United Kingdom, France, the United States, Russia, China, and Germany
<b>UNSC</b>	United Nations Security Council
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>PMOI</b>	The People's Mujahedin of Iran
<b>MKO</b>	Mojahedin-e-Khalq Organization
<b>EU-3</b>	Europa Universalis: France, Germany and Italy
<b>UNSCR 1737</b>	The UN Security Council Resolution 1737.
<b>UNSCR 1747</b>	: The UN Security Council Resolution 1747.
<b>UNSCR 2231</b>	: UN Security Council Resolution 2231

<b>OPEC</b>	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
<b>GDP</b>	Gross domestic product
<b>IRGC</b>	the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps
<b>ISIS</b>	The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
<b>CISADA</b>	The Comprehensive Iranian Sanctions and Divestment Act
<b>IFSR</b>	Iranian Financial Sanctions Regulations
<b>NPWMD</b>	Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction
<b>SDN</b>	Specially Designated Nationals
<b>IRI</b>	Islamic Republic of Iran
<b>CBI</b>	Central Bank of Iran
<b>MBD</b>	Million Barrels per Day
<b>FATF</b>	The Financial Action Task Force Blacklist
<b>HIES</b>	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
<b>FTO</b>	Foreign Terrorist Organization
<b>UAE</b>	United Arab Emirates
<b>PMF</b>	Popular Mobilization Forces
<b>AAH</b>	Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq
<b>KH</b>	Kata'ib Hizballah
<b>CJTF-OIR</b>	Combined Joint Task Force-Operation INHERENT RESOLVE
<b>EIB</b>	European Investment Bank
<b>SRE</b>	Significant Reduction Exception
<b>SPV</b>	Special Purpose Vehicle
<b>INSTEX</b>	Instrument in Support of Trade Exchange
<b>FAC</b>	Foreign Affairs Council
<b>DRM</b>	Dispute Resolution Mechanism

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## **General Introduction**

### **Background of the Study**

The withdrawal of the United States from the nuclear agreement is considered a historical event in the 21st century. Its origin goes back to the beginning of the decline of US-Iranian relations due to the escalation of Iran's nuclear influence especially after the Gulf war 1980. Later on, by the crisis of 2002, in which the international community condemned Iran for its illegal nuclear activities. This was parallel to the event in which President George Bush included Iran in the axis of evil states alongside Iraq and North Korea in 2002, which plunged it into several negotiations beginning in 2003 and strengthened a number of strict control measures with guarantees over Iranian nuclear facilities, which led to the signing of the nuclear agreement in 2015. The United Nations Security Council adopted several resolutions to maintain national security in return for implementing the protocols and lifting the economic sanctions that had been imposed on Tehran since 1979. But in 2018, Trump surprised the world with his decision to withdraw from the agreement by claiming that Iran supports extremist groups that aim to destabilize the Middle East region. This decision resulted in internal and external repercussions for the Iranian regime. Nevertheless; Iran began to take various options away from the attention of the United States in order to help restore its crumbling infrastructure.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Since the issue of the Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018, has occupied a great deal of space and interest in the international stage in recent years. There is still a wave of discussions about whether the decision had negative or positive effects on the Iranian regime, either on the internal or external level. Thus, the main question that the study will address is what are the repercussions of withdrawal from the nuclear agreement on Iran?

## **Sub-questions**

In light of the main question, the study will be committed to answer the following sub-questions:

1. What were the reasons given by the Trump's administration for the withdrawal from the agreement (JCOPA)?
2. To what extent has Trump's policy hindered Iran's regional activities?
3. How did the decision to withdraw open the field of Iran's relations with EU and Non-EU countries?
4. To what extent did Iran continue its commitment to nuclear non-proliferation?

## **Objectives of the Study**

### **The Academic Objective**

Given that the United States has always portrayed itself as a defender of the freedoms and stability of peoples around the world, the study attempts to investigate its role in addressing Iran's regional and nuclear activities and bringing security to the Middle East region.

### **The Personal Objective**

I discovered my interest in political exploration early when I was in middle school years. I have always been interested in the news of US foreign political relations towards the countries of the Middle East, especially Iran, because it is a source of nuclear power in the region. Therefore, I asked about U.S strategy to curb this nuclear armament, since it always claims in its conferences that it is responsible for promoting national security. Since this study revolves around the nuclear agreement and former President Trump's withdrawal from it, I wanted to discover the various repercussions of this decision on Iran and its internal and external regime. By conducting research with academic and personal dimensions that answers my questions and feeds my previous knowledge.

**Methodology**

The study relied on the historical and analytical approaches, because the historical approach brings together the historical facts that Iran went through with the United States and traces the time period that preceded the signing of the nuclear agreement. Also, it paves the way for an objective assessment of the unilateral withdrawal of the US from it in 2018. The study also relies on the analytical approach that is concerned with studying phenomena objectively and crystallizing results through data, books, magazines, reports, documents and articles.

**Significance of the Study**

The thesis critically analyzes the effects of Trump's 2018 decision on Iran in light of the maximum economic sanctions policy. Thus, it provides evidence of whether this decision served the United States or Iran.

**Structure of the Study**

The dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter provides a historical background on the Iranian nuclear program. The second chapter deals with the implementations of the Iranian nuclear agreement and Trump's policy towards it. The third chapter concludes the dissertation. The latter raises the repercussions of Trump's withdrawal from the agreement on Iran in the economic, regional, political and nuclear fields.

## **Chapter One: The Origins of Iranian Nuclear Program**

### **Introduction**

The nuclear program has received wide attention under successive Iranian governments. It passed through a number of strenuous stages that began with the establishment of the program during the rule of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who was trying hard to develop Iran and arm it with nuclear technology in the scientific and military fields and raise its ambition to make it a regional power. Also, these goals continued until after the Islamic Revolution in 1979 in the era of Ayatollah Khomeini, which revealed radical changes in Iran's policy towards the United States regarding the nuclear program and its right to possess this type of energy. However, the ambition of the nuclear program created a crisis in the Persian Gulf and the international community since its inception, due to the inability to determine its true dimensions and hidden motives, which constituted an obsession for Western countries about Iran's ability to obtain yellow cake (Uranium) that is capable of making nuclear weapons. This forced Iran to confront the international community about the background of the program, which culminated in a series of negotiations and economic pressures. The study's first chapter traces the history of nuclear ambitions, beginning with the main stages it went through. Then, it covers the series of negotiations that ended with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and the reaction of countries to its signing.

## **01. The Iranian Nuclear Program (1953-2002)**

### **1.1 The Nuclear Program under the Shah Reign (1953-1979)**

The nuclear program witnessed its beginnings since the mid-fifties of the twentieth century, when the United States consolidated its ties with Iran and strengthened strategic relations between the two countries under the rule of the Shah after the American forces (CIA) overthrew the government of Prime Minister Muhammad Mossadegh in alliance with the British intelligence M16 to orchestrate a coup against him by supporting the implementation of the secret operation Ajax in 1953 (Stravato 6).

#### **1.1.1 Birth of Iran's Nuclear Program**

In 1950, the Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi directed the Iranian stage, he expressed his desire to reform the regime, which appeared to be economically weak and lacking a sense of security and technological progress, by targeting crucial issues that include providing a strict security policy against external threats by paving the way for a large nuclear infrastructure, as well as exporting Iran as a major player in the Middle East region. "Iranian policy makers might have been convinced that nuclear weapons capability would give them an edge over potential adversaries and this non-conventional superiority will satisfy their security needs" (Mirza et al 17). His royal vision for Iran was concerned with reinforcing the feature of modernity in all areas known as the White Revolution (Enqelab-e sefid) (Gaietta 8).

His vision served the state by relying on the cooperation with the United States, that conferred capacities through the Atomic for Peace Program announced by Dwight Eisenhower on December 8, 1953 (Gaietta 6). In his address to the United Nations General Assembly, he called for the provision of civil use of atomic energy so that it can also be used for development, power generation and other peaceful uses (Kela 53).



In the purpose of balancing fears of continued nuclear armament. Ironically; It was the United States that sowed the seeds of nuclear involvement by signing the program that was a major driver in the nuclear game as it paved the way for the Shah to achieve his ambitions to establish nuclear power plants and support the advancement in different domains. By 1957, this support culminated in an agreement with Washington, according to which Iran obtained Technical nuclear support and renting several kilograms of enriched uranium in the United States to cooperate in the peaceful uses of atomic energy extended on March 13, 1969 for another ten years (Joyner 6)



**Figure 1:** A map of Major Nuclear Sites in Iran.

(Source: Iran Nuke Program 2: ABCs of Sites, March 16, 2015)

Moreover; Tehran Nuclear Research Center (TNRC) sponsored by the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) had been moved from Baghdad to Tehran. Iran had also benefited from a 5 -megawatt nuclear reactor from General Atomics of the United States for nuclear research, which was founded in 1960 (Gaietta 7). Although; The nuclear activity at that time was idle due to the backwardness of Iran's industrial infrastructure because it lacked the scientific base that could operate nuclear equipment even the light water reactor with a capacity of 5 MW and the highly enriched uranium reactor whose value (5.15 kilograms)

used in making weapons was obtained from the American company General Dynamics, that did not have the full ability to fill this gap. The deal also included providing "a set of hot cells, which are tightly isolated rooms that are operated by arms that work remotely to separate radioactive materials in the research reactor" (Akla 11).

In addition; The Shah ordered a study of the ability to build a nuclear reactor in Iran, after seeing one of the nuclear reactors in France. He also ordered the intensification of contacts with both France and West Germany to build nuclear plants in Iran, despite the recommendations that protested Iran's need for nuclear energy to stockpile reserves (Oil and natural gas) (Kala 11). The agreement obligated the United States to provide Iran with nuclear fuel to run its nuclear activities. "In September 1967, it provided Iran with 5,54kg of enriched uranium as fuel to operate this reactor, in addition to 16.5 kg of radioactive fissile uranium isotopes, and then provided it with a larger shipment of about 104 kilograms of uranium to be used as a fuel source in the aforementioned reactor" (Kalaa 12). At that time of the year; It acquired by General Atomic Technologies (GA Technologies) a water moderated reactor of the pool-type (Joyner5).

In 1968, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation (NPT) of nuclear weapons was concluded to verify Iran's compliance with the peaceful use of nuclear activities and Parliament ratified it on March 5, 1970 (Wright 77) Besides; It signed an agreement during 1963 for the limited test ban and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1968, to confirm the peaceful nature of nuclear testing and its desire to expand it (Joyner 6).

### **1.1.2 The Launch of Nuclear Program (1974-1978)**

Since that time, the nuclear program had been launched to include a comprehensive vision of Iran's nuclear goals, which sought unlimited investment in resources and an increase in the contribution of nuclear power plants, which in turn supported a large proportion of

Iran's economic and industrial structure. Then; The Shah founded the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) in 1974. When Akbar was elected as president, he announced plans to build 20 nuclear power reactors which relied on a group of trainers in (TNRC) and (CENTO). Also, scientists experienced abroad in the field of nuclear physics (Wright78). In addition; He concluded a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (INFCIRC/214), which came into effect on May 15, 1974. Then; Iran constructed the Esfahan Nuclear Technology Center (ENTEC) to focus on generating the full nuclear fuel cycle, with assistance from France (Joyner 6-7). In that period, the Shah focused on expanding the program's plans in agreement with successor western powers, France and West Germany) . On October 29, 1974, an agreement was concluded with the German Kraftwerk Union (KWU) to build two light water reactors at the Bushehr site (Gaietta14). Even The Shah expanded his nuclear cooperation with several countries between (1974-1976), including France, India and South Africa( El -Raoui 116,117). Also; He benefited from enriched uranium when it acquired 10% of the shares of the French Eurodef plant in 1978( El-cheikh 3).

### **1.1.3 The End of Shah's Nuclear Program**

During 1977, The emergence of the economic crisis created cracks that weakened the nuclear program. The strategy adopted by the United States towards Iran during the negotiations for the delivery of fuel and nuclear reactors contributed to the protest against comprehensive ownership of the fuel cycle. Likewise, poor integration of the production of potential reactors into the national electrical network (Gaietta27). Bijan Mossavar Rahmani, energy correspondent for Kayhan International, raised concerns about the issue of exceeding state expenditures on projects, causing overburdening of the Iranian infrastructure (Patriarakos97). In addition, the opposition of representatives from other sectors that received less funding from the states forced the Shah to reduce the state's budget which led to the

turmoil of the public finances and prompted the postponement of the payment of French and German commissions (Gaietta 30). Then; It forced Iran to rely on a few commercially politicized suppliers. In fact, the internal situation of Iran became on the edge of the slope after the departure of Shah to Egypt in 1979 (Patriarakos 97).

## **1.2 The Nuclear Program during and after the Islamic Revolution**

After the Iranian Islamic Revolution in 1979, the clerics view of the nuclear program changed and Iranian politics moved from a monarchy to an Islamic republic with a free and independent revolutionary character after the overthrow of the Shah's rule because of the modernization policy that the people refused to be convinced of. The Shah's followers also stopped supporting him because they questioned the United States support for the Iranian nuclear program, which seemed to be declining( Hooglund3). Additionally; The United States adopted a campaign hostile to Iranian nuclear dealings and imposing financial pressures (Reardon 11-12) as a result of the 1979 hostage crisis in Tehran for a period of 444 days, which in turn contributed to the collapse of pending nuclear contracts with the United States and foreign partners (Joyner 11).

On April 11, 1979, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization, Fereydun Sahib, revealed that the AEOI minimized its tasks (Cordesman & Al-Rodhan 107). Thus; In 1980, during the Iran-Iraq war, Iran was subjected to Iraqi raids that affected the nuclear stations, which was accompanied by the failure of the international community to respond to Iraq's missile and chemical aggression, which made Iran crystallize its plans again regarding the nuclear program (Cordesman 367).

### 1.2.1 The Restart of Nuclear Program

The program intensified by 1984. It quickly built and completed scientific research centers for nuclear purposes, such as the Bushehr reactor of the Energy Organization to generate electricity, which was damaged by the war. Iran began to recover from the trauma of the war and came out of the shell in which it isolated itself. Iran renewed its political and economic orientations by relying on a new government formation that sought to rethink its nuclear endeavors. After the trauma of Iraqi war, Rafsanjani Ali Akbar, Chairman of the House of Representatives, returned nuclear scientists from abroad to complete the activities of the suspended nuclear program (Patrikarakos121). At first, Iran struggled to conclude agreements that would allow the completion of that reactor. But later; Initiative links blossomed with interested suppliers such as China, where it participated in the development of the Isfahan Nuclear Research Center for enrichment in the 1990s, when it sold to Iran "2000 kg of uranium compounds that were used to secretly test conversion processes for plant" (Pilat & Busch42). Besides; It launched natural uranium secretly to Iran (Patrikarakos161).

The Uranium enrichment program was secretly revived by receiving technical assistance from the physicist father of the Pakistani nuclear program Abdul Qadeer (A.Q.) by obtaining the blueprints for the P-1 centrifuges (later P-2 as reparation for bad quality of P-1) (Vaes&Sadjapour8). Then; Iran lacked professional expertise when it resumed work in manufacturing centrifuges. Consequently; the process was postponed until 2002(Patrikarakos 162). By 1991, Tehran considered China the mainstay to secretly obtain various compounds of uranium and later used it in nuclear energy production and enrichment experimental processes, "convert about 2.7 kg of UO<sub>2</sub> into 3 kg of UF<sub>4</sub>, and a further 9.8 kg of UF<sub>4</sub> into 6.9 kg of UF<sub>6</sub>" (Gaietta54). Iran also signed a cooperation agreement with Russia regarding the civilian uses of atomic energy in 1992. It initiated plans to complete the construction of

Bushehr. However, the difficulty of integrating technologies with the German company belonging to the Siemens Group, which mainly owned manufacturing equipment, exposed Iran to a financial problem ended with the withdrawal of the German party from the agreement. Therefore, an agreement was assigned between AEOI and the Russian company Atomstroyexport in 1998 as a solution to the planned success (Gaietta 63-64).

However, the continuous interference of the United States negatively affected Iranian relations with the countries that support it as a result of its repeated attempt to prove to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that Iran violated the provisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and it feared Iran's ability to convert dual-use equipment into military practices (Vaes& Sadjapour9).

### **1.2.3 The Nuclear Program Crisis 2002**

In 2002, Iran's nuclear program became a subject of more concern after Iranian opposition group (the People's Mujahedin of Iran (PMOI) or Mojahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO)) revealed hidden and illegal nuclear activities at the uranium enrichment site at Natanz and the construction of a heavy water plant at Arak capable of producing plutonium. The Atomic Energy Agency considered it a violation of the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement because it failed to report the existence of nuclear facilities to the organization. But in 2003 the agency was able to inspect the reported locations. However; their suspicions escalated to a critical mass that exposed Iran to a major crisis. They demanded the inspection of the Kalaye Electric Company, which later forced Iran to agree to this step. In addition, the United States imposed many efforts to prove the accusation of Iran's non-compliance with the laws of the Treaty in the Board of Directors to hold Iran accountable for its lack of transparency (Patrikarakos 173-176).

## **02. The Nuclear Program Negotiations**

After the inspections conducted by the International Atomic Energy Agency confirmed the presence of uranium residues in nuclear plants. Anxiety increased on the international stage, especially the United States, which adopted a hostile stance in the case and repeatedly demanded that it be referred to the United Nations Security Council, but at the same time the European Union countries, the United Kingdom France and Germany (EU-3), saw that negotiation is the best solution to verify Iran's intention regarding hidden enterprises. As part of settling international concerns about the alleged activities, Iran was forced to sign the Treaty of Tehran ('Sa'dabad Agreement,') and comply with the additional protocol, which intensified inspections of potential sites and agreed to suspend uranium enrichment and processing activities.

The ebb and flow between the negotiating parties punctuated by the Brussels Treaty but the round of talks did not drive to a significant momentum to cover the crisis. Later, on November 14, 2004; Iran ratified the Paris Treaty which reached favorable results but on the other hand, it was semi-operational (Reardon 15). The negotiations took another turn by 2006, when Iran was exposed to a set of penalties as a result of its non-compliance with the protocol and because it had resumed its nuclear activity at the uranium conversion plant in Isfahan since 2005 and the Natanz facility in 2006. Later; The UN Security Council issued Resolution 1737(UNSCR 1737), which required Iran to suspend heavy water activities related to enrichment, reprocessing plutonium activities and prevented forms of cooperation. Iran rejected the terms of the proposal and considered it illogical because the sanctions began to have a telling effect on Iran's economy. Later on; The Security Council issued Resolution 1747(UNSCR 1747), which shackled the nuclear program through banning material support, the exchange of weapons, and freezing assets, as well as depriving Iran of foreign ventures (Tagma&Lenze 53).

Furthermore; The policy of crippling sanctions and violations continued in parallel, where more draconian penalties were put in place in terms of setting scrupulous limits on everything that targets the energy sector, whether investments or commercial transactions that came under Security Council Resolution 1929 (Tagma & Lenze 55). However; The US intelligence resorted to secret tactics to intercept Iranian nuclear activities. First of all, it spread electronic viruses such as Stuxnet in energy facilities that sabotaged centrifuges and later carried out assassinations of nuclear scientists (Tagma & Lenze 56).

The period between 2003 and 2012 witnessed a kind of mismatching of negotiation process between the Iranian government and the international community regarding the right to launch enrichment activities. Where Iran considered any significant nuclear retreat tantamount to an act of losing the game. On the other hand, Iran was flooded with crippling sanctions, but this did not prevent it from resuming the nuclear program every time because it considered it the outlet that would redraw the features of Iranian potent and export it to the international stage. At the end, neither negotiations nor time were sufficient to ripen the nuclear issue, rebuild trust with the US Congress or liberated a diplomatic settlement that satisfied all parties. By 2013, decisive milestones were drawn in the negotiations with the (5 + 1) group. the gridlock between Iran and the United States was broken when the US Secretary of State and the elected President of Iran, Hassan Rouhani, on June 14, 2013 held several meetings to reach a long-term dimension's solution (Lyons).

### **2.1. The Joint Plan of Action (JPOA)**

After the Obama administration and the Iranian Republic showed a desire to bring the issue to the negotiating table and support the talks to reach a final diplomatic settlement before the volcano erupts and the situation gets out of their hands. On November 24, 2013, the 5 + 1 group agreed with the Iranian side on the Joint Plan of Action (JPOA) in Geneva for



a period of six months in order to be able to resolve previous thorny issues. Thus; The agreement aimed to preserve the peaceful nature of the nuclear program and not to breach the comprehensive guarantees of the (NPT). On the other hand, the US administration provided a set of incentives that would restore the economic balance (Kerr & Katzman1).

Under the (JPA), Iran waived the expansion of enrichment activities at the Natanz, Arak and Fordow facilities. Besides; It reduced by 20% uranium-235 half of its enriched UF<sub>6</sub> reserves to less than 5%. It also excluded the installation of centrifuges in facilities. The International Atomic Energy Agency called on Iran to inform it of any further progress regarding its nuclear businesses. Iran accepted to modernize the effectiveness of access to nuclear spaces that were not included under the comprehensive guarantees. Subsequently; The report of the IAEA came into favor of Iran, as it expressed the commitment of the program to many limits of the agreement (Kerr & Katzman5). In contrast; The (P5 + 1) or (EU / E + 3), reinstate 4.2 \$ billions of blocked foreign exchange holdings (petroleum sales) to Iran and stopped penalties for various sectors such as banking issues. At that time, all sides focused on keeping diplomatic efforts under a hat to avoid domestic dissension against the framework or content of the treaty (Tabatabai & Pease 38).

They extended an agreement to November 24, after setting its last deadline on July 20, 2014. During that period, the negotiators disagreed about the problem of enrichment capabilities, the time span of accord and lifting the sanctions. Inevitably; The implementation of the plan continued until 2015. In February, the round of talks called for a decisive point in the course of the negotiations, which ensured the involvement of technical expertise led by the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Atomic Energy, Ali Akbar Salehi, with the US Secretary of Energy and Nuclear physicist, Ernest Muniz, in talks to add support to the deal based on scientific arguments (Tabatabai & Pease 39-40). US and Iranian statements differed about reaching a final settlement, as Foreign Minister Zarif demanded that sanctions should

be banned from economic sectors such as oil and banking affairs as soon as compliance with the limits of the agreement verified. On the other hand; Secretary Kerry announced that the option of lifting the sanctions will take time (Tabatabai & Pease 41).

## **2.2. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action**

Although the implementation of the (JPA) brought somewhat satisfactory results, it cannot be denied that the negotiators were thirsty for a complete and substantial deal to cover all the gaps that they were unable to fill in the previous interim agreement. As a result, the (E3/EU+3) and Iran sealed their cooperation by ratifying the JCPOA on July 14, 2015 after it fell behind a detailed deadline of June 30, because it was under congressional review. Thus, the validity of the (JPA) continued until the adoption of the JCPOA (Katzmann & Kerry8).

The main motives that pulled the negotiators to the dinner table first and foremost was that they emphasized the peaceful nature of the plans of the Iranian nuclear program, including enrichment activities or manufacturing, possessing and importing any nuclear weapons equipment. Then; They demanded that all conditions under the banner of the Non-Proliferation Treaty be fulfilled in order to maintain the regional and international security belt and avoiding any outputs with military dimensions. Besides; The implementation of contract requirements will melt the ice between the blocs and open areas of nuclear cooperation between them in the future. Furthermore; The international community overcame its fears about Iranian nuclear intentions by taking comprehensive measures that urged the principle of credibility and strict supervision of the nuclear program to ensure its safety during and after the agreement (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action).

The plan denied access to an atomic pile capable of producing nuclear weapons that threaten international stability and neighboring regions (Magri & Perteghella 19). By enforcing Resolution 2231 of the UN Security Council, which restricted Iran on the

acquisition of sensitive dual-use technologies (Rezaie 171). It also allowed the strengthening and facilitation of the implementation of the comprehensive plan by assigning the joint committee to monitor transfers related to the nuclear field and to address proposals of member states before submitting them to the Security Council for consideration and giving the final word (Resolution 2231 on Iran Nuclear Issue).

The plan allocated a set of reporting provisions that contributed to verifying the member's commitment to implement the resolutions issued by the Security Council (2231) and called for an unprecedented tightening of inspections at nuclear sites undefined to the Energy Agency. Then; It ensured access to comprehensive and exclusive data and reports on Iran's nuclear tracks in order to deter concerns related to Iran's completion of illegal nuclear activities capable of issuing nuclear weapons. According to the treaty, all sanctions imposed on Iran were lifted, but trade plans regarding weapons and missiles were excluded. Moreover; The decision automatically triggered the snapback mechanism in the event of fraud on the terms of the agreement by Iran, which means restoring previous economic sanctions on Iran (Samore 58).

Under the JCPOA, Iran complied with the provisions imposed on it, dispensing with 19,000 centrifuges and discovering IR-1 and it reduced the percentage of uranium enrichment to 3.67% for a period of 15 years. It also strengthened access to the nuclear activity's sites in Natanz and the enrichment facility in Fordow (Richards 81-82). It decreased the stock of low-enriched uranium to 300 kilograms and getting rid of surplus uranium by transporting it abroad (Rezaei 168). Also; It destroyed the research, manufacturing and processing of advanced centrifuges, in addition to a demand to take away the enriched uranium from those devices, due to their availability on a basis capable of enriching uranium after the end of the agreement period (Fest 7). In other words, the deal attempted to eliminate any possible doubts about the creation of nuclear weapons and allowed the Energy Agency to

adopt a high level of monitoring by using optical fiber seals capable of transmitting data electronically, an infrared satellite to detect secret facilities, and sensors to search for traces of nuclear particles. Besides; It ordered Iran to change the Fordow site to a center for nuclear physics and technology and to refrain from enriching uranium there (Sterio75).

The economic sanctions regime brought the Iranian state to its knees and touched its infrastructure, which in turn hindered its domestic and foreign policy. Therefore, the comprehensive plan solved this tangled issue by canceling the economic blockade related to the sectors of industry (manufacture of transport vehicles such as aircraft) and trade (minerals). Also; Retrieving individuals and companies from the blacklist. In addition, the United States and the European Union ended the financial and banking embargo, as it agreed to recover 115 billion Dollars of suspended oil sales in foreign banks (Fest 12).

The Obama administration contended that the international nuclear enterprises with the P5 + 1 group and the IAEA, which were included in the framework of (JCOPA), restrained Iran from manufacturing energy fuel on its own. Moreover; The United States supported this step, but at the same time it did not have the ability to establish nuclear cooperation with Iran because of the laws that prevented it from nuclear linkage with a country that was classified as a Promoter of terrorism (Kerr & Katzeman15).

### **3. Main Reactions to the JCPOA**

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action received a wide echo from the international community after its announcement, as the attitudes of countries was divided between supporters and opponents. Some of them saw the deal as successful, and there were those who took a hostile stance towards it.

### 3.1 The Iranian Reaction

The majority of the Iranian people were optimistic about the signing of the deal after the negotiators took a long period of diplomatic talks to reach a final and comprehensive settlement. Because they considered it the light at the end of the tunnel that takes them out of their isolation and guides them to the real solution to the economic crises that have burdened Iran's infrastructure and affected the standard of living of the people as a result of the blockade imposed by the regime as well as serious sanctions against the regime. (Thousands take to Iran streets to celebrate the historic nuclear deal).

After polling, 68% of the Iranians admitted that the agreement is an appropriate option for the benefit of their country, despite the hostility of some hardliners to the Iranian leadership's decision regarding the future of their country (Fakhreddin & Owen). Mustafa Abul-Hassan Bani Sadr, the first president of Iran after the revolution, who is one of the hardliners, declared: "This is another moment of Iranian leaders who drink from a poisoned chalice but want to force-feed it to the people as a delicious drink" (Bani Sadr).

Sadeq Kharrazi, Iran's former ambassador to the United Nations, said "the agreement would reduce regional tensions and create a new opportunity to find a way to put out the fires in the Middle East. He added" the nuclear talks were the first time Iran had negotiated from a position of strength. It also ends the cold war between Iran and the United States and they will be able to get to know each other more realistically" (Kharrazi). This means that Kharrazi saw the deal decision as the most important step for the Islamic Republic to reconfigure its relations with the West, to obtain incentives to awaken the national economy from slumber, and to export security policy in the Middle East region.

President Hassan Rouhani addressed the people live, he said: "the agreement was an important juncture in the history of our country and revolution and a new chapter had begun,

showing that sophisticated world problems could be solved through less costly ways”. He appended: «Today is an end and a beginning; An end to baseless claims and a beginning for a new phase in international relations ... our people prayed for a good deal during this fasting month of Ramadan. I can announce that their prayers have been answered” (Rouhani). Besides; He added: “No one can say Iran surrendered. The deal is a legal, technical and political victory for Iran. It's an achievement that Iran won't be called a world threat any more.....it was really difficult to preserve some of our red lines. There was a time we doubted there could be a deal. It's a historic deal and Iranians will be proud of it for generations to come (Rouhani says nuclear deal “political victory” for Iran). Rouhani welcomed the agreement and considered it successful by all standards as a result of concessions and great political efforts to reach the final stage of the negotiations. Which means that the deal is a trump card in the pocket of the Iranians to change their economic and political conditions for the better. It also corrected skeptical views about commitment to the peacefulness of the nuclear program.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said at a news conference: “The deal caps more than a decade of on-off negotiations with an agreement that could potentially transform the Middle East” (Iran's Zarif, EU say nuclear deal is new chapter of hope). He added: “I think this is a sign of hope for the entire world”. Also; He declared: We have been able to start resolving an issue that was seen by a good number of people as a source of tension in our region. It's a good testimony to the fact that dialogue and engagement and respect work much better than coercion” (Iran nuclear agreement: an overview). Zarif considered the deal as a beginning of a new page to resolve the long-standing tangled issues. In other words, the diplomatic method adopted by the negotiators dropped the charges related to the dimensions of the nuclear program by easing economic sanctions in exchange for discouraging Iranian nuclear efforts in the Middle East.

Ebrahim Asghar Zadeh, a student leader involved in the infamous American hostage crisis in 1979, tweeted: “One day Hitler ordered bloodshed from his balcony in Vienna, and today other diplomats on his balcony blocked the path to war” (Zadeh). Which means the deal stopped potential war guns between Iran and US are a result of the problems of the Iranian nuclear issue and its military ambitions since the Islamic Revolution of 1979. The diplomacy of negotiations brought positive peaceful results in favor of all participating parties and ended the scenario of confrontation.

### **3.2 American Reaction**

President Barack Obama welcomed the agreement and rejected the attempt of any group of opponents to cancel the deal, which he condemned. "This is not the time for politics or posturing». He said after announcing the agreement. "This deal meets every single one of the bottom lines we established." (Obama vows to veto any Republican attempt to derail Iran nuclear deal). In other words, the deal was the perfect choice to protect US interests and national security and to discourage potential armament efforts that might affect the stability of the Middle East. He added: "Think about what happens in a world without this deal". Without this deal, there is no scenario in which the world joins us in punishing Iran until it completely dismantles its nuclear program. Nothing we know about the Iranian government suggests that it would simply give in under that kind of pressure"(Obama vows to veto any Republican attempt to derail Iran nuclear deal). Which means that the diplomatic conditions surrounding the deal provided constant pressure on the part of the participating countries to stop Iran's nuclear advance towards neighboring regions in return for easing the economic sanctions that have brought the infrastructure of the Iranian regime to its knees. , and this is after verifying that Tehran did not deviate from the required scenario and play the roles of

new personalities, meaning The mitigation of penalties takes place after compliance with the terms of the treaty.

Secretary of State Kerry is gratified with the decision, he said:

sanctioning Iran until it capitulates makes for a powerful talking point and a pretty good political speech, but it's not achievable outside a world of fantasy. The true measure of this agreement is not whether it meets all of the desires of one side at the expense of the other; The test is whether or not it will leave the world safer and more secure than it would be without it(Press Availability on Nuclear Deal with Iran).

He added:” It's a historic day because it marks the first time in six weeks that I have worn a pair of shoes” (Press Availability on Nuclear Deal with Iran). This means that the mechanism of sanctions that captured the Iranian regime did not produce implicit results. So, the final settlement took a sufficient period to be what it is today as a result of the determination of the United States and P5 + 1 to engrave the broad lines of the deal, clarify the restrictions that Iran is bound by and enrich transparency in dealing to serve the interests of allies. It was not to tilt one of the two sides of the scale because the main goal of the negotiators is to maintain regional and international security and eliminate any malicious intentions behind the scenes by tightening monitoring of nuclear activities throughout the period of cooperation.

In contrast to the Republicans who were ascetic in their views regarding the agreement because they considered it as a defect to the history of the United States and that it undermined its national security, the Israeli presence and its interests in the Persian Gulf. This mistrust results from a long history of crumbling relations since the 1979 American hostage crisis. They also questioned the success of the deal in eliminating the possibility of nuclear weapons proliferation in the region. So, they tried to persuade Congress to pass the resolution



backed by the Obama administration and to abolish the right to veto any legislation to implement the resolution (Dann).

### **3.3 Arab and Gulf Countries Reaction**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia opposed the efforts made by President Obama to reach the agreement because from its vision, it was a threat to its geopolitical position in the Middle East and doubted the impact of the US alliance with Iran on its relations with the Arab Gulf states, which constituted concern for the stability and interests of the region (Cook)

Jamal Khashoggi, the veteran Saudi journalist said: “Iran under sanctions was a pain in the neck for the Saudis, and it will be more of a pain in the neck without sanctions”, he declared: “There is no sign that the Iranians are going to change and bring peace” (Khashoggi). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its allies saw that the US administration committed a major diplomatic mistake because the deal guaranteed economic recuperation that meet its nuclear ambitions in terms of sanctions relief. Since it supports Hezbollah groups in Lebanon, Shiite militias in Iraq and the Houthis in Yemen, raising concerns about the potential repercussions of the cooperation in the future( Hubbard).

The Syrian government clearly expressed its satisfaction with the deal, describing it as historic, since Iran is a strong supporter of Bashar al-Assad's government. (Iran nuclear deal: Saudi Arabia and Gulf react with caution).

### **3.4 Europe**

The European countries were pleased with the deal, as British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond expressed its importance in bringing Iran out of isolation to re-running its foreign relations with the West and reviving international investments (Hafezi et al). EU foreign

policy chief Federica Mogherini said: “I think this is a sign of hope for the whole world” (Mogherini).

French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius also told newspaper Le Monde that the Iran deal was "sufficiently robust" to last 10 years. (French President Hollande calls on Iran to help in Syrian conflict). This means that many European politicians chanted in the name of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and saw it as a light of hope that will achieve peace at the international and regional levels by reducing any goals towards armaments on the scene. On the other hand, Iran will benefit from the palliative supplies for the country's economic deficit.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Iran's nuclear program began in the 1950s under the Shah's leadership with assistance from the United States. It went through several phases and experienced various events. the most significant advance in the nuclear program was ratifying The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action under Obama's authority with the aim of dismantling Iran's nuclear weapons capabilities. Then; Sanctions were lifted after 2016, when it was determined that the provisions of the agreement had been complied by Iran. The deal was embraced by different countries and understood the main requirements involved. Therefore, it was viewed as a historic triumph for Iran and the entire world. However, it provoked divisive attitudes among the international community. The beginnings of friendly features between the United States and Iran were visible in this international cooperation. But, behind the scenes, its nuclear aspirations and regional policies continued to concern the American psyche since they would jeopardize US hegemony in the region.

## **Chapter Two: Post-JCPOA: Implications and US Attitude towards it**

### **Introduction**

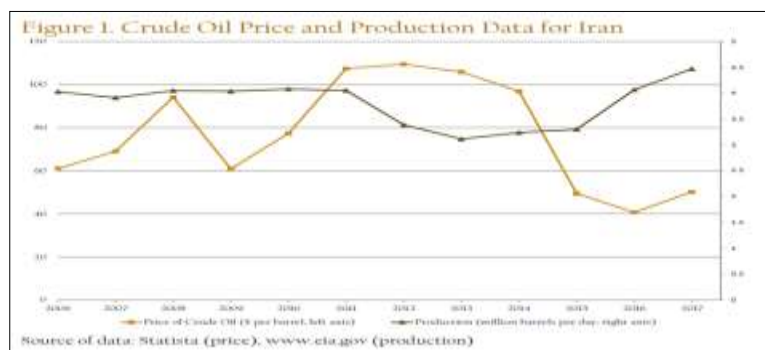
The nuclear agreement that was ratified during the era of former President Obama after long and arduous negotiation sessions, beginning with the 2002 crisis, which was a winning political card in the hands of the US administration which bet on it to bring about radical changes aimed at aborting nuclear armament activities before producing decisive effects on national and international security by resuming the conditional negotiation policy led by Obama to achieve a comprehensive diplomatic settlement that took more than a decade and passed through several barriers to reach it under the name of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in return for lifting the economic sanctions that have paralyzed the regime. After Trump assumed the presidency, he turned politics upside down and adopted a different approach from his predecessor Obama towards the Iranian Republic. The following chapter sheds light on changes in the economic status of Iran as a result of the fulfillment of the agreement and the implications for Iran's engagement in the region. Also, it looks on Trump's attitude to the deal and his policy towards it.

### **01. The Iranian Economic Climate after the Nuclear Deal**

#### **1.1 The Iranian Macroeconomic Levels**

Iran has experienced economic strength since the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action's execution in 2016, which was mostly supported by the revival of oil commerce with Western nations. With the exemption of sanctions, European corporations rushing to clinch investment agreements with Iran including Airbus, Nestlé, Daimler, Total, and Siemens, in which the commercial exchanges between the two parties increased by 30% between 2016 and 2017 (Csicsmann<sup>3-4</sup>).

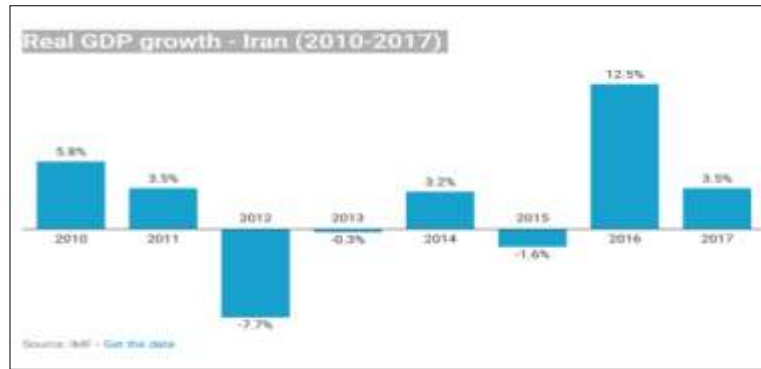
After the sanctions were lifted, Iran's first intent was to regain its share of The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) production while increasing its crude oil output. Iran additionally requested that other OPEC members limit their surplus production in attempt to maintain the total OPEC production cap. Then; The upsurge in Iran's export volume was further facilitated by the recovery of the oil cost in 2017. In the period from January 2016 to August 2017, it also boosted oil output by 30%, going from 3.3 million barrels per day in December 2015 to 4.3 million barrels per day in January 2017. So, in August 2017, production rose to 4.46 million barrels per day by 3.7%. From April 2015 to March 2016, oil and gas export income climbed by 66% to \$55.75 billion from April 2016 to March 2017(Habibi 2-3).



**Figure 2:** Iran's Crude Oil Cost and Production from 2006 to 2017.

(Source: Brandeis.edu, Middle East Brief, February 2018)

Iran's GDP growth rates for 2016 were 12.5% and 3.7% by 2017 respectively, in stark opposition to the prior year's lower expansion rates. In 2016, the inflation rate fell to 9.5%, the lowest level in a long item. Then; The strategy of lifting sanctions contributed to Iran's restoration of its vital economic level before the imposition of penalties by the international community in 2012 and progressively regaining its footing in terms of business and investment (Meignan).



**Figure 3:** Iran's GDP Growth from 2010 to 2017.

(Source : globaleurope.eu, January 16, 2018)

## 1.2 Iranians Living Conditions

Despite the country's economic situation improving, a portion of the Iranian populace did not experience anything perceptible after the agreement. According to surveys, per capita household spending ranged between Tehran inhabitants, urban non-residents of Tehran, and rural non-residents. As a result of the higher density of industrial and business activities in certain areas, Tehran and other big industrial cities gained greater economic advantages from the nuclear deal than other cities.

The lack of economic prospects and unemployment, which had an impact on Iranian families, was one of Iran's domestic issues. Young individuals have an especially high unemployment rate. A lot of diversified investment initiatives that would create jobs were also discouraged by the non-oil sector's inadequate movement, as employment data showed an upward but unsustainable trend in employment growth since the deal was reached, and the overall unemployment rate rose from 10.6% in 2014 to 12.4% in 2016 (Habibi 6-7).

## 02. The Impact on Iran's Regional policies

### 2.1 Syria

The negotiators made a strong case that the agreement would not compel Iran to alter its regional activities and planning toward Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Israeli-Arab war, Shiite forces in Iraq, or the conditions in Yemen and Syria (Khalaji 72). Iran would have increased influence both politically and economically as a result of the JCPOA. Shiite militias from Iran proliferated in Syria to assist Assad's military because Iran is a major provider to the National Defense Forces Militia Network, which helped make up for Assad's army's lack. The Iranian support for Syria was crucial since it helped Assad's economy grow and when the JCPOA was struck. Thus; Iranian investment increased as a result of the recovery of the Iranian economy (Lund). Where Iran provided the local Popular Committee forces with supplying, weapons, surveillance gear, training, and weaponing (Esfandyari & Fellow 232). Iran also provided encouragement to Syria with the objective to safeguard its predicament in Lebanon and it was viewed as Iran's companion, providing a surefire passage into Lebanon and Hezbollah (Rabinovich). After the number of Iranian Revolutionary Guard fatalities rose, including the murder of Hossein Hamdani, the commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard( IRGC), on October 9, 2015. Iran started to reevaluate the Syrian matter. The mission to find a resolution to the issue and repel ISIS in Syria was launched under the direction of Javad Zarif, the foreign minister. attempts to address the issue through discussions held in Vienna at the end of October 2015 were hindered by reports that Iran increased its meddling in Syria in the following months. However, it became more challenging to find a peaceful solution due to escalating Russian meddling, including aerial bombing (Esfandiary& Fellow 232).

## 2.2 Iraq

Iran sought to influence Iraq's political configuration after Saddam Hussein's downfall in order to create a Shiite regime that could be readily influenced by Iran by fusing numerous parties together, including Shiite and Kurdish ones (Wright 151). The accord was seen differently by the two groups of Iraqis. Some people approved of it, while others didn't. Due of the favorable relations between Iran and the US that were made possible by the deal, the supporters, who were of Shiite majority, thought that the deal would have great effects for their nation and aid in bringing about peace. The opposition's Sunni opponents, on the other hand, believed that Iran might interfere in Iraqi affairs without American opposition. Additionally, they claimed that proponents of the JCPOA may surreptitiously conduct business with Saudi Arabia and the Arab Gulf nations (Habib).

The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) posed a distinct challenge to Iran than other bordering extreme Sunni organizations. because of the considerable advancement it has achieved in a little period of time, during which it has gathered materials, controlled huge geographic regions, and trained tens of thousands of warriors from all over the world. The growth of the organization has startled local and foreign parties, including Iran. ISIS, in contrast to other terrorist groups active in the region around Iran, has objectives that go beyond a separatist one: it wants to eradicate Shiites and build an Islamic state founded on the fundamentalism of Sharia (Esfandiary& Tabatabai 2). Iran rapidly increased its involvement by providing military hardware, advisors, and Major General Qassem Soleimani, the official face of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to battle against ISIS. US-led airstrikes alone will not be sufficient to contain the Islamic State (ISIS). Ground support for Iran was desirable, provided that it includes Iraq's Sunni community. Then; Minimal Western collaboration with Iran was feasible thanks to the nuclear agreement signed in July 2015.

This has improved the effectiveness of the war against ISIS and will continue to do so, in addition to assisting Tehran in controlling Shiite militias (Esfandiary& Fellow 232).

### **03.The US Foreign Policy towards JCPOA**

The Obama administration bet on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action after it subjected Iran to a set of measures to verify its compliance with the restrictions imposed on it and did not rely on trust as a result of the events after the Islamic revolution (Marges 31). After the deal was implemented, on January 16, 2016, the International Energy Agency confirmed Iran's commitment to the terms stipulated in the framework of the deal. Consequently, sanctions were lifted on the economic sectors and a number of previous decisions were cancelled (Humud&Thomas 52-53).However, with the advent of President Trump, events changed and the pace of tensions began to escalate on both sides, as his policy expressed its desire to establish its personal diplomatic approach at the expense of the interests of member states and its existing cooperation with Iran. This was motivated by the protection of the interests of its allies in the Middle East region, the elimination of regional unrest and the radical ideologies branching out in the Persian Gulf.

#### **3.1 American Policy under Trump Administration**

President Trump took a different tack from the administration of his predecessor Obama in terms of his foreign policy toward Iran, making his personal anti-JCPOA vision a cornerstone of his campaign and repeatedly used harsh rhetoric to scrap the deal when he publicly declared: "My number one priority is dismantling the disastrous deal with Iran" (Humud & Thomas13).

But in fact, after he assumed the presidency, he faced many obstacles related to Iran's compliance certificates established by the International Atomic Energy Agency and the



support of world powers for the continuity of the agreement, as he criticized the multilateral deal feature because its laws did not give the power to cancel it to any party, which restricted the freedom of the United States. So, he peddled-back to amend plans related to the nuclear program and to renegotiate its constraints (Katzman & Kerr 1).

President Trump and his allies claimed that the previous administration failed to cover “the sunset clauses” in the agreement that ensured the lifting of sanctions imposed on Iran after the expiration of the contract period, thus giving Iran space to act again on its military nuclear activities. He also criticized Obama's policy, which prioritized eliminating Iran's hope of producing nuclear weapons, but did not focus on other issues of concern as non-nuclear. Trump and the leaders of the US Congress visualized Iran as a threat because of its undesirable actions as sponsoring terrorism and exporting violent movements in an unstable manner in the region through proxies and sectarian groups, conducting ballistic missile tests and intelligence capabilities (Lee et al 2).Which was considered a violation of the UN Security Council Resolution 2231(Immenkamp3). All these issues were not together with the security of the civilian population and the interests of the allies of the United States.

Trump referred to how the agreement granted Iran permission to finance its directions from the proceeds recovered from the lifting of economic sanctions, which he considered it a loss of his winning cards in favor of Iran (Lee et al 2).Therefore; The president recruited US officials who were known for their stance against the directions of a previous administration, especially the joint plan of action, such as conservatives Mike Pompeo who became the U.S. Secretary of State and John Bolton, the U.S. National Security Advisor who unequivocally believed that the agreement was disastrous and should be canceled because it did not serve the interest of national and international security (Fiedler 289).

The President twice submitted a Certificate of Compliance to the US Congress, which mandated the certification of the quarterly report on Iran's compliance with the terms framed in the deal. In October 2017, the President decided to withdraw his administration's certification after he reviewed the terms of the stipulated agreement that he clearly did not satisfy. In January 2018, Trump decided to end certain sanctions on the energy sector with the aim of reaching a satisfactory settlement by working with European negotiators to address the terms not agreed upon in the nuclear deal, but the desired goal had not been reached. In this case, on January 12, 2018, he decided not to renew sanctions waivers that performed US obligations under the deal (Humud& Thomas 13).

Trump concluded that Iran was a deceitful country due to its unreliable nuclear history, which raised doubts among his administration officials about the possibility of pursuing the development of its nuclear activities in the future. As a result, he cooperated with several Republican US senators in order to enact legislations to refinish the agreement and fix its defects by applying the policy of maximum pressure towards it and forcing it to accept additional restrictions on its nuclear program (Fiedler289). He also threatened to invoke the option of force on the platform in order to subject Iran to a re-negotiation, to accept the reduction of its ballistic missile programs, to reduce its nuclear activities by a large percentage, to ensure more access to questionable facilities, whether nuclear or non-nuclear and even military. Also, expanding the duration of sunset provisions to be able to curb the nuclear program in a stronger manner, shedding light on Iran's violation of national and local security through destabilizing operations and trying to impose more restrictions to get rid of it (Kerr & Katzman 23).

It was likely that one of Trump's priorities was to target a better deal that serves his personal vision. On the other hand, Iran did not intend to make more concessions on its nuclear program because the Trump administration invoked the anti-Iranian rhetoric that took

advantage of its economic situation that is at risk of collapse after threatening it with massive waves of international pressure and used the option of military force in the renegotiation event in order to force it to many concessions, but did not indicate the intention to cooperate to find better solutions that would be desirable for both parties.

## **3.2. Turning Point: Trump Withdrawal from the JCPOA**

### **3.2.1 The US Withdrawal from The Nuclear Deal**

One of the two most important pledges Trump had made to his right-wing adherents among his 282 electoral promises was for the United States to exit from the Nuclear Accord (Cherkaoui 3). Prior to the deadline for lifting various sanctions every 120 to 180 days under the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act enacted by the US Congress in 2015. On May 8, 2018, US President Donald Trump effectively announced the US withdrawal from the JCPOA (Potential Consequences of the U.S. Withdrawal from the JCPOA).

The last option taken by the Trump administration in this case was not to drop the concessions in favor of Iran. Instead, it was the first step of a tangled policy that was quickly dived into after announcing the intention to swerve from the common path of the international summits that framed the agreement (Nephew 4). The United States decided to re-impose harsh US sanctions on Iran (Fiedler 289). Despite the IAEA's continuous assurance through reports of its compliance with the procedures of the Convention. According to the US administration's position, in order to drag Iran into negotiations, a strategy of placing Iran under the threat of maximum pressure must be adopted. On the other hand, the rest of the parties considered the US decision to leave the agreement unilaterally as evading the reciprocal promises exchanged by them and as the beginning of a breach between Washington and Europe, which made the continuation of the deal a priority, causing doubts about the Iranian side remaining loyal to work under its terms (POP 105).

For the president, the deal had too many inaccuracies that need to be readjusted. He clearly stated that:

The agreement was so poorly negotiated that even if Iran fully complies, the regime can still be on the verge of a nuclear breakout in just a short period of time. The deal's sunset provisions are totally unacceptable. If I allowed this deal to stand, there would soon be a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. Everyone would want their weapons ready by the time Iran had theirs(Trump).

As he added:" After these consultations, it is clear to me that we cannot prevent an Iranian nuclear bomb under the decaying and rotten structure of the current agreement" (Trump). In this case, it can be recognized that President Trump viewed the previous agreement as a fragile base that could collapse at any moment. In other words, the negotiators did not guarantee the validity of the restrictions on Iran's nuclear program for a long time, which escalated the fears of the US administration to a critical mass regarding the launch of nuclear activities after the rainy period under (JCPOA), which could cause an explosion of nuclear armament movement in the regional neighborhood.

### **3.2.2 The Re-imposition of Economic Sanctions**

The US administration reinstated the secondary sanctions which imposed on individuals and companies outside the jurisdiction of the United States who cooperate with Iran (Mulligan<sup>2</sup>). It swung into action after the 90-day wind-down period, which ended on August 6, 2018, included the upstream sectors whether in oil or natural gas and all transactions related to them (Caine& McNabb). Then; The Trump administration made Iran face a big dilemma in bringing investment to its country when prevented European companies from making any cooperations with Iran; Despite the European negotiators working on the deal and trying to adopt an additional entity to finance business with Iran, the nightmare of US

sanctions was threatening European individuals and companies from engaging in any transactions or investment projects. (Marges 37). One of the results of those sanctions was there treating of the international oil companies from financing Iranian corporations (Jalilvand 6). Penalties were also imposed under the Comprehensive Iranian Sanctions and Divestment Act of 2010 (“CISADA”) on the cash and banking transactions of foreign companies with Iranian financial institutions. Besides; The sanctions affected the shipping lines sector, including port operators and shipbuilding manufactures in Iran (Caine& McNabb). In addition to the various Iranian institutions and individuals who were registered under the severe sanction’s strategy.

Following the JCPOA's removing of some restrictions, Trump rescheduled them and then sanctioned 1,139 extra institutions or individuals. In order to construct a maze of red tape, he exploited legal procedures. For instance, a person or entity that was previously classified with the Iranian Financial Sanctions Regulations (IFSR) tag may be reclassified as a Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (NPWMD) target. Numerous instances that had been subject to primary sanctions from 2011 to 2015 all of a sudden started to show up on the list of Specially Designated Nationals(SDN), making them more liable to secondary sanctions. As a result, this strategy combined the nuclear issue with other kinds of sanctions, such as those pertaining to Iran's military forces or endorsement of terrorism (Kahalzadeh4).

### **3.3 The Arguments behind Trump's decision**

When Trump withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, he did not provide any real proof of Iran's breach of its obligations under the signed deal because the International Atomic Energy Agency's ratified Iran’s commitment to the agreement as a result of the unremitting inspections of Iranian nuclear facilities. Ironically, the president's decision was bolstered by the perceived deficiencies in the agreement.

### **3.3. 1. Hire Control of The Nuclear Force**

Trump claimed that the deal laid the carpet for Iran to gain nuclear power. It was clear that the sunset provisions stipulated in the agreement adopted the restriction of nuclear operations for a short period of time that included 15 years, which the Trump administration considered impractical in the long term and insufficient to cover American hopes regarding confirming the peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear program. Thus; Trump's concerns about the subsequent Iranian aspirations were exacerbated after the expire of the sunset provisions that would allow the actual re-launch of the Iranian nuclear program, since the latter expressed its intention to create a vast industrial basis for the unlimited development of everything related to the yellowcake enrichment and storage operations. Also, reprocessing spent fuel and building reactors and nuclear facilities. As a result, after the expected occurrence, diplomatic policy will not have a place to occupy, so the solution will not be available except in exporting the military option to deter Iran in a nuclear war (THE IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL: What's Wrong with It and What Can We Do Now?).

### **3.3.2 The Regional Instability&The Nuclear Weaponization**

Trump directed his criticism of the agreement on a misleading basis, because he relied on the witnesses of Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, who pointed the finger at Iran for manufacturing nuclear weapons, despite the lack of an argument condemning its alleged behavior (Lucey & Lederman).

Trump believed that (JCPOA) allowed Iran to develop traditional weapons such as ballistic missile test. Consequently, the regional allies of the United States may compete in developing the capabilities of nuclear and traditional weapons, which will create a state of chaos that cannot be sorted later. In addition; The United States condemned Iran by penetrating the right to protect the citizens and their freedoms without supervision. It also

failed to cover non -nuclear issues related to strengthening sectarian activities in the region, such as Hezbollah in Lebanon or Hamas (THE IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL AND ITS CRITICS 14), and stood beside Bashar al -Assad's authoritarianism during the Syrian civil war, as it also detained American and non -American citizens (THE IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL: What's Wrong With It And What Can We Do Now?).

Nikki Healy, US Ambassador to the United Nations, said: "Iran's leaders want to use the nuclear agreement to make the world hostage to its bad behavior" (Healy). In the sense that the negotiators did not focus their attention on the problems arising from eliminating economic sanctions on the Iranian regime, as it benefited a large percentage of the revenues received from frozen assets abroad to finance extremist groups, which increased the possibility of hitting Israeli targets and other Gulf states and threatened regional stability at the end. For Trump, the application of the maximum sanctions policy would be to drag Iran for diplomatic talk table to collect a more mature agreement.

### **3.3.3 The Search for Best Deal**

During his presidential campaign, Trump has always opposed the decisions of the previous administration regarding the pace of (JCPOA) and expressed his desire to break the legacy of Obama and replace it with a saturated policy for his personal vision to obtain a better deal in terms of its essence. These speculation does not stop alone without real reasons. Trump said that "Iran is violating the spirit of the deal" (Adler). The United States' concerns about its aspiration for huge military cooperation with Russia regarding weapons have escalated despite the prohibition of the Security Council resolution of the commercial transactions of weapons, which they considered a violation of the spirit of the deal. (Fischel, 2016).

In addition; The US administration claimed that Iran was the senior beneficiary of the agreement, no matter how concessions were made to the other parties because the restrictions imposed on its nuclear program did not promote to curb the development of its missile program (Hurtung). Since the language stipulated in the Security Council resolution did not suggest that missile tests actually stop.

Trump criticized the agreement as multilateral, which means facing a great obstacle to persuading the other members to change the terms of the deal unacceptable for united states with the aim of reaching a successful settlement that protects national and international security interests (Gharleghi). Where Trump made discussions with European officials on reviewing and amending the conditions of the deal, but did not come with any result in reality. The European procession tried to persuade Trump to adhere to the agreement, but he previously intended the decision to go out if there is nothing to prevent it from that (Chalabi 31).

## **04. Reactions to Trump's Decision**

### **4.1 Europe's Reaction**

The decision to leave the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action was subjected to a wave of criticism from most of the six nation negotiators, because it created a state of uncertainty, which might later result in Iran rolling off the path of the agreement and the crumbling of the bond that the parties cling to.

The other P5+1 nations promptly reaffirmed their support for the JCPOA and declared their intention to uphold their JCPOA obligations and shield their businesses from the impact of any sanctions imposed by the US. France, Germany, and the United Kingdom said in an announcement jointly that they want to continue participating in the JCPOA and work with all the relevant stakeholders to the pact to make sure Iran keeps getting the enduring economic advantages (Kerr& Katzman 25-26).



The British Foreign Secretary, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and French President Emmanuel Macron were unable to persuade their respective countries to maintain their membership in the pact. Trump's choice was crucial for Europe since the agreement made it accessible to European establishments to do business with Iran by removing sanctions (Yochi). The French president Emmanuel Macron voiced his displeasure with Trump's appointment and responded to the statement on Twitter, writing that "France, Germany, and the UK regret the US decision to leave the JCPOA. The nuclear non-proliferation regime is at stake" (Macron). Trump's decision raised the level of concern of the French leader in terms of the future of international relations after undermining the integrity of the United States towards Iran and other countries. The grounds for the agreement became shaky after the US administration disavowed its membership and did not hint at Iran's subsequent plan regarding its nuclear program and its steadfastness to the terms of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which drew vague features about ensuring security on the regional and international front.

EU High Representative Federica Mogherini was resented with Trump's sudden behavior and confirmed that the agreement was based on a multilateral element that must be respected by all members. Meanwhile; She indicated that Europe would cooperate with other parties to uphold the accord and they will stay dedicated to the continuing full and effective execution of the nuclear deal, she stated: "As we have always said, the nuclear deal is not a bilateral agreement and it is not in the hands of any single country to terminate it unilaterally". She added: "As long as Iran continues to implement its nuclear-related commitments, as it is doing so far, the European Union will remain committed to the continued full and effective implementation of the nuclear deal" (Morgheini).

## 4.2 Iranian Reaction

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani stated in a televised speech that he had authorized his Foreign Ministry to talk with nations that remained in the nuclear accord. He declared: " The nuclear deal will continue if we see we can meet the demands of the Iranian people with the cooperation of five countries in the short period" (Rouhani). Iranian authorities have repeatedly opposed renegotiating the JCPOA or concluding a new accord a of the type envisaged by the US (Kerr & Katzman 26).

Foreign Minister Zarif stated in a letter to UN Secretary-General António Guterres dated May 10, 2018, in which he confirmed that for the JCPOA to remain in effect, the contributing members must ensure that Iran would receive tangible remuneration for the numerous instances in which the United States violated the agreement and withdraw from it without authorization. In addition, Khamenei urged Europe to avoid raising the issue of Iranian missile development or the spread of regional influence, and stressed Iran's right to conduct sensitive activities again (Bouhmama159- 160).

Ali Khamenei, the Supreme Leader, declared that Iran would continue to abide by the deal if the European nations provided guarantees that would protect Iran's revenue from oil sales to Europe. Similarly, President Rouhani expressed the same viewpoint in an address on July 4(Kerr and Katzman 27).

Iranian officials expressed their dissatisfaction with Trump's departure from the nuclear agreement in a harsh manner, including an indirect message, as Khamenei said:"

U.S. pres.'s shallow & ludicrous behavior wasn't unexpected. The same behavior existed in previous US presidents. Yet, Iranian nation is persistent while former

U.S. presidents passed away & IRI is still standing. This man's corpse will also be worming food while IRI stands strong” (Khamenei).

Which means that the Iranian Republic believed that Trump's decision was absurd, so it did not trust and will not trust the American covenants despite its different administrations. It also decided to submit to its obligations under the agreement even without it, while refraining from concessions on the benefits it derives from economic sanctions relief.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the nuclear agreement touched crucial aspects of the Iranian nuclear track, as it reached the easing of sanctions which later contributed to gradually resolving some economic bottlenecks and gave an impetus to Iran to get out of its international isolation after it witnessed a severe recession before 2015. This is what provoked the new Trump administration by claiming that the policy reached by his predecessor Obama was extremely lenient and contained serious flaws. Consequently; Trump entered the negotiations on that file into a dead end in 2018, and plunged the penalties knife deeply into the Iranian economy by re-imposing harsh sanctions due to the insufficient duration of the sunset clauses to curtail Iranian nuclear program permanently. He also pointed to the lifting of economic sanctions on the regime which helped it achieve its strategic aspirations to expand regionally at the expense of neighboring regions by supporting extremist organizations from revenues. He also warned of an acceleration of the arms race between competing countries in the region as a result of Iran's development of its missile defense policy. On the other hand, the decision to withdraw was opposed by the signatories who considered it a violation of their obligations under the agreement, which could create unexpected future scenarios. At the same time, they declared that they would continue the deal despite the American absence.

## **Chapter three: The Impact of Trump's Decision on Iran: The Devil to Pay**

### **Introduction**

After Trump fulfilled his long-awaited promise to the United States to unilaterally withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal on May 8, 2018, he gave the US administration the opportunity to strangle Iran's economy by imposing restrictive sanctions that were waived under the JCPOA on January 16, 2016. From the president's point of view, the Iranian deal was fundamentally flawed, so he proposed his objectives as a mere measure to pre-emptively defend international and regional security interests by permanently scraping Iran's nuclear program. He also aimed to renegotiate the borders of the deal and apply pressure that would force Tehran to curb its support for extremist activities in All parts of the Middle East and its exhaustion from the internal side. In fact, rebuilding the economic pressure was a major challenge given the international opposition to the US withdrawal and the scant international support for America's move to renew sanctions. Above all, receiving Trump's allegations without delving into the repercussions of this decision on the Iranian regime did not paint the picture with full angles. Therefore, the last chapter of the study presents the extent of the internal and external influences of the unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the agreement on Iran, since it is a very influential force in the Middle East and an active member in foreign policy.

### **01. The Impact on Iran's Economy**

The re-imposition of US sanctions harmed Iran's economy, as major corporations have decided to withdraw from the Iranian market rather than be subject to penalties by the US. Donald Trump's maximum pressure campaign developed a strategy that is largely centered on cutting off Iran's financial capabilities in order to confront its nefarious operations in the Persian Gulf region (Khan& Zaman 74). Then; It caused Iran to enter a severe, protracted

recession, devalue its currency, increase inflation, drive away foreign investors and lose tens of billions of dollars in income, particularly from oil exports. This economic strain is already translating into political pressure, which may compel the government to choose between existence in the deal or nuclear aspirations and foreign conflicts (Ghasseminejad & Goldberg).

### **1.1 The Gross domestic product (GDP)**

There was no doubt that Iran had suffered economic harm as a result of the Trump administration. Iran's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) decreased by around 3.6% in 2018 and another 7.6% in 2019 in the two years following the reinstatement of sanctions. Nearly all of Iran's oil exports were halted by the possibility of sanctions over the sale of crude oil. Iran was exporting roughly 2.3 million barrels per day at the start of 2018. With the persistent exclusion of a few purchasers, Iran's shipments have decreased to 1 million barrels per day by April 2019 (Mortlock5).

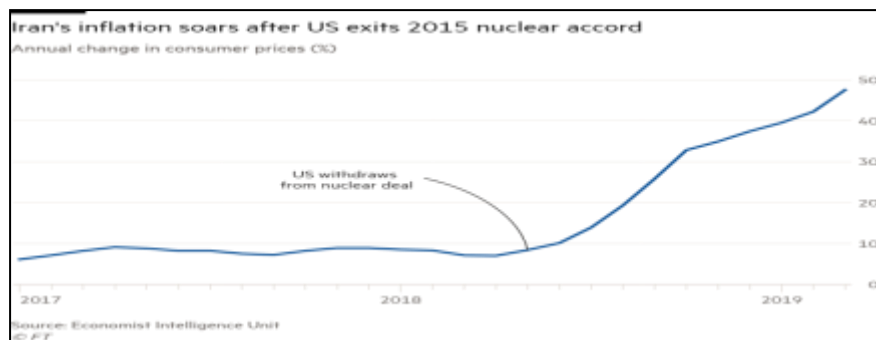
The decrease in industrial production, mostly brought on by the United States' decision to reinstate its oil embargo on Iran, was the major cause of the general drop in GDP in 2018 and 2019. Due to their narrow foreign emphasis and predominance in the home market, the service and agriculture industries have resisted sanctions more. The value added of industry in 2018 (which included mining, manufacturing, gas, electricity, water, and construction) witnessed a significant decrease of 9.1% compared to 2017 when in 2019 witnessed another 9.7% fall in value added for the industrial sector while the value contributed of agriculture also dropped by 2.4%. and a modest decline in the services sector of 0.05% (Farzanegan).

The US sanctions made the country's economic shrink due to the increase in the cost of imported commodities brought on by the rial's depreciation and subsequent inflationary trends. When Iran was harmed by having access to illegal oil supplies, the government was unable to fund the fiscal stimulus plan. The administration sold bonds through open market

operations and it used a “helicopter money” mechanism to fund its expenditures. However; The balance of its expenditure was paid for by expanding the money supply. The expansion of the money supply immediately caused higher prices with a lower interest rate while the GDP continued to shrink. Unproductive and speculative capital investment in the foreign exchange market and the Tehran Stock Exchange reduced the government's budgetary flexibility and led to stagflation. (Ghodsi& Nejad).

## 1.2 The Inflation Spikes and Currency Collapses

In consideration of the US exit from the JCPOA, the value of the rial currency had decreased by more than 60%. As a result, the food costs increased by 85% and the rate of inflation surged to just under 50%(Bozorgmehr & Klasa).



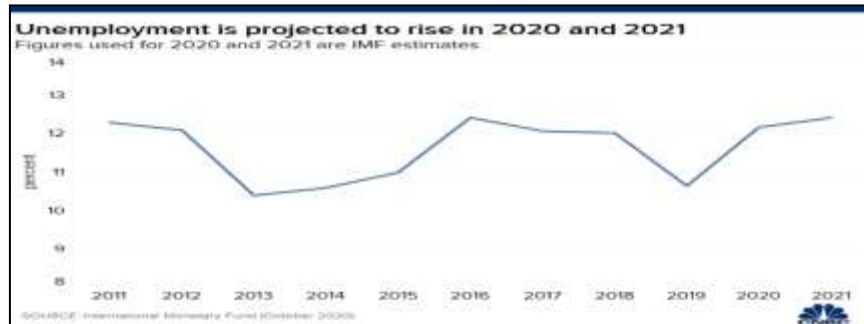
**Figure 4:** A graphic depiction of the Iran’s inflation for the period 2017-2019.

(Source: Financial Times, May 12, 2019)

The massive decline of Rial against other currencies over the past decade has highlighted Iran's vulnerability to trade with the rest of the world. Due to the depreciation of the rial, imported Iranian products became more expensive, especially high-end products such as medicines, medical instruments, and equipment, which led to a drop in imports (Ghodsi& Nejad).

At the beginning of 2018, the cost of living increased at a time when citizens were already suffering from a slowing economy and labor market, which in turn led to an increase

in inflation as a result of the devaluation of the currency. As a result; The unemployment rate in Iran increased in 2018 and reached nearly 12%. by 2021, 12.4% of the population was expected to be unemployed, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Ngwy).



**Figure 5:** A graphic depiction of the unemployment rate after US exit (2018-2021).

(Source: CNBC, MAR 22, 2021)

The day after President Trump declared that all UN sanctions against Iran were being re-imposed, the Iranian rial reached another significant decline in its value versus the US dollar in September 2020, trading for 273,000 rials on the black market. On October 1, the Iranian rial hit yet another record low against the dollar, trading at 300,000 rials. Abdolnaser Hemmati, governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI), stressed that there was a close relationship between geopolitical events and the depreciation of the rial, as the Trump administration's declaration to re-impose sanctions on Iran had a negative impact on the foreign exchange market in the country (Ghodsí & Nejad).

### 1.3 The Oil and Non-oil Trade

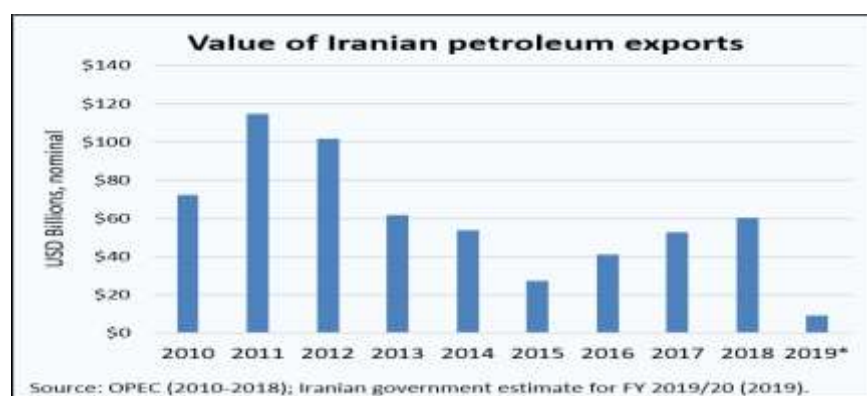
#### 1.3.1 The Oil Trade

In many waves of sanctions on Iran, the US has notably targeted the oil and gas industries. Indeed, a number of US authorities have announced their attempt to eliminate Iranian oil exports, either directly through sanctions on the energy industry or

indirectly through sanctions on Iran's financial sector, which hindered the return of oil profits (Vogt&Jalilvand 12).

After the application of sanctions, according to the economic statistics from the middle of 2018 to the beginning of 2020, Iran's oil exports have decreased by 80% by March 2019 compared to the same month in the previous year, from 2.5 million barrels per day (mbd) to less than 0.3 mbd. In 2019, oil revenue was only \$13.75 billion, down from \$42.2 billion in 2018. Furthermore, sanctions caused Iran's foreign reserves, which were \$115 billion in 2017 following the JCPOA, to drop to \$85 billion in 2019 (Kahalzadeh4)

Tehran has had trouble retrieving the proceeds it received from the sales because of the intricacy of the situation, which was highlighted by a public struggle between Iran and South Korea over the suspension of oil reimbursements. In response to the prospect of US sanctions towards any foreign currency exchange with Iran, South Korea had frozen \$7 billion in Iranian assets. Iran has had restricted access to its oil export profits as a result of the worldwide effects of U.S. sanctions since 2018, both in terms of reducing exports and freezing assets. For instance, Iran's oil exports brought in \$41 billion in 2016 and \$53 billion in 2017. But from March 2019 to March 2020, Iran's oil earnings were barely \$8 to \$9 billion. From March to September 2020, the following six months. The government's \$18 billion income goal for the 2020–2021 fiscal year seems unlikely to be met, despite the substantial increase in oil prices since the autumn of 2020 (Rome).



**Figure 6:** A graphic depiction of the value of Iran's oil exports 2010-2019.

(Source: United States Institute of Peace, The Iran Primer, February 10, 2021)



The government's public finances suffered as oil and gas export income fell. As the government had a budget deficit of approximately \$10 billion during the nine months from April to December of last year, which was unparalleled. As a result, to close a portion of the fiscal imbalance, the government used part of the nation's hard currency reserves. It also took part in a fresh round of privatization, selling its shares in a number of significant business entities. The fact that the purchasers in these deals were primarily parastatals was itself a drawback because the private sector lacked the resources to make more significant purchases. Due to this, the opaque semi-governmental sector began to have a larger impact on economic activity at a period when the government's participation was still relatively minor (Vogt & Jalilvand 13).

### 1.3.2 The Non- Oil Trade

Iran's total commerce decreased by 20% between March 20 and November 20, 2020, totaling \$23.1 billion in imports and \$21.5 billion in exports. Iran's non-oil trade imbalance increased from \$1.3 billion to \$1.6 billion as a result of higher imports than exports. It contributed significantly to a considerable reduction in non-oil commerce in 2020 when combined with the overall effects of US trade and financial sanctions. The primary economy of Iran was abruptly cut off when countries including Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, and other nations closed their borders with Iran in the spring. Exports decreased to barely \$1.65 billion in April from an average of \$3.45 billion per month the year before (Rome).



**Figure 7:** A graphic depiction of the Non-Oil Trade, 2020.

(Source: United States Institute of Peace, The Iran Primer, December 16, 2020)

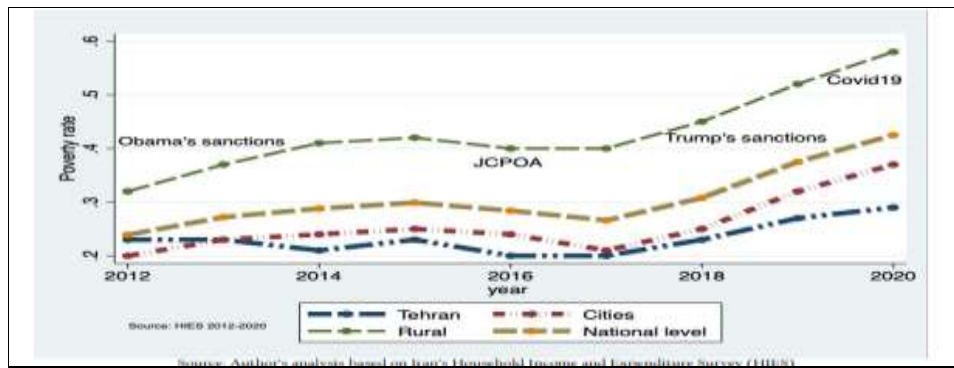
Iran decided to create a resistance economy focused on self-sufficiency rather than depending on an economy based solely on a single product, like oil. Iran has made an effort to grow its non-oil exports using this technique despite being subject to financial sanctions and being included on The Financial Action Task Force blacklist (FATF). It was able to raise non-oil exports to over \$30 billion in 2020. At the same time, non-oil imports topped \$33 billion, resulting in a trade balance in this industry that was about \$3 billion negative (Naghbandi et al 170).

In a further effort to close the budget gap, the government shut off the fuel computer and tripled the price of regular gasoline from 10,000 to 30,000 and 150,000 riyals, respectively. This occurred between November 24, 2018, and November 15, 2019, and it had a significant inflationary impact and sparked a general feeling of displeasure. This strategy, which reduced gasoline subsidies and raised the price of the fuel, was unsuccessful in lowering the budget deficit (Tasnim).

## **1.4 The Iranian Domestic Hardship**

### **1.4.1 The Rise of Poverty**

The Iran Statistical Center's analysis of the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) revealed that general poverty had increased, particularly in rural areas, and that a sizeable segment of the Iranian middle class had also fallen into poverty during this time. The average living standard fell by 12%, while the national poverty rate climbed by 11%.<sup>19</sup> The poverty rate rose by 14.3% between March 2018 and March 2021, while the level of life decreased by 14% overall. Over 13 million individuals have fallen into poverty in just three years as of the end of March 2018 (Kahalzadeh 6).



**Figure 8:** A graphic depiction of the Iran poverty headcount ratio, 2012–2020.

(Source: Brandies University, Crown Center for Middle Studies, January, 2022)

#### 1.4.2 The Increase in Deaths during the COVID-19

During the worldwide coronavirus outbreak, high-level discussion has focused on the effects of US sanctions on Iran. More than 4,000 people have passed away by the beginning of April 2020, including many of Iran's most prominent lawmakers. The pandemic's effects were made worse by the Iranian government's failure to disclose the scope of the outbreak and its tardiness in taking action (Mortlock 5). In addition, starting 2018, the sanctions have allegedly restricted Iran's ability to import pricey Western-made pharmaceuticals, such as chemotherapy and multiple sclerosis treatments, despite the fact that medical products throughout the period of 2012-2016 carried permits for medical supplies. Some medications were in short supply since banks would not accept to process payments for commodities (Katzman 56). This global event highlighted the contribution of harsh sanctions in taking the lives of citizens who were victims of the geopolitical conflict between Iran and the United States.

## **02. The Iranian Regional Policy: Escalating tension**

After Trump revealed the United States' exit from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, he vowed to define a permanent solution to the Iranian nuclear threat through the country's cooperation with its allies. This would entail making endeavors to end its global subversive actions throughout the Middle East (Trump 4). Then; By reducing the government's financial budget in an effort to prevent it from supporting its agents and covert cells dispersed throughout the Persian Gulf area, the United States attempted to construct a kleptocratic regime that relied on attacking Iran's economic base (Hook). According to the Trump administration's own assessment, none of these objectives have been met by US policy toward Iran during the past two years. Brian Hook, the US's special envoy for Iran, constantly updates the media on Iran's continued participation in all of these disruptive operations (MORTLOCK 7). Since the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) was designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) by President Trump on April 8, 2019 (Iran's Revolutionary Guard Named a Terrorist Organization 1).

### **2.1 Yemen**

The United States denounced Iran for continuing to finance foreign conflicts with spending resources of its citizens. A significant number of Iranian arms were intercepted by the US Navy aboard a dhow bound for the Houthis in Yemen, which exposed both commerce and free sailing in the Red Sea to a serious threat from these weapons. 150 Iranian-made Dehlavieh anti-tank missiles and three Iranian-designed and produced surface-to-air missiles were taken into custody. Additionally; There were parts and thermal optical sights developed in Iran that the Houthis could use to put together a variety of watercraft destructive apparatuses (Hook). Besides; Drone-fired missiles started a blaze at the Shaybah oil facility owned by Aramco in August 2019. Following same month, Houthi rebels launched ten

strategic missiles at Jizan Airport in southwest Saudi Arabia, triggering the deaths of several people. A drone and missile strike were conducted in June 2020 against King Khalid Airport and the Defense Ministry's main office in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia. A few days after the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia convened the G20 in November 2020, Jeddah was the target of a missile assault (Cohen).

The most brazen of the attacks was occurred on the Khurais oil station and Abqaiq, the world's largest oil processing plant, owned by Saudi Arabia's Aramco national oil corporation on September 14, 2019. Over half of Saudi Arabia's oil output and nearly 5% of the world's fund, or 5.7 million barrels per day (mb/d), of petroleum were momentarily interrupted by the strike, which employed both drones and missiles. (Attacks on Saudi Oil Facilities: Effects and Responses 1). The timing of this incident coincided with growing hostility in the area as a result of the US administration's "maximum pressure" approach and the increasing severity of oil sanctions on Tehran, purportedly orchestrated by Houthi troops in Yemen with Iranian assistance. Three days before to the strikes, vandalize attacks on ships took place in the oil port of Fujairah, United Arab Emirates (UAE). When considered collectively, these strikes on the oil export facilities of the major Gulf States that are part of the anti-Iran bloc were a warning that Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and other Gulf nation's' capacity to substitute Iranian oil was not guaranteed (Tanchum 1).Iran has strengthened its offensive capabilities through the presence of Iranian proxies and military facilities close to Saudi Arabia's crossings with Yemen and Iraq, which made the proximity to the oil infrastructure of the Arab Gulf states more susceptible to attack (Rivlin&Parker 2).Iran elevated the ante to a very perilous position, as it played an overwhelming hand out of vulnerability and partly because it thought neither Saudi Arabia nor the United States was prepared to retaliate (Rivlin&Parker4).Because Iran carried out indirect attacks against the United States by exploiting its proxies in Yemen as a mediator for reactions.

The Houthi rebels in Yemen, who were backed by Iran, confessed that ten drones were responsible for the strike. Iran launched the attack in vengeance against Saudi Arabia, which was in charge of the war in Yemen that resulted in the deaths of 90,000 people, consisting of tens of thousands of citizens. Iran made a deliberate effort to disadvantage its rivals by posing potential hazards to American allies in the Persian Gulf that might increase the likelihood that oil prices will rise before President Trump runs for another term (Mallick65-66).

## **2.2 Iraq**

As the United States and Iran exerted pressure on each other's influence in the depths of Iraq, which turned into a battleground, the security situation was undoubtedly very severe. As a result of this pressure, Iran targeted an American military facility in the city of Kirkuk via the Hezbollah Brigades in Iraq, slaughtering both American and Iraqi servicemen (Djebar 465-466). Hezbollah fighters ignited parts of the embassy's buildings on fire on December 31, 2019, after irate militia adherents rushed and broke into the US Embassy property in Baghdad at the beginning of the year (Ferro 3). Not to mention how Iran's assistance for insurgents who are on its side has increased its footprint in Iraq. Due to this, the Iraqi government was unable to assume its duties for safeguarding Iraq's sovereignty from Iranian meddling through the Iraqi militias that controlled the country's political processes (Djebar 466).

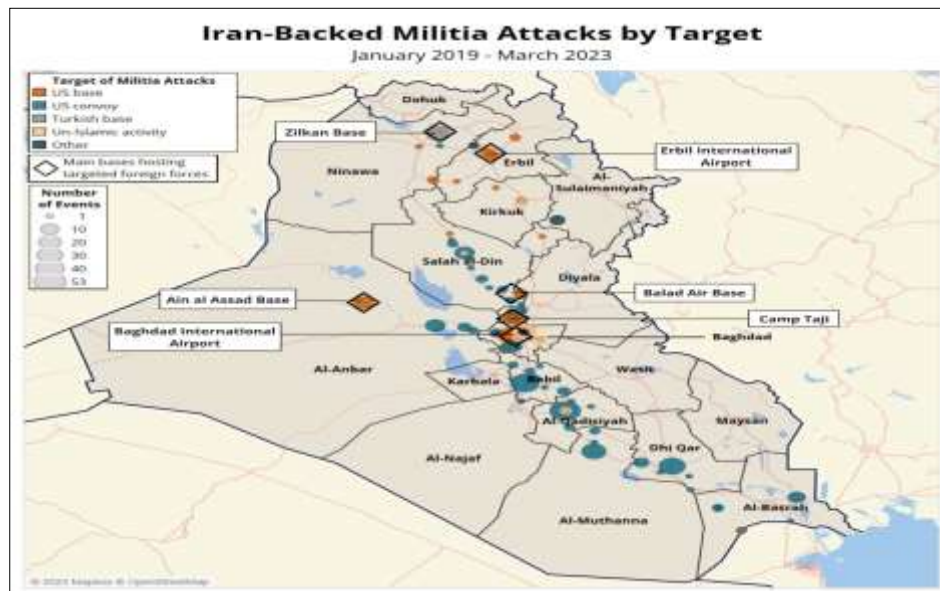
Another event occurred in 2019 was the assassination of the legendary Quds Force commander Qasem Soleimani, an engineer who fostered Iran's numerous alliances with armed organizations, by a US drone attack in January, 2020. As Iraq had come to rely on Iran for security, oil, and trade, Washington was eager to curtail the role of the Revolutionary Guards there. Iranian organizations have been aggressively targeting US coalition soldiers in Iraq and Syria, with one missile assault in 2021 injuring several people. Iran and its supporters have threatened retribution (Iran's Revolutionary Guards). Consequently; More

than 100 US servicemen suffered brain harm as a result of Iran's retaliatory rocket assaults on the Ain al-Asad airfield, which US troops operated to train Iraqi soldiers (Ferro 3).

In the Iraqi parliamentary elections held in October 2021, a number of Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), affiliated pro-Iranian parties, suffered heavy defeat. The outcomes of the elections were disputed by the parties (Loft 14). That turned out in favor of the Muqtada al-Sadr party because his views were counter to those of the jurist Khomeini, which damaged his relationship with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard (Jones). In an effort to overturn their electoral setback, factions supported by Iran disputed the election results and started a new round of reprisals in November 2021 that included convoy assaults and an attempt to kill Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi. This uptick in violence persisted until at least 28 attacks on convoys were documented in January 2022, the greatest monthly total ever reported (Shifting Patterns in Iran-Backed Shiite Militia Activity in Iraq).

By 2021, Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH), had moved its attention of its activities to convoy attacks, which led to an upsurge in activity that was formerly handled by façade organizations with Kata'ib Hizballah (KH) support. The year of 2021, recorded 180 incidents in which US convoys were targeted. Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH), aligned facade groups, have reported about 40 of these events, whereas Kata'ib Hizballah (KH), aligned groups have confirmed about 11 of these occurrences (Knights & Smith). As President Biden, who took office in January 2021, adopted a new strategy aimed at making efforts to resume the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action negotiations with Iran (Aryan & Lipin). Meanwhile; Iran-backed militias raised the stakes by intensifying convoy assaults (The Muqawama and Its Enemies). Additionally; In contravention of the continuing conditional truce, an (AAH) facade groups, Saraya Awliya al-Dam, asserted accountability for a strike on a US Airbase in Erbil on February 15, it led to the killing of some members of the coalition soldiers and injured three local residents (Knights). Besides; Iran fired missiles against a US embassy facility in Erbil,

northern Iraq, in March 2022. Iran has not launched a missile towards US infrastructure directly since January 2020. Israel's airstrikes on Iranian military forces in Syria, according to Iran, prompted the move (Loft 14).



**Figure 9:** Geographical Map of The Targets of Iran -Backed Militia Attacks from 2019 to 2023. (Source: ACLED Data; Bringing Clarity to Crisis, 23, May 2023)

### 2.3 Syria

Iran and its allies in Syria have attacked the Combined Joint Task Force-Operation INHEREN RESOLVE (CJTF-OIR) with less caution. Thus; Iran backed the Assad government in order to preserve the "axis of resistance" coalition against Israel (Mckenzie) . Which is a distinctive type of multilateral framework with an influential ideological tendency and concerned with safeguarding Iran and its allies (Wastnidgea & Mabonba 4). Despite their mutual assisting for the Assad government, Iran and Russia have been contending for permanent dominance in Syria. As a result; Iran and its allies have been preparing to strike US partners and interests, as shown by a number of incidental fire assaults against sites connected to the US using sophisticated launchers that resemble cruise missiles. (Mckenzie).



Therefore; It provided a boost to its involvement by signing a deal on military and technical collaboration on August 27, 2018, in Damascus, during the Iranian Defense Minister Amir Khatami's tour to Syria. The agreement made Syria more dependent on the Iranian army and its financial support by defining the areas of Iranian military bases in Syria (Russia). Syrian land remained a vital center and logistical path for Iranian-backed militias as they carried out their offensive against Israel. It used five unmanned aircraft loaded with explosives to attack a U.S. military camp in Al-Tanf, Syria, in October, during what American authorities reportedly claimed was retaliation for Israeli assaults on Iranian personnel (Bergman & Schmitt). On May 10, 2018, the Iranian Revolutionary Guards' rocket brigade entered Syria under the Quds Force's leadership and launched more than thirty projectiles towards Israeli army bases in the Golan Heights. Iran launched the ballistic weapon in response for a previous Israeli strike on drone facilities used by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards at the Tiyas Air Base in Syria. The Grad, a 122mm triple shot rocket system, and the bigger 333mm Fajr-5 missiles were two of the Iranians' weaponry in operation. Only four missiles allegedly crossed the border before being shot down by Israeli air defense systems (USKOWI 4-5). Any retaliation could have led to the start of a full-fledged war between the two countries on Syrian territory, which would harm the interests of all intertwined parties, especially the Syrian region, which would be a victim of their ambitions.

### **03. Preservation Efforts of JCPOA**

#### **3.1 The European Efforts**

The European Union attempted to save the deal's execution after the United States withdrew from the nuclear deal in May 2018. This caused them crashing into a brick wall and a worsening of the transatlantic rift because of the US sanctions that prevented companies doing business with Iran from getting involved the US market (Zaccara 93)

### 3.1.1 Restoration of Trade with Iran

The EU nations have taken action to shield themselves from extraterritorial US sanctions, such as the EU's "Blocking Regulation" from 1996 that permitted EU companies to offset losses inflicted on by breaking with US orders. Then; In order to encourage investments between European and Iranian banks, the European Investment Bank (EIB) modified its foreign lending mandate in June 2018(Cimino-Isaacs 2). This was done because Iran feared US reprisal for not adhering to the Financial Action Task Force's anti-money laundering regulations (Diaz10). Additionally, in August 2018, the European Commission approved a package of 18 million euros in assistance for Iran, including 8 million for the Iranian private sector, including support for high prospective small and medium-sized businesses, in an effort to strengthen its commercial relationships with Iran. Due to essential cutback in their oil procurement, Italy and Greece were granted "Significant Reduction Exception"(SRE) from US sanctions on November 5, 2018, allowing them to obtain Iranian oil for six months without incurring any negative repercussions (Cimino-Isaacs 2).In an effort to assure that European businesses get to keep doing business with Iran, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom worked closely with the European Union to institute a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) as private limited corporation under French law in January 2019. The fact that European banks were reluctant to conduct any financial transactions with Iran, Instrument in Support of Trade Exchange (INSTEX) was constructed as a barter system, permitting EU businesses to interchanger merchandise with Iran without directly transferring contributes by using a credit account or "virtual ledger" to compensate for the balances (Immenkamp10). Initially, the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) was only intended to facilitate legal charitable trade, such as the export of foodstuffs or medicine to Iran. However; The (SPV) mechanism also was interested in offering financial settlement facilities to the eight nations that had been granted provisional waivers from US sanctions on their oil purchases. Additionally; It

attempted to increase the euro's influence on the global stage especially with non-EU partners, as a substantial departure from an economic framework controlled by the dollar (Zaccara 107-109).

They reasoned that if the nuclear agreement held up, Trump may eventually come around to the idea that diplomacy had a much greater chance of reining in Iran's nuclear program than maximal coercion (Alcaro 52). The US initially opposed Instrument in Support of Trade Exchange (INSTEX) vehemently, claiming that it sought to challenge US financial prominence in order to exempt Iran from sanctions and that the European Union's relatively limited business framework prevented it from being an achievable substitute to the US financial system (Gjoza 118)

### **3.1.2 The Shuttle Diplomacy: Relationship Recovery**

After the United States removed from the deal, the Middle East region had previously experienced a number of disputes, boosting the risk of an outbreak of a regional military panic due to the prior assaults carried out by the armed forces of the two parties toward one another, which harmed the stability of security in the region (Immenkamp9). Aside from that, Iran started to go beyond the JCPOA's restrictions on its nuclear programs as of May 2019 in retribution for the US exit, with no anticipated economic gains from Europe. In attempt to reclaim some clout with Washington, it also participated in conflicts in the Gulf aimed at frightening Arab Americans. As a consequence; The E3/EU was forced to retreat in an effort to limit the JCPOA's impact while still attempting to leave opportunity for diplomatic interaction (Alcaro15). Many people believed that the EU should communicate with Iran in an effort to rescue the situation obtaining an additional arrangement or keep with the JCPOA to encourage confrontation reduction between Iran and the US (Immenkamp11).

As a result, a number of international leaders, including as French President Emmanuel Macron and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, have pushed Iran to persist in the JCPOA and oppose US demands for being part of the "maximum offensive" (Vogt & Jalilvand24). In order to promote an encounter with President Trump in this respect, the Iranian Foreign Minister received a summons to the G7 Summit in Biarritz in August 2019. In a fresh plan presented by Macron at the start of September 2019, France will grant Iran with a loan of \$15 billion over the course of four months in exchange for Iran's sustained oil exordiums. In return, Iran pledged tranquility in the Persian Gulf, resume unconditional compliance with the nuclear agreement, as well as take part in an in-depth discussion regarding the long-term viability of the JCPOA (Diaz 12). In exchange for the United States implementing the JCPOA's anticipated sanctions alleviation, Zarif agreed to ratify the Additional Protocol immediately during his visit to New York. However, there were no noticeable outcomes, and the crisis remained in place (Vogt &Jalilvand24).

### **3.2 The Relation of Non-Eu Countries with Iran**

In fact, given China is a rising international superpower engaging with the United States and hasn't generated any ideological disputes with Iran, its approach of overwhelming pressure has given Iranian conservatives the freedom to vehemently advocate for a redirection of Iran towards China (Kahalzadeh 8). Other nations have developed strategies to get past US sanctions as a result of the Trump administration's efforts to compel the remaining countries of the world to accept its Iran policy. Despite US sanctions on a variety of its trade firms, China kept purchasing varied quantities of Iranian oil. Then; A country with the scale of China's economy could easily produce businesses that don't operate in the US market (Vogt &Jailvand23).The two biggest oil consumers in Iran, China and India, were provided with the Significant Reduction Exception(SRE)for a period of six months and made

it plain that they will maintain their business relations with Iran. Media sources state that China and India have decided to limit their daily crude oil purchases to no more than 360,000 barrels per day. The two nations have been able to hold Iran's exports at a level that has allowed the country to escape a more serious downturn, despite the fact that those cutbacks are significant in comparison to import levels in 2018. Iranian expenditure on infrastructure comes mostly from China, which is Iran's largest economic partner. The Chinese government, in contrast to the European Union, has some control over enterprises' decisions about keeping their operations with Iran notwithstanding US embargoes. (Cimino-Isaacs2).

Asia received 76% of Iran's overall petroleum exports in March 2019. China, South Korea, India, Turkey, and Japan received the most of it. Iran's oil exports to China had reached pre-sanctions rates by 2021. Among November 2020 and March 2021, Iran supplied more than 500,000 barrels of petroleum product per day to China. 5 percent of China's crude imports were in the form of deliveries. Iran appeared to have concealed supplies to former China by using third-party middlemen in Oman, Malaysia, and the United Arab Emirates. In order to cover up the underlying firm's ties to Iran from the US (Iran's Increasing Reliance on China). Moreover; Sinopec, a \$3 billion company from China, supplanted Royal Dutch Shell, oil company, as the developer of the Yadavaran oil discovery in Iran (Yellinek). Iranian-operated ships have also been used by Chinese state oil merchants to carry oil. Besides; India and Iran wanted to continue their commercial relationships by employing the rupee, India's currency. The Indian government additionally stated that it will let the oil's processing facilities there to keep buying Iranian petroleum. (Cimino-Isaacs 2).China and Iran consented on a 25-year strategic partnership to further their shared security and economic interests in 2021. Beijing likewise assisted Saudi Arabia and Iran reach an agreement to reactivate their consulates and resume bilateral relations in March 2023(Iran's Increasing Reliance on China).

In addition to bolstering and supporting Tehran's dominance in against the backdrop of Israel and the United States, Russia also expanded and backed the military alliance with Iran that emerged in Syria and solidified in Ukraine. Along with the S-400 missile defense systems, Russia is anticipated to send 24 Su-35 combat aircraft to Iran. Additionally, in February and March 2023, it allegedly sent 30,000 tons of fuel for diesel engines to Iran (Sariolghalam).

#### **04.The Nuclear Proliferation**

Iran was adhered to the nuclear agreement's commitments and carried out the provisions imposed on it. Thus, it was elevated to a position of good on a global scale (Nephew).However; Iran claimed in July 2019 that it was scaling down its obligations under the JCPOA because it believed the anticipated economic dividends from the accord were an incentive for its agreement to restrict its nuclear operation (Immenkamp 2). Even though the United States retained to believe that there was no choice to arm, these actions cut the breakout time to less than two weeks. By developing ever more intricate centrifuge designs, for instance, Iran has also amassed an immeasurable number of insurmountable details about how to develop a nuclear weapon (JCPOA Five Years Later: Iran's Escalations).The EU Foreign Affairs Council conducted an unusual meeting on January 10, 2020, to hold discussions about the changes that have occurred in Iran. Four days later, France, Germany, and the UK triggered the JCPOA Dispute Resolution Mechanism (DRM) in an attempt to start negotiations in an attempt to save the deal and end the diplomatic deadlock brought on by a potential breach by Iran, which has been trying to exert influence on the other parties to step up their endeavors and make amends to the financial losses brought on by the US restrictions, which were imposed as a result of the latter's allegations that the other parties, particularly Europe, had broken their pledges concerning the terms of the deal. Since the

United States is an active member of the UN Security Council, which would enable it to re-impose sanctions on Iran (Diaz 13-14).

The International Atomic Energy Agency stated on May 20, 2020, that Iran's overall storage of low-enriched uranium had increased to 1,571.6 kilograms, well exceeding the JCPOA's 300-kilogram cap. Additionally; Iran was still enriching uranium to a purity of 4.5%, which was higher than the JCPOA's permitted limit of 3.67%. Also; Iran has gone beyond the agreed-upon threshold for stockpiling heavy water. Thus; Iran has disregarded every restriction established by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (Immenkamp 2).

Nevertheless; The deal was in a complicated case at the Trump's last term in office in early 2021. US foreign diplomacy succeeded in reducing Iran's access to any sizable international funding stream even if UN and EU sanctions were repealed. In response, the latter decreased adherence to its nuclear commitments. Iran was seriously indicating that the inspection regime was no longer legitimate (Alcaro 15–16). It was possible to reverse the inspection verdict if circumstances required it as a result of pursuing the Iranian regime's nightmare of sanctions to bring it to its knees and lead Iran out of the agreed international path.

Iran constrained the accessibility of various sites for the UN International Atomic Energy Agency in February 2021 and stopped remotely tracking at some locations in June 2022. Iran started processing uranium to a new, almost normal degree of 60 percent in April 2021, which was close to 90 percent of a arms test. Iran's successive JCPOA breaches have grown to encompass new fields of study and the proficiency of new skills, including 60% enrichment and the use of more effective centrifuges such the IR-2 and IR-6 td. By May 2023, the program had advanced to the point that Iran was expected to be equipped to enrich a

sufficient quantity of uranium for fission arms within three to four weeks (JCPOA Five Years Later: Iran's Escalations).

## **Conclusion**

There was no denying that US animosity toward Iran has increased beyond all recognition. Iran's economy has fluctuated significantly since Trump withdrew from the JCPOA, which undoubtedly indicates that the tightening of US sanctions is largely to blame. Iran's infrastructure and people's level of living have been damaged by its hostility. The United States mistakenly felt that applying the greatest amount of economic pressure would topple the Iranian proxies in the region, but in reality, it would only serve to cement its grip and not entirely eliminating them because Iran retains to act as an integral part in nations like Yemen, Iraq, and Syria. The region has witnessed destabilizing activities in the regional stages as a result of the confrontation between the United States and its allies against Iran, which targeted oil and military bases. It might result in a flashpoint that may be disastrous. As a consequence; In order to adjust the international and regional circumstances, the European Union decided to step into the picture and interfere to create a new diplomatic room between the two parties through. However, in the end, its efforts were in vain, and it was unable to persuade Iran to adhere by the terms of the deal because it was fed up with the cruelty of the United States towards it and decided to resume its yellow cake enrichment endeavors, which raised the level of anxiety and promoted the situation to the abyss.



## General Conclusion

The present study highlights one of the most controversial events in recent memory, the United States withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018. The latter was initiated under Trump administration. It resulted in restoring a multi-pronged pressure campaign through the implementation of the previous suffocating sanctions on Iran that were lifted during the Obama era. After Trump decided to unilaterally withdraw from the deal, he presented several arguments to convince the international community of the validity of his attitude towards Iran. As a primary legal argument, he claimed that the sunset clauses in the agreement restricted nuclear activities to a period of time, which the Trump administration deemed insufficient to ensure the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program. It also failed to cover non-nuclear issues related to the promotion of sectarian activities through the consolidation of proxies in the region, as it claimed that Iran was funding violence through Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in the Palestinian territories, the Assad regime in Syria, Houthi rebels in Yemen, and Shiite militias in Iraq. From his standpoint, Iran's regional strategy was able to escalate the flashpoints of tension to the point of destroying people's stability and revoked their liberties. Then; Trump believed that the deal allowed Iran to develop conventional weapons such as ballistic missile testing. Thus, it may lead to the competition of the regional allies of the United States to develop the capabilities of nuclear and conventional weapons, which will bring the situation out of control in the future. The Trump administration's third argument was the multilateral nature of the agreement, which presented a significant challenge in convincing the other signatories to modify the terms that the United States finds objectionable in order to reach a successful settlement that safeguards national and international security interests. However, the research results show that Trump's justification is unfounded. After the withdrawal, it became clear that the information provided by the United States did not stand on a solid basis. All of its arguments condemning the Iranian

government were not accompanied by strong evidence that could confront Iran and all members of the agreement because the IAEA has repeatedly confirmed its commitment to the provisions of the agreement after signing it. Moreover; The American promise to bring security to the Persian Gulf regions and protect national interests after establishing itself as the official sponsor of human rights and peace in the Middle East, which opened the way for US to deploy its military forces to protect the region's affairs from Iranian interference. However; It is known that the series shows an illustrated scenario through characters who play the roles, but does not show the events that take place behind the scenes. The important point here is that the scenario represented by the US regarding achieving stability after its withdrawal did not happen because words have no value like actions. In fact, the matter that the Trump administration overlooked is that almost all of the attacks carried out by Iran were the result of its response to the provocations of the US allies, as the Israeli and Saudi states threatened the security of sectarian groups affiliated with the Iranian government by committing a series of attacks in Yemen, Iraq and Syria. Which made those areas fertile ground for the escalation of the clash. As a result; These actions restricted the freedoms of their people and placed them at the mercy of external powers. However; The fact cannot be denied that from the Iranian side, it was creating a kind of instability in those regions, as it poured most of its targets on the main oil installations in the Gulf and targeted them indirectly through its proxies in Yemen as part of not guaranteeing the ability of Saudi Arabia, the UAE and other Gulf countries have agreed to replace Iranian oil as a result of the deterioration of its value due to the sanctions policy, which affected economic transactions on its part which only contributed to harming the lives of the Iranian people and besieged its trade relations with different countries. Instead, the government did not avoid paying the budget of its agents to continue its activities, but it was less than before. Moreover; Militias affiliated with Iran have carried out arson and missile attacks on US buildings and bases in both Syria and Iraq.

At the end, Trump has positioned himself on the losing side of the JCPOA, with the US being the irresponsible party spoiling the agreement and Iran being the party honoring its words. We must not forget the European efforts to continue the deal with Iran and to maintain trade relations with it through the strategy of Blocking Regulation, Instrument in Support of Trade Exchange (INSTEX) and financial aid. However; Later on, they were not effective enough to protect Iran from retaliation against the US as a result of defrauding it. Therefore; Iran violated the agreement and resumed its nuclear program again. So far, no clear result has been settled on this matter and the case has headed towards an open end. So, I encourage future researchers to discuss the role of the Biden administration in managing the Iranian nuclear issue and how the web of events has been re-stitched compared to the Trump administration's policy.

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