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Degree of Master of International Studies  
(International Area Studies)

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE US AND  
THE RUSSIAN POSITION TOWARDS  
THE NUCLEAR IRANIAN PROGRAMME

August, 2019

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# Comparison of the US and Russian position towards the Iranian Nuclear Programme

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Submitting a master's thesis of International  
Studies

August 2019

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## **Abstract**

Apart from its historical roots, and being the bed of the Persian civilization, Iran has acquired more and more importance after the Islamic invasion because merging its original historical power with the Islamic Civilization. Adopting the SHIA doctrine was also a symbol and a manifestation of differentiation of Iran concerning its view and perspective towards the Islamic religion. Driven by a continuous controversial relationship with the Arab World, this trend was conducive to orient the Iranian foreign policy in accordance with that controversy but also in balance with its interests with the superpowers of the time, especially USA and USSR in the Cold War Era. At the forefront of the non-aligned countries, Iran have had always envisioned the necessity to balance its respective relationship with those two powers without neglecting the eventual contribution of other western developed countries (like France and Germany ) which could be of big help in achieving its main goal of being treated as a regional superpower in the Middle- East. Without neglecting the help of some emerging or developing countries who provided great support to Iran in acquiring the nuclear technology.

This objective has been determined as a key orientation from the Shah Mohamed Reza Era who was enjoying strong relationships with the USA, but followed up and emphasized during the Islamic Republic era, especially under Mahmoud Ahmadinejad rule. Conscious of the importance of this country and its strategical position both in the World and the Middle-East, as well as of the whole World, and its richness in matter of energetical resources and its proximity to Afghanistan which has been at the forefront of the confrontation between USA and USSR during the last century, the Iranian nuclear problem has always been at the center of the interest of the main powers, especially as a potential rival of Israel, the unique detainer of nuclear capabilities in the region of the Middle-East and the first partner of the USA in the region conjugated with the Gulf Arab countries, natural enemy of Iran.

Even having complied with the IAEA recommendations, and its allegations that its nuclear facilities aim only pacific applications, Iran has never been trusted on this point by the great powers. Nevertheless, the Neorealist theory is susceptible to explain the position of each stakeholder in this issue because every party should defend its own interests and every single position could be explain by this theory and by the security dilemma posed

by this issue of nuclear proliferation in a sulfurous region as the middle East. The aim of this study stands on two main pillars: explaining the its motivations and justifications of each party, the US as well as the Russian position on the Iranian Nuclear programme and finally the basis of difference of views between those two superpowers on this nuclear programme seen under the prism of each counterpart's considerations.

In general, the respective positions of the USA and Russia towards the Iranian nuclear programme have been shaped by their respective security and nuclear policies as well as their interests in the region of the Middle-East and the changing of their respective relations with Iran as well as their bilateral relations. In fact, the United States has changed radically its position from a sustainer and contributor to the Iranian Nuclear programme with the raising of the Islamic Republic because it considers with a lot of doubt and insecurity this programme , which threatens its hegemony in the region and targets principally its main partner in the region Israel, as well as it considers it as a potential enhancer of terrorist islamist movements. While Russia shares the concern of the possibility that Iran could use its nuclear programme to acquire nuclear weapons , it doesn't feel so much threatened by this programme and prefers

considering Iran as a commercial partner in the region of the Middle- East and a potential client for its know-how and nuclear material, especially after the USSR's dismantlement and in any case is convinced by the complete compliance of Iran to the International framework, especially the IAEA safeguards and this position is more and more confirmed for Russia after the signature of the Nuclear deal between the P5+1 countries and Iran

**Key words** : Nuclear Proliferation, Neorealism, Iran history and nuclear programme, US Iranian relationship, US Russian relationship, proliferation policy from the American point of view, proliferation policy from the Russian point of view,

## **Chapter I- Introduction:**

Iran has declared its nuclear ambitions since the second half of the last century. Many countries sustained her while many others were opposed to those ambitions. It has been the object of many controversies. Among the countries which were interested in this conflict, all the countries in the Middle-East, especially Arab countries and Israel as well as the USA and Russia, especially in the period of the Cold War based on ideological opposition and competition to attract more countries in their respective trajectories. This competition led to a polarization of many countries and as a consequence, the Iranian nuclear acquired more and more importance and is now a very sensitive issue susceptible to destabilize all the region of the Middle East and could be conducive to a third World War. Because of its dangers, nowadays, this protracted crisis has increased tensions in the region and beyond, including Iran itself, the P5+1 (China, France, Germany, Russia, the UK and the US), the Gulf countries (especially Saudi Arabia) and most importantly Israel especially after the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA agreement which is susceptible to destabilize the region especially in a conflictual security context harmed with non-nuclear issues

concern like the situation in Israel-Palestine and the ongoing wars in Yemen and Syria, That's why the role of USA and Russia combined with multilateral institutions would be very crucial in solving those problems.

### **1 – Research Questions:**

Iran has shown a rising interest for nuclear technology since the shah Era , even if the nuclear age in the history of the humanity refers back to before the second World War, but the recent tensions which appeared between Iran and Israel in the Middle-East in 2012 have put the classical strategy debate over the nuclear issues. In fact, the controversy over Weapons of Mass Destruction is based on two antagonist theories ( MAD) : Mutual Assured Destruction and NUTS (Nuclear Utilization and Target Selection)<sup>1</sup>. The first approach to Nuclear strategy (MAD) is at the base of the principle of deterrence and defense. According to MAD reasoning, the only result to expect from the use of nuclear weapons is annihilation. It means that everything would be destructed, therefore the basis use Of WMD is deterrence only. Any trespassing of this step would lead to a

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<sup>1</sup> <http://sites.psu.edu> Maria Cosma. MAD and Nuts about Nuclear Weapons- The Centrist Party-06/12/2012

complete and irreversible situation of destruction. Conclusion: WMD and Nuclear weapons, especially should never be used. The final expected result of building nuclear facilities would be the end of Total War like we have noticed between the occidental countries since the end of WWII in 1945, and especially the blunt end of war with the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the Americans.

The second approach to Nuclear Strategy, NUTS, claims the possibility to win war by targeting the nuclear arsenal of the adversary and as a result to end war with the provision in this case of second-strike capabilities well hidden as an advantage but also very difficult to deploy as a notable shortcoming. In both approaches, the Security Dilemma concept driven by a mistrust between opponent forces will incite some countries to acquire more nuclear weapons, while others who don't have previously would do efforts to acquire those facilities. This arms race would follow an ascendant trajectory according to five main steps;

Here are the steps to nuclear acquisition:

1. No program
2. Program for energy only

3. Weapons research/nuclear fuel program
4. Weapons acquisition (opaque)
5. Test weapon<sup>2</sup>

At this stage, Iran is considered at the 3<sup>rd</sup> step so in the middle of the itinerary, but the problem is that even Iran is claiming the pacific nature of its nuclear programme and alleging complete compliance with international standards and transparency towards IAEA inspections, the rest of the World, especially Israel, the surrounding Arab Gulf countries and the occident in general remain skeptical towards those allegations and fear the non-efficiency of the MAD approach initially aimed for deterrence and prevention of war goes far beyond what expected and is conducive at the final step to a third World war or other overreacting consequences.

The problem initiates from a difference of vision between the three countries on the nuclear proliferation, USA, Russia and Iran. As highlighted in the literature review chapter, the Iranian need to developing a nuclear programme and enriching Uranium can be completely justified by its feeling of threat and by being surrounded

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

by many enemies in the region, all, especially Saudi Arabia, the Council of Gulf Countries (CGC) AND Israel are intimate partners with the USA, which explain the strong fear and enmity that feels Iran against the USA. Moreover, its nuclear proliferation policy, the USA is incentivised by its strategic energetic interests in the Middle East and aims to have access to other trade and war tactical trajectories through the Caspian region and with the former CIS countries to challenge the Russian domination on the region as well as an easiest road to China and the Pacific region. And its second most important interest is to break the military coalition existing between Iran, Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Palestine and the Syrian government as the USA consider all those entities and movements as main sustainers of terroristic activity destabilizing the whole World.

The main research question concerning this study is how to explain and justify the different views of each power, namely Russia and USA to the Iranian Nuclear Programme Issue?

To elaborate this research some important questions should be raised. First of all we need to know why Iran need a Nuclear Programme? Secondly

what are the respective responses of each country (USA , Russia) to those justification and to what extent and in which perspectives do their views differ towards this crucial issue?

Finally, the divergences between the two visions should be explained and justified by the theoretical framework.

## **2- Significance of the Study:**

The importance of the study is justified by the strategic geographic position occupied by Iran in the Centre of the Asian continent and the energetical resources its underground contains like oil, and natural gas (2<sup>nd</sup> reserve in the World in matter of Gas. Any conflict who may occur in this region would have consequences on all the World for being located in the Middle-East, Center of the World and near to the Holy places, namely Makkah and Madinah for Islamic religion and Jerusalem in Palestine (Israel) for the three monotheist religions: Islam, Christianity and Judaism. It is also crucial because Iran is of Shi'i obedience, which is in conflict with the majority of Muslims which are Sunni and Iran is making all efforts to sustain shiia in any Muslim country, like Iraq, Yemen, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and

Alawi power in Syria, those last two who are virulent enemies of Israel, main partner of the USA in the region, before the Gulf Arab States. Iran is also encouraging the Shia minorities in all of the remaining states, not only because of religious affinities but also due to Iran considering itself as a real regional power prone to expansion according to the Safavid Imperialist Doctrine rooting back to its previous history. Moreover, Iran is partner of many occidental countries since the Shah Era, and those countries dispute antagonist economic and political interests in the region. At this point, we should not forget that Iran has been at the center of the Cold WAR between the USA and the USSR and is still an object of discord with the actual Russian federation. A neighbor country, Afghanistan, with a Sunni majority has been an object of conflict at the last century and it is not still resolved. It was a starting point of the emergence of International Terrorism which is still a topic of actuality and a major threat to all countries in the World and especially USA and Russia, even if the position on the terrorism expansion is still controversial on the international scene. And it is clearly obvious that the enrichment of fissile material and the enhancement of its nuclear facilities in Iran is susceptible to add so more to the danger and seriousness of the threat in the region.

### **3- Organization of chapters:**

This study would be organized essentially in four (04) main chapters.

**The first chapter** : the Introduction

**1-The First part of the introduction** would be dedicated to state the question to which this research should answer.

**2-The Second part** will determine the importance, interest and significance of this study and our motivation to tackle this issue and to which extent shall the recommendations we could provide a solution to the problems in the region and a catalyzing factor for reducing the probability of occurrence of extensive and crisis induced by a serious domino effect with projections and consequences in all the region and in the World.

**3-The Third part** will determine the organization of the Study in chapters .

**The Second Chapter** will review the main literature and state of the art of the topic. The classification of the literature review will be done in the following sequences:

- 1- **The literature specific on the Iranian Nuclear programme itself.**
- 2- **The literature specific on the American position on the Iranian nuclear programme**
- 3- **The literature concerning the Russian position on the Iranian nuclear programme .**

### **The third Chapter :Russia's Policy on Iran's Nuclear Program:**

- 1- **Iran's background** would be an introduction to the topic which will define clearly the background of the issue , acknowledge the country and the region as well as a brief abstract of the history of the country and its relations with its neighbors and of the powers of the time. After that, an introduction to the topic of international security would be performed with all its aspects and then the discussion would be emphasized on the topic on the nuclear proliferation in the World and its importance against and in the aim of maintaining a global security and stability as well as the intensity of its effect at the regional level. This introduction would be divided in six main parts : namely. The background of the study and especially the background of Iran as a country and its main characteristics in the region and its relations

with the World superpowers during the Cold War”: USSR and the United States.

- 2- **Russia’s policy statements:** would give some examples of statements determining the orientation of the Russian policy towards the Iranian Nuclear Programme.
- 3- **Analysis:** This part would be an analysis of the results obtained from the different sources and a tentative to give an explanation to the difference of views between the US and Russia towards the Iranian Nuclear Programme.

**The Fourth Chapter** would be dedicated to the main results extracted from this study and the main deductions as well as some recommendations to give to the actors and partners in this crucial issue in order to reduce the opportunity of deviance to an armed conflict.

Moreover, it would be defining the conclusion and trying to answer the questions we have stated in the introduction and will as well consist in opening the door to possibilities for the evolution of this question in the future and the possible scenario to expect for the consequences in the region and in the Whole World.

## **Chapter II- Literature review:**

The literature on the issue of Iran Nuclear Proliferation programme and the various international position over this issue is very abundant but among the various literature available, I've chosen some works related to some specific relevant issues like :

### **1- Iran Nuclear Programme.:**

The book of N. Entessar and K.L. Afrasiabi on the period of détente since the beginning of negotiation of the nuclear deal between the P5+1 countries and Iran. The most important, this book try to discuss the link between the requirements of a nuclear programme for Iran to insure its National Security. This need is largely explained by the fact that Iran is filling at threat surrounded by many potential enemies. In fact, in 2014, the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs , Mohamed Jawad Zarif, declared that due to the maintenance of its programme, Iran feels more secure and that its program of “ securitization cannot be defeated anymore by the enemies of his country”<sup>3</sup>. The Western counterpart , by his side, judged that Iran has many shortcoming and weaknesses in its security strategy, therefore we

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<sup>3</sup> N. Entessar- *Iran Nuclear Negotiations*- Rowman & Littlefield Editions- pp127-2015- USA-

can explain why “it is available to come to the negotiations table and that it was the result of the compulsion policy exerted on Iran by the economic sanctions. According to Iran, at the contrary, it was more the fear of the occident that pushed it to the negotiations instead of the Iranian weakness. An other threat in fact was recognized by the Iranian counterpart : “ the oil economic insecurity”<sup>4</sup> induced by the oil trade war engaged by the USA against Iran through Saudi Arabia proxy and Iran was feeling like submitted to a new economic warfare in parallel with the sanctions, this situation conducted Iran to devaluate its currency. From another perspective, the US was said cooperating because feeling constrained by the reinforcement of the Iranian position and the raising approving approaches of Russia and China. It is well clear that it was needed a balancing act that took into consideration Iran national’s interest as well as the “ security dilemma” facing the western countries against this case. For example, some news reported that the US and the Gulf Arab countries were cooperating on a defense shield against missiles’ threat from Iran. This fact augmented the suspicion between Iran and its counterparts and increasing mistrust

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<sup>4</sup> -Ibid p129

between them. Facing this situation, the Iranians reminded that their missile as well as their nuclear arsenal has for only scope to act as a deterrent and protect them from the surrounding potential enemies and was not intended to engage in offensive actions and that the Western countries headed by the USA should review their strategy in the Gulf region.

By another perspective, the American military preparedness in the region was useful for the Iranians to maintain them keeping alert and pursuing the development of their missile capabilities, concomitantly with their nuclear projects in order to be able to target any American military base which is stationed in the Gulf. The existence of those bases was in reality a source of threat as well as opportunities for Iran.

To analyze this angle of perception, it is necessary a little bit to construct this thought on theoretical pillars. The Concept of “ National interest” actually raised by Trump Administration in the USA has always been the base of the political taking decision in Iran under which regime it was. This concept of “ national interest” is one of the pillars of the realist theory advanced by Hans J. Morgenthau according to “ the realist theory of International Politics”. By another way, Morgenthau distinguished between

temporary and permanent interests, and specific and general interests. An other scholar , Stephen Krasner, described the national interest as a subjective variable because this concept of national interest changes with the movements of leadership and decision-makers. In another side, the scholar Donald Nuechterlein defined national interest as “the perceived needs and desires of some sovereign State comprising its external environment “<sup>5</sup>. And the eminent scientist J.Y.NYE has conditioned a right definition of the “ National interest” with the existence of a “ well-informed and transparent debate”. The national interest is also a fusion of the objective materialistic interest of a nation combined with its moral aspirations. On the international realm, the International society is considered as anarchical where every entity looks for its own interest at the detriment of other’s interest.

In the case of Iran, the acquisition of nuclear programme capabilities serve its national interest by serving mainly its national security strategy. Like the concept of “terrorism” the national security of a country, deserves diverse definitions which are sometimes non-consensual.

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<sup>5</sup> N. Entessar- *Iran Nuclear Negotiations*- Rowman & Littlefield Editions-PP132-2015- USA-

By this way, we obtain a multitude of different definitions :

Ch. Mair defines it as “the capacity to control those domestic and foreign conditions that the public opinion of a given community believes necessary to enjoy its own self-determination or autonomy, prosperity and well-being”<sup>6</sup>. It is also obvious that the national security strategy is different between the nuclearized countries and the non-nuclearized countries.

Concerning Iran, the neo-realist Waltz based its study on the “ nuclear balancing” theory. In fact, he relies on the destabilizing power of the destabilizing Israel nuclear arsenal, that sanctions adds to Iran nuclear security and incite to a proliferation tendency. Nevertheless, the Iranians doesn’t base their nuclearization on the existence of Israel and its threat because they manage to show that the israelian arsenal is negligible. Normally, Israel is not at the top of the threats against Iran because it is more concerned about the near Pakistan, which is of Sunni obedience and has a more important nuclear arsenal and the existence of the terrorist group is more eager to raise the question of nuclear terrorism. The main criticism to Waltz’s assumption is that Iran doesn’t require nuclear

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid -PP133

weapons to safeguard its national security interests and that any attempt to disseminate nuclear weapons in the region would conclude in arm race destabilizing all the region. Regardless of the behavior of USA, it is considered the most efficient deterrent to Iran nuclear in the regio but Iran's national security is a most important issue related to other important issues like:

- 1- The balance of strategic nuclear forces in the Gulf region
- 2- The conventional military balance in the Gulf
- 3- The prospects for deterioration of the relations in the Middle-East
- 4- The probability of the nuclear proliferation including by non-state actors like terrorists.

This situation is aggravated by the proximity of many nuclear-armed states(Russia, China, Pakistan, India and Israel), which shows that is surrounded by unreliable neighbors and that in the hope to see a dismantlement of the Iranian nuclear capabilities in this situation is improbable. This risky context enlarges the concern to other concerns of national security like “ cyberwarfare” against its facilities and cooperate in order to strengthen its abilities in matter of defense against cyberattacks.

Some scholars emphasize another characteristic to the Iranian Nuclear Security which is based on its “loneliness”. Iran, in reality, is acting like “a regional pivot” with developing a regional local network of alliances through the Shiaa in Baghdad, Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Palestine. Those facts completely refute the theory of “strategic loneliness” alleged by those scholars.

## **2- US position on Iranian nuclear programme :**

In this compartment, the book of Saira KHAN , *Iran and Nuclear Weapons – Protracted conflict and proliferation-* is based on a research done by the author with the title “ Iran-US protracted conflict and Iran’s Nuclear Ambition”<sup>7</sup>launched in 2007.This book explains how was the evolution of the US position facing the nuclear Iranian programme from 1947 to after 2000. This book, written by an Iranian researcher paves the way of the American’s position on the nuclear Iranian during a big part of our scope

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<sup>7</sup> - Saira Khan-*Iran and Nuclear Weapons- Protracted Conflict and Proliferation.-* Routledge Global Security Studies- UK 2010-

and length of my research , beginning from 1953, after the coup sustained by the Americans on Iranian Prime Minister in 1952 - Mossadegh.

The concerns of International Community about Iranian Nuclear programme have begun in the 90's and became more serious since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, after its advancement in Uranium enrichment facilities." Iran's protract conflict with the US began at the End of the Shah Period and the Islamic Revolution which transformed the country in a republican theocracy in 1979 because Iran considered the US which was previously an ally of the Shah's regime, the major enemy of the Islamic countries and was still supporting their toughest enemy in the region , Israel. The latter became the enemy of Iran from the 80's because Iran sustained , Hezbollah (of Shi'i obedience) in Lebanon., which was the first enemy of Israel in the region after Syria and engaged in proxy -wars in the name of Iran. After finishing war with Iraq in 1988, Iran found itself facing a very strong and hegemonic nation, the United States, which couldn't be deterred without nuclear weapons especially as this superpower identified Iran as a "rogue state" and declaring it part of "the axis of evil" by the Bush's administration. This study has tried to explain the need of Iran to nuclear proliferation by a number of reasons :

- Engagement of the state in protracted conflicts
- Existence of many nuclear rivals in the region (Israel).
- Existence of a superpower rival with high nuclear capacity (USA)

According to Saira's research, Realism based on Anarchy is not sufficient to explain the Iranian need to Nuclear Proliferation. She Considers that this is the gap on Realism but adopts the constructivist approach which declares that "Anarchy is what states make of it", and that the number of conflicts where a country is involved directly or by proxy are very decisive in the choice of trying to possess nuclear weapons or not. This book is divided in three main parts:

-1- The Causes of Proliferation and justifications of Iran's motivations to aspire to Nuclear Weapons

2-Theoretical explanations of nuclear weapons acquisition: which are at the center of the research and to explain why Iran is really in need of Nuclear Weapons . The theory is expected to be applicable across protracted conflict cases.

3- The Case study of Iran : According to her hypothesis based on protracted conflicts , Saira KHAN divided her study into four major phases:

**-1<sup>st</sup> phase** - This part targets the Iranian nuclear ambition in the period between 1947 and 1979. The two defined conflicts are with Israel since 1947 and with Iraq since 1950 but in this period , Iraq as Sunni- Oriented was considered as the first enemy of Iran in the region of the Middle-East.

**2<sup>nd</sup> phase**- from 1979 onwards a triple conflict: This period was characterized by the Islamic revolution which led to the Shah deposition and Islamic Republic Creation. From 1980 to 1988, Iran was kept busy with its war against Iraq and the new conflict emerging with the US , especially after the American embassy hostages issue.

**-3<sup>rd</sup> phase:** The deterioration of the relations between Iran and the USA conducted to the necessity for Iran to develop quickly its nuclear programme (1990-2000). State and el Qaeda. This phase is mainly characterized by a cooperation between Iran and North Korea in order to develop the technology of Missiles and treatment of fissile materials.

**4<sup>th</sup> PHASE**- Quick proliferation process since 2000 and intensification of the Conflict with the US. This situation was emphasized with the presence of the US in the region since the Gulf war and declaration of Iran as part of “ the axis of evil” after 09/11 events and the US establishing links between

Iran as a State and el Qaeda as the first terrorist movement targeting the USA.

- In his book entitled “ US Nuclear Diplomacy with Iran – From the War on Terror to the Obama Administration”, Kumuda Simpson , try to explain the relations between the USA and Iran from the Cold War to the Nuclear deal reached with Iran in 2013 by the Obama Administration.

This book, which is initially a thesis presented by the author try to show a perspective of the American- Iranian relations in this large period of history (1945-2013) and also to hypothesize on the influence of the nuclear programme on the future of the relations of Iran not only with the USA, but also with its rivals and partners in the Middle- East and in the West.

The discussion on the Iranian nuclear programme has been always linked with the declaration of Iran as “ a rogue state” and forecasting the worst scenario as the outcome of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons and its influence on the geostrategic interest of the USA and its partners in the Middle-East Region. The behavior of Iran , in this perspective has always been linked with some terrorist and violent movements existing in the Middle-East like

its support to the Assad regime and Hamas in Palestine as well as Hezbollah in Iran, all those rivals of Israel, the main partner of the USA in the region.

This book is mainly divided in six chapters.

The First Chapter is an overview of US nuclear policy during the Cold War and the role played by the United States in providing help and supply to Iran to develop its nuclear programme in hope to balance the role played by the USSR in the region and countering Iran from adopting Communism as an ideology.

-The third important book to describe the relations between the US and Iran about its nuclear programme is the book of Roham Alvandi, "Nixon, Kissinger and the Shah : The United States and Iran in the Cold War". This book talks about a specific period in the Cold war. Mohamed Reza, the Shah of Iran , has struggled between the two important superpowers at that time, the USA and Russia , between 1941 and 1979, period of his long reign, interrupted by the Islamic revolution. This author establishes a link between the conflictive relationship of Iran with its neighbor Iraq, that initiated the Iranian regime to have recourse to a nuclear programme as a mean of deterrence. In 1975, and after the signature of Algiers

Agreement with Iraq, Iran attained its military superiority enjoying military material supply from the Americans and began to put in action their nuclear programme. There was a very strong relation between the Shah on one hand and Nixon and Kissinger on the other hand. But after the Watergate incident, the relation between the Shah and the President Ford was not so warm. The book of Alvandi is presented in four chapters: the first chapter describes the Iranian-American relations after the second World War and the accession of Nixon to the presidency of the USA and its sequential rising influence in the Middle-East and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter how the Shah used this privileged relation in the Iranian benefit. Remarkably, the last chapter emphasizes the impact of the negotiations between Iran and the USA over the Iranian Nuclear Programme and the declining relationship trend catalyzed by the accession of President Ford to the White House. According to Alvandi, the downfall of the Shah has been accelerated by his authoritarian policy and his support of the Coup organized concomitantly by the American and the British against the Nationalist Prime Minister of Iran, Mossadegh, in 1953 and furthermore due to his submissive position to the Status of Forces Agreement of 1964 which praised the American Personnel stationed in Iran with full immunity.

Second Alvandi, It was those reasons most of all which precipitated the Shah's reign decay.

### **3-Russian position on Iranian Nuclear programme:**

Some documents target the question of the Russian Position on the Iranian Nuclear Programme. The Russian relationship with Iran have always been controversial and defiant to its respective relationship with the USA, especially over the nuclear Iranian programme. From those documents, a basic and important one is the document established by the National Defense University in 2012 on "Russia and the Nuclear Programme Replay or break through". According to this research, the<sup>8</sup>relations between Russia and Iran have been very complex and changing. This relationship is also tributary of the evolution of the relations between Russia in the USA Which have recently deteriorated after the American invasion of Iraq despite Russian objection and the interference of USA in revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan and the delivery of missiles S300 to Iran in

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<sup>8</sup> A. Brady .Arms Control Today- Daily Briefings- *Russia Completes S-300 Delivery to Iran-* December 2016

November 2016 according to the bilateral contract established in 2007<sup>9</sup>. The importance of the issue of those missiles was very decisive in the bilateral relations between Russia and Iran because “ S300 ( 150 km of distance targeted with maximal altitude of 27 kilometers) would enhance the Iranian’s confidence in facing eventual air strikes from the USA or Israel directed to its nuclear facilities located in Bushehr or Natanz.”

From an other perspective, Iran, under the rule of President Mahmoud AhmadiNedjad has engaged in talks with the US and its P5+1 partners on supplying fuel for the Tehran Research’s Reactor (TRR). Moreover, the revelation in 2009 of the existence of a secret enrichment plant in Fordow highly challenged the trust bond between Iran and its partners as well as Russia and induced Medvedev, in that time to issue a statement at the G20-Summit in Pennsylvania where he highlighted Iran’s failure to notify the IAEA’S about this hidden facility for several years.

Afterwards, in Geneva it was agreed to supply Iran from Europe through Russia raw material (unconvertible to weapon material) to treat some diseases by nuclear medicine.

Afterwards, and due to the sustainment of Russia to Mahmoud Ahmadi Nedjad and the conservative Iranian wing, after its reelection in 2009, the bilateral relations between Russia and Iran have improved. Subsequently, this relationship worsened when Brazilian President Luiz Ignacio Lula da Silva alleged that he could help Iran on TRR with the Turkish contribution. In fact, this initiative was not backed by Russia. According to UNSC resolution 1929, Iran has not the right to enrich Uranium to a level of 4% but in reality, it is not possible to construct an atomic weapon with less than a level of Uranium enrichment of 20%. This fact explains to what extent this condition in the resolution is unrealistic.

After passage of the UNSC Resolution 1929, it was created a Russian-Iranian Consortium in Mines, Mining Industries for constructing atomic plants. Russia was also about to engage a contract on oil and gas with Russia, but the main obstacle where the sanctions imposed internationally on the Iranian companies. Moreover, “in the energy sector Russian and Iranian interests are too competitive to allow for cooperation”.

In general, the relations with Iran represented for Russia a tool to leverage its relations with the US while in the same time trying to acquire confidence

in relations with Iran and to reduce the impact of its threat in the region if it acquires more nuclear capacities, but in general, Russian experts do not believe like the west that Iran could be able to acquire a nuclear weapon.

By another perspective, the interest of Russia to Iranian Nuclear Programme is driven by defensive concerns like the fact that "Iran might support Islamic militants in Central Asia and North Caucasus but act in the way to guarantee that Iran, a Shia recognized country, is guaranteed by Russia as a strong ally in its war against Extremist Sunnis in the bordering states of Russia as well as in Afghanistan. Iran acted as a Defender of Russia in the Organization of the Islamic Council (OCI) but has also assisted the Russian efforts in combatting Islamism in Chechnya.

The positioning of Russia with Iran was emphasized with the Arab spring in 2011 as the Iranian power increased in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and other Arab countries. In general Russia has great interest in avoiding a military crisis where Iran is involved in the Middle-East.

How would be the reaction of Russia in case of a military action on Iran and its position on the middle-eastern considerations?

As we know, tension in the Middle-East always rise the prices of oil. And tension in this region is in general destined to maintain oil prices very high. Since 2011, the Russian government seemed to be concerned by any Israeli attack on Iran and consider a possible attack as “a disaster in the Middle-East”. The eventuality of supplying Russian military assistance to Iran has also strongly sustained in case of strikes or attacks by US, Israel or NATO forces. While Iran Russian treaty signed in 2001 previewed only “not to give any help to the aggressor” which is a noticeable important evolution in the Russian position.

A second document, explains an article written in the Journal Asian and African Studies – The Nuclearization of Iran and the Policy of Russia- by its author, Mohamed Thowhidul Islam, in its Vol 22 number 2 of 2013 . According to him, many incentives have driven Russia to support Iran’s Nuclear programme despite the Western fear , and on head of it the USA of the consequences of the evolution of this programme on the region and on the whole World’s peace and stability. He tried in his article to explain the Russian specific view on this programme. His vision is that the Russian perspective is the result of a disjunction between the Iranian

position and the Western countries one.<sup>10</sup>Iran claims that its programme is definitely civil-oriented but the western countries argue that they are in fact hiding military objectives behind the pacific implementations. Many economic and geopolitical considerations incite Russia to sustain the Iranian nuclear programme despite the occidental arguments as a permanent member of the UNSC (United Nations Security Council) and detainer of the Veto with the help and sustainment of China which is as well on the same position on the issue of the Iranian Nuclear Programme. Russia's view is based on the recognition of legality of the Nuclear Iranian Programme condoned by the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency). According to the author, the Russian position is supported by the "geopolitics of the Middle-East, Russia's economic interest, and its need to export weapons, that its always looking for potential customers.

3-Edited by A. Nikitin and Morten Bremer Maerli, the article related to the NATO Science for Peace and Security Series – Vol 33 -, 2008, entitled "Tuning Priorities in Nuclear Arms Control and Non-Proliferation"- aims to

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<sup>9</sup> - Md Towhidul Islam- *The Nuclearization of Iran and the Policy of Russia*- Asian and African Studies, Vol22, number 02, 2013 , pp248

compare the Russian position towards the Iranian Nuclear with the western visions.<sup>11</sup>

In the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of this article the , author I. Safranchuk, Director of the Moscow Branch of the World Security Institute, try to explain the “Russian position on the Iranian Nuclear Crisis” prevailing from 2006. According to him, the Russian vision could be explained by different ways. While a group of scholars justify the Russian position by its need to reduce the American hegemony in the region and to complicate its situation of good standing with its regional partners, an other group try to explain it by its economic interests with Iran. But those two explanations seem to be too simplistic and limitative. Therefore, other more deep explanations managed to stress on the Strategic Considerations of the Russian Position. The Author criticize the Russian vision by being “volatile”<sup>12</sup>. The Russian position has two formulations based mainly on two dynamics: the “regional” vs “the “global” dynamic’ in one hand and the “ pragmatism” vs “ principles” dynamic.

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<sup>11</sup> Nikitin and Maerli -*Tuning priorities in Nuclear Arms Control and Non-Proliferation-* pp31

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

- a- **The global vs “ regional dynamics:** Russia sees the Iranian nuclear programme under this double prism dimension. This angle of vision is constructed on the pillars of the antagonism “Optimistic” vs “Pessimistic”. In fact, while the pessimists think that the NPT ( Non- Proliferation Treaty ) has effectively reduced the access of countries to nuclear weapons technology, the optimists see that after abandoning their nuclear ambitions for other reasons, and in order to achieve certain interests in different realms, some countries joined the NPT. The global context for Russia is quite clear, thus, if Iran acquire nuclear Weapons, the NPT would lose its presumed role and lead to a more dangerous situation where the risk of a lethal nuclear war would exponentially grow. This is what is previewed in the global dynamics. By opposition,
- The second vision is the regional dynamics which is for the Russian strategy most important in the Caspian region ( near Iran) and its economic interests in Chechnya. The neighboring countries with Russia former members of USSR are more and more cooperating with the US and among of them Azerbaijan

is the most concerned about Iran's nuclear threat because of proximity reasons.

- **b- the pragmatism vs principles dynamics:**
- The pragmatic vision suggests that even if Iran acquire nuclear weapons, Russia doesn't feel rationally enough threat as the USA, Israel and Saudi Arabia.
- The principles vision sustains that the Iranian issue cannot be solved outside the legal international framework relative to the "Primakov Doctrine"<sup>13</sup> which draws the lines of the Russian Foreign policy since the USSR's decay and the ambition of the Russian empires 'revival.
- The combination of those dynamics gives Russia's three choices in facing the nuclear Iranian Programme crisis : Tough, Medium and Soft.

1- **The Global Principle Perspective** : or soft dynamics .In Russia, the Primakov Doctrine dominates as international law is the

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<sup>13</sup> A. Nikitin "Tuning priorities in Nuclear Arms Control and Non-Proliferation"-pp32

principal conductor of Russian foreign policy so their reference is the judgement of IAEA on the Iranian programme , so the Russian position is tributary of this “official “position and not aligned on western positions. Russia has always cooperated with Iran and hoped that no proof of its non-compliance standard would be demonstrated by the IAEA. But after, with the election of Mahmoud Ahmedi Nedjad in (2005-2006) , the relationship between Iran and the IAEA deteriorated and the case submitted by the IAEA itself to the UNSC and Russia has fallen in a bad position.

**2- The Global-pragmatic perspective: or the medium perspective:**

Finally, afront a more nearest Iran to acquire nuclear technology, Russia becomes tougher. In this vision, not allowing Iran acquiring a nuclear bomb is also among Russia's principles.

**3- Regional pragmatic perspective :** It is the hardest position of Russia. It is all focused on the dissensions between

Azerbaijan and Iran . As Azerbaijan is keen to make alliances with US/NATO to face the Iranian possible belligerence. Facing this situation, and due to the importance of the Caspian region for the Russian region, it finds itself obliged to intervene, The problem is if Iran become nuclear, US/NATO would undoubtedly seek to install a military base and assert its presence in Azerbaijan. And as this situation would not be convenient for Russia, it shows more narrow relationships with Azerbaijan which a former member of the USSR than with Iran. This fact induces the toughness of Russia against Iran and strengthen its position against its nuclear programme, which is susceptible to bring nuclear instability in the Caspian region. As a result, since 2002, Russia has shared this concern about Iran and Azerbaijan misunderstandings.

Among those three options, Russia has managed to balance between the soft and medium dynamics by adopting a Tactical Dynamics because it wants conciliating its interests with Iran as well as those with the Western countries. In fact

Russia is submitted to a dilemma. Iranian authorities were nearly sure that Russia will never vote sanctions against their country at the UNSC. Iran and from 2006, has tried to make the pressure on Russia in order to make its decisive choice between its interests in the West and its alignment with Iran, but Russia has always' obviously preferred the compromise and has never accepted the eventuality of strikes on Iran as a result to the advancement of its nuclear programme because Russia is more interested in reinforcing its economical interests in the Middle- East than participating in wars which could erupt in this region.

### Chapter III- Russia's Policy on Iran's Nuclear Program

#### 1- Iran's Background: .

**Islamic Republic of Iran** is constituted of multiple ethnic groups : in majority Persian and Azeri but with minorities of Mazandarani, Kurdish, Arab, Baluch and Turkmens' is a country with Muslim majority: 90% Shia and 7% Sunna. It benefits of many natural resources like : Oil, Natural Gas and Minerals.

The Qajar Dynasty ruled Iran from 1795 to 1925. In 1921, Reza Khan , an Army official led a Coup and was named Minister of Defense, and Prime Minister and finally he made himself Shah of Iran in 1925 with surname Pahlavi. During World War 2, in 1941 he was obliged to abdicate in favor of his son Med Reza Pahlavi, who ruled Iran, until the Islamic Revolution in 1979. During his reign, Iran enjoyed high economic prosperity and modernization but opposition movement against the shah dictatorship was rising until Khomeini guided this movement in 1978 and after popular movements created the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979. From 1980 to 1988 Iran was engaged in the Iran-Iraq war. Khamenei succeeded to Khomeini in 1989 as religious leader under the political rule of Ali Akbar Hashemi

Rafsanjani (1989-1997) followed by Mohamed Khatami (1997-2005) and then Mahmoud Ahmadinejad .

Foreign Policy in Iran is guided by the National Security Council (NSC) . Its foreign policy goals are mainly “ enhancing the status of regional power of the country”, reducing foreign interferences in the region especially the US ones and asserting its right to pursue nuclear power technology. Furthermore, it aims to support and sustain Islamic revolutionary movements in the neighboring countries. Since 1979, Iran is considered a non- aligned power. Furthermore, the accession of Mahmoud Ahmadi Nedjad as President of Iran , conducted to escalation of tensions because the position of the latter was very confrontational with the Western countries especially the US, and on the issue of Iran’s nuclear civilian program which is alleged to be a cover for military nuclear capability acquisition.

The first time, Iran acquired nuclear technology was in 1967, under the reign of Med Reza Pahlavi SHAH (1941-1979), a five megawatt research reactor of US origin and further enrichment technology and supply of Uranium provided by some western countries (France-Belgium-Spain -

Italy)<sup>14</sup>. But why does Iran need to develop nuclear energy facilities? Because of its richness in natural resources like oil and natural gas, according to the US position, Iran doesn't need to develop a nuclear technology. Iran justifies this interest by human security, energy security, and economic and legal sovereignty reasons especially that Iran is bound by its commitments under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) sees having all the rights to proceed to development of nuclear fuel cycle.

The Nuclear Iranian Programme roots back to the aftermath of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War where the Shah Mohamed Reza, who ruled Iran from 1941 to 1979 aspired to acquire nuclear technology for his country. Following Coup against Mossadegh incited concomitantly by the American and the British because his policy where opposed to their energetic interests in the region. That's why the historical timeline of the Nuclear Iranian Programme could be divided in four main parts:

### **a-During the Shah's rule : (1953-1979).**

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<sup>14</sup> -K. Derouen and P.Bellamy- *International Security Studies and the USA-* The Encyclopedia pp(341-356) British Library 2008-

In 1957, after the Coup to Mossadegh, "US and Iran signed the Agreement for Cooperation on Civil Uses of Atoms and IN 1959, US provided to Iran its first five Megawatt thermal Research Reactor for the project of a University's Nuclear Research Center."<sup>15</sup> In 1967, this facility received around 05 kilograms of enriched Uranium susceptible to produce a nuclear bomb. After that, Iran signed the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1968 and ratified the 2<sup>ND</sup> February 1970 and in 1974, Iran signed the IAEA safeguards Agreement. A prolongation of the Treaty signed with the US was done for ten (10) more years.

Subsequently, and encouraged by this Treaty, Iran decided to build Nuclear Power Plants in Southern Iran.<sup>16</sup>

**b.- After the Islamic Revolution and the Deposition of the Shah in 1979:**

" The new Islamic Regime led by Ayatollah Khomeini was not at the beginning interested with the nuclear program as its predecessor but changed his mind after Iraq's bombing of the Bushehr Nuclear plant

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<sup>15</sup> - B.T. Hamilton.-*An Analysis of U.S. Policies Targeting the Iranian Nuclear Programme*- Master Thesis- University of South Florida- pp 07-2010- USA-

<sup>16</sup> - Ibid -PP10

during the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980's . As a result of this repositioning, China began to restart its nuclear programme with the help of China and India as well as Pakistan (Abdul Qadeer KHAN network). Two other important events catalyzed the Iranian interest in Nuclear technology, the dismantlement of the USSR and the growing influence of the USA in the region and subsequently the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1991.

### **c-During Mahmoud Ahmadinejad Era:**

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected the first time in 2005 and reelected in 2009 for a period of 04 years each. At that time, the USA was engaged in war against terrorism after the 09/11 events and accusing many countries of sustaining international terrorism, and among them was Iran. After that, Iran and its ally G.W. Bush. Those series of events were about to shape more precisely the relationship between the US and Iran in the period after and exacerbating the differences on the Iranian nuclear programme .” Over the next eight years, the Bush administration pursued a policy towards Iran with belligerent aspects: intrusive inspections by the IAEA, harsh economic sanctions and offensive diplomatic strategy on the multilateral scene”<sup>17</sup>. In

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<sup>17</sup> -K. Simpson- *US Nuclear Diplomacy with Iran- From the War on Terror to the Obama Administration*-pp35- 2016- Rowmann & Littlefield – 2016-USA

fact, at that time, the USA was intending harder and harder repellents against Iran and thinking as well of military strikes in order to induce Iran to reduce its nuclear ambitions and stop Uranium enrichment projects,.

In 2007, the UNSC members adopted unanimously the resolution 1737 which called Iran to interrupt Uranium enrichment and comply with IAEA recommendations as well to call upon Iran providers of nuclear material and technology to avoid those acts. Nevertheless, Iran remained attached to its right to acquire nuclear know-how and facilities for pacific purposes.

And if the Bush administration was relatively reluctant to attack Iran militarily, she was really concerned about an eventual military strike engaged by its partner Israel because this file was constituting in the Middle-East an existentialist concern. But after Ahmadinejad election and reelection in 2009, America was sure for 100% that Iran was not eager to perform a political change and more "screwed" to a conservative vision, and as a consequence, the USA had begun to think about a regime change triggered from inside. This state of confusion and instability remained until the election of President B.Obama in the USA but the position of the latter diverted from its predecessor's and he showed more inclination to

negotiate with the Iranian regime in order to achieve any kind of agreement as well as he intensified the economic sanctions targeting especially the financial Iranian system and its oil-oriented activities. That is the way, Obama used the stick and Carrot policy in order to incite Iran to return to the global order, obey the IAEA safeguards and join the negotiation table with the main World deciders. But what was really noticed is that in the first four years of his election, Obama has very little realizations on the Iranian file. Instead, Iran continued to develop its nuclear programme without caring too much about the different threatens and the reprobation of the international community. In the context of the Arab uprisings, Iran gained more and more influence in the Middle-East. In fact, Obama has had its own vision on nuclear non-proliferation: he thought that disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation should target every state and not only Iran. For him, non-proliferation is a standard that should be respected by everyone on the international scene. Facing the nuclear Iranian issue was based first of all according to Obama on the diplomatic available means, namely the negotiation, and consequently opened this door extensively comparatively to G.W. Bush. In order to better the US-

Iranian relationship and incite this country to halt Uranium's enrichment at the lowest possible cost.

The reelection of Ahmadinejad in 2009 who showed in his electoral campaign a level of openness to negotiation with the P5+1, encouraged Obama to abandon the previous American attachment to democracy promotion in Iran and to be more concerned about advancement in consensus over the nuclear issue.

After the violence of the Iranian regime against protesters to his reelection, Obama was obliged to sharpen the tools of sanction against Iran to induce the regression of its accession to the nuclear technology and Uranium enrichment; but in the reality the toughness of the Americans' position resulted in more defiance from the Iranian counterpart. Further, the Arab uprisings which were launched from 2011, reduced the confidence between the USA and its Arab allies and had given more leverage to Iran to reinforce its position in the region and grow its influence. Moreover, it has been comforted by the fall of Saddam regime in Iraq and the access of the Shia to rule this country with more probability of cooperation with Iran.

By opposition to his first term, the second term of presidency of M.Obama has seen a betterment shift in the US-Iranian relations because of the election of Hassan Rouhani recognized as a reformist and showing his willingness to negotiate more in order to ameliorate the economic situation of Iran and its

**d-Last evolutions with JPCOA, US withdrawal and actual situation.** The pressure put on Iran after its defiance to the international order and its progressive tentative of Uranium enrichment an conducted the US and its partners to take strong actions against Iran aiming to isolate it on the international scene. But, at the same time, the international community has left the door open to incite Iran to rejoin this order. The P5+1 countries reiterate the offerings made to Iran by 2006 to reach a specific deal susceptible to reduce the hostilities between those countries and Iran and insure its voluntary and complete adherence to the international standards leading at the summum of their implementation to the non-proliferation orientation . This deal mentioned specifically some interesting measures for Iran. Among them: the assistance to Iran for its

intended nuclear program with peaceful use realization and development, nuclear fuel supply, and assistance in many other strategic and economic fields and the alleviation of the sanctions which were harming and hindering its economy. But, to pay the cost of those advantages, Iran had the obligation to suspend its country's proliferation activities of a belligerent nature and comply with all the standards and recommendations dictated by the IAEA, and it was on the top of the achievements reached after the signature of this deal in Geneva in 2015, was the best what could be reached with Iran with diplomatic means and reduce the maximum probability for an American led war in this part of the Middle- East region. Unfortunately after having being consolidated and really realized, the JCPOA has been and is till now really threatened after the accession of Donald Trump to the US presidency and the withdrawal of the USA from this deal because considering it more favorable to Iran and against the American interest and the subsistence of this deal is really at risk even if the other countries part of it are assuring Iran to comply to the deal requirements even if USA is not any more contributing.

## **2-Russia's Policy Statements:**

Besides the academic references and journals tackling the different positions towards the Iranian Nuclear Programme, the major source for defining the positions of the two countries, namely, USA and Russia, is definitely represented by the declarations and statements

In reaction to the US withdrawal from the Nuclear Deal with Iran, the Russian News Agency Tass did a declaration in name of a Russian senator who said "The United States' withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal is quite a realistic scenario, especially after the congress, which was utterly negative about the agreement, joins the discussion"<sup>18</sup>

First of all, we have the basis address where President Donald Trump try to explain his position why he was convinced that America's withdrawal from the Iranian Nuclear Deal is first of all in the interest of the USA because Donald Trump think this deal is more on the Iranian side than in the western side. In his address, President Trump said "We cannot prevent an Iranian bomb under the decaying and rotten structure of the

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<sup>18</sup> -<http://lsp3.search.proquest.com.libproxy.snu.ac.kr/printviewfile?accountid=6802>

current agreement, Therefore, I am announcing today that the United States will withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal.”<sup>19</sup>

In fact the utility of the deal is incommensurable as said by James Acton, Director of the Carnegie Endowment Nuclear Policy Programme “ With the deal in place, it would be extremely difficult for Iran to build the bomb without being detected and there would be a time frame that allow the international community to react”. At the moment, the ball is in the camp of the occidental countries : if they maintain their position and continue to trade economically with Iran, nothing will change significantly but if they decide to follow the secondary sanctions ordered by the US, the most valuable choice would be for Iran not to stick to its commitments and pursue its quest for the nuclear weapons and Uranium enrichment without limits and at whatever cost.

As a response to those premonitions, according to Sergei Kislyiak, Russia’s former ambassador to the United States, “ the Iran Nuclear Deal is not an US- Iranian agreement, it is a multilateral agreement endorsed by the UNSC

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.vox.com/> Zack Beauchamp-Trump’s withdrawal from the Iran Nuclear Programme- May 2018

and enjoying a special status” which means that the American’s withdrawal would affect the nuclear deal with Iran only partially. For precision, this deal was reached in July 2015, during the Obama Administration between Iran and its six mediators (USA, UK, France, Germany, China and Russia). The deal which has been implemented since January 2016, Iran has the obligation to curb its nuclear activities and to be regularly inspected and transparent with the IAEA in exchange of the abandonment of the sanctions prevailing from its partners.

Moreover on the 8<sup>TH</sup> OF May 2018, and just after the official confirmation of D. Trump of the withdrawal of his country from the defined Deal, the Russian reaction has not been delayed at all as seen with Mr Kislyak declaration but has also been followed by an official statement by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs”. This statement have had a very negative attitude on the American withdrawal from the JCPOA. The representant of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said expressly “ We are deeply disappointed by US President Donald Trump’s decision to unilaterally give up commitments to implement the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on

Iran's nuclear programme (JCPOA) and to reinstate the US sanctions on Iran."<sup>20</sup>and he asserted that this deal doesn't belong to the US alone but to the whole international community. "There are no and cannot be any grounds for undermining the JCPOA. The Plan has proved its absolute relevance. It efficiently tackles all the challenges it is designed to address." And confirm the utility of this agreement with no doubt and considers the American action as a clear discrepancy with the majority's position and more than that a sign of mistrust towards the IAEA. And finally, while criticizing the American position, he confirmed the conviction of Russia to pursue this agreement at any cost as considered the "best deal" and also to sustain Iran in its positions and in its nuclear programme as long as this country sticks to the agreement and more importantly complies with the IAEA'S directives and its international commitments in general, the fact that has been respected by Iran till now, from the implementation of this agreement till now, according to the Russian official vision.

In fact, this Russian attitude towards the JCPOA deal has been uniform from the initial step on reaching this agreement on the highest levels in the

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<sup>20</sup> Foreign Ministry of Russia- Statement on Developments around the JCPOA on Iran's Nuclear Programme -08 may 2018

Russian government. This is obviously highlighted in the president Vladimir Putin statement after the achievement of the deal on July 2015, “Russia welcomes the agreement reached today in Vienna on a settlement of the situation concerning Iran’s nuclear programme and the joint comprehensive plan of action approved by the six countries and Iran. We are certain that the world heaved a sigh of relief today”<sup>21</sup> and he confirmed that the main pillar of this agreement was in accordance with the International Law represented by the IAEA and its recommendations and that he expected that this position would be surely condoned by all the members of the UNSC in order that the option of stability and peace overcomes the calls upon the use of force and violence.

He agreed as well that this deal would be of great benefit to Iran as it would submit all its nuclear activities to the IAEA’ S appreciation, help Iran to develop its nuclear pacific programme in stability, provide it with relief

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<sup>21</sup> <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/49957> *Statement by President of Russia V.Putin following Completion of Negotiation on Iran Nuclear Programme.-*  
14 July 2015

from economical sanctions harming its internal politics and opening the doors for more opportunities of Cooperation for developing this programme that could be furnished by Russia.

And finally he declared that this deal is certainly a first step in the realization of the Russian's policy vision in the region which aims to achieve " global Nuclear Non-Proliferation and to achieve the two main basic goals expected in this region: " a Middle-East Nuclear- Free zone" and " a regional coalition for fighting and eradicating terrorism".

And from the beginning of the election term of Mr Trump, and his declaration of intention to quit the nuclear deal between the P5+1, "Russia has warned Donald Trump's administration not to pull out of the Iran nuclear deal - saying America's withdrawal would harm "predictability, security, stability and non-proliferation around the world".<sup>22</sup> And on the same order, Dmitri Peskov, Putin' spokesman stated to the reporters that "the US move against the nuclear deal would have "very negative consequences" and would "seriously aggravate the situation around the Iranian nuclear dossier".

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/>- H.Cokcburn- *Russia warns Trump over Iran nuclear deal: 'US withdrawal will seriously aggravate situation'*-13/10/2017

And more than that, to precise the Russian position, it worth it to cite the condemnation expressed in 2007 by President Putin of “any almost uncontained hyper use of force in international relations” and the call of his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergei Lavrov addressed to the USA to “show such flexibility and pragmatism in approaching Iran, just it has shown towards North Korea” as well as the explanation of the crisis persistence due to “the unwillingness of the US to normalize its bilateral relations with Tehran”.

### **3-Analysis:**

The aim of international countries to prevent Iran to acquire know-how and capacities for Uranium enrichment is largely outdated but the international community, is still rationally able to prevent Iran from having a nuclear bomb. The last nuclear deal JPCOA between the Iran and the P5+1 countries was the optimal achievement realized for this objective. Unfortunately, the last American withdrawal from this deal was a shock and a huge factor of destabilization to this deal as the USA are a major actor in this accord and in the Middle-East region. Engagements Accompanied with the sanctions imposed on Iran and its economic partner

and allies, this withdrawal could incite more Iran to stick to its positions and why not review all its commitments with the IAEA, and feeling unsecure about the occidental engagement and trust is lost. As a consequence, Iran could review its commitments and aspire newly to acquire nuclear weapons without any remorse because the deal was broken by the western counterpart.

The Russian position can easily be explained by its actual Nuclear Policy which considers itself still a power and wants to conserve its position. Moreover, Iran, which is considered by the USA as a rogue state, and is in an open opposition with the US, in Russia's view is interested to obtain its protection against the US. Furthermore, Russian's experience with Iran in Tajikistan ( where Iran contributed to end the civil war) and also in Chechnya where Russia is entangled in a violent separatist war as well as fundamentalist Sunni terrorism has been more than positive. And at the End of the day, Iran is considered by Russia as strategic regional actor as well as one of its important trade partners.

Of course, Russia is at the same position as the USA against Iran's acquisition of a nuclear bomb, but at the same time it hopes the

resorption of this crisis at the minimal costs with a recognition of the “pacific” nature of the Iranian Nuclear Programme. And it is finally of great importance to remind that “Iran is the third importer of Russian weapons in the World after China and India”<sup>23</sup> as well as it could be a good customer of its technology material and know-how in the case that Iran succeed to “clean” its position on the international scene and convince that its nuclear programme is limited to peaceful applications. And as Dmitri Trenin confirms in his paper “Russia will remain firmly committed to nuclear-non-proliferation, At the same time, Russia sees its cooperation attempts with Iran as an equal commitment in importance and is strictly attached to the resolution of this crisis, in all cases by diplomatic means, never with the use of force.

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<sup>23</sup> - Dmitri Trenin- *Russia's Nuclear Policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Environment*- Proliferation Papers-2005- IFRI Security Studies Department-France-

#### **Chapter IV- CONCLUSION:**

• “. Although Moscow was willing to accept a larger Iranian civil nuclear program than the United States or the Europeans, opposed economic sanctions in principle, and sought throughout the nuclear talks to maintain good bilateral relations with Tehran, Russia played a key positive role in the negotiations, including by gaining Iran’s agreement to ship virtually its entire stock of enriched uranium to Russia. Its nonproliferation and commercial interests coincided. By supporting low limits on Tehran’s enrichment capacity, Moscow could ensure that Iran would remain dependent on Russia to provide fuel for its Russian-supplied power reactors.”<sup>24</sup> This is the best probable explanation . Obviously, there is a big difference between the American view and the Russian view towards the Iranian Nuclear Proliferation Programme . The difference of opinion has led Russia to take a more conciliatory position on Iran even if the Russian position has been changing according to the historic eras . Nevertheless, both countries have contributed more or less in elaborating this nuclear programme but this was always depending in major shifts in power and diplomatic dominance

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<sup>24</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/> Robert Einhorn-Prospects of US-Russian Non-Proliferation Cooperation-26/02/2016

between them. According to their relative bilateral relationships, after the cold war, Russia was viewing Iran more like a potential trade partner than an enemy in the region. While it shares with the international community, especially the USA, the concern which consists in preventing Iran from preventing a nuclear weapon, as well as its urgent call to Iran to stop or reduce at the foremost its Uranium enrichment actions, Russia is against the military action to achieve this goal and is opposed as well as it asserts the usefulness of the economic sanctions against Iran and believes that those sanctions “are more eager that they serve more the hardliners in Iran rather than the moderate forces “. A military intervention would only tarnish more the image of the West in the eyes of the “Muslim” countries.

The conflict over the Iranian nuclear programme have been taking many years , except the Nuclear Deal of 2015, there have been no signs of easing tension between Iran and the USA. Obviously, the US have been the driving force behind the Iran policy of the international Community, that is why the Nuclear deal is less viable after the American withdrawal. More than the historical diplomatic conflicts between the two countries, the global strategy of the Bush Administration to Iran has been to prevent its emergence as a regional power. For the US its position in general against

Iran -except the Obama Administration- was a complete denial to have a nuclear programme because always accused of aiming to have a nuclear weapon. And for the US, an Iran with a nuclear weapon is to avoid at any cost, even with war.

So the political and economic sanctions as well as the military pressure have been for the Americans the best mean right now. This administration has refused to apply the same strategy which is applied with North Korea ( based on direct bilateral talks).

But in the reality, even if Iran resent the effect of these sanctions , it is not said that it is not able to circumvent the universal sanctions by building bilateral bonds with other countries which are not always sharing the US position, especially if they are nearest to the Russian and Chinese boarder for whom the national and economic interest prevails more than an alliance with the USA. Moreover, after its last withdrawal from the JPCOA has shown complete unreliability as it had turned back on its own commitments, giving Iran a strong signal of mistrust which incite the latter to stick to its positions and refuse any proposition to close its enrichment facilities or to reduce the scope of its nuclear program as its own

commitment to international obligations is not anymore a guarantee of all the stakeholders' commitment to any commonly approved legal framework. In revenge, a policy of "détente" is more than accurate in this situation illustrated by : a reinforcement of bilateral relations and cooperation between Iran and the concerned countries could curve the feeling of threat of Iran, its recognition as a regional power in the Middle-East as well its right to manage enrichment capacities for pacific sake, but commit to not make any attempt to weaponize its nuclear programme.

For the future, the European countries as well as Russia and China are strongly sticking to the Nuclear Deal of 2015 despite the american injunctions and threats. Inside America itself, and in the Government , not all the parties share Trump's view on the withdrawal concerning Iran. The Obama period has really been an exception since the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979. The World has seen through this deal an eventual coming out from the crisis which could reduce the tensions in the Middle- East and by transitivity on the Whole World. Despite its threats of sanctions, Donald Trump still find dissidence on the international scene concerning its positions. Of course, the US position is very important as a hegemon and superpower and it could greatly influence the important World economic

groups which are active in Iran and which still sustain with this country strong relations of cooperation and business. Right now, the viability of the Nuclear Deal is really at risk but the game is not over as many important countries are sticking to this historical agreement and who knows? May be a change in the American presidency could be a guaranty to return to the initial positions provided that the status quo is maintained now and no irrational action is taken by anyone of the stakeholders.

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