



The Verbal Strategy of the United States in the Process of Securing Iran's Nuclear Program (2001-2021)

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Abstract:

Foreign policy choices usually range from historical to routine decisions. Political elites may decide to start conflicts, form alliances, reach agreements, make peace with each other, establish diplomatic relations, adopt certain views on nuclear nonproliferation, or enforce sanctions against other players. This study aims to analyze the motivations behind the efforts of the United States in the verbal aspect to prevent the development of Iran's nuclear program. To this end, it tries to answer the following main question: How has the United States' verbal strategy for securitization of Iran's nuclear program evolved and why is this approach so aggressive? The research hypothesis, which is examined using the descriptive-analytical method and the doctrines of security studies in the Copenhagen School, is based on the proposition that the United States' verbal strategy has maintained its aggressive nature via exaggerating the concern that one of the aspects of Iran's access to nuclear weapons is achieving regional hegemony, with the aim of providing the US with access to the resources of the Middle East. The results of this study indicate that the leaders of the White House are trying to ensure that the US gains access to the Middle East's oil, protects Israel and annihilates security threats.

Keywords Iran's nuclear program, The United States, The Middle East, Biden, Trump

Introduction

During the Cold War, the White House officials formulated and established their foreign policy in order to curb the influence of com-

munist as the most important military and ideological threat. In this regard, the foreign policy apparatus of America put on the agen-

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da to counter this threat, strengthen the regional unity and create a regional gendarmerie. In other words, equipping the Iranian regime with nuclear knowledge was one of the White House officials' measures against this great threat. But after the collapse of the Soviet Union, this threat lost its importance. In the meantime, it did not take long for the 9/11 incident to create a new situation for Washington, and after that, the threat of terrorism replaced the concept of communism, and Islamic fundamentalist groups such as the Taliban and Al-Qaeda were introduced as examples. According to the emergence of this new non-state threat, the White House officials in their high-handed documents used the concepts of governments that support terrorism, which they claim are Iraq, North Korea and Iran. Therefore, it was natural that securing issues related to these countries is one of the strategic measures of the White House.

From the very beginning of the victory of the revolution, America has described the Iranian government with titles such as a domineering government, a violator of human rights, a distributor of weapons of mass destruction, a disrupter of regional order, and an obstacle to the peace process between the Arabs and Israel. and has managed to create the most important political, technical and legal obstacles in Iran's path to achieving nuclear knowledge.

In August 2002, the International Atomic Energy Agency announced its readiness to inspect the uranium enrichment facilities in Natanz and Arak heavy waters. This was the time when the issue of Iran's nuclear program was created and magnified as a security threat by Western countries and became one of the important issues in the foreign policy apparatus of the White House. Important questions arise around why Washington wanted Iran to acquire a nuclear program

before the revolution, but after the revolution, it used all its efforts to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear program. The answer to this question comes back to the perceptions and mentality that has been formed in the past years and is considered one of the main topics of this article. Therefore, the main question of this article is designed in such a way that how the verbal strategy of the United States has evolved in the process of securing Iran's nuclear program? And why is this approach so aggressive? In order to answer this question, the tested hypothesis is based on this statement based on the descriptive-analytical method and the theoretical teachings of security studies in the Copenhagen school; that the verbal strategy of the United States, by exaggerating the concern that one of the aspects of Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons is to reach the regional hegemon, has maintained its aggressive nature with the aim of achieving the existing interests in the Middle East. The method of gathering information using library studies and using first-hand sources, especially American security documents, is included in reliable websites.

Theoretical framework: securitization in the Copenhagen school

The theoretical teachings of the Copenhagen school and the description that this school has of security development form the main part of the theoretical framework of this article. And it seems to provide a coherent analytical framework regarding the efforts of the American governments in the process of securing Iran's nuclear program.

The Copenhagen school has had a significant effect on the concept of security through presenting its concepts and ideas regarding securitization and non-securitization. In fact, the Copenhagen School is part of a broader

effort to provide a new definition and framework for security and redefine the security agenda after the end of the Cold War. The Copenhagen school, by using the constructivist theory regarding the construction of identities, provides a framework by which to analyze which issues or actors are considered a security threat (Pieper, 2012, p. 2). The important point in this framework is that the threat must be successfully created and accepted by the audience. In securitization, there are three units of analysis: "referent" means the thing about which securitization takes place; A securitizing actor who securitizes the issue by declaring something as an existential threat; Functional actors, that is, those whose activities have important effects for creating security. In this way, in security, a security actor succeeds in introducing a threat or vulnerability as a threat to the existence of the audience and, accordingly, receives the approval of emergency measures. Usually, political leaders, governments, lobby groups and pressure groups are considered as security actors (Buzan and Weaver, 2009, p. 225).

The securitization of a politicized issue occurs when a securitizing actor presents an issue as an existential threat to a referent. This referent can be a government, national sovereignty, ideology and collective identities. After that, the security activist emphasizes the necessity of using extraordinary measures; Measures that go beyond the usual norms in the political arena and are used with the aim of dealing with this threat. The Copenhagen school refers to the spectrum along which subjects are grouped. The Copenhagen school claims that any particular issue can be depoliticized, politicized, or securitized. In response to the existential nature of the threat, the security activist declares that in order to manage this security issue, he must

take extraordinary measures and measures that go beyond the usual norms of the political sphere. Buzan, Weaver, and de Wilde argue that securitization is a move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue as a specific type of politics or above it. In fact, securitization can be seen as an extreme version of politicization, which goes beyond military issues and includes economic, social and environmental sectors (Ovall and Bozdagloglu, 2012, p. 5).

The Copenhagen school argues that securitization is intersubjective and socially constructed. In fact, the way to look at a security issue always comes back to the discussion of choice or political option. This choice is usually realized by labeling a security threat to an issue. In other words, security is a process of intersubjective necessity. In fact, this process is a dialogue and interaction between the security actor and the audience. In the Copenhagen school, verbal action is considered as the starting point of the securitization process. An issue can become a security concern through a verbal act alone, regardless of whether that concern is actually an existential threat or not. In fact, the importance of verbal action is not because it indicates something real, but its performance is also considered an action.

The distinguishing feature of the securitization sector is the existence of a rhetorical structure; This means that the security actor puts forward the argument that if this problem is not solved now, it will be too late; That means there will be no more time to compensate for this failure. In general, a security-creating actor claims the necessity and right to deal with it by resorting to an extraordinary way by attaching the description of security to it. The security process is what is called speech act in language theory. The

speech act is not interesting as a sign of something more real, but the act is the speech itself. Something is done by speaking words. (Buzan et al., 2013, p. 55) In fact, a successful speech act is a combination of language and society. In this regard, the policies of the White House governments towards the nuclear program of the Islamic Republic of Iran can be summarized in these cases; Trying to introduce Iran as a threat to the security of the Middle East region as well as European countries and the interests of the United States in the region; Convincing public opinion that Iran's nuclear program is a threat and trying to take actions outside of accepted international norms, such as conducting a military attack against Iran.

Security of Iran's nuclear program by the United States of America

Iran is viewed by the United States as a "rogue" regime fomenting chaos throughout the Middle East. Preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons is one of the fundamental interests of the United States in the Middle East. Therefore, as soon as Iran's attempt to acquire nuclear weapons was revealed, the United States took a decisive approach towards Iran. The United States considers Iran a complex country that is a function of its national interests and maintaining the considerations of its political system. According to the American authorities, the increase in Iran's power in the region will lead to the strengthening of the forces, which is a serious threat to the interests of this country in the Middle East region. Because of this, according to American officials, any deterrence should be aimed at preventing the threat of Iran. Therefore, in order to implement its plans against Tehran, the United States is trying to make Iran and its nuclear activities appear as a threat to international peace and

security. In other words, the issue of instilling fear and panic about Iran at the international level is considered as a prerequisite and a basis for operationalizing the next goals. In the following, the dimensions of this effort will be documented in different periods and more precisely in the two factions of the Democratic Party and the Republic, in order to determine the different aspects of these two factions regarding Iran's nuclear program while examining the security process.

The approach of the Bush administration towards Iran: regime change

Bush began his presidency with a realistic worldview. He saw the world as a dangerous place filled with self-interested nations that tend to use military means to advance their interests. 9/11 reinforced this strategic view of the international environment and revealed the possibility of catastrophic terrorism on American soil through the intersection of terror and technology. Bush's speech after the incident was the White House's first official response to the incident. By dividing the audience into insiders and non-insiders and saying the famous phrase "either with us or against us", Bush once again divided the world into two identity camps around the concept of fighting terrorism. The Bush doctrine in the fight against terrorism states that the US government must use any military means and surprise attacks to destroy terrorism and moderate the countries with nuclear weapons and defeat the supporters of terrorism forever. It stipulates that the best self-defense is "offensive power" and America should establish world peace by removing dictators and creating open and democratic societies (Tamanna, 2002, p. 160).

In his annual speech to Congress on January 29, 2002, Bush highlighted the idea of peace based on democracy and spoke of the

"axis of evil" and placed Iran, Iraq and North Korea on three sides of this axis. He stated the reason for this designation is the support of these countries for terrorism and their efforts to obtain weapons of mass destruction (Mottaghi, 2003, p. 15). From the point of view of the 2002 National Security Strategy document, rebellious governments know that they cannot win over America by using conventional weapons, so they focus their efforts on obtaining weapons of mass destruction. Bush's assistant group claims that terrorist networks are fed through governments whose political atmosphere is full of ideas and personalities in favor of terrorist policies. The solution proposed by the Bush team is preemption in the attack, which is the fifth chapter of the 2002 National Security Strategy document (NSS, 2002, p. 14).

One of the most important documents that can show the approach of the Bush administration towards Iran is the national security document that was published in 2006. In this document, the Bush administration tries to draw the conditions far more dangerous than four years ago and to form a coalition to somehow solve the problems of the lack of multilateralism. It is stated in the introduction of the 2006 National Security Strategy document: America is at war. In this document, the phenomenon of terrorism is introduced as a fundamental challenge that is increasingly arising from the ideology of hatred and killing. A large part of the above-mentioned document deals with the example of Iran. The document states: "We may not face a more serious challenge from any country than Iran. For almost 20 years, Iran concealed much of its major nuclear endeavors from the international community.

Since taking office in January 2001, the Bush administration has adopted three differ-

ent but related approaches to the Islamic Republic. Initially, from the time it first came to power until the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, the administration pursued a policy that can best be described as one of "hostile neglect." The Bush administration was never interested in Iran's leadership and adopted a hostile stance toward Tehran from the start, in stark contrast to the conciliatory gestures of the Clinton administration's final months. However, prior to 9/11, the Bush administration did not really formulate a coherent strategy toward Iran. Certainly, from the very beginning of the Bush presidency, there was a lot of harsh rhetoric against the Islamic Republic, not the least of which was the president's designation of Iran as a member of the "axis of evil." However, either the administration was genuinely unsure of what to do with Iran, or it was too focused on Iraq to pay enough attention to its neighbor to the east. Whatever the reason, America's policy towards Iran in the first year of Bush's presidency was characterized by a combination of neglect and hostility (Kamrava, 2008, p. 12).

The US position towards Iran changed immediately after the start of the US invasion and occupation of Iraq in March 2003. The US government never publicly articulated its strategy, but a number of highly influential Washington insiders, particularly figures commonly known as neoconservatives, began calling for regime change in Iran. For example, Richard Pearl, who served as chairman of the Pentagon's Defense Policy Board before the Iraq War; and David Fromm, the former White House press secretary credited with coining the phrase "Satan's Axis," authored a book called *The End of Satan* in which they called for a covert U.S. operation to topple the Iranian regime. They wrote: The problem in Iran is much bigger than weapons. The problem is the terrorist regime that

is looking for weapons, the regime must go. (Kamrava, 2008, p. 13).

Throughout 2003 and late 2004, Washington was abuzz with talk of regime change in Iran. But as the occupation of Iraq steadily turned into a quagmire and "liberated Iraq" teetered on the brink of civil war, Washington officials seem to have realized the serious dangers of a similar "liberation" of Iran. Thus, the military option was increasingly abandoned in favor of a more subtle approach. By late 2005, early 2006, it was clear that the United States had adopted a new strategy toward Iran. This new strategy, which continues to operate today, appears to have three main components. The first component aims to promote "soft regime change" in Iran by encouraging acts of civil disobedience and resistance inside the country. The Bush administration began its second term with a commitment to multilateralism that had not always been evident over the previous four years. At this point, the White House held negotiations on Iran's nuclear program and succeeded in directing the negotiations in the direction it wanted and passed three resolutions in the Security Council (Kamrava, 2008, p. 16).

Obama's approach to Iran: smart power

With Obama entering the White House, there has been a bigger change in the US foreign policy towards Iran. Obama abandoned Bush's one-dimensional confrontational stance and preferred a multi-dimensional strategy of "diplomacy, punishment, and containment." The new US administration also sought to revive the international movement against nuclear proliferation and multilateral support against Iran's nuclear ambitions in fora such as the United Nations. Unlike his predecessor's belligerent and insular policies, Obama seems capable of creating a construc-

tive dialogue between the United States and other countries. In his first televised interview as president, Obama told Al Arabiya: "My job is to announce the fact that Americans are not your enemy." And that [America] makes mistakes sometimes. We are not perfect (MacLeod, 2009).

In a three-minute online video celebrating the new year, he praised Iranian culture, quoted a Persian-speaking poet and even spoke a little Persian. "My administration is now committed to diplomacy that addresses the full range of issues before us and seeks constructive relationships," Obama said. He added: An honest interaction based on mutual respect cannot be achieved through terror or weapons, but through peaceful actions that show the true greatness of Iran's people and civilization (Sharp, 2009, p. 4).

In a wide-ranging speech in Cairo, Obama then asserted Iran's right to peaceful nuclear energy under the terms of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and pledged to negotiate "without preconditions on the basis of mutual respect." Finally, in an unusual diplomatic maneuver, the administration announced that representatives of the Iranian government could be officially invited to Fourth of July celebrations at American embassies and consulates around the world (Sharp, 2009, p. 5).

In March 2009, Iran's engagement with the United States and its allies increased significantly. On March 27, the special international meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on Afghanistan was held in Moscow, the United States of America special representative Patrick S. Moon sent the assistant foreign minister to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organization meeting for the first time. In this meeting, Moon discussed Afghanistan with Mehdi Akhundzadeh, Iran's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (Donaghy, 2009: p. 1). On

March 31, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton welcomed Iran's participation in the International Conference on Afghanistan in The Hague (Lander, 2009, p. 1).

At the same time as expressing its willingness to interact with Iran, the Obama administration did not completely abandon its policy of containment against Iran. The Obama administration did not announce its intention to lift economic sanctions against Iran, but as usual on March 15, 2009, it extended the US sanctions against Iran for one year. Recognizing that a unilateral policy adjustment would not necessarily be successful, Obama publicly stated that bilateral relations between the United States and Iran cannot be expected to change overnight, lest the outside world expect too much from the US-Iran engagement policy.

On May 26, 2009, Obama's national security document was released. In the document published by Obama, the idea of a global war against terrorism, preventive war and words such as Islamic radicalism were removed; And diplomacy, especially in relation to India, China and Russia, nuclear non-proliferation and climate change has been paid attention to (Haji Yousefi, Bajehi, 2011, p. 749). In this document, the main emphasis is on multilateral diplomacy and interaction with America's enemy countries in foreign policy. In the national security doctrine of the Obama administration, the name of Iran is mentioned 14 times, 9 of which were in a paragraph entitled "Encouraging responsible Iran ". According to this document, Iran and North Korea must either accept American proposals regarding American-style interaction or they will face severe isolation. It is stated in the national security document of 2015; The US preference is to reach a comprehensive nuclear deal that ensures that Tehran's nuclear program remains peaceful for-

ever. And this option is the best way to secure the national interests of the United States, advance the non-proliferation regime in the world and the peaceful use of nuclear energy by Iran. At this point, America was looking for a future in which Iran fulfills its international responsibilities and obtains its true position in the community of nations. and take advantage of political and economic opportunities in the way that its people deserve. In his speech for the Nobel Peace Prize, Obama argued that the international community must step up its pressure and impose sanctions that can impose a "real price" and are tough enough to actually change behavior. Parallel to the threat of sanctions, his government has designed a clearer strategy of containment (Betizza and Phillips, 2010, p. 14).

The Trump administration's approach to Iran: peace through power

The Trump administration endlessly portrays the Iranian regime and its allies as a common threat. For the Trump administration, the Iranian regime and its aligned groups were the main source of instability in the Middle East region. In his speech at the Arab Summit on May 21, 2017, Trump introduced Iran as a common threat to the region and said: Iran is the regime that is responsible for all the instability in the region. From Lebanon to Iraq and Yemen, Iran funds and trains terrorists, militias, and other extremist groups that spread destruction and chaos throughout the region. In the "Peace to Prosperity" plan that was revealed in January 2020, the Trump administration warned the countries of the Middle East about the geopolitical threat posed by Iran. In this plan, it was stated: "Iran's strategy seeks to encircle Israel by using Lebanon, Syria and Gaza and encircle the

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia through Iraq, Bahrain and Yemen" (Kriaa, 2021: p. 47).

For the Trump administration, the Iran nuclear deal dramatically failed to address aspects of Iran's destabilizing behavior in the region and was seen as nothing more than a colossal mistake. The JCPOA provoked a storm of criticism from the president and his cabinet. And it was called "Obama's dangerous nuclear deal with Iran", "a one-sided deal that should never, ever have been done", "nothing less than a foreign policy failure", etc. In Trump's meeting with Netanyahu, the two leaders agreed that the Iran nuclear deal is a terrible deal for the United States, Israel and the world (Qumar, 2018, p. 278). Therefore, on May 8, 2018, the United States withdrew from the JCPOA. This withdrawal was not only approved by some world leaders, but Netanyahu considered it a bold move. Likewise, Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the United States, Khalid bin Salman, said his country fully supports the actions taken by President Trump. In this regard, Anwar bin Mohammad Gargash, the former foreign minister, emphasized that the JCPOA was an "incomplete agreement" and the president's decision was "correct" (Osama, 2018, p. 259).

According to the Trump administration, the JCPOA was incomplete because it did not address the totality of Iran's alleged malign behavior in the Middle East and the world. Therefore, "the policy of the Trump administration towards Iran will deal with the totality of these threats and malicious activities of the Iranian government". President Trump's new strategy is inspired by "peace through strength" previously pursued by President Reagan, who rejected close ties with Iran because the president understood the "dangers of appeasement." The new strategy, which was issued on October 13, 2017, listed various goals to counter Iran's behavior

in the regions. First, the revival of regional alliances and traditional partnerships was to change the balance against Iran. Second, it aimed to deprive the Iranian regime of the financial means to finance terrorist activities and proxies, particularly through the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). The third goal was to protect and counter ICBM missile threats against the US and its allies in the region. Fourth, a strategy aimed at mobilizing the international community to condemn the Iranian regime's human rights violations, including the unjust imprisonment of Americans and foreign citizens. The fifth and most important goal is the strategy aimed at preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. In his second speech on September 25, 2018 at the United Nations General Assembly, Trump praised his administration's "bold diplomacy" in reducing threats from Iranian regimes and many other threats around the world (Yarhi, 2018, p.68).

Biden government's approach towards Iran: return against return

Joe Biden, the President of the United States of America, has declared the formulation and pursuit of a new policy towards the Islamic Republic of Iran as one of the priorities of his government's foreign policy. Because Biden and his foreign policy team believe that Trump's maximum pressure strategy against Iran has failed to achieve its goals. Therefore, in order to get rid of this failed strategy, a new policy must be developed and implemented to ensure the goals and strategic interests of America. The nuclear issue is in the focus of the Biden foreign policy apparatus. As Biden made it clear before and after the election that his government will return to this agreement if Iran returns to the JCPOA.

Biden's foreign policy discourse is "liberal internationalism" within the framework ...

the US Democratic Party's foreign policy discourse. The central idea of this discourse is to plan and change the world and the international system through the application of American power and will. This strategy implies the combination and consolidation of power, cooperation and partnership to fight and confront the threats and enemies of America (Kupchan, 2020).

Anthony Blinken, the US Secretary of State, also has such a personality, thinking and performance. Like Biden, he is a realist, a person of realism, caution, step-by-step policy, compromise, compromise and agreement. But at the same time, it does not ignore the perspective and horizon of long-term and larger ideals and goals of liberal politics (Fried, 2020). He defines and considers preventive diplomacy and military deterrence as one of the ideal principles of American foreign policy. Based on that, diplomacy should be supplemented and strengthened with deterrence; And military force is a necessary complement and helper of active and effective diplomacy (Blinken and Kagan: 2019).

Therefore, the declared positions of Biden and his foreign policy team indicate that the possible policy of Biden's America towards Iran's nuclear challenge will be a mutual return to the JCPOA. Since Biden's victory in the US presidential election, two options of conditional return and unconditional return have been proposed. It seems that Biden will choose the option of returning to the JCPOA to immediately stop Iran's nuclear program; In such a way that despite the logical connection between these three issues, he does not make the return to the JCPOA conditional and deferred to negotiations about Iran's missile program and regional power; Because in his opinion, the best way to limit missile power and achieve a degree of regional sta-

bility is to control and re-monitor Iran's nuclear program (Friedman, 2020, p. 2).

Considering the strategic value and sensitivity of missile power and regional influence for the Islamic Republic of Iran on the one hand, and the urgency and vital importance of stopping Iran's nuclear program for the United States on the other hand, Biden's policy will be mixed and phased; So that in the first phase, nuclear negotiations will begin to return Iran to the conditions before the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA. In the second stage, negotiations are pursued to strengthen and develop the provisions and timetable of the JCPOA. In the third phase, the Biden government will follow up the missile negotiations and then the regional negotiations in parallel (Goldenberg and Thomas: 2020).

The first step in Biden's step-by-step nuclear policy towards Iran is rejoining the JCPOA in the equivalent form of "return against return". Biden has explained this policy as follows: If Iran returns to strictly and fully complying with the nuclear agreement, the United States will also rejoin the agreement (Biden, Sept: 2020).

Jake Sullivan, Biden's national security adviser, has also confirmed that the Biden administration intends to return Iran to the 2015 JCPOA and force it to fulfill its obligations according to it (Jamerson, des: 2020). Based on this policy, Iran observes the restrictions on its nuclear program and activities, and in return, the United States suspends economic sanctions against Iran.

These positions show that returning to JCPOA is not Biden's ultimate goal, but a means to achieve other ultimate goals. In fact, returning to the JCPOA is the beginning of stopping the nuclear program and curbing and limiting Iran's missile power and regional power, not the end of it; Because the prereq-

uisite and prerequisite for achieving all three goals is the rejoining of the United States to the JCPOA. Therefore, considering the failure of Trump's maximum pressure campaign, returning to the JCPOA is necessary but insufficient. In a note in September 2020, Biden explained the purpose of returning to the JCPOA as follows; America will return to the JCPOA agreement as a starting point for the next negotiations (Biden, Sep: 2020). In this direction, Biden considers it essential to rely on allies. After winning the election, he again emphasized this goal of America and said; We will enter into further negotiations and agreements in consultation with our allies and partners to make the limitations and restrictions on Iran's nuclear activities more rigid and long-term (Friedman, Dec: 2020).

Like Biden, Blinken believes that returning to the JCPOA will put America in a better position to negotiate a stronger and longer nuclear deal through diplomatic work with its allies and partners. He said that by returning to the JCPOA, we will also be in a much better position to more effectively confront and push back Iran's other destabilizing activities (USIP, Nov, 2020, p. 24).

They claim that JCPOA was the first step in the process of arms control negotiations with Iran, not the last step. According to Biden and his foreign policy team, curbing and limiting Iran's regional influence is also a part of Iran's arms control process that must be negotiated. It seems that Biden's America will adopt and implement a step-by-step policy that includes all three strategic issues of Iran's nuclear program, missile power, and regional influence.

Conflicting interests of Iran and the United States in the Middle East

As noted above, the United States has taken hostile measures, including sanctions, to pre-

vent Iran from developing its nuclear weapons program. The question that should be asked is why the United States has been so aggressive in stopping Iran's nuclear weapons program. According to the 2010 National Security Document, the United States has many interests in the Middle East, the most important of which are oil, Israel, and security (NSS, 2010, p. 24)

Oil

As stated in the May 2010 United States National Strategy Report, the need for a stable and secure flow of energy or oil has become overwhelming for the United States. In fact, the main goal of US national security policy since then, and especially since the 1970s, has been to ensure a stable and secure flow of oil from the Middle East to the US and its allies around the world, even through the use of military force (Gendzier, 2003, p. 21). In fact, the declaration of the Carter Doctrine after the fall of the Shah in 1979, the rise of the Khomeini regime in Iran, along with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, strongly indicate this approach. In his doctrine, President Carter points out that any attempt by any foreign power to take control of the Persian Gulf region will be considered an attack on the vital interests of the United States of America. And such aggression will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force. This statement shows the commitment of the United States, including the use of military force, to ensure the steady flow of oil from the Middle East (Duffield, 2005, p. 112).

According to the report of the Energy Information Administration (EIA) and the International Energy Agency (IEA), the percentage of the Middle East's total oil production in the world in 2002 was 28.4%. The report went even further and suggested that

world demand for oil production from the Middle East could increase by more than 43 percent by 2030. This report concludes that the world's dependence on the energy of the Middle East countries will increase significantly in the coming years. In addition, the cost of cheap oil production in the Middle East and the minimal capital required to increase production capacity will greatly increase the dependence on Middle East oil reserves in the future. Therefore, considering the vital role that oil reserves in the Middle East play in the world economy and especially the American economy, continuous access to Middle Eastern oil is one of the most important reasons for America (Duffield, 2005, p. 111).

One of the most serious concerns of the international community and the United States is that if Iran can develop its nuclear program, it will use the leverage of nuclear power to disrupt the flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz to achieve its political and economic goals. It will be possible for Iran to use its nuclear weapons as an umbrella to close the Strait of Hormuz (Pham, 2010, p. 64).

The steady flow of oil through the straits is critical to the United States. National and security interests in the Middle East have made the United States increasingly concerned about the realities related to Iran's nuclear program and the country's threat to oil transit through the Strait of Hormuz. Therefore, it can be claimed that the security threat to the free flow of oil from the Persian Gulf and especially through the Strait of Hormuz is one of the main reasons why America is against Iran's nuclear program.

Israel

Although the stable flow of energy from the Middle East is of great interest to the United States, the close relations between the United

States and Israel in a wide range of issues is another reason that shows the concern of the United States regarding the opposition to Iran's nuclear program. In this section, I will argue that Israel, as the main ally of the United States in the Middle East, has strong financial, military, diplomatic, and political ties with the United States that have integrated Israel into the national interests of the United States. Since Iran's nuclear program is a threat to Israel's interests in the Middle East, the United States wants to prevent Iran's nuclear development.

Three main points are presented in this section to support this argument. First, the high level of US financial and military aid to Israel since the formation of the Israeli regime after World War II has been a major reason for strengthening US interests with Israel in the Middle East. Secondly, the strong US diplomatic support for Israel in international organizations such as the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency strengthens the relationship between the two countries. Finally, the presence of a strong Israeli community and Israeli lobbyists in the United States is another reason why the US government considers Israel part of its national interests in the Middle East. These points are explained below.

Scholars such as Miller have argued that the US agreement with Israel is vital because Israel faces multiple security threats, including threats from a nuclear and missile-prone Iran. Miller also argued that the growing arsenals of these Iran-affiliated groups, especially the expanding power of Hezbollah in Lebanon as well as the imminent threat of Iran, show how essential it is to maintain Israel's strategic regional security in the Middle East (Miller, 2011).

Due to Iran's nuclear program and the threat of a terrorist attack by Hamas and

Hezbollah, as well as ongoing instability in the Middle East; Many pro-Israel groups in America, including the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), believe that it would be beneficial for the United States to maintain its commitment to Israel's security going forward. Because Israel is the only stable and pro-Western democratic government that can protect the interests of the United States in the Middle East (The American Israel Public Affairs Committee, 2011).

Furthermore, they claim that US military support for Israel has reduced the chances of a major regional war because Israel's enemies cannot overcome Israel with military capability (The American Israel Public Affairs Committee, 2011). Aside from AIPAC, Christian evangelicals also influence the United States. Relations with Israel Christian evangelicals are a powerful pro-Israel group in the United States, who are also active members of AIPAC. They believe that Israel's rebirth is part of biblical prophecy and therefore support Israel's expansionist agenda and believe that oppressing Israel is against God's will. Christian Zionists have strengthened hard-liner attitudes in Israel and America, making it more difficult for American leaders to pressure Israel (Mearsheimer and Walt, 2006, p. 15).

Security

The problem of terrorism has been at the forefront of Iran-US relations for years. Since 1984, the United States has designated Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism, and the United States Department of State has designated Iran as the "most active state sponsor of terrorism." In fact, after the 1979 Iranian revolution, due to the high level of tension between the United States and Iran, the United

States repeatedly accused Iran of providing significant amounts of weapons and financial aid to hostile organizations and groups such as Hezbollah; which is against America's interests in the Middle East. Hezbollah is a Shi'ite military, political and social organization in Lebanon that was formed in 1982 and has strong ties with Iran. Over the years, Hezbollah has transformed itself from a paramilitary group into Lebanon's leading political and military force. Nevertheless, the United States still considers Hezbollah a terrorist group and accuses them of masterminding several anti-American and anti-Israel acts in the 1980s and 1990s. The largest of these actions by Hezbollah was the bombing of US naval peacekeepers in Lebanon in October 1983. The attack in Beirut killed Marines and forced President Ronald Reagan to withdraw all US forces from Lebanon (Shatz, 2004).

Since the formation of Hezbollah, the Iranian government has established cordial relations with this group, because the two-share religious and ideological beliefs. Supporting Hezbollah has made Iran appear in the list of countries supporting terrorism. The United States has accused Iran of providing significant intelligence and military training to Hezbollah forces over the past few decades (Katzman, 2011: p.43).

Because of Iran's close relationship with Hezbollah, Iran's nuclear program has created significant grounds for concern in the United States, Israel, and in many Western countries. Several scholars, including Kenneth Katzman, have argued that Iran's close relationship with organizations such as Hezbollah increases the likelihood of nuclear proliferation for non-governmental organizations should Iran acquire nuclear weapons. This threatens the security of all countries, not just the United States. According to Katzman, Iran has long considered Hezbollah as a tool

for exerting regional influence (Katzman, 2011: p. 44). These close ties, along with Iran's desire to pursue a nuclear program, make Iran a potential threat as a supplier of such weapons to such groups. The American authorities believe that, apart from the suspicion of the potential threat of nuclear weapons proliferation by Iran, there is also the possibility that the transfer of information or nuclear technology will take place without the explicit intervention of the government.

Scholars such as Shahram Chubin have argued that even if the Iranian government is committed to providing nuclear weapons, some powerful domestic organizations such as the IRGC may contain unstable elements willing to transfer sensitive nuclear technology to proxy groups. It is said that the transfer of nuclear technology can be carried out by disgruntled members of the government in times of crisis. For example, Chubin has argued that without strict supervision, transfers would be more likely (Chubin, 2006: p. 51). Therefore, preventing nuclear proliferation to countries like Iran becomes a tool to prevent nuclear transfer to terrorist groups. As President Bush stated in a 2005 speech at the National Endowment for Democracy; We are determined to deny weapons of mass destruction to illegal regimes and their terrorist allies who use them without hesitation (Chubin, 2006, p. 52).

Conclusion

This article raised this argument with the aim of explaining the verbal strategy of the United States in the process of securing Iran's nuclear program; White House leaders, relying on protecting their interests in the Middle East region, have tried to make Iran's nuclear program look dangerous by exaggerating the concern that Iran's nuclear program is linked to terrorism and Iran's growing influence in

the West Asian region. This article has benefited from the theoretical teachings of the Copenhagen school. From the perspective of the Copenhagen school, security is not only an objective situation, but it can be a linguistic and rhetorical factor, and with the expression of the security actor, it can reduce or add to the security burden of an issue. Relying on such a framework, the efforts of American governments from 2001 to Biden's tenure were first examined. The findings of the analysis of this section showed that the incident of September 11, 2001 significantly changed the discourse and examples of security in the United States. By relying on unilateralism and the phenomenon of terrorism, the Bush administration introduced Iran as a destabilizing element and supporter of terrorism.

During his tenure, the concept of terrorism was an influential variable in the process of securing the nuclear program. But the consequences of the Iraq war and the developments in the Middle East caused the president of Iraq to take a different approach to Bush. With the area of multilateralism, he adjusted his verbal tone towards Iran's nuclear program by relying on smart power. Because he always resorted to punitive and sanctions mechanisms while creating an atmosphere of interaction and discussion. In other words, with a softer tone, he was able to impose a lot of economic and political pressure on Iran. The results of the Obama administration's efforts ended in the JCPOA. However, with the inauguration of Trump from the Republican Party, the aggressive approach of the United States led to a more unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA. Relying on the security of Iran's nuclear program, Trump tried to create a new model of regional security through the interaction between the Arabs and Israel.

After the end of Trump's term, Joe Biden put Iran's nuclear program and reaching a comprehensive agreement on the agenda during the election campaign. Given that his government has not ended and at the time of writing this article, the process of negotiations to reach an agreement is ongoing. The findings confirm that the Biden government considers the revival of the JCPOA as the first step to continue the American policies towards Iran's regional influence. This article raised a question about the aggressive approach of the US governments in order to reach the intentions behind the US. And the findings showed that the issue of oil, Israel, and threats from proxy forces close to Iran are among the variables that play an important role in securing Iran's nuclear program.

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