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**On the Edge of Dependency: Iran in the  
Foreign Policy of the United States,  
1979 – 2009**

*Diplomová práce*

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## Bibliografický záznam

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## Abstrakt

Málokteré země světa mají tak bouřlivé vzájemné vztahy jako Spojené státy americké a Islámská republika Írán. Od roku 1979 byla americká vojenská, diplomatická a ekonomická vystřídána sankcemi a projevy nepřátelství.

Autor diplomové práce *Na pokraji závislosti: Írán v zahraniční politice Spojených států, 1979 – 2009* vychází z předpokladu, že geopolitickým zájmem Spojených států je mít slabý, izolovaný a závislý Írán na periferii světového systému a usilovat o vytvoření heteronomní struktury dominance. K zodpovězení výzkumných otázek byla provedena kritická diskursivní analýza. Na základě konstruktivistického přístupu a teorie řečových aktů měly americké politické elity, aby dosáhly svých zahraničně-politických cílů, využívat komisivního jazykového projevu.

Analýza amerického politického diskursu nicméně odhalila, že Spojené státy od roku 1979 usilovaly o hierarchickou strukturu dominance nad Íránem. Dlouhodobá nestabilita americko-íránských vztahů tedy může být vysvětlena tak, že íránské politické elity odmítají normy, které se Washington snaží prosazovat.

## **Abstract**

There are not many countries in the world whose relations were as turbulent as in the case of the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Since 1979 the U.S. military, diplomatic and economic assistance towards Iran has been replaced by sanctions and hostilities.

Author of the M.A. thesis *On the Edge of Dependency: Iran in the Foreign Policy of the United States, 1979 – 2009* assumes that the geostrategic interests of the United States were to make Iran weak, isolated and dependent on the periphery of the world system, thus to enforce a heteronomous structure of domination. To answer the research questions the critical discourse analysis has been performed. Based on the constructivist rule-based approach and speech act theory the U.S. political elites in the process of meeting their foreign policy objectives should have been using a commissive language.

The analysis of the U.S. political discourse has shown, however, the United States since 1979 strived for hierarchical structure of domination over Iran. The long-standing lack of stability in the U.S.-Iranian relations can be therefore explained that Iranian political elites reject the rules Washington has been trying to apply.

## **Klíčová slova**

Spojené státy americké – Írán – Blízký východ – zahraniční politika – řečový akt – konstruktivismus – kritická diskursivní analýza

## **Keywords**

United States of America – Iran – Middle East – foreign policy – speech act – constructivism – critical discourse analysis

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V Praze dne 15. května 2014

Jaroslav Zukerstein

## **Poděkování**

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## Introduction

Once representing the example of the unlimited partnership and mutual assistance, the relations of the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran are today largely strained by mutual mistrust and misunderstandings. One can hardly imagine that in fact Iran used to be one of the closest allies of United States in the Middle East ever.

The history of the U.S. involvement in the Iranian political scene is, however, relatively short; the contacts were surprisingly rare before the World War II. The coup d'état that was organized by the British and American intelligence services in 1953 which deposed the Mohammad Mosaddegh government started a new era of close alliance between the Iranian regime and the United States. Billions of dollars flowed into Tehran as a direct investment, military aid or other support to modernize the Iranian industry and infrastructure.

The special relationship during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi between these two countries came to an end with the Islamic revolution in 1979 which featured an explicitly sharp anti-American sentiment. Since then, both United States and Iran pursued the foreign policy full of threats, hostilities and missed chances. Although the state of affairs is far from ideal, it offers unprecedentedly interesting opportunities for research.

The U.S. foreign policy discourse, which sharply rejects the Iranian nuclear program, criticizes Tehran for alleged support of terrorism and export of the revolutionary ideas and also accuses Iran for destabilization of the region, pursues various strategies how to contain the *Iranian problem*. One of the most important aspects of it is pursuing policies which feature various economic and diplomatic sanctions and other steps that intend to bring Iran to the international isolation.

Therefore, it seems necessary to ask – how do the U.S. administrations do that? What kind of foreign policy do they pursue towards Iran? Since the U.S. administrations consider the revolutionary regime in Tehran as an unfriendly one, the author of the thesis *On the Edge of Dependency: Iran in the Foreign Policy of the United States, 1979 – 2009* assumes that the primary goal of the U.S. foreign policy of the past thirty years has been to make Iran isolated and weak as much as possible, to turn down its aspirations, to put Iran to the “periphery” of the world system in order to deliver favorable outcomes for the U.S. interests.

To provide the most comprehensive and precise answer to the mentioned questions regarding what kind of foreign policy United States has pursued towards Iran since 1979, according to the author it would be best to apply the rule-based approach of constructivist theory and to perform a critical discourse analysis. Nicholas Onuf in his landmark book *World of Our Making* developed the theory that would enable us to determine what kind of relations, based on the language, agents pursue.

Onuf argues that three different types of speech act (assertive, directive and commissive) creates the rules for social reality and these rules yield three different types of rule which determine the nature of agents' domestic and international policies. These three different types of rule constitute hegemonic, hierarchic or heteronomic structures of domination in the world.

According to this theory the use of *assertive* statements, proclamations and descriptions towards Iran creates a hegemonic status of the United States over Iran. Rules that follow this constructed reality create hegemony or cultural hegemony as Antonio Gramsci defined it. *Directive* speech act constitutes rules that yield hierarchical structure. It creates a world with dominant/submissive relations among agents, emergence of imperial powers and client states. And finally when *commissive* statements are converted into rules, they reduce the agents' autonomy and create structure of heteronomous domination. Core-periphery order as defined by the dependency theory is the most accurate example of heteronomous structure of domination.

Therefore, based on this constructivist framework it is possible to formulate the hypothesis: *The United States wants Iran to be weak, isolated and dependent, placed on the periphery of the world system, to reach its own strategic goals. Therefore, as Onuf's speech act theory indicates, the U.S. official discourse strives for a heteronomic nature of relations, in which United States plays the role of the dominant power and Iran the role of being dominated. The U.S. administrations in the process of meeting their foreign policy objectives should have been using commissive language in the official political discourse.*

The nature of the U.S. foreign policy and the language used by American officials towards Iran between 1979 and 2009 provided the basis for the creation of a specific kind of rule under which the U.S.-Iranian relations operated. Application of a modernist-linguistic approach of the constructivist theory and a performance of a critical discourse analysis of the U.S. foreign policy will demonstrate what kind of

political attitude has been present in the Washington discourse. The constructivist theory and methodology will be explained in greater detail in the next chapter.

This thesis is meant to be a continuation of the author's previous work *The Making of a Special Relationship: Iran in the Foreign Policy of the United States, 1953 – 1979*<sup>1</sup> where similar methodological and theoretical framework has been used.

Because only American policies, approaches and language used towards Iran are important to answer the research questions and to understand the nature of dominance, mainly American sources and scholars have been cited and used as references.

While conducting the research for this thesis, the author has consulted a large number of primary and secondary sources, all of which cannot be referenced here. In the following paragraphs only the most important and relevant sources will be discussed and analyzed.

The outlined nature of this thesis indicates that mostly official foreign policy documents as primary sources, PR and media sources will be included in the bibliography. Among the U.S. primary documents the digitalized *The National Security Archive* (NSA) collection has been consulted during the writing of the thesis, as well as sources published online in the *Declassified Document Reference System* (DDRS) and in *The Department of State Bulletin* (DoS Billets), which includes press releases, commentaries and speeches that express the official policies of Secretary of State on various issues and developments. In 1989 the Department of State Bulletins have been replaced by the magazine *Department of State Dispatch*.

It is the speech act that many constructivist authors consider as one of the most important factors that provide the essentials to construct the social reality. The manner how the U.S. top politicians and other public figures talked about Iran, the policy they proclaimed towards the Islamic republic, the words that the U.S. political representation used in public speeches helped to define the structure of the U.S.-Iranian relations. Therefore, to provide enough evidence how the relationship structure had been socially constructed, the author analyzed the U.S. foreign policy proclamations as appeared in media. Different widely distributed newspapers and additional media outlets had been used for the analysis, namely *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and many others.

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<sup>1</sup> Jaroslav Zukerstein, *The Making of a Special Relationship: Iran in the Foreign Policy of the United States, 1953 – 1979* (Praha: Univerzita Karlova, 2014).

The author is fully aware of the fact that official statements and views on foreign policy have in many cases nothing to do with reality which remains undisclosed to the public. However since the basis of this thesis works within a constructivist framework this is not at all a drawback. Social reality is constructed in a discourse manner, so since the official statements are in time converted into rules and norms, they become “a social reality”. It is the use of particular language in official statements that matters. For the specific academic purposes of this thesis the official documents designated for public and media coverage represent a highly valuable source.

The U.S.-Iranian relations between 1979 and 2009 have attracted the attention of many distinguished scholars. Their monographs have been consulted while the thesis was being written, although the main research relies on primary sources. However, since many scholars and historians also used these sources (as well as other features, for example interviewing officials or policymakers) it provides value to their monographs.

Donette Murray is one of the American scholars who have written about the post-revolutionary U.S.-Iranian relations. Her book *US Foreign Policy and Iran: American-Iranian Relations since the Islamic Revolution*<sup>2</sup> offers probably the most comprehensive and balanced study of mutual relations since the Islamic Revolution and beyond with a strong emphasis on the contemporary security paradigm. Murray worked with numerous primary sources, documents and interviews, which make the scope of her research exceptionally complex and well-detailed.

All particular steps by the Carter Administration before and after the Islamic Revolution were brilliantly put into Cold War context by Christian Emery in his book *US Foreign Policy and the Iranian Revolution: The Cold War Dynamics of Engagement and Strategic Alliance*<sup>3</sup>. His study reveals the fast-paced dynamics of the U.S. administration policies from the collapse of the pro-Shah policy to the hostage crisis and represents a highly valuable insight into the emergence of the new era of the bilateral relations.

Sasan Fayazmanesh covered the topic of the U.S.-Iranian relations from rather different perspective. In her book *The United States and Iran: Sanctions, wars and the*

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<sup>2</sup>Donette Murray, *US Foreign Policy and Iran: American-Iranian Relations since the Islamic Revolution* (Taylor & Francis, 2009).

<sup>3</sup>Christian Emery, *US Foreign Policy and the Iranian Revolution: The Cold War Dynamics of Engagement and Strategic Alliance* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

*policy of dual containment*<sup>4</sup> Fayazmanesh follow the thirty-years-long evolution of the economic sanctions imposed on Tehran and the U.S. relations to the Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. The thorough and admirably extensive research of media to fully grasp the topic makes her book extremely useful.

Many other books by mostly American scholars were consulted during the process of writing this thesis. For example the rivalry of both countries and the political and economic warfare was the main theme of the book by Joseph J. St. Marie and Shahdad Naghshpour *Revolutionary Iran and the United States: Low-intensity Conflict in the Persian Gulf*<sup>5</sup> or the role of media in the formation of the policy and development of the relations themselves was covered by Melani McAlister in *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East Since 1945*<sup>6</sup>.

Last but not least, the author of this thesis consulted many books and articles by constructivist and linguist theorists to provide a complete framework of the fundamental research. This included books or articles by Fairclough, Kratochwil, Wendt or Katzenstein. However the theory presented in *The World of Our Making*<sup>7</sup> by Nicholas Onuf is the most significant one for defining the framework of this thesis. Detailed explanation of the theoretical approaches which this thesis is based on will be discussed in the next chapter.

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<sup>4</sup>Sasan Fayazmanesh, *The United States and Iran: Sanctions, Wars and the Policy of Dual Containment* (Routledge, 2008).

<sup>5</sup>Joseph J. St. Marie and Shahdad Naghshpour, *Revolutionary Iran and the United States: Low-intensity Conflict in the Persian Gulf* (Ashgate Publishing, 2013).

<sup>6</sup>Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East Since 1945* (University of California Press, 2005).

<sup>7</sup>Nicholas Onuf, *The World of Our Making* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2013). First published in 1989.

## 1. Applying constructivism on the analysis of the U.S.-Iranian relations

Since the late 1980s, when the Eastern bloc was about to collapse and the existing theories (realism/neorealism, liberalism/neoliberalism etc.) were not able to explain why<sup>8</sup>, the social constructivism has become one of the most dynamic approaches of the IR theory. According to constructivist scholars the socio-political international reality is constructed by human interaction and the world is therefore a social construction created by relations between agents of the international structure which is consisted most importantly by the states.<sup>9</sup> Constructivist scholars believe that the *identities*, *culture* and the norms discursively constructed by *speech act* are among the top concepts that define social reality.

Specific understandings, suppositions or collective memory are the results of internal interactions which define the identity of the agent. The concept of identity is essential to understand the distinction between agents and to define “the otherness”.<sup>10</sup> Various habits, values, models and norms constitute the cultural background of the agent. The culture motivates agents to take actions and use particular language through which they develop specific relations towards others; it determines the incentives for various behaviors of states.<sup>11</sup> Finally, through *speech act*, which is necessarily influenced by culture and identity, the norms in the international structure are created. Nicholas Onuf offers three different types of speech act. Assertive (instructive) speech acts inform agents about the social reality (I state that...). Directive speech acts request the agents to take particular actions, which are accepted as imperatives and commands (I request that...). Directive speech acts create social relations based on the threat of the use of force. Commissive speech acts commit agents to future actions. These acts involve promises (I promise that...).

These speech acts create rules and norms that yield a corresponding type of rule in international reality.<sup>12</sup> Onuf tried to redefine Weberian<sup>13</sup> ideal types of rule and

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<sup>8</sup> Petr Drulák, *Teorie mezinárodních vztahů* (Praha: Portál, 2003), 51.

<sup>9</sup> Vendulka Kubálková, Nicholas Onuf and Paul Kowert, *International Relations in a Constructed World* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1998), 3–21.

<sup>10</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), xviii.

<sup>11</sup> Ronald Jepperson, Alexander Wendt and Peter J. Katzenstein, “Norms, Identity, and Culture in National Security,” in Peter J. Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (Columbia University Press, 1996), 33–75.

<sup>12</sup> Onuf, *World of Our Making*, 183–184.

<sup>13</sup> “Legal, traditional and charismatic rule,” in Max Weber, *The Three Types of Legitimate Rule*, 1958.

applied them to the political society. These rules are hegemony, hierarchy and heteronomy.

To be more specific with regard to the topic of this thesis, according to Onuf's theory the use of *assertive* statements, proclamations and descriptions by the U.S. political elites when addressing Iran created a hegemonic status of the United States over Iran. If the statement (locution) performed by the United States is accepted by Iran (illocution), other agents get used to that (perlocution) the reality is created.<sup>14</sup> Rules that follow this constructed reality create hegemony or cultural hegemony.<sup>15</sup>

The concept of cultural hegemony applicable for international relations was developed by the Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci.<sup>16</sup> When the Americanization of the culture with its values, norms, perceptions, beliefs and explanations – the American *Weltanschauung* – is accepted as a cultural norm by other agents, the dominant ideology as a result is not a social construct that is beneficial only for the United States, but other agents believe that is also beneficial for them. This implied domination delivers the status quo as natural and perpetual.

*Directive* speech act constitutes rules that yield hierarchical structure. These kinds of social relations are based on the use of force. The statement which includes requests and threats of the use of force creates a world with dominant/submissive relations among agents, emergence of imperial powers and client states.<sup>17</sup>

*Commissive* speech acts involve promises on the part of the speaker (in this case the United States) in order to create obligations for the agents.<sup>18</sup> When commissive statements are converted into rules, they reduce the agents' autonomy and create structure of heteronomous domination. The Kantian concept of heteronomy inspired by Jean Jacques Rousseau is redefined by Onuf as the reality where agents believe they are independent, but in fact are constrained by the rules that constitute their reality. Core-periphery order as defined in the dependency theory is the most accurate example of the heteronomous structure of domination.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> More on performatives (performative utterances) in John L. Austin, J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisá, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962).

<sup>15</sup> Onuf, *World of Our Making*, 196–217.

<sup>16</sup> More on hegemony in Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (International Publishers Company, 1971).

<sup>17</sup> Onuf, *World of Our Making*, 196–217.

<sup>18</sup> Katja Weber and Paul Kowert, *Cultures of Order: Leadership, Language, and Social Reconstruction in Germany and Japan* (New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008), 27.

<sup>19</sup> Nicholas Onuf and Frank F. Klink, “Anarchy, Authority, Rule,” *International Studies Quarterly* 33, No. 2 (June 1989): 149–173.

If the author assumes that *the United States to reach its own strategic goals strives for a heteronomic nature of relations, thus in the process of meeting its foreign policy objectives should have been using commissive language in the official political discourse* and the analysis of the foreign policy speeches reveals, that the U.S. official discourse indeed used commissive language, it can be claimed that the U.S. policy has been pursued correctly and if accepted by other agents Iran would have been placed to the periphery of the world system successfully. If the hegemonic elements would be uncovered in the U.S. political discourse or if the analysis discloses directive elements in the U.S. foreign policy, the attempt to weaken Iran and place it in the periphery of the world system has been doomed to fail. However, the question of whether Iran actually *is* in the periphery or its placement there has been prevented by other actions has to be left for another research.

Therefore, in this research the U.S. official political discourse formulated by speeches and foreign policy documents represents the independent variable, whereas rules which it creates (hegemonic, hierarchic and heteronomic) stand for dependent variables.

Methodologically to accurately identify the assertive, directive or commissive tone in the documents and U.S. foreign policy itself, a critical discourse analysis as defined by Norman Fairclough has been performed. The overall meaning of words as they appeared in the documents and media has been taken into consideration and the context in which the words were used provides us with the correct understanding of their meaning. Thanks to the Fairclough's theoretical framework of the CDA it is possible to accurately determine how the expression of intention is projected into the words that speaker uses in the speech act, how the discourse evolved in time and how the discourse corresponds to the U.S. foreign policy ideological basis.<sup>20</sup> Critical discourse analysis has been further studied by distinguished scholars such as Teun van Dijk or Ruth Wodak.

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<sup>20</sup> More on critical discourse analysis in Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (Longman, 2010).

## **2. Iran in the U.S. Foreign Policy before the Islamic Revolution**

Historically, in the first half of the twentieth century, the United States had not been interested in Iranian affairs so much. It was rather Russian and British influence that determined the semi-imperial structure between Iran and outside world. For the United States it was an era of opportunity to build a positive image in Tehran, which was indeed met with success. The years after the World War II have shown, however, that the geostrategic importance of Iran is something that Washington should bear in mind. The beginning of the cold war, the strengthening of the realist thinking in the U.S. political discourse and also a broader interest in the region as such provided an incentive to become more involved in Iranian affairs. The pragmatic element was also present as State Secretary Cordell Hull told President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1943: “It is to our interest that no great power be established on the Persian Gulf opposite the important American petroleum development in Saudi Arabia.”<sup>21</sup>

The Iranian democracy was anything but stable. There was simply nobody within the Iranian political representation who could Washington effectively rely on – apart one exception – the Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. His relatively weak position inside the Iranian political sphere was, however, perceived potentially risky, especially in the turbulent times in the early 1950s. The dynamics of oil politics and subsequent nationalization of the whole industry resulted in economic and political turmoil. The provocative political maneuvers of Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh raised serious concerns in the U.S. political discourse. As the oil industry, the most important country’s source of revenue, was largely strained, Prime Minister Mosaddegh used a mild blackmail as a possible political tactic. He requested an economic assistance in Washington and if rejected, according to him, Iran would have difficulties to remain a part of the free world: “Without the assistance of \$10 million monthly, Iran would collapse within thirty days and the Tudeh<sup>22</sup> would take over the government. If the U.S. assurances of aid were not given soon, I would be forced to seek Soviet assistance.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> “Memorandum by John D. Jernegan: American Policy in Iran,” in *Architects of Globalism: Building a New World Order During World War II*, Patrick J Hearden (The University of Arkansas Press, 2002), 134.

<sup>22</sup> The Tudeh Party of Iran is an Iranian communist party founded in 1941.

<sup>23</sup> “Memorandum by Paul A. Borel, Office of National Estimates, Central Intelligence Agency, to the Director of Central Intelligence (Smith),” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1952-1954, Volume X, 328.

With such a controversial politician who directed the way of a region's important country potentially into a communist world, the United States engineered a plan – to remove Mosaddegh and give full support to the Shah who was understood as the only option of reliability and stability. The right time has come with the new Eisenhower Administration in 1953, when John Foster Dulles became the State Secretary and his brother Allen Dulles the Director of the CIA. On August 19, 1953 the CIA together with the British intelligence service executed a coup d'état which deposed Prime Minister Mosaddegh. He was replaced by General Fazlollah Zahedi, a military officer with strong anti-communist credentials and unwavering loyalty to the Shah.<sup>24</sup> The coup gave way to the consolidation of Shah's power and ensured that the Iranian political elite would stay away from the communist world. The new era of U.S. – Iranian strategic partnership had begun.

Immediately after the coup the economic and military assistance started to pour into Iran. During the Eisenhower Presidency the aid totaled for more than billion dollars, for military and general purposes combined.<sup>25</sup> The United States also assisted Tehran with the oil settlement – due to the political turmoil and nationalization the oil production basically ceased. After the regime change, however, the new arrangement had been settled with the structure that favored both Iranian and Western interests. The nationalized National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC, previously Anglo-Iranian Oil Company) still owned the oil reserves and facilities. For the operation and management on behalf of NIOC, however, the international consortium had been created – the structure was as follows: U.S. companies shared 40%, British 40%, Dutch 14% and French 6%.<sup>26</sup> According to the State Secretary John Foster Dulles the agreement was "...another significant step that has been achieved in the direction of a solution to a problem which for several years worked hardships on Iran, Great Britain and, indeed, upon the free world as a whole".<sup>27</sup>

In the cold war context Iran was highly important country for the United States with its massive oil wealth and geo-strategically important location. The Shah very soon realized that and during the late Eisenhower Presidency it was him who requested more

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<sup>24</sup> More on the 1953 coup in Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2008).

<sup>25</sup> Yonah Alexander and Allan Nanes, *The United States and Iran: a documentary history* (Frederick: Aletheia Books, 1980), 253–254.

<sup>26</sup> Paul Avery, G. R. G. Hambly and C. Melville, *The Cambridge History of Iran, Vol. 7* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 665.

<sup>27</sup> "Eisenhower Tells Shah of New Era," *The New York Times*, August 6, 1954.

cash as an economic and military aid – and should the United States refuse to provide some, he threatened Iran would have gone to Moscow for aid.<sup>28</sup> Shah's strategy worked, to American discontent, very well. The United States had no other option than to support him.<sup>29</sup>

Kennedy Administration slowly tried to replace the most controversial military programs by socio-economic ones. Later Vice President Lyndon Johnson during his visit to Tehran proposed a “shift from direct cash grants and heavy military budget support to long-range loans to spur self-help development”.<sup>30</sup> Also the Department of State raised some serious concerns about fragile sustainability of Shah's regime, identified the most serious threats (educated urban middle class who criticized corruption and lack of opportunities was the most imminent one) and prepared a fourteen-point program of reforms for Shah to adopt.<sup>31</sup> However, the Shah, a pilot himself, was yearning for cutting-edge aircrafts and other military equipment and preferred to pursue his own reforms, different from those suggested by Washington. He pushed through the series of economic and social reforms called the White Revolution and requested money from the United States for it: “If we are not understood by our friends and [we] do not get the aid which we need – what a gain for communism.”<sup>32</sup>

When President Lyndon Johnson came into the office the human rights imperative in the U.S. foreign policy had been slowly replaced by the trend which administrations before John Fitzgerald Kennedy introduced – the stability and progress of the Third World could be guaranteed by use of force. The Shah of Iran, who ruled the country with a carrot and stick approach, was a ruler who Johnson had always wished for and praised him as “a model for Middle Eastern leaders to follow”.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> “Memorandum of Discussion at the 394th Meeting of the National Security Council,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1958-1960, Volume XII, 626.

<sup>29</sup> “National Security Council Report: Statement of U.S. Policy Toward Iran,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1958-1960, Volume XII, 607.

<sup>30</sup> “Johnson: Tour Abroad Assessed,” *The New York Times*, September 9, 1962.

<sup>31</sup> “Memorandum From the Vice Chairman of the Policy Planning Council (Morgan) to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy),” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1961-1963, Volume XVII, Document No. 27. The program included: putting his family in Europe, reducing his military forces, removing most of the U.S. advisers from Iranian Government, withdrawing from his openly pro-Western international posture, reducing his personal standard of living, and the pomp and panoply of his lifestyle, appointing respected moderate Mosaddeghists to various positions or utilizing his personality to make constant personal contact with the middle class.

<sup>32</sup> “Shah Bids U.S. Help Make Iran A Showplace in Fight on Reds,” *The New York Times*, November 5, 1961.

<sup>33</sup> “Shah Welcomed at White House,” *The New York Times*, August 23, 1967.

It was in 1964 when Johnson Administration made a long-lasting impact on the U.S. – Iranian relations. The Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) that completely exempted American nationals living in Iran from being accountable under local law provoked so serious controversy in Iran and eventually led to the increase of anti-American sentiment in both secular and religious opposition. What the U.S. political discourse called an “unfortunate coincidence” was the immediate approval of the extended U.S. military aid for purchase of the latest military equipment worth \$200 million within days when SOFA was passed.<sup>34</sup> The Shah of Iran until the end of the Johnson Presidency received even more than that. Washington was fully aware of the fact that Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, an authoritarian leader, was a truly strategic partner who geo-strategically opposed the Soviet expansionism in the Middle East, openly supported the Vietnam war, served as a regional hegemony after Great Britain withdrew its forces from the Persian Gulf, opposed the regional leftist radicalism (Gamal Nasser in Egypt and others) and importantly – he also supported the state of Israel.<sup>35</sup> The arrangement had satisfied both Iran and the United States.

When President Nixon with his National Security advisor Henry Kissinger in 1972 visited Tehran, they announced a decision that had no comparison so far – Iran received a military “blank check”. Shah could purchase any of the most advanced military equipment from the United States even without review arms processes in the State and Defense Departments.<sup>36</sup> The value of purchased arms reached unprecedented levels; between 1972 and 1977 it was estimated at more than \$16 billion.<sup>37</sup> Washington needed to have a regional power that would serve for American interests as defined in the Nixon Doctrine. In Shah it had found one.

Nothing had changed when Gerald Ford became President as Henry Kissinger remained the State Secretary. Military purchases went on even larger scale than ever before. Some voices from the U.S. political discourse, however, warned that the situation was becoming unsustainable, but the policy has not been reviewed.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> “Current Intelligence Memorandum: The Situation in Iran,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1964-1968, Volume XXII, Document No. 79.

<sup>35</sup> “Letter From Vice Presidential Aide George Carroll to Vice President Humphrey,” in United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1964-1968, Volume XXII, Document No. 163.

<sup>36</sup> “Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Foreign Assistance, Staff Report, U.S. Military Sales to Iran,” (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1976), viii–ix.

<sup>37</sup> William H. Mott, *United States Military Assistance: An Empirical Perspective* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002), 166.

<sup>38</sup> “Iran and the Arms Trade,” *The Washington Post*, August 5, 1976.

### 3. Carter

*“Iran, because of the great leadership of the Shah, is an island of stability in one of the more troubled areas of the world. This is a great tribute to you, Your Majesty, and to your leadership and to the respect and the admiration and love which your people give to you.”<sup>39</sup>*

Jimmy Carter, December 31, 1977

Jimmy Carter followed policies entirely identical with those of previous administrations regardless of the rising political and socio-economic challenges that the Shah had to face domestically. Despite the extremely tight relations between both United States and Iran and also the high number of Americans living in Iran the U.S. intelligence during the Carter Presidency was not fully able to correctly analyze the situation and in its reports there were no indications present about the event that were to follow. The CIA report from September 1978 went so far in the estimates that “the Shah is expected to remain in power over next ten years”.<sup>40</sup>

This misinterpretation could have been caused by the focus of the intelligence on the Soviet Union and possible communist threat, since gaining the information about the religious opposition in Iran was outsourced to SAVAK whose reliability was more than problematic.<sup>41</sup> The only one who warned Washington about the serious troubles was the U.S. Ambassador in Iran William H. Sullivan who in his message “Thinking the Unthinkable” indicated that the Shah’s regime is likely to collapse and the United States should as soon as possible initiate the negotiations with exiled religious opposition, most importantly with Ayatollah Khomeini.<sup>42</sup>

His warning was not met with understanding. While National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski preferred a hard-line policy, voicing strong support to the Shah with his mighty military capabilities to suppress opposition, Jimmy Carter adopted his

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<sup>39</sup> William Shawcross, *The Shah's Last Ride* (Simon and Schuster, 1989), 130.

<sup>40</sup> “House of Representatives, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Subcommittee on Evaluation, Staff Report, Iran: Evaluation of U.S. Intelligence Performance Prior to November 1978,” in *All Fall Down: America's Fateful Encounter with Iran*, Gary Sick (I. B. Tauris, 1985), 71.

<sup>41</sup> “Brzezinski is Said to Have Rejected Warnings About Problems in Iran,” *The New York Times*, December 21, 1978.

<sup>42</sup> More on “Thinking the Unthinkable” and related issues in Charles Kurzman, *The unthinkable revolution in Iran* (Harvard University Press, 2004), 1–11.

own policy<sup>43</sup> of “voicing support for the Shah, but doing little more than watching, waiting and hoping,”<sup>44</sup> but after all, that was not his only foreign policy failure. Later, State Department officer Henry Precht claimed that it was simply necessary to do nothing at all, stating that the United States “could not pull the rug from under the Shah because there was no structure to replace him”.<sup>45</sup>

On January 16, 1979 the Shah left the country and shortly after the Islamic Republic has been established. The U.S. political elites were shaken and left confused what has just happened. The symbiotic era, when the Shah had preserved the U.S. geopolitical and security interests in the region and the United States assisted him to rule the country, was gone. When Washington realized that “Iran was lost” the Carter Administration decided that it is worth keeping the direction of the bilateral relations the same as much as possible – to balance the pro-Soviet tendencies in the region and to keep the oil flowing to the West. But it was a bit of a challenge since the insight of what was really going on in Iran was desperately missing.<sup>46</sup>

After first meetings and talks with new Iranian officials the situation, however, did not seem to be completely lost. The signals from Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan, Foreign Minister Ibrahim Yazdi or Defense Minister Mustafa Ali Chamran calling for “degree of continuity”<sup>47</sup> and desiring for improved ties with the United States were considered a proof that the new Iranian political elite could be eventually willing to preserve the bilateral relations. The positive development did not last for so long, however, as there was an element that the United States underestimated – the emotional and deep-rooted anti-Americanism of the revolutionary Iran and the level of its institutionalization.<sup>48</sup> The cautious pro-Western attitude of the Bazargan’s government began to be considered incompatible with revolutionary ideas and its political days were quickly counted. The sharp anti-American sentiment came to light shortly after President Jimmy Carter allowed the Shah to come to the United States for a surgery.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> “U.S., Short on Intelligence and Tied to the Shah, Decided It Had to Support Him,” *The New York Times*, November 15, 1978.

<sup>44</sup> “Carter Held Hope Even After Shah Had Lost His,” *The Washington Post*, October 25, 1980.

<sup>45</sup> “The Iranian Revolution: An Oral History With Henry Precht, Then State Department Desk Officer,” *Middle East Journal* 50, No. 1 (Winter 2004).

<sup>46</sup> Robert M. Gates, *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War* (Simon and Schuster, 2007), 128.

<sup>47</sup> Emery, *US Foreign Policy and the Iranian Revolution*, 98.

<sup>48</sup> Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert Owen Keohane, *Anti-Americanisms in World Politics* (Cornell University Press, 2007), 37.

<sup>49</sup> William O. Beeman, *The Great Satan Vs. the Mad Mullahs: How the United States and Iran Demonize Each Other* (University of Chicago Press, 2008), 130.

The storming of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and taking sixty-six diplomats as hostages have become one of the most significant events of the U.S.-Iranian relations for years to come.

What seemed to be initially a short low-key protest on November 4, 1979 turned out to be a 444 days long crisis since Ayatollah Khomeini publicly endorsed the actions of the extreme-leftist and anti-American group called the Muslim Student Followers of the Imam's Line. Also the general public agreed with the invasion to the U.S. Embassy. The State Department apparently lacked an institutional collective memory.<sup>50</sup> One of the hostages later stated that the U.S. involvement in the coup d'état in 1953 in Iran was largely forgotten in American discourse, while in Tehran the memories were "so alive as if it had happened yesterday".<sup>51</sup>

President Jimmy Carter alienated himself very personally to the hostage crisis. How he handled the situation did not give him much credit in retrospect, but it is fair to admit that the scope of the choices was fairly limited and the United States had very little control over what was actually happening in Tehran since the only intelligence base in the country – the embassy – was lost. At the very beginning of the crisis he strongly condemned the holding of hostages as "an act of terrorism totally outside the bounds of international law,"<sup>52</sup> made clear that "the United States of America will not yield to international terrorism or to blackmail"<sup>53</sup> and warned that if any of the hostages was be harmed, the "consequences would be extremely grave".<sup>54</sup>

Apart from the war of words the real measures were promptly taken. Within days from taking the hostages, on November 14, 1979 President Carter announced a first stage of economic sanctions towards Tehran – to freeze Iranian assets in the American banks.<sup>55</sup> Many other measures followed afterwards. Economic sanctions were massively broadened by President Carter in the sense that "all payments to any person or entity in Iran" were prohibited and the eventual transactions would have been considered by United States "as a criminal act".<sup>56</sup> All imports from Iran had been halted, most importantly oil worth billions dollars, as other imported goods such as caviar, rugs

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<sup>50</sup> Gary Sick, *All Fall Down: America's Fateful Encounter with Iran* (I. B. Tauris, 1985), 7.

<sup>51</sup> Quoted in Murray, *US Foreign Policy and Iran*, 30.

<sup>52</sup> "Carter, Denouncing Terror, Warns Iran on Hostages' Safety," *The New York Times*, November 16, 1979.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> "Carter Warns Iran on Hostages' Safety," *The New York Times*, November 24, 1979.

<sup>55</sup> Charles Nelson Brower and Jason D. Brueschke, *The Iran-United States Claims Tribunal* (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1998), 3–10.

<sup>56</sup> "Carter's Steps: A Summary," *The New York Times*, April 18, 1980.

or dates comprised only minimal share of bilateral trade. The U.S. citizens could no longer travel to Iran. The latest military equipment including, helicopters, warships, anti-aircraft missiles or spare parts for jet fighters which was ordered already by the Shah before the Islamic Revolution had been “made available for use by the United States military forces or for sale to other countries”.<sup>57</sup> The diplomatic relations of the United States with the Islamic Republic were broken on April 7, 1980<sup>58</sup> and have not been restored until these days. President Jimmy Carter also repeatedly used a directive language indicating that “some sort of military action against Iran would seem to be the only alternative if economic and political sanctions failed to produce the early release of the American hostages”.<sup>59</sup>

President Carter indeed gave a green light to the military action called Operation Eagle Claw, on April 24, 1980 which, however, resulted in a complete failure and public debacle as one helicopter and one transport aircraft were destroyed in crash, killing eight American servicemen and one Iranian civilian. Apart from human causalities the accident resulted in a serious damage of the U.S. prestige in the world.<sup>60</sup> And of course, the release of hostages had never been so distant.

The hostage crisis possibly had some broader geopolitical implications. Few months after the unsuccessful attempt to release the captured diplomats the Iran-Iraq war began. The violent conflict lasted nearly eight years, since September 22, 1980 to August 20, 1988. The United States since the outbreak of the war claimed to be impartial, but it cannot be said that Washington remained uninterested.<sup>61</sup> To have as much options on the table as possible, the United States was thinking about the reconsideration of the previously unfavorable U.S.-Iraqi relations. Some scholars even go so far that the role of Washington in the outbreak of the war, and most importantly of the National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, was totally essential. Kinzer<sup>62</sup> or Fayazmanesh<sup>63</sup> present some plausible evidence about the secret negotiations with Saddam Hussein and other officials of his regime in order to initiate the conflict.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Semira N. Nikou, “Timeline of Iran’s Foreign Relations,” in *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy*, Robin B. Wright (US Institute of Peace Press, 2010), 231.

<sup>59</sup> “Carter Says Military Action Is The Only Choice Left to U.S. If Iran Fails to Free Captives,” *The New York Times*, April 18, 1980.

<sup>60</sup> Michael A. Turner, *Historical Dictionary of United States Intelligence* (Scarecrow Press, 2005), 62.

<sup>61</sup> More on the U.S. involvement in the Iran-Iraq War in Bryan R. Gibson, *Covert Relationship: American Foreign Policy, Intelligence, and the Iran-Iraq War, 1980-1988* (ABC-CLIO, 2010), Introduction.

<sup>62</sup> Stephen Kinzer, “Inside Iran’s Fury,” *Smithsonian Magazine* (October 2008).

<sup>63</sup> Fayazmanesh, *The United States and Iran*, 12–27.

The difficulties and length of the negotiations to release the hostages seemed to be incompatible with the success of Jimmy Carter in the presidential election in 1980. Although the “America’s patience in the hostage crisis was not a mark of weakness but of exemplary strength”<sup>64</sup> was praised in the The New York Times, the electorate and the world regarded that as a weakness. The diplomats were released one day after signing the Algiers Accords, on January 20, 1981, just minutes after President Ronald Reagan finished his inaugural speech.<sup>65</sup>

In the end, the systematic political and economic pressure by Carter Administration brought the desired positive results in the hostage drama. Washington realized that the crisis eventually ended only when Tehran wanted it to end and therefore acted patiently, but still fiercely. President Carter and other Washington officials used explicitly directive language publicly.

There is, however, a message Iran claims to be sent by Jimmy Carter to Ayatollah Khomeini through Swiss Embassy in Tehran and Iranian Foreign Minister Sadegh Ghotbzadeh using words of promise and understanding.<sup>66</sup> But the United States denied sending such message.

The end of 1970s and early 1980s was a difficult time for the U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East and President Jimmy Carter personally. The failure to develop a clear and coherent policy before the Shah’s fall can be contributed directly to the administration. For the extreme limits of what could be done by the Unites States in Iran after the Islamic Revolution it is possible to blame the long-term trends of the U.S. involvement in the region.<sup>67</sup> The American public in 1980 showed the desire to replace what was in its eyes a weak head of state with toughness of Ronald Reagan who promised to restore the lost American pride.

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<sup>64</sup> “Strength, Weakness and Patience,” *The New York Times*, January 28, 1981.

<sup>65</sup> Hossein Alizhani, *Sanctioning Iran: Anatomy of a Failed Policy* (I. B. Tauris, 2000), 93.

<sup>66</sup> “Text of Message Iran Says Carter Sent to Khomeini Through Swiss,” *The New York Times*, March 31, 1980.

<sup>67</sup> Barry M. Rubin, *Paved With Good Intentions: The American Experience and Iran* (Oxford University Press, 1980), 252–253.

## 4. Reagan

*“A few months ago I told the American people I did not trade arms for hostages. My heart and my best intentions still tell me that’s true, but the facts and the evidence tell me it is not.”<sup>68</sup>*

Ronald Reagan, March 4, 1987

During the presidential campaign when candidates touched the foreign policy issues Ronald Reagan ultimately followed the strategy of pointing out Carter's incapability, failures and weaknesses. He promised to restore the prestige of the United States in the world which suffered a lot at those times. The weak prospect of Jimmy Carter to be re-elected was correctly expressed by various White House officials: “If we don’t get those people [hostages] out quickly and safely, I don’t see how he can be re-elected.”<sup>69</sup> In the end, the hostages have been released which could be eventually considered a success, but it was 444 days long-lasting impact on public opinion which largely understood the affair as an embarrassment.

In the final days of the election campaign the Reagan camp feared that if the hostages were to be released before the elections, Jimmy Carter would gain significant number of last-minute voters.<sup>70</sup> Many scholars argue that the Reagan team made a contact with high-profile religious leaders in Iran to delay the release of hostages after the elections.<sup>71</sup> Former Iranian President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr also later confirmed this speculation which the Republicans call a mere conspiracy.<sup>72</sup> If this story is true, Ronald Reagan prevented Jimmy Carter from getting the votes of large number of undecided voters; however, it is questionable how decisive impact on the results the foreign policy issues really had since the domestic challenges in the United States dominated the campaign.

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<sup>68</sup> United States, Department of State, *The Department of State Bulletin* 87, No. 2119, March 1987 (Office of Public Communication, Bureau of Public Affairs, 1987).

<sup>69</sup> Hamilton Jordan, *Crisis: the last year of the Carter presidency* (Putnam, 1982), 119.

<sup>70</sup> “House Inquiry Finds No Evidence of Deal On Hostages in 1980,” *The New York Times*, January 13, 1993.

<sup>71</sup> Gary Sick, *October Surprise: America's Hostages in Iran and the Election of Ronald Reagan* (New York: Random House, 1991), 12.

<sup>72</sup> “Bani-Sadr, in U.S., Renews Charges of 1980 Deal,” *The New York Times*, May 7, 1991.

In the early months of the Reagan Presidency the tough rhetoric of the election campaign started to become materialized – as was later defined in the Reagan Doctrine the United States tried to oppose the Soviet influence in the world by overtly and covertly supporting pro-Western political and military forces in African, Latin American and Asian countries with Soviet-backed governments. There were nine priority countries for implementation of the Reagan Doctrine and Iran was among them.<sup>73</sup> The geopolitical reasons why the United States previously supported Iran during the Shah's regime has not changed – the proximity to the Soviet Union ("the most dangerous potential threat would be a Soviet attack, perhaps at the invitation of some faction in a regional state or on a pretext designed to exploit regional instability"<sup>74</sup>) and natural resources were taken into consideration. The politics gained more dynamics and importance in the context of the Iraq-Iran war.

Still remembering the initial assistance to Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq during the first year of the war Washington realized that it would be indeed extremely unfavorable to see Iran's collapse since the Soviet Union could easily take advantage of that. White House therefore started to assist Tehran with some valuable intelligence.<sup>75</sup>

But on the other hand in the U.S. political discourse Iran remained one of the most threatening country, considering the another hostage crisis in Lebanon which was ultimately linked to Iran, Tehran-sponsored coup in Bahrain and the Khomeini's plan to integrate Iraq into Iran after the defeat of the Hussein's regime.<sup>76</sup> To reach the most desired balance and to prevent a creation of any regional hegemony the United States in February 1982 had removed Iraq from the list of countries sponsoring and supporting terrorism.<sup>77</sup>

Though officially the U.S. foreign policy in the conflict was a strict neutrality and it limited the involvement (as mentioned in the Algiers Accords: "the United States pledges that it is and from now will be the policy of the United States not to intervene, directly or indirectly, politically and militarily, in Iran's internal affairs..."<sup>78</sup>), the Reagan Administration started to voice support for Iraq more openly than ever before

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<sup>73</sup> Stephen S. Rosenfeld, "The Reagan Doctrine: The Guns of July," *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1986.

<sup>74</sup> "Reagan Asserts U.S. Is Committed to Security of Some in Middle East," *The New York Times*, October 27, 1981.

<sup>75</sup> Stuart Schaar, "Irangate: The Middle Eastern Connections," in *The United States and the Middle East: A Search for New Perspectives*, Hooshang Amirahmadi (SUNY Press, 1993), 183–185.

<sup>76</sup> Murray, *US Foreign Policy and Iran*, 43–44.

<sup>77</sup> Eric Davis, "The Persian Gulf War: Myths and Realities," in Amirahmadi, *The United States and the Middle East*, 257.

<sup>78</sup> Alikhani, *Sanctioning Iran*, 93.

since the Iranian victory over Hussein's regime was highly undesirable: "Reagan Administration officials said today that Iran's rout of Iraqi forces threatened the stability of Persian Gulf states and was creating a situation potentially more dangerous to Western interests than the unresolved Arab-Israeli conflict".<sup>79</sup> Undesirable Iranian victory, however, did not mean that Iraqi victory was desirable either. The U.S. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger described the Washington policy as "We want to see the war end in a way that does not destabilize the area."<sup>80</sup>

To achieve the balance at the time of Iranian offensive towards Iraq between 1983 and 1984 the Operation Staunch was launched to stop the flow of weapons to Iran from merchants of third countries "after the National Security Council concluded it would not be in the U.S. interest for Iraq to lose the long-running war between the two Persian Gulf nations".<sup>81</sup> The second measure to slow down the Iranian war progress was enlisting the country to the list of states sponsoring terrorism. Ronald Reagan declared Iran, Libya, North Korea, Cuba and Nicaragua "a confederation of terrorist states" that "had carried out acts of war against the United States".<sup>82</sup> In his speech underlining the fact that "American people are not going to tolerate intimidation, terror and outright acts of war" from the "outlaw" states that are "run by the strangest collection of misfits"<sup>83</sup> he explicitly mentioned the possibility of the use of force: "These terrorist states are now engaged in acts of war against the Government and people of the United States. And under international law, any state which is the victim of acts of war has the right to defend itself."<sup>84</sup> Such speech act can be considered directive since it implicates the domination enforced by force.

All this and more had been done "to engineer a stalemate"<sup>85</sup> in Iran-Iraq War. The United States, however, had to deal with another hostage crisis. Since 1982 Iran-sponsored Hezbollah in Lebanon systematically kidnapped mostly American and Western hostages, including high-profile officials and notable citizens like the CIA Bureau Chief William Buckley or American University of Beirut President David Dodge. The number of hostages totaled 96 in the years to come. Though officially following the "no negotiations" policy, the Reagan Administration in the summer of

<sup>79</sup> The New York Times on May 26, 1982, in Fayazmanesh, *The United States and Iran*, 28.

<sup>80</sup> Shahram Chubin and Charles Tripp, *Iran and Iraq at War* (Tauris, 1988), 208.

<sup>81</sup> Quoted in Fayazmanesh, *The United States and Iran*, 30.

<sup>82</sup> "President Accuses 5 'Outlaw States' of World Terror," *The New York Times*, July 9, 1985.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Bob Woodward, *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA 1981-1987* (New York City: Simon & Schuster, 2005), 507.

1985 started to negotiate the secret sale of arms to Iran, initially through Israel and later to Tehran directly, being fully aware of the illegality of such transaction.<sup>86</sup> The profits of the controversial trade were used to support anti-communist anti-Sandinista Contras forces in Nicaragua and the subsequent revelation of the scandal is known as Iran-Contra affair.

Therefore, in 1985 and 1986 the Reagan Administration pursued two official contradictory policies regarding Iran.<sup>87</sup> The first one – explicit policy of diplomatic and economic sanctions – was concurrently complemented by a covert policy of selling weapons along with Israeli intermediaries. The motivation to conduct such policies was not only to set hostages free, but the goal was much wider – one of the prospective geostrategic aims in Iran was an establishment of a more moderate government in Tehran and regaining some intelligence that was scandalously lacking in the 1980s.<sup>88</sup> But as later historian James A. Bill stated, the plan “involved wrong people (McFarlane, North, Teicher) advised by the wrong ‘experts’ (Leeden, Ghorbanifar) supported by the wrong ally (Israel); they went to the wrong place (Tehran) at the wrong time (during the month of Ramadan and after the US had tilted to the Iraqi side in the Gulf war), carrying the wrong tactical plan.”<sup>89</sup>

Within few days after the first leaks about the arms-for-hostages trade affair in November 1986 Ronald Reagan stated that his purpose was “to send a signal that the United States was prepared to replace the animosity between [the U.S. and Iran] with a new relationship,”<sup>90</sup> using more reconciliatory language towards Iran. “At the same time we undertook this initiative, we made clear that Iran must oppose all forms of international terrorism as a condition of progress in our relationship. The most significant step which Iran could take, we indicated, would be to use its influence in

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<sup>86</sup> Murray, *US Foreign Policy and Iran*, 51.

<sup>87</sup> Eric Hooglund, “The Policy of the Reagan Administration toward Iran,” in *Neither East Nor West: Iran, the Soviet Union, and the United States*, Nikki R. Keddie and Mark J. Gasiorowski (Yale University Press, 1990), 191–192.

<sup>88</sup> Marsour Farhang, “U.S. Policy toward the Islamic Republic of Iran: A Case of Misperception and Reactive Behavior,” in *The United States and the Middle East: A Search for New Perspectives*, Hooshang Amirahmadi (SUNY Press, 1993), 164.

<sup>89</sup> James A. Bill quoted in Lawrence Freedman, *A Choice Of Enemies: America Confronts The Middle East* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 188.

<sup>90</sup> Ronald Reagan, “Address to the Nation on the Iran Arms and Contra Aid Controversy,” *Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation*, November 13, 1986,  
<http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1986/111386c.htm> (accessed April 18, 2014).

Lebanon to secure the release of all hostages held there,”<sup>91</sup> added Reagan, using clearly commissive language as explained in the Onuf’s theory.

The Special Review Board, known also as Tower Commission,<sup>92</sup> had been immediately created to investigate “the circumstances surrounding the Iran-Contra matter”.<sup>93</sup> The U.S. Congress also initiated its own investigation. The most important issue in both of them was the role of Ronald Reagan in the affair. While the first one found out that President did not have knowledge of the trade, but should have better control over his national security advisers,<sup>94</sup> the second pointed out that “the shredding of documents by Poindexter, North and others... leaves the record incomplete”.<sup>95</sup>

The Defense Secretary’s Weinberger notes, however, indicate the role of Reagan, “he [Reagan] could answer charges of illegality but he couldn’t answer charge that ‘big strong President Reagan passed up a chance to free hostages’”<sup>96</sup> During the first three months of the scandal Reagan has not delivered any single speech about the Iran-Contra affair. In March 1986 he admitted that the “no negotiations with terrorists” was something which was not actually happening: “A few months ago I told the American people I did not trade arms for hostages. My heart and my best intentions still tell me that’s true, but the facts and the evidence tell me it is not. As the Tower board reported, what began as a strategic opening to Iran deteriorated, in its implementation, into trading arms for hostages. This runs counter to my own beliefs, to administration policy, and to the original strategy we had in mind.”<sup>97</sup> And what made the political scandal even worse, there were no hostages actually released. The significant discrepancy between uncompromising attitudes towards Iran formulated in public and the secret action rapidly slashed credibility of the Reagan Administration. The New York Times concluded that “even if the policy had succeeded in freeing the hostages, it would still have produced a failure over all”.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Named after one of its members Republican Senator John Tower from Texas.

<sup>93</sup> “Excerpts from the Tower Commission’s Report,” *The American Presidency Project*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/PS157/assignment%20files%20public/TOWER%20EXCERPTS.htm>, (accessed April 18, 2014).

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> “The Iran-Contra Report,” *The American Presidency Project*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/PS157/assignment%20files%20public/congressional%20report%20key%20sections.htm>, (accessed April 18, 2014).

<sup>96</sup> Christopher Hemmer, *Which Lessons Matter?: American Foreign Policy Decision Making in the Middle East, 1979-1987* (SUNY Press, 2012), 122.

<sup>97</sup> United States, Department of State, *The Department of State Bulletin* 87, No. 2119, March 1987 (Office of Public Communication, Bureau of Public Affairs, 1987).

<sup>98</sup> The New York Times on December 10, 1986, quoted in Murray, *US Foreign Policy and Iran*, 55.

It was the sincerity and predictability of the U.S. foreign policy towards the states in the Gulf that started to be questioned by local leaders. In order to appease the partner Arab states, most importantly Iraq, Saudi Arabia and other GCC members, and to underline the U.S. commitment to their security, Washington massively strengthened its involvement in the conflict. In the first stage the United States agreed to militarily protect Kuwaiti tankers passing through the Gulf and re-flagged them with the American flag. President Reagan then announced that “he will take action to protect oil being shipped in the Persian Gulf against threats by Iran or anyone else”.<sup>99</sup> And the action followed shortly. Because of the “unprovoked attacks on American forces and Kuwaiti vessels” that had been re-flagged in the Gulf, Iran’s refusal “to accept a United Nations-mandated cease-fire” and “the aggression toward ‘nonbelligerent nations’ of the Persian Gulf” along with continuation of sponsoring international terrorism Ronald Reagan imposed further economic sanctions that banned all Iranian exports and restricted the U.S. export to Iran.<sup>100</sup>

In claimed retaliation for the emplacement of mines in the specific areas of the Gulf during the war the United States in April 1988 launched a massive naval operation called Praying Mantis, striking two oil platforms and several Iranian warships. President Reagan publicly explained: “We've taken this action to make certain the Iranians have no illusions about the cost of irresponsible behavior. We aim to deter Iranian aggression... They must know that we will protect our ships, and if they threaten us, they'll pay a price.”<sup>101</sup> With such escalated involvement of the United States in the Iran-Iraq War the language had to be adjusted accordingly – the domination by force had prevailed in the U.S. political discourse.

Though the International Court of Justice later described the U.S. actions (destruction of the Iranian oil platforms) “unjustified as measures necessary to protect the essential security interests of the United States of America,”<sup>102</sup> the naval operation was one of the most important events that forced Iran to accept a ceasefire.

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<sup>99</sup> “Iran, the United States and a Political Seesaw,” *The New York Times*, April 13, 2012, [http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/04/07/world/middleeast/iran-timeline.html?\\_r=1&#time5\\_166](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/04/07/world/middleeast/iran-timeline.html?_r=1&#time5_166), (accessed April 18, 2014).

<sup>100</sup> United States, Department of State, *The Department of State Bulletin* 87, No. 2129, December 1987 (Office of Public Communication, Bureau of Public Affairs, 1987).

<sup>101</sup> “U.S. Strikes 2 Iranian Oil Rigs And Hits 6 Warships in Battles Over Mining Sea Lanes in Gulf,” *The New York Times*, April 19, 1988.

<sup>102</sup> “Case concerning Oil Platforms (Islamic Republic of Iran v. United States of America),” Summary of the Judgment of 6 November 2003, *International Court of Justice*, <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/index.php?sum=634&code=op&p1=3&p2=3&case=90&k=0a&p3=5>, (accessed April 18, 2014).

When President Reagan came to the office one hostage crisis had been solved, but another challenges, however, started to materialize. The United States in late years of his presidency largely lost its credibility and reliability, painfully regained in the first term after Carter's lack of drive, due to the scandal that overshadowed previous successes. The important documents and materials from the 1980s remain classified until these days; it is therefore unknown to the general public and academia what kind of language the U.S. officials used behind the closed doors with their Iranian counterparts.

The complexity of bilateral affairs, considering another hostage crisis in Lebanon, Iran-Iraq War and the process of strengthening sanctions, produced predominantly directive language from the top U.S. officials towards Iran. Apart from few occasions when the U.S. language involved promises and thus eventually trying to create the heteronomic structure of domination, the Reagan Administration given the generally directive language apparently strived for hierarchy.

## 5. G. H. W. Bush

*“Good will begets good will. Good faith can be a spiral that endlessly moves on.”<sup>103</sup>*

George H. W. Bush, January 20, 1989

Despite the large (and during the election campaign heavily downplayed) involvement in the Iran-Contra scandal<sup>104</sup> George H. W. Bush was able to keep the White House Republican. Regarding the U.S.-Iranian relations he, just as two presidents before him, had to deal with the situation of American hostages abroad. Having learnt the lesson from the Reagan Administration that overt “no deals with terrorists” approach and covert negotiations with them at the same time was too risky adventure to begin the presidency with; Bush committed himself to engage in talks only in a transparent environment. He carefully encouraged Americans to “make kinder the face of the nation and gentler the face of the world,”<sup>105</sup> and in the sense that the “new breeze is blowing” he summoned the Iran-linked hostage-takers to new setting of negotiations: “There are today Americans who are held against their will in foreign lands, and Americans who are unaccounted for. Assistance can be shown here, and will be long remembered. Good will begets good will. Good faith can be a spiral that endlessly moves on.”<sup>106</sup>

Bush continued to use the commissive language when talking about possible release of the hostages, underlining the assumption that Iran is not the one who took the hostages, but has the power to secure their release. Concurrently, the possible de-freeze of the Iranian assets in the U.S. banks has been negotiated. However, if it is Iran who has the ultimate control over the freeing the hostages, Bush “would just reiterate [his] view that the way to improve relations is to let them go,” and urged Iran to “give these people their freedom”.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> George H. W. Bush, “Inaugural Address,” *The American Presidency Project*, January 20, 1989, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=16610>, (accessed April 19, 2014).

<sup>104</sup> Murray, *US Foreign Policy and Iran*, 62.

<sup>105</sup> David Hoffman, “George Bush Sworn in as 41st President, Declares He Will ‘Use Power to Help People,’” *The Washington Post*, January 21, 1989, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/inaug/history/stories/bush89.htm>, (accessed April 22, 2014).

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> George H. W. Bush, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States* (Federal Register Division, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, 1989), 30.

One of the most anticipated, but also the most feared events happened on June 3, 1989 when Ayatollah Khomeini died. While the international press or reports by RAND indicated that the change in the U.S.-Iranian relations is less likely to occur,<sup>108</sup> the administration still had to bear in mind that eventual power vacuum in Iran would place a serious obstacle in the efforts to release hostages or it would increase the instability in the region. The power transition, however, had been smooth and the dialogue regarding hostages kept in Lebanon and frozen Iranian assets in the United States continued. But it was more and more difficult to avoid making the connection between those two issues and persuade the public that there are no negotiations with the state which was suspected to support terrorism. President's spokesman tried to convince the public that "[the U.S.] position is the same as it's always been, that we are not willing to link the Iranian assets question to the hostage question. That fits within the definition of our policy of not trading arms or money or whatever for hostages, of not paying ransom for hostages."<sup>109</sup>

That was the official discourse; however, the issues could not be handled separately. The promise of exchanging frozen assets for the release of the hostages had been considered, but had to be explained carefully. Such language was used by several senior administration officials: "...while we would not give a direct quid pro quo, we would offer some understanding or agreement that 'if you use your good offices to get the hostages, we will look favorably on your desire to get the assets,'"<sup>110</sup> avoiding the move to be called as "a deal". Publicly, the Bush Administration and President himself repeatedly suggested options that involved a military solution of the crisis, using directive language and threat of force: "Iran and a couple of other states have been involved in the state sponsorship of terrorism... it's a question of exploring every avenue to get these people back and recognizing that at some point we have to stand up for our interests, even if it means military."<sup>111</sup> The hostage issue, however, was a long-term run.

The major breakthrough came in the fall 1989 when the United States decided to return frozen assets to Tehran worth \$567 million. At the press conference Bush expressed hope that "Iran will use what influence it has to get these hostages

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<sup>108</sup> Nikola B. Schahgaldian, *The Clerical Establishment in Iran* (RAND, 1989), ix–x, <http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/reports/2006/R3788.pdf>, (accessed April 22, 2014).

<sup>109</sup> "Iran Is Reported Ready For A Deal To Recover Assets," *The New York Times*, August 9, 1989.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> George H. W. Bush, "The President's News Conference," *The American Presidency Project*, August 15, 1989, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=17427>, (accessed April 19, 2014).

released,”<sup>112</sup> which later happened indeed. First hostages were released in April next year after Iran promised to send weapons and financial aid to the group Islamic Holy War for the Liberation of Palestine in Lebanon where hostages were held. The transaction had been done by Mahmoud Hashemi Rafsanjani, a brother of the Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.<sup>113</sup> Not all of them, however, have been released. Iranian officials expecting some gestures of the “good will” from President Bush received in the end just a “low-key” response that signaled “until all of the American hostages are released, it will be as though none of them have been freed”.<sup>114</sup> It was not until December 1991 when the last American citizen has been released.

One of the other issues that had a significant impact on the U.S.-Iranian relations was the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 and the UN-mandated international action. The response of the Bush Administration carried out as the Operation Desert Storm was something that Iran welcomed on one hand and feared on the other. Tehran was able to witness a complete destruction of the military power in a neighboring enemy state (along with international community Iran condemned the Saddam Hussein’s aggression). As a result of these events some European countries reopened their embassies in Iran and the European Union as a whole partly lifted the sanction regime. The United States also eased the sanctions and allowed the import of oil from Iran, pragmatically factoring the possible shortage of oil in the world market caused by the conflict.<sup>115</sup> All that indicated that the “good will” policy took place, but for the Bush Administration Iran remained of a serious concern (and therefore there cannot be “the moment for good will”).<sup>116</sup>

The concern was caused by several assumptions. One of the reasons why after the Operation Desert Storm, although the Iraqi offensive capabilities were destroyed, Saddam Hussein remained in power was the fact that only his regime was understood as the one that could eventually balance the powers in the region and prevent Iran to fill the power vacuum.<sup>117</sup> It was also the alleged military build-up in Iran itself that caused

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<sup>112</sup> George H. W. Bush, “The President’s News Conference,” *The American Presidency Project*, November 7, 1989, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=17762&st=iran&st1=>, (accessed April 22, 2014).

<sup>113</sup> “Iran Reportedly Gave Weapons To Obtain U.S. Hostage Release,” *The New York Times*, August 9, 1989.

<sup>114</sup> “Bush Denies Any Deal With Iran for Release,” *The New York Times*, April 23, 1990.

<sup>115</sup> “U.S. Is Relaxing Its Ban on Oil Imports From Iran,” *The New York Times*, December 23, 1990.

<sup>116</sup> “The World; After a Fresh Look, U.S. Decides to Still Steer Clear of Iran,” *The New York Times*, June 7, 1992.

<sup>117</sup> Colin L. Powell, *My American Journey* (Ballantine Books, 1996), 529–532.

some worries. At the times when the CIA reported that Iran “is making progress on a nuclear arms program and could develop a nuclear weapon by 2000”,<sup>118</sup> the administration officials, considering the massive weapons proliferation in the region, realized that they “missed [it] once in Iraq and won’t do it twice”.<sup>119</sup> Moreover, in the election year 1992 George H. W. Bush was seeking reelection and ‘soft’ approach towards Iran is not something that would win the run-off. Tehran was therefore perceived by the administration as an “international problem” and “strategic enemy”.<sup>120</sup> George H. W. Bush in the end lost the presidential election, but most probably for different reasons than the U.S. foreign policy towards Iran. Although there was no hostage crisis and Iran became a bit less geo-strategically important than it used to be during the Cold War, the Clinton Administration had other challenges to face.

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<sup>118</sup> “C.I.A. Says Iran Makes Progress On Atom Arms,” *The New York Times*, November 30, 1992.

<sup>119</sup> “The World; After a Fresh Look, U.S. Decides to Still Steer Clear of Iran,” *The New York Times*, June 7, 1992.

<sup>120</sup> Patrick Clawson, “Iran’s Rafsanjani, the New Mideast ‘Darling,’” *The Wall Street Journal*, April 22, 1992.

## 6. Clinton

*"In 1953 the United States played a significant role in orchestrating the overthrow of Iran's popular Prime Minister, Mohammed Massadegh. The Eisenhower Administration believed its actions were justified for strategic reasons; but the coup was clearly a setback for Iran's political development... Moreover, during the next quarter century, the United States and the West gave sustained backing to the Shah's regime. Although it did much to develop the country economically, the Shah's government also brutally repressed political dissent.*

*As President Clinton has said, the United States must bear its fair share of responsibility for the problems that have arisen in U.S.-Iranian relations."*<sup>121</sup>

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, March 17, 2000

When Bill Clinton came to the office it could be objected that Iran had not been on the top of the agenda. Unlike many presidents before him Clinton did not have to handle the issue of American hostages in the Middle East and he personally has not been negatively involved in the Iranian affairs (though the State Secretary Warren Christopher had the Iranian experience from the Carter Administration as a chief negotiator in the hostage crisis which could be eventually interpreted as one of the most significant foreign policy failure in the U.S.-Iranian relations). Moreover, the prospect of change in the U.S. foreign policy approaches towards the Middle East was initially present; the Clinton's foreign policy team headed by the State Secretary Christopher openly inclined to multilateral actions and global economic cooperation rather than classical geopolitical calculus.<sup>122</sup>

However, latest intelligence reports<sup>123</sup>, uncovering the dynamics of the Iranian progress in the nuclear weapons development, gave the administration an incentive to

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<sup>121</sup> Madeleine K. Albright, "Remarks before the American-Iranian Council," *Federation of American Scientists*, March 17, 2000, <http://www.fas.org/news/iran/2000/000317.htm>, (accessed April 27, 2014).

<sup>122</sup> Stewart Patrick and Shepard Forman, *Multilateralism and U.S. Foreign Policy: Ambivalent Engagement* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 13.

<sup>123</sup> Michael Eisenstadt, "Déjà Vu All Over Again? An Assessment of Iran's Military Buildup," in *Iran's strategic intentions and capabilities*, Patrick Clawson (Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, 1994), 101.

adopt a less idealist policy. Clinton thus labeled President Rafsanjani a “dangerous man in charge of dangerous country”<sup>124</sup> and called Iran “an international outlaw”.<sup>125</sup>

Therefore, the Clinton Administration prepared a whole new approach to “weaken and isolate” Iran and “prevent [Tehran] from emerging as a substantial threat to Western interests”.<sup>126</sup> The offshore balancing approach has been replaced by a “dual containment” policy. This approach articulated by Martin S. Indyk, a director for Middle East policy for the National Security Council, targeted both Iran and Iraq – instead of checking each other, the United States decided to contain them both. The isolation would end only when Iran “halts its support for terrorism, curtails its military buildup, stops its subversion of other governments and ends its quest for nuclear weapons”.<sup>127</sup> Though due to internal problems Iran was “more vulnerable than it has been in the past,” Mr. Indyk warned that “this moment will not last long”.<sup>128</sup> The dual containment policy was, however, a declarative one and it did not require any active operation. The administration also had difficulties to persuade other Western countries to adopt similar policy towards Iran; the idea of multilateral approach was a challenging issue to materialize<sup>129</sup> and despite all the efforts by the State Secretary Christopher the initiative resulted in a complete failure. The isolation of Iran was also undermined by the U.S. oil companies. They were actually allowed to buy Iranian oil and sell it anywhere outside the United States. Speaking numbers, in the end of the day it was the United States who was the largest oil customer in Iran.<sup>130</sup>

The continuation of pursuing the dual containment policy was largely in media and academia considered as counterproductive. But despite the indications that the “[Iranian] regime is facing serious internal problems with no solutions”<sup>131</sup> and thwarted by severe economic problems the administration attempted to resuscitate the hard-line policy. The National Security Advisor Anthony Lake publicly described both Iraq and Iran as “reactionary backlash states that seek to advance their agenda through terror or intolerance or coercion and therefore have to be neutralized, contained and pressed to

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<sup>124</sup> “The World; Taking on Iran and Iraq, but Separately,” *The New York Times*, April 11, 1993.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> “U.S. Seeks Ways to Isolate Iran; Describes Leaders as Dangerous,” *The New York Times*, May 27, 1993.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> European countries and Japan offered loans while Russia and China supported Iran in deliveries of weapons.

<sup>130</sup> “On My Mind; The U.S.-Iran Oil Scam,” *The New York Times*, July 16, 1993.

<sup>131</sup> “Iran’s Difficulties Lead Some in U.S. to Doubt Threat,” *The New York Times*, July 5, 1994.

change”.<sup>132</sup> Encouraged by Israeli alarmist predictions that “the Atomic Ayatollahs” of Iran “will have the device in more or less five years” and assumptions that they are “not just trying to get one or two bombs,” but “an arsenal” since Iran wants “to be a superpower,”<sup>133</sup> the Clinton Administration decided to bolster the sanction regime towards Iran in order to contain it and respond to the uncomfortable pressure from a hawkish Republican Congress.<sup>134</sup>

Therefore, in March 1995, President Clinton issued an executive order that banned all oil contracts of the American companies with Iranian government. Specifically, this move prevented the Houston-based oil company Conoco from making a billion-dollar deal to develop new oil and gas fields in the Persian Gulf.<sup>135</sup> According to Congress, further steps were necessary. In next executive order just two months later, the Clinton Administration imposed a total economic embargo on the trade with Iran, the “inspiration and paymaster to terrorists”.<sup>136</sup> Bill Clinton responded “to the country's sponsorship of international terrorism and its active pursuit of weapons of mass destruction,” so imposed “the new sanctions [that] prohibit trade with Iran, as well as trade financing, loans and related financial service,”<sup>137</sup> explaining his move to “[his] fellow Americans” as there was nothing else to do: “Many people have argued passionately that the best route to change Iranian behavior is by engaging the country. Unfortunately, there is no evidence to support that argument.”<sup>138</sup> However, the desired effects were considerably smaller than administration would wish for. Mostly the European countries despite urges from Washington decided not to join the U.S. strategy and in the deal with the development of new oil and gas fields Conoco has been replaced by French Total.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> “Iran May Be Able to Build an Atomic Bomb in 5 Years, U.S. and Israeli Officials Fear,” *The New York Times*, January 5, 1995.

<sup>134</sup> Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: Resisting the New International Order* (ABC-CLIO, 2010), 52.

<sup>135</sup> “Executive Order Serves to Warn Tehran and Pressure Europeans: Clinton Says No Deal On Iran's Oil Fields,” *The New York Times*, March 15, 1995.

<sup>136</sup> “Clinton to Order a Trade Embargo Against Teheran,” *The New York Times*, May 1, 1995.

<sup>137</sup> 104th Congress (1995-1996) Senate Report 104-187, *The Library of Congress*, [http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/cpquery/?&dbname=cp104&sid=cp104opUwb&refer=&r\\_n=sr187.104&item=&&&sel=TOC\\_3981&](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/cpquery/?&dbname=cp104&sid=cp104opUwb&refer=&r_n=sr187.104&item=&&&sel=TOC_3981&), (accessed April 27, 2014).

<sup>138</sup> William J. Clinton, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, William J. Clinton, 1995, Bk. I, January 1 to June 30, 1995* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1996), 616.

<sup>139</sup> Kenneth Katzman, “Iran: U.S. Trade Ban and Legislation,” in *Iran: Outlaw, Outcast, Or Normal Country?* Albert V. Benliot (Nova Publishers, 2001), 128.

In the end of the Clinton's first term as a President most of his attempts were overshadowed by predominantly Republican Congressional actions. A controversial proposal formulated by Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich allocated \$18 million for the CIA to fund the covert action which was "designed to force the replacement of the current regime in Iran."<sup>140</sup> What makes this secret operation rather bizarre is the fact, that the plan was revealed even before the bill became a law and the operation actually started. The chances of any success were minimal. Iran subsequently responded with logical measures "to counter the Great Satan" and "to uncover and neutralize U.S. Government conspiracies and interference in Iranian affairs"<sup>141</sup> allocated \$20 million.

The promises of multilateral actions and engagement seemed to be completely abandoned with the law that President Clinton signed in August 1996 which impose sanctions also on the foreign companies that invest in Iran. Libyan and Iranian governments were described as "two of the most dangerous supporters of terrorism in the world,"<sup>142</sup> and the United States would fight "the enemy of our generation... alone, without its allies, if necessary".<sup>143</sup> And Washington was indeed alone. European countries, especially Germany and France, immediately condemned the measure and even warned to raise a protest at the World Trade Organization.

When President Clinton entered into his second term, he made some significant adjustments in the foreign policy team. Fully admitting that the directive approach of sanction regime which had not any "specific target beyond punishment,"<sup>144</sup> which European allies refused to join and had very limited effect on the Iranian research and development in various civilian-military programs, the State Secretary Madeleine Albright and President Clinton were therefore newly open to the possible re-examination of the policy towards Iran.<sup>145</sup> The most important incentive to finally go ahead with the revamped approach was the presidential election in Iran itself. The landslide victory of liberal and reformist President Mohammad Khatami was commented by President Clinton as "hopeful" and "a very interesting development," pointing out that he has "never been pleased about the estrangements between the people of the United States and the people of Iran" and wished that these estrangements

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<sup>140</sup> "U.S. Plan to Change Iran Leaders Is an Open Secret Before It Begins," *The New York Times*, January 26, 1996.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> "Clinton Signs Bill Against Investing in Iran and Libya," *The New York Times*, August 6, 1996.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> "Taking on the Mullahs," *The Economist*, January 18, 1997.

<sup>145</sup> Alex Miles, *US Foreign Policy and the Rogue State Doctrine* (Routledge, 2013), 69.

“can be bridged”.<sup>146</sup> It was a careful response initially, but the rhetorical change has become more and more visible.

In response to Khatami’s call for “dialogue among the civilizations” where “nothing should prevent dialogue and understanding between two nations”<sup>147</sup> the prevalent discourse in the White House slightly moved from directive to commissive tone. President Clinton “encouraged” by the “most conciliatory gesture since the Islamic revolution of 1979”<sup>148</sup> welcomed the proposal for dialogue and supported the idea of cultural and social exchange.

Secretary Albright initially did not share the mild optimism, she continued to call Iran as one of the ‘rogue states’ and the dealing with them as “one of the great challenges of our time...because they are there with the sole purpose of destroying the system,”<sup>149</sup> but few months later she abandoned the sharp rhetoric as well. The European Union at that time considered necessary to help Khatami in his struggle with the domestic conservative opposition. Therefore, to bolster his international standing Secretary Albright in the similar sense as Khatami in his “dialogue of civilizations” offered Iran to “draw up a road map leading to normal relations”<sup>150</sup> with the United States, but of course had some conditions such as increasing the respect for human rights, to end support for international terrorism and to provide a credible evidence that Tehran did not want to develop weapons of mass destruction.

When Iranian reformist President Khatami won his second term, the State Department interpreted such development as another opportunity to move ahead with gentle opening. In a landmark speech at the American-Iranian Council in March 2000 Secretary Albright admitted the United States were significantly involved in the coup d’état which deposed Prime Minister Mossadegh in 1953 and Washington subsequently supported the rule of the Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi who “brutally repressed political dissent”. She also acknowledged that the U.S. foreign policy towards Iraq during the Iraq-Iran War “appear[s] now to have been regrettably shortsighted”.<sup>151</sup> The

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<sup>146</sup> “Clinton Sees Hope in the Election of Moderate as President of Iran,” *The New York Times*, May 30, 1997.

<sup>147</sup> “Transcript of interview with Iranian President Mohammad Khatami,” *Amanpour*, CNN, January 7, 1998, <http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/9801/07/iran/interview.html>, (accessed April 27, 2014).

<sup>148</sup> “But Clinton Warns of Concerns About Terrorism: U.S. Welcomes Overture For Dialogue With Iran,” *The New York Times*, December 16, 1997.

<sup>149</sup> Robert Litwak, *Regime Change: U.S. Strategy Through the Prism of 9/11* (JHU Press, 2007), 31.

<sup>150</sup> “Albright, in Overture to Iran, Seeks a 'Road Map' to Amity,” *The New York Times*, June 18, 1998.

<sup>151</sup> Madeleine K. Albright, “Remarks before the American-Iranian Council,” *Federation of American Scientists*, March 17, 2000, <http://www.fas.org/news/iran/2000/000317.htm>, (accessed April 27, 2014).

United States then lifted some symbolic sanctions previously imposed on Iran, mainly aimed at small pistachio and caviar businesses. But to fully remove the “wall of mistrust” she repeated again that the Tehran’s policy regarding terrorism and weapons of mass destruction had to be abandoned, otherwise “fully normal ties between our governments will not be possible and our principal sanctions will remain”.<sup>152</sup>

However, with the end of the second term of the Clinton Presidency slowly approaching, it became more and more apparent that there was a considerable discrepancy between what had been said and what could be realistically done. In the United States the administration really wished to improve the relations with Iran; after twenty years of strong directive language the rhetorical change towards more conciliatory tone was substantial and promises have been made. This initiative (which faced, however, an opposition in the predominantly Republican and anti-Iranian Congress) was possible because of the rhetorical change in Iran itself; Khatami repeatedly appealed for better relations with the West and the United States, but due to the Iranian domestic political particularities his initiative reached its limits relatively soon. Although the massive breakthrough in the U.S.-Iranian relations did not come during the Clinton Presidency, the framework for prospective negotiations became less hostile and more promising.

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<sup>152</sup> “U.S. Ending a Few of the Sanctions Imposed on Iran,” *The New York Times*, March 18, 2000.

## 7. George W. Bush

*“[North Korea, Iran and Iraq], and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States. In any of these cases, the price of indifference would be catastrophic.”<sup>153</sup>*

George W. Bush, January 29, 2002

In the first months of George Bush Presidency, Iran had not been considered a high-profile threat and the slow progress initiated by the Clinton Administration continued unchanged. Moreover, the State Secretary Colin Powell felt upbeat in the new prospects of the U.S.-Iranian relations and believed it was “time to re-set the clock”.<sup>154</sup> The administration therefore started to work on the gradual reviewing of the policy towards Iran. Proposals were on the table – lifting some sanctions, that were considered “ineffective” anyway, or the end of making obstructions in Iran’s application to the World Trade Organization.<sup>155</sup>

After the attacks on September 11, 2001 there have been, however, some immediate adjustments in the U.S. policy – but not necessarily negative ones though. Since the United States and Iran had shared interests in toppling down the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, the Bush Administration started to analyze to what extent and through which channels Iran could have become a member of the coalition in the ‘war on terror’.<sup>156</sup> The cooperation actually has grown significantly, Iranian government agreed to provide aid and assistance to “any American who might be shot down or forced to land in Iranian territory, or who escaped into Iran”.<sup>157</sup> Other mean of

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<sup>153</sup> George W. Bush, “The President’s State of the Union Address,” *The White House*, January 29, 2002, <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>, (accessed April 27, 2014).

<sup>154</sup> Quoted in Murray, *US Foreign Policy and Iran*, 119.

<sup>155</sup> Kenneth Pollack, *Unthinkable: Iran, the Bomb, and American Strategy* (Simon and Schuster, 2013), 151–154.

<sup>156</sup> Alan Sipress and Steven Mufson, “U.S. Explores Recruiting Iran Into New Coalition,” *The Washington Post*, September 25, 2001.

<sup>157</sup> “A Nation Challenged: Tehran; Iran Dances A ‘Ballet’ With U.S.,” *The New York Times*, October 16, 2001.

cooperation had been under way at the United Nations through the Afghanistan 6+2 talks.

However, public speeches from either side about any positive initiative were virtually non-existent, because only secret meetings and 6+2 talks allowed “Iran to participate in this coalition without publicly losing face that it is siding with the United States.”<sup>158</sup> The open discourse featured much sharper tone, either from Pentagon to encourage “centrifugal forces in Iran that, with any luck, will drive that miserable government from office,”<sup>159</sup> or from Tehran where Ayatollah Khamenei, whose political authority was significantly higher than President Khatami’s, rejected any kind of talks with the U.S. and involvement “in the massacre of innocent people”<sup>160</sup> in Afghanistan.

In January 2002, when the slow and silent rapprochement was going on and the State Department was considering a further diplomatic engagement, the President’s Bush State of the Union Address made an extremely long-lasting impact on the U.S.-Iranian relations. Along with Iraq and North Korea, Iran has become one of the “axis of evil” states, because its regime “aggressively pursues weapons [of mass destruction] and exports terror, while an unelected few repress the Iranian people's hope for freedom”.<sup>161</sup>

The Iranian response was immediate. Not surprisingly, Ayatollah Khamenei described Bush as “bloodthirsty president of the Great Satan” and declared that “the Islamic Republic of Iran is honored to be the target of wrath and anger of the most hated Satan in the world,”<sup>162</sup> Iranian President Khatami and Foreign Minister Kharazzi, who so far used only words of reconciliation and understanding, denounced Bush’s speech as “bellicose and insulting,”<sup>163</sup> overlooking all the assistance Iran provided to the United States in Afghanistan. It was, however, only some smoke, not fire; after some official protests and refusal to proceed with 6+2 talks, the cooperation and talks have been shortly thereafter restored.

Although the administration has been receiving the intelligence about alleged nuclear program or links to terrorist groups, Iran was not the topic for the headlines.

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<sup>158</sup> William Samii, “Afghan War Without Iran Almost Impossible,” *RFE/RL Iran Report* 4, No. 36, (September 24, 2001).

<sup>159</sup> “In Louder Voices, Iranians Talk of Dialogue With U.S.,” *The New York Times*, December 10, 2001.

<sup>160</sup> Barry Rubin, *The Tragedy of the Middle East* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 134.

<sup>161</sup> George W. Bush, “The President’s State of the Union Address,” January 29, 2002, <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>, (accessed April 27, 2014).

<sup>162</sup> “Iran lashes out at Bush,” *BBC*, January 31, 2002,

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/1793856.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1793856.stm), (accessed April 30, 2014).

<sup>163</sup> “Iran accuses Bush of war-mongering,” *BBC*, January 30, 2002,

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1792767.stm>, (accessed April 30, 2014).

Given the situation in the neighboring Iraq, Iran necessarily became a lower-tier problem. There has been an initiative, however, later known as a “Grand Bargain”. In May 2003 the State Department and White House received a letter from Iran, sent by the Swiss ambassador to Iran. It proposed the end of the Iranian nuclear program and supporting terrorism in return for lifting sanctions and normalizing the relations.<sup>164</sup> After the “Grand Bargain” proposal the U.S. foreign political discourse can be described as inconsistent and different departments often took contradictory stands on Iran. While the hard-line Defense Department, Vice-President Cheney and Secretary Rumsfeld used explicitly directive language and “we don’t speak to evil” attitude, even suggesting the extension of war in Afghanistan to Syria and Iran, State Secretary Colin Powell personally promised deals, compromises and goodwill if the Iranian political elites become more cooperative with the United States.<sup>165</sup> But he was the only one; a mere official response was accusation of the Swiss ambassador for pursuing his own agenda and overstepping his mandate.<sup>166</sup>

Until the end of the President’s Bush first term there were just occasional “will not tolerate the construction of a nuclear weapon”<sup>167</sup> statements and it seemed that the administration did not actually know how to proceed with Iran (which might be very true since the entire CIA network of operatives has been by mistake sent to a double agent working for Iranian regime<sup>168</sup>). As Washington Post assessed, despite the bold proclamations about the “axis of evil”, Iran became in the U.S. foreign policy discourse “unaddressed”.<sup>169</sup>

This continued in a similar fashion at the beginning of the Bush’s second term; newly appointed State Secretary Condoleezza Rice decided to join the European efforts to initiate further negotiations. She promised to end the WTO membership obstructions

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<sup>164</sup> Kenneth Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: Deciphering the Twenty-five-Year Conflict Between the United States and Iran* (Random House, 2004), 395.

<sup>165</sup> Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States* (Yale University Press, 2007), 248–249.

<sup>166</sup> Litwak, *Regime Change*, 223.

<sup>167</sup> “Bush Says U.S. Will Not Tolerate Building of Nuclear Arms by Iran,” *The New York Times*, June 19, 2003.

<sup>168</sup> Richard L. Russel, *Sharpening Strategic Intelligence: Why the CIA Gets It Wrong and What Needs to Be Done to Get It Right* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 98.

<sup>169</sup> “What about Iran?” *Washington Post*, April 11, 2004.

to Iran in exchange for cooperation.<sup>170</sup> The threat of the use of force was according to President Bush “simply ridiculous”.<sup>171</sup>

The dramatic shift in rhetoric came after the Iranian presidential election in June 2005 (which Bush described as “a process that ignores the basic requirements of democracy,” because those “unelected few who have retained power... suppress liberty at home and spread terror across the world”).<sup>172</sup>

The newly elected President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in his first United Nations address (during which he was “surrounded by a light... and for 27 to 28 minutes all the leaders did not blink”<sup>173</sup>), speaking about injustice in the world, denouncing aggression, human rights violations and double standards, calling for global tranquility and equality, he expressed a criticism of regimes that “are trying to prevent other countries from acquiring the technology to produce peaceful nuclear energy” and declared that “all countries and nations are entitled to technological and scientific advancement... to produce nuclear fuel”.<sup>174</sup> Encouraged by another Ahmadinejad’s speech few weeks later, in which he quoted Ayatollah Khomeini that “the regime occupying Jerusalem must vanish from the page of time,”<sup>175</sup> at that time mistranslated and interpreted as “Israel must be wiped off the map,”<sup>176</sup> the U.S. political discourse embraced a considerably sharper and clearer language.

After Iran allegedly resumed the uranium enrichment and was reported to the International Atomic Energy Agency, State Secretary Condoleezza Rice stated there “is no greater challenge from a single country”<sup>177</sup> and the U.S.-Iranian rhetoric confrontation has been further escalated. Though Rice believed in bolstering the diplomatic action, more conservative administration officials (e. g. Vice President Dick Cheney and President himself) sought “to include greater consideration of a military

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<sup>170</sup> Murray, *US Foreign Policy and Iran*, 131.

<sup>171</sup> Jaime Holguin, “Bush: No Plans For Iran Attack,” *CBS News*, February 22, 2005, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/bush-no-plans-for-iran-attack/>, (accessed May 1, 2014).

<sup>172</sup> “Bush Denounces Iran's Election,” *Washington Post*, June 17, 2005.

<sup>173</sup> “Iran: President Says Light Surrounded Him During UN Speech,” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, November 29, 2005.

<sup>174</sup> Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, “Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran before the Sixtieth Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York,” *United Nations*, September 17, 2005, <http://www.un.org/webcast/ga/60/statements/iran050917eng.pdf>, (accessed May 1, 2014).

<sup>175</sup> “Lost in translation,” *The Guardian*, June 14, 2006,

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2006/jun/14/post155>, (accessed May 1, 2014).

<sup>176</sup> “Wipe Israel 'off the map' Iranian says,” *The New York Times*, October 27, 2005.

<sup>177</sup> “Rice: U.S. faces 'no greater challenge' than Iran,” *CNN*, March 10, 2006.

strike”<sup>178</sup> to turn down Iranian aspirations “to gain nuclear weapons and dominate the region”.<sup>179</sup> In order to prevent Iran “from having the knowledge necessary to make a nuclear weapon” and to avoid “World War III,”<sup>180</sup> although insisting on pursuing a diplomatic approach, Washington repeatedly refused to rule out a military intervention to cool down Iranian nuclear ambition.<sup>181</sup>

There has been, however, a very significant difference between what has been presenting publicly and how the negotiations have been actually conducted. In reality, the United States and Iran cooperated on various issues, especially regarding Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>182</sup> Also the intelligence estimates indicated that the threat of nuclear Iran is substantially lower than it was commonly presented; despite such assessment President Bush insisted that “Iran was dangerous, Iran is dangerous, and Iran will be dangerous,”<sup>183</sup> and completely ruled out any diplomatic initiative specifically with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.<sup>184</sup>

Regardless of the nuclear talks process at the United Nations the language of the U.S. political elites remained until the end of Bush Administration noticeably strong and directive. Iran was in the U.S. discourse “the world's leading state sponsor of terror,”<sup>185</sup> so the United States was “rallying friends around the world to confront this danger before it is too late”.<sup>186</sup> Though confident and bold in speeches, placing one red line after another, State Secretary Rice in her Wall Street Journal interview admitted the threat might have come from the unknown: “We don't really have people who know Iran inside our own system... We don't have Farsi speakers any more in the service. I mean we are not well positioned...”<sup>187</sup> Besides that, it was the time when the United States was highly occupied in Iraq, so the political and military capacity was in question indeed.

Since the Islamic revolution in Iran the United States has not used such escalated language and near-confrontation stances as the second Bush Administration. The military action, however, has never materialized. During the election campaign Barack

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<sup>178</sup> “In Bush Speech, Signs of Split on Iran Policy,” *The New York Times*, September 16, 2007.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> “Bush Says Iran Nuclear Project Raises War Risk,” *The New York Times*, October 17, 2007.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Dore Gold, *The Rise of Nuclear Iran: How Tehran Defies the West* (Regnery Publishing, 2009), 174.

<sup>183</sup> “Bush Says Iran Still a Danger Despite Report on Weapons,” *The New York Times*, December 4, 2007.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> “Bush: Iran threatens world security,” *CNN*, January 14, 2008.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Wall Street Journal Interview, quoted in Fred Halliday, *Shocked and Awed: How the War on Terror and Jihad Have Changed the English Language* (I. B. Tauris, 2010), 283.

Obama offered a “new diplomacy” and an approach to Iran “without preconditions”.<sup>188</sup> When elected, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad congratulated him, calling for “real changes, in policies and actions, especially in this region” and expressed hopes “the damage done in the past will be somewhat diminished”.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> John Davis, *Barack Obama and Us Foreign Policy: Road Map for Change Or Disaster?* (AuthorHouse, 2009), 62.

<sup>189</sup> “Translation of Ahmadinejad's Letter,” *The Washington Post*, November 6, 2008.

## **Conclusion**

There are not many countries in the world whose relations were as turbulent as in the case of the United States and Iran. President Jimmy Carter considered Iran as a pillar of stability in the Middle East. Washington maintained exceptionally strong economic, diplomatic and military ties with the Shah's regime. Three decades later the Islamic republic has been labeled as a threat to the global peace and the biggest challenge the United States has to face.

Various administrations treated Iran differently, but they had one in common – they tried to make its regime less hostile to the American interests. The most important documents that would reveal in detail how the bilateral relations actually operated are classified. However, by analyzing the political discourse it would be possible to determine in what context the foreign policy had been conducted. Deriving from the theories of distinguished scholars Onuf and Austin, the speech act has performative effects on the international structure and can define the character of the bilateral relations. In this thesis author studied the U.S. political discourse in order to find out what kind of language the U.S. political elites used, whether assertive, directive or commissive.

President Jimmy Carter found himself in a truly uncomfortable position. After the pro-American regime has been replaced by a revolutionary government and the American citizens taken hostages Washington had very limited options how to proceed. Even when some promises had been given (United States largely denies that), publicly the “no deals with terrorists” stance had been followed. Carter’s directive proclamations about a potential use of military action in the end even got materialized, however, they resulted in a devastating failure.

The Reagan Administration perceived Iran as an “outlaw state” governed by a “group of misfits”. The language used in public speeches has been predominantly very strong and in the end of the Iran-Iraq war the United States resorted to coercive actions. Open conciliatory acts were limited only to some particular events, for example the U.S. efforts to release hostages in Lebanon. It can be argued that during the Reagan Presidency there has been a discrepancy in the overt and covert discourse. In the light of the U.S. involvement in the Iran-Iraq War and Iran-Contra affair some promises were certainly made, but such commissive initiatives did not make the headlines.

Similarly, the G. H. W. Bush Administration has also combined some carrots and some sticks; the quid pro quo promises marked the beginning of the Bush Presidency. President himself envisaged a brand new diplomacy in the Middle East, but soft approaches rarely win a favor of the electorate. Iran officially remained a “strategic threat” and the directive language, complemented by occasional warnings of the use of force, predominantly characterized his presidency.

During the Clinton Administration the sanction regime has been significantly bolstered and the pressure on Iran reached its heights. Much of the initiative, however, has been taken by a Republican Congress, not the administration. The publicly presented approach included the “fight against enemy” rhetoric and the initial ideas of engagement came to nothing. The shift away from directive language, however, became apparent in the second term of President Clinton. The promises to normalize the relations have been raised within the “dialogue of civilization” framework and the United States acknowledged some wrongdoings of the past.

The dialogue continued in a similar fashion also in the early George W. Bush Presidency, but the rapprochement has been tailored mostly behind the closed doors. The first presage of the coercive approach has been outlined in the “axis of evil” speech, but the directive language has become a norm after Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected President of the Islamic Republic. In the post-revolutionary era there has never been such confrontational language present both in the U.S. and Iranian political discourse.

Different types of speech act constitute various structures in the international system. Author assumed that if the geostrategic interest of the United States has been to weaken Iran economically and diplomatically through sanctions and thus to enforce a heteronomous order (to have performative control over the change of the regime’s behavior, to initiate the regime change from within etc.), the U.S. political elite should have been using a corresponding language – as the theory indicates – the commissive one. Apart from few historical occasions when commissive speech act was applied indeed, Washington has been predominantly using much stronger vocabulary towards Iran. The research has shown that the articulated hypothesis cannot be confirmed.

Directive speech act creates rules that reinforce hierarchical structures. If accepted, the speaker has the ultimate authority in the international system. Onuf once indicated that the United States in the second half of the twentieth century was actually striving for hierarchical rule, “intervening whenever and wherever it chose in the name

of freedom and prosperity".<sup>190</sup> The real language used in the researched U.S. political discourse seems to be corresponding with his presumption. The structure is stable only when agents abide by the rules to preserve the hierarchic order. It could be therefore reasoned that the long-standing lack of stability in the U.S.-Iranian relations is the result of the Iranian rejection of the rules Washington has been trying to apply in the world.

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<sup>190</sup> Nicholas Onuf, "Constructivism: A User's Manual," in *International Relations in a Constructed World*, Vendulka Kubálková, Nicholas Onuf and Paul Kowert (M. E. Sharpe, 1998), 76.

## **Shrnutí**

Jen málo zemí na světě se může pyšnit tak bouřlivými vzájemnými vztahy jako Spojené státy americké a Írán. Zatímco Jimmy Carter pokládal šáhův režim za pilíř stability na Blízkém Východě, o několik let později je Írán označován za jednu z největších výzev, kterým Washington musí čelit.

Americké administrativy mezi lety 1979 a 2009 vedly různou zahraniční politiku vůči Íránu. Důležité zahraničně-politické dokumenty zatím zůstávají utajené, analýzou veřejného politického diskursu je však možné určit, v jakém kontextu byla politická rozhodnutí učiněna. Na základě Onufovy a Austinovy teorie tato diplomová práce charakterizuje americkou zahraniční politiku z lingvistického pohledu a snaží se určit, jaký způsob jazykového projevu americké politické elity využívaly.

Různé typy řečového aktu vytváří různé struktury v mezinárodním systému. Pokud bylo geopolitickým cílem Spojených států oslavit Írán prostřednictvím sankcí a vytvořit heteronomní strukturu závislosti, americké politické elity měly používat odpovídající způsob projevu (komisivní).

Kritickou diskursivní analýzou řečových projevů zástupců administrativ Jimmyho Cartera, Ronalda Reagana, George H. W. Bushe, Billa Clintonova a George W. Bushe bylo zjištěno, že převažoval odlišný typ projevu – direktivní, jenž vytváří hierarchické struktury závislosti. Pokud ji aktéři v mezinárodním systému přijímají, řečník se těší maximální autoritě a struktura je stabilní. Nedostatek stability v americko-íránských vztazích tedy může být vysvětlen tak, že Írán dlouhodobě odmítá normy, které se Washington snaží na mezinárodní strukturu aplikovat.

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# **Projekt diplomové práce**

## **ON THE EDGE OF DEPENDENCY: IRAN IN THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES SINCE 1979**

Once representing the closest alliance and being the example of the unlimited partnership the relations of the United State of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran are today to large extent strained by mutual mistrust and misunderstandings. The coup d'état that was organized by the British and American intelligence services which deposed of the Mohammad Mosaddegh government started a new era of close alliance between the Iranian regime and the United States. Billions of dollars flowed into Tehran as direct investment, military aid or other support to modernize the Iranian industry and infrastructure. The special relationship during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi between these two countries came to an end with the Islamic revolution in 1979 which featured explicitly sharp anti-American sentiment. Since then, both United States and Iran pursued the foreign policy full of threats, hostilities and missed chances. Although the state of affairs is far from ideal, it offers unprecedentedly interesting opportunities for research.

The U.S. foreign policy discourse, which sharply rejects the Iranian nuclear program, criticizes Tehran for alleged support of terrorism and export of the revolutionary ideas and also accuses Iran for destabilization of the region, pursues various strategies how to contain the *Iranian problem*. One of the most important aspects of it is pursuing policies which feature various economic sanctions and other steps that intend to bring Iran to the international isolation. Therefore, it seems necessary to ask – how do the US administrations do that? What kind of foreign policies do they pursue towards Iran? Since the U.S. administrations considers the revolutionary regime in Tehran as an unfriendly one, the author of this thesis assumes that the primary goal of the U.S. foreign policy of past thirty years is to make Iran isolated and weak as much as possible, to turn down its aspirations, to put Iran to the “periphery” of the world system in order to deliver favorable outcomes for the U.S. interests.

Author of this thesis believe that to provide the most comprehensive and precise answer to the mentioned questions regarding what kind of foreign policy United States has pursued towards Iran since 1979, it would be best to apply the rule-based approach of constructivist theory. Nicholas Onuf in his most important book *World of Our*

*Making* developed the theory that would enable us to determine what kind of relations, based on the language, agents pursue.

Onuf argues that three different types of speech act (assertive, directive and commissive) creates the rules for social reality and these rules yield three different types of rule which determine the nature of agents' domestic and international policies. These three different types of rule constitute hegemonic, hierarchic or heteronomic structures of domination in the world.

According to this theory usage of *assertive* statements, proclamations and descriptions towards Iran create a hegemonic status of United States towards Iran. Rules that follow this constructed reality create hegemony or cultural hegemony as Antonio Gramsci defined it. *Directive* speech act constitutes rules that yield hierarchical structure. It creates a world with dominant/submissive relations among agents, emergence of imperial powers and client states. And finally when *commissive* statements are converted into rules, they reduce the agents' autonomy and create structure of heteronomous domination. Core-periphery order as defined by the dependency theory is the most accurate example of heteronomous structure of domination.

Therefore, based on this constructivist framework it is possible to formulate the hypothesis: The United States wants Iran to be weak, isolated and dependent, placed in the periphery of the world system to reach its own strategic goals. Therefore, as Onuf's speech act theory indicates, the US official discourse strives for heteronomic nature of relations, in which United States plays the role of the dominant power and Iran the role of being dominated. The US administrations in the process of meeting its foreign policy objectives should have use commissive language in official political discourse.

Methodologically, to accurately identify the assertive, directive or commissive tone in the official documents and the US foreign policy itself, Wittgensteinian language philosophy will be used. The overall meaning of words as they appeared in the documents will be taken into consideration and the context in which the words are used provides us with the correct understanding of their meaning. Thanks to Wittgenstein's works and his concept of natural language it is possible to accurately determine how the expression of intention is projected into the words that speaker uses in the speech act.

If the analysis of the foreign policy documents reveals, that the US official discourse uses commissive language, the current escalated situation can be explained in the way that Iran has chosen to reject the heteronomic rule the Washington aimed at.

If the hegemonic elements would be uncovered in the US discourse, Iran obviously rejects the cultural hegemony of the United States; the American Weltanschauung and the U.S. foreign policy objectives are incompatible with Islamic revolutionary ideas.

If the analysis discloses directive elements in the US foreign policy, Iranian regime by its rebellious behavior rejects the attempt of Washington to dominate it as an imperialist power. Therefore, in this research US official political discourse formulated by speeches and foreign policy documents represents the independent variable, whereas rules which it creates (hegemonic, hierarchic and heteronomic) stand for dependent variables.

The outlined methodology, theoretical framework and thesis theme indicates that mostly official foreign policy documents as primary sources will be included in the bibliography. These of course include National Security Strategies, speech deliveries or highly valuable Department of State Bulletins. The author is fully aware of the fact that official statements and views on foreign policy have in many cases nothing to do with reality. However since the basis of this thesis works within a constructivist framework and social reality is constructed in a discourse manner, so since the official statements are in time converted into rules and norms, they become “a social reality”. It is the use of particular language in official statements that matters. Therefore, media coverage of foreign policy statements and speeches will be consulted as well; these include The New York Times or The Economist among others.

Besides the constructivist authors like Alexander Wendt, Peter J. Katzenstein and most importantly Nicholas Onuf, due to the topic of the thesis many other distinguished theorists will be cited; these include Immanuel Wallerstein, Fernando Cardoso and Karl Polanyi to address the framework of dependency theory, and Edward Said to define orientalist approach to postcolonial studies.

Since only American policies, approaches and language used towards Iran are important to answer the research questions and to understand the nature of dominance, as a secondary bibliography mostly American sources and scholars will be consulted while writing this thesis. These include:

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