

The Impact of U.S. Sanctions on Iran's Regional Influence (2017-2021)

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Abstract

This study examines how U.S. sanctions from 2017 to 2021 impact Iranian regional influence throughout the Middle East. It analyzes the issue using qualitative methods using Joseph Nye's theory of smart power (combining both soft and hard power). This study examines U.S. sanctions on Iran's regional influence during the Trump administration (2017-2021), focusing on the reasons behind these sanctions. Iran's activities in the Middle East include ideological organization, geopolitical ambitions, and deterrence strategies. Thus, the current study will discuss the Trump administration's "maximum pressure campaign," despite the criticism it has received. It also covers major events such as the assassination of Qassem Soleimani, the withdrawal from the nuclear deal, and the designation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization. This research critically analyzes these key events and explores domestic issues, regional dynamics, external pressures, and the causes of U.S. political and economic sanctions, along with their impact on Iran's influence in the region. Hence, the results suggest that U.S. pressure has strengthened Iran's ideology, while sanctions have worsened the country's economic oppression. However, the investigation concludes that the sanctions shaped Iran's role in the region and diminished its influence, but failed to change its behaviour in the Middle East. The study concludes with a discussion of Iran's strategy of adaptation and resistance, encompassing regional political relationships and economic growth.

Keyword: U.S. Sanctions, Iranian Proxies, Trump Administration, Middle East, Maximum Pressure Campaign.

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Introduction

During the Trump administration (2017–2021), US-Iranian ties drastically deteriorated due to a complex interplay of ideological disagreements, geopolitical aspirations, and the influence of Iranian proxies across the Middle East. ‘Maximum Pressure Campaign’ and New Sanctions During this period, this administration embarked on its “Maximum Pressure Campaign,” exerting wide-ranging economic and political constraints to restrict the Iranian nuclear program and regional dominance, and to curtail support for the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and other terrorist groups. The assassination of Gen Qassem Soleimani, the US exit from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and imposition of crushing sanctions marked the main themes of this period, which greatly shaped the Iranian economy, regional status, and strategic calculus under centrifugally increasing internal and external duress. The Maximum Pressure Campaign aimed to diminish Iran's influence, but it also stimulated

changes in Iran's economic policies, fostered new political partnerships, and sought regional collaboration to demonstrate its resilience to U.S. policy.

Statement of the Problem

The main game in the Middle East is the US-Iran rivalry and also the Iran-Israel rivalry. The region is one of the most strategically and politically sensitive places on the earth. One major flashpoint is the hostility between the United States and Iran, resulting in a series of direct as well as proxy conflicts over the last decade. These problems are directly related to peace and security in the Middle East.

Another problem is that the United States considers Iran a threat to regional peace, and their relationship often involves the possibility of war. A major concern is that Iran could develop nuclear weapons, which could pose a threat to neighbouring countries.

However, another issue is that Iran has been developing its ballistic missile program to increase its regional power and influence. The United States and allies view this as a threat to the Middle East. And the persistence of sanctions contributes to the further escalation of their conflicts, most notably, the assassination of Qasem Suleimani and the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA and adoption of a maximum pressure campaign against Iran. All these problems have been referred to are challenges that can be described as huge, and with that, aspersions about sanctions have been made by various actors to contain the influence of Iran in the region.

Significance of the Research

This research is vital as it contributes in understanding the complex nature of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, particularly concerning Iran's influence in the area. By examining various tactics, such as maintaining stability, protecting

oil interests, and promoting democracy, this study illustrates how the U.S. employs a multifaceted strategy. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of grasping the broader context of global politics and how U.S. actions impact regional issues, especially those related to terrorism and the security of its allies.

The study provides significant insights into the impact of economic pressures on regional power dynamics. This understanding is essential for policymakers, emphasizing the need for a thoughtful and strategic approach to American foreign policy in the Middle East. Grasping these implications is crucial for shaping the future of U.S. policies. In other words, this research sheds light on the region's complex ties and the challenges Washington faces as the politics there shift underneath its feet. Additionally, an analysis of U.S. sanctions on Iran's regional activities helps us understand how such activities influence Tehran's entanglements with proxy groups and neighboring states.

This study also examines the lasting effects of U.S. sanctions on regional actors like Iraq and Syria, as well as their broader implications for stability in the Arab world. Additionally, it is vital to analyze the types of sanctions imposed on Iran and their impact on its dominance in the region. These sanctions cover various dimensions, such as political, economic, and military factors. A comprehensive understanding of these different aspects of sanctions is essential for evaluating their effectiveness in limiting Iran's influence and dominance in the Middle East.

Aims of the Study

The research attempts to assess the impact of U.S sanctions on Iranian regional influence: 2017-2021. Thus, the main objective of this research is to evaluate the effect of the political and economic sanctions on the regional power of Iran. The study aims to assess how Iran's ability to impact the Middle East has been directly and indirectly affected by the sanctions. The following are the

principal objectives of the study:

- To evaluate the impact of US sanctions on Iran's regional influence, consider how sanctions imposed during the trump presidency, particularly those targeting the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and the nuclear deal, have changed Iran's military power and political influence in the Arab world.
- To understand how sanctions have altered Iran's influence in the Middle East: This objective examines the impact of sanctions imposed during the Trump administration on Iran's regional influence. It will explore how these sanctions have affected Iran's ability to collaborate with its allies and support organizations abroad.

Research Questions

The Main question of the study: How have U.S. sanctions from 2009 to 2024 impacted Iran's regional influence in the Middle East?

Sub-question of the study: How have U.S. sanctions from 2017 to 2024 impacted Iran's regional influence in the Middle East?

Methodology

Generally, the study adopts a qualitative approach to answer the question of the study. For this, the researcher uses both Primary sources and secondary sources to deal with the influence of U.S. sanctions on Iran on regional power. The research methodology, which uses a qualitative approach for this study, involves the researcher conducting 6 structured interviews with academic professionals. Interviews followed a structured format to ensure consistency in data collection and analysis. the study seeks to uncover the complexities of decision-making and strategic responses. Complemented by scholarly analyses and historical context, this multifaceted approach provides a comprehensive understanding of how sanctions have impacted Iran's regional influence.

Literature Review

Sanctions, used to resolve international and regional conflicts, have a profound impact on countries' economies, politics, and societies. Iran has been subject to US sanctions for decades, impacting its struggle for regional hegemony. This study examines the political and economic impact of sanctions on Iranian policies. According to Joukar and Sazmand in 2020, "The Role of Regional Powers in Shaping the Middle East Security Order (2003 To 2011)", in their article, both of them examine the role of regional powers in shaping the security order in the Middle East from 2003 to 2011. It argues that the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 disrupted the balance of power in the region, leading to the rise of Iran's regional influence. In response, other regional powers such as Saudi Arabia and Turkey sought to counter Iran's growing power and shape a new regional security order. The article analyzes the foreign policy orientations and regional roles of Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey during this period. It shows how Iran tried to expand its regional influence by supporting Shiite groups in the region.

However, Qader (2014), published an article entitled "The impact of U.S. Trade and Financial Sanctions on Iran" examining the impact of U.S. sanctions on the Iranian economy and people, with a particular focus on the oil sector. The article argues that while sanctions have caused significant hardship for the Iranian economy and people, they have failed to change the Iranian government's policies regarding its nuclear program until sanctions targeted the oil sector more severely. The sanctions led to a decline in Iranian oil production and exports, as well as a decline in the government's oil revenues, which ultimately forced Iran to negotiate and reach an interim agreement with the West in 2013. Additionally, Abdelbary and Elshawa (2023), in their study entitled "Economic Sanctions as a Foreign Policy Tool: A Case Study of the Iran-West Conflict," examined the impact of economic sanctions on Iran's economy, society, and regional influence.

The study found out that sanctions have reduced GDP, increased instability, and reduced foreign investment. Although sanctions have limited Iran's nuclear program, they have not stopped it entirely. The study suggests that policymakers use multilateral sanctions and diplomatic strategies to limit civilian influence and support moderate candidates in Iranian elections (Abdelbary & ELshawa, 2023).

Finally, Yazdizadeh (2021), in his book "The Art of Defeating Sanctions," emphasizes that sanctions are a tool for exerting political and economic pressure, but they can be defeated with strategy and planning. Citing historical and economic experiences, he argues that Iran can overcome the challenges posed by sanctions by strengthening the resistance economy, developing non-dependent international relations, and employing domestic technology.

Thus, a notable gap in the literature is the lack of analysis regarding the influence of these sanctions on Iran's regional influence in the Middle East. While sanctions are intended to weaken Iran's influence, the implications for its regional power dynamics remain unexplored. Understanding how these measures affect Iran's strategic position and relationships within the Middle East is crucial in understanding the broader geopolitical landscape. Therefore, during the writing of this direct research, the researcher came to work on The Impact of U.S. Sanctions on Iran's Regional Influence.

Theoretical Framework: Joseph Nye's Smart Power Theory

Smart power combines hard and soft power, focusing on strengthening community ties and exploring cleaner energy options. It emerged after the Cold War, influencing various groups and categorizing power into soft and hard power in international relations (Erdil, 2022). This theory is particularly important for addressing complex global challenges, enhancing stability, and bolstering the state's global standing by fostering cooperative relations while retaining the capacity to act decisively when necessary. In recent years, three successive U.S.

administrations have employed a mix of diplomatic and economic sanctions, along with occasional military strikes, targeting Iran and its influence in the region. A successful sanctions strategy, according to Joseph Nye, requires a two-pronged approach: implementing economic penalties and employing sanctions diplomacy to isolate Iran geopolitically. This strategy aims to counter Iran's support for terrorist groups and their proxies in the region, thereby seeking to undermine its regional influence (Erdil, 2022).

A key component is smart power theory, which examines how U.S. sanctions affect Iran's regional influence by incorporating hard power and soft power strategies. After Donald Trump was elected to office, one of the main sanctions affecting Iran's regional influence was implemented. Trump accused Obama of allowing more uranium enrichment, and this policy did not continue as before. As a result, the United States completely snubbed the original deal and applied brutal sanctions on Iran in a phase-by-phase manner through a hard power mindset. This is what smart power looks like. The effects of United States sanctions on Iranian regional power could be analyzed using the concept of smart power; it combines both hard and soft power to develop a more optimal policy. Economic pressure from the US, on the other hand, acts as soft power (equivalent to Richard's term) to coerce Iran into adhering to international norms in the context of its regional and nuclear activities. These sanctions have caused significant economic pressure on Iran, restricting its ability to exert military leverage over the region and affecting its power over allies and proxies in the region (Albarasneh et al, 2019).

US-Iran Relations during the Period of the Trump Administration (2017-2021)

The Obama administration lifted sanctions on Iran and sought to integrate it into the regional political equation, aiming to alter its behavior and policies. However, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency, "Iran has 274.8 kilograms of enriched uranium, 60 percent," the IAEA reported (Institute for Science International Security, 2024). Iran capitalized on the softened American stance and the lifting of economic sanctions, attempting, contrary to expectations, to impose its influence and hegemony over the regional countries. The deterioration in the security situation in the region as a result of the Arab Spring, the emergence of ISIS, and the intensification of sectarian strife presented Iran with a golden opportunity to quickly entrench itself in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Lebanon simultaneously, it also advanced toward fulfilling a long-cherished ambition the Shiite Crescent. But the Trump administration's approach to U.S.-Iran relations was a dramatic departure from previous negotiations, reshaping the power equations in the Middle East. Its new approach was underpinned by a full withdrawal from the (JCPOA), the Obama-era multilateral nuclear deal. The United States unilaterally withdrew the agreement in May 2018, marking a major change in its Iran policy. Trump's outlook on foreign policy was informed by a brand of right-wing populism that has always been against engagement with Iran. By and large, people see Trump's foreign policy as strong on Iran. But it could not ignore the geopolitical facts on the ground in the Middle East, the reality of Iran's vast presence in the region, right from Beirut, Baghdad, Damascus, to Sana'a (Saeed, 2017).

However, the Trump administration's tough stance on Iran has primarily aimed at changing Iran's behavior and policies both at home and abroad, rather than altering or overthrowing the political system in Tehran. U.S. officials have been particularly clear that they have no secret plans to topple the Iranian regime by military force. Instead, the United States' main goal is for the Iranian

authorities to adopt a new policy at the domestic and international levels and reassess their current approach. In this context, on April 22, 2019, the Trump administration released a statement that insisted on putting pressure on Iran and isolating it, explaining that those campaigns aim to force a behavior and a policy change on Tehran in the region. The reason for this is that the Trump administration, unlike former US president Barack Obama, is convinced that Iran's expansion in the Middle East, where it had become the leading regional power, presents a real risk to the United States. and its allies, including Israel, Saudi, Egypt and others, as Obama was criticized for being pinned to the wall due to an interventionist policy that put him practically at war with multiple Arab capitals (Hetoti, 2021).

Iranian Proxies in the Middle East and their Influence

While Trump's maximum pressure campaign inflicted immediate economic hardship on Iran, the long-term implications remain uncertain. Additionally, prolonged economic hardship could either weaken Iran's regional influence or lead to greater instability within the country, potentially forcing the regime to adopt even more aggressive foreign policies to maintain domestic legitimacy. Iran has a network of proxies across the Middle East; Tehran has allies in more than a dozen major militias, some tied to political parties, that have menaced both their domestic government and those in their neighborhood. The groups have armed, trained, and funded militias and political movements in at least six countries: Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon, the Palestinian territories, Syria, and Yemen (Allen, 2023).

In contrast, Iran's use of proxy forces in the Middle East has become a central strategy for expanding its influence and achieving regional goals. This approach allows Iran to engage in asymmetric warfare, leveraging local non-state actors to counter perceived threats, particularly from the U.S and supporters. As these

Iranian proxies extend Iran's strategic reach, they disrupt established state dynamics, significantly impacting the Middle East's regional power balance. By employing this proxy strategy, Iran can project power, dissuade enemies, and establish a network of influence across multiple nations, shifting regional alliances and conflicts (Ahmadzadeh, 2024). Iranian-backed proxies in the Middle East continue to pose an active threat to stability, American national security, and peaceful self-governance in the Middle East. Strategically speaking, Iran has used its proxy organizations in innovative ways to gain political and military power (Hollingshead, 2018). Iran values its use of proxies in the Middle East above all for geopolitical, ideological, and most recently strategic reasons in its pursuit of regional power and influence in ways that avoid conventional military conflict against perceived threats. Iran has successfully projected its influence along three different lines, even as the U.S. and its enemies in the Middle East conspired to make its march forward very difficult. This is why the U.S. keeps such a close watch on Iran's activities inside its borders and around the world. These are the three tactics that Iran uses in the Middle East. The U.S. has imposed the most sanctions on Iran, especially during Trump's tenure. The three different strategies are:

Ideological Alignment, Geopolitical Ambitions and Strategic Deterrence

Iran's ideological alignment in the Middle East is primarily characterized by its promotion of Shia Islam and revolutionary principles, which serve as a counterbalance to Sunni powers, particularly Saudi Arabia. This ideological contestation has significant implications for regional politics, influencing conflicts and alliances across the Middle East. Iran's support for these resistance movements is multilateral and provides military, financial, and ideological assistance. This support not only strengthens these groups but also enables Iran to project power beyond its borders and challenge the influence of Saudi Arabia

and other Gulf states that adhere to Wahhabi Islam. The Iranian regime's commitment to counter-hegemonic forces is evident in its strategic alliances with groups that share opposition to US and Israeli interests in the region (Hamid et al., 2021).

Iran's support for regional groups like the Houthis and Hezbollah has a big influence on its internal policies in several ways. First of all, by presenting Iran as a leader against Western imperialism and a champion of persecuted Muslims, this support strengthens the regime's intellectual legitimacy and strengthens national identity. Moreover, significant resources are allocated to support these groups, often at the expense of social services and infrastructure, which may increase public dissatisfaction with unmet local needs. The government uses foreign policy achievements to promote nationalism, unite populations, and distract from economic hardship and political repression. In addition, focusing on external threats can justify the increasing repression of dissent, as the regime portrays internal opposition as unpatriotic. Ultimately, Iran's support for these groups led to international sanctions, exacerbated economic hardship, and forced the government to overcome the challenges of maintaining regional alliances while addressing domestic consequences. In short, these factors create a complex relationship between Iran's foreign policy goals and its domestic governance (Modarres et al., 2019).

Additionally, Iran's search for regional dominion is heavily tied to its national interests and ideological beliefs. The Islamic Republic of Iran's strategic culture, framed by the 1979 revolution, promotes the "culture of strategic resistance" and informs its foreign policy and regional objectives. This enterprise is a mix of ideological and pragmatic considerations, as Iran seeks to further its influence through both direct and proxy engagement. Iran's Geopolitical Ambitions. The driving force behind Iran's geopolitical aspirations in the Middle

East is its quest for hegemonic expansion and the establishment of itself as a counterweight to American influence in the area.

By actively promoting an Islamic political-religious regime, Iran seeks to export its revolutionary ideals and establish itself as a leader among Shia populations. This strategy involves providing political and military support to allied regimes and non-state actors in the Middle East, where Iran aims to strengthen its foothold against American interests. and also In Syria, Iran's backing of the Assad regime not only ensures its access to critical land routes but also facilitates the deployment of military assets and proxy forces (Visbal and Barceló, 2020).

The Middle East is vital to Iran's strategic goals. Naturally, with the conflict between both the Islamic Republic and the United States, its increasing resistance against Israel, and its festering competition with its Arab neighbors, particularly Saudi Arabia, the region is wide open for Iran's strategic investment in influence and deterrence against its adversaries. Iran has used its strong regional presence to develop networks of alliances and partnerships, nurture a client base in the service of its strategic goals, and cultivate trade links between its neighbors (Ostovar et al., 2013). The Middle East is vital to Iran's strategic goals. Naturally, with the conflict between both the Islamic Republic and the United States, its increasing resistance against Israel, and its festering competition with its Arab neighbors, particularly Saudi Arabia, the region is wide open for Iran's strategic investment in influence and deterrence against its adversaries. Iran has used its strong regional presence to develop networks of alliances and partnerships, nurture a client base in the service of its strategic goals, and cultivate trade links between its neighbors (Eslami, 2024).

Factors Deteriorating US-Iran Relations and Imposition of Harsh Sanctions

The sanctions have placed a significant strain on Iran's economy, resulting in serious hardships for its people. This has led to frustration and negative sentiments towards the U.S. government in Iran, making it more difficult for both countries to connect and engage in meaningful dialogue. Additionally, the sanctions have undermined Iran's confidence in the global community and caused it to doubt whether other countries can genuinely assist or mediate. Consequently, Iran has become more obstinate and confrontational, heightening tensions with the United States. While using sanctions can be a powerful method to influence a country, they can also produce unintended consequences that counteract our intended objectives. This is particularly evident in the complicated and unstable relationship between Iran and the U.S (Nephew, 2023).

The escalation in US-Iran relations under the Trump administration stems from several key causes, predominantly related to offensive policy changes and military tensions. Diplomatic relations have been in tatters after the Trump administration's "maximum pressure" campaign, which pulled out of the JCPOA and re-imposed tough sanctions. The idea was to pressure Iran back into renegotiating the nuclear accord, though, rather than encourage Iran to engage in earnest diplomacy, it has spurred more hostilities, worsened regional tensions, and diminished Iranian influence in the Middle East. Maximum pressure was the United States' bid to squeeze back Iran's presence in the Middle East using a string of draconian economic sanctions and diplomatic moves. But the inflection points in this plan came in May 2018, with the exit from the (JCPOA) that, while not a panacea, was at least one more tool in a toolbox to constrain Iran's nuclear program and the reimposition of the most devastating sanctions designed to hit at critical parts of its economy. The withdrawal was designed to economically and

politically isolate Iran and to curb its ability to project power across the region. Trump's most effective punitive measures against Iran have been the following four, which have crippled Iran both domestically and regionally. These are outlined below in Deterioration of US-Iran Relations (Nuruzzaman, 2020).

The Maximum Pressure Campaign

Maximum Pressure is President Trump's high-stakes sequence of crippling sanctions to strong-arm the nation into renegotiating the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran. This approach has backfired, however, leading the U.S.-Iran relationship to suffer, and tensions in the region have risen. Oil exports are crucial to Iran's finances and among the many areas of the Iranian economy subjected to the sanctions. As a result, Iran has been heavily economically squeezed and has been moving toward a more aggressive foreign policy stance. Pressure to abandon its nuclear ambitions and reduce its influence in the Middle East is the ultimate objective of the campaign. But in a strategy that has provoked increased animosity and the potential for conflicts to spiral, its effectiveness is unclear. The Maximum Pressure Campaign sought to drain from the regime's coffers the revenue it was providing to elements such as the (IRGC), a wing of Iran's military that directly reports to the supreme leader, to fund the genocidal aggression of Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in the Palestinian territories, the Assad regime in Syria, and the Houthi rebels in Yemen. It also conscripts Shiite militias in Iraq and their mercenaries, who secretly conspire around the world. This has made the United States angry and led to a further decline in U.S. relations with Iran. American foreign policy is committed to containing Iranian influence and driving it to change its behavior with harsh economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation. It has raised tensions between the U.S. and Iran and (at least for now) reset the global calculus, especially in the Middle East (Nuruzzaman, 2020).

However, Europe, China, and Russia all reacted differently to the “Maximum Pressure” campaign against Iran. Most European countries backed the idea of pressuring Iran hard, thinking it could push the Iranian government to change its nuclear policies. But they didn’t want to completely cut off their diplomatic relationships with Iran either. China took a different approach and firmly opposed maximum pressure on Iran. They worried it would make the whole region unstable and hurt China’s economy. Russia felt the same way about opposing the pressure campaign. They argued that what the US and its allies were doing would just make things worse in the region and reduce Russia’s power there (Radio Free Europe, 2018).

Besides, the primary objective of the maximum coercion strategy on Iran was to compel the Iranian government to change its conduct, particularly regarding its nuclear program and regional activities. Initiated by the Trump administration, this campaign marked a significant shift from previous policies that aimed to isolate Iran economically and diplomatically, while fostering conditions that might lead to regime change or a more subservient Iranian state. The goals of the maximum pressure campaign are as follows: First, coercion and containment: The campaign reimposed strict economic sanctions to limit Iran's influence in the Middle East and force it to renegotiate the JCPOA. Second, regime change: Implicitly, the United States aimed for regime change, hoping that continued pressure would lead to internal opposition and a possible collapse of the Iranian government. Finally, the tactic involved delegitimizing Iran on the international stage and diminishing its influence in the region, which separated it from potential allies and reduced its capacity for economic growth (Jobani and Dahshwar, 2020).

Supporters of the "maximum pressure" strategy against Iran, including prominent figures such as Tom Cole and Ken Calvert, argue that it is necessary for the safety of the United States and to prevent Iran from developing nuclear

weapons. By targeting Iran's resources used in terrorism and weapons development, proponents believe that this approach could weaken the country's economy and limit its aggressive actions. In the end, they assert that a firm stance is necessary for both U.S. security and world peace. Additionally, the "maximum pressure" strategy claims to have strong support from important regional allies such as Israel and the United Arab Emirates. These countries view the strategy as crucial for pushing back against Iran's influence in the Middle East. They are concerned about Iran's actions and desire a united effort against it. This strategy is seen as a way to demonstrate to these allies that the U.S. cares about their safety and is working to prevent Iran from causing problems in the region (Department of State, 2021).

Criticism of Trump for Imposing Maximum Pressure on Iran

Criticisms of Trump's "maximum pressure" strategy against Iran highlight its ineffectiveness in curbing Iran's nuclear ambitions and regional influence. Critics claim that despite tough sanctions, Iran has continued its nuclear program and supported militant groups, undermining the policy's intended goals. During Donald Trump's presidency (2017–2021), the policy of "maximum pressure sanctions" against Iran was one of the main facets of significant criticism. The policy began in 2018 after the US withdrew from the JCPOA, with the Trump administration steadily escalating sanctions on Iran (Fiedler, 2023). The main criticisms were that the U.S. sanctions destroyed the Iranian economy and hurt ordinary people. According to international organizations, the sanctions prevented the supply of medicines and medical supplies, violating Iranian human rights. Critics like Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez called the policy an "economic war" that only hurts ordinary people, not the political elite. Additionally, critics such as former national security adviser John Bolton and former ISIS coordinator Brett McGough argue that Trump's "maximum

pressure” strategy against Iran was unsuccessful. They believe that despite tough sanctions, Iran has been able to continue its nuclear program and support armed groups in the region. Wendy Sherman, a Democratic diplomat and former head of the nuclear negotiations, also argued that the policy only alienated allies and weakened the US position in the region (Kamel, 2024).

The Assassination of Qassem Soleimani

The United States has designated Qassem Soleimani as a terrorist and supporter of terrorism. According to the U.S. decision, a U.S. citizen does not have the right to do business with Soleimani. Meanwhile, under UN Security Council Resolution 1747, Soleimani was on the sanctions list. On May 18, 2011, the United States imposed additional sanctions on Soleimani, along with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and other officials, for his involvement in financial support for the Assad regime (Hameed, 2020). Qassem Soleimani, who has killed hundreds of Americans and has destabilized the region, has been assassinated by the US. The decision, which President Trump has justified, ignited a debate on the part of Middle East policymakers and legal experts over whether the killing was warranted morally and legally. The debate has revolved around the consequences for world peace and stability (Kondoch, 2020).

President Donald Trump decided to eliminate Iranian General Qassem Soleimani for many reasons. The United States had multiple justifications for the strike on January 3, 2020, with the primary ones being geopolitical strategy and national security. As a key architect of Iran’s military operations and support for terrorist groups, Soleimani posed a direct threat, and the Trump administration defended the action as necessary for self-defense. Escalating tensions were a significant factor in the decision. Tensions between the United States and Iran had been rising, especially in the wake of several attacks on American forces in

Iraq by militias supported by Iran. The United States launched airstrikes against militia sites after a rocket attack on December 27, 2019, that killed an American contractor, escalating the situation. After that, the feeling of imminent danger was emphasized: Trump and his administration used Soleimani's alleged imminent plans to assault American forces in the area as justification for the action. This claim was part of a larger narrative that framed the assassination as an essential preventive measure to safeguard American lives. Additionally, the strategic objectives: the goal of the assassination was also to demonstrate the United States' determination and discourage future Iranian aggression. The Trump administration sought to make a clear statement that assaults on American interests would have dire repercussions by targeting a senior military figure (Kondoch, 2020).

Withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

Upon taking office in 2017, Donald Trump expressed his dissatisfaction with the 5+1 agreement, calling it the worst agreement. Since then, Trump has voiced his opposition to the Iranian regime and the P5+1 nuclear deal. The United States announced the P5+1 nuclear deal and imposed financial, economic, political, and military sanctions on Iran. The dangers of Iran's nuclear program have become more apparent internationally since 9/11. As a result, the international community has turned to diplomacy and negotiations as the best option to mitigate these risks. After the Democrats took the White House and Iran's moderates assumed the presidency, the most significant agreement on this subject is the Vienna Nuclear Agreement on Iran's Nuclear Program, or the JCPOA (Khadr, 2017).

While the deal will destroy or reduce much of Iran's nuclear capabilities, it will, in turn, free Iran from the persecution it has suffered due to international sanctions. It will also facilitate Iran's return to the international community, allowing it to recover tens of billions of dollars in blocked funds. Sanctions on banks, currency transactions, loans, foreign investment, trade, oil, and gas exports and sales are being lifted. However, Republicans expressed their opposition to a nuclear agreement with Iran even before signing and announcing the deal. This was made clear in a letter sent by 42 members of the U.S. Senate to the Islamic Republic of Iran, threatening to amend or cancel any agreement administered by the U.S. administration regarding its nuclear program after Barack Obama's term ends in 2017. Following the announcement of the agreement, Republicans continued to oppose it because they believe it will strengthen Iran's position and role in the Middle East and could lead to Iran possessing nuclear weapons. Trump, in his speeches, has labeled Iran a serious threat to the security of the Middle East in general and to Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Libya, and Saudi Arabia in particular, accusing it of collaborating with terrorist groups and organizations. Therefore, he claims to prevent further strengthening of Iran (Khadr, 2017).

Designation of the (IRGC) as A Foreign Terrorist Organization

In 2019, the United States labeled Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps a foreign terrorist organization, the first time a state's military institution has been awarded such a title. The IRGC was designated as a terrorist organization because it participated in several activities that the United States and its allies consider destabilizing. Those efforts involve backing groups like Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and other militias in Syria and Iraq. The IRGC's activities included planning attacks on U.S. and allied military personnel and attempting

to proliferate ballistic missile technology are a few of their aggressive actions, as well as cyberwarfare. The Trump decision to designate the IRGC as a foreign terrorist organization has serious implications for security in the Middle East. U.S. President Donald Trump stated, "Today, I am formally announcing my Administration's plan to designate Iran's (IRGC), including its Quds Force, as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) under Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act. This historic action is a forceful reminder that doing business with the IRGC has consequences," said Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in announcing the designation. "This action represents a fundamental shift in our policy, and that was done at the direction of the President of the United States." "The IRGC is the Iranian government's primary means of directing and implementing its global terrorist campaign," the secretary said. The IRGC is the principal instrument of the Iranian government's policy of directing and carrying out its global terrorist program." (Whitehouse, 2019).

However, Israel believes that applying sanctions on its missile program and designating the IRGC as a terrorist organization will help "control and reduce Iran." This designation serves as a vital mechanism for states to enforce sanctions and limit the IRGC's operations, thereby restricting its ability to finance and carry out terrorist activities. The classification IRGC as an international terrorist group has profoundly affected Iran-backed factions such as Hezbollah and Hamas. This has led to tighter scrutiny and restrictions on their finances and operational capabilities, as global entities have become increasingly cautious about engaging with any IRGC-linked organization. Additionally, these groups have faced further sanctions due to their designation, which has limited their access to training and resources. As a result, Iranian influence over these groups may decline, potentially hindering their ability to function effectively and act against American interests and allies in the area (Phillips, 2019).

Motivations behind Economic and Political Sanctions in the Region

President Trump's sanctions on Iran, which are economic and political, seek to check its nuclear ambitions, its alleged support for regional terrorism, and to demonstrate American resolve and win domestic political points. Furthermore, the United Nations, the European Union, and the U.S together sanction countries that are accused of breaching human rights, destabilizing democratization, sponsoring terrorism, and threatening national security. To learn how Iran has eroded its influence in the Middle East, this paper will analyse the sanctions in two contexts, economic and political sanctions on Iran's interference in the Middle East. In 2015, the first phase of the Iran sanctions, with the focus on economic, trade, industrial, construction materials, and corporate offers, was implemented under Trump. The second phase would target harsh punishments for sectors such as oil, gas, energy, maritime transport, and the financial arena. This slap has had a strong impact on Iran's \$60 billion economy. It looks like earnings could fall to below \$30 billion, the warnings suggest (Fiedler, 2022).

According to an interview with Dr. Parwez in 2014, sanctions forced Iran to adjust its policies, retreating in some areas and adapting in others. The severity of these economic pressures has compelled Iran to enter negotiations with the United States, leading to the 2015 nuclear agreement aimed at easing restrictions. While Tehran has sought ways to circumvent sanctions through trade and alternative alliances, the ongoing pressure has necessitated changes in some of its policies. Nevertheless, Iran continues to balance resistance and pragmatism to mitigate the impact of sanctions on its economy and regional power (Qadir, 2024). However, in another interview with Dr. Zubier in 2014, the effect has been enormous and the Iranians are no strangers to U.S. sanctions. "We have a Ph.D. in U.S. sanctions, especially [as they pertain to] how Iranians lead their lives, how they make ends meet, so I can tell you that the impact is immense, but we have

not had a complete transformation of Iranian behavior as a result of U.S. sanctions.” Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, in an interview, said they have not managed to change their conduct. “The sanctions have so far had a devastating impact on the Iranian economy, particularly under Trump. That is, punishing Trump doesn’t stop at sanctions, but has he managed to change Iranian behavior? No, he has not and cannot modify his conduct here and in the ME (Ahmad, 2024).

And finally, Prof. Dr. Kameran thinks the American sanctions have severely hurt the Iranian economy, but have altered little of the country’s regional policies. Iran has continued to help its allies in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen, despite economic struggles. The sanctions have driven Iran to deepen its relationship with Russia and China, and boost its use of regional proxies as a way of making up for the losses. Sometimes that pressure has resulted in straightforward escalation, such as the attacks on Saudi oil installations last year and attempts to target US forces in Iraq. Booming rocket attacks drilled into Balad's glory as a bulwark of American power in Iraq (Salhi, 2024). Therefore, the Trump administration has tightened US sanctions against Iran, undermining its nuclear capabilities and cutting off energy, defense, government officials, banks, and the Iranian economy. These unilateral sanctions have had a major impact on Iran's economy, as the country has resumed the sanctions imposed by the JCPOA and its international relations. Trump declares no interest in war with Iran. (Al Jazeera, 2019).

Reduction of Iranian Influence Due to the Trump Era Sanctions

Tehran was profoundly shocked by the assassination of Qassem Soleimani by the US, as the latter made it clear in no uncertain terms that the object of his killing was to change Tehran's strategy and policy in the Middle East. The US has implemented strong sanctions against Iran, trying to make it change its

behavior and stop meddling in regional issues. Six months after the assassination of Soleimani, Iranian influence in the region has declined, and there are several reasons for that, including changes in the region and internal and external pressure that began after 2009. This comes within the framework of Joseph Nee's theory of hard power, which is clearly described in the theoretical framework. This indicates that the soft power aspect of this theory was exploited by previous administrations, particularly under Obama, who believed in diplomatic negotiations to resolve problems (Fraihat, 2016).

External Pressures

The Arab Spring, which emerged in 2011, resulted in the fall of the despotic regimes in countries like Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Syria. Demonstrators demanded political, economic, and social changes. Iran found itself barely able to hold its Shiite allies together, involving both the Assad regime in Syria and the militias in Iraq. The U.S. has taken a multi-dimensional response towards Iran's increased presence and activities in the region, imposing economic sanctions on Iran against various sectors, financial institutions, and persons connected to the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps. This is part of a larger attempt to curb Iran's ability to project power and to finance its regional activities. The American pursuit to contain the aftershocks of the Arab Spring has unmade Iran's influence and stature in the region (Katzman, 2022).

U.S. external pressure on Iran in the Middle East has focused primarily on economic sanctions, diplomatic strategies, and military threats aimed at curbing Iran's nuclear ambitions and regional influence. Economic sanctions are a key tool of U.S. policy, targeting industries such as oil and finance to weaken Iran's economy and restrict its ability to fund proxy groups. Following the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018, these sanctions intensified, leading to

escalating tensions and a more confrontational stance from both countries. The United States has formed alliances with regional partners, including Israel and Saudi Arabia, to counterbalance Iranian influence in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen. This complex interplay of economic, diplomatic, and military tactics reflects a broader strategy to contain Iran's ambitions while navigating the intricate dynamics of Middle East geopolitics. In the end, those efforts highlight the difficulty of dealing with Iran's role in the region. Donald Trump's "*maximum pressure*" approach has severely curtailed Iran's ability to exert influence, most notably over the Shiite Crescent blueprint. This approach has weakened Iran's regional sway, particularly after the death of Qassem Soleimani. According to the American side, the assassination is an effort to de-escalate regional violence- but that's not how Iran views it. The death of Soleimani, for Iran, represents a searing blow to leadership and possible effectiveness and a further tangle in its struggle for sway across the region (Evantis, 2019). Therefore, Iran's weakness has prompted regional powers to compete more than ever to safeguard their interests in the Middle East, including Russia and China (Nephew, 2023).

Regional Dynamics

Recent geo-regional developments have seriously undermined Iran's standing in the Middle East. The Abraham Accords' normalization of relations between Israel and multiple Arab states has presented a unified front against Iran, diplomatically isolating it. Such countries as the UAE and Bahrain have meanwhile made inroads with Israel, undercutting Iran's influence as the lead power in the region. Sunni powers, especially Saudi Arabia and Egypt, have also emerged to challenge Iran's Shia-dominant narratives. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 seeks to increase its influence and its economic leverage to counter Iran's regional goals. Iran's footprint in Syria has been met by resistance from Turkey and Russia, both of which have lessened the scope of Iranian influence over the

ultimate resolution of the conflict. Moreover, America's withdrawal from Afghanistan has shifted the regional balance, giving greater room for Gulf states to assert themselves. Altogether, these elements have contributed to a less Shiite-dominated region and a less Iran-friendly region than in the past (Evantis, 2019).

President Donald J. Trump warned Iran not to interfere in Middle East politics, including potential destabilizing effects from the Arab Spring's unrest. This threat is a reminder of the rivalry and competition and the sectarian tension that pose challenges to Iranian influence in the region. Dominated by an Iran that constantly seeks to extend its influence, this regional order is held back by competing states such as Saudi Arabia, which actively check Iran's use of asymmetric warfare tactics. The combination of these factors provides a view of a complex and multilayered geopolitical picture, where competing external and internal pressures prevent Iran from fully realizing its regional ambitions and push it into a long-term dynamic of contestation for supremacy among Middle Eastern actors (Evantis, 2019).

Internal Challenges

Iran focused on building diplomatic relations in the Middle East through its Muslim citizens rather than through governments. I collaborated with the Muslim Brotherhood to increase influence in Sunni-majority countries, aiming for a unified Islamic front against common enemies such as Israel and Western influence. Iran also promotes Shiite Islam by financing schools and religious institutions. (Badawi and Al-Sayyad, 2019).

Iran is well aware that it cannot gain the approval of states in the Middle East through official diplomatic channels. It understands that Muslim citizens in the region are consistently opposed to the United States, Israel, and the secular regimes nearby. Consequently, Iran continuously tries to influence Muslims through religion; however, a wave of popular protests has returned to the Middle

East, this time emerging from a different gateway, sweeping through areas of Iranian influence and Iran itself. Although the Iranian protests of 2009, or the so-called “Green Movement” following the victory of former Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad for a second presidential term, preceded the so-called “Arab Spring” by two years, these US sanctions could exert a longer-term impact on Iran and weaken the position of Shiism both inside Iran and in the Middle East in several ways. This includes undermining the political and economic structures that support Shiite communities and their influence in the region by creating economic hardships that limit available resources, fragment alliances, and erode the legitimacy of Iranian influence. This multifaceted impact could lead to a reduction in Shiite political influence both within Iran and across the Middle East (Raouf, 2019).

Furthermore, various policies regarding Iran have aimed at either changing the regime by force or isolating it politically and economically through the imposition of sanctions. As a result, the United States has accused Iran of being the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism, supporting terrorist militias, and attempting to acquire weapons of mass destruction while developing ballistic missiles. Consequently, the United States has increasingly imposed strict sanctions on Iran, particularly in recent times, to alter its behavior concerning issues of concern, especially those related to nuclear activities, ballistic missiles, and the support of militias and terrorist groups. Additionally, Dr. Imran suggests that Trump’s intention is not to destroy Iran but to change its political behavior at both the domestic and regional levels. This approach has raised concerns among various countries, particularly regarding American interests (Ali & Ahmad, 2022).

Iran's oil and gas exports from 2006 to 2018 were valued at billions of U.S. dollars. The value of exports decreased between 2014 and 2016, a reflection of

the ongoing impact of sanctions and economic difficulties. In 2011 and 2012, exports peaked at \$9 billion due to increasing oil prices and global demand. Following this peak, there was a notable decline in exports in 2013, indicating the effects of international sanctions and the economic issues Iran was dealing with at that time. In 2017, there was a marked recovery as exports began to increase again, aided by stabilizing global oil prices and Iran's attempts to reclaim its market share. Data from 2018 indicates that this upward trend persisted. Nevertheless, the uncertainty in international relations and the sanctions continued to affect export performance. The sanctions imposed by the Trump administration have diminished Iran's influence more than ever (BBC, 2018).

Iran's Resilience and Regional Actions to U.S. Sanctions

Iran has shown a great deal of grit even in the face of U.S. sanctions, employing various strategies to maintain its economy and its regional influence. One important tactic has involved deepening economic links with friendly countries such as China and Russia, enabling alternative currency trade and reducing dependence on the dollar. Iran's oil exports to China, increasingly a critical partner that rarely lets U.S. sanctions get in the way of buying Iranian oil, have grown, and the Chinese payment companies have expanded into Iran to keep the oil flow going. Iran, too, has been developing its domestic production capacity to offset the impact of sanctions. This involves investing in the agriculture and industry sectors to attain self-sustenance. its petrochemical industry has flourished; under sanctions, Iran has even managed to increase its production capacity and still make the sort of hard currency that enables it to exert influence in the region. By such means, Iran shows that it can transform and respond to external pressures, while acting in the best interests of the state (Reuters, 2019).

Therefore, before the U.S. withdrew from the nuclear deal in May 2018, Iran was exporting about 2.6 million barrels per day (Habibi, 2018). However, following the reimposition of sanctions, Iranian oil exports plummeted to around 0.5 mbd at their lowest point during the maximum pressure campaign, particularly after the expiration of oil import waivers in May (Fardoust, 2020). According to the International Monetary Fund, following the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA, Iran's oil exports dropped from 2.5 million barrels per day in 2018 to approximately 300,000 by 2020 (IMF, 2021).

Iran's defiance against U.S. sanctions arises from political mobilization, corporate management, and social unity. These factors enable Iran to maintain economic stability despite external pressures. The country employs a "defensive economy" policy and seeks economic independence while forming alliances with China and Russia. It also utilizes strategies such as intermediaries, selling oil at lower prices, and digital currencies. However, these efforts have not fully eliminated the sanctions' impact (Batmanghelidj, 2024). The two important strategies that influenced Iran's presence in the region under Trump are as follows:

Economic Strategy Adaptation and Political Alliances

The Iranian leadership has implemented economic measures to reduce reliance on imports and boost domestic production, promoting the "resistance economy" policy. It has encouraged citizens to purchase Iranian products, strengthening the national spirit and enhancing economic resilience. However, the sanctions imposed by the Trump administration have exacerbated poverty and unemployment in Iran, despite its various strategies to mitigate these issues and enhance its influence in the region. The Iranian government also employs a narrative to portray sanctions as aggression against the nation, aiming to unify the public against a common enemy. State-controlled media emphasize resistance

and self-sufficiency. Iran has established strategic alliances with countries such as Venezuela, Cuba, North Korea, Russia, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, known as the resistance economies, to confront US sanctions and circumvent economic pressure through mutual support and cooperation (Bajoghli, 2023).

Regional Strategy Cooperation

In the Trump era, regional strategy cooperation targeting Iran's influence capitalized on building alliances among U.S. partners in the Middle East. One notable example was the Abraham Accords, which normalized Israel's relations with several Arab nations, including the U.A.E. and Bahrain. This was a diplomatic coup designed to present a united front against Iranian aggression.

There was also greater military cooperation between the United States, Saudi Arabia, and its Gulf allies as they held joint training programs and increased weapons deliveries to defend themselves. In addition, they further pressed for the creation of the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum, composed of Egypt, Greece, and Cyprus, to counter Iranian leverage over energy markets. Taken together, these efforts aimed to cut Iran off from the world and to form a bloc of countries against it, pushed back by its massive regional ambitions.

In May 2018, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo presented a list of 12 conditions that Iran needed to fulfill to have sanctions lifted. The key sticking points included suspending all nuclear activities, ending support for terrorist groups, and withdrawing from conflicts in Syria and Yemen. He also called for an end to ballistic missile programs and unrestricted inspections of Iran's nuclear facilities. Additionally, he urged the release of U.S. detainees and respect for human rights. These measures formed part of a broader strategy to rein in Iran and stabilize the Middle East after the U.S. withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal (Khazanov and Gasratyan, n.d.).

Conclusions

It is concluded that Joseph Nye's theoretical framework for shaping U.S. foreign policy on sanctions against Iran's influence in the Middle East under Donald Trump differed from that of his predecessor's administration, as Trump believed in imposing tough sanctions to reduce Iran's influence in the region. During the Trump presidency, the approach to Iran focused more on economic and military pressure than diplomacy, radically shifting U.S. policy in the Middle East. In 2018, the US withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and re-imposed sanctions to weaken Iran's economy and hinder its nuclear program. However, this "maximum pressure" strategy has yielded mixed results.

While it has weakened Iran's financial capacity, it has also triggered aggressive countermeasures, including attacks on oil facilities and increased uranium enrichment. The 2020 assassination of Qassem Soleimani has not only disrupted Iran's regional activities but also escalated tensions and the risk of direct conflict, which could reduce Iran's influence in the Middle East. Despite U.S. sanctions and military actions, Iran maintains regional influence by leveraging proxies in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Lebanon. Although Trump's efforts at isolation have strained relations, Iran strengthens its ties with Russia and China, promoting self-sufficiency and national unity.

The Trump administration's alliance with Israel and Saudi Arabia has strengthened an anti-Iran regional bloc, but it has also deepened divisions, making the conflict harder to resolve. While Iran's influence has decreased somewhat due to sanctions, the proxy war has continued, advancing its nuclear program. Mike

Pompeo's twelve conditions for sanctions relief, which demanded drastic changes in Iranian foreign policy, were seen as unrealistic and offered little room for negotiation. The impact of sanctions on Iran's regional influence has become more noticeable, especially after the assassination of Qassem Soleimani. Finally, the sanctions during Trump's first term became a major foundation for trying to diminish Iran's influence in the region.

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کاریگه‌ری گهمارۆکانی ئەمریکا لەسەر کاریگەر و ههژموونی ئێران

له ناوچه‌كه (٢٠٢١-٢٠١٧)

پوخته

ئهم توێژینه‌وهیه لیكۆلینه‌وه له‌وه ده‌كات كه چۆن گهمارۆ و سزاكانی ئەمریکا له (٢٠٢١-٢٠١٧) کاریگه‌رییان له‌سەر کاریگه‌ری ناوچه‌یی ئێران له‌ رۆژه‌لاتی ناوهراستدا هه‌بووه به‌ به‌كارهێنانی میتۆدی چۆنایه‌تییه‌وه شیکردنه‌وه بۆ ئهم پرسه‌ ده‌كات، بۆتیگه‌یشتنی زیاتر له‌ بابه‌ته‌كه تیۆری هێزی زیره‌کی جۆزیف نای (تیکه‌له‌یه‌ك له‌ هێزی ره‌ق و هێزی نه‌رم) له‌م توێژینه‌وه‌یه به‌ به‌کارهاتوه. ئهم توێژینه‌وه‌یه لیكۆلینه‌وه له‌ گهمارۆکانی ئەمریکا لەسەر کاریگه‌ری ناوچه‌یی ئێران ده‌كات له‌ سه‌رده‌می ئیداره‌ی ترمپ له (٢٠٢١-٢٠١٧)، تیشك ده‌خاته‌ سه‌ر ئهو هۆکارانه‌ی كه بۆنه‌ته هۆی سه‌پاندنی گهمارۆ بۆ سه‌ر کاریگه‌ری ئێران له‌ ناوچه‌كه. به‌هۆی چالاکییه‌کانی ئێران له‌ رۆژه‌لاتی ناوهراست، كه خۆی ده‌بینینه‌وه له‌ ریکه‌ستنی ئایدیۆلۆژی، ته‌ماحی جیۆپۆله‌تیکی و ستراتیژی رینگری. توێژینه‌وه‌كه وردتر ده‌بینینه‌وه له‌ سه‌پاندنی "هه‌لمه‌تی زۆرتترین فشار"ی ئیداره‌ی ترمپ، سه‌رمای ئهو ره‌خانه‌ی كه پرووهرووی بۆنه‌ته‌وه. پروواده سه‌ره‌کییه‌کانی وه‌ك تیرۆرکردنی قاسم سوله‌یمانی، كشانه‌وه له‌ ریکه‌وتنامه‌ی ئه‌تۆمی وه‌ ده‌ستنیشانکردنی سوپای پاسدارانی ئینقلابی ئیسلامی وه‌ك ریکه‌راویکی تیرۆریستی، هه‌ر بۆیه به‌ شیوه‌یه‌کی ره‌خنه‌گرانه هه‌له‌سه‌نگاندن بۆ پروواده سه‌ره‌کییه‌کان ده‌كات. جگه له‌وه‌ش، توێژینه‌وه‌كه به‌ له‌به‌رچاوترینی فشاره‌ ده‌ره‌کییه‌کان، دینامیکی ناوچه‌یی و ئالێنگاری ناوخۆیی، پالنه‌ره‌کانی پشت گهمارۆی ئابووری و سیاسیه‌یه‌کانی ئەمریکا و کاریگه‌رییه‌کانیان له‌سەر کاریگه‌ری ئێران له‌ ناوچه‌كه‌دا ده‌کۆلینه‌وه. به‌م شیوه‌یه‌ ده‌ره‌هه‌نگه‌یه‌کان ئاماره به‌وه ده‌کهن كه گهمارۆ فشاره‌کانی ئەمریکا ئایدیۆلۆژی ئێرانی به‌هێزتر کردوه، له‌ کاتێکدا گهمارۆکان بۆته هۆی تیکچوون گۆشه‌گیری ئابووری ئهو وڵاته‌كه. به‌لام له‌گه‌ل ئه‌وه‌شدا لیكۆلینه‌وه‌كه به‌و ئه‌نجامه‌ گه‌یشتوه كه گهمارۆکان رۆلی ئێرانی له‌ ناوچه‌كه له‌ قالب داوه کاریگه‌ری ئێرانی له‌ ناوچه‌كه كه‌مکردۆته‌وه به‌لام نه‌یتوانیوه ره‌فتاری ئێران له‌ ناوچه‌كه‌ بگۆری. له‌ کۆتاییدا لیكۆلینه‌وه‌ باس له‌خۆر اگری و ستراتیژی خۆگونجانی ئێران ده‌كات، له‌وانه‌ش په‌رده‌دان به‌ ئابووری و به‌ ستنی هاوپه‌یمانی سیاسی له‌ ناوچه‌كه.

وشه سه‌ره‌کییه‌کان: رۆژه‌لاتی ناوهراست، ئیداره‌ی ترمپ، كه‌مه‌یینی زۆرتترین فشار، بریکاره‌کانی ئێران، گهمارۆکانی ئەمریکا.

تأثير العقوبات الأمريكية على النفوذ الإيراني الإقليمي

(٢٠٢١-٢٠١٧)

الملخص

تقدم هذه الدراسة تحليلاً نوعياً لتأثير العقوبات الأمريكية (٢٠١٧-٢٠٢١) على النفوذ الإقليمي الإيراني في الشرق الأوسط، مستندةً إلى نظرية جوزيف ناي حول "القوة الذكية" التي تجمع بين القوة الصلبة والناعمة. توضح النتائج أن العقوبات الأمريكية أدت إلى تعزيز الأيديولوجية الإيرانية داخلياً، بينما تسببت في تدهور الوضع الاقتصادي بسبب الضغوط المتزايدة. ومع ذلك، يخلص البحث إلى أن هذه العقوبات نجحت في إعادة تشكيل دور إيران الإقليمي وتقليص نفوذها في المنطقة، لكنها فشلت في تحقيق الهدف الأساسي المتمثل في تغيير السلوك الإيراني على المستوى الاستراتيجي. يُظهر التحليل أن السياسات الأمريكية اعتمدت بشكل كبير على الأدوات الصلبة، متناسيةً أهمية القوة الناعمة في تحقيق تغيير دائم، مما حدّ من فعالية العقوبات في الوصول إلى النتائج المرجوة.

تتناول هذه الدراسة تأثير العقوبات الأمريكية خلال فترة إدارة ترامب (٢٠١٧-٢٠٢١) على النفوذ الإقليمي الإيراني في الشرق الأوسط، مع تحليل الأسباب الكامنة وراء هذه العقوبات، والتي تشمل الأنشطة الإيرانية المتمثلة في التمدد الأيديولوجي، والطموحات الجيوسياسية، واستراتيجيات الردع العسكري. كما تركز على "حملة الضغط القصوى" التي تبنتها واشنطن رغم الانتقادات الدولية، وتقيم الأحداث المحورية مثل اغتيال قاسم سليماني، والانسحاب من الاتفاق النووي، وتصنيف الحرس الثوري كمنظمة إرهابية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تبحث الدراسة الدوافع الخفية للعقوبات الاقتصادية والسياسية الأمريكية وآثارها على الدور الإيراني في المنطقة، مع الأخذ بالاعتبار العوامل الخارجية، والتفاعلات الإقليمية، والتحديات الداخلية التي واجهتها طهران. وأخيراً، تستعرض استراتيجيات المواجهة الإيرانية، بما في ذلك محاولات تعزيز الصمود الاقتصادي، وتعزيز التحالفات السياسية مع الفاعلين الإقليميين، بهدف التكيف مع الضغوط الأمريكية والحفاظ على النفوذ في بيئة معقدة ومتغيرة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الشرق الأوسط، إدارة ترامب، حملة الضغط الأقصى، وكلاء إيران، والعقوبات

الأمريكية.