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U.S-IRAN RELATIONS AND THE MIDDLE-EAST QUESTION: AN APPRAISAL OF UNITED STATES CONTAINMENT POLICY THROUGH SANCTIONS

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Abstract

The United States Strategic interest in the Middle East is pivotal to the discourse on the roadmap to peace in the region. While the U.S. has maintained a twin diplomatic intercourse with Saudi Arabia and Iran. However, the United States relation with the duo over the years have deteriorated to a brickbat and have become highly frosty. However, while the U.S-Saudi relations is quite predictable and less tempestuous, U.S relations with Iran on the other hand have been characterized by a Nuclear arms imbroglio attributable to the ambitious foreign policy of Iran that seeks dominance in the Middle East. This informed the U.S. pursuit of containment aimed at de-escalation into an open conflict. In this paper, we review the U.S posture on Iran over the years and assess the diplomacy of sanctions as a foreign policy tool. Is it capable of deterring Iran's nuclear ambitions and strategic interests in the Middle East?

We approach this study from the prism of containment as a middle-range theory while adopting the historical design with an intensive review of secondary sources of data. We recommend that the United States should as of necessity review its Middle East policy as it affects Iran, and must be conscious of the subterranean roles and interests of major global players who are desirous of a strong presence in the Middle East region.

Key words: Containment; Sanction; Foreign Policy; Middle East; Deterrence

Introduction

The Middle East has remained a hotbed for great power politics especially since the discovery of oil in the region. The United States whose involvement in the region provides a buffer for its hegemonic ambition and shield for its longstanding allies is central to peace in the Middle East. With its platonic relations with Israel and relations with Iran and Iraq, the two nations has once courted their friendship at some point of diplomatic maneuvering, the United States' foreign policy in the region seems predictably ambitious. This posture has run itself into contradictions with other major players in the region, especially during the Cold War when the USSR challenged its dominance around the world. The U.S. courted Iran at such time to maintain its strategic interest in the Middle East until it degenerated into very ugly paths, a residue of the elevated ambition of the Iranians. This study is an attempt at exploring the US-Iran relations and the deployment of the former's containment policy and sanctions to placate the menacing ambition of Iran whose foreign policy and strategic interest in the Middle East is at variance with great power meddling in the region, a position that is propelling its desire into growing its nuclear weapon capabilities (Siraj and Bakare, 2022). Thus, we are accessing to what extent has Iran conducted itself within the perimeters of extant treaties and acceptable international norms. While we will also appraise the U.S-Iran

relations in the light of thorny issues of nuclear arms proliferation, its support for terrorism, human rights violations and to what extent can the deepening cleavage be arrested, and peace entrenched in the region.

Containment: Conceptual Review

Containment as a theory in contemporary international relations was principally developed into a medium-range theory from a principle of foreign policy propagated by the United States during the Cold War (Jakštaitė, 2010). It was derived from the works of George Kennan whose background working in the Soviet Union and Europe from 1927-1946 laid the template for the later development of the strategy to check the perceived rise in influence and expansionist zest of the USSR (Jakštaitė, 2010). His understanding of the Russian system, culture, and communist institutions via his extensive interactions within Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union while working on U.S.-Soviet policy served as the foundation for Kennan's development of containment. This began with his interest in the Russian language and the Soviet regime with uncommon enthusiasm, and the period he lived in Moscow and interacting with the Kremlin informed his attitude towards the regime, even if it failed to negatively impact his love for the Russian people altogether. The Soviet Union's distrust of foreigners and the West due to their own insecurity, the regime's subversive behavior in other countries through the communist party, and Stalin's ascension to a traditional tsarist autocracy made him realize that the Soviet Union existed as a real political threat to the U.S. and West (Gaddis, 2011). It was all these tendencies that he articulated in his foreign policy brief in a log Telegram in February, 1946 as well as what he detailed in his X-Article or Sources of Soviet Conduct in July 1947 where he outlined measures to arrest the rising hegemony of the Soviets (Gaddis, 2011). Though Kennan's original thoughts were devoid of militaristic manifestations but aimed at drawing a line of collaboration because of Russia's

penchant for invasions (Kennan, 1947). This is reinforced by his original knowledge of Soviet economic and military strength in war-ravaged Europe enabling him to identify the Soviet threat as political in nature, and not military. The U.S.S.R. then presented a different kind of enemy than the U.S. had faced before, one against who traditional military strategy and past U.S. diplomacy would not remain enough to overcome (Costigliola, 2014).

Kennan thus developed a new political strategy of containment to combat the new political danger he envisioned in Stalin's Russia, a type of threat which the U.S. had never faced before. He based his new strategy on his experiences of the traditions of Russia and Soviet Communist foreign policy, a Soviet-led communist movement, and importantly unsustainable Soviet system. As World War II came to a close and Cold War tensions increased, Kennan's ideas assumed prominence in Washington. He saw recovery plans such as the Marshall Plan in Europe and the Reverse Course in Japan as the right policy nuances for economic recovery and ultimate resistance to Soviet influence in the key regions of Europe and the Black Sea region. It was his belief that this will restore stability in the region and help curtail Soviet expansionism and rising influence.

However, Kennan's perspective seems to have been altered by Washington policymakers whose perception combined with the rise of atomic power in the late 1940s misconstrued Kennan's containment as a militaristic strategy. By situating Kennan's thoughts in this misplaced wrung it missed the actual purpose of containment. Thus, only through examining the original roots of Kennan's thinking back in Stalin's Russia will his true intentions for his strategy of containment which later became an American foreign policy. However, the fundamental influence of such policymakers as C. Clifford, D. Acheson. H.F. Mathews in building this theoretical thought is indispensable as

it helped to establish a set of regularity that systematically defined the US-Soviet relations at the time (Jakštaitė, 2010)

Post-Soviet U.S Policy of Containment: Perspective on the Middle East

The principle and praxis of containment as enunciated by Kennan was not limited to Soviet-American relations. The character of superpower rivalry and the contestations for geopolitical dominance gave rise to the multiplication of the character and dimensions of the containment policy as a foreign policy initiative of the United States. United States' interest in the Middle East and the growing ambition of Iraq and Iran made the U.S. to either pander towards Iran or Iraq at one time or another in what could be described as dual balancing. However, after the Gulf war it seemed Saddam Hussein of Iraq conduct was still detrimental to global peace and America's interest. While on the other hand, Iran was manifesting increasing signs of recalcitrance as demonstrated in their support for organizations that were opposed to the Arab-Israeli peace initiative, increasing desire to acquire weapon of mass destruction (WMD) capabilities as well as their disposition to international terrorism. Thus, dual balancing of pitching one of the countries against the other resulted in the new approach to contain both countries at the same time through the policy of dual containment targeted weakening the two nations through the instrumentality of sanctions and diplomatic isolation (Saltiel and Purcell, 2002). Though the dual containment was geared towards the two countries it specifically targeted Iran's regime posture aimed at pressurizing it to change some of its ways rather than an outright regime change as was the case of Iraq (Saltiel and Purcell, 2002).

The sanctions under the dual containment at this time were greeted with some degree of ambivalence as mixed reactions from U.S allies polarized the European Union as some were increasingly reluctant on the secondary

sanctions on Iran through the Iran and Libya Sanction Act (ILSA) designed to forestall foreign investment in Iran's Petroleum industry (Saltiel and Purcell, 2002). The U.S. policy of dual containment seems to have not been a smooth sail as it has also fundamentally hurt America's interest in the region even as the U.S. proceeded with unilateral sanctions that damaged U.S long-term energy and security interest in the Middle East.

Dual Containment has led the United States to focus so intently on combating certain concerns such as state-sponsored terrorism, violent opposition to the Middle East peace process and the development of WMD, that it has neglected other interests, which can be pursued simultaneously and without tremendous opposition from Iraq and Iran: energy security, regional stability, increased commercial activity and reduced drug trafficking. This last area of possible cooperation would also help stamp out some of the sources of funding for terrorism. Indeed, there is good reason to believe that greater engagement, at least with Iran, might aid in the realization of a host of old and newly understood common interests.

Issues in U.S-Iran Relations: Historical Background

A brief detail of the historical context of US-Iran bilateral relations is crucial to the explanations of their contemporary relations, as the US role in Iranian politics and security has been both historic, crucial and controversial. The US involvement in Iran dates back to the 19th century when the American missionaries arrived in Persia and the US diplomatic mission was established there in 1883 (Hussein, 2015). However, the US involvement in the region and particularly in Iran remained secondary to its global interests till the discovery of oil in Iran. The American oil giants soon developed commercial interests and Iran became the focal point of US economic interests (Slavin, 2007). The US

not only provided massive economic help but also sent 30,000 soldiers who were stationed in Iran. With the change of regime in Iran, when Muhammad Reza Shah replaced his father with US help, its involvement in Iran grew stronger (Polk, 2009). The growing American involvement in Iran was not seen positively by the nationalist forces and Islamic clergy and it culminated in a nationalist coup by Mohammad Mosaddegh removing the Shah of Iran in 1953 (Azimi, 2012). Once again the US-backed counter-coup put Muhammad Reza Shah back in power and strengthened the US involvement in Iran.⁶ With the departure of Britain from the Gulf in 1969, Iran became the 'Policeman' of the Gulf and the strongest US ally in the Middle East. The Shah became more assertive regionally but repressive domestically (Hussein, 2015). The nationalist coup of 1953 had already awakened the Islamic clergy in Iran and Ayatollah Khomeini soon became the epitome of 'resistance and hope' to the common Iranians against Shah's repression and suppression. It took more than two decades for Ayatollah Khomeini to build the needed support to bring a popular revolution and remove the Shah of Iran in 1979 (Azimi, 2012).

The US-Iran relations and the characterization of the foreign policy of both nations in the Cold War era and the post-Cold War oiled the dimensions of interaction between the duo in the pre-revolutionary period and the post-1979 Islamic revolution which shifted the arc of harmony from a friendly demeanor to a frosty and confrontational relation. The preeminence of the cleavage grew more intense during the cold war period as Iran sort to move against the United States and the interest of Israel, a relationship that was hitherto cordial before the Islamic revolution (Hussein, 2015). Iran seems to push for a nuclear weapon acquisition policy as a means to bolster their strategic interest in the Middle East where Israel, a perceived U.S ally is a major player and regional rival. This propelled Washington to initiate a comprehensive containment agenda geared towards the denuclearization of Iran, the insulation of Israel

against the perceived 'Iranian threat', and ultimately dismantling the hegemonic ambition of Iran and its interference in Syria and Iraq (Siraj and Bakare, 2022). From the Iranian perspective, it is within its legitimate interest to drive an agenda that guarantees its security and interests in the region. The real threat therefore is to her America's hegemony (Council on Foreign Relations, 2019).

Since the character of the United States and Iran seem to be in sharp contrast to what it was prior to the post-revolution and post-Cold War period we then need to situate the attitudinal variance in Iran and the USA's conduct and probe “the ideas, interests, strategic policies and institutional arrangements that galvanized the changes in both nations” (Siraj and Bakare, 2022). Doing this will help unravel the underlying rationale behind the reversal of US exceptionalism to the policy of containment in its relations with Iran as the U.S. bolsters Security cooperation with other regional allies. The Biden Administration seem to have continued the age-long U.S. policy of bolstering the defense capabilities of U.S. partners in the Gulf through arms sales, which was evident in an August 2022 proposed sale of 300 Patriot missiles to Saudi Arabia at \$3 billion and 96 Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missiles to the United Arab Emirates for \$2.2 billion (Humud and Thomas, 2023). The U.S. military and its partners have not relented in conducting joint military exercises, including some seen as intended to counter Iran (Nissenbaum, 2023). The policy primer in Table 1 below will help provide insight into the foreign policy perspectives of both countries.

Table 1: U.S-Iran Foreign policy primer in the post-cold war era

	Ideological	Strategic Interests	Policy and Strategies	Confrontational Grounds
US foreign policy	Triumph of liberal capitalism Flag bearer of Liberal international order	Spread of liberal, democratic values in every region Stability of the global system through US hegemonic stability (sole superpower)	Economic and military support for regional allies Security cooperation with other regional partners Nonproliferation and denuclearization of rival regional states	Nuclear weapons Rising Islamism Palestine issue Threats from non-state actors Issues in Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Syria, Yemen, and Eastern Europe
Iran foreign policy	Iranian self-image Pride in its past empire history, language and culture Being the largest Shia Muslim state Rhetorical opposition to the existence of Israel	Territorial integrity and security against big powers meddling Regional stability Acquisition of nuclear weapons for strong security Establishment of a modern progressive state	Ensuring security against the USA and Israel Development of nuclear arsenal Regional alliance especially with anti-US forces and military ties with Beijing and Moscow, Energy security	Nuclear weapons Deviation from democratic norms Human rights issues Regional security issues, especially Palestine, and later Afghanistan and Iraq, support to the Houthi movement in Yemen, and Hezbollah in Lebanon

Source: Adapted from Siraj and Bakare, (2022); Hashem, A.J and Abdul-Jabbar, R. A (2022); Humud, C.E. and Thomas, C (2023)

Iran's Middle East Ambitions and U.S Containment through Sanctions

The hegemonic ambition of the Iranian regime is well spelt in the statement of a top official of the government Younesi who described Iran's role in the Middle East as 'protecting the interests of all the people in the region because they are all Iran's people, and that they strive to once again spread the philosophy of Islamic-Iranian unity and peace in the region. Noting that Iran must see it as its primary essence in the Persian Gulf (Spyer, 2015). The pursuit of this ambition was however caught up in the controversy of a nuclear ambition that pitched it

against Western interests, and attracted sanctions in the process. Sanctions of course are a deliberate containment by the West led by the United States to scuttle the new mantra of Iran's expansionism and power balancing. The discourse around U.S. containment through sanctions on Iran is however hinged on the violations of extant treaties on nuclear weapons and other violations that are contrary to the rule-based international order. Among several treaties such as Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, 1968; Biological Weapons Convention, 1972; Chemical Weapons Convention, 1993; and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, 1996 (Arms Control Association, 2022). The NPT was however more prominent amongst them.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT):

The Nuclear Proliferation Treaty was signed in 1968 but took effect in 1970. It was renewed indefinitely in 1995 after 25 years. In January 2020 about 190 signatories with some notable non-signatories such as India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea. However, North Korea was to sign in 1985 and again pull out in 2003 and that its withdrawal from the NPT left it free from the binding force of its Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (Kirgis, 2003). The NPT has as major signatories nuclear-wielding nations such as the United States, Britain, Russia, France, and China who reached an agreement not to transfer nuclear weapons to a non-nuclear state. While the non-nuclear wielding states on the other hand agreed not to develop or acquire nuclear weapons and in return got a nod for the permission to develop the capacity for nuclear energy use for peaceful purposes if they submit to periodic inspection from the International Atomic Energy Agency (Zarate, 2007). There are however identifiable limitations that impinge on the effectiveness of the treaty which has to do, firstly with the discriminatory contents of the treaty. This finds expression in Article 1 and II which confers monopoly rights on the five nuclear powers as recognized in 1968 (Terry, 2009). While they maintain

their powers to and display these weapons of deterrence the treaty forbids others from acquiring the same. Another limitation of the treaty is in the fact that states cannot be compelled to sign or ratify the treaty which was the reason why most states such as India, Pakistan and Israel developed nuclear weapon capabilities and yet are not signatories to the treaty on NPT. Also, the dual-purpose nature of nuclear energy technology seems to give leverage to aspiring nuclear actors to undercut the provision of the treaty which is often done under the pretext and under the cover of Article IV (1) which provide for the civilian use of nuclear technology (Terry, 2009)

U.S-Iran's Conduct on the NPT

Since the IAEA got information on Iran's nuclear development and the subsequent decision on monitoring Iran it was observed that Iran had ignored the IAEA Board of Governors' request to suspend its uranium-enrichment activities until the necessary information on its nuclear programme had been obtained (IAEA, 2003). Eventually, IAEA referenced the Security Council in accordance with Article 12 (c) IAEA Statute. Pursuant to this the Security Council kept demanding Iran suspend this ambition as it constitutes a violation of Iran's obligations under Article 25 UN Charter which Iran continued to justify on the ground that the programme is peaceful and that the Security Council actions “do not meet the minimum standards of legitimacy and legality.” (Terry, 2009). This did not however not go without the minimal imposition of sanctions by the UNSC in accordance with Article 41 of the UN Charter (Ranganathan, 2014).

The United States on the other hand have not shown any convincing attitude on reinvigorating the integrity of the treaty as no significant action seems to have been undertaken by any of the nuclear weapon states towards the elimination of nuclear weapons as most of them including the USA and China who are permanent members of UNSC were yet to even ratify the Comprehensive

Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (United Nations, 2021.). It was for this reason that most of the non-nuclear states advanced to state that it was no longer tenable for nuclear powers to only concentrate on horizontal proliferation without looking at vertical proliferation also. The United States seem not to have shown any sign in this respect as the American policy on proliferation seems to be defined not really by non-proliferation but by selectively stopping some countries and regimes from possessing nuclear capability (2014). This discrimination is clearly depicted in the US-Indian “123 Agreement” proposed in 2006 and already ratified. Under the agreement, India is able to acquire nuclear technology from the USA for civilian use despite developing nuclear weapons and not being a state party to the NPT. Even though there were Safeguard Agreement not sanctioning India for possessing a nuclear weapon and going ahead with such an agreement is a tacit approval (Ranganathan, 2014).

The United States has thus under this various guise enacted various regimes of sanctions. This includes the 1979 executive order which introduced various measures after the hostage-taking and reports of human rights abuse were beginning to rise to unacceptable thresholds. Another set of sanctions was implemented in 1987 due to Iran's actions against the USA and other ships in the Persian Gulf from 1981-1987(Phadtare, 2022). Thus the United States sanctions on Iran gained more prominence when in 1995, the Clinton administration initiated the "double containment strategy" to contain both Iran and Iraq and ban all American corporations from any business relationship with Iran while condemning Iran's ambitious development of a weapon of mass destruction (WMD) and support for terrorism (Smith, 2016). This was followed by the decision of the US Congress to introduce the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act in 1996 which imposed restrictions on American and foreign companies making investments in Iran's energy development. The third round of sanctions was activated in December 2006, after Iran refused to comply with

its decision to stop the uranium enrichment program. The EU which was United States Allies also brought additional sanctions to Iran in 2007 in response to similar concerns. These various sanctions targeted various aspects of Iran's commercial and public life, including oil, gas, petrochemical investments, refined petroleum products exports, and trade agreements with the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. Finally, the fourth round of sanctions from the USA took effect in November 2018 which was aimed at forcing Iran to make a marked shift of its policies in the region, including its backing for militant groups in the region and the development of ballistic missiles. The regime of sanction continues to be the most significant measure that the United States of America have been employing to contain the Iranians in the Middle East. Although the impact of these sanctions has proven to be lethal with damning consequences it has left much to be desired in demobilizing the nuclear ambition of Iran which is strategic in power balancing in the Middle East.

Towards Constructive Diplomacy: The JCPOA Agreement.

As the Iranian economy became exhausted by the impact of sanctions and following the victory of conservative moderate Hassan Rouhani in the 2013 presidential election, he immediately appointed dialogue-seeking Javad Zarif considered as Iranian most talented diplomat since the revolution as a foreign minister who immediately initiated secret negotiations with the United States over nuclear issues, and on July 2015 they struck a deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) by the P5+1 (Sharafedin, 2018). The signatories to the nuclear deal agreed to the following key parameters: the number of uranium enrichment centrifuges operated by Iran should decrease from 19,000 to 5,060; Iran's uranium enrichment level should be lowered to 3.67% so that low-enriched uranium is unsuitable for use in nuclear explosives; the storage of enriched uranium should not be no more than 300 kilograms; Iran's heavy water reactors and should be remodelled so that they

cannot produce weapon-grade enriched uranium. And that Iran will convert its facility at Fordow so that it is no longer used to enrich uranium; and that Iran will only enrich uranium at the Natanz facility, with only 5,060 IR-1 first-generation centrifuges for ten years (Sharafedin, 2018).

On the existing sanction regime following this nuclear deal, it was agreed that all past UN Security Council resolutions on the Iran nuclear issue will be lifted simultaneous with the completion, by Iran, of nuclear-related actions addressing all key concerns (enrichment, Fordow, Arak, PMD, and transparency), and that Iran will receive sanctions relief if it verifiably abides by its commitments. Also, the U.S. and E.U. nuclear-related sanctions will be suspended after the IAEA has verified that Iran has taken all of its key nuclear-related steps. (Samore, et al. 2015.). While Iran became committed to the deal but hardliners in the United States did not support the JCPOA agreement which they considered to be too lenient. From the outset, the Obama administration estimated that Congress would not ratify the JCPOA agreement, and did not attempt to turn it into a treaty. Nations such as Israel and Saudi Arabia committed to the containment of Iran also opposed it. The fragile JCPOA failed to obtain expected support in the United States and abroad, and as soon as he took office as US president, Donald Trump demanded that other signatory countries should rectify some-noted flaws of the JCPOA which Iran fiercely protested, and President Trump consequently declared US withdrawal from the agreement in May 2018 (Jaffer, 2019). The Biden administration has however admitted pulling out of the deal without an alternative was not the best option as affirmed by the then NSA Sullivan, “that it believes that it was a tragic mistake to exit the deal with nothing at all to replace it” (Sullivan, 2023). The Trump administration reverted to sanctions against Iran and urged all countries and allies around the world to accede to zero imports of Iranian crude oil going forward. Confused on whether to take sides with the United States or with Iran, European and Japanese corporations are reluctantly abiding by the US

directives (Jaffer, 2019). Thus, Iran is now subject to repeated and comprehensive sanctions which are both multilateral and unilateral sanctions including targeting key members of the administration

Conclusion and Recommendations

Containment as a middle-range theory is built on the foundation of U.S. state policy and engagement which shaped and emphasized the purpose of containment as the quest for the limitation of Soviet power by various means in strategically important spots of the world; the policy set out the recommended instruments of containment, regions, the approach to the main U.S. adversary and small scope power balancing as a major focus.

It is this principle of containment that was brought forward in dealing with Iran's perceived recalcitrance and attempted hegemony in the Middle East. For several decades going, the hostility between the two countries (U.S-Iran) spread beyond the confines of the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. Consequently, the US became faced with multiplied regional challenges and the increasing importance of Iran in addition to the increasing threats to its internal security. Unresolved Iran–USA hostility also made Iran an integral part of every regional conflict which must be dealt with. That is why scholars like Pollok (2004) insisted that the USA should rise vehemently to deal with Iran, indicating the gravity of the situation. Although the U.S administration has instituted the use of sanctions as a containment tool against Iran these sanctions have been imposed unilaterally in most cases, without either the force of UN resolution or the synergy and coalition to ensure their effectiveness. While the US has the ability to impact the economy of Iran and has done so, it does not have the ability to paralyze it completely. Therefore, the tendency that sanctions will have the intended effects is doubtful. Although more nations have acceded to limiting or cutting off the supply of weapons to

Iran, there are alternative channels for almost all commodities required especially in the presence of sanction busters in the international system. Although most countries have stated that they prefer constructive engagement to the usual recourse to sanctions, there is compelling logic behind this fact. Iran has billions of dollars of loans unpaid to several nations. It would therefore amount to poor fiscal policy indeed for a nation to loan Iran money and then immediately back a policy that would drive it into economic ruin. In addition, most countries including the EU which is its 2nd largest trading partner view Iran as a large market that can be exploited by industrial actors (European Commission, 2020). It is therefore unlikely that unilateral sanctions imposed by the US will motivate the regime in Iran to modify its behavior absolutely. Thus, we recommend that:

- A return to constructive engagement and dialogue by both parties is necessary. The achievement recorded by both parties through the JCPOA before the U.S pulled out is a testament to the power of diplomacy. If the United States really wishes to achieve enhanced peace and stability in the Gulf, it needs to advance towards a much more nuanced Middle East policy which relies on diplomatic engagement rather than solely on political and economic sanctions or isolation. To this end, the United States will need to be more mindful of its diplomatic engagement and also relate more effectively with the Muslim world altogether bearing in mind the deliberate interest of active interest in the Middle East especially with the resurgence of Cold War-like rivalry in the international system and the onslaught of the Belt and Road initiative. Therefore, a new approach that will consist of three main axes is likely imperative: reactivating the JCPOA agreement, amending the agreement, and perhaps expanding the agreement to include new issues to achieve the interests of both parties (Hashem and Abdul-Jabbar, 2022)

- The United States will need to recalibrate its policies on the Middle East especially as it relates to the treatment of Iran's nuclear crisis. To that extent, a new nondiscriminatory approach to the nuclear arms control mechanism must be evolved bearing in mind that Israel, a key ally of the United States which is perceived to enjoy differential treatment is Iran's regional rival.
- The decision of the U.S administration under Biden to reboot the policy of containment in order to deescalate the Middle East and not to create an atmosphere of tension and hostility such that other interest and alliances can project their alliances is a strategic development that is critical to peace in the Middle East as the international community watch the commitment of the Biden's promise of returning to dialogue.

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