



Futuristic research of basic problems in the way of negotiations between Iran and the United States

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Abstract

In the present research, this question has been considered, "What are the factors that cause major problems in the way of negotiations between Iran and the United States?" which in response it can be stated that factors causing major problems regarding the mentioned way are the non-proliferation lobby, the human rights lobby, the financial affairs lobby, the regional and global lobby, the set of Israeli lobbies, the pressure groups and the competition between the poles of power. Moreover, it should be noted that there are three scenarios that determine the range of possibilities for the outcome of the negotiations between Iran and the United States, and based on that, the result of the negotiations can be something between these two options of the failure of the negotiations or a weak agreement (regardless of the JCPOA) and the revival of the JCPOA in its current form or a stronger and longer agreement (JCPOA Plus). Additionally, if the aforementioned fundamental problems cause the failure of negotiations between Iran and the United States, based on the possible scenario that was examined in the research, Iran's economic and political environment will continue to exist like the current situation, maybe a little weaker and stricter, and the challenges for the country will be intensified. In this research, by

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accepting the principles of the interpretative qualitative method, the problems of negotiations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States were studied futuristically, and the method of this research is the extension of the present to the future and the construction of the future, which is considered one of the methods of futuristic research. The research strategy is the questionnaire and the type of research is applied study, case study, and trend study.

Keywords:

Negotiations, Futuristic Research, Iran, United States, Lobby, Pressure Group, Poles of Power

Statement of the problem

The relations between Iran and the United States of America have always faced many tensions and confrontations during the Islamic Revolution. Those tensions originated not about the Islamic Revolution, but from years before and especially after the coup against Mohammad Mossadegh in 1953, and in the post-Islamic Revolution period in Iran, have become obvious and public. Moreover, with the advent of the revolution, a series of actions and events have made the relations between Iran and America very sensitive, tense, and hostile. But perhaps the occupation of the American embassy by students can be considered as the peak of these tensions in the relations between the two countries, because since this critical moment in history, the conditions of hostility, enmity and conflict have dominated the atmosphere of relations between Iran and the United States (Benjamin & Simon, 2019; Fawcett, Payne, 2022). Additionally, after nearly four decades since the revolution and the severance of US-Iranian relations, there are no noticeable signs of a thawing of the ice between the two countries. It must be mentioned that during the past four decades, factors have been involved in destroying the prospect of improving the relationship between the two countries, and in this, it is important to identify the actors and forces interfering in the communication processes between the two countries as a variable that causes the continuation of tensions in the future. The most important reasons that cause problems in the future of Iran-US negotiations are mentioned below:

A- Non-proliferation lobby

After the Cold War, the United States has introduced weapons of mass destruction as one of the two major threats to its security and has always emphasized arms control and the need to strictly observe the non-proliferation of prohibited weapons of mass destruction. In recent years, the non-proliferation lobby has played a prominent role in stabilizing this tendency of the United States and has been active as one of the influential forces in this field. The aforementioned

lobby consists of a wide network of experts, politicians and institutions that have declared the goal of their actions and plans to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, in order to achieve security for the United States. Iran's nuclear conflict and the Islamic Republic's ballistic capacity are the main issues raised in this lobby in relation to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

B- Human rights lobby

Corresponding to the increasing importance of human rights issues in the post-Cold War era, the human rights lobby also increased its scope and even put pressure on George W. Bush's administration during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. In the case of Iran, in particular, from the era of Bush (son) onwards, the above-mentioned lobby found more financial resources and support and was directly supported by the US Department of State. Among the functions of this lobby is the establishment of the Iranian Human Rights Documentation Center with the aim of recording all cases of human rights violations by the Islamic Republic. Currently, this lobby is considered among the most influential lobbies on the policies regarding Iran, which is connected with a diverse range of people, from experts and academic individuals to opponents in Iranian exile.

C- Financial affairs lobby

The finance lobby, which is sometimes called the congressional-treasury lobby, is the strongest lobby in the US Congress in terms of political and legal support. In recent years, the independence of the financial affairs lobby has increased and almost no institution, even the president, is able to ignore its plans and decisions. The mentioned lobby is among the most effective organizations on the relations of the Islamic Republic with the United States and in a more general view with other countries of the world; because it basically creates and designs programs to limit Iran, which are first formalized in the form of internal laws approved by Congress (or presidential decrees) and then provide restrictions against the Islamic Republic in the form of resolutions of the United Nations Security Council or other influential international institutions.

D- Regional lobby

In the field of the regional lobby, the Arab lobby can be mentioned, because this lobby is one of the influential organizations that has played a role in the policies of the United States towards Iran. The Arabs and in the center them Saudi Arabia, have created organizations in the form of lobby centers in the American government and Congress since three decades ago. The Arab lobby has defined the issue of the Islamic Republic of Iran as one of its existential elements, and in some cases, especially during the eight-year war between Iraq and Iran, they were effective in formulating some policies of the United States against Iran. This issue, along with the characteristic of being Arab, has caused them to be in conflict with

the Jewish lobby in some cases (Darwich&Kaarbo, 2020, 230); but currently, following the nuclear program and the escalation of the Syrian crisis, which has been accompanied by the increase of Iran's regional influence, the mentioned lobby is trying to prevent Tehran from achieving more concessions and, in general, from developments and policies in favor of the Islamic Republic.

E- The set of Israeli lobbies

The communication between Israel and various executive and legislative circles in the United States takes place through wide and numerous channels and mechanisms, however, it can be definitely stated that most of Israel's efforts to influence the outcomes of the decision-making system in the United States are through a mechanism that is generally called the "Israel lobbies" (Kaye & Efron, 2020, 7-30). In this sense, the Israel lobby is a general title to introduce a wide range of people and groups that work to maintain and strengthen the "special relationship" between Israel and the United States, as well as guide the foreign policy of the United States in the direction of supporting Israel (Mearsheimer and Walt, 2016: 112). The aforementioned lobby consists of a relatively wide range of organizations active in America, which include about seventy-five to ninety organizations; but the Anti-Defamation League, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, and finally the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (IPAC) are probably the most influential Jewish organizations active in the United States. The performance of the mentioned organizations varies according to the nature and power of influence, but they usually fall into three general classifications: direct lobbying with the government or Congress, influencing public opinion, and finally supporting candidates for various positions in the American political system and supporting protectionist actions towards Israel.

The destructive role of the lobby in exerting determination on Iran policy in the United States became more serious mainly since the 1990s (Gallup, 2021). The scope of these determinations is such that IPEC and other influential pro-Israel organizations have supported a bill for a long time that includes the prohibition of any diplomatic communication between Iranian and American officials; unless Congress has been notified of it at least fifteen days before. In addition, the lobby is trying to make maximum use of sanctions to isolate and weaken Iran. In this lobby, it is stated that "what is the guarantee that Iran will not provide nuclear weapons to allies such as Venezuela or terrorist groups such as Hezbollah or Hamas". After that, the comparison of the Islamic Republic to Nazi Germany and the anti-Semitism of both governments are other images that have been presented many times by the lobby. In addition to that, the image of the Islamic Republic as an illegitimate government is also one of the things that is seriously pursued by the lobby. This issue firstly accelerates public support for radical policies in Tel Aviv and Washington, secondly, it increases the obstacles to direct diplomacy, and thirdly, it strengthens the perception of the Islamic Republic's vulnerability.

F- The field of radical and pressure groups

In addition to the introduced lobbies, other fields can also be effective in future of negotiations between Iran and the United States, for example, in the field of the role of unofficial factors in Iran's foreign policy, especially in the way of interaction with the United States, the role of pressure groups and the problems they can create in the path of negotiations are also considered. This is because pressure groups and extremists believe that no one has the right to say anything, write anything, or do anything except in predetermined competitions.

G- Competition between poles of power

The pattern of competition between power poles as well as patterns of alliance and coalition between regional and global powers can directly affect the relationship between Iran and the United States. For example, Turkey's foreign policy towards Iran and America has streaks of conflicting roles. On the one hand, during the severe international sanctions, it has been able to secure a large volume of Iran's import market and financial reserves. However, playing the role of a good citizen by Turkey as an emerging middle power can keep the United States satisfied on the one hand and balance Iran on the other hand in an alliance with major and regional powers (Niakoui and Ahmadi Khoi, 2017: 199).

Also, in this regard, the relationship between the United States and Russia in areas such as Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and issues such as NATO, regional crises, etc., will potentially transform the relationship between Iran and the United States. If the situation between Moscow and Washington turns from conflict and hostility to competition and cooperation, the possibility of further restrictions against Iran is not out of the question. In other terms, there is a possibility that Russia will provide concessions to the United States in the Middle East and instead of those concessions, it will take the advantage of concessions in the Black Sea and Eastern Europe, NATO's eastward expansion, and eventually the removal or suspension of US sanctions. In such a situation, the increase in the action capacity of the United States in order to put more pressure on Iran (as in the 1990s and the weakness of Russia's ability to influence power equations) is likely, and the Islamic Republic will not be able to make maximum use of Russia's countervailing weight towards the United States, at least in the issues related to the Middle East. The same situation may be considered in the case of China or Europe in exchange for providing different incentives. Provision of concessions in the South China Sea or incentives in the field of collective security or trade balance to Europe can be among these things.

Research questions

A- The main question

What are the factors that cause major problems in the way of futuristic negotiations between Iran and the United States?

B-Subsidiary questions

1. How is the future of Iran in the era without JCPOA?
2. What are the scenarios that determine the range of possibilities for the outcome of the negotiations between Iran and the United States?

Research hypothesis

A- The main hypothesis

The existence of factors such as the non-proliferation lobby, the human rights lobby, the financial affairs lobby, the regional and global lobby, Israel's lobbies, pressure groups, and the competition between the poles of power creates fundamental problems in the way of futuristic negotiations between Iran and the United States.

B- Sub-hypotheses

1. There are three scenarios that define the range of possibilities for the outcome of the negotiations between Iran and the United States and based on that, the outcome of the negotiations can be something between these two options of the failure of the negotiations or a weak agreement and the revival of the JCPOA in its current form or a stronger and longer agreement.
2. In the era without the JCPOA, Iran's economic and political environment will continue to exist like the current situation, maybe a little weaker and stricter, and the challenges for the country will be intensified.

Research background

A-Book

James (1992) in the book "Lion and Eagle: The Tragedy of Iran-US Relations" presents one of the most complete reviews about the relations between Iran and the United States. This book mainly deals with the level of microanalysis, and through it, the author has pointed out several reasons in the investigation of the effective factors at the beginning of the enmity and breaking of the relationship between Iran and the United States. The negative mentality and the type of action of the United States in intensifying it among the people of Iran between 1953 and 1978; Bill identifies the analytical weakness of American diplomats and the failure of the United States diplomatic system to properly recognize the changes made in Iran, as well as the lack of proper analysis of the Islamic Revolution, its nature and leaders, as the most important reasons for this issue. Bill's book is a unique work in that it describes the bilateral relations before and after the revolution and presents an almost comprehensive picture of the policy-making processes in Iran (before the revolution) and the United States. Bill's work, in a sense, mainly has

an explanatory approach, and while pointing to the effective causes of breaking the relationship, such as the occupation of the embassy, etc., he also includes reasons beyond pure historical events in his analysis.

In this context and in line with the explanatory studies of the current hostile situation, John Limbert (2009) has discussed the relationship between the United States and Iran in the book called "Negotiating with Iran: Wrestling the Ghosts of History". In his book, Limbert starts from the beginning of the relationship between Iran and the United States at the turn of the 20th century and provides general information about the good relationship between the Pahlavi government and the United States. Moreover, he pointed to the hostage crisis and while explaining the concern of both sides about the future of relations; he considers the existing suspicions to be the most important cause of the incident. In the continuation of the cooperation on the issue of allowing the American hostages to be released in Lebanon, it is discussed and emphasized as a model of constructive action.

In the last part of his book, the author mentions fourteen basic steps to achieve a constructive relationship with Iran. In Limbert's opinion, Iranians have shown interest in establishing a relationship, and thus he devotes the last part of the book to recommendations for US leaders. Therefore, taking a quick look at the fourteen steps proposed by Limbert, it can be concluded that recognizing and respecting Iran's interests in the region, paying attention to Iran's culture and history, and finally learning from past experiences in bilateral relations are the most important issues that should be considered by the American leaders. It seems that Limbert's reliance on eliminating and reducing the effectiveness of the significant causes of conflict, achieving a de-escalation situation in the relations between the two countries, in comparison with equipment based on only paying attention to the areas of shared interests and threats can imply a more comprehensive review and a better prescription for policies in this field.

Abbas Maleki and John Tirman (2014) in the book "U.S-Iran Misperceptions: A Dialogue" have addressed the issue of the role of mentality and misconceptions in the blockage and lack of relationship between Iran and America. This book, which from one point of view has the most explanation regarding the mentioned subject, is completely in the direction of explaining the semantic factors and reasons of hostility, and even issues such as the regional activism of two countries in the field of strategic interests or the role and influence of external variables such as lobbying, etc. are generally discussed in the form of subjective feedback. According to the authors, the main problem in the field of the relationship between Iran and the United States is the lack of sufficient knowledge between the two sides and this issue means a lack of a proper image and understanding of the characteristics of the two countries, which has caused the judgments, policies and behaviors of the two sides to deviate from the action based on correct and real data.

In editing this book, Maleki and Tirman have used Jervis's conceptual framework about mentality and foreign policy and are trying to show that it is the perception of nations about each other that leads to a specific foreign policy.

According to the authors, while Iran has a normal and even cordial relationship with many countries, it has a lobby in many countries and institutions and has extensive international connections; but in the field of relations with the United States, this country has not used any of the possible channels, and this (i.e., the lack of communication at all levels) has caused false perceptions of reciprocal behaviors to appear. Furthermore, in the absence of Iran and its possible lobbies in the United States, the lobbies and activities of units opposed to Iran and opposed to the normalization of the relationship between Iran and the United States in Washington like the Arab lobby or the Israeli lobby, are trying to shape the foreign policy behavior of the United States in the Middle East and towards Iran with more freedom.

The relations and the type of special relationship between Iran and the United States in the years after the victory of the Islamic Revolution have led to various research. In this regard, it can be surely claimed that the book called "The Tower Commission Report " (1987) provides the most information about the process of hostility and enmity between the two countries, as well as the short-term and secret communications between the two countries between 1979 and 1986. The basis of the book is a report of a special commission of the President of the United States, which was compiled following the secret agreement between Iran and the United States to sell large amounts of weapons to Iran and McFarlane's trip to Tehran. The aforementioned report, which was prepared by three officials of the United States, namely John Tower, Edmund Maskey, and Brent Scowcroft, contains the main text of the report in one hundred pages and eight appendices and supplementary notes. The second appendix in 350 pages is the most important part of the book and describes contacts and initiatives to restore bilateral relations. In spite of dealing with specific issues such as meetings, etc., the Tower book has presented a very comprehensive and unique assessment of the strategic requirements of the closeness of Iran and the United States in the 1980s, and from this point of view, it has examined the results of the behaviors at the macro and strategic level. Although the Tower book itself is a complete source for the strategic intentions of the United States of getting closer to Iran and gives detailed information about the quality and quantity of communication with Iran during the years of the war with Iraq; it seems that the two books "The Story of McFarlane" by Mehdi Hashemi and Habibullah Ahmadi (2011) and "Shenood Ashbah" (the eleventh chapter written by Reza Golpour (2002)) as a supplement to the mentioned work can be considered for a better understanding of the mentioned book.

B- Article

Rafi and others (2014), in research entitled "New scenarios of American soft power against Iran", stated that the new scenarios of America against the Islamic Republic of Iran based on the concept of soft power are: Media psychological war, economic sanctions, human rights, cyber war, Iran phobia and pressure on regional

allies. In this research, the author has only relied on soft power. However, in order to present a comprehensive view and avoid reductionism, other dimensions of power must also be taken into consideration.

Rifatnejad and others (2014), in an article entitled "Scenarios of Iran's military attack against the Islamic Republic of Iran", have stated that the scenarios of the global conventional attack under the leadership of the United States, the influence-oriented military attack of the United States on Iran, and the limited attacks on nuclear and missile facilities, respectively, are the plans of the military attack of the United States on Iran. In the evaluation of this research, it can be stated that based on the available evidence, America does not have a plan in this regard, at least at the moment, considering the huge consequences of a military confrontation with Iran.

Darvishi and others (2015), in an article entitled "Perspectives of America's strategy against the Islamic Republic of Iran", considered confrontational policy along with limited cooperation in regional issues to be the most likely option for America in dealing with Iran in the next decade. In the evaluation of this research, it can be stated that the authors have only expressed the confrontational policies of America towards Iran in a general way.

Farkhi et al. (2016), in an article titled "the future of American presence in west Asia", the authors propose three scenarios of continued presence in West Asia, decreasing presence in West Asia, and complete withdrawal from West Asia. In this research, the authors believe that the most likely scenario is the continuation of the American presence in West Asia, while the available evidence indicates a decrease in the American presence in West Asia. The authors also do not mention the effects and possible consequences of each of the scenarios for the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Research Methodology

Futuristic research methods are divided into normative and exploratory methods based on the purposes. Normative methods are based on values and norms and ask about desirable futures, while exploratory methods look for what is possible. In addition, normative methods specify possible desirable and believable futures for decision-making in the present, but exploratory methods draw the future based on the past and present. Also, futuristic research methods are divided into quantitative and qualitative categories based on the techniques used; some of these methods are combined and include some of all types of methods, such as scenario writing which was chosen for this research (Mardokhi, 2011). Scenarios are pictures of possible futures that show a logical sequence of events. In fact, scenario writing is a process that takes place during different stages. Additionally, the scenario is a tool for analyzing policies and recognizing the conditions, threats, opportunities, needs, and superior values of the future. Due to the diversity of the factors and forces creating the future and the complexity and interaction between them, it is difficult to accurately predict the future. In general, scenario writing is

an effort to identify the cases that are prioritized for study, to determine the political agents and their strategy and the facilities they have for achieving their goals, and finally, the evolution of the studied system according to the change of key variables (Hajiani, 2011: 265).

In scenario writing, it is very significant to identify driving forces and identify uncertainties. The driving forces are independent of the subject and the problem that affects it. Other, driving forces indirectly affect other fields. In the scenario writing method with the "important uncertainties" approach developed by "Peter Schwartz" (Schwartz, 1996), identifying the driving forces is one of the basic steps to reach the scenarios. It must be noted that in order to collect the scenarios in this research, by accepting the principles of the interpretive qualitative method, the problems of the dialogue between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States are studied in the future, and the method of this research is the extension of the present to the future and the construction of the future, which is considered one of the methods of futuristic research. The research strategy is a questionnaire. The type of applied research is a case study and a trend study.

Table 1- Key driving forces affecting the relationship between Iran and the United States

Directly influencing key factors	Indirectly influencing key factors
The role and position of Israel	The role and position of Palestine
The role of the US government	The role of lobbies
The role of American political institutions	The role of Iran's military institutions
The role of pressure groups and extremists in Iran	The role of Iran's political institutions
The role and position of Saudi Arabia	The role of US military institutions
The way that countries deal with JCPOA	Changes after the JCPOA (withdrawal of each of the JCPOA parties)
The position of the Islamic Republic in the future of the international system	Iran sanctions law
The influence of China-Russia relations on the future of relations with America	The position of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the future of regional wastage

By stating the driving forces in the above table, three scenarios can be stated in the future of Iran-US negotiations:

1- Failure of negotiations (possible scenario)

A probable scenario is a scenario that is likely to happen. Based on this scenario, the failure of negotiations is quite possible. In order to realize this possibility, it is not even necessary to officially cancel the negotiations. A long process can be enough; because the longer the negotiations, the value of the negotiations will decrease, especially in the context of the JCPOA. In this scenario, economic and diplomatic pressure will increase on Iran from all sides, including from within the

Middle East; so that Iran's rivals, such as the Zionist regime or Saudi Arabia, can pressure America to strike Iran's nuclear facilities. Additionally, even the Zionist regime can take the initiative and may force America to intervene to protect itself. Although China and Russia will oppose any military action, they are unwilling to support Iran diplomatically.

2- More limited agreement (possible scenario)

A possible scenario is a future that can be realized later. Based on this scenario, it can be assumed that the Iranian government is aware of the risks and costs caused by the failure of negotiations. Therefore, they may go to another option such as a more limited agreement than the JCPOA; an agreement that reduces only a part of Iran's sanctions. An agreement less than the JCPOA or without the JCPOA can satisfy Russia and China to continue investing in diplomatic-security relations (Russia) and political-economic partnership (China) with Iran.

3- Revival of JCPOA (desired scenario)

The desired and pleasant future scenario of an actor is based on value judgments. Therefore, it can be said that it is subjective. On the other hand, due to the fact that different individuals and groups have different value judgments, the desired future for them is different; it means that the future which is favorable for an individual or a group may be unfavorable for others. The third scenario of Iran-US talks is related to the full restoration of the JCPOA. Although this is unlikely, it is not impossible

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