



REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE

ALTINBAŞ UNIVERSITY

Institute of Graduate Studies

Politics and International Relations

**IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
ON MEDIA**

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Master's Thesis

Supervisor

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Istanbul, 2023

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Politics and International Relations

Master's Thesis

ALTINBAŞ UNIVERSITY

2023

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XXXXXX

DEDICATION

To my father, the source of my inspiration and my companion in my success, to my mother, who gave me her life, to my husband, who made me the happiest person in this world, To my friend who died but lives in my soul, in this thesis I will promise her that I will complete what death deprived her of. I would like to dedicate my thesis to my country, which I will return to serve.



PREFACE

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the people who helped me make this study a reality. In particular, I would like to express my deep gratitude to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fulya AKSU, my thesis advisor, whose dedication, guidance and invaluable support contributed so much to study, I would also like to have mercy on the souls of the earthquake victims in southern Turkey, and express my thanks and gratitude to beautiful Turkey, and wish it more prosperity.



ABSTRACT

IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ON MEDIA

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Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fulya AKSU

Date: April / 2023

Pages: 96

The present study takes an analytical approach to investigate the effects of international relations on the media. Taking the Iranian nuclear deal as a focus, the study analyzes the reporting of three major news media outlets on the matter; BBC Arabic, Al-Mayadeen,, Al-Arabiya Al-Hadath and Euronews. The reporting was analyzed at three different periods; the negotiations between the Obama administration and Iran prior to the 2015 nuclear deal, Trump administration's withdrawal from the deal, and the restarting of negotiations in Vienna between Iran and the Biden administration. It was apparent in this study that the three media outlets reported on the matter with certain patterns that can be explained by the background of each. Al-Mayadeen had an apparent bias towards Iran and highlighted its strengths while attacking Western stances, Al-Arabiya Al-Hadath leaned towards the West and attacked the stances of Iran while supporting the prospect of cancelling the deal, and BBC Arabic tended to be centrist while sharing the European and UK viewpoint which attempted conflict resolution, highlighting the faults and views of both Iran and the US, and Euronews show the European view. These findings confirm the hypothesis that states the Media's subordination to International Relations, as it shows a clear bias of news media outlets through their support to the respective parties that back their outlets.

Keywords: International Relations, US, Iran, Nuclear Deal, Media.

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ABBREVIATIONS

IR	:	International Relations
NATO	:	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
UN	:	United Nations
USSR	:	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
USAID	:	U.S. Agency for International Development
NPT	:	Non-Proliferation Treaty
IAEA	:	International Atomic Energy Agency
BRICS	:	Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
IRGC	:	Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps
AMIDEAST	:	America-Mideast Educational and Training Services
CNN	:	Cable Broadcasting Corporation
BBC	:	British Broadcasting Corporation

1. INTRODUCTION

The way in which modern warfare is fought includes multiple aspects that nations use to wage war on multiple fronts. The human race's history with war involves straightforward displays of force in which the winner is determined by what has been dubbed "bigger army diplomacy". Since the stone age and the prehistoric era, warring tribes competed for land, resources, manpower, and influence, which, in the essence of survival, is an intrinsic desire in humanity that makes war inevitable.

The Second World War proved that warfare is no longer an isolated event between localized groups that is relatively inconsequential on a global scale, but a conflict that is currently global in its reach due to interdependence, globalization, and the use of automobiles and flying planes, all of which are in addition to the massive increase in firepower after World War One.

The establishment of the United Nations (UN) to monitor international relations, act as a unifier among countries of the world, and prohibit certain acts of war, as well as establishing the rules of war, to keep the global stage from deteriorating into a major global conflict again (Berdal, 1996). The UN, fear of global isolation, and the general international trend to oppose violence and loss of life, has caused the traditional type of warfare to shift to economic and media wars that rely heavily on global interconnectedness. International relations have replaced violent wars and shifted the conflicts from firepower to diplomacy, along with the economic and media aspects of modern global conflicts.

Conflicts that rely on international relations seem to have a recurring reliance on media. The earliest major use of this "media war" is the National Socialist Workers' Party, the Nazi party, which established a heavy reliance on media to sway public opinion (Welch, 2004). The Nazi's ministry of propaganda, under the leadership of Joseph Goebbels, rallied the German public behind Adolf Hitler's ideology by spreading racism and hatred towards the Jewish people, and establishing a win-or-die atmosphere that gave Hitler full control of his people (Herf, 2009). In the modern world, the use of politically-charged broadcasting is widespread in conflicts that resemble the cold war in their competitive but nonviolent nature. The conflict between Iran and the United States (US) is one of the most prominent of these.

The current state of affairs between the US and Iran is a complete reversal from that which persisted during the reign of the Pahlavi Dynasty, which to most was a dramatic shift of events; from inseparable allies to archenemies constantly at risk of triggering a third world war.

The height of the Iranian-American conflict, and the centerpiece of the threat this conflict manifests, is the Iranian nuclear program. This study will focus on the US-Iran relationship, particularly their usage of media wars, in order to shed light on the role of international relations and media as a weapon or instrument in the hands of nations in conflict. This concept makes itself most clear in the case of the Iranian nuclear program which the US, along with its NATO allies, is a strong opponent of, and which has triggered multiple economic sanctions (DAVENPORT, 2012) in addition to the media and broadcasting conflict we have been witnessing for the better part of the past decade.

The methodology of this dissertation follows an analysis of different primary and secondary sources including books, journal articles, scholarly sources, newspapers, government-issued statistics and reports, and information published by credible non-governmental organizations. In addition, this dissertation also draws information from quantitative data compiled by world organizations such as FRED to best analyze the relation and the standing points of both Iran and the US.

In my study, I relied on analyzing the content as well, by analyzing the media coverage in "BBC Arabic, Al-Mayadeen, Euronews and Al-Arabiya Al-Hadath" channels, and the extent of their attempts to control and control public opinion, to prove the goal of my study, which is centered on "the impact of international relations on the media."

The structure of this dissertation involves three main parts and a conclusion. The first part is the introduction in the remainder of which will be listed the aims and objectives of the dissertation as well as the research question, the researcher's hypothesis, the study's theoretical framework, the literature review, and the historical analysis that aids in the delivery of the dissertation's objectives.

The second part delves into the influence of international relations on the press, and its control over the broadcasting media to sway public opinion and influence global conflicts in favor on of one side or the other.

The third part is an analysis of Iran's nuclear program and the role of the international relations and broadcasting media on the way in which this conflict is directed when it comes to the specific Iranian-American aspect, as the US proves itself the strongest opponent of the Iranian nuclear program and Iran's rise to regional dominance in general. The conclusion provides a thorough summary of the entire dissertation, along with findings and analysis.



2. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND MEDIA

2.1 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE THESIS

The aim of this study is to shed light on the role of broadcasting media under the influence of international relations in global conflicts, and how media wars affect the state of affairs and the conditions of competitive conflicts between nations. In order to attain these aims, the following objectives need also to be reached:

- i To elaborate the effect of journalism on public opinion and how it influences the proceedings of conflicts; and.
- ii To examine the conflict between Iran and the US and the use of international relation's influence on media and the media's influence on international relations in that conflict.

2.2 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

International relations and broadcasting media play the major role in conflicts between global powers. This is especially prominent in the conflict between the US and Iran over the Iranian nuclear program, but can be seen in most global conflicts. This study argues that international relations is affected by the influence of broadcasting media in its effort to reach its desired outcomes and change, or enforce, public opinion.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of international relations dates back to the Greek times. The ancient historian of the Peloponnesian war, Thucydides, was the first major proponent of international relations, and is cited by many scholars as the cornerstone of international relations and the "traditional" standard of the field from which all theories of international relations have branched. International relation's effect on the direction that events flow into did not rise to prominence until after the Second World War, partly as a substitute to waging wars through firepower in hopes of avoiding a third world war. Before the technological revolution of the second half of the twentieth century, the world was too big with too vast of a difference between the people of different regions for it to be influenced collectively in any similar kind of patterns, regardless of the extent and power of the nation trying to use international

relations as a way to influence, win, or resolve conflicts. However, the rapid technological progress during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which was further accelerated by the space race, the arms race, and the overall technological and industrial race between the US and the Soviet Union, made interconnectedness in the world turn earth into what is sometimes referred to as a “Global Village” (Keohane and Nye 2000). The speed at which information, goods, and people can travel from one corner of the globe to the other made the differences between different regions gradually dissolve, the common interests rise, and transportation of military personnel and equipment become easier. All of these factors allowed for the relative ease in using international affairs to resolve conflicts as a substitute to war (Gaddis 1992).

One of the most powerful tools used in international affairs is broadcasting media and journalism. The use of media and journalism in international relations can change or radicalize public opinion to put pressure on certain parties involved in the conflict to take favorable action, or to sway international opinion, putting pressure on unrelated countries to get involved in the conflict, most prominently through economic sanctions or diplomatic interventions.

As an effective tool, or weapon, that avoids direct military conflict, the role of international relations and its influence on broadcasting media and journalism have replaced warfare in modern times, making the most common form of warfare center around media wars, which in turn hands over the conflict to a public opinion that can be influenced by journalistic strategies and media influence.

On the other side of the spectrum there is the effect that media plays on international relations. Since the advent of the printing press, media has been used to change public opinion, change or enforce ideologies, support or destroy political candidates, and influence the political atmosphere of a country, a region, or the entire world.

2.3.1 Overview

International relations is broad in its practice, and features multiple different methods and approaches, along with a wide spectrum of theories that differ in their principles.

Different scholars and politicians have selected different approaches and principles with different goals in international relations.

While international relations is a relatively new field, it is currently the fundamental core of the work being done in international politics to direct global affairs. As relations between countries in the world grow in complexity, due to the rise of transnational companies, refugee crises, pollution international smuggling, and new dynamics and trends that effect nations but do not stem from the nations themselves, the role of international relations grows in proportion to design and manifest foreign policy that brings about international cooperation when necessary.

International relations and media influence each other in various ways that determine the method in which they both operate, and the objective they operate towards. The influence of international relations on media is a subject of criticism and debate, but the influence of media, journalistic TV broadcasting in particular, on international relations is very well documented and researched thoroughly. The CNN effect is a term that was coined near the turn of the millennium as an umbrella term to describe the effect news media coverage of global events, especially warfare and violent conflict, on foreign policies and international relations. This effect influences public opinion and turns countries away from hard power strategies in favor of soft power ones, which is the focus of international relations.

Since the beginning of time, different peoples around the globe divided themselves into groups based on ethnicity, religion, geography, interest, or ideology. These groups, be them families or tribes in the earlier days of civilization, or nations or alliances of nations in our present day, have always been trying to expand their influence to increase their access to resources, acquire more manpower to fight enemies, and gain larger territories to create natural geographic landscapes that would aid them in defending against incoming invasions or help them start these invasions into neighboring regions by providing an easy access and proximity.

In order for one nation to increase its influence it must force another nation to change its behavior in a way that acts within the interest of the first nation. The route through which this change of behavior on part of the second nation is reached is called power. In the earlier days of our civilization, and up until fairly recently, the predominant power nations used to

gain influence in another nation was hard power, and this is still seen today, almost as often as its alternative which we will get to later. Hard power involves coercive acts (Wagner, 2014) that consist of three main types:

- i Sanctions;
- ii Force; and
- iii Threat of Force.

The first type is the one seen most often in our present day, mostly against nations that pose a threat to neighbors or international peace, and it centers around economic sanctions that ban other countries from trading with the sanctioned country lest they receive the same fate. Economic sanctions can be crippling to nations. Iran, for example, lost \$150 Billion in the two years between the US's withdrawal from the nuclear deal in 2018 and 2020 due to economic sanctions (Bloomberg, 2020).

The second type involves acts of war, such as the German invasion of Poland in 1939, or the US' invasion of Iraq in 2003. This is generally the last resort in our present day, and it is heavily restricted by international law. The UN authorizes the use of force in situations where the country in question has broken the rules of the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, has committed repeated attacks against other countries, has violated the agreements of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, or has harbored or aided international terrorism. The alleged breaking of the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons was used to authorize the war on Iraq's ruling regime in 2003 (Powell 2003).

The third type is the threat of force, which is used even in the event of a country breaking one of the four aforementioned rules in order to prevent a nation from "going rogue" or threatening peace without the need to resort to military action and direct force. This is generally used as a last attempt to resolve matters peacefully, but it poses a strain on diplomatic relations. This was the strategy used by the Soviet Union against the United Kingdom, France, and Israel in the Suez Crisis in 1956 when the USSR threatened the use of nuclear weapons if all three countries did not cease their attack on Egypt (Peck 2020).

On the other side of the spectrum, the concept of soft power centers around the use of persuasive methods to change a country's behavior (Nye, Soft Power 1990). The types of soft power include:

- i Political Values,
- ii Culture;
- iii Institutions.

Political values are used to create peaceful alliances that are united by an ideology, or the fear of one. This type of soft power requires countries to spread their ideology and political values by proving its success and the peace and prosperity it creates. American liberal capitalism, for instance, is now considered a beacon that leads to security and prosperity by most people around the globe due to the US' projection of its successes by actions, media, and policies.

Culture is spread through media, products, and art, and is spreading much faster than ever before due to the massive globalization the world has undertaken since the fall of the Soviet Union. This creates a competitive atmosphere between nations to manifest themselves as the leading culture around the globe. Although the US has been leading the global cultural change ever since the end of the Second World War, many countries now are throwing their hats in the ring, such as China. China has been mastering soft power since the rise of Xi Jinping, and has been using its extreme economic growth to fund its soft power and to spread its culture, political values, and institutions (Shambaugh, China's Soft-Power Push: The Search for Respect 2015).

The use of institutions to increase influence is often the most expensive as it entails constant funding of developments in developing countries like China's easy loans as part of the Belt and Road, scholarship programs and financial aid to students similar to the USAID program, and tax cuts, incentives, and financial support for companies to extend their globalization and reach, which is another method being used by the Chinese government to promote Chinese companies that manufacture electronics and automobile vehicles, and that are involved in banking or the service industry.

Soft power manifests itself most clearly when looking at the foreign aid budgets global powers spend in developing countries. The total development aid and the percentage of Gross National Income (GNI) used in foreign aid are shown in Table 2.1:

Table 2.1: Foreign Aid Budget by Country.

Country	Budget	% of GNI
US	\$34.62 billion	0.16
China	\$38 billion	0.36
Russia	\$1.14 billion	0.03
United Kingdom	\$19.37 billion	0.70
France	\$12.18 billion	0.44
Germany	\$23.81 billion	0.60
Japan	\$15.51 billion	0.29

Joseph Nye's critique against the overuse of hard power relies upon the claim that the war against global terrorism is a war to win the "hearts and minds of the public", a feat that can only be achieved using soft power (Nye, *Public Diplomacy and Soft Power* 2008). Soft power, according to Nye, makes war unlikely, and increases the interdependence between global powers that helps maintain global peace, and works towards a more unified approach to development and progress.

Critics of soft power approaches in international relations, and even some of its supporters, lay out the troubles with using soft power, and the reasons behind the delay of its implementation by multiple countries that still use more hard power than soft power.

Margaret Seymour, for instance, argues that soft power poses a challenge due to the difficulties and complexities that go along with its implementation. She notes that the soft power approach is targeted on humans, and needs to take into consideration their

“individualistic complexity, whereas hard power offers relatively direct and clear targets with a detailed battleplan allowing for a more obvious operational pattern (Seymour 2020).

Seymour also states that the results of soft power are nearly impossible to predict due to multiple variables that can determine the extent of its success, and the fact that the results of soft power, unlike hard power, cannot be quantified and measured, and that they require long stretches of time and meticulous planning into the future.

The increasing impact of social media is gradually changing the dynamics of soft power around the world. Politicians are "increasingly engaged in digital diplomacy". This means that global connections are easier but at the same time more complex. It challenges existing patterns of influence as well as traditional hierarchical power structures. Social media like Facebook, for example, provide excellent data sources. The new global power is information. Modern information technology is spreading information more widely than ever before. (Háberová n.d.)

2.4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Some studies seem to imply that the relation between media and international affairs works in the opposite direction of influence, by which they indicate that it is international relations that affects the role media plays by influencing its content to cause desired changes in public, and politicians', opinions, and views on certain matters in which those in charge of international affairs see it necessary for action to be taken. Further studies have suggested that the news media only focused on the Somalian situation after receiving intelligence from government insiders about imminent American intervention, which, the study suggests, was intelligence given to intentionally provoke the news media's focus on Somalia and, by extension, influence American foreign policy to take action (Livingston and Eachus 1995).

The influence of media, and journalism in particular, on the political spectrum of a country is seen very clearly and the political conflict that arose after the American Revolutionary War. The printing press was relied on very heavily by opposing factions and politicians to support or ruin the image over certain political candidate or party. For instance, Alexander Hamilton, who was known for his influential writing style, often used the press to alleviate scandals, support his ideology of federalizing the American states and establishing a

National Bank, and to attack the political opposition which threatened his interests (Ophoff 1978).

In the American presidential election of 1800, Alexander Hamilton published an extreme criticism of John Adams, the president at the time, who is a member of Hamilton's own political party, the Federalist party. Hamilton's attack would prove fatal for president John Adams' political career as it ruined his chances at securing a second term as president and all his future attempts at regaining any influential position. This is just one example of the power the press holds over public opinion, particularly when the writer is capable of manipulating the view of society with his words.

An inherent bias can be seen in almost all journalistic reporting. This is by the own admission of journalists who comment on the field of journalism and media. In his video essay, titled "Seven Things I've Learned About Journalism in Seven Years of Being a Journalist", Johnny Harris, a journalist who started his career at Vox, states that journalists cannot be unbiased, because, like everyone else, journalists, too, have views on political, economic, social, and historic matters. Divisive issues, on which journalists are expected to report with no biases and with complete objectivity, are often divisive among journalists as well. A journalist, according to Harris, must realize that his bias exists and must learn to give a fair representation of the opposing view in order to be ethical in his journalistic practice (Harris 2021).

Sticking with the American example makes the situation of journalism's influence on politics and international relations, as well as the influence of international relations on journalism, more evident due to the large scale of both journalistic freedom and the influence which corporate interests and political factions have on the journalistic practice in the US and the abundance of examples that represent, fairly accurately, the issue at hand in a wide array of matters, politically and socially.

In the 2016 US presidential elections, the role of media is, arguably, what determines the outcome of the race between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. While social media played its role in determining the election's outcome through spreading false information and, allegedly, hosting Russian bots and fake accounts made to influence the election in Donald

Trump's favor (Roberts 2017), it was the role played by the republican-leaning news media outlets that had the greatest influence in enabling Donald Trump's victory.

Fox News, the prominent news media outlet among Republicans, politicians and supporters, in The US, has used its platform to support Donald Trump in his campaign to win the 2016 presidential elections of the US, and continued to support him during his many scandals and crises along his four years in the Oval Office.

At one point, Donald Trump's director of communications was Bill Shine, the former copresident of Fox News. This close relationship between trump and Fox News extends to include his on and off-air closeness to Fox News hosts such as Sean Hannity, Jeanine Pirro, and Lou Dobbs (Illing 2019). However, it is the closeness between trump's rhetoric and that of Fox News that cemented the alliance between the presidential candidate and the rightwing news media outlet.

During certain scandals that threatens Donald Trump's candidacy, such as the scandal that has been dubbed the "Access Hollywood tape", Fox News and its hosts were vigilant in releasing pieces of news that would be interpreted as scandals committed by Hillary Clinton, such as the email scandal which was reported to infer that there had been treason, negligence, or mishandling on Clinton's part that endangered national security. In other words, Fox News would find certain points that could be interpreted negatively that had been committed by trump's opposition and vastly exaggerate their importance in order to make trump scandal seem more insignificance in relation to those of his competition.

Even though Hillary Clinton's email scandal was heavily investigated by the FBI who found no treason, crime, or national security risks caused by Hillary Clinton, it was nevertheless two damaging to Clinton's image and trustworthiness in the eyes of the public, particularly the voters, that it benefited Donald Trump and saved his candidacy from the Access Hollywood scandal (ELLIOTT 2016).

In the 1960s, president John F. Kennedy used the press in a rather different way. Kennedy had realized, much earlier than most people in the political sphere, that the shift from print and radio to television in journalism and media required a change of attitude towards journalism, particularly in the visual department. In the battle for the presidency against

Richard Nixon in the presidential elections of 1960, John F. Kennedy seemed to realize that the fact that the debates had moved to a televised platform, which had replaced radio and print, and that people could actually see the candidates as well as hear them, it was as important to look good and be visually appealing to the audience as it was to have well thought out responses and have an appealing message to the voters. As a result, Kennedy was able to win in the presidential elections even though it has been said that Nixon won the debates, however, Nixon was considered visually unkempt and untidy compared to Kennedy who was much more charismatic and much more appealing to the camera which had become the entire platform of the debates (Spillane 2017).

Another trick that Kennedy used in the 1960 presidential elections against Nixon involved misleading the media by publicly repeating false information about the nuclear missile gap between the US and the Soviet Union which had supposedly widened in the favor of the

Soviets as a result, he claimed, of the mishandling of the Cold War by Eisenhower's administration in which Nixon was vice president. However, these allegations were known to be false by John F Kennedy who knew very well that the nuclear missile gap was in favor of the US as he was briefed about the matter during his candidacy before making these allegations public to the press and to the media (Schwarz 2013). The entire purpose of these allegations were not to inform the public, as the news media was meant to do, but rather to serve John F Kennedy's chances of winning the presidency by changing the opinion of the public on the performance of Eisenhower's administration, of which Nixon was an integral part, and, therefore, change the opinion of the public on Nixon himself.

2.5 INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND JOURNALISM

Alan R. Kluver states in his 2002 article, titled "The Logic of New Media in International Affairs", that the new inventions in the technology and the platforms from which we receive our news have created a more direct, visual, and in some cases, emotional way of receiving the news, which has caused politicians and decision-makers to act less on the principles and plans of their governments and more on the basis of public opinion, while taking into consideration the reactionary impulse that the modern news results in, and sometimes acting upon such reactionary impulses. Kluver uses the conflict between the US and China to describe the role of the news media, be it in print, broadcasting, television, or other

platforms, in determining the framework within which politicians react to certain situations driven by either the influence or the fear caused by public opinion (Kluver 2002).

A 1989 article titled “The Press in Vietnam as Agent of Defeat: A Critical Examination” by William M. Hammond quotes a former US Commander in South Vietnam, General William C. Westmoreland, in saying that the news media’s constant involvement of the American people in the Vietnam War, and their broadcasting of the war into their homes, showing them what he considered an exaggerated view of the situation in South Vietnam, is the main reason why the US withdrew its military from the Vietnam war and left South Vietnam to fall shortly after (Hammond 1989).

2.6 JOURNALISM

Journalism began, as the earliest records suggest, in ancient Rome where it was used mainly to record important speeches and to note influential events. Julius Caesar created what was known as “Acta Diurna Populi Romani”, which translates to “Daily Acts of the Roman People”, to chronicle different events taking place across the Roman Empire in 59 BC (Endres n.d.).

The advances brought by the Roman empire’s order, organization, complexity, education, and security were nearly wiped out in their entirety after the collapse of the western Roman Empire. As a result of the barbarian takeover of Western Europe following the collapse of the empire, Europe entered its dark ages which signaled a decline in literature, innovation, education, literacy, and the general stability and complexity of society that made the earliest form of journalism possible (Magister 2017).

Journalism and the press became rapidly gaining success in Europe following the introduction of printing paper from the east, starting with China and traveling to Europe through the Middle East, and soon, after printing the Bible in Germany, Europeans witnessed the establishment of hundreds of printing presses across the continent.

The advancements in printing and the widespread success of the printing press across Europe resulted, shortly after, in the establishment of the first regularly published newspaper. A newsbook, titled “Relation aller Fürnemmen und gedenckwürdigen Historien”, was

established by Johann Carolus in the year 1605 in Strasbourg, Germany. Its title translates to “Account of All Distinguished and Commemorable News” (Norman n.d.).

Although Carolus was already in the journalism business, his work involved writing news sheets by hand for exclusive and wealthy subscribers. The invention of the printing press, however, allowed Carolus’s “Relation aller Fürnemmen und gedenckwürdigen Historien” to move into print and be more affordable, and, therefore, more attainable, to the majority of the public that was interested in the news.

Perhaps the earliest widely known event in which journalists made a substantial impact in the modern world is the journalism that took place during the Dreyfus Affair, between 1894 and 1906. In early 1898, the most famous French writer at the time, Emile Zola, published an article on the Dreyfus Affair that is still considered to this day to be one of the most influential journalistic interventions in political affairs, and to have set the course for the entire future of France.

In 1894, artillery captain in the French military, Alfred Dreyfus, was suspected of treason for sharing confidential information with the German government. In a trial that moved the nation of France, Dreyfus was found guilty of treason and was sentenced to a lifetime of solitary imprisonment. unbeknownst to the French public at the time, the accusation and the subsequent trials of Alfred Dreyfus was a massive case of antisemitism due to Dreyfus being of a Jewish family, and was indeed a cover up by the French military, the counter espionage department, and the justice system (Rothstein 2007). It later came to light that the real spy who had been delivering this sensitive information to the German government was French army major Ferdinand Walsin Esterhazy. But it was Emile Zola's fiery article, titled “J'accuse!”, with both its passion and investigative journalism, that would reopen the case, shed light on the truth, and lead to the vindication of Alfred Dreyfus in a case that divided the Third French Republic and brought on the Fourth Republic.

In March of 2008, Jeff Jacoby published an OP-ED in the Boston Globe about Emile Zola’s “J'accuse!” that describes the influence and the effectiveness of the article. “IT IS the most famous front page in the history of journalism. Its one-word headline - "J'accuse!" - is if anything even more renowned” wrote Jacoby, in his expression of the importance that Zola’s

article forces upon the reader. Jacoby also states that “J’accuse!” was “part investigative reportage, part impassioned advocacy” in his attempt to convey the gravitas the article manifested.

In publishing his 4000-word article defending Alfred Dreyfus, Emile Zola was truly and undoubtedly risking his career. “J’accuse!” was published in the face of a growing tsunami of antisemitism and hatred, and in a time when the French public was fully convinced that Alfred Dreyfus was, indeed, a German spy selling off information that put the French national security at risk. Jacoby continues to write, “Zola's article mobilized the Dreyfusards, who included many of the era's leading writers, artists, and academics. This too was the birth of something the modern world takes for granted: an intellectual class actively engaged in a war over national culture and values”.

A highly established list of French journalists, writers, and other leading intellectual and influential figures in French society identified as Dreyfusards and fought to stand up for Dreyfus, and all that the Dreyfus Affair represented, due to Zola’s article.

This included, among others: Sarah Bernhardt, Anatole France, Henri Poincaré, Georges Clemenceau, Lucien Herr, Jean Jaures. This journalistic defense of Dreyfus, which was a reflection of a journalistic movement towards truth and justice, eventually led to the exoneration of Alfred Dreyfus, which saw him receive medals of honor, and reinstatements into the French military as an officer who then went on to fight in World War One before retiring as a patriot and a hero to the French public (JACOBY 2008).

Another highly influential author of the early twentieth century was George Orwell, a pen name chosen by Eric Blair, one of, if not the, most influential writers in history. The definition of journalist would have to stretch no further than its natural extent to include George Orwell in its bounds. Orwell’s “Homage to Catalonia”, published in 1938, is, to a near-ultimate degree of certainty, the most accurate description of the Spanish civil war, as it was written by a person who, not only defied conventional norms that saw all journalists of either side, leftists and fascists alike, cozy up to the leaders and influential figures of extremist political parties on both ends of the spectrum leading to subjective and populist journalism in which journalists had personal gain at the time, but had also participated

personally in the Spanish civil war under the banner of the Partit Obrer d'Unificació Marxista, a Trotskyite faction of the Marxist rebellion whose name translates to the Workers' Party of Marxist Unification, and had gained first-hand experience in the events and the occurrences on the field (Hitchens 2002).

The difference between Eric Blair and Emile Zola is that the influence of Zola's writing was something he experienced first hand during his own lifetime. In fact, Zola was nominated to the first two Nobel prizes during his lifetime, whereas Blair's fame and influence came posthumously. Nevertheless, Blair's reporting on the Spanish civil war from his experience in Catalonia proved influential to the Catalan cause, and brought significant support to the separatists which persists to this day.

In recent history, particularly in the late 1960's and early 1970's, a movement towards investigative reporting started a paradigm shift in the way journalism was viewed. Instead of its role being solely to report the news, journalism became more involved in news making itself. A massive undertaking by a journalistic duo, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, with the help of the Washington Post's staff and support, uncovered series of corruption, money laundering, obstruction of justice, abuse of power, and general criminal activity committed by then-president Richard Nixon and his administration (Investigative Impact n.d.).

Woodward and Bernstein used a combination of unclassified records, people on the inside such as administrative staff, general leaks from within the administration, and the findings of concurrent investigations run by the US federal justice system, the US Federal Bureau of Investigations, and the US Congress. However, the most useful weapon used by Woodward and Bernstein in their reporting was Woodward's highly confidential source who was codenamed "Deep Throat" and later uncovered to be a high-ranking FBI official named Mark Felt.

he work of Woodward and Bernstein would bring the Watergate scandal, and by extension, the abuse of power committed by Richard Nixon and his administration in their criminal endeavors, to the public view in all clarity and objectivity while displaying all the facts and figures relevant in making the case that of public opinion as much as it was a criminal case in the justice system.

2.7 THEORIES OF JOURNALISM

There has been multiple approaches to journalism over its half a millennium of existence and its vast influence over the affairs of politics, nations, culture, society, and academia. Although journalistic practice differs between different regions of the world as much as it differed between different centuries of its existence, there has been an abundance of theorizing that tends towards grouping the journalistic practice and its approaches in different numbers of categories depending on who is pursuing the course of theorizing.

Despite the aforementioned abundance of theories regarding the categorization of different journalistic approaches, there has been three distinct theories that gained traction amidst media scholars with wide acceptance within the field. The three main theories in journalism are:

- i The Four Theories;
- ii The Five Concepts; and
- iii 3- The Three Movements.

Each of these theories is divided further into sections that categorize journalistic approaches.

2.7.1 The Four Theories

Perhaps the most influential of the three main theories is the Four Theories. Published by the university of Illinois's press in 1956, the "Four Theories" has been widely taught as the framework upon which journalism is categorized. As the name implies, it consists of four series of journalism (SIEBERT, PETERSON and SCHRAMM 1984), those being:

- i Authoritarian;
- ii Libertarian;
- iii Social responsibility; and
- iv Soviet communist.

2.7.1.1 Authoritarian theory

Authoritarian theory is the oldest theory of journalism. Ever since the advent of Johannes Gutenberg's printer, authors and journalists alike posed a threat to the monopoly on knowledge and information that was previously possessed by the politicians and the church. As a reaction to losing their grip on this monopoly, and in a society that is influenced by the work of Plato, Machiavelli, Hegel, and others who believed that the importance of maintaining order in society dwarfed that of the individual, governments around the world began restrictions on publishing in general and the press in particular. It didn't take long until governments began launching their own journalistic platforms with the aim of advancing the government's agenda, sharing government propaganda, and delivering whatever facts the government deemed fit for the people and the public to know, with varying, and often low, degrees of truth and objectivity (Siebert, *The Authoritarian Theory of the Press* 1984).

News outlets that follow the authoritarian theory of journalism push forward to the public whatever version of the truth the leadership of the nation wants to be released. This type of journalism is found in many countries around the world where a type of strongman dictatorship rules, particularly in Asia and Eastern Europe.

2.7.1.2 Libertarian theory

The Libertarian theory of journalism arose as a response to the authoritarian approach in late seventeenth century Europe. Much like the word libertarian comes from liberty, libertarian journalism believed in individual freedoms, the right of the public to be informed, the freedom of expression and speech, and the right to criticize and expose the actions of governments, politicians, and the church (Siebert, *The Libertarian Theory of the Press* 1984). Despite the libertarian view that individuals have the right to reach and spread information, the real-world forces bias is that the libertarian theory does not go at odds with. Therefore, following the libertarian theory, different privately owned news media outlets can seek the same information and come up with opposing conclusions that they then lay out to the public depending on their political background.

In its nature, the libertarian theory of journalism is only capable of thriving in free-market capitalist societies where the form of government is democratic and runs under a multiparty system such as the US, Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Australia, and Japan, among others.

2.7.1.3 Social responsibility theory

The difference between social responsibility theory and the libertarian theory is that, as mentioned above, the libertarian theory came as a response to the authoritarian theory which resulted in it being force of opposition, or at the very least an open eye, when it came to monitoring the work of governments, whereas the social responsibility theory believes that the main role of the press is to give everyone in society a voice (Peterson 1984). This leads to news media outlets following the social responsibility theory of journalism being more objective than those who follow the libertarian theory, and more committed to journalistic ethics. However, relying overwhelmingly on public opinion makes social responsibility theory vulnerable of criticism that accuse it of being reactionary.

Although a staunch defender of journalistic freedom, the social responsibility theory of journalism enforces certain obligations on journalists that performed as boundaries to their freedom. According to the theory, journalists are responsible for these points:

- i Facilitating discussions, debates, and the access of information by the public;
- ii Informing the public in ways that make it capable of self-government;
- iii Monitoring the work of governments so as to ensure that individual liberties are protected;
- iv Benefitting the economic system by providing an advertisement platform that links buyers and sellers;
- v Providing entertainment to the audience; and
- vi Having a self-sufficient business model that protects the journalists from pressure caused by funding from special interest groups.

2.7.1.4 Soviet communist theory

The Soviet Communist theory of journalism came as a result of Marxist, Leninist, and Stalinist ideologies taking over many parts of the world in the early twentieth century, starting with the Soviet Union. While it is sometimes affiliated with the authoritarian theory, the soviet communist theory differs in the aspects of private ownership of news media outlets as it is not allowed by this theory where it is allowed by the authoritarian theory. News media outlets are an integral part of the government within the Soviet communist theory. The oneparty system uses news media outlets under the Soviet communist theory to rally public support, spread the government propaganda, and further the party's agenda by displaying their own versions of the truth with a complete ban on any criticism towards the objectives of the party (Schramm 1984). This system can be seen today in countries like Cuba and North Korea.

2.7.2 The Five Concepts

The Five Concepts topology came as a major update to the Four Theories in 1981. Introduced by William Hachten (Tran 2009), the Five Concepts came as a tool to categorize the growing use of journalism on the international stage. The five concepts are:

- i Western;
- ii Revolutionary;
- iii Developmental;
- iv Authoritarian; and
- v Communist.

2.7.2.1 Western concept

The Western concept of journalism believes in the complete independence of news media and its total freedom from governmental influence. This concept states that journalists must be able to criticize and shed light on all aspects and actions of the government (Bhuian 2015). As a result, news media outlets must be financially autonomous, which requires them to be

under a business model that is profitable and its nature. The western concept is most often seen in the US.

2.7.2.2 Revolutionary concept

Throughout history, one of the most important tools used by revolutionaries to facilitate the success of their revolutions has been wide scale communication. being the most effective method of widescale communication, journalism has been heavily relied on by revolutionaries to recruit, inform, insight, and persuade the public on their quest to overthrow the political system under which they exist. this is the revolutionary concept of journalism (SUBIJANTO 2017).

Although the revolutionary concept is in its nature and illegal form of communication, it is bound by certain directives that's all revolutionary journalism follows.

- i Spread information that the government-run news media does not;
- ii Organize the insurgency;
- iii Destroy the reputation and rally against the rulers; and
- iv Topple the ruling class.

Examples of the revolutionary concept of journalism are best found during the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the anti-Nazi resistance in occupied France during World War Two.

2.7.2.3 Developmental concept

The developmental concept of journalism focuses on benefiting and facilitating the development of society by making individual rights secondary and focusing on serving economic growth of the country, political unity, and educating the public to decrease illiteracy (TAYLOR-APPIAH 1982). This requires all media outlets to be organized and instructed by a governmental oversight that unites the efforts across all platforms. developmental concept is most often found in non-communist developing nations such as those of Latin America.

2.7.2.4 Authoritarian concept

The authoritarian concept shares much of the same nature as the authoritarian theory from the Four Theories. It is, in essence, opposed to the diversity of views and opinions in society and in favor of relying on the view of the ruling system even when the news media outlet is privately owned (Communication Theory 2012).

2.7.2.5 Communist concept

Much like the authoritarian concept, the communist concept also shares its nature with the Soviet communist theory of the Four Theories. The communist concept focuses on forwarding the party's agenda and propaganda in order to achieve the change desired by the one-party system. Nevertheless, news media outlets in the communist concept are only ever government-run, and privatization is not allowed in journalism (Bajracharya 2018).

2.7.3 The Three movements classification

In the 1980s, a new way of looking at the categorization of different journalistic approaches began to take hold. Rather than focusing on the political divisions that separate different news media outlets and define the way they function, the Three Movements classify journalistic approaches by the values they pursue and the model they adopt.

The classification divides journalism into:

- i Market Journalism.
- ii Marxist Journalism.
- iii Advancing Journalism.

2.7.3.1 Market journalism

Market Journalism is based on complete journalistic freedom outside of any external control on the journalistic process. It also believes in the fair and objective reporting of events by journalists away from bias and political special interests (McManus 1994). The fundamental ideals of Market Journalism can be summarized in the following:

- i Truth-seeking;

- ii Social responsibility;
- iii Apolitical delivery of information;
- iv Impartiality in reporting;
- v Capitalist business model; and
- vi Monitoring the work of the government.

2.7.3.2 Marxist journalism

Marxist Journalism as classified by the Three Movements classification corresponds with the Communist Concept of the Five Concepts as well as the Soviet Communist Theory of the Four Theories. At its core, Marxist journalism aims to eliminate the monopoly the rich have on information and spread out the information and, by extension, awareness across all classes of society, the working class in particular. The main method in which Marxist journalism enlightens the public, from its own perspective, is by educating them politically in a manner that coincides with socialism and the Marxist ideology (Chandler 2020).

2.7.3.3 Advancing journalism

Advancing journalism shares some common aspects with Marxist journalism in that it works hand in hand with the government and the political ruling class to unite the public and aid the work towards progress through unity and selective information. Advancing journalism considers journalistic freedom and the right to access information to be secondary to the primary purpose of unity and progress.

2.8 JOURNALISTIC IMPACT ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND PUBLIC OPINION

The journalistic impact on international relations and public opinion has long been noticed by scholars and widely reported, from the CNN effect to other phenomena like the Aljazeera effect, and has influenced the world deeply. The role of the media is changing public perspective on religion, culture, and society has necessitated an interdependence between

journalism, particularly the news media, and the political class along with their decisionmaking process (Coban 2016).

In the case of China, the news media has been using its persuasive aspect to further the agenda of the one party state (Shambaugh, China's Propaganda System: Institutions, Processes and Efficacy 2007), whereas in countries like the United Kingdom where there is an opposition to the actions of the government and a healthy democratic system in which freedom of expression prevails, news outlets, such as the Guardian, are used as watchdogs to monitor the government and to criticize its wrongdoings.

Aljazeera effect is a term used to describe the influence of the news media on the course of events by taking away the monopoly that the state where the powerful groups have over communication on a mass scale and information delivered to the public. This influence was first noticed unemployed scale in the Egyptian revolution which Al Jazeera covered in its entirety and in complete depth, giving a voice to the previously unrepresented groups in the media and rallying support which aided them in reaching their goal (Miles 2011).

In the last decade, very few topics have dominated news more than the Iranian nuclear situation. The situation in Iran might have started as a power struggle between Iran and the US, but has developed into a nuclear crisis in which all the countries in the world are deeply involved. Naturally, this has caused a wide scale coverage by all major news media outlets in the world, and deep divisions and differences among these coverages, depending on who's reporting.

A relatively more centric news media outlet, such as the BBC, has had its own biases while reporting Iran's nuclear crisis, particularly when it came to the Iranian nuclear deal where the BBC reporting seems to change depending on who is the figure involved in the nuclear deal.

An article by Jonathan Marcus in 2018 tries to unpack the results achieved by a Netanyahu presentation that intended on revealing secret documents obtained by Israel, taken from

Iranian nuclear archives (Marcus 2018). Marcus's report takes jabs at Netanyahu's implicit intentions in reporting these documents, and hints, in an unsubtle way, that the presentation is targeted at then-president Donald Trump to sabotage the possibility of a successful nuclear deal with Iran.

Another focus of the BBC has been the relations between the US and the European Union, as well as the relations between European nation states. This specific focus is not seen in many of the major news media outlets around the world, but the BBC being major European news organization, it tends to focus on its own viewpoint of the matter: how the Iranian nuclear deal is affecting European relations. This can be seen in an article by Jenny Hill published in 2018 that sheds light on the relations between Trump, Macron, and Angela Merkel as seen in an Iranian nuclear deal talk in Washington. Hill notes the difference in Trump's interactions with Macron and Merkel, and emphasizes on the difficulties Merkel has had in trying to build strong relations with president Trump compared to the relative ease that face Macron in this area (Hill 2018).

The way the BBC reported the Iranian nuclear deal under Trump differs from that in which they reported it when Obama was in the Oval Office. In 2015, a BBC article covering the backlash of Obama's statement concerning the Iranian nuclear deal, said of his critics, "his Republican rivals, who hope to scupper the agreement in a subsequent vote, have accused him of appeasement" (BBC, Iran nuclear deal: '99% of world agrees' says Obama 2015), discrediting this criticism by pointing out that the reasons behind it are political rivalries and attempts at getting more votes in hopes of winning more elections.

3. IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM

3.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Iran's Qajar dynasty, which had ruled since 1796, was deposed in a British-backed coup d'état which saw the rise of the Pahlavi Dynasty in 1925 with Reza Shah Pahlavi ruling over Iran (Zirinsky 1992). The neutrality maintained by Iran during the first world war was not tolerated by the allied forces in the Second World War. After refusing Britain's demands to expel all Germans from Iran in 1941, Reza Shah was forced to abdicate following a joint invasion of Iran by the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union aiming at preventing German influence in Iran and the Nazi procurement of Iranian oil fields. Mohammed Reza Shah,

Reza Shah's 21-year-old son, took over as the ruler of Iran after his father's abdication, which led to a decade of British influence over the country (Eshraghi 1984). In 1952, the democratically-elected prime minister of Iran, Mohammad Mossadegh, cut off all diplomatic relations with Britain after declaring it an enemy of Iran due to the Anglo-Iranian oil company's monopoly over Iranian oil of which Iran saw little-to-no profit. Although the US opposed British policies in Iran, the election of president Dwight D. Eisenhower in late 1952 marked a shift in that position as Eisenhower's anti-communist stance resulted in American involvement alongside the United Kingdom in overthrowing Mohammed Mosaddegh in 1953 in another coup d'état, due to America's fear of the influence of communism in Iran, which led to the return of Mohammed Reza Shah's reign with full control over the country (Dee 2015).

Over the next few decades, the US and Iran shared a particularly close partnership, with Iran becoming the single largest purchaser of American-made weaponry. During the Shah's visit to the US in 1977, US president Jimmy Carter said of Iran, "[Iran] is an island of stability in one of the most troubled areas of the world". However, the protests against the Shah's brutal secret police, the SAVAK, which was established with the help of the US, led many Iranians to blame America for its backing of the Shah, and to refuse the continuation of America's influence over Iran. In addition, the westernization and secularization of Iran left a mass of opposition among the more conservative members of society. This all culminated in 1979 when the Islamic revolution began with the return of Khomeini to Iran, and led to the deposition of the Shah. Briefly after his deposition, the Shah was given asylum in the US by

president Carter. In response, a mob of Iranian students invaded and occupied the American embassy in Tehran, taking 52 American diplomats hostage for 444 days (Hassan 1984). The hostage crisis resulted in Carter ordering crippling economic sanctions on Iran which increased resentment against the US among Iranians. Iranian antagonization of the US would reach its full extent during the Iran-Iraq war. Saddam Hussein, the then new leader of Iraq, decided to take advantage of a weakened Iran, suffering after a violent revolution and withering under international sanctions and military isolation. The US backed Iraq in the war, supplying it with advanced weaponry, funding, and, allegedly, chemical weapons (Sterner 1984). This was arguably the main cause for Iran's antagonization of the US.

Iran's nuclear program started in the 1950s with the help of initiative and aid from the US as a part of its Atoms For Peace program. The Atoms For Peace program was a part of then-president Dwight Eisenhower's strategy of "containment", by which the US and its allies were meant to increase their readiness to fight communism in general and the USSR in particular in hopes to contain the spread of communism and the control the USSR had over multiple regions of the world. The program included a media campaign known as "Operation

Candor", and, it involved a very serious view towards the threat of nuclear warfare, the solution to which, as Eisenhower saw, was to increase the nuclear readiness of allied countries, particularly those who share borders with the Soviet Union.

Multiple factors made Iran a prime candidate for this program:

- i Iran shared a more than 2000 kilometres long border with the Soviet states of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Turkmenistan.
- ii Iran's rich oil fields and thriving economy made it a strong economy that can afford launching a nuclear program.
- iii The Shah of Iran at the time, having reclaimed control thanks to the 1953 coup which was orchestrated by the US and the United Kingdom, who is a strong and dependable ally to the US.

Naturally, the Atoms For Peace program was advertised to the world as a developmental program that focused on the peaceful and helpful aspects of nuclear energy, such as power generation and medicinal use.

The cooperation between Tehran and the Washington resulted in the establishment of the Tehran Nuclear Research Center. Nevertheless, in 1970 Mohammad Reza Shah signed the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (NPT) to reassure his allies that his country did not aim to have nuclear weapons. Iran later joined the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA's) in 1974. In the same year Iran was the first Middle Eastern country to submit a draft resolution to UN that suggested a nuclear weapons free zone in Middle East, this step clarified Iran's intention to use its nuclear program for peaceful purposes and not to threaten the region of the Middle East.

Mohammad Reza Shah had planned to developed the nuclear program and build about 23 Nuclear plants by the end of the twentieth century to increase Iran's national interests, but the Iranian revolution of 1979 interrupted this plan. The war between Iraq and Iran in 1980 lead Iran to look for foreign assistance, but its policy against the west, its occupation of the US embassy in Tehran, and its aid to Hezbollah in Lebanon led to international isolation towards Iran, which forced it to cooperate with China, Russia, Libya, Pakistan, and North Korea to acquire the necessary materials needed in its nuclear program.

Following the Islamic revolution, The US and its allies ceased all nuclear programs involving Iran, including Germany which was building the Bushehr nuclear plants in Iran, a project that had seen 80% completion by the time Germany stopped all work on the project. The leader of the Islamic revolution, and by extension, the leader of the then-newly formed Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini, saw that the nuclear program was a waste of resources that was draining Iran's economy. in addition to the economical disadvantages that Ayatollah Khomeini saw as an inevitable result of the nuclear program, multiple sources and historical accounts state that Khomeini's opposition to the use of weapons of mass destruction stems from his belief that it is forbidden by Islam. Some sources even claimed that Khomeini issued a fatwa against the use of chemical and nuclear weapons in the Iran-

Iraq war (Foreign Policy 2014). However, Khomeini's efforts to stop the Iranian nuclear program are undermined by historical accounts of Iran's relentless efforts to develop nuclear weapons.

Reports of Iranian purchase of Namibian yellowcake uranium stand as damning evidence of Iran's endeavors in the direction of developing weapons of mass destruction in the 1980s. In addition to the purchase of yellowcake uranium from Namibia and Russia, Iran has also built P1 centrifuges based on designs acquired from Pakistan, which is a country that also started its nuclear weapons development under Eisenhower's Atoms For Peace program.

Following the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989, less than one year after the end of the Iran-Iraq war, Iran's development of nuclear weapons resumed and escalated under the leadership of Khamenei, partly as a result of Iraq's use of chemical weapons during the Iran Iraq war which emphasized upon the necessity of Iran's acquisition of weapons of mass destruction if it seeks prove itself a dominating power in the region coupled with its urge to defend itself against an international community that was using methods of increasing isolation towards Iran, with hostility from multiple international powers, particularly in the West. The most prominent development in Iranian relations during that era was with Pakistan. The Iranian-Pakistani Atomic Energy Commission reached an agreement to train six Iranian scientists in the institution of Pakistani Nuclear studies.

The same nuclear ambitions that led Iran to an alliance with Pakistan fueled an alliance with Russia and China as well in an effort to end all and any reliance on the West in the face of increasingly harsh international sanctions and even more international isolation. This alliance increased Iran's nuclear readiness massively, especially in the 1990s.

Iran's nuclear weapons capabilities are under constant surveillance by international organizations, as the world now sees Iran as the primary threat to world peace, just after the US, and are, therefore, very weary of its abilities to pose said threat. Whether this comes from a successful propaganda campaign that caused the antagonization of Iran on behalf of the entire western world or from a logical conclusion that stems from genuine fear of Iran's purpose in the region and the world is still up for relentless global debate. Nevertheless, what is certain is the rapid increase of the nuclear readiness of Iran's military, evident by the multiple operational facilities that are documented, with details available for public

consumption. The table below includes some of the operational Iranian facilities that are allegedly used in the development of nuclear weapons (Iran Watch 2021).

Table 3.1: Iran's Nuclear Facilities.

Facility	Function	Location
Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant	Uranium enrichment with gas centrifuges	Natanz
Fuel Enrichment Plant	Uranium enrichment with gas centrifuges	Natanz
Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant	Uranium enrichment with gas centrifuges	Fordow
Tehran Nuclear Research Center	Research, including on uranium metal	Tehran
Saghand Uranium Mine	Extraction of uranium ore	Saghand
Ardakan Yellowcake Production Plant	Uranium concentrate production	Ardakan
Uranium Conversion Plant	Uranium Conversion	Isfahan Nuclear Technology Center

3.1.1 The Emergence of Iran's Nuclear Activities to the International Community

Iran's nuclear facilities on their own are no threat to the interests of the US and its allies or their role in the global balance of power, but the alliance that Iran is strengthening with Russia, China, and their allies is placing a kind of stress on the influence possessed by The US and NATO allies in multiple regions of the world, chief among which are:

- i Middle East;
- ii Central Asia;
- iii West Africa;

iv Central Africa; and

v Latin America.

Although the most turbulent places on earth, these regions are highly integral for World Peace in general. The alliance Iran has with Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, otherwise known as BRICS, and their allies, poses distinct threats to world peace, as well as the interests of NATO and its allies, for distinct reasons in each region. However, one main threat is in the forefront; all the aforementioned regions harbor global terrorist organizations that might seek nuclear weapons, and, with BRICS and Iran's apparent "Prime Directive" being the toppling of the global balance of power which currently has the US as the one global superpower, coupled with the inherently dangerous position Iran finds itself in due to internal and external threats, NATO fears the possibility of Iran supplying nuclear weapons to one of these terrorist organizations, be it through the cooperation with BRICS, acting on its own, or a simple mistake in Iran's security system and handling of its nuclear warheads.

All of Iran's known connections to terrorist organizations in all the regions named above are a part of what is known as the "Axis of Resistance". The vast majority of groups operating under Iran's control as proxy militias operate under some variation of the name Hezbollah, with verifiable but unclear ties to the main Hezbollah which made the foundations of its regional and international operations in Lebanon.

"Hostile Iranian actions in the Western Hemisphere are not far-fetched, they are a reality. Iran is seeking to establish terrorist networks around the world, and it sponsored a terrorist attack in Buenos Aires in 1992. The bizarre plot by Iran against Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Washington, disrupted last year, further illustrates the mullahs' brazen intentions. The chances of Venezuela serving as Iran's surrogate in the hemisphere through terrorism or other coordinated action are increased by its chaotic state of affairs.", these were the words of Senator Richard G. Lugar during the February of 2012 hearing before the 112th US

Congress's Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Peace Corps, and Global Narcotics Affairs (112th Congress 2012).

Through Hezbollah, Iran has found itself in an influential position in Latin America as an ally to the Venezuelan president and the ruling system in Venezuela, a country which has

turned into a host for Hezbollah's activity on the American continents. However, Hezbollah's presence in the Americas does not end with Venezuela, as the Iran-backed organization has established its presence in Colombia within Lebanese and Arabic communities living in the region, before moving to the tri-border area which includes parts of Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil (Humire 2020). In addition to being one of the largest terrorist organizations on the planet, Hezbollah's activities in South America have stretched to include global trafficking and distribution of narcotics. Of the over 2000 individuals and groups named by the DEA as kingpins in global drug trafficking, 200 are linked directly to Hezbollah. This highly profitable activity is believed to be used to pay off Hezbollah's fighters and to purchase weapons and equipment to aid the organization in its terrorist activity.

Iranian influence in Africa is quite similar to that in the Americas, with one glaring exception; instead of narcotics, Hezbollah in Africa deals with diamonds. With a large number of Lebanese immigrants living in West Africa, particularly in Sierra Leone, large communities of Lebanese individuals organize themselves into clan and family structures that dealt primarily with the trade of diamonds. Originally, this business, along with the families and clans that created the foundation for it, was organized by the Amal movement, Hezbollah's main rival in the Lebanese Shiite communities. Hezbollah's role as the dominant influential force within the Shiite communities of the Lebanese people, both inside and outside Lebanon, grew massively after the severe weakening of the Amal movement and the draining of its resources due to its heavy participation in the Lebanese civil war which lasted from 1975 to 1990, and the subsequent participation of Amal in the political system of Lebanon which caused a transformation within Amal that saw it change from a movement to one of the largest political parties in the country. This new prominence of

Hezbollah boosted Iran's influence massively within Lebanese Shiite communities, emigrants and residents of Lebanon alike, and, by extension, allowed Iran to play roles of high influence in the countries in which these Lebanese citizens exist. Hezbollah's network south of the African Sahara was also highly successful in its operations, mainly in the Congo, where Hezbollah laundered money through the use of corporations such as Tajco Ltd. and Ovlas Trading operated through Ali Hussain and Kasim Tajuddin along with diamond and food trading enterprises in Gambia, the Congo and Angola to launder money for Hezbollah

(Wege 2012). This money is believed to have been used to finance Hezbollah's military operations in Lebanon and the region.

The role of Iran in Central Asia has been historically dominant with strong ties to all Kingdoms, Empires, and city states that have existed in the region throughout Iran's long history as the Persian empire in all its forms. In its current day, Iran has lost much of the influence it has in Central Asia to two massive conglomerates on the global stage; Russia and China. China's Belt and Road initiative, which seeks to reinstall the Silk Road that connected the massive economy China has to offer to the rest of the world, passes through multiple Central Asian countries and, as a result of that, is very economically beneficial to these countries which increases their reliance on China. On the other end of the spectrum,

Russia's endless efforts to reclaim the former Soviet territories in Central Asia and the Caucasus is a constant infringement on the Iranian sphere of influence as those territories border Iran from all sides. Furthermore, Russia and Iran now find themselves competing over China's belt and road initiative. While the Siberian territory of Russia, which includes the South Siberian railway, poses as a very suitable solution for the belt and road initiative due to it being along the territory one single nation which is generally allied with China and because it offers a historically peaceful substitute to the turbulent Central Asian region, China's agreement with Russia on this matter is highly unlikely due to the immense power this proposed plan would give Russia over China (Sheikh 2021). The alternative to that route to the south Siberian railway, however, passes through Central Asia, with only one transition point to the Middle East, and, subsequently, Africa and Europe; Iran.

This has been causing Iran to cozy up to China on the international stage. Cozying up to China, although benefits Iran in general, would not guarantee that Iran gets the route it is hoping for. This would require Iran to build a stable and peaceful relationship with the Central Asian countries. Since all that Russia has to offer is a long continuous stable and peaceful piece of land, Iran and the Central Asian countries would have to act as one bloc to guarantee the same stability and peace to the southern route of the belt and road initiative. Strengthening relations with China, improving relations with Central Asian countries, and the proposed permanent membership in the Eurasian economic union, are three major concerns to the West due to their abilities to alleviate the effects of the sanctions on Iran

which would allow it to continue its nuclear program with hardly any economic difficulty and even less of the difficulties that the international isolation has been causing Iran.

Perhaps the most important benefit Iran stands to gain from this Central Asian union that it's been working towards is the massive supply of uranium ore that exists in the region. Although uranium mines exist on every continent, the production of uranium is still less than what the world needs to consume every year. The sanctions on Iran does not help its situation any more than the shortage of uranium does, which is why it desperately needs a Central Asian alliance within the framework of an economic zone that would allow not only for political unity, but for trade that would give Iran access to the largest uranium mines in the world located within the borders of the largest producer of uranium on earth; Kazakhstan. Iran is one of the few countries on earth to possess uranium mines within its border, but its total production of uranium has been constant at 71 tons per year which is far less than what its nuclear program demands. Meanwhile, of the 47,731 tones of Uranium mined in 2020,

Kazakhstan produced 19,477 tons, which is over 40% of the entire world's production of Uranium, dwarfing the second largest Uranium producer, Australia, which only produced 6,203 tons of Uranium, or slightly less than 13% of the entire global production of the material (World Nuclear Association 2021). In 2007 Iran struck a deal with Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan to create a new railway connecting the three countries which would be capable of transporting ten to twenty million of material every year. This project has been dubbed "the modern age silk road" (Farrar-Wellman 2010).

In 2016, Iran planned to buy 950 tons of uranium ore from Kazakhstan in a trade deal that would see the Iranian-Kazakh relations reach unprecedented heights with a new economic partnership. The purchase of uranium was set to take place over a timeframe of three years with three shipments, the third of which, comprising of 300 tons of uranium, would be returned to Kazakhstan after enrichment in Iran (Reuters, Iran plans to buy Kazakh uranium ore, seek Russia help to make nuclear fuel 2017). This deal was meant to create a sort of nuclear partnership between Kazakhstan and Iran that would end any dependency Iran has on other countries to purchase uranium in the midst of the ever-increasing sanctions. In addition to the deal with Kazakhstan, Iran hopes to seek Russia's help in the enrichment of the uranium ore which further strengthens relations between Iran and Russia, moving Iran

even further from any dependency on the west, or, indeed, any need for a stable connection with the international community, the rules of which Russia does not abide to.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has been a staunch enemy of the US since the Islamic revolution in 1979. The budget of the Iranian military pales in comparison to that of the American Military, but has, nevertheless, been posing a threat to the interest of the US in Iran's surrounding region. With \$20.54 Billion dollars annually, Iran's defense budget lacks the extent of the American one, but it more than makes up for it in two aspects; theological influence and paramilitary forces.

Iran's theological influence represents a formidable threat to American interests in predominantly Shiite regions. Iraq, for instance, has been under heavy Iranian influence due to Iranian-sponsored Shiite militias and the recruitment of tribal militias with a predominantly Shiite population (O'Connor 2015). In order to change the political landscape of Iraq, the US needed to put "boots on the ground" and launch a wide scale invasion with heavy casualties, whereas Iranian influence in Iraq required nothing but Iranian sponsoring of paramilitary forces that are, by nature, run under a miniscule budget compared to conventional militaries, due to its theological connection to Iraqi Shiite paramilitaries.

The roots of Iranian influence in Syria are perhaps still not completely comprehended, and require further research, but the most obvious timeline in which it appeared in large proportions was the time since the start of the Syrian civil war. In 2012, as the Syrian government began to lose ground to rebel forces, the Iran-backed militia, Hezbollah, took on direct action to aid Syrian president Bashar Al-Assad. Iran then sent the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) into Syria to combat rebel forces, foreign militaries, and even Islamist militias, in favor of president Al-Assad (Fulton, Holliday and Wyer 2013). The Syrian regime is led by the Al-Assad family, which follows the Alawite faith, which is a Shiite sect. Although Syria's leading, and only, political party, Baathism, is theoretically secular, in practice Baathism was incorporated into theological rule both in Iraq under Saddam Hussein and in Syria under Al-Assads. American intervention in Syria consisted mainly of supporting the Free Syrian Army, which later developed into a direct military intervention that was eventually scaled back by President Donald Trump with no major victories to report, and with Al-Assad still in power. Syria and Iraq's strategic importance

to Iran adds to their role in the concept of a “Shiite Crescent”, and their value as a geographic route to Lebanon, where Iran’s most powerful militia, Hezbollah, resides.

Formed in 1982, Hezbollah was initially an armed Lebanese Islamic resistance to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in the same year. Israel neighbors Lebanon from the south, and is therefore neighboring predominantly Shiite areas in the Lebanese south, which caused a greater recruitment power by Hezbollah to be possible in Shiite areas. Iranian Influence on

Hezbollah is no secret, and is in fact publicly admitted by Hezbollah’s Secretary General Sayyid Hassan Nasrullah. Lebanon’s close relation to the US and the west made it an ally to French, British, and American Militaries in the region. In fact, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 was supported by Christian political parties and militias in Lebanon, including the then-president Bashir Al-Gemayel, in opposition to the Soviet-backed Lebanese National Movement. At the end of the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990), all militias and paramilitary forces were disbanded, but Hezbollah remained heavily armed under the cloak of being a resistance against the Israeli Army that was still occupying southern Lebanon. After the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in the year 2000, and having acquired significant political and public support, Hezbollah remained heavily armed, still possessing the title of a “resistance force”, using the argument that Israel still occupied Chebaa Farms on the Lebanese-Syrian border.

After the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005, Hezbollah entered politics with large momentum, leading a political alliance that represented nearly half of all Lebanese.

Hezbollah’s influence in Lebanon and the surrounding region has been growing ever since, while the American influence in Lebanon is dwindling despite America’s soft power with wide-scale scholarship programs such as the USAID, educational organizations and institutions such as AMIDEAST and the American University of Beirut, and their continued support to the Lebanese military as its largest foreign backer (Blanford 2020).

Lebanon now has a generally positive view of Iran compared to other countries in the region. While only 18% of Jordanians, 20% of Egyptians, 19% of Turks, and 37% of Palestinians have a favorable view towards Iran, nearly half of Lebanese, 40%, favor Iran’s influence in the region, according to a Pew report (Pew 2013). That statistic, however, proves more

significant when divided into Iran's favorability view within each sect due to the difference in the levels of acceptance towards Iran's ideology and the idea of including Lebanon in the concept of the Shiite Crescent, as shown in the table below:

Table 3.2: Iranian Favorability in Lebanon by Sect.

Population Sample	Favorable %	Unfavorable %	Other %
Lebanon	40	60	0
Christian	38	62	0
Sunni	6	93	1
Shiite	89	11	1

Iranian influence has also been stretching to include Yemen, where the US have a particularly strong interest as a result of this influence being against the wishes of its strongest current ally in the middle east, and its single largest arms buyer, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Shiite Houthis in Yemen have been maintaining close relations with Hezbollah, and with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, in opposition to Saudi Arabia and the Yemeni government (IISS 2019).

3.1.2 The Growing Dispute Between Iran and the International Community

Following the Paris Agreement of 2004, Iran began a voluntary suspension to the enrichment of uranium on its soil, as announced by its chief negotiator, which was aimed at building confidence in Iran through this peace offering. This peace offering, however, came after immense pressure from the United Kingdom, France, and Germany, known collectively as the EU-3, as they were acting on behalf of the European Union in the negotiations with Iran. Although originally proposed to be a six month long suspension of the enrichment of uranium in Iran, it soon became evident that the EU-3, and by extension, the European

Union, were aiming at the permanent halting of uranium enrichment within Iran's borders. This aforementioned intent was seen as unacceptable by the Iranian authorities who

expressed Iran's unrelenting work towards a more comprehensive nuclear program (Global Dialogue 2006).

The European negotiators were, themselves, under pressure from the US to push for an end to the Iranian enrichment of uranium, which the Iranians saw as a violation of both the

Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty, and the Paris Agreement itself, both of which give Iran the full right to enrich uranium within its borders for medicinal, technological, energy, and other peaceful uses that require uranium enrichment. Following these facts, Iran resumed the enrichment of uranium in the Isfahan nuclear facility, with the EU3 attempts to make Iran use low enrichment uranium, imported from other countries, in its nuclear reactors linger in the background (Ryan 2005).

Iran's position on the global stage began to shift towards uncharted waters following the victory of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the 2005 presidential elections. Ahmadinejad's rhetoric with regards to the Iranian nuclear program always lean towards the emphasis upon the necessity of a sovereign nuclear power program within which Iran should be fully independent in its decision making with no foreign influence or any relation to the international community if it tries to limit the program in any way. With the same emphasis that he puts on the importance of a nuclear energy program, Ahmadinejad also emphasized on the needlessness of a nuclear bomb. His public words, be it in interviews, conferences, or press releases always included criticism and outright rejection to any attempt at creating a nuclear bomb, calling it a tool for countries without logic or civilization, and who think they can only solve problems with the use of force (BBC, Ahmadinejad: We will have nuclear energy soon 2006). Ahmadinejad's view on the matter, however, served as no consolation for countries that distrusted Iran's intentions with regards to its nuclear program and were made uncomfortable by the ever-increasing nuclear abilities of Iran, abilities that were harnessed under the name of peace, as Ahmadinejad claimed, and for the improvement of the nuclear power plants in Iran, with the exclusion of any military ambitions that aspire to possess nuclear warheads. Although very iconic, the president's statements make little to no difference when it comes to nuclear matters in Iran. The Iranian nuclear program is under the full control of the Supreme National Security Council, a council led directly by the supreme leader of Iran, as well as the Iranian military (Recknagel 2005).

Iran's problems with the international community escalated rapidly due to its recurring issues with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Critics of the UN and its agencies who launch their criticism from a logical angle often state that the UN does very little to monitor the behavior of countries to ensure peace and justice, and does even less when that behavior strays away from what is acceptable, whether the unacceptable behavior was done domestically or at an international level. It can be said that these actions, or rather the many instances that bring to light the UN's lack of proper action, are very evident when it comes to the situation in Iran. In short, the International Atomic Energy agency was tasked by the international community to monitor the Iranian nuclear program and to have inspectors that can assure the international community that Iran is not currently building, and is not capable of creating in the near future, any type of nuclear weapon. This task, although agreed upon by the international community and, in most phases, the Iranian authorities, seems to be impossible to the International Atomic Energy Agency as the only consistency in their reports has been that they know nothing about the nuclear situation in Iran, while simultaneously using terms of approximation to describe the low degree of certainty at which they are operating, and the even lower degree of sureness in their findings.

Adding further mud to the muddy waters was the International Atomic Energy Agency's inconsistency towards the level of transparency at which Iran is dealing with the IAEA and the international community. The following is a timeline of the IAEA's view on its own verification process on Iranian soil:

- i September 2003: IAEA inspectors depart to Iran;
- ii October 2003; IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei said that the Agency's nuclear verification in Iran is making "good progress";
- iii December 2003: Iran grants IAEA inspectors greater authority in verifying the its nuclear program;
- iv April 2004: IAEA Director General admits outstanding issues regarding the verification of Iran's nuclear program;
- v March 2005: IAEA asks for more transparency from Iran but claims good progress;

vi January 2007; IAEA Director General Calls for "Timeout" on Iran Nuclear Issue;

This is a short timeline including the first 4 years of the Iranian situation with the IAEA, in the midst of which the UN Security Council continued to issue resolutions that force harsher and harsher sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran while the International Atomic Energy Agency had been reporting in a conflicting and contradictory on the situation.

The message of the International Atomic Energy Agency regarding the situation in Iran sent one consistent message to the world throughout its long presence in the country; we have reason to believe that Iran is pursuing the development of a nuclear bomb, but have no evidence to support this. This could be argued is the reason behind the multiple sanctions on Iran implemented by all the UN Security council resolutions on the matter. Nevertheless, the lack of evidence shifted the topic away from the original purpose of the UN and the International Atomic Energy Agency, which was meant to address a genuine concern regarding the possibility of a country breaking the nuclear nonproliferation treaty in such a way that would be threatening global peace whether intentionally or as a result of insufficient carefulness.

3.2 PRESSURE CARDS BETWEEN IRAN AND THE WEST

Over the years, a multitude of methods have been used by both Iran and the West which is represented mainly by the US of America, to weaken the other side or force it into submission entirely. These methods have taken multiple forms, and have mainly been spread across three fronts:

- i Economic.
- ii Diplomatic.
- iii Military.

3.2.1 Sanctions on Iran

The UN Security council issued thirteen resolutions on Iran since 2006. Beginning with UN Security council resolution number 1696 which demanded Iran to cease all enrichment of uranium, The UN Security council issued for rounds of sanctions on Iran with four different resolutions spanning a period of three and a half years, with each resolution enforcing

heavier and harsher sanctions on Iran that further crippled its economy and served as a method of international military and economic isolation towards the country that continued until the Joint Comprehensive Action Plan on Iran was established and approved in a UN Security council resolution in 2015 (UN Security Council 2021). The six aforementioned resolutions are the most relevant in this matter, and are as follows:

- i July 31st 2006: UN Security Council resolution number 1696 demanding Iran to cease all enrichment of uranium.
- ii December 23rd 2006: UN Security Council resolution number 1737 announcing sanctions on Iran that included a ban on trade of proliferation-sensitive items with Iran alongside freezing the assets of individuals and entities that had ties to the Iranian nuclear program.
- iii March 24th 2007: UN Security Council resolution number 1747 established an embargo on arms trade with Iran.
- iv March 3rd 2008: UN Security Council resolution number 1803 established a travel ban on individuals that were previously affected by the sanctions that involved assets freeze, expanded the ban on the trade of proliferation-sensitive items with Iran, and permitted countries to inspect cargo going to, or coming from, Iran under suspicion of the cargo containing any banned items.
- v June 9th 2010: UN Security Council resolution number 1929 expanded the previous measures taken against Iran, reaffirmed previous positions on the matter, and established a panel of experts to assist the Iran Sanctions Committee.
- vi July 20th 2015: UN Security Council resolution number 2231 endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran.

The precise effects that the sanctions had on the Iranian economy are very difficult to pin down to any degree of accuracy due to Iran's lack of cooperation and transparency when it comes to dealing with the international community or disclosing any accurate numbers relating the affairs of its government. Nevertheless, there are educated estimates that use a

multitude of variables to determine, with reasonable precision, the rise and decline of the Iranian economy on an annual basis.

The economy of Iran has been shrinking consistently since 2011, with only two years that show any improvement in the economy, those being 2014 which saw a very slight rise after a steep and sharp fall, and 2016 following the joint comprehensive plan of action on Iran which saw some of the sanctions lifted as a part of the nuclear deal that was reached between Iran and the west. The Iranian oil exports have particularly taken a bad hit due to the sanctions that resulted in a decrease that saw oil exports go from 2.7 million barrels a day in 2011 to just over one million barrels a day in 2014. Iranian exports in general did not fare better than the Iranian oil companies, as they fell from a hundred and sixty billion US dollars a year in 2011 to just over seventy billion US dollars in 2014 (CNBC 2021).

Over the same period, stretching from 2011 to 2014, the Iranian currency suffered massive degrees of inflation every year which approached 40% in 2013 and did not decrease below 9% at any point since 2011. For context, an acceptable inflation rate is usually considered to be just under 2% annually (Federal Reserve 2011), and rarely exceeds 2% in most nations of the world. As it currently stands, the Iranian Rial's value compared to the US dollar is around 42,000 IRR per USD. This high level of inflation means that imported goods, that all countries rely on, are steadily increasing in price and becoming more and more unaffordable by the mass populace of Iran. Higher standards of living are not accessible in times of economic crisis and inflation, which leaves the majority of the citizens of Iran at a severe economic disadvantage with less than desirable living conditions.

The large mounting pressure on Iran from the international community due to its nuclear program, and the pressure from within, caused by the starving people of Iran who were getting increasingly poorer due to the implementation of sanctions against Iran on behalf of the international community as well as the international isolation Iran had been subjected to with the embargo on trade and oil, forced Iran into nuclear negotiations with the international community, spearheaded by the US, during Barack Obama's term in office. The negotiations resulted in an agreement known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran (JCPOA). The agreement, also known as the Iran Nuclear Deal, was signed by Iran and the P5+1, which was composed of China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and

the US, on July 14, 2015. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran was later endorsed by UN Security Council resolution number 2231 on July 20th 2015 (Davenport 2021).

The Iran Nuclear Deal included the following main points (Geranmayeh 2015):

- i Eliminating the stockpile of medium-enriched uranium;
- ii Reducing low-enriched uranium to 2% of original amount;
- iii Reducing the number of gas nuclear centrifuges to a third of original number for 13 years;
- iv Enrich uranium only up to 3.67% for 15 years.

On the other hand, in return to Iran's cooperation with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the international community promised the following:

- i Lifting UN and some EU sanctions, allowing Iran to retain \$100 billion frozen assets;
- ii Lifting of all EU sanctions on Iran 8 years into the agreement;
- iii Ceasing US secondary sanctions that prohibit other nations from dealing with Iran; and
- iv Abandoning the nuclear-related restrictive measures on Iran.

The Iranian nuclear deal was subject to mixed reactions from the international community, particularly countries that are close to Iran geographically and are at odds with it politically and militarily, such as Israel, which viewed this deal as a losing gamble that endangers the region and gives Iran an undeserved break from sanctions (Sharon 2015).

In 2017, just two years after the Iran nuclear deal was finalized, US president Donald Trump expressed his opposition to the deal, criticizing its lack of comprehensive measures, the massive relief from sanctions that Iran would be receiving, and the temporary nature of the deal which, according to president Trump, would allow Iran to resume its efforts towards building the nuclear bomb. The 15-year period agreed upon in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is over. One year later, in 2018, the US refused to recertify the Iran nuclear

deal, and withdrew from the agreement entirely (Vox, Trump's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, explained 2018). This behavior prompted heavy criticism and opposition from all sides of the agreement. The United Kingdom, France, and Germany issued a joint statement supporting the nuclear deal, while Russia stated that Iran was abiding by the deal as was agreed upon in the 2015 signing. Iran threatened that the US' unilateral withdrawal would cause severe consequences.

The withdrawal of the US from the joint comprehensive plan of action had crippling effects on Iran as the US sanctions on Iran were put back in place. While the European Union and the remaining countries involved in the deal tried to keep Iran committed to the agreement, the conditions under which Iran demanded the agreement to continue were simply too much to ask of the European Union. Those included the complete disregard by the European Union of these sanctions placed on Iran by the US, particularly secondary sanctions that prohibit countries from trading with Iran and that affects the oil exports of Iran in particular. The Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khamenei, added to the conditions that the European Union must not interfere with Iran's ballistic missiles program and regional activities.

Following the withdrawal of the US from the joint comprehensive plan of action, and the lack of commitment on parts of the European Union with regards to the conditions laid out by Ayatollah Khamenei, Iran began to breach the terms of the nuclear deal by announcing that it will be enriching uranium beyond the 3.6% level permitted in the agreement, and notifying the international community, through official diplomatic routes, of its decision (ForeignPolicy 2020). This has caused a wave of diplomatic tensions between the international community and Iran which has only started to tone down to some degree, or at least relative to the situation that was present in 2019, following the election of US president Joe Biden in the 2020 presidential elections. President Biden's first steps were to undo the diplomatic mishaps committed by his predecessor, president Trump, chief among which is the withdrawal from the Iran Nuclear Deal. In effort to restore some agreement regarding the nuclear program of Iran, President Joe Biden, with help from the international community, has resumed negotiations with Iran in 2021 in hopes of reaching a new nuclear deal. Nevertheless, the talks have been reported to show no signs whatsoever of actually reaching an agreement.

3.2.2 Iran's Pressure on the West

The pressure Iran displays on the West has taken many forms over the years and has stretched far in both methods and timeline since the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979. Iran has always faced heavy opposition from the West and has considered the West, particularly the United Kingdom and the US, who spearheaded the European Union and the North Atlantic treaty organization, respectively, for the majority of Iran's existence following the Islamic revolution until the Brexit vote, after which the United Kingdom stepped down as the leader of the European Union, leaving the seat empty for France and Germany who have taken a more diplomatic approach towards dealing with issues of international significance on behalf of the European Union, which was their method of choice in dealing with the Iranian nuclear program. Nevertheless, diplomatic pressure is still pressure, and sanctions still effect Iran economically just as hard, or even harder, than any war the west could have waged, which has driven Iran to a multitude of attempts to pressure the west, most of which have involved the establishment of international terrorist organizations and paramilitary groups, in addition to backing revolutions or dictators against revolutions. These acts, while intended to pressure the west and increase Iran's influence, have only added vilification to Iran's already vilified appearance, and have resulted in even more sanctions and international isolation (AtlanticCouncil 2021).

The methods Iran used to establish its sphere of influence in the region and around the world began with the recruitment of Shi'ite groups in different regions of the world via the teachings of Shi'ite clerics who represent the ideology of the Iranian regime. The clearest case of this influence is seen in the Lebanese situation. The story of Hezbollah in Lebanon is, arguably, the most successful story of a country expanding its sphere of influence by establishing a paramilitary group. In many ways, and from many angles, Iran's establishment of Hezbollah is reminiscent of Phoenicia's establishment of Carthage as a colony which later became so successful that it created its own colonies. As discussed previously in this paper,

Hezbollah has turned Lebanon into a launching pad for the vast majority of Iran's paramilitary activity and international terrorism, and has trained, armed, aided, fought alongside of, and funded multiple versions of Hezbollah in many countries in the region and

around the globe, such as: Iraq, Yemen, Sierra Leone, Venezuela, Nigeria, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire

The radical paramilitary group that operates under Iranian control in Iraq is known as Kata'ib Hezbollah. The group has been operational since 2007, which is around the time most variants of Hezbollah started to appear in multiple countries around the world, coinciding with the end of the 2006 war Hezbollah waged against Israel in Lebanon which, according to reports, severely diminished Hezbollah's weapons stockpile and operational facilities in Lebanon. Kata'ib Hezbollah has links in both logistics and ideology to Hezbollah in Lebanon, and a similar rise to fame by attacking American forces in the country. Attacks which have been aimed at undermining a self-ruling and democratic state. Kata'ib Hezbollah have since been the main suspect in multiple acts of terrorism, in addition to ones they have publicly adopted, including bombings, rocket propelled grenade attacks, and sniper assaults. The terrorist group also targeted the International Zone in Baghdad in a November 29, 2008 rocket attack that killed two UN workers (GlobalSecurity 2021).

Yemen's situation takes a different approach, however, where the organization started its activities in apparent isolation and was later supported by Iran, both directly and through Hezbollah in Lebanon. Following the 2011 uprising in Yemen and the transition of power it resulted in, the Houthis, who represented a minority Shi'ite sect in Yemen known as Zaidi Shia, had been fighting the ruling regime for years before it was toppled by the uprising. This experience gave them the knowhow required to take control of the northern Saada province in early 2014 and begin the advance towards the south. Because of the chaos left by the transition, many citizens of Yemen, Sunnis included, supported the Houthis, which allowed them to take over the Yemeni capital of Sanaa in 2015 (BBC, Yemen crisis: Why is there a war? 2021). The Houthi forces in Yemen have been frequently attacking Saudi Arabia, which is supporting the former government of Yemen, and are allegedly doing so as a pressure point for Iran on the biggest American ally in the region. The latest of these attacks, occurring on September 5th of 2021, came in the form of three ballistic missiles and drone attacks launched by the Houthis on Saudi oil facilities and southern cities within range. The missiles and drones were, as is often the case, intercepted by Saudi defense forces, but,

as is also often the case, injured Saudi citizens and damaged buildings (BBC, Yemen war: Saudis intercept Houthi missiles - defence ministry 2021).

The presence of Iranian paramilitary groups, with ties to the Quds force and the Lebanese Hezbollah, have been reported for years to be growing in west Africa, particularly in Nigeria, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, and Sierra Leone. In 2013, Nigerian State Security Service (SSS) captured Abdullahi Mustapha Berende and other Nigerians suspected of being members of a terrorist group that receives training and instructions from Iran. The group was, allegedly, planning attacks on American and Israeli targets in Nigeria. Abdullahi Berende later testified that he had been spying on Nigerian officials and reporting back to Iran, and that he had received thirty thousand US dollars to carry out his planned attacks on Nigerian soil. Later that year, an Iranian national by the name Azim Aghajani was sentenced to five years in prison, along with a Nigerian accomplice, for his involvement in plotting to smuggle a shipment of weapons into West Africa. The investigation began when security forces discovered thirteen containers full of weapon stockpiles at Lagos' Apapa Port in 2010 heading for the Gambia. The case repeats itself in Sierra Leone, where the Lebanese

Hezbollah has had a long presence, and the Senegal, where Hezbollah's activities are being led by Abbas Lotfi Fawaz (Karmon 2013).

Perhaps the most powerful pressure card Iran holds against the West and the international community is the strait of Hormuz. The strait is a chokepoint at the exit of the Arab gulf, and is located between Iran and Oman. The strait of Hormuz is so significant to the global economy due to the massive oil exports that pass through it every year, averaging around 20% of the entire global supply of oil. Iran has made it a habit since the Iran-Iraq war to disrupt shipment of oil through the strait of Hormuz as an attempt to force the west to suspend hostilities or sanctions towards Iran. Since the prices of oil around the world are tied so closely, Iranian attacks on oil tankers in the strait of Hormuz, or merely the threat of attack, drive up oil prices sharply on a global level in every instance (Vox, Why the US and Iran are fighting over this tiny waterway 2019). On August 6th of 2021, the US along with the G7 condemned a drone attack on a tanker off the coast of Oman that had taken place a week prior. The unmanned aerial vehicle was Iranian-made. The G7 stated, "Iran's behavior, alongside its support to proxy forces and non-state armed actors, threatens international

peace and security. We call on Iran to stop all activities inconsistent with relevant UN Security Council resolutions, and call on all parties to play a constructive role in fostering regional stability and peace” (CrisisGroup 2021).

Due to the massive global significance of the strait of Hormuz, the US operates a large fleet in the gulf, and is known to escort ships of high importance, such as oil tankers belonging to allied nations, and US vessels being transported in or out of the gulf. Nevertheless, Iranian efforts to threaten the security of vessels passing through the strait of Hormuz persist, often engaging in hostile behavior with the US Navy in the region. In May of this year, 2021, the Pentagon stated publicly that thirteen fast boats from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy (IRGCN) came nearly within a hundred meters of American Navy vessels escorting the American guided-missile submarine USS Georgia as it was passing through the strait of Hormuz (BBC, Strait of Hormuz: US fires warning shots at Iranian boats in Gulf 2021). This behavior has been accused of hostility in intentions by the US, but Iran shows no signs of backing down.

July of 2019 saw the United Kingdom assist Gibraltar officials to seize an Iranian supertanker by the name of Grace-1. The tanker was carrying oil from Iran to Syria, which breaks sanctions put forth by the European Union. Mohsen Rezaei, an advisor to the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khamenei, tweeted in response to the incident: "If Britain does not release the Iranian oil tanker, it is the authorities' duty to seize a British oil tanker” (BBC, Iranian official threatens to seize British oil tanker 2019). Later in the same month, Iran used its most powerful method of pressuring the west, the strait of Hormuz, to capture a British-owned tanker known as Stena Impero as it was crossing the strait. The tanker was surrounded by four Iranian speed boats and a helicopter (BBC, Iran seizes British tanker in Strait of Hormuz 2019). The 23 members of crew, as well as the tanker, were held hostage at the port of Bandar Abbas, having been taken from within Omani waters. Stena Impero was released in late September of 2019, after being held for over two months while diplomatic talks took place (BBC, Stena Impero: Seized British tanker leaves Iran's waters 2019).

3.2.3 The Iran Nuclear Deal Between Trump and Biden

By far the biggest critic of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran was the reality TV host, author of the best-selling book “The Art of the Deal”, and billionaire businessman, Donald J. Trump. Throughout his presidential campaign, which spanned from his candidacy announcement on June 16th of 2015 until his election as the 45th US President on November 8th of 2016, Donald Trump was outspoken in his opposition the Iran nuclear agreement which was signed by his predecessor, President Barack Obama, in 2015. His vocal opposition to the nuclear deal included calling it “the worst deal ever negotiated”, “disaster”, and “a Nuclear-Holocaust”. In a speech Trump made to the pro-Israel lobby group, known as AIPAC, in March of 2016, the then-presidential candidate announced that dismantling the Iran Nuclear Deal would be his first priority as president. However, what was not apparent in his speeches was how he would dismantle the deal, due to high degrees of inconsistency in his remarks. Although his opposition was consistent, the statements regarding the approach he would take towards the deal were often vague and contradictory. On multiple occasions, Donald Trump claimed he would have negotiated a better deal that would have included longer restrictions while also criticizing remaining U.S. sanctions that prevent American companies from dealing with Iran. On the other hand, he has admitted it would be hard to end a deal endorsed by a UN Security Council resolution. In August of 2015, Trump claimed he would not “rip up” the nuclear deal, but that he would instead “police that contract so tough they don’t have a chance.”

Reactions to President Trump’s victory in 2016 warned of the predictable fate of the Iran nuclear deal. Former US negotiator in the Iran nuclear deal, Richard Nephew, said following the elections: “Say goodbye to the Iran deal... There is very little likelihood that it stays, either because of a deliberate decision to tear it up by Trump, or steps that the U.S. takes which prompt an Iranian walk back”. The Iranian view of the matter was very similar in its anticipation of the inevitable change to the deal that would be ushered by Trump’s victory, but was more resilient towards that change, with the spokesman of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, Behrouz Kamalvandi, stating: “Iran is prepared for any change” while remarking upon Iran’s willingness to uphold the deal in the face of whatever challenges that may arise (Reuters, Trump election puts Iran nuclear deal on shaky ground 2016).

President Donald Trump withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal on May 8th of 2018, less than three years after the signing of the deal. This unilateral decision left the US in relative isolation in its stance on the matter, as all other signatories of the deal remained in firm support of it. In the face of the international opposition to the US' decision, President Trump said "This was a horrible one-sided deal that should have never, ever been made... it didn't bring calm, it didn't bring peace, and it never will" (NYTimes 2018).

During his 2020 presidential campaign, Joe Biden, having been vice president in the administration that signed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran, urged the importance of reinstating the nuclear deal with Iran, and warned against the catastrophic effects of having no deal in place facing the Iranian nuclear program. In a CNN op-ed in September of 2020, then-presidential candidate Joe Biden stated that he has "no illusions about the challenges the regime in Iran poses to America's security interests...But there is a smart way to be tough on Iran, and there is Trump's way" (Biden 2020).

In the same op-ed, Biden listed the main points he would focus while reinstating the Iran nuclear deal:

- i Putting as first priority the commitment to preventing Iran from ever acquiring a nuclear weapon.
- ii Offering Iran a path back to diplomacy by choosing diplomatic over military options in the region.
- iii Preventing US sanctions from affecting Iran's efforts to fight Covid-19.
- iv Fighting against Iran's "destabilizing" actions in the region.
- v Working closely with Israel to fight against Iranian-backed proxy groups in the middle east.

Joe Biden concluded his op-ed with the statement: "If Iran chooses confrontation, I am prepared to defend our vital interests and our troops. But, I am ready to walk the path of diplomacy if Iran takes steps to show it is ready too".

In early 2021, the secretary of state in Biden's administration, Secretary Anthony Blinken, announced that Iran could be weeks away from possessing enough material to create a nuclear bomb. While the deal is imperative, according to the Biden administration, it faces many challenges. Firstly, the original Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran failed to address Iran's proxy groups and ties to terrorist organizations. The deal also did not include any restrictions on Iran's Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles development, even though that is the primary method of delivery when it comes to deploying nuclear warheads. Secondly, Iranian public opinion on the deal has changed since the signing in 2015. The approval rate of the deal has plummeted from 85% among Iranians in 2015 to 45% following Trump's withdrawal in 2018. Thirdly, and most importantly, Iran's demands, in response to America's unilateral withdrawal, have become much harsher than those of previous negotiations. Iran demanded the Biden administration remove all sanctions on Iran unconditionally ahead of negotiations, a demand that the US, predictably, rejected (RAND 2021). Another demand made by Iran was that the US offers some kind of guarantee that the deal will be upheld in the case of the election of future republican presidents, a party that is staunchly against the deal (Vox, Can the Iran nuclear deal be saved? 2021).

Negotiations to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran started in Vienna, Austria, in June of 2021. While the negotiations have faced an undoubtably high degree of carefulness and, in some cases, outright rejection and complete lack of trust from both the Iranian and the American sides, both sides are very serious in their attempts at restoring the deal, making their demands public with crystal-clear positions. The other sides of the deal, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, China, and Russia, have all urged the importance of not starting from scratch, but rather negotiating the original nuclear agreement and building on top of that. The negotiations have stopped for multiple reasons on multiple occasions during the next few months following the first talk, and are set to resume in November 29th of 2021 with high hopes from both sides on achieving some progress when the negotiations start again (AlJazeera 2021).

4. ANALYSIS OF MEDIA COVERAGE ABOUT THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM

The impact international affairs have on media is substantial in cases of major and global events, such as the nuclear deal held between the United States and Iran, which is the focus of this paper. Following different ideologies and coming from different backgrounds, different news media outlets developed unique responses to the Iran nuclear deal throughout the years of the Obama administration, and maintained this approach through the administrations of presidents Donald Trump and Joe Biden, particularly with the turning points that were the Trump administration's withdrawal from the nuclear deal, and the Biden administration's efforts to renew it and return affairs to the Obama-era.

This chapter will be based on content analysis, with the content under analysis being taken from three main news media outlets with conflicting interests and backgrounds:

- i British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), which is centrist in the conflict;
- ii Al-Arabiya, which leans towards the United States and anti-Iranian ideals and
- iii Al-Mayadeen, which leans towards Iran and its allies in the middle east, and is generally anti-American.
- iv Euronews which leans towards European views and show European ideas.

In May of 2018, in his second year as president of the United States, Donald Trump withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal following years of scrutiny on his side to the deal his predecessor made in 2015. This decision, although expected at the time, resulted in a backlash from sides all across the political and global spectrum. Other signatories in the deal, including Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Russia, and China decided to remain in the deal, following

Iran's announcement of its commitment to the agreement, which further increased the backlash against the United States and Mr. Trump in particular (Landler, 2018).

Following Trump's withdrawal from the deal, BBC released an article titled, "Iran nuclear deal: Trump pulls US out in break with Europe allies", which embodies BBC's lean towards

the European view on the matter, and highlights the European disagreement with President Trump in this matter. In the article, BBC reflected upon Trump's position on the global stage, in contrast with the European one, stating that he went against the wishes of his allies in Europe in statements like:

“Going against advice from European allies, he said he would reimpose economic sanctions that were waived when the deal was signed in 2015.” (BBC, Iran nuclear deal: Trump pulls US out in break with Europe allies, 2018)

The then-European BBC used this event to amplify the negative implications of Trump's withdrawal of the nuclear deal with Iran, stating immediately near the top of the article that

Iran would restart its efforts to enrich Uranium in response to Donald Trump's decision. The Iranian view is also highlighted in the article, where the BBC quotes Iran's president at the time, Hassan Rouhani, in saying, “The US has announced that it doesn't respect its commitments”, and adding further detail to the implications in reporting on Rouhani's decision to prepare the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran to resume Uranium enrichment if needed “on an industrial level without any limitations”.

Al-Mayadeen had a similar reaction to Trump's withdrawal from the deal, although it had undertones that leaned heavily pro-Iranian. While reporting the event, Al-Mayadeen noted Trump's explanation as “excuses” in their article, and highlighted the negative reaction of the rest of the world, stating that the European Union is urging the rest of the signatories to uphold the deal, and that Russia is “disappointed” and blaming the United States for trying to start a “pit of chaos” in the middle east which justifies supplying Iran with S-400 airdefense systems. Furthermore, Al-Mayadeen's audience is generally anti-Israeli and antiSaudi, which could explain the prominence of the positive response of the Israeli prime minister and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the article, taking up a third of the coverage (Trump announces his withdrawal from the nuclear deal and reimposes sanctions on Iran, 2018, Al-Mayadeen).

The article released by Al-Arabiya following the United States' withdrawal from the nuclear deal with Iran was focused solely on President Trump's perspective on the matter, emphasizing on the dangers of such a deal with a thread of tweets from their Twitter account

highlighting the parts of the president's speech following the withdrawal that reflect the Iranian threat, as seen by Trump, and the failure of the deal to curb that threat in a manner sufficient enough to keep it. This was further supported by Al-Arabiya's use of this piece of news to legitimize Trump's position by mentioning interactions between him and other world leaders in a light that makes the president seem powerful and in command, mentioning that president Macron had to cancel his meetings with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and UK prime minister Theresa May (Al-Arabiya, Trump announces US withdrawal from Iran nuclear deal, 2018), in a fashion that makes the European leader in favor of the deal seem uncoordinated and lost in the wake of Trump's decisive actions.

Al-Arabiya also delves into the Iranian response briefly, stating that Iranian reactions will be solely based on President Trump's decision over the method of leaving the deal, making Iran look like the weaker side of the event. Quoting Trump saying, *"The United States does not make empty threats,"* and stating Iran's position by writing:

"Trump's decision means Iran's government must now decide whether to follow the US and withdraw or try to salvage what's left of the deal. Iran has offered conflicting statements about what it may do - and the answer may depend on exactly how Trump exits the agreement."

(Al-Arabiya, Trump announces US withdrawal from Iran nuclear deal, 2018)

In a later article, Al-Arabiya focused on the perspective of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Kingdom's stance was in staunch opposition to the deal, and Al-Arabiya highlighted that view by quoting the Saudi ambassador in the United States:

"...the deal fueled Iran's expansionist ideological drives across the Middle East."

(Al-Arabiya, Saudi ambassador to US: Deal fueled Iran's malicious regional expansion, 2018)

Al-Arabiya further reported on the Saudi perspective by stating that the Saudi government wishes for a "united stance" from world powers in the same level of firmness as the United States' towards Iran.

In late 2021, having been a talking point for years, President Biden started the negotiations with Iran and other participating countries, namely Germany, the United Kingdom, France, China, and Russia, the news media outlets jumped on the matter and reported from their ideological backgrounds, with the BBC reporting on the matter under a critical light. While acknowledging the history behind these negotiations, the BBC focused its report on Donald Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear deal in 2018, as well as the reasons that the world might not be fully trusting of Iran and its nuclear endeavors.

The BBC further emphasized on the critical situation Iran is in by stating that the Islamic Republic's advances in Uranium enrichment and Nuclear capabilities "have now strayed significantly beyond the limits set by the original deal". The BBC also emphasized the efforts being put by the European powers in order to reach a new nuclear deal. Nevertheless, in the article's conclusion it is mentioned that while both Iran and the United States want to reach a new nuclear deal, neither country is willing to make the first move. (BBC, Iran nuclear deal: Talks to resume within weeks, 2021)

Al-Mayadeen's reporting on the nuclear deal negotiations under President Biden leaned towards the Iranian view, and the general anti-Israel view, by stating that there are fundamental disagreements between Israel and the United States over Joe Biden's handling of the situation and his attempts to mend relations with Iran. The pro-Iran news outlet started their article by claiming that the Israeli-caused bombings in Iranian Uranium enrichment facilities resulted in no real damage because Iran "has quickly recovered from the damages and installed new machines to enrich uranium faster than before" as the news outlet stated.

This view is further amplified by stating that the sanctions imposed on Iran are "unlawful and inhuman", and quoted the Iranian perspective by stating that before Washington resumed negotiations, it must:

"...admit to wrongdoing in pulling out of the deal, it must lift all sanctions at once, and it must offer a guarantee that no other administration will exit the deal as Trump did" (AlMayadeen, Disagreement Between US, "Israel" about Iran, 2021)

Al-Arabiya's reports stood at the opposite end of the spectrum, where it stated the American views on the matter, often highlighting the most aggressive ones, as Al-Mayadeen did with Iran. In their article in November of 2021, Al-Arabiya reported that the United States will not "sit idly" if Iran tried to prolong the negotiations. The Saudi news outlet also claimed that the newly-elected Iranian President Raisi was "ultra-conservative" and implied that the negotiations are unlikely to reach an understanding.

Al-Arabiya continued in laying the responsibility on Iran by quoting US negotiator Rob Malley in saying:

"If it doesn't want to get back into the deal, if it continues to do what it appears to be doing now, which is to drag its feet at the nuclear diplomatic table and accelerate its pace when it comes to its nuclear program, if that's the path it chooses, we'll have to respond accordingly." (Al-Arabiya, US will not 'sit idly' if Iran drags out nuclear talks: Rob Malley, 2021)

It was also emphasized in the report that the United States can seek military actions, although it is choosing only to apply economic pressure. Such statements serve the purpose of making the United States appear in a powerful position, and it makes the Islamic Republic of Iran seem at a disadvantage in the events taking shape. Furthering the American point, AlArabiya used statements that implied Iran was being irrational in its negotiations, such as that Iran demands all sanctions to be lifted before negotiations continue.

Euronews show the European view towards Iranian nuclear program, via media materials served this views and try to effect on public opinion.

4.1 ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENT OF AL-MAYADEEN, AL-ARABIYA AL-HADATH, BBC ARABIC AND EURONEWS DURING COVERAGE

4.1.1 Al-Mayadeen

Al-Mayadeen TV devoted a special coverage on May 8th, 2018 to highlight the withdrawal of Donald Trump from the Iran nuclear agreement, through which it tried to highlight the advantages that Iran had facing the United States, and the problems that Washington will face due to its withdrawal from the nuclear agreement. The news material included in that

coverage focused on Iran's respect for international resolutions and treaties. Al-Mayadeen, which is funded by Iran and loyal to it, tried to mobilize public opinion in favor of the Iranian point of view, and to report its talking points and deliver its message to the international public through the guests and correspondents it hosted during its coverage.

The coverage included a network of correspondents from Moscow, Washington, New York, Tehran, Geneva, and Bethlehem, with each of them conveying the scene in the country in which they are located, but contrary to the policy of the pro-Iranian channel, i.e., the part that would be in its favor, the interventions of its correspondents and the messages they carried were as follows:

The Washington correspondent focused on the many criticisms issued by US lawmakers over Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear deal, based on the reaction of Democratic leader Chuck Schumer and the reaction of Nancy Pelosi, having both stated that Iran did not violate the nuclear agreement.

The Tehran correspondent focused on the European position on the withdrawal of Trump from the nuclear agreement, and conveyed the position of Iranian officials and their readiness to negotiate over the Syrian and Yemeni crises. The correspondent also described Iran's position as “diplomatic” and contains special political acumen in foreign policy. In addition, the correspondent spoke about the unified political position in Iran to stand up to the American decision, Iran's commitment to international conventions, the presence of discomfort with the American position, Barack Obama’s position on the matter, and opinion polls showing that 63% of Americans disapproved of the withdrawal.

Moscow's position focused on its intent to supply Iran with S-400 missiles, Russia's condemnation of the position of the Trump, Russia's willingness to deepen relations with Iran as a reaction to the American position, and to have the two countries in the same trench and face the sanctions imposed on them in unity.

The Geneva correspondent focused on Washington's blow to the EU, Trump’s disrespect for the leaders of the European Union, and the threats Trump made to sanction every European company that deals with Iran, while reflecting upon whether or not European countries will be able to preserve the nuclear deal.

With the Bethlehem reporter, the broadcaster's questions focused on Israel's fear of reacting to the decision to Trump and the opening shelters in the Golan, and the reporter's response was to describe the decision to withdraw from the nuclear agreement as a military intelligence operation of the Mossad and the distribution of roles between Trump and the Israeli Mossad in an elaborate manner, describing Trump as hostage to Israeli decisions and Mossad reports, and the situation in Israel as tense, stating that Israel directs Trump to serve its internal political interests and tensions on the home front.

The New York correspondent conveyed the position of the United Nations on the withdrawal of Trump from the deal, reporting Guterres' view that what happened is dangerous and is a blow to international peace in the efforts to ban nuclear weapons, and talking about the separation of Washington from United Nations resolutions. The correspondent also mentioned Washington's lack of respect for the resolutions of the Security Council and the United Nations, and hinted to the return to the time when the United States decided to invade Iraq in opposition to United Nations resolutions.

Al-Mayadeen did not stop at its network of correspondents and the messages they addressed that carried the Iranian point of view, but they resorted to guests, a method resorted to by all media outlets, as they pass messages through the words of guests that commensurate with the point of view of the channel's funder.

Al-Mayadeen TV hosted Hossam Matar, a Lebanese researcher in international relations, who is of opinions closer to the Iranian-Russian side. Matar focused during his time on AlMayadeen TV the day of coverage on the idea that Iran is armed with an international position which confirms that Iran abides by its commitments and international conventions regarding its nuclear program, pointing out that it was Iran's missile capabilities that prevented an American attack on it and not nuclear weapons. Mata also defended Iran's regional intervention by claiming that its goal is to preserve its security and interests while being in the middle of a region full of countries suffering from existential conflicts, so it is impossible for Iran to give up its position. Finally, he focused on the European role, which he described as anxious, inconsistent and accepting of the decision of the Trump.

Al-Mayadeen TV prepared a number of news reports through which it presented Iran's view on the withdrawal of Trump from the nuclear agreement, the most prominent of which was a report by journalist Hazem Klass, which began with the phrase, "Tehran's position on the Iran nuclear agreement seems strong and reassuring", a phrase during which the journalist tried to focus on the idea of the power that Iran has and its indifference to the position of Trump, a strong start to the report which expresses its content. The reporter talked about the position of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, who sent messages to Trump, before taking the decision to withdraw from the agreement, that Iran adheres to the path of diplomacy and to international commitments, and does not care about the position of Trump. The reporter also served as a voice to Hassan Rouhani during which he said that Washington will pay the price for its revocation of the nuclear agreement, before mentioning the Iranian nuclear projects announced by Tehran, stressing that the nuclear agreement gave it the opportunity to develop its nuclear program and introduce it into the Nuclear Trade Club. He also presented Iran's threats to raise uranium enrichment because of the decision of Trump, which is Iran's point of view. The channel announced to the public an attempt to co-opt it to its side as part of the media war that accompanied the conflict between it and the West, specifically the United States.

4.1.2 Al-Arabiya Al-Hadath Channel

Al-Hadath Arabic channel also devoted coverage focusing on the withdrawal of US President Donald Trump from the Iran nuclear agreement through which it tried to broadcast its anti-Iranian positions using all means to mobilize public opinion against Iran, and to highlight Iran's weaknesses in this battle with the west by hosting researchers specialized in Iranian affairs who convey an opposing view of Iran, in addition to a number of media material that translated the channel's policy and expressed the policy of its financier.

Al-Arabiya Al-Hadath TV hosted the researcher specializing in Iranian affairs Masoud AlFak who stated that the situation for Iran is highly complicated because of Tehran's insistence on enriching uranium, explaining that the Iranians are in a closed circle and the Europeans have interests with Iran so they are trying to get out of this impasse, pointing out that the conditions set by Trump to negotiate with Iran relate to its missile activities and interventions in other countries including Syria and Iraq by supporting militias in these

countries. Al-Fak also said that Trump offered Iran an opportunity to negotiate, noting that the Trump administration did not want the 2015 deal because the deal destabilized the security of the region.

Al-Jawf said that Iran is in a state of confusion because Hassan Rouhani is facing conflict on an internal and external front, having internal challenges represented by his war with hardliners who want to remove him from the political arena, and thus the guest focused on the internal problems experienced by Iran and highlighted the state of division experienced by Iran during recent years due to the economic crisis produced by the American sanctions on the country, a view through which the guest wanted to highlight the Iranian weaknesses and challenges it is experiencing.

Al-Arabiya also hosted two guests known for their anti-Iranian views, the title of the discussion was "The validity of the European decision to abide by the Iranian nuclear agreement from which Trump withdrew".

The guests were:

- i Writer and political analyst (Ahmed Abu Douh) from London.
- ii Dr. Ziad Majed is Professor of Political Science at the American University of Paris.

Dr. Ziad Majid said that the Europeans can stay in the agreement because they are part of it, but it is difficult for European companies to stay in Iran because they can be subjected to sanctions, and Europe cannot resolve some regional files without the Americans, so the Europeans can adhere to the agreement in theory but not practically, a point which the guest used to downplay the importance of European support for Iran, which is the point that Iran was clinging to, as it considers European support for it to be the one that will save it from the American sanctions. This was a message, on the part of Dr. Majid, to supporters of Iran and its public that European support will not continue. He also spoke of the French role, noting that Paris will not be able to resume negotiations with Iran because of Trump's adherence to his opinion and the continuation of sanctions, and it is also trying to pressure the Iranians to make concessions and return to negotiations.

Abu Douh focused on the idea that Europeans are divided into those who try to move away from the American umbrella and resort to independent decisions such as Germany, and those who try to launch negotiations with Iran because of the interests that bind them with Washington.

The channel did not limit itself to guests to cover the event, but also produced a number of analytical news reports, showing a report entitled "Kerry scandal over the Iran nuclear deal" on May 7th, 2018, the day before Trump announced his official withdrawal from the nuclear deal. The report began with the phrase "The architect of the Iran nuclear deal and former US Secretary of State John Kerry is in the crosshairs". The report detailed a diplomatic campaign, that was described as parallel to the US administration, to protect the nuclear agreement, and conveyed information revealed by the newspaper "Boston Blue" which indicated great efforts by Kerry with the main parties that signed the nuclear agreement, adding that Kerry met with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif at the headquarters of the United Nations to protect the agreement, also mentioning that Kerry had lobbied within the United States to support the nuclear agreement, and that he had rounds of talks with European leaders to save the agreement, of which he was one of the sponsors.

Al-Arabiya Al-Hadath channel used its political programs as a platform to convey its antiIranian policy, which is one of the methods of media mobilization against Iran, as it devoted an entire episode of the program "DNA", which is considered one of the most watched programs, to the topic of the withdrawal of Trump from the Iranian nuclear agreement, a day after the withdrawal, in a comedic manner. The presenter Nadim Qutaish used a comedy style to attract viewers, trying to downplay the speeches issued by Iranian officials regarding the decision of the Trump to withdraw from the the Iran nuclear deal, in which they defy the United States of America and Donald Trump's decisions and threaten the United States of America. This television episode touched on the speech of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani during which he threatened Washington, and showed the contradictions carried by Iranian statements in a comedic way. The presenter Nadim Qutaish downplayed Iran's challenge to Washington in an attempt to influence the opinion and feelings of viewers in favor of the United States of America and its allies in the Gulf, led by Saudi Arabia, which is the financier of the channel. The episode showed the moment of

burning the American flag inside the Iranian parliament in addition to the burning of the agreement concluded by Iran with the major powers, the presenter of the program underestimated this method and highlighted Iran's inability to confront the West and their lack of any possibilities to stand up to the major powers except chants, which are part of the media war used by opponents to highlight each other's weaknesses and influence the determination of the public.

Qutaish showed statements by Khamenei threatening to get rid of the United States of America and its influence in the region in disregard to Iran's possibility of harming American interests in the Middle East, especially after the United States imposed its sanctions on Iran. During the program, Qutaish also took the Iranian intervention in Iraq and Lebanon as material for his program, saying that Iran uses the territory of these countries in its war with the West, a point that Iran's opponents are always keen to highlight to win public opinion against Iran, especially after the destruction that has befallen Yemen. Because of the IranianSaudi conflict there and the political problems that Iraq and Lebanon suffer from due to Iranian interference in these countries, the anti-Iranian media tries to use this card to win the media battle.

4.1.3 BBC Arabic Channel

The BBC's Arabic-language channel tried to take a position of neutrality. The British channel tried to stand at the same distance from all sides and not to impose British policy on the channel's policy out of journalistic neutrality. It presents the news and analyzes it without taking a position on it, but at the same time it highlighted the British position indirectly, and this is illustrated by the following analysis of the material broadcasted by the channel during its coverage of the withdrawal of US President Donald Trump from the nuclear agreement.

On May 8, 2018, the channel showed a graphic video, titled "Possible scenarios in the event of Trump's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear agreement", during which it defined the Iranian nuclear agreement and its signatories, as well as the content of the agreement and its most important provisions. The graphic raised a question about the results of Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear agreement, and presented a number of scenarios, the most important of which are endangering American interests in Iraq because of the pro-Iranian militias present

in Iraq, and the possibility of targeting American interests there. As the graphic presented the number of US forces that were present in Syria at the time, and the possibility of being attacked by pro-Iranian factions inside Syria, the graphic mentioned the authority that Iran has over the Lebanese Hezbollah, and the possibility of pressuring the political parties in Lebanon and raising problems in them, as the graphic talked about Iranian support for the Houthis, and the risk of increasing support to them after the withdrawal of Trump from the nuclear agreement, and thus the Houthi escalation will occur against Saudi Arabia and its ally the United Arab Emirates, the allies of the United States of America.

BBC Arabic presented through this graphic facts but highlighted them in the form of points to raise the questions of the public and prompted them to analyze, without imposing a certain point of view clearly and explicitly, but the facts presented by the channel lead to the fact that "Iran will fight a proxy war against the United States in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen". While the channel did not talk about this analysis explicitly, it highlighted facts leading to this analysis, which is the method used by the BBC in its commitment to impartiality in putting forward its views.

BBC Arabic's episode, "Talking Point", was devoted to the topic of Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear deal, an interactive program based on viewers' contacts and presentation of their views on a particular issue, the title of which was "Does Trump's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal affect Arab countries?"

There was diversity in the type of participants in the program, some of whom talked about the problems caused by Iran to the Arab countries and its interference in the affairs of those countries through the militias loyal to it located inside these countries, while others considered that the withdrawal of Trump from the nuclear agreement will cause great problems for the region, and may pave the way for a new war and major conflicts. These participants defended Iran and its commitment to international treaties, as well as accusing the United States and Israel of interfering in the affairs of Arab countries and creating problems in them. The presenter was asking questions that led viewers to anti-Iranian answers often, some participants agreed with him and others were against him, but the presenter remained committed to the channel's policy of neutrality.

BBC Arabic Channel viewed their "Trend" program, which is specialized in presenting what social media pioneers say on the platforms about the withdrawal of Trump from the Iran nuclear agreement. Al-Barnamaj presented the Gulf public's welcome to the withdrawal of Trump from the nuclear agreement, while reflecting the Iranians' rejection of this decision. The program highlighted the view of Americans, between supporters and opponents of the Trump decision to withdraw from the nuclear agreement. The views presented by BBC Arabic during this episode of the program were amplifying the points of the program's owners, i.e. the owners of the pages of the consensus networking sites, without the channel adopting any point of view from it.

BBC Arabic did not only resort to regular programs, but also invited guests, one of which was the spokesman of the British government "Edwin Samuel" who discussed the Iran nuclear agreement and the consequences of the decision of Trump to withdraw from the it. The spokesman for the British government said that this agreement was not concluded between the United States and Iran only, but was concluded with five countries and the United Nations on the one hand and Iran on the other. Edwin said that preserving this agreement is the goal pursued by Britain, because it promotes peace in the Middle East, a European point of view that Europeans have long tried to maintain and promote, Edwin Samuel announced the British government's efforts to maintain European investments in Iran through the relationship between Britain and the United States, and trying to pressure Washington to achieve this goal. Samuel translated his country's policy that seeks to maintain good relations with Iran to maintain the security of the Gulf, which Britain considers linked to Britain's security, but at the same time he expressed Britain's vision of being keen to maintain its alliance with the United States and its bilateral relations, and expressed that Britain has become "between two fires."

On the other hand, BBC Arabic hosted a guest from Saudi Arabia, which agrees with the opinion of the Trump and encourages his withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, in an attempt to reflect its neutrality in dealing with this issue and to host guests who express all points of view and not focus on only one, as it hosted "Hisham Al-Ghannam" while covering the decision to withdraw Trump from the nuclear agreement, a researcher in international affairs who said that Riyadh hopes that the withdrawal of Trump from the nuclear agreement

will stop Iran from igniting conflicts in the region, otherwise these decisions will be worthless, pointing out that Saudi Arabia welcomed the conclusion of the nuclear agreement in 2015, but Iran's actions and its continued interference in the affairs of countries in the region made Riyadh and the United States distrust Iran and its decisions and the extent of its commitment to international conventions. Hisham Al-Ghannam saw that the sanctions imposed on Iran will affect its economy and that will be a pressure card on it and the Iranian people will not bear their economic problems. Dr. Al-Ghannam also said that the Iranian regime is trying to calm the situation with the United States to maintain its internal power and its regime, noting that this depends on its actions, which he described as terroristic in the Middle East.

4.1.4 Euronews Channel

We chose Euronews for our study because it provides a European point of view, including those countries that are parties to the Iranian nuclear agreement. The channel presented a number of reports following the US withdrawal under President Donald Trump from the Iranian nuclear agreement in 2018.

One such report, “Iran: Fate of the nuclear deal”, presented the European leaders’ view of Trump’s decision, urging both US and Iranian officials to preserve the terms of the agreement. The views included those of French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and British Prime Minister Theresa May.

Another Euronews report, entitled “What will Trump’s presidency mean for the Iran nuclear deal?”, carried warnings about Trump’s withdrawal from the agreement, and its implications for both the parties to the agreement and the global system. The report also presented the Iranian point of view through a statement by Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in which he spoke about the importance of implementing the provisions of the Iranian nuclear agreement, and the commitment of the signatory parties to its provisions.

Through these reports, Euronews reflects the European Union’s policy and position regarding the Iranian nuclear agreement, which it has tried to preserve while maintaining a balanced position between Iran and the United States, the historical ally of European countries.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENT OF AL-MAYADEEN CHANNEL AND AL-ARABIYA AL-HADATH AND BBC ARABIC AND EURONEWS CHANNEL DURING THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS

Another file that we studied in this research concerns the coverage of the three channels that we chose (Al-Mayadeen, Al-Arabiya Al-Hadath, BBC Arabic) for the Vienna negotiations on reviving the Iranian nuclear agreement, from which former US President Donald Trump withdrew, and the analysis that came for separate bulletins during the long period of negotiations is as follows:

4.2.1 Al-Mayadeen

Al-Mayadeen channel attempts to prove the failure of the United States in managing the negotiations file, and Israel's pressure on it. This language reflects the policy of the channel's financiers, the Iranian regime, and attempts to consolidate this idea in the minds of the public opinion. In this research we will take samples of media materials that are presented on AlMayadeen channel during the period of negotiations and study them.

The channel showed on its screen a report, entitled "Washington sends messages of reassurance to its allies in the Vienna negotiations", prepared by journalist Mohamed Bouabdallah in 2021 before the start of the seventh round of negotiations. The title of the report carried messages hinting that the United States is trying to reassure its allies about the progress of the Vienna negotiations, while the content of the report talked about a threat made by Washington towards Iran to drive it away from exploiting the Vienna negotiations to develop its nuclear program, and holding it responsible for these steps. The report described this threat as outdated, and as just a reassurance to Israel, an ally of the United States that does not recognize the nuclear agreement. However, according to the report, the United States is unable to implement this threat. The report focused on the Israeli position which objects to the nuclear agreement, and Tel Aviv's refusal to reach an agreement with Iran and lift sanctions on it. The report also talked about the fears of Israeli officials over the missile arsenal that Iran possesses, an idea that Al-Mayadeen TV tries to focus on, as does all Iranian media. Invalid source specified.

Al-Mayadeen, during this stage, focused on the Israeli role and the pressure cards that it is trying to play on Washington to prevent it from reaching an agreement with Iran. During a report, entitled “Israeli fear of American concessions that enable Iran to return to the nuclear agreement”, presented by Al-Mayadeen TV last December, prepared by journalist Manal Ismail, tried to consolidate the idea of Israel's fears of the progress of negotiations between Iran and the United States, and the concern of officials in Tel Aviv about Iran's method of negotiation and what this may lead to. Concessions made by the United States are not commensurate with what Israel aspires to. Invalid source specified.

Focusing on US-Israeli relations in Al-Mayadeen TV prompted the channel to allocate a special "graphic" material explaining the rift in US-Israeli relations. The graphic title was "Biden ignores Bennett's contacts on the Iranian nuclear file", and mentioned that US President Joe Biden ignored Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's calls, and mentioned them along with their dates, in an attempt to display the disagreement between Israel and the United States on the negotiations. Biden's rejection of Israeli pressure in this regard, and the defeat that Israel suffered in its attempt to influence Washington to change the course of negotiations against Iran and prevent the nuclear deal from reviving again. Invalid source specified.

The editorial policy of the Iranian-backed Al-Mayadeen TV reflects Iran's policy and views. This channel has always been a mouthpiece for Iran that speaks what it wants to convey to public opinion and win it for the benefit of Iran's cause and its challenge against the West

4.2.2 Al-Arabiya Al-Hadath

Al-Arabiya Al-Hadath channel reflects the anti-Iranian point of view and tries in all its press materials to attack Iran and show it in a position of weakness against the United States of America and the great powers. The policy of the Saudi channel Al-Arabiya Al-Hadath, which pursues an editorial policy that translates the Saudi anti-Iranian policy, is against reviving the Iranian nuclear agreement, and seeks to impose more sanctions on Iran, as well as attempting to show Iran's support for the Shiite militias that target Saudi Arabia in Yemen. Al-Arabiya Al-Hadath also attempts to use the Israeli card, but in a different way from Al Mayadeen, as it also relies on Tel Aviv's refusal to revive the agreement, and attempts to

pressure Washington, but it does not highlight any disagreement between the United States and Israel as the pro-Iranian media does through their media materials to win public opinion to their point of view.

Al-Arabiya prepared a television item called "The Graphic" in December 2021 entitled "Vienna Negotiations.. Iran is playing with time and buying it with a hidden document". This article presented the obstacles facing Iran and Western countries to reach an agreement. The Graphic focused on the West's desire to restrict the Iranian nuclear program and prevent its expansion and development, and in return it talked about Tehran's desire to reach an agreement with the United States to lift sanctions and return to oil exports and integrate into the global system, due to the economic problems it is experiencing. The Graphic talked about guarantees demanded by the West to return Iran to its nuclear program and stop the production of ballistic missiles, and return to the public mind Iran's violation of international law and the multiple violations of the nuclear agreement, as well as the American pessimism about reaching an agreement with Iran. The Graphic also discussed the lack of trust between the United States and Iran, an idea that the channel is always keen to consolidate. (AlArabiya, n.d.)

Al-Arabiya Al-Hadath channel dealt with the event in a report entitled "The Iranian nuclear agreement in its most difficult stages" prepared by journalist Ali Al-Samman in September. The report talked about the difficulty faced by the negotiations to revive the nuclear agreement, and Israel's rejection of this step, especially when it comes to the talks about lifting sanctions on Iran. The report also mentioned Israel's attempts to make the United States agree on a unified approach to deal with Iran. The report discussed meetings conducted by Israeli officials with their American counterparts concerning Iran's nuclear threat, as well as Iran's missile activity and behavior in the region. The report used an interview where Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz talks about Israel's concerns about Iran's activity and behavior. This type of media material is resorted to by the journalist or media organization to give more credibility to hits talking points and prove what his report contains. (Al-Arabiya, n.d.)

In another graphic presented by Al-Arabiya Al-Hadath channel in August 2022 entitled "A New Paper on the Nuclear Negotiating Table in Vienna", during which the channel talked about the fears of the European Union about the development of Iran's nuclear activity, and attempts to curb it from continuing to develop this program, Al-Arabiya focused on the European Union's concerns in this period because of the support that the European Union was showing to Iran and its attempt to push for a return to the nuclear agreement. The graphic touched on US President Joe Biden's desire to reach an agreement with Iran before the midterm elections, to win it as an achievement to be reckoned with. The graphic presented the reasons for Iran's desire to reach an agreement with the great powers, and the futility of what the graphic described as the long negotiating self, the graphic concluded by talking about Iran's fears of a military confrontation with major countries which is not in its interest. (Al-Arabiya, n.d.)

4.2.3 BBC Arabic

BBC Arabic, which is trying to ensure neutrality in its coverage of the Iranian nuclear file, did not shed much light on the differences that marred the negotiations between Iran and the West, and to maintain the neutral image that BBC Arabic is accustomed to, it resorted to interactive programs to discuss the file of negotiations between Iran and the West, and also took separate parts of this issue and discussed it with its television materials, trying to practice neutrality in its display.

As part of the interactive program "Talking Point" that is shown on BBC Arabic, the channel dedicated a special episode on the negotiations to revive the Iranian nuclear agreement in December 2021, and presented the angle of Saudi Arabia's likelihood to participate in the negotiations, a proposal put forward by French President Emmanuel Macron. The presenter of the program asked a number of questions, and viewers began to present their views in this regard through social media. Depending on the nature and context of the program, a number of them considered that Macron's proposal would complicate the issue. Another participant considered that the involvement of Saudi Arabia in this file is in its interest and the interest of its allies, referring to Israel. Opinions against Macron's proposal and representing the side of Iran were chosen by the presenter of the program and put forward during the episode, but at the same time he hosted the political analyst Ali Nasser al-Din to create a kind of balance,

because he is opposed to Iran, and talked about its violations after the signing of the nuclear agreement in 2015. The guest also talked about the militias funded by Iran to threaten the region and the Arab countries.

The program hosted a second guest from Iran as a political analyst who spoke with Iran's vision and adopted its point of view, as he held the United States responsible for withdrawing from the nuclear agreement and failing to implement its terms, pointing out that Iran negotiated a lot with the West and tried to come up with useful results to end the conflict.

What the program presented to show both opinions is a method that the media tries to resort to to prove and emphasize its neutrality and gain the trust of the public, but this is not without phrases and methods used by that media that adopt a certain point of view, or serve a certain policy. (Arabic, n.d.)

BBC Arabic usually resorts to hosting guests who talk about their views in order not to adopt this point of view as a channel, but certainly the selection of this type of guests is not done randomly, as it focuses on guests who sometimes speak in line with its undeclared policy. In December 2022, the BBC hosted the guest Nadine Sanders from New York, regarding the attacks carried out by the United States on Iran-backed militias, and Sanders considered that these attacks are not related to the nuclear negotiations. The aim of this type of attack is to deter these militias from the threats they exert towards US interests in Iraq and the region in general, according to the guest. Sanders considered that the United States does not need pressure Iran to change its decisions or positions on reviving the nuclear agreement.

4.2.4 Euronews Channel

Euronews also provided special coverage during the Vienna talks held to revive the Iranian nuclear agreement. The channel focused on Europe's support for reviving the agreement and using diplomacy to reach an agreement to end the dispute between the United States and Iran while obliging Iran to respect the terms of the agreement.

Euronews presented a report on the talks, entitled "Iran nuclear deal reached in Vienna according to diplomats". Through these talks, Europe aimed to resolve the differences between the United States and Iran. In the report, I explained which parties were involved,

the most important agenda items, and the significance of the talks. The report fully supported the talks, conveyed the positive atmosphere, and emphasized their importance in easing the sanctions imposed on Iran, which have caused severe economic problems. Euronews also reported claims from the International Atomic Energy Agency that Iran was enriching uranium to 60%. This step prevented the revival of the Iranian nuclear agreement and hindered the Vienna negotiations. Bringing counterparts closer between Tehran and Washington. Euronews reports and other media sources reflect Europe's position, namely a call for a return to the 2015 nuclear agreement signed between Iran and the superpowers, an end to the Iranian-Western conflict, Tehran's compliance with the terms of the agreement, and restriction of its uranium enrichment to solely peaceful purposes.

This table is show the deference between four channels which we study and analysis its coverage to approve research aim "Impact international relations on the media:

Table 4.1: Comparison of the Four Channels.

Channel	Method	Policy	Focuses on
AL-ARABIYA AL-HADATH	A pro-Saudi methodology that adopts the Saudi government's point of view	Not neutral and reflects Saudi policy in all its media materials.	1- This channel focused on the problems that Iran faces due to the sanctions imposed on it by the West, and it broadcasted the Israeli and American attacks on Iranian sites. 2- Focusing on Iranian interference in Arab countries, especially Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon, and its financing of militias 3- The reports prepared by the channel focused on the weakness of Iran's position compared to the intention of the United States. 4 - It focused on Iran's violations of the nuclear agreement and international treaties and its continued enrichment of uranium

Table 4.1: Comparison of the Four Channels " tables continued ".

AL-MAYADEEN	A methodology that is loyal to Iranian politics and adopts the Iranian government's point of view.	Not neutral and reflects Iranian policy in all its media materials	1- This channel deliberately focused on American weakness in managing the nuclear agreement 2- The channel deliberately showed Iran's nuclear and missile power 3- It focused on the dispute that erupted between the United States and European Union countries due to the withdrawal from the nuclear agreement 4 - Al-Mayadeen focused on Israel's fears of Iran's strength and military capabilities
BBC ARABIC	A neutral approach, but it was not devoid of some messages that the channel tried to send to public opinion, such as focusing on the inviting European position. Returning to the nuclear agreement, which is the British point of view	Adopting the destination of the two parties to create a kind of balance, an attempt to embody the neutrality of the channel	1- This channel focused on defending, in one way or another, the British policy calling for a return to the Iranian nuclear agreement 2- Focusing on resorting to interactive programs that rely on public interventions to present the public's opinions in general 3- Focusing on the inviting European position. Back to the nuclear deal.
EURONEWS CHANNEL	A methodology that reverses the European Union's policy and position on the Iranian nuclear deal	Adopting the direction of European politics.	1- Focusing on a balanced position between Iran and the United States, the historical ally of European countries. 2- Focusing on the impact of Trump's withdrawal from the agreement and its repercussions on both parties to the agreement and the global order. 3- Focusing on European leaders' view of Trump's decision, and urging US and Iranian officials to preserve the terms of the agreement

Through our analysis of the content of the four channels in their media coverage during Donald Trump's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal and the Vienna negotiations, we were able to compare the language used by each channel and the means by which it tried to influence public opinion and attract it towards the ideas adopted by the funders of those channels.



5. CONCLUSION

Through a research conducted over the course of a year and a half, historical and analytical methodologies were applied to be able to prove the hypothesis of the research based on "the subordination of the media to the control of international relations", taking the Iranian nuclear file as a research angle to study the media's treatment of this file using channels as research models (Al-Arabiya Al-Hadath, Al-Mayadeen, Euronews and BBC Arabic). The reason for the choice of these channels is the diversity in their approach and tendencies and to compare the content of each. Al-Arabiya Al-Hadath represents an anti-Iran approach, Al-Mayadeen is pro-Iran, Euronews defense on European ideas and BBC Arabic takes a neutral approach.

The historical approach was added to analyze the historical background of Iran's nuclear activities, the roots of the dispute between the United States and Iran that has lasted for decades and was for various reasons, the stages of relations between Iran and the West in general, and how the dispute escalated until it reached the point of imposing sanctions on Iran that reached its peak under US President Donald Trump.

Regarding the analytical approach, the materials presented by the three visual media channels (Al-Mayadeen Channel, Al-Arabiya Al-Hadath Channel, Euronews and BBC Arabic Channel) during their coverage of Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear agreement in 2018 and the Vienna negotiations on returning to revive the agreement were surveyed. The research included analyzing the ideas that the three channels tried to convey to the public through the content of the press reports they produced, as well as the guest interventions that were selected by the channels to take part in their coverage, as well as the backgrounds of these guests and their political inclinations. The following conclusions are drawn from this research and study after looking at a number of those programs these channels offer that featured guest appearances.

Al-Mayadeen channel, which is supportive to Iran, adopted the Iranian point of view, reflected Iranian policy in all its media materials, and uttered the talking points of Iranian officials regarding the withdrawal of Trump from the Iranian nuclear agreement in 2018 and the Vienna negotiations on the revival of the agreement. This channel deliberately focused on the American weakness in managing the nuclear agreement, and the violation made by

President Trump by withdrawing from the agreement. The channel also deliberately showed Iran's nuclear and missile power, and its indifference to US threats and measures. AlMayadeen channel also focused on the dispute that erupted between the United States and the European Union countries due to the withdrawal from the nuclear agreement, and the keenness of these countries to return to the agreement because of their need for Iranian oil. Al-Mayadeen further focused on Israel's fears of Iran's power and its military and material capabilities, with the help of its correspondents in Palestine, and guests who mentioned this idea in their interventions. The channel also presented in its media materials that it broadcast throughout the Vienna negotiations, which still did not bear fruit, the dispute between Israel and the administration of US President Joe Biden regarding the return to the nuclear agreement and the lifting of sanctions imposed on Iran. The channel ignored neutrality in its media materials and did not display any materials explaining the position of the USA represented by the imposition of sanctions that have exhausted the Iranian economy, and also ignored mentioning the protests taking place in Iran due to the deterioration of the economic and service situation, which is a reflection of the sanctions imposed on it. AlMayadeen did not address the Israeli attacks on Iranian sites in Syria, but, on the contrary, tried to show Israeli concerns of Iran's military power and ballistic missiles, and as such it was the mouthpiece and spokesman of the regime in Iran.

Al-Arabiya Al-Hadath, the pro-Saudi and anti-Iranian channel, tried through the media materials that it presented during its coverage of Trump's withdrawal from the Iranian nuclear agreement and throughout the Vienna negotiations to devote the Saudi point of view and focus on the problems faced by Iran due to the sanctions imposed on it by the West, and broadcasted the Israeli and American attacks on Iranian sites in Syria and Iraq and the losses suffered by the Iranian forces during these attacks. Al-Arabiya channel also tried to focus on Iranian interventions in Arab countries, chief among which are Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Lebanon, and its funding of militias in those countries to attack American interests in them. The guests hosted by the channel represent one point of view, which is against Iran, and most of them are from the Iranian opposition. The reports prepared by the channel focused on Iran's weak position compared to the United States and Washington's intention to destroy Iran and eliminate its nuclear program completely. Al-Arabiya also focused on popular discontent in Iran due to the deterioration of the economic and service situation due to the

sanctions suffered by Iran, and also focused on Iran's violations of the nuclear agreement and international treaties and its continued enrichment of uranium. The channel has always been keen to prepare reports explaining the dangers of Iran's development of its nuclear program, how it's getting closer to the manufacture of a nuclear bomb, and the threat this causes to the Arab region and to international security, and thus ignored the strengths that Iran possesses during its negotiations with the West, and the possibility of Iranian negotiators from manipulating the negotiations through the long drawn-out methods that Iran is known for. Al-Arabiya Al-Hadath ignored the achievements that Iran was able to accomplish during the Vienna negotiations despite the obstacles faced by its negotiators. The channel was not neutral in its coverage of the Iranian file, and it was a means used to present the ideology and the policy of its financier, to sway public opinion towards these ideas and justify the Saudi position opposing Iran and highlight the negative side.

BBC Arabic channel attempts to take a neutral approach as it is subject to British laws that focus on the neutrality of its media, but it was not without some messages that the channel tried to direct to public opinion, such as focusing on the European position calling for a return to the nuclear agreement, which is the British point of view. BBC Arabic channel was keen during its coverage to display the both sides of the debate, that is, to host a guest loyal to Iran versus another loyal to the Western point of view to create a kind of balance that embodies the channel's policy of neutrality, and the channel was keen to resort to interactive programs that depend on the interventions of the public, to display the views of the public in general without allocating a specific point of view. It has presented pro-Iranian views and opposing views, which was used to be able to adhere to neutrality, but as we mentioned earlier, its articles were not without some materials that convey the British point of view and win public opinion in favor of British policy, which intersected with American policy at many stages in the Iranian nuclear file. BBC Arabic tried to defend in one way or another the British policy calling for a return to the Iranian nuclear agreement, despite the neutrality it tried to show in the presentation of its media materials.

Through studying the content of these three channels, we came out with the conclusion that the media is subject to an editorial policy drawn by the funding party, as it is the mouthpiece of this party, serves its interests, and is a means of winning public opinion towards it. This is done through the presentation of media materials, some of which adopt the talking points

of the funding party clearly, and sometimes it is done by sending hidden messages. The media has its methods of attracting public attention to a particular issue, or covering up other files that the supporting parties do not want to be shown. These channels deliberately display these materials at a time called in media language "peak viewing", which are hours of the day in which the target audience is in their spare time and turn to television as a means of entertainment and following the news, these hours are concentrated between 8:00 PM and midnight. All media outlets display their important materials during these hours, and with striking materials written in a way that controls the minds of viewers.

Euronews which show the European ideology, and emphasis on the European view with Iranian nuclear program and support return to Iranian nuclear deal, which trump withdrew from it, this ideas show by media materials which Euronews show during coverage.

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