

# From Strategic Similarity to Tactical Differences: Iran and the 2020 US Presidential Election

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## Abstract

The competition of candidates has always influenced the US presidential election in explaining domestic and foreign policy issues and providing solutions to overcome the crises ahead. During the election campaign in foreign policy, several issues were raised. These include threats from Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran's Islamic Republic. In the present article, the issue of Iran in the 2020 US presidential election has been examined in two levels: strategic imagery and tactical approaches. The question of the present study is, “what were the similarities and differences between the two sides on the issue of Iran?” In response to this question, the following research hypothesis is proposed. In Biden and Trump's campaign policies at the level of strategic explanation, Iran is in a similar situation in terms of being at the macro level of security threats, but at the level of tactics and methods of dealing, Trump seeks to score points all at once in the form of pressure policy. It was maximal, and Biden sought to take advantage of transatlantic multilateralism and gradual and gradual scoring by criticizing Trump's approach. The data collection method in the present study is documentary and the analysis method is descriptive-descriptive.

**Keywords:** Iran Sanctions, Nuclear Talks, US Presidential Election, Maximum Pressure.

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## **Introduction**

The US presidential election is important to many countries because of its pivotal role in world politics. Therefore, many countries in the world follow the content of the election campaign. Because the content of a candidate's contest is highly influential in the direction of foreign policy after the victory of one of the candidates, the monitoring of US electoral developments is not pursued only at the level of superficial political rhetoric, and always pursues strategic rivals and allies in terms of strategic importance. Campaigning in the United States covers a wide range of foreign and domestic policy issues, and foreign policy issues are injected into public opinion through specific perceptual channels by ruling elites during the campaign, raising political sensitivities. (Walker,2021: 9) In American public opinion, foreign policy is perceived by voters from the perspective of existing opportunities and threats, and candidates always use their discourses to formulate and articulate threats and opportunities in foreign policy and highlight some threats and opportunities work (United States of America: 2020 presidential election,2021) The Iran has been one of the countries that is of great importance in US foreign policy and campaigning and has always been portrayed threateningly by American candidates. After the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the Iran has always been represented as a threatening actor for the values and interests of the United States and its allies in the West Asian region. Threatening and unfavorable representations of Iran's foreign policy behavior for various political and economic reasons to legitimize US hostile policies toward Iran have become commonplace.

There are significant differences in Iran's blackened representation and the methods the candidates propose in dealing with Iran, and the Republican and Democratic parties have not had the same consensus. In the US election campaign, dealing with the Iran is pursued at two levels of strategic explanation and tactical prescription. In this article, the author seeks to examine the differences and strategic and tactical similarities between dealing with the "Iran" concept in the foreign policy of Trump and Biden, the US presidential candidates during the 2020 presidential campaign. The importance of the Iranian debate in this round of the election campaign is that a large part of the strategic vision of the winning candidate in the face of sanctions against the Iran is extracted and implemented through these campaigns.

The question of the present study is what are the similarities and differences between the issue of the Iran in the foreign policy of Biden and Trump during the election campaign at both strategic and tactical levels? In response to this question, the following research hypothesis is proposed In Biden and Trump's campaign policies, at the level of strategic explanation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in terms of being at the macro level of security threats, the situation is similar, but at the level of tactics and methods, Trump seeks to score points at once and simultaneously pursues the policy of maximum pressure. By criticizing Trump's method, Biden sought to take advantage of transatlantic multilateralism and to take gradual and gradual advantage. The data collection method in the present study is documentary and the analysis method is explanatory-descriptive.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The Framework of the present study consists of three phases. The first phase is to categorize the issues and challenges raised by the candidates in the presidential election, divided into domestic and foreign policy challenges. In this phase, the candidates seek to formulate and demarcate between internal and external issues and explain their relationship by separating the challenges into two

categories. The Chinese challenge, for example, is a foreign policy issue that is also related to domestic policy issues. In the 2020 US presidential election, Corona was the link between China and domestic politics. (The Future of US Policy Toward China Recommendations for The Biden administration,2020)

The second phase goes back to how to meet foreign policy challenges. In this phase, there are two levels of political-security verbal action. The first level of verbal activism relates to the threat-opportunity-based explanation of the foreign policy actor. The second level of verbal activism goes back to the value judgment of threat-opportunity. In the first level of action, the foreign actor is presented in the form of an organized image as a source of threat or opportunity for Americans' well-being and existential and moral values. In the second level, after explaining and illustrating, the proposed actor is judged in terms of the good and bad of his behaviors by the standards of American society and elite. In this phase, two critical questions of strategic importance of the actor in foreign policy and the reasons for its importance in both levels of action are explained. Russia, for example, is at a high level of strategic threat because of "threats to democratic values" and "regional expansionist policies" as well as "cyber and electoral threats." (Foreign Threats to the 2020 US Federal Elections,2020)

As a complement to the second phase, the third phase is devoted to the method of dealing with foreign policy actors. Collision methods are divided into two categories: hardware and software methods. Hardware methods range from extensive military confrontation to limited and selective military confrontation. The software method includes sanctions, negotiations, media operations, and a combination of these. What is related to soft and semi-hard war falls into the second category. One of the significant challenges to the US foreign policy elite is to formulate and balance soft and hard tools in achieving strategic goals. (Blackwill, 2020:15) Infiltration of lobbies and influential currents in the second and third phases is done in the think tanks, political and legal lobbies and media tools. Perceptions based on

the strategic priorities of the candidates and their foreign policy team are the focus of these groups.

## **I- Iran in the US Presidential Election**

The US election arena is the place where candidates raise domestic and foreign policy threats and opportunities to collect electoral credits for state electoral colleges to enter the White House. (Parry, 2020: 7) Foreign policy focuses primarily on formulating external threats to the security and well-being of American citizens in the presidential election. Lectures and televised debates show how candidates are portrayed and explain foreign threats. (Nowruzpour and Mohammad Alipour, 1398: 240) The issue of the Iran in the US presidential race has always been raised with varying degrees of intensity and weakness. (Geranmayeh, 2020: 4) The driving forces behind Iran's threat in the presidential election have survived in different periods with varying degrees of influence. Political currents and lobbying and strategic documents have been among the lines influencing the threatening ideas and portrayals of Iran in the minds of American voters.

**Strategic Documents; A Structural View of the Iranian Challenge:** Formalization of strategic national security documents has a long history in the United States. The current structure of these documents began at the suggestion of George Kennan, the former US ambassador to the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. (Leffler, 2006: 8) In this regard, the Reagan administration also drafted the first national security strategy document, which was presented and published in 1987. (Drew, 1988: 55) Since then, 17 official national security strategy documents have been drafted by various governments, and the Bill Clinton administration has been more active than all other governments in presenting 7 national security strategy documents. (A National Security Strategy for A New Century, 1999) The documents of the US National Security Strategy in different periods and in chronological order are:

1-US National Security Strategies under Ronald Reagan (1987, 1988)

2- US National Security Strategies under George W. Bush (1990, 1991, 1993)

3- US National Security Strategies under Bill Clinton (1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000)

4- US National Security Strategies under George W. Bush (2002, 2006)

5- US National Security Strategies under Barack Obama (2010, 2015)

6- US National Security Strategy under Donald Trump (2017)

**US National Security Strategies under Barack Obama:** The first strategy of the Obama administration in the 2010 document deals with the Iran in two main parts. The document discusses Iran and North Korea's nuclear programs and outlines US stereotypes about Iran's peaceful nuclear program. (Kuzmarov, 2019: 197) In the section related to the relations between the two countries, while the United States is ready for dialogue with the Islamic Republic of Iran, the traditional positions of this country towards the Iran have been repeated. (Bartley, 2020: 71) In the 2015 document of the US National Security Strategy, threats such as the emergence of terrorism are mentioned again. (Torrance, 2016: 100) The threats mentioned in this document were formulated when terrorist groups such as ISIS had taken control of large parts of Iraq and Syria. Another issue that was emphasized in this document is cyber threats from other countries. The US intention in this section was to counter the cyber activities of China, Russia and Iran. (Vakili and Keyvan Hosseini, 1400: 20) In addition to addressing Russia and China, the document also included the continuation of North Korea's missile and nuclear programs and Iran's nuclear program. In this document, more emphasis was placed on the nuclear activities of the Islamic Republic of Iran. (Beigon, 2019: 91)

**US National Security Strategy under Donald Trump (2017):** The US National Security Strategy document for 2017 was strongly influenced by the atmosphere of negative American nationalism. The document sought to demonstrate its goal of strengthening America's national power through an aggressive

approach. In this document, in addition to addressing Iran, the scope of US threats against countries such as China and Russia also increased. (Mcfarland, 2019: 45) The US strategy during the Trump era in different areas such as the revolutionary system of Iran, Russia, China, North Korea, the fight against terrorism, etc. is different from previous documents. One of the highlights of this document is its detailed coverage of Iran. This document mentions Iran 12 times and the regional threats posed by Iran. (Hanson, 2019: 200) Among the accusations that are claimed in this document against the Iran are: Iran's regional activities; Support for Shia groups, missile program and its nuclear program.

In the US National Security Strategy (2017) to counter the above threats, the US government has also made the following proposals to counter the Islamic Republic of Iran:

- Efforts to establish missile defense systems against Iran and North Korea;
- Creating deterrence against Iran;
- Dealing with Iranian-backed groups, including Hezbollah;
- Reducing influence and limiting Iran's military presence in the region (NSS, 2017).

The document states that the regional balance is changing to the detriment of the United States. In this regard, the Iran is also mentioned and it is emphasized that the United States will cooperate with European powers in the face of global threats, including Iran. (Hastedt, 2020: 308)

**Iranophobia in Trump and Biden Election Debates** :During the 2020 US presidential election, Biden and Trump and their assistants Harris and Pence debated on various foreign and domestic policy issues. The two rounds of Trump-Biden debates focused on various foreign policy issues, from the North Korean threat to Iran, Russia and China. The issue of Iran was raised in these debates at two levels: the importance of strategic threats and tactics. Both candidates saw Iran as a strategic threat to the United States that threatens US allies and interests. (Debate transcript: Trump, Biden final presidential debate moderated by Kristen

Welker, 2020) Cyber threats and interference in US elections were other claims that Biden and Trump considered to be related to Iran. (Donald Trump & Joe Biden Presidential Debate Transcript, 2020) In the second debate, Joe Biden mentioned Iran's interference in the US elections to damage the security of the elections and considered it an example of interference in US sovereignty. Trump also cited Iranian and Russian involvement in the US election, citing National Intelligence Director John Radcliffe reports. (Debate transcript: Trump, Biden final presidential debate moderated by Kristen Welker, 2020)

**Iranophobia in the Harris-Pence Election Debate:** The second round of debates was held in the Harris and Pence debates. The issue of Iran was raised at this level of debate in the form of the JCPOA and the Iranian missile attack on the US base of Ain al-Assad in Iraq. Criticizing Trump's withdrawal from the BRICS agreement, Harris criticized the rise of US nuclear enrichment and the isolationist unilateralism of the United States. (Read the full transcript of Vice-Presidential Debate between Mike Pence and Kamala Harris, 2020) Pence defended the US withdrawal from the JCPOA agreement, saying that its continuation would strengthen Iran's economic structures. (Mike Pence, Kamala Harris discuss, 2020) On the subject of the assassination of Major General Soleimani and the missile attack on the Ain al-Assad base, Harris attributed the assassination to the American soldiers. While Pence, by strengthening Major General Soleimani's perceived threat, considered this action right and in the interests of the United States. (Pence vs. Harris: Four takeaways from the only VP debate, 2020)

## **II- Think Tanks and Anti-Iranian Strategies**

Influence currents are another factor influencing challenging US foreign policy priorities alongside strategic documents. Influential currents seek to manipulate strategic priorities and foreign policy threats by entering think tanks, legal and political institutions, and infiltrating the intellectual circles of decision-making elites. Along with strategic documents, these currents constitute complementary

resources and feed the collective fears. As tools of influential think tanks, Audiovisual media play the role of transmitting illusory and oriented concepts and images. Fox News, for example, played a pivotal role in producing anti-Iranian reporting content and analytical ideation in the hot days of the election for candidates. (Abdullahi Nejad and Omid, 1399: 160)

**Trump's Maximum Pressure Policy:** Trump's foreign policy toward Iran's nuclear program is rooted in Jackson's Republican ideology and security. (Jahanian and Islami, 1399: 39) Jacksonism is one of the four main currents of American foreign policy. These currents include Hamiltonism, Wilsonism, Jeffersonism, and Jacksonism. The Reagan administration's view of maximum restraint and pressure against the Soviet Union, enshrined in the 1983 NSDD-75 National Security Order, was hailed as a successful version of curbing Iran's nuclear program and regional influence during the Trump era. (Schultz, 2019: 15) In the maximum pressure approach, Trump and Pompeo were at the center of advancing this strategy, and the Mark Dubowitz-based Defense of Democracy Foundation played the role of theorist.

Mark Dubowitz is one of the leaders of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies in the United States, which has advised various governments, especially Republicans in the White House, on arms control and economic control of the Islamic Republic of Iran. (Mousavi and Rozavi, 1399: 131) One of the main institutions that Dubowitz insists on intensifying is the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which is the main institution in protecting the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The main strategy proposed by Dubowitz and the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies is to "weaken the governing, security and military institutions of the Islamic Republic of Iran" using various methods. (Juneau, 2019: 26) One of the main institutions that Dubowitz insists on intensifying is the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which is known as the main institution in the protection of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The US declaration of the IRGC as a terrorist organization was one of the important

proposals of this organization and Dubowitz to the Trump administration.

Sanctions and military threats are the most significant tools of the maximum pressure approach. Hardware tools the threat of military attack and software economic sanctions have always been on the table of Republican and Democratic decision-makers. (Nouri and Hosseini, 1398: 195) The United States has sanctioned Iran 35 times since the beginning of the revolution, 24 times during the time of the Democrats and 11 times during the time of the Republicans. (Iran Sanctions, 2021: 30) With 11 sanctions, Obama holds the record for sanctions against Iran, which is in fact the most severe sanctions in history against a country. In a 2019 Gallup poll, while 11 percent of Democrats wanted to use the military option to counter Iran's nuclear activities, 25 percent of Republicans voted in favor. In other words, the belligerence against Iran among Republicans is more than double that of members of the Democratic Party. (Younis, 2019) Republican Trump extended and increased the sanctions of the Obama era for various strategic reasons, and by withdrawing from the JCPOA agreement, he increased the tensions with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Trump's foreign policy toward the Iran was based on maximum pressure - maximum concessions. One of the most significant criticisms of Trump to Barack Obama and his foreign policy team has been to give the Iran the opportunity for regional mobility and freedom of action in exchange for the signing of the JCPOA agreement in 2015. (Dehshiar and Nourani, 1399: 54) Unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA agreement and pursuing the strategy of maximum pressure through the start of a hybrid war with the Iran is a set of Trump's efforts to intensify political and economic pressures against the Islamic Republic of Iran. (Hosseini, 1398: 31) The purpose of Trump's favorable negotiations was to change Iran's behavior simultaneously in the three areas of nuclear, missile and regional influence. The regional layer of pressure strategy can be summarized in coalition building pressures and military threats, lack of access to regional markets and political coalition building.

(Saeed Karami and Mousavi, 1398: 171) The most important think tanks and think tanks for Trump's foreign policy, apart from the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies (which has the major impact on the Trump administration's strategy towards Iran), are the Heritage Foundation, Business Partners, Freedom House, American Enterprise Institute for the Advancement of the American Enterprise, and the Texas Public Policy Foundation.

**Heritage Foundation:** The Heritage Foundation has always made many executive proposals to Trump in the field of countering Iran's threats to the United States. There are significant similarities between the Heritage Foundation's literature on Iran and Donald Trump's political literature on Iran. With 38 influential proposals, it is the most influential foundation in Trump's foreign policy. In a report to the future US administration, the think tank presented "seven proposals to confront the Islamic Republic" after JCPOA. The most important suggestions are:

The first suggestion; Intensification of sanctions against Iran with the cooperation of Congress: The US government should immediately revive all sanctions imposed on Iran, which were suspended under the Vienna Agreement, and increase sanctions by interacting with Congress and supporting Iran's nuclear program. Focus on terrorism, the ballistic missile program, interference in Iraq, Syria and Yemen, as well as human rights abuses and, of course, the detention of four Americans on Iranian soil. The new US administration should also designate the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization and sanction non-Iranian companies that have business with the Revolutionary Guards.

The second proposal; Strengthening US allies, especially the Zionist regime: The nuclear deal has had a devastating effect on US bilateral relations with its allies, especially the Zionist regime and Saudi Arabia. The next US administration must pay special attention to safeguarding the important security interests of the United States and its allies in the region and contain Iran by creating the desired balance of power in the region. Washington should increase its arms sales to the Zionist regime, Saudi Arabia and other

members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, which Tehran threatens.

Third suggestion; Prevent nuclear proliferation: The Obama administration's agreement with Iran will lead to the expansion of a range of nuclear programs among threatened countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt. To prevent such a consequence, the next US administration needs to reassure these countries that it will take military action against Iran if it increases its nuclear capabilities and repel the Iranian military threat to their interests

The fourth proposal; Negotiating with Iran for a better deal: The Obama administration has been weak in negotiating with Iran, and it was clear that Washington needed a nuclear deal more than Tehran. This made it possible for Iran to bargain, and they cleverly took advantage of this situation. The next US administration must seek an agreement with Iran that permanently halt its nuclear program. This requires at least the following:

- Stop Iran's uranium enrichment activities.
- Destroying a significant part of Iran's nuclear infrastructure, especially Fordow, Natanz and Arak heavy water facilities.
- Carry out strong inspections at all times and prompt monitoring
- Finally, establish a clear and expeditious process (James, 2018).

**Foundation for the Defense of Democracies:** The Foundation for the Defense of Democracies has made many efforts to declare the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps a terrorist by publishing numerous articles and sending experts to Congress. (Hennigan, 2018) After the Trump administration took office, these efforts doubled. The US Congress took the first step in this direction and passed a law called "CAATSA<sup>1</sup>" requiring the government to declare the Revolutionary Guards a terrorist organization within 90 days. In this context, Trump acted in the way proposed by the Foundation for the Defense of Democracy long ago. The

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1. The Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act

Foundation for the Defense of Democracies has sought to impose extensive sanctions on the US Congress and President by producing anti-human rights and anti-democracy reports from security and judicial institutions in Iran.

### **III- Biden's Strategy**

Democrat ideas and advice are first sent to a small inner circle of Biden advisers, including Anthony Blinken, Jake Sullivan, Ariel Heinz, Brian McQueen and Julie Smith, and then presented by Biden. Democrats such as Jake Sullivan, Ilan Goldenberg, Daniel Benin, Van Deepen, Robert Einhorn, and Richard Neveu are building Biden's critical approach to Trump's containment strategy and his unilateral withdrawal from the BJP. The think tanks of the Center for International and Strategic Studies in Washington, DC, the New America Security Center, and the Brookings Institution are among the pro-Democrat think tanks with a multilateralist approach.

Anthony Blinken, one of Biden's foreign policy strategists, has stated that "Iran must return to full BRICS adherence. Otherwise, and until [Iran] does so, it is clear that all sanctions will remain in place." "(Quinn, 2021) In addition to returning Iran to its obligations, sanctions against Tehran will be maintained until a stronger and longer-term agreement is reached." "The next US administration [Biden] should start the process of negotiating the next agreement as soon as it returns to the UN Security Council" (Russell, 2020). "We need to extend the timing of the so-called sunset restrictions. We also need to try to strengthen other elements in the agreement." In a joint note with William Burns in the New York Times, Sullivan described any expectation from Tehran that the sanctions would be lifted without agreeing to a supplementary agreement, despite acknowledging that their government had withdrawn from the agreement, despite Iran's full adherence to the IAEA nuclear deal. They did. (Burns and Sullivan, 2019)

In Sullivan's view, the connection between the agreed areas is such that "we should not hold nuclear diplomacy hostage for the sake of regional diplomacy, but we should find ways to make connections

and pursue both goals ... When we first addressed this issue, our friends in the Persian Gulf repeatedly said that do not make regional issues the focal point of the talks, because we are on it if we are not at the negotiating table. "Be guided." (Detrow, 2020) Sullivan's strategy for controlling Iran is based on "gradual scoring." Sullivan believes that a new agreement should be signed with Iran that would increase the timing of the so-called sunset restrictions. However, accepting this proposal from Iran seems very difficult. Jake Sullivan believes that the United States should separate nuclear diplomacy from regional diplomacy. He has argued that if Iran resumes its commitments, the Biden administration will ease sanctions on Iran in 2021. He argues that countries should lead regional diplomacy in the region (Quinn, 2021).

Using diplomatic tools to gradually and maximize concessions from the Iran is a common chapter of Sullivan and Benaim's views. I believe that where the military is at a standstill, using the tools of "negotiation and pressure" is a good solution. In a joint note with Sullivan, Benaim proposed the idea of parallel and engaging negotiations with the Iran in three parallel areas: missile, regional and nuclear. Like Sullivan, the American strategist believes that Trump's policy of maximizing US pressure and leaving the negotiating table and the BRICS agreement has failed strategically.

The document said that the Democrats will stop the Trump administration from moving toward war with Iran and put nuclear diplomacy, de-escalation, and regional dialogue on the agenda. The Democrats will stop the Trump administration from moving toward war with Iran and put nuclear diplomacy, de-escalation and regional dialogue on the agenda, the document said. "We believe that the Comprehensive Joint Action Plan is the best way to cut off all Iranian nuclear program. The unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the IAEA separates us from our allies and paves the way for Iran to resume its pursuit of nuclear program." That is why a return to mutual adherence to this agreement is so urgent: a nuclear deal has always been meant to be the beginning, not the end, of our diplomacy with Iran. "Its threatening activities, including regional militancy,

support ballistic missiles." (Detrow, 2020)

The ideological roots of Joe Biden's approach to US foreign policy toward Iran can be seen in his critical views of Trump. Joe Biden announced in 2013 that the United States intended to prevent rather than contain Iran. Prevention policy means that if the United States assures that Iran is not an imminent threat but that its potential threat may become an actual threat, it will try to neutralize the existing threat through military means. However, in the policy of containment, the United States must strengthen its military and economic allies in the region to act as a barrier against the target country and prevent its influence. In fact, in prevention policy, the United States relies more on its military capability and seeks to prevent the target country from achieving a particular capability. (Forgey, 2019)

The use of multilateral leverage and achieving a more comprehensive agreement on nuclear restrictions have formed the most important lines of Biden's foreign policy strategy towards the Islamic Republic of Iran. Criticizing Trump, he said, "Trump has made America's rivals rude and shattered US leverage to meet national security challenges, from North Korea to Iran, from Syria to Afghanistan and Venezuela." Has done business against America's friends and foes that have hurt the middle class, we will work with our allies to strengthen and extend it, we will use targeted sanctions against human rights abuses, we will support terrorism and "We will continue Iran's ballistic missile program." (Robinson, 2021)

#### **IV- Negotiations Scenarios in the Biden Administration**

With the beginning of the 13th government, the continuation of the nuclear talks is one of the possibilities facing the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Various scenarios for the future of BRICS and US sanctions can be drawn using their drivers. The following are five possible scenarios for the continuation or termination of the Vienna talks.

**Scenario 1; Suspension of Nuclear Talks:** In the suspension of nuclear negotiations scenario, the negotiating parties will not deviate

from their maximum positions. By leaving the negotiating table, they seek to strengthen their positions and strategic assets to strengthen bargaining in the next rounds of negotiations. In the first scenario, the Americans seek to criticize all their demands, such as the Trump era, by dragging the negotiations into a strategic stalemate, and the Iran has repeatedly stated that meeting all US conditions is not be achieved. In this scenario, if the nuclear talks are interrupted, the possibility of increasing the level of enrichment in Iran's nuclear facilities will increase. In this scenario, the American's demand for the continuation of negotiations and its entry into the missile and regional fields will not be accepted by the Islamic Republic of Iran. The United States will not accept the option of lifting all sanctions and guaranteeing the non-return of sanctions.

**Scenario 2; Erosive Negotiations Without Scoring:** At the forefront of this scenario is US confidence in the widespread impact of sanctions on Iran's economic structure and the increasing pressure on Iran to surrender in the medium term. The second driver in this scenario is the US confidence in reducing Iran's economic resilience and the absence of widespread economic reforms. In the second scenario, negotiations with the 13th government will continue to waste time for sanctions to have a more profound impact on the economy. In this scenario, the Americans will seek to legitimize sanctions by taking a dialogue-oriented stance. Putting the Iran in the erosive spiral of negotiations for negotiation and not granting economic concessions will be the most important goal of the United States in this scenario. On the other hand, the 13th administration will leave the negotiating table with a pragmatic and result-oriented view of the negotiations if the Americans continue fruitless negotiations.

**Scenario 3; Exhaustive Negotiations:** In the third scenario, given the serious incentive of Iran to increase the level of enrichment and reduce the level of supervision of the Atomic Energy Agency, the nuclear breakout time will reach two months and the Americans to increase Iran's acquisition of nuclear capability beyond the grant of limited economic concessions will

take action. For example, the limited sale of oil, the transferring money through the import of basic goods through INSTEX credit line to circumvent sanctions. In this scenario, oil concessions on goods and the intensified sanctions by foreign companies that are parties to the contract with Iran to stop Iran's enrichment will occur below 20 percent.

**Scenario 4; Nuclear Talks with Step-by-Step Scoring:** The most important driver of the fourth scenario will be the increase in threat perception by the Americans due to the increase in the level and amount of enrichment at enrichment sites in Iran. In the fourth scenario, the Americans will agree to a plan to control the sale of oil and transfer the proceeds in foreign currency to Iran to return Iran to the Vienna Agreement and raise the issue of overlapping terrorist and nuclear sanctions. In the regional and missile areas will be in the next stages. In this scenario, limited economic concessions will be agreed separately to reduce the level of enrichment in the form of limited oil sales with limited transfer of foreign exchange earnings, and further lifting of economic sanctions will be linked to agreements in missile and regional areas.

**Scenario 5; Revival of JCPOA:** The most important driver of the fifth scenario will be increasing Iran's nuclear enrichment to more than 60 percent, reducing the level of IAEA oversight, and increasing Iran's economic resilience in the coming years. In this scenario, due to the costly option of a military confrontation with Iran and Iran's reaching the level of nuclear enrichment, more than 20% of Iran's missile and regional containment priorities will be removed from the US agenda and a return to the JCPOA agreement will be on the Biden government's agenda. This scenario will be the most favorable scenario for the Iran and the Biden government's worst-case scenario.

## Conclusion

In this article we argued that, the failure of Trump's maximum pressure strategy of on the Iran to bring the country to the negotiating table and gain more concessions has led to increased criticism of his

administration. Biden presented his different solutions during the election campaign by revealing Trump's defeat against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Harris responded to Mike Pence's claims in two rounds of debates by criticizing Democrats. Both candidates shared a strategic vision for promoting Iran's military, nuclear, and regional threats to US foreign policy. Upstream US security documents and influential political and security currents also highlighted Iran's strategic threat to both candidates.

The difference between Biden's negotiating approach to Trump at the tactical level and how strategic interests are received and secured is during the reorganization of the nuclear talks. By putting the Twelve Conditions on the negotiating table and resolving the missile, nuclear and regional issues in a single and one-step manner, and instead of lifting economic sanctions, Trump has brought the negotiation situation to a strategic stalemate and pursued it in the form of economic pressures. Putting Iran in a position of strategic isolation and tactical contraction. Trump's foreign policy team has raised unprecedented and crippling sanctions in this context. Trump's hybrid warfare with hardware and software tools using one-on-one negotiation tactics failed to achieve his desired outcome.

With the beginning of Biden's presidency, he has two legacies of unilateral US sanctions and the failure of Iran to return to the negotiating table. Biden has the goal of controlling Iran through smart power, but the step-by-step, interconnected negotiation plan proposed by his foreign policy team has had a different tactic than Trump's foreign policy team. Reaching a nuclear agreement by removing the time limit clause instead of lifting some of the sanctions and continuing negotiations to the missile and regional areas in a gradual manner until all issues are on the table and the lifting of all sanctions in a spiral and feasible process. Returning to the first point is the negotiating model of Biden's foreign policy team. In this plan, if Iran stops in the nuclear talks and does not enter the missile and regional talks, the agreement in the first nuclear phase will be canceled.

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