

# National Role Perceptions and Biden's Foreign Policy towards Iran

Elham Rasooli Saniabadi<sup>1</sup>

Associate Professor, Faculty of law and Political Science of Yazd University,  
Yazd, Iran.

## Abstract

This article focuses on the concept of national role, which is defined as the perception of foreign policymakers of the position of their nations in the international system. The main argument of this paper is that Joe Biden, as the 46th President of the United States, offers a new definition of national role, which is different from Trump's definition. This national role is made up of elements and ideas that are necessary to understand US foreign policy toward other states, including how to deal with Iran. So, the main question of this paper is “what is the new national role that Biden defines for American identity? What are the most important elements that constitute this new national role? and According to these elements, what can we expect from Biden's administration's foreign policy orientation towards Iran? The research findings show that according to the new perception, the most important national role defined by Biden for the United States is: “respected and moral leadership”, a role that has been severely damaged by Trump's isolationist policies and the most important elements that constitute this new national role are: strengthening alliances, especially with Europeans, emphasizing public opinion satisfaction, using all US capabilities in the form of smart power, selective engagement, multilateralism and institutionalism, liberal internationalism, and diplomacy. This article is a descriptive-analytical article using case theory and the method of data

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1. Email: [rasooli@yazd.ac.ir](mailto:rasooli@yazd.ac.ir)

collection is based on the existing literature and virtual data.

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## **Introduction**

According to the US Constitution, the president is primarily responsible for formulating and implementing foreign policy. Although in the foreign policy process many formal and informal institutions (Senate, House of Representatives, pressure groups or lobbies) can influence or limit foreign policy decisions, finally the president plays a decisive role, because he is the legal representative of the United States in foreign relations (Peake, 2016: 83). So, by changing the president as the main decision-maker, national role perceptions and foreign policy orientations will change. As a result, in order to understand the new US foreign policy towards other states, including Iran, it is very important to know Biden's perceptions as the 46th President of the United States from the national role and its constituent elements. So, the main question of this paper is "what is the new national role that Biden defines for American identity?", "What are the most important elements that constitute this new national role?" and "According to these elements, what can we expect from Biden's administration's foreign policy orientation toward Iran? In this relation, in speeches and formal statements, he has pledged to renew America's global leadership. In his first post-presidential speech, Biden explicitly stated that he wants to do something to bring the United States back to the world stage. He offered the ideas of "Respected leadership" and "United America" instead the idea of "first America" (Biden, 2020 a). These new definitions and new perceptions affected and changed US foreign policy orientations.

In this regard one of the most important issues facing the Biden administration's foreign policy is how to deal with the Middle East

as one of the most challenging regions in the international system. In this regard “The administration is focusing on three key objectives – resetting the relationship with Saudi Arabia, ending the war in Yemen, and getting the Iran nuclear agreement back on track” (Norman, 2021). It seems that the issue of Iran is more important than the other two issues, because Biden makes the connection between regional stability and an agreement with Iran. According to him “The best way to achieve some stability in the region is to deal with the Iran’s nuclear program” (Biden, 2020 b).

With this introduction and in answer to the main questions of this paper, we will explain the theoretical framework in the first part, focusing on the “National Role Perceptions” in the framework of the “Interpretive Individualism approach”. In the second part, we will check Biden's new definitions of the American national role, and explore the central ideas. In the third part, we will examine Biden's foreign policy towards Iran based on the central ideas of the new national role and its policy-making prescriptions. Finally, we end the paper with a conclusion.

This article is a descriptive-analytical article using case theory and the method of data collection is to review the existing literature and use virtual data.

## **Theoretical Framework**

**National Role Perceptions and Foreign Policy Analysis:** “Foreign policy analysis” (FPA) is one of the most important parts of “International Relations” (IR) discipline and includes national objectives and the means to achieve such objectives (Coulombis and Wolfe, 1990, 114). while International Relations theories highlight the structural limitations of international system and behavioral similarities affected by such structural limitations (actor-general theory), foreign policy analysis is based on the inevitable role of human agency, creation of differences, and focusing on decisions (actor-specific theory) (Hudson, 2005: 11).

FPA has different theoretical approaches. One of the most important of these approaches is “Interpretive Individualism”. In

fact, this approach falls into the category of “Cognitive Theories” in foreign policy analysis. Cognitive theories encompass mental activities such as the observation of different stimuli in an environment; Remembering and recalling information; pattern recognition and problem representation; and complex activities like social judgments, analytic reasoning, and learning. Cognitive psychology also highlights the constraints that prevent individuals from acting as utility-maximizing, fully rational decision-makers. These constraints lead people to rely on a regularly occurring set of cognitive mechanisms to simplify the decision-making process (Rapport, 2017: 3).

So, in analyzing foreign policy, the “Interpretative Individualism” focuses on “perceptions”, “preferences” and “cognition” of foreign policy decision makers regarding the world and its effect in their foreign policy decisions (Carlsnaes, 1992: 249). “National Role” conception is in the context of interpretive individualism approach. It is defined as foreign policy makers' perceptions of their nations' positions in the international system. It includes perceptions of the general kinds of decisions, rules, commitments, and long-term functions associated with these international positions (Wish, 1980: 532). Holsti was one of the first international relations theorists to apply role theory to the international context. He defines national role conceptions as

Policymakers' own definitions of the general types of decisions, commitments, laws, and actions appropriate to their country and the tasks they must perform continuously in the international system if there is a government ... This is their image of the proper orientations and actions of their situation in relation to the external environment or inside it. (Holsti, 1970: 245).

This concept is closely related to the concept of national identity. In fact, effective foreign policy rests upon a shared sense of national identity, of a nation-state's 'place in the world', its friends and enemies, its interests and aspirations. These underlying assumptions are embedded in national history and myth, changing slowly over time as political leaders reinterpret them and external

and internal developments reshape them (Hill and Wallace, 1996: 8).

A role conception is a set of norms expressing expected foreign policy behavior and action orientation. It can be thought of as a 'road map' that foreign policy-makers rely on to simplify and facilitate an understanding of a complex political reality (Goldstein and Keohane 1993: 3). In other definition, national role conception is the cognitive constructions of decision-makers of 'what the nation naturally stands for and how high it naturally stands, in comparison to others in the international arena'. They can be considered as the core of a grand policy vision through which policy-makers explain the world around them and their state's existence therein (Aras, 2010: 74).

The most important concepts related to the national role conceptions are "Cognitive map", "National Self-image", "Ontological Security" or "Security of the Self" and "Operational Code". According to APA dictionary of psychology cognitive map is a mental understanding of an environment, formed through trial and error as well as observation. Accordingly, self-images include how people sees themselves, something he likes most about itself, that about which it is most disturbed, the ways in which it may want to change, perceptions of the nation's history, conceptions of national purpose and interest, and views of the nation's power and limits. Regarding perceptions of enemies, the theory emphasizes the differences with which parties perceive the same issues, events, policies, and peoples, and suggests such gaps in perception as keys to understanding conflict behavior and interactions. So, National self-images and perceptions of enemies are explicated and analyzed as determinants of various types of conflict behavior (Kaplowitz, 1990: 39).

Self-image may consist of four types:

1. Self-image resulting from how an individual sees oneself.
2. Self-image of how others see a person.
3. Self-image that results from how one sees them.
4. An image of oneself that results from how one perceives

oneself. (Rogers, 1977: 678).

The final concept that relates to national role perception is ontological security. What is emphasized in analyzing the foreign policy relying on the concept of ontological security or Security of the Self is to find out which social acts have been used by the foreign policy makers to meet the identity needs of their states (Mitzen, 2006). Like its physical counterpart, the motivation for ontological security is constant. Some, deep forms of uncertainty threaten this identity security. The reason is that agency requires a stable cognitive environment. Mitzen believes Ontological security is security not of the body but of the self, the subjective sense of who one is, which enables and motivates action and choice. Actors achieve ontological security especially by routinizing their relations with significant others (Mitzen, 2006: 350) Finally the concept of “Operational code” has been developed in the study of international politics to refer to a set of lenses that filter how decision-makers perceive, process, and react to situations involving other countries (Hass, 2021).

## **I- Biden and American National Role Perceptions**

Biden shared his perception of the new US national role in a pre-election article in Foreign Affairs entitled “Why America Must Lead Again,” he proclaimed, “I will take immediate steps to restore democracy, restore US power, and protect the future economy, and once more America will lead the world.” To this commitment he added, “No other nation has that capacity.” He thus explicitly recognized what has been the country’s indispensable role. He announced that “The Biden foreign policy agenda will place the United States back at the head of the table, in a position to work with its allies and partners to mobilize collective action on global threats. The world has not organized itself yet” (Biden, 2020 c: 64-66).

In his first major foreign policy speech as the president of the united states, Biden delivered a ringing message, saying “I want the world to hear today: America is back again....” (Biden, 2021 a). So,

Biden emphasised on “American Respected leadership” or a “Transformational leadership”. This definition of the US global role has a direct impact on the Biden administration's foreign policy. “In times of global crisis, America should lead. We should be the first to offer help to people who are being hurt or are in danger. That’s who we are. That’s who we’ve always been” (Biden, 2021 b).

So, Biden will have to shift the policy with allies from a “transactional American leadership” (This leadership style relies on reward and punishment pairs. Moreover, the leader sets the goals without necessarily including the followers,) toward a more transformational one (encompasses the motivations and ideas of followers.) To do so, the United States needs to be a reliable partner and uphold its commitments (Swielande, 2021: 143).

The role of American values is crucial in this transformational leadership. Joe Biden announced that, as president, he will advance the security, prosperity and values of the United States by taking immediate steps to renew American democracy and alliances and once more place the united states at the head of the table, leading the world to address the most urgent global challenges (The Biden plan, 2021).

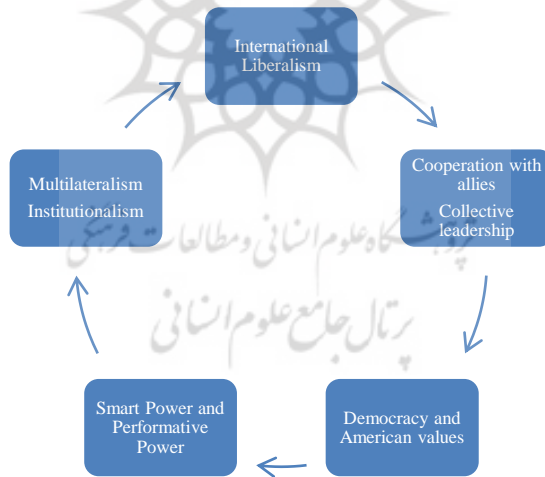
I come to talk about crisis and opportunity. About rebuilding the nation, revitalizing our democracy, and winning the future for America... America is rising again. Choosing hope over fear, truth over lies and light over darkness... America is an idea, the most unique idea in history (Biden, 2021 b).

From Biden’s view renewal of American leadership to mobilize global action on global threats is necessary: “The world does not organize itself. American leadership, backed by clear goals and sound strategies, is necessary to effectively address the defining global challenges of our time. In order to lead again, we must restore our credibility and influence” (The Biden plan, 2021). “It falls to the United States to lead the way. No other nation has that capacity. No other nation is built on that [democratic] idea” (Biden, 2020 c: 65). In effect, Biden seeks to show that not only is



America still America, but it's ready to do again what it has successfully done before.

He criticizes the Trump administration for avoiding US global leadership responsibility. He believes that the continuation of this process will lead to the loss of America's control over future developments in the world. So, Biden defines for the United States the role of a "liberal hegemon", This role contradicts Trump's illiberal hegemony. In Biden's view, Trump's illiberal Hegemony alienated much of the imperialist establishment. They determined that it failed to restore US supremacy, undermined soft power, disrupted alliances, weakened the US position against both China and Russia, and set back its ability to manage imperial crises in the Middle East (Kumar, 2021: 3). So, in Biden's view the US must lead, he argues, otherwise one of two outcomes will prevail: "either someone else will take the United States' place, but not in a way that advances our interests and values, or no one will, and chaos will ensue" (Biden, 2020 c, 71).



**Figure 1. The Most Important Elements of The New American National Role**

## II- International Liberalism

One of the most important constituting elements of America's new

role is “International liberalism Discourse”. The central idea of this discourse is to manage and change the world or international system through the exercise of American power based on the will and ideals of this country. International liberals argue that the United States’ success has depended on a combination of power, democratic ideas, and liberal internationalist projects, while realists ignore the role of American liberal values and democratic ideas in American foreign policy. (Ikenberry and Kupchan, 2004: 34).

So, Biden’s worldview is rooted in mid-twentieth century liberal internationalism, American exceptionalism and pragmatism. It is internationalist because it aims to create order through multilateral cooperation, partnerships, institutions and rules among a community of states and non-state actors. It is liberal because it is premised upon consent, cooperation and a desire to shape the international environment in favor of liberal democracies. It is exceptional because it adheres to the normative belief that the United States has a special role to play in the history of the world. (Ettinger, 2021: 164).

Ikenberry believes that Biden’s administration has laid out international liberalism agenda of change that aims to put the United States back at the center of progressive liberal leadership to address 21st-century problems (Ikenberry, 2021). One of the elements of this discourse is the emphasis on “selective engagement”. Since the Obama administration, the United States has adopted a less interventionist policy on the international scene. Under Obama, this policy translated into the concepts of nation-building at home and strategic patience; Selective engagement is characterized by the concentration of capacities where it really matters, where it has the biggest impact, where it is essential (Swielande, 2021: 145). So, unlike Trump-era nationalism, Biden emphasizes Obama's policy of selective engagement or pragmatic engagement strategy.

**Multilateralism and Institutionalism:** Another element shaping the new American role is “Multilateralism and Institutionalism”. Multilateralism is process of organizing relations

between groups of three or more states, a situation in which several different countries or organizations work together to achieve something or deal with a problem. Keohane defines multilateralism as ‘the practice of coordinating national policies in groups of three or more states, through ad hoc arrangements or by means of institutions’ (Keohane, 1990, 731).

So, multilateralism is an example of cooperation among world governments and is used in contrast with unilateralism. Unilateralism is when a state acts without regard to the support or interests of other states. For example, the 2003 American-led invasion of Iraq is often given as an example of unilateralism in international relations. Multilateralism is believed to be a way to achieve a nation's interest, while promoting stability in the world (Scott, 2013). In multilateralism, the United States defines for itself the role of an active state in global governance. Whereas, in unilateralism, the United States is presented as an isolated and arbitrary state. This strategy is reflected in Trump’s idea of “America alone” or the idea of “America first”.

Throughout the campaign, Biden trumpeted his support for multilateralism. The cornerstones of this approach include strengthening the NATO alliance, partnerships with European Union nations and key relationships with Asia and Oceania, such as those with Australia, Japan, and South Korea (Biden’s Foreign Policy Doctrine, 2021). So, Biden has wisely framed the United States return to multilateralism as a foreign policy for the American middle class, linked to the concrete interests of US citizens. Restoration of the multilateral order, reflected in his early moves to rejoin the Paris Climate Accord and the World Health Organization and re-affirming the importance of the transatlantic partnership and other traditional alliances.

Multilateralism is associated with institutionalism and multilateral diplomacy. Institutionalism means emphasizing the role of institutions in pursuing America's global interests, an instrumentalist view to institutions in achieving US foreign policy goals. For example, Biden in matters such as: global health security,

climate change or nuclear weapons proliferation emphasizes institutionalism and multilateralism. Biden has acknowledged the reality that there is no national solution to this transnational threat—and that pandemic preparedness cannot stop at the U.S. border. The U.S. president has also moved to revive U.S. arms control and nonproliferation efforts and signaled his intent to downgrade nuclear weapons in U.S. defense policy (The Biden Administration, 2021).

**Collective leadership:** Another element shaping the new American role is “Collective leadership”. Collective leadership is characterized by a multiple perspective, sharing responsibility, building upon the strengths of others. Eventually, it leads to increased effectiveness, accountability, shared responsibility, sustainability and leveraging motivation. The United States has to make its allies and partners feel part of the strategic process (Swielande, 2021: 135). Biden has returned the United States diplomacy from “America First” of the Trump administration to the traditional style that places importance on its network of alliances. According to Biden, no country can face many challenges alone, from climate change to the proliferation of nuclear weapons, from the aggression of great powers to transnational terrorism, from cyber warfare to mass migration. (The Biden plan, 2021).

We will repair our alliances and engage with the world once again... and we'll lead, not merely by the example of our power, but by the power of our example. We'll be a strong and trusted partner for peace, progress and security (Biden, 2021 b)

**Smart Power and Performative Power:** Other elements shaping the new American role are “Smart Power” and “Performative Power”. As president, Biden will promote diplomacy as America's top tool for global engagement. Contrary to the Trump approach of limiting American power to economic and military coercion, Joe Biden will have to deploy the total range of American power capacities. The administration cannot hesitate to use military force if necessary, nor hesitate to resort to economic sanctions, but the incoming president will also need to make use of

soft power (Swielande, 2021: 142).

Biden asserted that the US would stop ‘rolling over’ in the face of its adversaries, especially those that seek to ‘damage and disrupt our democracy.’ He emphasized, however, that diplomatic relations will remain an option on the table, as the US would engage when it is ‘in America’s interest to do so (Biden, 2021 c).

**Democracy and American Values:** Biden’s foreign and security policies are built on democratic security by offering the prospect and promise of a fresh democratic future, not merely a fixed version of the past, while avoiding the pitfalls of democratic exceptionalism (Soare, 2021: 14). In Biden’s view, there is no incompatibility between international leadership and rebuilding democracy and to rebuild democracy at home, the US has to strengthen democracy abroad. His goal is to put democracy and democratic values at the heart of US foreign policy, while at the same time rebuilding the "spirit of the nation" after Trump's humiliated it. In this context Biden’s approach is twofold. First, he aims to reverse all of Trump’s illiberal and undemocratic foreign policy practices. Second, Biden’s seeks to restore the US as the “bulwark for global democracy”. He has said, “defending America’s democratic values is inseparable from advancing our national interest” (Lieber, 2021).

Democracy is the root of our society, the source of our power and the source of our revival. In fact, democracy strengthens our leadership to keep us safe in the world. It is the engine of our ingenuity that drives our economic prosperity. This heart represents who we are and how we see the world and how the world sees us. That is why the United States' ability to become a force for progress in the world and to mobilize collective action at home begins. (Biden’s Foreign Policy Doctrine, 2021).

Thus, as part of his effort to reclaim America's leading role on the world stage, Biden proposed hosting a "Summit for Democracy" on December 9-10, 2021 with the participation of US partners around the world and challenges for authoritarian leaders. The summit will serve “to put strengthened democracy back on the

global agenda” (Biden, 2021 d). In his view, by emphasizing the link between internal and external security, the United States can once again wish to use its model of flexibility and the ability of democracy to reform and prosper.

### **III- Iran and Biden’s Security Priorities**

To better understand Biden's foreign policy prospects toward Iran based on new national role perceptions, we must consider his national security priorities. These priorities are divided into internal and external components. At the domestic level, Biden focuses on American domestic problems, the most important of which is how to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic and the health of American citizens. At the external level, Biden’s security priorities are divided into three layers:

- Transnational, globalized security challenges, including tackling the global health crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, socio-economic inequality, reforming the international trade system, the governance of emerging technologies consistent with liberal values and curbing irregular migration (Soare, 2021: 16).

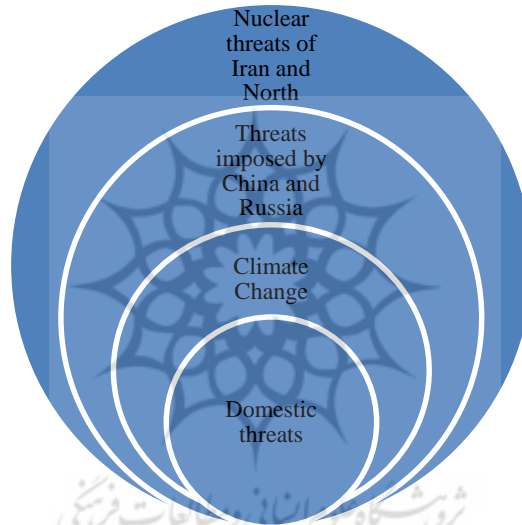
Among these challenges, Biden has pledged to make ‘climate change’ a priority in his administration, starting with undoing many of Trump’s environmental decisions via executive order and rejoining the Paris climate accord in his first days in office. He believes: “Climate change and global warming is an existential threat to humanity. We have a moral obligation to deal with it” (Biden, 2020 d).

- Threats posed by China and Russia: In this regard, Biden sees China correctly as the primary geopolitical adversary and as a common reference point for a community of democracies. He also sees confronting China as an economic challenge which he links to domestic economic revival and climate change (Ettinger, 2021: 160). Thus, Challenges from China and Russia (Biden refers to Russia’s interference to American elections and the cyberattacks) and other illiberal authoritarian states present geopolitical

pressures, as does the advance of illiberal nationalism within democratic polities, especially the US. (Ibid: 163).

- Threats posed by Iran and North Korea: To Biden's administration, the nuclear threats of Iran and North Korea are at the third level of national security priorities.

On Iran and North Korea, nuclear programs present serious threats to American security and the security of the world. We're going to be working closely with our allies to address the threats posed by both of these countries through diplomacy as well as stern deterrence (Biden, 2021 b).



**Figure 2. Biden's Representation of US National Security Threats**

Biden laid out his plan for relations with Iran in a 13 September written commentary via CNN. Castigating President Donald Trump for a failed 'maximum pressure' policy that 'worsened the threat' from Iran and failed to win the support of a single US ally, Biden made a three-part promise. Firstly, like every incoming US president of this century, he pledged to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. The second promise involved a package of diplomatic measures. Biden would rejoin the nuclear accord 'if Iran return[ed] to strict compliance' with the deal. Relatedly, he would



work to strengthen and extend the JCPOA's provisions, while also addressing other issues of concern, among them freeing Americans detained in Iran, condemning Iranian violations of human rights, and helping US regional partners reduce tensions and end regional conflicts, including the war in Yemen. The third part of Biden's plan is to counter Iran's 'destabilizing activities', working closely with Israel and using targeted sanctions against 'Iran's human rights abuses, its support for terrorism' and its ballistic-missile program. These efforts would be made on a parallel track unconnected to nuclear negotiations (Biden, 2020 d).

Biden during the campaign also repeatedly pledged to return to the Iran nuclear deal that President Obama negotiated in 2015 and President Trump abandoned in 2018, although he suggested it needed to be updated and broadened. "If Iran returns to strict compliance with the nuclear deal, the United States would rejoin the agreement as a starting point for follow-on negotiations," (Joe Biden on Iran, 2020).

#### **IV- Biden's Foreign Policy Prospects towards Iran**

According to Biden's national role new perceptions and Iran's position in the hierarchy of security threats he defines for the United States, the following prospects can be considered for Biden's foreign policy towards Iran:

**1. Emphasis on Institutionalism and Multilateralism in Dealing with Iran:** Considering these two components, the new US President seeks to establish a 'liberal hegemony' against Trump's 'illiberal hegemony'. According to this definition, Biden's foreign policy in relation to Iran has the following aspects:

- The Biden administration is expected to adopt a less unilaterally confrontational tone in relations with Iran.

- Emphasis on international alliances and cooperation with partners, especially European partners in dealing with Iran. "With our allies, we will work to strengthen and extend the nuclear deal's provisions, while also addressing other issues of concern." (Joe Biden on Iran, 2020).



**2. Emphasis on liberal Internationalism in Dealing with Iran:** Biden aims to practice a US-centric liberal internationalism that relies more on the consensual aspects of American leadership, and less on the coercive aspects. Those coercive aspects, however, will be part of the program but in pragmatic ways (Ettinger, 2021: 163). According to this definition Biden's foreign policy in relation to Iran has the following aspects:

- Unlikely to use the military option against Iran, because in liberal internationalism, the military option can be used cautiously, in a limited way, in line with liberal interests and values, and with the consent of liberal allies (Keohane, 2012: 125). Therefore, if Iran resorts to missile, nuclear or regional military actions, the Biden's administration will also use the military option. According to Biden, if Iran chooses to confront, he is ready to defend the vital interests of the United States.

- Emphasis on collaborative games: In cooperative games, the actors seek to agree on a set of principles to achieve common goals. Of course, it should be noted that in the relation's game between two States, Iran's strategic cost-benefit calculations is very important.

**3. Emphasis on Smart Power in Dealing with Iran:** Smart power involves the strategic use of diplomacy, persuasion, capacity building, and the projection of power and influence in ways that are cost-effective and have political and social legitimacy, essentially the engagement of both military force and all forms of diplomacy (Crocker, 2007: 13). According to this definition, Joe Biden claimed that there was a 'smarter way to be tough on Iran' during the 2020 US election campaign. He tried to strike a balance between confrontation and selective cooperation defending America's vital interests by confronting threats and abuses, but also engaging with these adversaries "when it's in America's interests to do so." (Lieber, 2021: 7)

According to Biden, Trump was not able to use smart power against Iran. "He ignored our closest allies and walked away alone, without a plan from a deal that put the world's eyes and ears inside

Iran's nuclear program and was verifiably blocking Iran's pathways to a nuclear weapon.” (Biden. Sept. 13, 2020). “Iran restarted its nuclear program and became more aggressive, moving the region closer to another disastrous war. In short, Trump’s decisions left us much worse off” (Biden, 2019 a).

From Biden 's point of view, the United States’ credibility and leadership in the nonproliferation regime suffered a substantial blow when the Trump administration unilaterally decided to withdraw from the agreement despite universal compliance. So, Biden looks for reclaim the United States’ reputation as a global leader in the nonproliferation regime. This will require new multilateral negotiations, experienced diplomats at the helm, and a willingness to provide sufficient incentives to ensure a diplomatic and peaceful end to Iran’s nuclear program (Mehta, 2021: 11). According to this definition, Biden's foreign policy in relation to Iran has the following aspects:

- ‘Compliance for compliance strategy’: Biden’s ‘compliance for compliance strategy’ can be considered in the context of smart power. “The United States wants Iran to come back into (compliance with) its JCPOA commitments and if does, the United States will do the same” (Joe Biden on Iran, 2020). So, Biden would then use this as a basis for engaging in wider talks with Iran on other issues of concern (Prospects for the Iran nuclear deal, 2020). At the State Department press briefing on February 22, Department Spokesman Ned Price reiterated clearly the administration’s position:

Biden made clear the deal of compliance for compliance: If Iran returns to full compliance with the JCPOA, the United States would be prepared to do the same. We would then use the JCPOA as a basis for a longer and stronger agreement and negotiate follow-on agreements to cover other areas of concern, including Iran’s ballistic missile program (U.S. Foreign Policy, 2021).

But the main problem in this context is the performance of the first trust-building action by each of the actors. In this relation Iran wants the US to lift the sanctions – more than 1,500 of them –

imposed under Trump as a precursor to direct talks, while the US wants Iran to first curb uranium enrichment levels to those agreed in the 2015 deal (Norman, 2021).

- Using diplomacy and sanctions dealing with Iran simultaneously: As stated smart power refers to the combination of hard power and soft power strategies. In Biden's administration, this means using diplomacy and sanctions simultaneously. Over the last two decades, sanctions have become a fundamental tool of American foreign policy. Sanctions are often seen as an alternative to the use of military force in pursuit of specific policy objectives such as non-proliferation. The United States has devoted more resources than any other power to developing sanctions as a core foreign-policy tool, leveraging the dominant position of the US dollar in the global economy ((Batmanghelidj and Rouhi, 2021: 185),

In Biden's words "We will continue to use targeted sanctions against Iran's human rights abuses, its support for terrorism and ballistic missile program" (Biden, 2020 d). Rather, we assume that sanctions will remain a significant tool of US non-proliferation policy in regard to Iran's nuclear activities. So, Biden said he would be prepared to defend vital US interests and US troops, but was ready to 'walk the path of diplomacy if Iran takes steps to show it is ready too' (Prospects for the Iran nuclear deal, 2020).

The threat of nuclear proliferation also continues to require careful diplomacy and cooperation among us. We need transparency and communication to minimize the risk of strategic misunderstanding or mistakes... That's why we have said we're prepared to reengage in negotiations with the P5+1 on Iran's nuclear program. We must also address Iran's destabilizing activities across the Middle East, and we're going to work in close cooperation with our European and other partners as we proceed (Biden, 2021, Feb).

## **Conclusion**

This research focuses on national role conception, which is defined

as foreign policy makers' perceptions of their nations' positions in the international system. Therefore, the main purpose of this article was to examine the change in US foreign policy based on the change in Biden's national role. So, the main question of this paper is what is the new national role that Biden defines for American identity? What are the most important elements that constitute this new national role? According to these elements, what can we expect from Biden's administration's foreign policy approach to Iran?

In fact, every newly elected American president enters office promising to implement new policies, to avoid the mistakes of the past, and to promote the country's security, interests, and values (new national role perception). In Biden's view, America First foreign policy (based on Trump's national role perception) isolated the United States from its friends and allies and upended more than 70 years of American leadership in the global community. So, Joe Biden and his senior advisers have signaled that they aim to restore American global leadership and to do so prudently and in close cooperation with US allies. In other words, Biden's entire foreign policy rests on the assumption that America must lead again.

On that occasion, Biden set out a long list of additional commitments. These included facing the global challenges of the climate crisis, nuclear proliferation, and the raging Covid-19 pandemic; championing human rights; upholding the rule of law; uniting the world in fighting to defend democracy; rejoining international institutions; and confronting cyber threats. In fact, the new role that Biden has defined for the United States, includes restore, revitalize, rebuild, reinvent, renovate, rejoin, reform, and reset. There is a clear preference for a return to multilateralism and coordination as the means to solving global problems including dealing with Iran. So, in this article we tried to examine Biden's Foreign Policy Prospects towards Iran based on US new national role perception. We predict Biden's Foreign Policy towards Iran includes elements such as 'institutionalism and multilateralism', 'liberal internationalism' and 'smart power'. Each of these elements creates specific instructions regarding Iran.

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