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# Impact of Iran Nuclear File on Iranian Political Relations with European Union (2013-2015)

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**Abstract:** *Since the victory of Iranian Revolution, Iran relations with European Union – then known as European Economic Community – have undergone through numerous vicissitudes. Due to the organizational transformations of this Union and the emergence of new variables and developments in Middle East and their effects, these relations have never been of any stability and an expanding pace in a long-term time line. The procedure of negotiations and nuclear diplomacy of Iran and Europe shows that the parties have distinct goals and motives. To neutralize US hostile policies and take advantage of nuclear technology specifically the fuel cycle, Iran began its negotiations with Europe. On the other hand, the goal of EU is convincing Iran to omit the technology of nuclear fuel cycle and production of nuclear fuel in Iran through giving encouraging concessions. In other words, Europe like US intends to see the one-time halt of uranium enrichment and production of nuclear fuel in Iran; Iran nuclear file has overshadowed the political relations of Iran and Europe and left tangible effects on the negotiations. In the current essay, the authors will discuss the developments in the political relations of Iran with EU from 2013 to 2015. The method of this study is descriptive-analytic and the data have been collected via library research.*

**Keywords:** *Nuclear Energy, European Union, Iran, Foreign Policy, Nuclear Negotiations.*

## INTRODUCTION

The first ambitious efforts of Iran to achieve nuclear technology dates back to 1960s. In line with the special relations tht Pahlavi Regime had established with the United States, in 1958 Iran became a member of International Energy Agency and on March 5 1970 National Consultative Assembly approved the bill of nuclear technology. Finally, however, due to the revolution and fall of Shah Iran nuclear program underwent some major changes.

After Islamic Revolution of Iran, the membership of Iran in IAEA and loyalty to NPT and the treaty of IAEA Safeguards continued to exist. However, nuclear program due to such reasons as the government's disinterest in continuation of activities, foreign companies' withdrawal from the completion of the power plants based on the previous agreements, eruption of imposed war and so on and so forth, was forgotten.

After the end of imposed war in 1987 and 1988 the renovation of reactors of the sites 1 and 2 of Bushehr that had suffered serious damages due to the Iraq air raids was resumed. When Kraftwerk withdrew from the completion of Bushher power plant under the pressures of the United States of America a consortium composed of Argentinian, German, and Spanish companies announced their readiness for the completion of Bushehr power plant in late 1980 although their plan did also fail under the US pressures.

Following these events, the world became more sensitive over Iran nuclear issue and the facilities of heavy water in Arak and uranium enrichment in Natanz were declared evidences that substantiated the US

allegations concerning Iran policies for achieving nuclear weapons. Upon the beginning of the disputes of Iran nuclear file, European countries sought to retain their central role in Iran relations with IAEA. Eventually, Europe's consensus with the US caused Iran nuclear file to be referred to the UN Security Council.

In the Ninth and Tenth Governmen a new definition of the west was presented. The total sum of the records of western actions in recent years showed that western countries are in fact after the surrender of Iran instead of reducing the tension and reaching coexistence (Dehqani Firuzabadi, 2012).

From 2005 to 2013 political and economic relations of Iran and EU declined in considerable size. Diplomatic ties and delegations reached their minimum record. On June 2008 EU announced that as long as Iran is not transparent about its nuclear program and does not build confidence, EU will refuse from establishing extended ties with this country (Khruzade and Afzali, 2011).

Iran-EU ties changed upon the election of encumbant Hassan Rouhani. The reasons for this change should be first sought for in the new principles of Iranian foreign policy that include insistence on active, constructive and realist foreign policy, priority of national interests in foreign policy, moderationism in foreign policy, constructive and pacifist interaction.

In general, the reactions of European officials indicate that they are optimist of the election of Hassan Rouhani and they hope to start a new era of good relations with Iran. In fact, regional role and place of Iran as well as the status of EU in international system have brought about mutual necessities for comprehensive and good ties between the two parties.

### **Europe and Iran Nuclear Issue:**

#### **A Review of the Relations Background:**

Since the victory of Islamic Revolution, the ties between Iran and EU have experienced various vicissitudes and developments. In some eras, these bilateral ties had been cold and full of tension while in some other eras a suitable atmosphere dominated these ties. Generally speaking, Iran-EU ties can be studied in three periods: First period begins from the victory of Islamic Revolution and lasts until the early 1990s. In this era, the ties between the two parties turns cold and unfriendly and an atmosphere of inconfidence prevails. The consensus of EU and US of Iran as a threat to the region and also of some issues like Salman Rushdi have overshadowed the ties of the two parties.

Second period starts from early 90s and lasts until the election of Khatami in 1997. During this period despite some developments in bilateral ties like the decision of EU for critical talks with Iran without following the policy of US in rising economic sanctions against Iran the inactive state of the relations of two parties continued. In the third period, which began in 1997 when Khatami Administration started its work, positive approach of EU to Iran internal changes and the interest of EU member states in supporting the new government whose first foreign policy was reducing tension led to the unprecedented improvement of the bilateral ties.

The replacement of critical dialogue of EU with a comprehensive dialogue in 1998 is itself an endorsement of this basic change in the relations of two parties. The other index that endorses this change is related to numerous political delegations. These delegations refer to the will of Iran and European countries for boosting ties (Behzad, 2004).

Generally speaking, the reasons of the coldness of Iran-EU ties in 1980s can be studied in three macro, regional and micro levels.

In macro-level analysis given the structure that governs international arena before and after the fall of USSR one can analyze the behavioral changes of European Union. Before the fall of USSR, the bipolar system that prevailed international relations had categorized western countries and capitalism in one bloc that was led by USA. The general orientation of these countries in the field of foreign policy was generally in line with the stances of United States. Under such conditions, EU as an important member of western bloc adopted a pro-US policy against Iran during 1980s and limited its relations with Iran (Behzad, 2004).

After the fall of USSR, EU found more freedom of action in foreign policy due to the new multipolar system insofar as in many cases despite the warnings and disagreement of US it decided to establish close ties with Iran.

In regional level of analysis, occurrence of such events as Iraq invasion to Kuwait, forced EU to revise its early conceptions of Iran. This event showed that the judgement of western countries regarding Iran as a warmonger and a key threat in the region was wrong. After a while upon the emergence of Taliban in Afghanistan, the role and importance of Iran were revealed to EU.

Finally, in micro-level, Khatami's reformist administration in Iran that pursued the strategy of rule of law and sought to reduce the existing tensions abroad provided more incentives for EU to establish close ties with Iran. This issue along with Iranian party's interest in improvement of its relations with EU led to the promotion of the level of relations between two parties both from qualitative and quantitative points of view (Behzad, 2004).

#### **European Union and Nuclear Activity of Iran:**

Generally speaking, the issue of proliferation of WMD including nuclear weapons in the world has been one of the key concerns and problems of EU in the domain of foreign policy. From the point of view of EU, expansion of these weapons has diametrically reduced the world security and stability and led to international insecurity. For this reason, during past years European Union has struggled to halt the expansion of these weapons by various countries.

As to Iran the issue of WMD and nuclear weapons has always been one of the focal points of the EU-Iran talks. EU insists on the transparency and legal state of Iran nuclear programs and emphasizes that this program should be totally in line with the international institutions and regimes (Behzad, 2004).

According to Javier Solana the then European Union's High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Europeans struggle to prevent Iran from continuing the process, which in their eyes may lead this country to the nuclear weapons through double policies. In other words, on the one hand, they insisted on the continuation of diplomacy and negotiation and on the other hand, they seek to draft a resolution against Iran nuclear program and try to convince all members of the UN Security Council to take serious actions that may halt Iran uranium enrichment plan (Golshanpazhuh, 2005).

In line with this dual policy as regards Iran nuclear file and for the sake of punishing this country due to its negligence of the demands of Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency and refusal of halting the uranium enrichment, EU referred Iran nuclear file to UN Security Council.

Europe adopts a dual policy regarding Iran nuclear program and threatens it will refer the file to UN Security Council and eventually operationalizes this threat and after drafting a statement of Iran nuclear issue that was ratified by France and UK Iran file is referred to Security Council.

After the positive vote of the Board of Governors to the resolution proposed by EU that requested the referral of Iran nuclear file to Security Council, Javier Solana the then European Union's High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy declared the resolution a sign of consensus of the member states of the Board of Governors and at the same time emphasized that the doors of dialogue are still open. Moreover, EU expressed its delight of the acceptance of the proposed resolution (Golshanpazhuh, 2005).

According to European countries, if each one of the Middle East countries reaches asymmetric power it will be able to change the international balance. Accordingly, any effort on the behalf of Iran for reaching nuclear power can be associated with certain consequences in regional power balance domain and this implies that Iran is of such a stature that allows it to change the political and international equations (Motaqi, 2005).

Europeans believe that Iran nuclear program aims at reaching nuclear weapon, because they are of the belief that Iran does not have any popularity by its Arab neighbors and it has no common ground with them but its policies regarding Palestine. Europeans suggest that Iran seeks to enhance its nuclear power in order to reduce its regional vulnerability based on the past bitter experiences of the eight years' war with Iran as well as US military invasions to neighboring countries. This is the issue that despite the insistence of Iran on the peaceful

nature of its nuclear efforts has changed to the most important and vital subject of EU and the west (Falahi, 2006).

One of the issues that has deepened the gaps between Iran and EU as regards Iran nuclear program is the location of this country in Middle East as a crisis hub neighboring such countries as India and Pakistan (that have Nuclear Weapons) and more importantly its short distance from Israel. Due to the radical statements of Iranian officials as to the existence of Israel the latter is always alert of using nuclear weapons against Iran because Israel sees Iran as a true threat. In such conditions, Europeans suggest that Iran is very likely to make efforts to reach WMD. Then European countries support Israel and accuse Iran of “provoking genocide”.

Secondly, there is a similarity between the conditions of the countries that have had nuclear weapons and the current conditions of Iran. These countries can hardly believe that Iran would enrich uranium for peaceful purposes.

Thirdly, Islamic Republic of Iran’s support of such groups as Hezbollah and Hamas during the past three decades since the occurrence of revolution in Iran has exposed this country to various types of accusations. For westerners believe that Iran supports these groups in order to undermine Israel and seeks to reach atomic weapons so that it may pose serious threats to the very existence of Israel.

Fourthly, Europeans declare Middle East their own neighbor and believe that Nuclear Weapons can be very dangerous for this region because they will be within the range of these weapons. They see the Middle East as a critical region and like US they also believe that even there may be a WWII in this region. Europeans have experienced two world wars and are by no means willing to experience a third (Amini and Armin, 2007). Iran can be considered the closest nuclear threat to Eastern Europe and this fact is an impediment to any bilateral relation. As Russia announced, non-nuclear Iran is our strategic ally and nuclear Iran is our enemy. Likewise, Europe suggests that nuclear Iran is a direct threat that endangers the security and natural life of European people.

Regardless of the unofficial information, the range of Iranian missiles is more than 2 thousand kilometer and this range has experienced an ascending course and they can carry warheads (Haj Jafari, 2004).

Nuclear weapons can change Iran to a powerful country in the region and provide an opportunity to pursue its specific interests with power. Iran access to nuclear weapon will persuade other countries take effective steps in this domain and will be a basis for weapons race and would undermine the non-proliferation regime (Ahmadi Lefruki, 2008).

#### **Impact of Nuclear Issue on Iran Foreign Policy (2013-2015) as regards Europe:**

##### **Principles of Iran Foreign Policy (2013-2015):**

Iran believes that the basis of foreign policy should be providing the national interests and security of Iran and if foreign policy succeeds to guarantee the national interests of the country and opens the path of development and in other words, reduces the costs and enhances the benefits, this foreign policy will be desirable.

If we want to summarize this discourse of foreign policy, we will reach what follows:

- 1) Moderation: creation of balance between ideal and reality that culminates in realistic idealism. The discourse of moderation in foreign policy consists of realistic movement, self-trust, and balanced and intelligent action as well as constructive interaction and consensus with the aims of promotion of the place of the country. The meaning of balance between idealism and realism is seemingly the reduction of opposition with international system and naturally implies that Rouhani Administration is interested in accepting the current order of the world and seeks to have more interaction instead of the struggle for changing the international order.
- 2) Calculated International Power-seeking: power is one of the most fundamental concepts that can be said that is one of the pillars of the science of international relations. Rouhani has clearly spoken of this concept and issue of power calculation. On the other hand, it is evident that Iran’s definition of

power cannot be only focused on the military power like the traditional realists. Rather it is closer to the views of the later thinkers who consider power to be a combination of government capabilities.

- 3) Interaction with International Regime: establishing and strengthening bilateral and multilateral relations in order to strengthen national security and interests and promotion of sovereignty in the region has been among the basic principles of the foreign policy of Rouhani Administration.
- 4) Power Balance based on the Concept of Moderation: one of the other issues that has brought Iran's view closer to realism versus idealism is continuous insistence on the category of moderation.
- 5) Reducing Tensions: overcoming tensions and preventing from unnecessary tensions in the relations with various countries and removing unnecessary and irrelevant issues from the agenda of the relations with the EU and US.

Another important constituent that is needed to be investigated as regards the diplomacy of nuclear Iran in the interval years of 2013-2015 is the personality, or in other words, the ideas of the President and in a lesser scale of the negotiating team. The history of Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy in the past shows that the personality and thought of the President has played a key role in the definition, codification and continuation of the foreign policy of the government. Thus, the moderationist discourse that governs the foreign policy of Iran is indeed representing the mindset of the President who has a decisive role in the continuation of it (Dehqani Firoozabadi, 2014). Iran policy related to the nuclear issue is focused on the exit of Iran file from UN Security Council and completion of nuclear technology in the country. Iranian politicians believe that both for Iran and western countries the only solution is dialogue. The government should seek to remove the sanctions. Overall, many threats turned to new opportunities with the election of Rouhani as the new president and the place of Islamic Republic of Iran in international scene was promoted by the public opinion and the world people viewed Iran and Islamic Republic from a new perspective. The government's nuclear team consisted of the experienced forces of Ministry of Foreign Affairs contrary to previous teams in the past who did not have any experience in international negotiations. No doubt, experiences and work records of the members of this team have had considerable role in nuclear deal success that should be taken into account. Generally speaking, in Iran foreign policy in the years between 2013-2015 Iran rights were the focus of negotiations. The team sought to use logical arguments via constructive interaction to bring about conditions to thwart the possible threats posed by the west and in doing so, to pave the ground for sanction lift in order to remove the unjust pressure that has been put on Iranian nation. In fact, one can argue that the high environmental pressures that have been put on Islamic Republic of Iran were simultaneous with the election of an individual who considered the domain of foreign policy a field of interaction and reconciliation and had diplomatic experiences. These factors together set the scene for change in the foreign policy of Iran (Haji Yusefi, 2005).

Iran/Europe ties changed with the election of new government in 2013. Reasons of this change can be sought for in new principles of foreign policy that consist of insistence on active, constructive and realistic foreign policy; foreign policy in the service of providing the national interests; moderationism in foreign policy; constructive interaction and tension-reduction.

Iran new approach to nuclear file that has been inaugurated with the announcement of "heroic flexibility" continued with intense negotiations of Iran with P5+1 during the UN General Assembly on September 2013. After the direct negotiations of the foreign ministers of Iran and USA and following the historic phone calls of the presidents of Iran and USA a new atmosphere took form in the negotiations.

The crisis in nuclear deal led to the adoption of comprehensive sanctions against Iran and reduced the level of international relations of Iran with EU. However, Iran nuclear deal with P5+1 opened a new chapter in the relations of Tehran with the world and specifically with EU and the implementation of JCPOA paved the path for the development and reinforcement of Iran foreign relations with EU.

Hassan Rouhani decided to travel to Europe after the implementation of JCPOA and his first destination was Italy. The reformist Khatami had also travelled to Italy. But during the presidency of Ahmadinejad Iran/EU

ties were complicated and for this reason EU policies were all influenced by US policies. EU was the biggest business partner of Iran and after the sanctions these ties suffered a tangible decline. The policy of EU before Iran was concerned with security issues because the close ties of Iran with EU caused the security to be on the top of agenda but after the nuclear deal the experts hope these ties not to be focused on security and instead expand in economic and political directions.

After 12 years of dialogues between Iran with EU and then with P5+1, the world was witness to Vienna Deal on 14 July 2015 as regards the nuclear activities of Iran. Then in a six months' period JCPOA was implemented on 16 June 2015. Implementation of JCPOA is considered to be a turning point in the relations of Iran and EU. The President's travel to Europe 10 days after the implementation of JCPOA was of mental, political, economic and international importance. The first European travel to Italy contains a significant message. Expansion of the relations of Iran and EU leads to the strengthening of regional position of both parties. Iran as a stable and powerful country in Middle East can be a suitable option for development of collaboration with EU.

European Union after 9/11 was dissatisfied with the on-sided influence of US in the region and struggled to revive its position. Iran's geopolitical status and its massive natural resources of gas and oil are attractive for EU. Moreover, Iran is the most powerful military force in the region that is of influence in Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq and Afghanistan. Then, strengthening ties with Iran provides a major part of the needs of Europe for establishing order and security in Middle East and Persian Gulf region.

#### **4-6- JCPOA and Diplomatic Delegations:**

Ratification of nuclear deal under the title of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action that is associated with the resolution 2231 of UN Security Council is seen as a turning point in the history of foreign relations of Islamic Republic of Iran from various perspectives. The ratification of this deal was a process according to which within a specified time line the two parties had to implement certain obligations in order to put an end to the unnecessary crisis.

##### **July 2015:**

Laurent Fabius the French Foreign Minister visit of Iran has been unique in the past 12 years. During his visit besides his counterpart Zarif he also met Iran Minister of Industry, Mine and Business, Minister of Road and Urbanism, Vice President and the Head of the Environment Organization. Ivica Dačić during his visit of Iran met a number of high ranked officials including the President, Foreign Minister, Head of Parliament and some officials of Ministry of Industry and Mine.

Paulo Gentiloni travelled to Tehran along with Italian Minister of Economy as well as a number of high ranked officials and managers of private companies. In this visit he met with Mohammad Javad Zarif, President and Ayatollah Hashemi Rafsanjani. He reiterated that his country is ready to invest in Iran and transfer technology to this country (Aftab, 2016).

##### **August 2015:**

Federica Mogherini High Representative of Europe in Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Laurent Fabius the then French Foreign Minister, Ivica Dačić the Deputy Vice President and Foreign Minister of Serbia, Paulo Gentiloni Italian Foreign Minister and Walid Moalem Syrian Foreign Minister were the people who visited Iran for negotiations in the early days after the ratification of nuclear deal.

##### **September 2015:**

Philip Hammond travelled to Iran for a two-day visit of Tehran and discussed various issues with Iranian officials. In this visit, he reopened the British embassy in Tehran. During his visit he negotiated about the increase of relations with Iranian officials.

Czech Foreign Minister arrived in Tehran with a group of businessmen. He insisted that the delegation was the biggest delegation that has ever accompanied the foreign minister in any foreign visit. He not only visited his Iranian counterpart rather he also met the President, minister of economy and the head of parliament. José Manuel García-Margallo arrived in Tehran along with the Spanish minister of industry, energy and tourism and discussed the opportunity for enhancing the relations with Iranian officials.

Mauro Vieira travelled to Tehran to meet Iranian officials and evaluate the possibility of expansion of relations in international and regional scales. Bert Koenders was one of the European foreign ministers who visited Tehran after the ratification of JCPOA. He travelled to Tehran upon the invitation of Mohammad Javad Zarif. He met with President, Ali Shamkhani and Ali Larijani. Immigration crisis in Europe and regional crises were among the issues that were discussed in the meetings.

#### **October 2015:**

October 2015 was the month when the JCPOA was adopted and ratified in the parliaments of IRAN and P5+1 in 90 days. Moreover, during this month President Hassan Rouhani travelled to New York to participate in the seventieth UN General Assembly Meeting and during this travel he met with the presidents of various countries. In this point we were witness to the disastrous stampede of Mina in which 400 Iranian pilgrims were killed in Mecca. This disaster and irresponsible behavior of Saudi officials caused the relations between Tehran and Riyadh to get darker more than ever. Croatian Parliament Speaker, Polish Parliament Speaker, Japanese Foreign Minister, Indonesian Foreign Minister, German Foreign Minister, Lebanese Foreign Minister were the officials who arrived in Tehran to talk with Iranian officials in order to enhance the ties with Iran.

#### **November 2015:**

Foreign Minister of South Korea, Vice President of South Africa and Belgian foreign minister visited Tehran in the eighth month since the ratification of JCPOA.

#### **December 2015:**

In December the Summit of 9 Gas Exporting Countries Forum including the presidents of Russia, Iraq, Bolivia, Venezuela, Equatorial Guinea, Nigeria, Turkmenistan, Prime Minister of Algeria, Special Delegation of Azerbaijan and the Secretary General of World Energy Forum was held in Tehran.

Putin's visit of Tehran and his meeting with the Supreme Leader and the President was one of the other examples of the presence of world leaders in Iran that was widely covered by world media. In this visit, seven documents of bilateral cooperation were signed that depicted an expansive perspective for promotion of Tehran-Moscow relations. Moreover, in this month Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov the President of Turkmenistan arrived in Tehran and visited Iranian officials and signed 9 documents of cooperation with Iranian counterparts.

#### **January 2016:**

One of the key events that had been forecasted in JCPOA was the day of implementation of this international plan, i.e. 2016 January 16. After the implementation of the nuclear obligations of Islamic Republic of Iran including the phasing out of a number of centrifuges and redesigning Arak reactor; PMD file will be closed and all related sanctions will be lifted. Thus, this way the two parties entered the post-JCPOA age. Few days before the date of implementation of JCPOA, Ibrahim Jafari Iraqi Foreign Minister, Christian Jensen Danish Foreign Minister, Retno Marsudi Indonesian Foreign Minister and De Bar Tolomeo the Speaker of the Parliament of Luxembourg travelled to Tehran. On 2016 January 18 Yukiya Amano the Secretary General of IAEA arrived in Tehran to evaluate the implementation of nuclear obligations of Iran.

#### **February 2016:**

February was one of the busiest months in the diplomatic history of Islamic Republic of Iran; in this month President Rouhani travelled to Italy and France and the outcome of these visits was the ratification of 14 memorandums with Italy and 20 memorandums with France. In this month Xi Jinping Chinese President arrived in Tehran as one of the members of P5+1 and discussed the issues of redesigning of Arak Reactor. 17 memorandums were signed during this visit that amounted to 600 billion dollars. The President of Ghana, Greek Prime Minister, Thai Foreign Minister, German Foreign Minister, Kyrgyz Prime Minister and the Minister of Investment arrived in Tehran in February.

#### **Contracts Signed After JCPOA:**

##### **Contract with Peugeot**

Peugeot can be considered the first European company that signed a contract with Iranian automotive manufacturers in order to bring its products to Iranian market. Like past 40 years, Iran Khodro became the

business partner of Peugeot and a new company known as IKAP joint venture was founded in Iran with 50/50 shares.

IKAP is producing modern Peugeot cars inside Iranian soil for markets in Iran and Middle East. The first product will be Peugeot 2008 that is supposed to be in the market until the end of 2017. According to the Director of Peugeot, IKAP will start the production of Peugeot 301 and 208 next year.

#### **Contract with Citroën**

Citroën the other company affiliated to PSA Holding chose SAIPA as its business partner. The reason of this choice was announced by the directors of Citroën to be the successful experience of production and presentation of Xantia in Iran. According to the contract signed between SAIPA and Citroën 50 percent of the SAIPA Kashan was sold to Citroën in order to be a platform for the production of such products as C4 and C6. This contract included also 30 percent of the products of SAIPA Kashan.

#### **Contract with Renault**

Renault was not satisfied with Iran Khodro and Pars Khordro specifically in the quality of after-sales services and production quality and this time it decided to have independent presence in Iranian market. Thus, this company signed a contract with an Iranian organization. Then, Renault signed its contract with IDRO (The Industrial Development & Renovation Organization of Iran). According to this contract, Renault will own 60 percent of the joint venture that was founded by the collaboration of IDRO which will have only 40 percent of the venture. As the major share holder Renault can make easier decisions and it is dealing now with a governmental organization not a car manufacturer.

#### **Contract with Hyundai**

Hyundai is the first Asian automotive manufacturer that has signed cooperation contract with Iranian car makers. This cooperation contract has been signed between South Korean Hyundai and Kerman Motor of Iran that aims to produce i10 and i20 in Iran. We have to wait and see that if the brilliant experience of the production of DAEWOO will be repeated by Kerman Motor in the production of Hyundai or not.

Furthermore, it was almost 14 years after the visit of a Chinese President of Iran (in 2002) that Xi Jinping arrived in Tehran leading a political and economic delegation consisted of three deputies of the Prime Minister and 6 ministers as well as businessmen and media. This visit by Xi Jinping in the second week after the annulment of the sanctions and immediately after visiting Saudi Arabia and Egypt amid the tensions between Riyadh and Tehran shows that Chinese think of peace and expansion of their strategic relations with the heart of world energy. The two countries seek to reach an expansive agreement based on comprehensive strategic cooperation after the implementation of JCPOA and sanction lift. Establishing the 25 years of strategic relations, ratification of 17 documents of cooperation and enhancing commercial relations to 600 billion dollars in 10 years were among the most important outcomes of Chinese President's visit of Tehran and high ranked Iranian officials.

President Rouhani's visits of Italy and France accompanied by 6 ministers were postponed due to terrorists' attacks in France. This was the first European visit of the President of Islamic Republic of Iran. The most important achievement of this 3 days' presidential visit of Italy was the ratification of bilateral cooperation documents in economic and commercial domains that amounted to 17 billion dollars. Rouhani was accompanied by 120 political and economic Iranian elites and besides meeting Italian Prime Minister he also visited Italian historical monument including Colosseum.

Hassan Rouhani entered Paris and was warmly received by French President after the cancellation the previous visit plan due to ISIS attacks in Paris. Before meeting François Hollande Rouhani met 20 French industry owners. Most analysts suggest that this visit aimed to pave the ground for more economic cooperation after the ratification of JCPOA and sanctions lift after 10 years of political tensions. Signing 20 memorandums including the contract of buying 118 planes from Air Bus for almost 25 billion dollars, contract of joint venture of Peugeot-Citroën and Iran Khodro that aims at investing 400 million Euros in Iran in 5 years and the contract with TOTAL for selling 150 to 200 thousands barrel of crude oil per day were among the achievements of the visit of



President of France. In 2015 three hundred years have passed since first political relations between Iran and France. Last visit of Iranian President of France dates back to 17 years ago in 1998 (Baeidinezhad, 2015).

### **Conclusion:**

New Iranian politicians are of the belief that the basis of foreign policy should be grounded in national interests and security and if foreign policy succeeds to guarantee the national interests and puts the country in the path of development, and to put it bluntly, reduces the costs and enhances the profits, this foreign policy will be desirable. Iranian foreign policy in nuclear issue is the effort for bringing Iran file out of UN Security Council and completion of nuclear technology. Iran believes that the only path for it and western countries is dialogue. The government should aim at lifting sanctions.

In general, many threats have turned to opportunities after the election of new government in 2013 in the international arena and the world people have changed their views of Iran and Islamic Republic.

Iran/Europe relations have changed after the election of Hassan Rouhani. The reasons of this change can be sought for in the new principles of Iran foreign policy that consist of insistence on active, constructive and realist foreign policy; foreign policy in the service of national interests; moderationism in foreign policy; constructive interaction and tension-reduction

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