



# Nuclear Discourse of Islamic Republic of Iran before JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) Focusing on the Stances of the Foreign Minister

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**Abstract:** *Mohammad Javad Zarif is undoubtedly is one of the most prominent and influential members of the government of Hassan Rouhani (2013-17) and one of the most high profile figures of the media in recent years. He is an experienced diplomat who succeeded to bring several years of negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 to fruition by sealing JCPOA on 14 July 2015. But after the end of early celebrations of the parties, a discourse cleavage gradually emerged between the parties and got deepened.*

*Western states, i.e. USA and EU led by US, not only did not implement the JCPOA and merely reduced it to a legal document, rather tied its implementation to other issues like missile power and Iran's policy in the Middle East.*

*On the other hand, Iranian government in general and the foreign minister of Iran revised their previous idealist discourse and neared themselves to semi-realists of Iran in their stances and put the pessimistic tone and language in the agenda and started to criticize the western counterparts. The current essay seeks to study the process of discourse shift of Iran and this Iranian diplomat.*

**Keywords:** Nuclear Discourse, JCPOA, Europe, USA, Mohammad Javad Zarif

## INTRODUCTION

The nuclear issue as the most vital issue of the foreign policy of Islamic Republic of Iran over the past decade has been the competition field for various discourses in this area. Growing tensions over the nuclear issue between Iran and the West led to political and economic pressures from the West over Iran. The increasing international sanctions and economic problems caused by them caused Rouhani to enter the presidential election promising "a centrifuge is supposed to keep spinning when the economy and public life are thriving too".

After the election of Hassan Rouhani as the head of the eleventh government of Iran, he chose Mohammad Javad Zarif as the foreign minister and transferred the nuclear file of the country from the National Security Council to Foreign Ministry and Zarif undertook the leadership of the nuclear negotiating team. The continuous presence of the foreign ministers of six world powers around the negotiation table was unique in the history of modern diplomacy. It was covered by world media, and represented the Iranian model for achieving the peaceful nuclear capacity. Finally, after 23 months of intensive negotiations the historical

agreement was reached between Islamic Republic of Iran and the six world powers better known as “Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action” on 14 July 2015 and put an end to one decade of disputation over Iran in UN Security Council.

But after the arrival of Trump, he made numerous efforts to question the international validity of JCPOA. By forcing limitations and sanctions, which were in conflict with JCPOA, Trump sought to trespass the spirit of JCPOA and struggled to reduce it from a multilateral international agreement that was internationally recognized by the resolution 2231 of UN Security Council to a bilateral agreement between Iran and US and his ultimate step was to annul this bilateral agreement unilaterally. This arbitrary and unprofessional approach of Trump was immediately rejected by EU and even the political team of the US Secretary of State. Insofar as Trump had no way but retreating from his stance on the unilateral annulment of the JCPOA though the new head of White House continued his actions that were all in conflict with the goal and spirit of the JCPOA.

### **1. First Topic: Discourse Process**

After the victory of Hassan Rouhani in the presidential election of 2013 the process of normalization of ties with the West through reaching a nuclear agreement. The nuclear negotiating team of the government of prudence and hope relying on the interactive discourse instead of confrontational discourse chose the limitation of nuclear activities among other alternative options. From among the options of “constructive confrontation” as the central signifier of the conflict discourse and “loser surrender” as the central signifier of the collusion discourse Zarif chose the option of “constructive interaction” (Firoozabadi and ‘Ataei, 2014: 105). The movement from the confrontational discourse to interactive discourse is one of the most important signs of behavioral shift in the foreign policy of the Eleventh Government before the outside world (Rasooli Thani Abadi, 2015: 11). Then, Rouhani administration has set the interaction with European countries and the US the axis of its foreign policy. Zarif in two discourse modes of convergence and relative divergence adopted different stances that we discuss hereunder.

#### **1.1. First Round: Convergence Discourse: 2013-2015**

The major part in which the ministry of foreign affairs shone was reaching the JCPOA. It was indeed the presence of a prominent diplomat in international scale called Mohammad Javad Zarif at the top of the ministry of foreign affairs that managed to set the ground for the ministry to reclaim its position in political arena by team management based on the codes of heroic lenience. In this period, Iranian foreign policy not only retained its principles rather it succeeded to begin a new interaction with the international community. Zarif insists on avoiding personal bias in foreign policy and believes: “In foreign policy of Iran we should always give priority to the global mission of Islamic Revolution. In foreign policy we should avoid extremism because the latter is a sign of weakness and fear” (Zarif, 2013 August 6). Zarif is of a kind, polite, simple and humble personality. In his professional domain of expertise he is a serious, devoted, disciplined and diligent individual who keeps always with his principles and values (Raji, 2016: 1). Diplomatic activities of Iran in Rouhani’s government including Zarif’s visits of the P5+1 countries and numerous bilateral meetings with the members of P5+1 in different gatherings in Vienna, Geneva and Lausanne and also the considerable record of his international trips as well as his use of the means of negotiation for normalization of ties with the West and finding a final solution for the nuclear dead-end (Jafari, 2016: 114) are among the examples of the diplomacy of the Eleventh Government. In this part of the essay we turn to the process of convergence of Europe and Democratic US with Iran nuclear program.

##### **1.1.1. Europe**

European Union as a group of countries and (France, UK and Germany) as the most notable and powerful members of this group considered the final result of Iranian presidential election of 2013 a hopeful aperture

for development of ties between Europe and Iran. Mohammad Javad Zarif set the “discourse of moderation” as the basis of his ministry’s activity in foreign policy that has been designed based on a realist, self-confident, paralleled and intelligent movement that aims at dialogue and constructive interaction instead of confrontation and relies on the principles of “esteem, wisdom and expediency” (IMNA News Agency, 2017 August 20). The mutual diplomatic trips between Iran and other countries particularly Europeans who had halted their political and economic relations with Iran for a long while and “expression of Iran’s official stances through notes published in western journals”, which was unprecedented in the history of Iranian foreign policy are among the objective examples of this discourse (Ajilee, Afsharyan, 2016: 54). Considering the enigmatic state of Iran nuclear file and the expansion of Iranophobia, Zarif struggled to better Iran’s picture in the world and provide the scene for resolving the nuclear issue. His general diplomacy is in line with the national interests and grounds itself on the facts of international regime and his message to the world public opinion heralds peace and stability. The addressees of Zarif’s diplomacy were the public opinions of the western countries that for many years had become used to the idea of Iran’s threat. With a calm and always smiling face Zarif addresses his audience with their own language in order to correct the picture that they have of Iran. In this regard the adviser of British foreign ministry states that Zarif knows well that he should appear smiling on diplomatic scene. And for many of westerners his good-humouredness and mastery of English is an expression of Iran’s enthusiasm for returning to international arena (<http://www.khabaronline.ir/detail/405258>). He did send the peaceful message of Iranians to the West in order to open a path for solving the nuclear issue of Iran through an interaction with the world. In this way he sought to set the scene for better management of the foreign policy of the moderationist government of Rouhani. The basis of dialogical interaction of the discourse of moderationism is understanding of other messages and actions that paves the path for further proximity between the two sides of negotiation (Adibzadeh, 2008: 202) that was carried out in the negotiations between Iran and P5+1 in the best form by Zarif and negotiating team.

#### **1.1.2. USA (Democratic Administration)**

Mohammad Javad Zarif a skillful man, US graduate and previous representative of Iran to the UN who played the role of a catalyzer in the negotiation of the political system after Taliban in Afghanistan was respected by the circle of politicians in Washington. As to the body language used in the nuclear talks one should say that if Zarif was not versed in the techniques of diplomatic talks and negotiation his body language could not have been wholly correct and exact. The reason of the general acceptability of Mohammad Javad Zarif in national and international levels is not his smiles rather it is his skills in conscious and emotionally controlled expression of the messages before people, cameras and the media. Zarif’s 30 years of presence in the US and his thorough knowledge of this country’s language and culture have assisted him to have a good mastery of their body language and non-verbal signs used by them. He knows how to use the social networks (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) as a means for Iran “new diplomacy”. Zarif is trusted by Rouhani and follows the policy of the president in taking the US serious in the negotiations. He also believes that the US is so important in dealing with the Europeans that could not be neglected. In other words, Rouhani could not have any other option other than Zarif and his team who are all of influence in the USA that is used for advancement of nuclear talks.

As the foreign minister of Rouhani’s government Zarif undertook the leadership of the nuclear negotiating team and in the early hours of 2013 September 27 participated in first negotiation of Iran and P5+1 in foreign ministers level that was held during the UN General Assembly Meeting. In this talk John Kerry the then foreign minister of the US was present and sat with Zarif around the negotiation table. This was the first meeting of the high officials of Iran and the US after 34 years in foreign ministers level. After the end of meeting Kerry took part the press conference and said: “I had a meeting with Zarif, his language was truly

different.” In the program that was submitted to the Parliament as Zarif’s plan for taking the leadership of the foreign policy of the Eleventh Government he insisted:

“The new team of foreign ministry believes that the lack of confidence between Tehran-Washington needs to be managed within a framework of “management of ties with the US” in order to overcome the unnecessary tensions among two countries. We insist on the realistic identification of goals, mutual policies and concerns, determination of ideological differences, manageable issues and resolvable cases, surpassing the US in management of the bilateral ties, purposeful planning for using all official and unofficial political capacities for reaching goals and gradual normalization of ties and changing the threats to opportunities in the form of the plan of action of new foreign minister” (<http://www.imna.ir/news/315828>). Rouhani always emphasized that if the head of the nuclear negotiating team was someone other than Zarif this success would not have been achieved.

### **1.2. Second Round: Relative Convergence-Relative Divergence Discourse (2015-17)**

After the US presidential election and Donald Trump's victory, he described the JCPOA an unsatisfactory and bad agreement, and tried to convince Western powers about the potential security threats of Iran's nuclear program. On the other hand, Iran Foreign Minister considered the desperate efforts and policies of Trump aiming at undermining a solid multilateral agreement, which simultaneously violates the articles 26, 28 and 29 of the same agreement. He has always insisted that the JCPOA is not negotiable, and that the United States must fulfill its obligations, like Iran. In the following, we discuss the positions of West on JCPOA after the election of Donald Trump as US President.

#### **1.2.1. Europe**

The European Union made several efforts to bring the nuclear talks with Iran to fruition, and to reach an agreement. The European Union's approach proved to be more successful than the American military approach in resolving disputes. Since the beginning of 2017 and upon the arrival of Trump to the White House, the behavior of the US government before JCPOA has changed. This situation dissuaded European companies and financial institutes from their cooperation with Iran, and the exploitation of the benefits of JCPOA turned harder for Iran than what was expected. Zarif seizes upon every opportunity to defend Iran's national interests against the United States in the international community. Using the cyberspace and attending European countries and nongovernmental organizations around the world, he is bringing together public opinion with Iran. And this is diplomatic policy of Zarif. Zarif has repeatedly emphasized the Europe’s interest in implementing and ensuring cooperation with Iran. (Zarif February 16, 2016)

On continuation of implementation and commitment to JCPOA, the Foreign Minister met with the High Representative for Foreign Policy of the European Union and foreign ministers of France, Germany and the United Kingdom on January. In the meeting Zarif insisted on the importance of the commitment of all parties, especially the European Union and European countries, to the implementation of JCPOA in the current situation. Federica Mogherini High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the foreign ministers of France, Germany and the United Kingdom jointly emphasized the commitment of Europe and their governments to the implementation of JCPOA as a unique achievement of multilateral diplomacy<sup>1</sup>.

Joint Meeting of the High Representative of the European Union and foreign ministers of France, Germany and the United Kingdom with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 2018 January 11 Date of Access 2018 February 12. The French Foreign Minister also emphasized on the importance of the implementation of JCPOA and the seriousness of France in this regard<sup>2</sup>.

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1 <http://www.mfa.gov.ir/index.aspx?fkeyid=&siteid=1&pageid=35992&newsview=495320>

2 <http://www.mfa.gov.ir/index.aspx?fkeyid=&siteid=1&pageid=35992&newsview=95312>

The foreign ministers of Islamic Republic of Iran and France met in Brussels.

### **1.2.2. Democratic USA**

The US democratic government that did not have a positive foreign policy performance, needed to take a positive step to change the situation and always tried to make this positive step real in reaching an agreement with Iran in the domain of nuclear talks. Reaching an agreement with Iran provided a good ground for the White House officials for presidential campaign. Obama even arranged secret lines against Zionist regime and, accepting Iran's military concerns, said that Iran "has become a regional power and a nuclear deal between Iran and the P5 + 1 could be beneficial for both Iran and the United States and for the entire region". This is the first time that Obama has chosen a different path from than that of his predecessors in dealing with Iran (Abolhassan Shirazi, 2015: 24). John Kerry understood the importance of "respecting" Iran. In an interview in 2017, he said: "One of our key words in the negotiations was mutual respect. Obama and John Kerry were forced to defend Iran as against their personal will insofar as John Kerry acknowledged that Netanyahu has hallucination of Iran, because if Iranians wanted to make bombs, they could have built it several years ago, but they did not. We remember that Netanyahu in the United Nations showed a picture and told that Iran is building a bomb in coming six months, but Iranians did not build any bomb. (Electronic Bulletin for Monitoring Political News and Transformations in the United States, 2015: 29) Although many of the statesmen believed that Obama, as the representative of American democrats, could put an end on historical tensions between the two countries through an interactive policy, the overall policy of the United States towards Iran over the course of these 39 years shows that no president, either Democrat or Republican, has missed any opportunity to defy the rights of the Iranian people. And perhaps most of the sanctions against Iran have been set by democrat presidents over the past years.

### **1.2.3. Republican USA**

During nuclear talks, Republican warmongers forced Washington to increase economic pressure on Tehran even while the negotiations were pursued. They sought to give Congress the right to veto any final agreement. The republican senators John McCain, Lindsay Graham and Kelly, known as three republican warmongers, released a statement after the extension of the JCPOA which reads: "The sanctions has had negative effect on Iranian economy and one of the major reasons of Iran's readiness for attending the negotiation table was these very sanctions. In addition, we have supported the sanctions of the international community against Iran and insist that negotiations have to be associated with the increase in sanctions and any agreement should be finalized by the Congress. All Congressmen should have the opportunity to review the agreement and make their decisions regarding this big decision of the foreign policy". After the arrival of Donald Trump, the United States has had various behaviors in the post-JCPOA era, which are not consistent with the spirit and text of this agreement and has led to frequent protests by the officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Since JCPOA is regarded as an agreement, it lacks legal and strategic requirements in the political structure of the US. More importantly, White House officials are trying to make use of mechanisms that could expose Iran as the party who has violated the JCPOA. The opposition of conservative groups along with Republican members of the Senate and US ambassadors is always a threat to survival of JCPOA. (Moslehinejad, 2018: 3) In an interview with the CNN, Mohammad Javad Zarif commented on Donald Trump's stances: "These positions on the nuclear deal undermine the credibility of the United States in the world, and no one will ever trust any US government to engage in long-term talks." (Zarif, Oct. 14, 2017) In this regard, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stated that JCPOA is a major achievement in maintaining international peace and security and I firmly believe that this agreement should be maintained.

## **2. Second Discourse: Legal JCPOA, Political JCPOA (Announced-Adopted)**

Iran's nuclear issue, as the most complicated political issue in Iran after the eight-year war, has given rise to various policy announcements and adoptions by political players. Vahid Zolfagari, in his article entitled

"Iran's Nuclear Crux and Measuring the Political Logic of Players", contends that Iran describes (announces) its nuclear and political logic with a normative paradigm and in line with the international regime, and in practice interprets it with security based and geopolitical paradigm of regional conflict. In addition, Western political logic in the announcement level is associated with the security, threat, and deterrence production paradigm while in the level of adoption it is interpreted based on normative and international model, and the maximum limit for Iran and the prevention of the emergence of new nuclear players. (Zolfaqari, 2016: 170). When JCPOA was signed by the foreign ministers of Iran and P5+1, the question of whether JCPOA is an international treaty or a mere political agreement did also emerge on the scene!

International law is of a special regime as regards the way of ratification of international treaties that has been delineated in the framework of the 1969 Vienna Convention. According to Article 2 of the 1969 Vienna Convention, "Treaty" means an international agreement concluded between States in written form and governed by international law, whether embodied in a single instrument or in two or more related instruments and whatever its particular designation. The requirements for the ratification of an official international treaty according to Articles 7, 11, 12, 13 of the 1969 Vienna Convention, is the following five stages: "negotiation", "composition", "signature", "ratification" and "document exchange".

If JCPOA is sealed in accordance with the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, it would have been necessary for the parliaments of the parties who ratified the treaty to endorse this document, but it did not need to be approved by the parliaments. US officials have defined JCPOA as an example of political agreement, while China and Russia have looked at the document from the point of view adopted by the Security Council and do not consider it an international document. (Delkhosh, 2017: 61). However, resolution no. 2231 of the UN Security Council, as a guarantee of implementation of JCPOA, while fully emphasizing JCPOA and its binding force, asks all parties to this document to be committed to their obligations and to implement in full all of the previous resolutions of the Council on the lifting of sanctions under Chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter.

## **2.1. Legal and Practical Obligations of Iran**

Iran and E3/EU+3 will take the following voluntary measures within the timeframe as detailed in this JCPOA and its Annexes:

### **2.1.1. Enrichment R&D, Stockpiles**

Iran will begin phasing out its IR-1 centrifuges in 10 years. During this period, Iran will keep its enrichment capacity at Natanz at up to a total installed uranium enrichment capacity of 5060 IR-1 centrifuges. Excess centrifuges and enrichment related infrastructure at Natanz will be stored under IAEA continuous monitoring, as specified in Annex I. Iran will continue to conduct enrichment R&D in a manner that does not accumulate enriched uranium. Iran's enrichment R&D with uranium for 10 years will only include IR-4, IR-5, IR-6 and IR-8 centrifuges as laid out in Annex I, and Iran will not engage in other isotope separation technologies for enrichment of uranium as specified in Annex I. Iran will continue testing IR-6 and IR-8 centrifuges, and will commence testing of up to 30 IR-6 and IR-8 centrifuges after eight and a half years, as detailed in Annex I. As Iran will be phasing out its IR-1 centrifuges, it will not manufacture or assemble other centrifuges, except as provided for in Annex I, and will replace failed centrifuges with centrifuges of the same type. Iran will manufacture advanced centrifuge machines only for the purposes specified in this JCPOA. From the end of the eighth year, and as described in Annex I, Iran will start to manufacture agreed numbers of IR-6 and IR-8 centrifuge machines without rotors and will store all of the manufactured machines at Natanz, under IAEA continuous monitoring until they are needed under Iran's long-term enrichment and enrichment R&D plan. Based on its own long-term plan, for 15 years, Iran will carry out its uranium

enrichment-related activities, including safeguarded R&D exclusively in the Natanz Enrichment facility, keep its level of uranium enrichment at up to 3.67%, and, at Fordow, refrain from any uranium enrichment and uranium enrichment R&D and from keeping any nuclear material (JCPOA, p. 6).

## **2.2. Legal and Practical Obligations of the West**

The issue of sanctions has been the most notable incentive for Iran to attend the nuclear talks. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif emphasized the importance of the UN sanctions issue. Americans, whose unilateral sanctions were imposed based on UN sanctions and used UN sanctions to legitimize their unilateral actions against Iran, opposed Zarif on this issue. However, Iran, in the final deal of Vienna, managed to annul all economic sanctions and all UN Security Council sanctions. These resolutions that were invalidated by resolution 2231. (Antasar, 2016)

### **2.2.1. Lifting Banking Sanctions**

JCPOA has led to comprehensive lifting of all UN Security Council sanctions as well as multilateral and national sanctions related to Iran nuclear program. The list of the sanctions lifted by EU in banking sector is as follows:

- i. Transfers of funds between EU persons and entities, including financial institutions, and Iranian persons and entities, including financial institutions;
- ii. Banking activities, including the establishment of new correspondent banking relationships and the opening of new branches and subsidiaries of Iranian banks in the territories of EU Member States;
- iii. Provision of insurance and reinsurance;
- iv. Supply of specialised financial messaging services, including SWIFT, for persons and entities set out in Attachment 1 to Annex II, including the Central Bank of Iran and Iranian financial institutions;
- v. Financial support for trade with Iran (export credit, guarantees or insurance);
- vi. Commitments for grants, financial assistance and concessional loans to the Government of Iran;
- vii. Transactions in public or public-guaranteed bonds (Team of Authors, 2016: 124);

US sanctions have been or will be lifted or suspended in the areas mentioned, though the lifting of US sanctions will be limited to the removal of secondary sanctions and there is no possibility for trade and direct financial relations between Iran and the United States. Establishment of direct financial relations with American persons and the presence in American financial market were not among Iran's demands in nuclear talks, and the United States has not been successful in removing US sanctions. (Team of Authors, 2016: 125)

The sanctions imposed by the Western governments over the past decades have had extensive effects on economic activities and severely restricted the relations of most banks, foreign financial institutions with Iranian banks and financial institutions. At the same time, the activities of foreign branches of Iranian banks, as well as banks affiliated with Iranian banks abroad, are subject to many restrictions. Accordingly, implementation of JCPOA has been able to overcome a significant part of the restrictions imposed on the banking system of the country and had a positive effect on this sector, and we hope to see the banking sector overflow effects on the economy as a whole.

### **2.2.2. Lifting Energy Sanctions**

The achievements of JCPOA for national economy is an issue that has caught the attention of the society. The effects of JCPOA on oil and gas that were the main target of economic sanctions of 2005 are of great importance. By implementation of JCPOA some nuclear obstacles and sanctions were lifted that include:

- Lifting sanctions in the oil, gas, and petrochemical sectors, which has doubled the average daily export of crude oil and gas condensate as compared to pre-JCPOA era.
- In shipping and tanker, the sanctions related to Shipping Company of Islamic Republic of Iran and the National Tanker Company, including fuel supplies, ports access, insurance and reinsurance, have all been lifted and 143 ships of Iranian Shipping Company and 74 tankers of the National Tanker Company have been removed from the sanctions list and the scene has been prepared for purchasing, constructing, repairing and other peripheral services for shipping and tankers. (Iran News Energy News)

With the implementation of JCPOA in 2015, production and exports also increased significantly. Total was the first European company that started to buy oil from Iran. The agreement on the purchase of oil from Iran was sealed during the trip of the president to France in January 2016 and amounted to 160 thousand barrels. Providing reliable insurance by international insurance companies, obtaining certificates from rating agencies and obtaining approval from major oil companies. (News, November, 2016)

### **3. Third Discourse: JCPOA and Beyond**

Since the implementation of JCPOA on 2016 January 16, Iran has implemented all its obligations before IAEA and unfortunately in return no major sanction has been effectively lifted by the EU and USA and there is no concrete basis for benefiting from this international treaty for Iran. But JCPOA has put desirable and considerable achievements and opportunities at the disposal of the country that are briefly discussed hereunder.

#### **3.1. Exchange of Capital and Technology with Energy**

The nuclear deal reached by Iran and P5 + 1 has lifted a significant part of the international sanctions against the country, and in doing so opened a clear horizon for Iran's economy. By promoting economic security and improving the country's performance in risk-taking indicators, and also, facilitating the money transfer and banking exchanges, the investment prospects and economic growth in Iran is more favorable than the past and has provided significant investment opportunities for domestic and foreign investors. The ratification of this agreement and the subsequent removal of sanctions will be so effective in attracting foreign investment, which the McKinsey Institute – which is one of the leading institutions that offers advices in the field of management to public, private and nongovernmental institutions worldwide, and provides advices for economic activists on investment through economic reports – in its 2016 report, predicts that if the current positive situation continues, Iran will probably attract at least 1 trillion foreign investment over the next 20 years. (Taherpour and Amiri: 2016,201) Europeans have been always concerned about their energy security and are generally dissatisfied with their dependence on Russia in this respect. Europe's energy security strategy states that Europe's dependence on oil imports is more than 90 percent and on gas is more than 66 percent. The total European import in this area has been estimated to be over one billion euros. (European Commission, 2009). Given the unstable relations of Europe and Russia, especially after the Ukraine issue, Europeans are deeply concerned about the security of energy supply and Iran as one of the richest energy countries in the world with the fourth place in the field of Oil resources and as the second-largest gas producer in the world cannot be easily neglected by Europe. Following the finalization of nuclear deal, and given Europe's need for Iran's energy resources, energy cooperation can create a strong tie and deepen the level of relations between Iran and the European Union. (Qamat and Pourghushchi, 2016) Although dependence on oil revenues has always been highlighted as the major problem of Iran's economy, oil plays an important role in the country's economy and constitutes the significant part of the country's exports. The colorful role of oil revenues in the country's economy certainly confirms the importance of extracting this raw material, but given the fact that digging and extracting oil and gas require advanced technology and heavy



investments, there is an urgent need for foreign investment. The sanctions imposed in recent years and the increase in US threats have caused many oil companies to refuse to cooperate and invest in oil and gas fields and petrochemical projects despite their interest to do so. Now by removal of international sanctions we expect to see the foreign investors to arrive in the country.

### **3.2. Iran Missile Issue**

Among various issues related to the military sanctions imposed against Iran, due to the sensitivity and importance of missile, this was of particular interest. US officials emphasized Iran's ballistic missile issues as part of the talks, but Iranian nuclear negotiating team opposed the inclusion of this issue. Iran has repeatedly announced that its missile program is "defensive" and is vital for the country's defense capabilities to prevent any invasion to the Islamic Republic. According to paragraph 9 of resolution 1929, Iran's missile activity had been completely banned, and to achieve this, resolution 1929 even had allowed countries to resort to force against Iran. (Bashiri, 2016) But the new resolution 2231 was issued in accordance with Article 25 of the Charter, which is related to the general nature of the Security Council resolutions. In the new resolution, only certain cases, such as the annulment of previous resolutions under the Article 41 of the Charter, which declares binding them for all countries. This means that Iran's nuclear issue is no longer a threat to international peace and security. (Baeidinezhad, 2016) In the Annex B of resolution 2231 the following limitations have been set as regards the missile program and the purchase and sale of arms of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In paragraph 3 it has been asked from Iran to halt its activities regarding ballistic missiles designed to carry nuclear warheads, including rocket launchers, as well as ballistic technology, for eight years after the adoption of JCPOA. In the paragraph 4 Iran has been banned for eight years to buy and sell all items, materials, equipment and technologies that may be used for production of missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads except with the permission of the Security Council. (Bashiri, 2016)

### **3.3. Iran's Policy in Middle East**

JCPOA as a result and outcome of Iran's nuclear negotiations with P5+1 has had significant consequences for the regional status of Iran. Before the implementation JCPOA, the intensification of pressures and sanctions had reduced the bargaining power and diplomacy of Iran in the world. Moreover, the foreign relations of the country were limited to certain countries, but with the realization and implementation of JCPOA, Iran's position was upgraded in equations and the weight of diplomacy of the country has increased. The lifting of Iran's sanctions, especially in the international dimension, has helped Iran to become a regional actor and this process has many implications for the region, especially for Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Lebanon, and Palestine, and at a wider level, for the international community.

With the nuclear deal, West Asia and the Middle East have turned to the focal point of political and geopolitical developments in the region, and the occurred developments have affected the security of the countries of the region. JCPOA will pave the way for the releasement of Iran's blocked assets, which will lead to economic growth and the improvement of its political situation and prosperity in the region. (Tierney, 2016) Islamic Republic of Iran is the most influential player in the Middle East region and has entered the negotiation process with the West relying on its regional power and is now seeking to legitimize this influence via JCPOA. By annulment or suspension of financial and economic sanctions against Iran, Iran will receive significant financial resources which can be used for the advancement of its regional policies. (Levit, 2016)

JCPOA has removed the so-called Iranian nuclear threat from Iran's foreign policy. The implementation of JCPOA has led to the promotion of Iran's strategic position in the region; insofar as the strategic importance of Iran has increased for regional allies like Syria, Iraq and Hezbollah, and consider it a sign of the authority, role and power of Iran's bargaining on regional issues including Syrian crisis (Nawzani et al., 2015)

After the end of the political sanctions, Iran will have the upper hand in the regional equations and regional issues, and the role of Iran in the region will be in the interests of Syria, Iraq and Yemen. From an international point of view, the great powers will count on Iran's role and influence in the Middle East as a strategic country, and will tend to use the country to fight terrorism and solve world problems.

The nuclear deal and implementation of JCPOA will resolve the threat of war for Iran and the great powers. In the eyes of great powers, Iran can help regional and international security by not producing nuclear weapons. From this perspective, other countries are also seeking to improve their ties with Iran. Implementation of JCPOA has promoted Iran's strategic position in the region in three fronts: first, by regional allies like Syria, Iraq, and Hezbollah; second, by major traditional allies of Iran, such as China and Russia, that see the nuclear deal as a means that can increase multilateralism in regional issues, reduce the influence of the West and strengthen the stability. Thirdly, and more importantly, Iran's geopolitical significance has been revealed to the West, such as Europe and the United States, and they have come to the conclusion that by implementation of JCPOA Iran can be a key element in stabilization of the region in order to prevent the growth of extremism and terrorism and solve regional crises.

JCPOA strengthened Iran's position in the changing regional order, and for the first time, not only during the nuclear negotiations, but rather even in the years after the Islamic Revolution, the Islamic Republic was part of the talks on the establishment of a new security order in the region. Of course, such a role is not just the result of JCPOA, and the role of other factors, including military-defense capabilities and cooperation and coalition with Russia in Syrian developments, should also be taken into account.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In the current essay, using the theory of discourse and neo-realism, we sought to explain how the stances of Ministry of Foreign Affairs led to the formation of a nuclear agreement between Iran and the P5 + 1. Undoubtedly, this negotiation can be considered to be one of the most decisive talks in the country in recent decades. Upon an impartial analysis and away from personal and factional orientation, with a 100% emphasis on national security and national interests, we must accept that this agreement, like the other political agreements that have taken place throughout the history of diplomacy, is of both positive points and contains opportunities and at the same time has weaknesses and shortcomings. Then, one can say that in the current conditions, perhaps the best way to overcome these shortcomings is to consciously benefit from all advantages of JCPOA. By adopting this policy we will take the utmost advantage of the lifting of sanctions and opening up of the economic climate. There are many challenges and opportunities before the ties of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the West that could create certain possibilities in the future. We cannot envisage an ideal future for our relations with the West because they are not institutionalized yet. The challenge facing the Islamic Republic of Iran is the view of the United States of the relationship between Iran and the European Union, which overshadows these ties. Therefore, we cannot expect an ideal future. But the prospect of relations between Iran and the EU is moving from the crisis to overcoming the crisis after the election of Hassan Rouhani. One of the main factors of accelerating the relations between the two sides is increasing trade and energy exports. Therefore, it is not difficult to imagine the think of the improvement of Iran-EU relations in the coming years, but the reality is that the realization of this issue is closely tied to Iran's nuclear program and the lifting of sanctions.

After JCPOA Europe not only does not see Iran an emergent security threat, rather by adopting certain strategies it is seeking to take advantage of the economic and political capacities in the region. United States of America has played a destructive role in the EU-Iran ties. Trump knows that he can be influence these ties only by reviving the idea of Iran threat for Europeans. However, this is hardly conceivable considering the

predictable challenges between Europe and the USA under Trump and EU's need to cooperation with Iran. Until Iran has not trespassed the obligations mentioned in JCPOA and posed itself as a threat to Europe, EU will continue to work with Iran despite the US government's interventions. On the other hand, leaving the nuclear deal while Iran is keeping with its obligations according to international agencies will lead to more isolation of the US.

The European Union as a separate and independent structure is of legal, political and institutional dimensions. The proper understanding of these dimensions by foreign policy officials and the inclusion of these considerations in the approach adopted by the Islamic Republic of Iran before the EU can provide the ground for strengthening relations. The power equation, co-operation based on the rules of international politics, international institutions and regimes, can be considered as components that make possible the necessary constraints for low-cost passing in the future trends of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

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