

Confrontation Between America and the Islamic Republic of Iran

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For decades, Iran was a strategic ally of the United States and had been playing a significant role in US strategy in the Middle East region. Yet, the relations between Washington and Tehran have been facing a difficult situation since 1979. For about 40 years, many events have taken place, which are basically rooted in their ideology, strategy, and interests, and have damaged the interaction between the two countries. The new tensions between the two nations have started since May 2019 which have raised many questions and discussions. This paper aims to address whether the tensions between the two countries led to a war. The paper argues that the tensions between America and the Islamic Republic of Iran might be increased but a war would never happen and a peace would never occur, too. In other words, the escalation conflict between Washington and Tehran will not lead the two countries toward a war.

Keywords: United States, the Islamic Republic of Iran, JCPOA, war and peace

Introduction

During the Cold War, there were multi-dimension friendly relationships between the United States and Iran. For decades, Iran, as a US strategic ally, was playing an important role in American strategy in the Middle East, and the Shah regime was fully supported by Washington. The two countries have broken their strategic relations in the aftermath of the Iranian Islamic Revolution since 1979. During the last four decades, there have been a number of conflicts between the two nations which are basically rooted in their ideology, strategy, interests, and discourse. For 40 years, many events have taken place between the two nations that have had negative impact on the relations between them. In particular, the new conflict between the two countries has raised many questions and speculation about the possibility of getting involved in a bloody war.

This paper aims to address this question: Whether tension between Washington and Tehran would lead them to a war? The paper main discussion is that although the historical background, current tensions, and some individual notions may fertilize the ground for a costly war, yet neither side wants a fight as neither side wants a peace.

Iran and US Relations: Moving Towards Hostility

During the Cold War, nobody could imagine a war between America and Iran, since Iran was a strategic ally of the United State. There were multi-dimension friendly relationships between the two countries. Iran was

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playing an important role in US strategy in the region, in particular in Washington anti-communism policy containment. To this, the Shah regime was fully supported by the US. Yet, by 1979 Iran's Islamic Revolution and overthrow of the Shah, the situation changed. Gradually, anti-American rhetoric was ramping up in the post-revolutionary Iran's society. In particular, the crisis escalated when the Iranian revolutionary students captured the US Embassy in Tehran in November 1979. Although this movement was marked by the former Islamic Revolution Leader, Ayatollah (Imam) Khamenei, as the "second revolution", the Americans regarded it as a serious threat to their interests. From that time until now for 40 years, the world has been observing a very hostile relationship between the two nations. Today, everybody may think about a bloody war between the two nations. This is because, from a very close friend of America in the region, Iran became a "strategic enemy" of the United States. And America from a supportive ally of Iran became its infinite enemy, the Great Satan. As in his speech on November 5, 1979, Ayatollah (Imam) Khomeini called the United State of America "the Great Satan".

During the past 40 years, in the both countries, political speeches and political literatures have been full of insulting words, swearing, insolent, and threats. The chants of "death to America" became a very popular slogan in many public meeting in Iran during these 40 years. As from the US side, Washington always accuses Iran as a sponsor for terrorism in the region, and as a threat to Middle East peace, and this has become US mainstream policy. During the four decades, the most important incidents that have taken place between the two nations are:

(1) The hostage of more than 50 American diplomats by Iran for 444 days from November 4, 1979, to January 20, 1981.

(2) US multiple systemic efforts including negotiation, using third party countries, managing coup in Iran and managing attack¹ in order to release the diplomats.

(3) Supporting the former Iraq's president, Saddam Hussein, for an imposed war against Iran which lasted for eight years.

(4) Attacking an Iranian non-military airplane in the Persian Gulf zone. Iran Air Flight 655, an Airbus A300, was a scheduled passenger flight from Tehran to Dubai. It was shot down on July 3, 1988 by an SM-2MR surface-to-air missile fired from USS Vincennes, a guided missile cruiser of the United States Navy. The aircraft was destroyed, and all 290 people on board, including 66 children, were killed.

(5) the Iran-gate (Iran-Contra) affair, in which McFarlane came to Iran aiming to negotiate with Iranian officials, it is said that the US aimed to sell weapons to Iran (despite an arms embargo) through Israel and then funnel the funds to aid the Contra rebels in Nicaragua, who were fighting the socialist Sandinista government—with the goal of preventing the spread of Communism. Reagan also hoped the sale of arms might help win the release of American hostages in Lebanon who were taken by Hezbollah (Pearce, 1988, pp. 361-365).

(6) Among US policies towards Iran, the most important and aggressive behavior has been towards its nuclear program. For about two decades, there have been a massive of actions dealing with this project; most of these actions have been undertaken by the United States of America, during different administrations from George W. Bush to Donald Trump. To this, excessive costs and person hours were paid by the Islamic Republic

¹ On April 24, 1980, the United States launched a covert military operation, known as Operation Eagle Claw (Tabas Operation), ordered by former US President, Jimmy Carter, in an attempt to end the hostage crisis, but it was a failed mission.

of Iran and a group of world powers: the P5 + 1 (the permanent members of the UN Security Council—the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, France, and China—plus Germany) and the European Union. A large number of tedious negotiations on the nuclear issue were taken place in Iran and other countries. A large number of diplomats from the US, EU countries, Russia, China, and the Islamic Republic of Iran were moving from time to time and place to place with thousands of hours sitting at the negotiation table.

(7) A more violent action is US withdraw of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) or let say “Amexit”. On May 8, 2018, President Trump announced the decision to withdraw from the JCPOA, accusing the Iranian regime of pursuing a regional agenda of harming core US interests in the Middle East. In fact, Trump withdrew from the JCPOA jeopardized the Obama administration’s and five more countries’ landmark nuclear deal with Iran. In the time of announcing the decision, President Trump labelled the Iranian regime as “the leading state sponsor of terror” and argued that Tehran “exports dangerous missiles, fuels conflicts across the Middle East, and supports terrorist proxies and militias such as Hezbollah, Hamas, the Taliban, and al Qaeda” (Trump, 2018c). He also called the JCPOA as “defective at its core” since to him, it would have allowed Iran to eventually acquire nuclear weapon (an issue which has been repeatedly denied by Iran) capability even if Tehran were to fully comply with its provisions. However, developments since the US withdrawal from JCPOA have created serious doubts about its sustainability and have escalated tensions between Washington and Tehran.

(8) On June 20, 2019, Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps’s (IRGC) shot down a US RQ-4A Global Hawk BAMS-D military drone with a surface-to-air missile over the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world’s most vital shipping routes. Iranian officials claimed that the drone entered Iran’s airspace, while US officials claimed that the drone was in international airspace.

Some other incidents have taken place between the two countries. On February 24, 1994 in the Clinton administration era, Washington officially announced “dual containment” strategy aimed at containing Iran and Iraq, isolating both countries regionally, cutting them off from the world economic and trading system (Gause III, 1994). In his 2002 State of the Union Address, former US president Bush labelled Iran and two other countries, North Korea and Iraq as “axis of evil”. On December 5, 2011, a US Lockheed Martin RQ-170 Sentinel Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) was captured by Iranian forces in northeastern of Iran. It was detected in Iranian airspace 225 kilometers from the border with Afghanistan. The Iranian government announced that the UAV was brought down by its cyberwarfare unit which commandeered the UAV and safely landed it. On January 12, 2016, two United States Navy riverine command boats after they entered Iranian territorial waters near Iran’s Farsi Island in the Persian Gulf were seized by Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy. On April 8 2019, President Donald Trump announced that the United States is designating Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps a foreign “terrorist organization”.

America Withdraw From JCPOA

For more than two decades, a number of negotiations took place between Iran and six other countries on Iran’s nuclear deal, aiming to resolve what was called by the West “the crisis”. Both sides had their own reasons to sit at the negotiation table. In Iran, there were different ideas about the negotiation and also in the West some, such as Israeli officials and some of American officials, preferred to open fire on Iran rather than to sit at the negotiation table.

In Iran, at least there were three views on nuclear negotiations:

- (1) Go for negotiation but do not trust the Western countries particularly the United States;
- (2) Do not go for negotiation; it is wasting of time and money and it is useless, there is no hope of negotiations;
- (3) Go for negotiation; compared to war and conflict, negotiations are far less costly and it is possible to get result.

In Western countries, particularly America, it was an idea that though negotiations might prevent Iran from further activities in case of Uranium enrichment and, as they continually have said, making atomic bomb, the latter never has been declared by Iranians and always has been denied.

The final fruit of such long, tiredly, and costly negotiations was JCPOA in 2015. There were two different views in Iran and America on JCPOA, President Rouhani called it the end and lift of all limits and sanctions while, previous US President Obama called it the end of Iran's nuclear project.

The Iranian administration was hopeful that the JCPOA would provide a better economic situation as all sanctions would be lifted. President Rouhani affirmed that nuclear deal was a win-win agreement, and believed that the mechanism of this agreement was designed to guarantee that Iran is not loser. From his point of view, Iran's main objectives in nuclear talks were to preserve nuclear rights, to withdraw from the resolution of the Seventh Chapter of the UN and to get rid of all sanctions. The nuclear deal recognized Iran's right to enrich uranium and removal of international sanctions (IRNA New Agency, 2016). To this, Iran soon fulfilled its nuclear obligations under the JCPOA within a few months. Then, Tehran was waiting for other side to comply with its commitments, particularly lifting the sanctions. Yet, nothing seriously happened except a few little moves.

After the US withdrawal from the JCPOA in the months that followed, Washington reimposed sanctions including those targeting Iran's oil, shipping, and banking sectors. Hence, Tehran stepped up diplomatic efforts to convince the European Union, Russia, China, India, and other countries to continue doing business with Iran. In general, despite US pressure on some of these countries, Tehran to some extent received a positive response.

On January 31, 2019, Germany, France, and Britain announced the establishment of a special purpose vehicle (SPV), called the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX), to "facilitate legitimate" trade between the EU countries and Iran (Geranmayeh & Batmanghelidj, 2019). However, the US threat to impose secondary sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA, 2017) might prevent European companies from defying US sanctions (Petroff, 2018). Yet, Tehran is also doubtful about the European cooperation and support.

US-Iran New Tensions

It seems there are three main areas in which the US is worried and led Washington to increase its number of troop and military equipment in the Middle East and in particular, in the Persian Gulf, they are:

- (1) Iran's nuclear program;
- (2) Iran's missiles;
- (3) Iran influence in the region.

First and foremost is the Iranian nuclear issue. While Tehran has continuously maintained that its nuclear program is for civilian and peaceful purposes; Washington and its allies in the region refuse to believe that Iran's program is only for civilian purposes. Ali Akbar Salehi, head of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran

(AEOI), in a press conference in June 2018, referred to the second principle and stated “Iran’s nuclear activities, as has always been said, especially by senior officials, are peaceful”. He added,

The basis of these peaceful activities is the *fatwa* (decree) of the Supreme Leader, which explicitly stated that the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction are forbidden under Islam and that Iran shall never acquire these weapons, and therefore, we are committed to this principle. (IRI Cabinet Office, 2018)

In 2012, the supreme leader also openly stated that:

The Iranian nation has never pursued and will never pursue nuclear weapons. There is no doubt that the decision makers in the countries opposing us know well that Iran is not after nuclear weapons because the Islamic Republic, logically, religiously and theoretically, considers the possession of nuclear weapons a grave sin and believes the proliferation of such weapons is senseless, destructive and dangerous. (Iranian Press TV, 2012)

However, no independent international agency including International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has corroborated the resistance axes of US-Saudi-Israeli fears in this regard. For instance, the February 2019 IAEA Report on Verification and Monitoring of the Iranian Nuclear Program states that Iran continues to abide by the provisions of the JCPOA and that there is no reason for any doubts on secret or unverified nuclear facilities that might violate Iran’s non-proliferation commitments (Director General Report, 2019). Yet, the US, Israel, and Saudi Arabia refuse to fully believe both the guarantees given by the Iranian government and reports produced by the IAEA, and claim that Iran has secret facilities in violation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSC) Resolution 2231. This is while US intelligence agencies recently have noted that Iran is not producing a nuclear weapon despite the US withdrawal from the JCPA as some American analysts, such as John Dale Grover, an assistant managing editor at *The National Interest* and American analyzer in an amylase in May 2019 have also avowed that “Iran never got a nuclear weapon and still does not have one” (Dale Grover, 2019).

Under the deal, International Atomic Energy Administration inspectors gained access to Iran and Tehran shipped about 98 percent of its uranium stockpile to Russia. Iran also destroyed several of its facilities and got rid of 66 percent of its uranium-enrichment centrifuges. In fact, even after Washington left the deal and reimposed sanctions, Iran has remained compliant. As an April 15, 2019, report by the Congressional Research Service noted, “UN and International Atomic Energy Agency reports since the JCPOA [Iran Deal] began implementation have stated that Iran is complying with its nuclear obligations under the JCPOA” (The Congressional Research Service Report, 2019).

Secondly, the US has raised serious concerns on Iran’s missile program. Iran has a robust military establishment that has developed medium- and long- range ballistic missile capabilities. Washington has repeatedly announced that Iran’s missile development threaten US and its regional allies’ interests. It has tried to illustrate Iran’s missile capability as a huge phobia in the region. Although Iran has improved its missile capability, Tehran has always defined its missile program as a means for its national security and tried to assure the world that since the missiles are not capable of carrying nuclear warheads, no need to be worried (Iranian Press TV, 2017).

The third contentious issue is Iran influence in the region and its support for Hezbollah, Hamas, Ansar Allah, Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Unit (PMU) (al-Hashd al-Sha’abi), and Syria regime. The US and its regional allies see this as a threat to their national security and regional interests, too. While the Obama

administration ignored the concerns of Riyadh and Tel Aviv and continued engaging with Iran, the Trump administration has taken the concerns of US allies seriously. In Trump's view, Iranian influence in the region and support for its regional allies undermine US national interests and threaten Israeli and Saudi Arabia security, and hence should be curbed.

What Is the Final Target of US War Against Iran?

If Washington intends to start a war with Iran the question is: What is Washington motivation for opening fire on Iran? Somebody may refers to Iran nuclear deal; if so, nobody can say that Iran has not been compliant with its nuclear commitments, as mentioned, Tehran quickly complied with its obligations in the case of its nuclear project in Arak, Qom, and Natanz sites. In addition, despite US withdraw from JCPOA, the Iranian government has never said officially that would do the same and leave the deal. Rouhani has stated that his country did not seek to leave the agreement—JCPOA—and called a “new step” within the deal's framework (Berlinger & George, 2019). Tehran has publicized that would continue the JCPOA without America. In an interview with CNN in August 2018, Zarif had stressed that Iran nuclear deal would continue without Washington's presence (Paton Walsh, Bozorgmehr, & Abdelaziz, 2018). To this, Tehran has been working with the EU countries, Russia and China on the JCPOA. The idea of using war as a means to stop Iran's nuclear program is mostly encouraged by Israel and its lobbies in America and Trump is following that notion, since to the Israeli officials, JCPOA was a bad agreement, and would enable Iran to be weaponized.

If somebody connects the war to the issue of “regime change”, the crucial question is that changing a regime in a country is the people's rights or other countries' duty. It is clear that in any society, people themselves have rights to decide about their own government not others from out of the society. To this, for sure the United State does not have right to force regime change in any country, as Jens David Ohlin, professor of law at Cornell Law School, criticized some Americans, stating: “some American nationalists and hawks think we should ignore international law because we have the political power and military strength to get away with it” (Ohlin, 2019). As Bolton openly asserted that Washington should make a decision on government in Iran, “the declared policy of the US should be “the overthrow of the mullah's regime in Tehran” (Goodenough & Benhassain, 2017). Therefore, if America is responsible for “regime change” in any country around the world including Iran, North Korea, and Venezuela, the question is: If one day, in America, changing the regime will be necessary, which country would be responsible for handling “regime change” in the United States?

It seems that “regime change” is a code or name for a game which Trump administration is playing with Iran and even North Korea as some analysts has referred to “regime change” as a Trump game (Jansen, 2019). Indeed, the US administration is using Iran nuclear deal as a means to make “regime change” possible in Iran and at the same time Washington is manipulating “regime change” as a strategy to get rid of Iran nuclear deal. According to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, the United States is currently pursuing a “regime change” in Iran, and the Warsaw Summit was part of this policy to build an anti-Iran coalition (Bakhshalizada, 2019).

David S. Cohen, former Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, believes that “regime change” in Iran would serve US interests (Cohen & Weinberg, 2019). Mike Pompeo also reportedly told a group of Iranian-American community leaders, the United States' best interest is “a non-revolutionary set of leaders leading Iran” (Mosavian, 2019). Therefore, one can recall that “regime change” is a means for protection of American interests not a way for providing a better government for the Iranians, as some of the Americans point to his. It means that the Iranian should pay the costs of protecting US interests.

Is It Possible a War?

The recent US moves in the region have raised the issue of war between America and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Yet, what can be understood from Iran side is that for Tehran, war is not possible as the supreme leader has declared on recent US-Iran tension: “Neither talks nor war”; this statement has been repeated several times by him. In addition, many officials in Iran have publicized similar notion, emphasizing that Iran would never go to war. In fact, the war cannot provide Iran’s national interests and will make the situation much worse.

The recent US steps up military deployment in Iran’s neighborhood, and dispatches the US Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier strike group and a bomber task force to the Middle East, which have been marked by the Iranian leaders as a psychological warfare and regarded as a provocation aimed at drawing Iran into a military conflict (Iranian Diplomacy, 2019).

As from the US side although, at least there are two general opinions in the Trump administration policy towards Iran, one group who may be called warlords normally suggest Washington to go to war, and another group does not propose war as a solution to the dispute. In other words, it has become increasingly clear that the Trump administration is divided over the objectives of its Iran policy and the role that military threats or force should play in achieving them. In the center of first group are John Bolton, US National Security Advisor, and Mike Pompeo, both believe that war is a solution to Iran crisis. Trita Parsi, leader of the National Iranian American Council wrote on Twitter: “People, let this be very clear: The appointment of Bolton is essentially a declaration of war with Iran. With Pompeo and Bolton, Trump is assembling a War Cabinet” (Mackey, 2018). In fact, President Trump’s two most hawkish aides, national security advisor and secretary of state, seem to be spoiling for a fight and baiting Iran into taking an action that would provide a pretext for a military strike with potentially catastrophic implications.

To prove such warlike motive, one can take a look at these series of declarations by Pompeo. He has claimed:

On May 12th, [2019] Iran attacked four commercial ships near the Strait of Hormuz. On May 14th [2019] Iran-backed surrogates attacked by armed drones-struck two strategically important oil pipelines into Saudi Arabia. On May 19th [2019] a rocket landed near the US Embassy in Baghdad. On May 31st [2019] a car bomb in Afghanistan wounded four US service members, killed four Afghan civilians, and wounded bystanders.

He added “This was the attack carried out likely by the Taliban. This is plain dishonesty calling Taliban a proxy of Iran” (Mills, 2019). First of all, Iran has vigorously denied any involvement in those attacks and even Tehran has condemned such horrible events. It was reported by *Wall Street Journal* that Iran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif denied Iran was involved in the attacks (Youssef & Egbali, 2019). Secondly, no sufficient evidences have been provided to support the assertions that Iran has been behind those attacks. Thirdly, through these claims, Pompeo has pointed out two important issues: One is that Iran is too powerful and has wide influence in the region as the region and in particular, the Persian Gulf is an American military base; it is said that the US has 36 military bases in the region, and absolutely under control of US Navy with fully military equipped and weaponized machine; Saudi Arabia is a country which is fully supported by America as Trump in October 2018 claimed that Saudi Arabia and its King would not last “two weeks” in power without American military support (Trump, 2018d). Afghanistan, in reality, is ruled and controlled by American forces. The second issue is that by emphasizing on Iran role in those attacks indeed, Pompeo has confirmed that America which is claimed to be the sole superpower, as Huntington marked after the collapse of

the Soviet Union, is not too strong to prevent Iran from those attacks. Yet, these assertions by Pompeo indicate that he, as a member of the War Cabinet, is struggling to justify war against Iran through resorting to any means.

In addition to the War Cabinet, there is a new warlike in the region, a new war group, which is called “B-Team”, a few people in America and in the region who repeatedly talk about war with Iran. This war group of “B-Team” includes John Bolton, Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates crown prince Mohammed bin Zayed, who are pushing the US towards war, in spite of the Trump’s campaign promise not to get involved in expensive foreign wars. However, the president keeps saying he wants to talk to the Iranians and get them back to the negotiating table to cut a better nuclear deal and to force Iranian concessions on its regional behavior and ballistic missile program. The secretary of defense and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, meanwhile, seem worried that Washington is on a path toward war with Iran and skeptical that additional US deployments to the Persian Gulf are warranted.

The first group is more adapted to Israel’s hostile policy towards Iran, as Prime Minister Netanyahu continuously encourages the US government for opening fire on Iran. Mike Pompeo and John Bolton are in this group, however, Mr. Pompeo, in his talks with Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in the Russian city of Sochi, said “US does not seek war with Iran” (Kramer & Pérez-Peña, 2019). Of course, he added “We have also made clear to the Iranians that if American interests are attacked, we will most certainly respond in an appropriate fashion” (Kramer & Pérez-Peña, 2019). This means he has not completely rejected the war. John Bolton has the same approach or even tougher, on May 5, 2019, he issued a stark warning to Iran. The United States, he announced, would deploy the USS Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group along with a bomber task force to the Persian Gulf, “to send a clear and unmistakable message to the Iranian regime that any attack on United States interests or on those of our allies will be met with unrelenting force”. The United States, he continued, “is not seeking war with the Iranian regime” but is “fully prepared to respond to any attack” (Kahl, 2019).

Bolton had been pouring forth warlike rhetoric against Iran for many years before his appointment as national security advisor in April 2018. Indeed, he has been obsessed with Iran for a long time, as Peter Beinart, Professor of journalism at the City University of New York, in June 2019, referred to this by stating: “for more than a decade, he’s consistently promoted war with Iran” (Beinart, 2019). In 2015, when the Obama administration was negotiating the nuclear deal, he wrote in a New York Times op-ed back: “To Stop Iran’s Bomb, Bomb Iran” (Bolton, 2015). In 2017, Bolton gave a speech at a conference in Paris organized by the People’s Mujahedin of Iran—a militant opposition movement and once classed as a terrorist group by the US and EU. He stated at this event that “before 2019 we here will celebrate in Tehran”, and “Ayatollah Khomeini’s 1979 revolution will not last until its 40th birthday” (Goodenough & Benhassain, 2017).

More significantly, in his role as national security advisor, Bolton asked the Pentagon to draw up military options for an attack on Iran—provoking considerable disquiet amongst senior officials. On February 11, 2019, the 40th anniversary of Iran’s Islamic Revolution, Bolton used the White House’s official Twitter account to tell the Supreme Leader of Iran: “I don’t think you’ll have many more anniversaries to enjoy” (Bolton, 2019). Yet, despite such a notion, the Iranians did celebrate the 40th anniversary of their Islamic Revolution.

But what is important is that in America also a war with Iran is regarded unnecessary and harmful to US interests (Dale Grover, 2019). United States Central Command (CENTCOM), while condemning any talk of

war, stated: “We have no interest in engaging in a new conflict in the Middle East. We will defend our interests, but a war with Iran is not in our strategic interests” (Mills, 2019). Therefore, one can say that despite the War Cabinet and the war group encouragement of Washington for imposing a war against Iran, America is not interested in such a fight, for several reasons:

(1) Since the United State has had two costly wars and invasions in Afghanistan and Iraq, which have been costing American lives and hundreds of billions of dollars, as it was declared by Trump: “We have spent seven trillion dollars in the Middle East and we have nothing except death and destruction” (Trump, 2018b). They still are paying for those wars. Therefore, although Washington regards Iran as a threat, “not one that requires another costly war” (Dale Grover, 2019).

(2) In addition, they are heading for the presidential election next year, if Trump wants to be reelected, by imposing another costly war on the shoulders of Americans he will lose in 2020 election and will leave the White House perhaps forever.

(3) Most significantly is that Iran is not like Iraq or Afghanistan and for sure any war with Iran would be much bigger than those with Afghanistan and Iraq, as president Rouhani called it “mother of all wars”, with much more money and expenses (Rouhani, 2018). Tehran has worked hard to strengthen its national security within a supportive regional framework. If Washington decides to go to war with Iran, this could result in an uncontrollable regional inferno (Saikal, 2019).

However, America may share the costs of the war with its allies, Saudi Arabia and Israel, since they have interests in any fight against Iran, but still the cost of war with Iran is so huge. This is what an American expert, Brain Katz, believes:

Iran has secured influence and footholds in key Middle East theaters and is emboldened to pursue a more aggressive strategy against regional rivals. An ascendant axis poses a formidable test to US strategy in the Middle East, a direct threat to US regional allies and interests, and key challenges for policymakers. (Katz, 2018)

The Americans are aware that Tehran wields influence in the Middle East through its partners and allies. Despite US withdrawal from the nuclear deal and re-imposing sanctions against Iran and more importantly, Iran’s economic woes have not contributed to declining its influence in the region. Iran’s partners and supporters are in countries, like Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, and Afghanistan (Jones, 2019). This was clear to Pompeo as he stated: “If these actions take place, if they do by some third-party proxy, a militia group, Hezbollah, we will hold the Iranian leadership directly accountable for that” (Lee, 2019).

Of course, one can assume that America has also its partners in the region, countries like Israel, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and UAE. These countries can play a role in helping the United States balance against Iran. This is because these countries and the US have a shared interest in containing Iran’s growing regional influence.

Conclusions

Despite attempts of the War Cabinet and the war group to lead Washington to a bloody and costly war with Iran, US will not go to a war against Iran, since the war will not grantee Washington interests and will impose a huge of costs on US nation. Despite, some war quotes, Iran also will not go to war with America, as war never could warrantee its interests. Therefore, the tensions between Washington and Tehran might be escalated but a war would never be happened and a peace would never be occurred, too. In other words, neither

side wants a fight or a peace. Although some experts believe that with the current US administration's confrontational strategy, the option of "No War, No Peace" is reaching an end, the author would say "No War, No Peace" is a strategy for both countries which will be practiced for a long time. This is because Washington and Tehran have good reasons for avoiding war and also have good reasons for escaping from peace.

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