
Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy: The Cases of Iran Deal and Conference Presidents

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on role of Israel lobby in U.S., as Netanyahu has expressed his discomfort about Obama's support of Iran deal, role of Israel lobby is significant to study in this case, rightly as Mearshiemer and Walts have stated in their book, elaborating on role of Israel lobby in U.S. and the penetration of this interest group on Congress. Qualitative content analysis is adopted as method of investigation for data that are focusing on "Iran deal" subject released by CONFERENCE PRESIDENTS' site as part entitled Iran Agreement. Conference Presidents' stance toward Iran deal is in a way that it is better for Israel's position, in order not to start any military engagement in Middle East and U.S. support geopolitical aspects of Israel's security, so there is a must in regards to U.S.-Israel especial relationship, moreover the lobby strongly supports investigations of credibility, sustainability etc. of the deal in order for Iran not to reach any nuclear weapons, they strongly urge intense, detailed investigation on Iran in order to follow the terms and obligations of the deal and urges U.S. to stop Iran from supporting terrorist groups, also Obama's stance is based upon distrust toward Iran or the deal, so both U.S. and Israel stated their distrust worthiness toward the deal.

Keywords: Iran, the U.S., Sanctions, Israel Lobby, CPMAJO

U.S._ Iran

Following P5+1 talk with Iran, the new perspective has started based on Iran-U.S. relationship and diplomacy.

During the negotiations:

During the last time for negotiations, two parts were not able to sue for any additional time for negotiations, some believed that Iran would benefit from, the delay. Some points are considerable in process of negotiations that seem to be "intractable differences", including Iran's IR-40 research reactor that is suspected to produce plutonium for weapons program, but Iran has accepted to change some designs. There were some noticeable facts for both parts that forcing them to trust to each other: one is that U.S. president would act on sanction relief or not, second is about U.S. Congress cooperation with this issue (related to domestic affairs of U.S.), third one is on new upcoming presidential election that would new one cooperate or not, also some Democrats expressed the opposition on this deal.

President Rouhani emphasized on reaching an agreement, as it was his presidential campaign motto to “undo the sanctions”. Also Supreme leader Ali Khamenei has specified some redlines and noted his untrustworthiness to the West especially U.S., moreover Iran must not give any concession to the enemy. Also Obama would not send a bill to the Congress, entails no reduction to Iran’s enrichment capacity(Parasiliti 2012, Reardon 2012).

Uranium Enrichment was the main subject of disagreement. Time and size were vital as “the time would require for Iran to complete an all-out dash to acquire at least one nuclear weapon”, also the size of enrichment would have impact on the country’s break out, moreover the number of centrifuges, efficiency and reliability of them were important facts to take into consideration for U.S.

So in this situation, U.S. military intervention seems to be reduced. Analysts estimate that it was two months needed for Iran to have a single nuclear bomb, “On Iran, while a majority of Americans believe Tehran is trying to develop a nuclear weapon and would support the use of force by the United States or Israel to prevent it, a substantial majority (81%) also support direct diplomatic talks as another means to do so”(Parasiliti 2012).

One of factor made Iran nuclear program really very crucial is its military dimension, leading to nuclear weapons, but Iran repeatedly brought up some evidences to assure them, (also sharing secret information with them would lead to foreign attacks), also another factor is Iran’s missile program that is major concern for U.S. and its allies, but it is less vital than nuclear program, another concerning factor that is one of obstacles for negotiation is verification and safeguard that ensure Iran’s nuclear program objective is for civilian purposes. The way through it is to accept modifies code 3.1 and additional protocol AP(Parasiliti 2012).

AP relates to providing more data and information on nuclear related research, development, trade and manufacturing that do not involve use of nuclear material. Secondly, Modified Code 3.1 is requiring Iran to declare any intention on the part of nuclear related infrastructure. Also Iran has accepted the monitoring of AIEA inspectors(Parasiliti 2012, Reardon 2012), The important concern for Iranian is sanction relief that is perquisite for Iran to accept a deal. Sanctions made Iran’s economy to be weak and inactive as they are targeted toward oil and gas sector, banking sector, imports of petroleum. Obama considered sanction implementation as key component to be successful in regards to reduce Iran nuclear capability, also to bring Iran to negotiating table. Based on executive order in U.S. political system, sanctions could be lifted by issuing waiver, but the rest of them need Congress to agree upon.

Israel in between:

Netanyahu clearly expressed his opposition about Iran deal in his speech in U.N, and considered Iran as a country which is supporting terrorism and trying to reach nuclear bomb, interestingly he mentioned that Israel as the only democracy in Middle East consider Iran as threat, due to the fact that Iran Supreme Leader has stated that Israel must wiped out from the region.

Shimon Peres, Israel deputy minister referred to Ahmadinejad as “Persian version of Hitler”, also saying to President Regan in 1986 that “U.S. and Israel need to have strategic relations with Iran”. Moreover Iran’s stance toward Israel is should be eliminated from the pages of history, this is repeatedly stated and referred to by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini and many other

presidents. American avoided this Iran-Israel conflict and pay better attention to Saddam's conquest and Israel-Palestine conflict. What is really obvious between these two countries is "clash of ideologies": "for years, Israel remained willing to do business with Iran, even Mullahs screaming for end of Zionist entity", but how could a country like Iran with missiles technology be trusted?, what Israel has done to frame this conflict is based on existence of a sole democracy in Middle East or "totalitarian theocracy that hated everything the West stood for". It is not about interests, tools, challenges in Middle East, but rather of survival or struggle between good and evil in the region(Parsi 2007, Zia-Ebrahimi 2011)As Iran and P5+1 have reached to agreement, Netanyahu expressed his concern that it would not stop Iran from developing a nuclear weapons capability, and considered Iran as threat to Israel. Recently, news released from AIPAC site dealing with congressmen's letter to Kerry about the right of states to implement sanctions on Iran.

Also interestingly based on a memo released by AIPAC on Sep 10th, titled as "Americans Oppose the Nuclear Deal with Iran", 66 percent of national security professionals disagree or strongly disagree based on Defense one poll and 25 percent of registered voters nationwide support it, based on PEW Research Center on Sep. 2015, 21percent accepted it and 20 percent approved it based on CBS news.

Questions:

Does Israel lobby influence on Iran deal?

What is CONFERENCE PRESIDENTS 'stance toward Iran deal?

Does Iran deal harm or strengthen Israel-U.S. relations?

This paper utilized Mearshiemer and Walt's theory on Israel lobby and U.S. foreign policies. Based on the book Israel Lobby and U.S Foreign Policy, Lobby is consistent of individuals and organizations that try to form U.S. foreign policy toward Israel. It is not true to consider all American Jews part of lobby, as Israel is not common issue among them, but some of them like CONFERENCE PRESIDENTS, JSTREET, CPMAJO, etc. What is special about Israel lobby is its influence and impact on issues like voting for candidates so people with pro-Israeli views get higher positions in political, social arena. Also there are two sources of success for this lobby: one is Executive branch and the second is U.S. Congress. They attempt to shape any policies toward pro-Israeli ones. Also they are concerned about the discourse against or for Israel (Walt 2007), also they proposed role of Israel lobby on media, press so they should follow anti-Semitism, meaning not to publish or broadcast anything against Israel.

Israel lobby is influential in regards to its impact in Congress, as AIPAC introduced two staffers of Congressmen to arrange the meeting for instance for the and so on and so forth.

This paper utilized Qualitative content analysis. Content or written text or transcripts are considered as researcher's materials to study and analyze, start to cluster them into some codes, the next step is process of coding that includes open coding, axial coding and selective one. Open coding is the first step in drawing out concepts, ideas, and notions from the raw data Axial coding is the second part of coding process is finding connections and relationships between the ideas and materials. Selective coding is the selection of researcher from data. Research process is through some stages: Data collection, coding, recoding, data analysis and conclusion are the stages (Given).

The process of data analysis is dealing with press releases, blog posts, etc. of CONFERENCE PRESIDENTS on Iran deal, also the researcher draws out some themes and paraphrases them in this regard so conclusion is drawn.

Findings

President Barack Obama appealed to the U.S. Jewish community to support the Iran nuclear deal in a Friday webcast moderated by Michael Siegal, the chairman of the Jewish Federations of North America and Stephen Greenberg, the chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations:

In this event, Steve Greenberg stated this is shared goal between members of Congress, Presidents and CONFERENCE PRESIDENTS to ensure Iran would not reach any nuclear weapons. And it is not personal or subjective matter, we all should fight against “global terrorist groups and their supporters”.

President has stated that preventing Iran from reaching nuclear weapon and strong bonds or relations with Israel were my promises to American nation before the election of presidency. Also he stated that he believed in diplomacy in first step, even though he does not hesitate starting a war in case of imposed danger or threat toward United States of America, but it will result in unintentional consequences and harms, now P5+1 has realized it, the core of Iran deal is “blocking” Iran’s path toward obtaining nuclear weapon in all means. Natanz centrifuges have been stopped except a few, Fordow has been changed to a research facility and there are no centrifuges, moreover Arak is going to be reconfigured in terms of heavy-water facility. This is a vital negotiation in history of world, also he expressed that there are some means and ways to “snap back” the sanctions in a case Iran cheats the terms and obligations in the deal. It was sanction strategy that force Iran to negotiate with P5+1, also it is restricted to 10 years, and the time will be extended later, so nuclear experts even expressed their approval in this regard and figures like Elizabeth Warren, Brent Scowcroft have endorsed it, too.

Besides, President has mentioned: Some criticize the deal in regards to untrustworthy elements that Iran will cheat, the deal is based on untrustworthy basis, and Iran is “antagonistic” toward both U.S. and Israel, would rejected Holocaust, and desire for disappearance of Israel, would not recognize it as state, but what is vital is U.S. would not predict any regime change in Iran, so it is important to ensure about Iran not reaching nuclear weapons, also U.S. is capable of finding and recognizing any cheat from Iran and even react militarily, “ we’ll have the advantage of a deal that the entire world has ratified; that Iran has committed to, saying that it’s not going to have a nuclear weapon. We will have purchased 15 years of familiarity with their program so that we know exactly what’s going on”, also even 15 year old from now, we would be in “stronger” position, no matter who ever be in position, also Mr. President continued his speech in this regard(Obama August 28, 2015).

Secondly, “Jewish Leaders Call for Safeguards to Assure Full Compliance and Implementation Given Iran’s Past Record”, it is on Apr 2nd, 2015 at New York, Robert G. Sugarman, Chairman, and Malcolm Hoenlein, Executive Vice Chairman/CEO, of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations released the following statement:

At first he thanked United States’ efforts to reach an agreement with Iran, but he addressed some issues based on historical background of Iran and the point that they could not trust Iran, also

posed some questions and found it necessary to reach to a detailed accord, not a general outline, sp validity, credibility, sustainability and durations etc. are amongst important issues to be taken under the investigations.

Here are exact questions, he proposed:

“1. What research and development activities will be permitted under the R&D plan submitted to the IAEA and the JCPOA?”

“2. Will IAEA inspectors are able to visit Iranian facilities without advanced notice?”

“3. How quickly will Iran's Arak facility be modified so as to prevent any production of plutonium which has no use other than for military purposes?”

“4. How will the possible military dimensions (PMD) of Iran's nuclear program be addressed?”

“5. What are the details of the phased sanctions relief that is to be provided and what are the mechanics of the snap-back of those sanctions in the event of non-compliance?”

“6. What are the specifics of the provisions relating to the expiration of restrictions to be imposed on Iran?”

After that, he continued his speech in appreciating Congress and urging the administration to work with Congress in regards to any Iran’s violation toward obligations and terms, also implementation of legislation immediately in this regard.

He also expressed Israel’s discomfort of Iran’s interventions and engagement as “the leading global state”, with the other terrorist state like Lebanon, supporting Hezbollah, Hamas, Houthis so he plead to stop Iran, but he appreciate the deal, ““Both the United States and Israel, and their leaders, are committed to a peaceful solution of the Iranian nuclear issue”(Robert G. Sugarman & Malcolm Hoenlein 2015).

Third, “Israeli Analysts: The Concern in Israel is that the United States has changed course in the Mideast”. Jerusalem, February 17, 2015...The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations Leadership Mission to Israel focused heavily on foreign affairs throughout their 3rd day in Israel:

The analysts all discussed about a “new positive US approach in regards to Iran as “Islamic State” that is increasing its influence in the Mid-west mostly. “The ramifications of this US pivot are many. Concern over Iran’s growing regional hegemony has united Israel and the Gulf States and has strengthened Israel’s relationships with its neighbors, Egypt and Jordan”, so the speaker added that there is little trust in regards to security issues of Gulf states from U.S., as U.S. is disengaging itself from the region, and the Syria has been collapsed and is now recognized a failed state due to the fact that U.S. did not support Syrian oppositions, so it really enforce the feeling of untrustworthiness toward security issues of region to U.S.

Prof. Teitelbaum has expressed that U.S. has a specific world view that is dangerous for Israel which is “balance of power”, he noted that U.S. supports Iran as balance of power for Saudi Arabia and Sunnis extremists, also the degree of relations of Israel and U.S. is as same as the other allies, or Gulf States, so he urged for stronger relationship(February 17, 2015).

CONCLUSION

Based on the themes drawn from finding above, It is concluded that CONFERENCE PRESIDENTS' has a role in this regard as U.S. has special relations with Israel or even Obama came there and delivered a speech on the deal, so what are the views proposed are: one, it is good approach for U.S. to take toward Iran as Islamic state which has great impact in the Middle East, but there are two different world views between Israel and U.S., obviously it is true, we consider U.S. as world hegemony and its sense of leadership and role of crusader in the globe, but Israel as small state in challenge with its neighboring countries in regards to its legitimization, and its first goal is to secure its geopolitics, and security in Middle East. So as Netanyahu has stated in U.N. Iran is a threat, he considered this deal as bad one, but considered it as disagreement within a family in terms of Israel relations with U.S., moreover what is Netanyahu and CONFERENCE PRESIDENTS stated and shared is stopping and preventing Iran from engagement with its neighboring countries, and Iran is not allowed to support terrorist groups.

Also toward the deal, they urge intense, detailed investigation on Iran in order to follow the terms and obligations. Both U.S. and Israel never trust Iran, also CONFERENCE PRESIDENTS expressed quick implementations of sanctions in case of any violations of terms in Iran deal by Iran, so it is resulted that this lobby is influential based on the activities and stances it has in U.S. mostly on executive branch. The second point is that this deal will not harm the U.S._ Israel relations, but strengthen might occur based on the situation, as based upon the data of this study, Israel wanted to make stronger relations with Egypt and Jordan as its great allies, also Israel won't break ties and connections with U.S., but considered this deal as different world views between Israel and U.S. and tries to force or persuade U.S. to be more aware in this regard, also this is shared goal between U.S and Israel, as they both shared the value of being West and having Western civilization so having democratic states, so Iran is threat and enemy of both. Interestingly, Israel always find a way to have special relations with U.S.

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