



Royal University of Law and Economics

Final Report on:

**The Military and Political
Confrontation between the United
States of America and the Islamic
Republic of Iran in Contemporary
International Relations**

Name of Students:

PHONG PANHARITH

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Name of Academic Advisor

Ms. LY MOUY

International Program

Bachelor's Degree in International Relations

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Foremost, the thesis on **The Military and Political Confrontation between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran in Contemporary International Relations** would not be done without much supports from our thesis advisor, family, and supportive friends around us. Thus, we would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude to the following people who have supported as well as helping us to complete this research.

We are incredibly grateful to our thesis advisor, Ms. LY Mouy, for her unwavering support, her belief in our abilities, and especially her encouragement and patience throughout this thesis. We are very thankful to her that she dedicated her time to help us despite her busy schedule, and without her, this thesis would not have been completed.

We would like to extend our thanks to Mr. Kiri Khim – Director of International Relations Department, lecturers, and professors of the International Relations programs for always being there and help us throughout the years and contributed their unparalleled knowledge for us.

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance that we received from the officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, for always advised and shared their knowledge about our thesis's topic during our internship. Their efforts are constructive and beneficial for both of us to produce outstanding research.

Our thanks and appreciation also go to the interviewees who gave their precious time for us to interview. We are very much appreciated to the government officials from Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, students from the International Relations program at Royal University of Law and Economics, and student from the Department of International Studies at Institute of Foreign Languages, for approve the interview and provide us with their perspective

toward the tension between U.S. and Iran. Despite their busy working time as well as studying time, they still gave their insight to help us with the analysis.

Last but not least, thanks should also go to our family who always supports us throughout our lives. Not only do they love and encourages us, but they also support us financially, which we never have a hard time focusing on pursuing the degree. Besides this, we also wish to thanks our friends and relatives for never wavered in their support.

ABSTRACT

In this contemporary day, conflict happens most of the time, and it affects every state. From indirect confrontation to severe tension, it makes the world seriously concerned over it—likewise, the conflict between the United States and Iran, which is going on for decades. Going back and forth between ally and opponent, both countries influence other countries to help them store their power mainly in Middle-East. However, their influence directly impacts to the region and toward their own countries too.

The United State, which known as the superpower, has an interest in the Middle-East's oil industry while Iran is one of the most developed countries in the Middle-East on the oil revenue. Their overlap interest likely to put both countries in serious relation on top of their bad diplomatic relation since 1979. Thus, when both countries seek their interests, countries in the Middle-East and the world are concern about the direct and indirect effects of it. The impacts of the confrontation between these two countries spread steadily without knowing. The Tension also has become a weighty issue, which makes other countries worry about its effect in various sectors such as diplomatic relations, economic, international law, and so on.

The study will be conducted by gathering data from previous research of other scholars, reliable news and documents, and interview as well. The data collected above will help to analyze the foreign policy of the United States and Iran toward each other as well as the root cause of their conflict since the two countries were close friends till became enemy. Notably, this paper will give a detailed explanation about the impacts of the conflict for decades of both countries toward the Middle-East region and the world.

LIST OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	v
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the United States and Iran relations.....	1
1.2 Statement of problems.....	2
1.3 Research question	3
1.4 Research objective	3
1.5 Scope and limitation of the research	4
1.6 Research methodology.....	4
1.7 Structure of Research.....	5
1.8 Literature Review	6
CHAPTER 2: MILITARIES AND POLITICS CONFRONTATION IN CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	9
2.1 Overview.....	9
2.2 The Foreign Policies of the United States and Iran	12
2.2.1 The U.S.'s Foreign Policies toward Iran.....	12
2.2.1.1 The Clinton Administration (January 20, 1993- January 20, 2001).....	12
2.2.1.2 The Bush Administration (January 20, 2001- January 20, 2009)	14
2.2.1.3 The Obama Administration (20 January 2009- 20 January 2017)	17
2.2.1.4 The Trump Administration (20 January 2017- present)	20
2.2.2 The Iranian Foreign policy	23
2.2.2.1 Counter Hungry Wolf	23

2.2.2.2	Responsive policy	24
2.2.2.3	Counter-containment	26
2.2.2.4	Iranian mastermind	28
CHAPTER 3: THE IMPACTS OF THE TWO ANTAGONIST STATES		30
3.1	The Impacts in Iran	30
3.1.1	The Political Consequences.....	30
3.1.1.1	The Unfriendly Diplomacy	30
3.1.1.2	The Economic Hardship	30
3.1.2	The Military Consequences	33
3.1.2.1	The Drone strike killing Iranian Top General.....	33
3.2	The Impacts on the United States.....	34
3.2.1	The Political consequences.....	35
3.2.1.1	The Criticism on the Maximize pressure by Donald Trump and his election campaign	35
3.2.1.2	The Criticism of JCPOA withdrawal	36
3.2.2	The Military Consequences with Iran	37
3.2.2.1	Drone shut down over the Strait of Hormuz.....	37
3.2.2.2	The December attacks in Iraq	37
CHAPTER 4: THE SHADOWS OF WASHINGTON AND TEHRAN ON THE MIDDLE-EAST/INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY		39
4.1	The Impact on other Middle-East countries	39
4.1.1	The Saudi-Iran conflicts in American’s Shadow	39
4.1.1.1	The Misleading Diplomacy	40

4.1.1.2	The Oil Tensions	44
4.1.2	The impacts on ongoing Arab Spring	45
4.1.2.1	Yemen Civil War Crisis	46
4.1.2.2	Bahrain: Human Rights between Sunni and Shai.....	48
4.1.3	Iraq: The Flashpoint between the United States and Iran	50
4.1.4	The Setback in Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Pakistan	52
4.1.4.1	The Syrian Civil War	53
4.1.4.2	Uprising Lebanese demonstration	56
4.1.4.3	The Double state conflict between Israel and Palestine	58
4.2	The Impact in the International community	60
4.2.1	International Politics instability	61
4.2.2	World Economic	64
4.2.3	Rule of Law	67
4.2.4	Human rights	69
 CHAPTER 5: THE ANALYSIS OF THE UNITED STATES AND IRAN		
RELATIONSHIP.....		
5.1	Analysis of the Relation between the United States and Iran	73
5.1.1	The Underlying Causes of the tension between the two countries.....	73
5.1.2	The impacts of the tensions and the potential of International involvement....	75
5.1.3	The Legal discussion on the assassination of Iranian Top General, Qassem Soleimani	76
5.1.4	The relation between the two states	77
5.1.5	The Way Forward	78
RECOMMENDATION.....		
		81

CONCLUSION.....83

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDIXES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	: Association of Southeast Asian Nations
IAEA	: International Atomic Energy Agency
ICC	: International Criminal Court
ICCPR	: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICJ	: International Court of Justice
IMF	: International Monetary Fund
JCPOA	: Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
NPR	: National Public Radio
OHCHR	: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UN	: United Nations
UNICEF	: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNSC	: United Nations Security Council

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the United States and Iran relations

With more than a decade that the United States and Iran face the conflict with each other, the impacts rise day by day. From a close friend during the 1940s, change to the enemy in the 1950s because of the change of politics. Looking back to the Shah regime, the United States protected Iran from the enemy – however, in 1979, Iranians fought against the Shah regime and made Anti-Americanism as the central part of their ideology as their leader, Ruhollah Khomeini, even described the United States as the “Great Satan” for Iran¹.

From that time, the United States and Iran face more conflicts between each other. Despite all the conflicts, the two countries still have a good relationship during some of the administration of each president. For instance, in 2002, during Bush’s administration, the president of the United States – described Iran as the “Axis of Evil”² and likely to go on indirect conflict with Iran. On the other hand, during Obama’s administration, the relation seems better due to the Nuclear agreement, which led the United States to reduced many sanctions from Iran in return on the limit of the nuclear power in Iran³. However, the tension raised a lot in Trump’s administration. From the agreement withdrawal, Gulf of Oman accidents⁴, drone attacks⁵, and

¹ Alex Ward and Zack Beauchamp, "9 questions about the US-Iran crisis you were too embarrassed to ask," VOX, January 13, 2020, xx, accessed July 30, 2020, <https://www.vox.com/world/2020/1/13/21051794/us-iran-soleimani-ukraine-airline-questions>.

² ANDREW GLASS, "President Bush cites 'axis of evil,' Jan. 29, 2002," POLITICO, January 29, 2019, xx, accessed July 30, 2020, <https://www.politico.com/story/2019/01/29/bush-axis-of-evil-2002-1127725>.

³ Brinley F. Bruton, "What is the Iran nuclear deal?," NBC News, April 25, 2018, xx, accessed July 30, 2020, <https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/smart-facts/what-iran-nuclear-deal-n868346>.

⁴ BBC, "Four ships 'sabotaged' in the Gulf of Oman amid tensions," BBC, May 13, 2019, xx, accessed July 30, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-48245204>.

⁵ Reuters, "Factbox: The Global Hawk drone shot down by Iran," Reuters, June 20, 2019, xx, accessed July 30, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-iran-usa-factbox/factbox-the-global-hawk-drone-shot-down-by-iran-idUSKCN1TL29K>.

the assassination⁶ – lead to the severe confrontation which concerns the world security. When U.S. and Iran face the confrontation, Iran faced with the economic crisis which was from the sanctions that the United States reimposed and the unfriendly diplomacy from the allies of the United States. In addition, the United States also faced with the criticism for his foreign policy on Iran when he declared the JCPOA withdrawal and many more military consequences. However, not only their two countries impact from the confrontation, but the other countries, mainly in the Middle-East region, impacts from it too. For instance, the withdrawal from the agreement - it impacted to the other signatures countries, Gulf of Oman accidents – impacted to the economics of the other countries in the region, drone attacks – impacted to the world security as the concern of the conflict raise, the assassination – impacted to the Iraq which is the place where the accident occurs as well as impact to the international law.

1.2 Statement of problems

In the 21st century, the world seems to be a better place than it was before. After the two significant destructions for the two world wars and not to mention the ideological war between the United States and the Soviet Union, people started to live in prosperity and comfort lives. However, not all the people around the world are lucky enough to enjoy the long-lasting peace. The Middle East is one of the regions that are home to around 411 million people, who are suffering in the constant warfare, poverty, humanitarian destruction, and challenging living conditions due to the political conflicts between the superpower country and the uprising regional power countries.

Since the mid-20th century, the United States has focused more on the Middle East's affairs due to the strategic local of the oil industry in the region. On the other hand, Iran has

⁶ BBC, "Qasem Soleimani: US kills top Iranian general in Baghdad air strike," BBC, January 3, 2020, xx, accessed July 30, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-50979463>

enjoyed the oil's prosperity and eventually developed into one of the significant countries in the region. Due to the clashed of ideas and overlapped interests, the United States and Iran were no longer get along and turned out to be a long-term rival in the Middle East. The two countries have manipulated and influenced other countries in the Middle East to form alliances, stand against one another, which later created another Cold War in the Middle East. The impacts of this confrontation have devastated the Middle East's politics and security, and even spilled over effects to the international community. Hence, this is the reason why this paper will be analyzing the relations between the two countries and discover the impacts of this issue to the other countries in the Middle East as well as to the international community.

1.3 Research question

➤ Main Research Question

- What are the keys impacts of U.S. and Iran confrontations toward the international community, particularly the Middle-East and global consequences?

➤ Sub Research Question

- What is the nature of the relationship between the United States and Iran?
- What are the side effects of the United States-Iran confrontation on the Middle East countries and the world community?
- What is the way forward for the relation between the two countries?

1.4 Research objective

In this research, we aim to give an in-depth explanation of the confrontation between the United States and Iran. This paper will also elaborate on a brief history of what was the root causes of the conflict between these two states, which lead to grave concern for the globe and giving many severe impacts. Moreover, the paper will give more detail on the United States and Iran foreign policy toward each other as well as the interests they need from Middle-East.

Beside this, this research also aims to give a detail information about the impacts of the United States and Iran which are the antagonist states of the confrontation.

1.5 Scope and limitation of the research

The scope of this research is to explain the severe effect of the tensions for the last decades. It will analyze most of the impacts toward the International Community (namely in the diplomatic relation, economic sector, international law, human rights) and Middle-East countries (namely, Iran, Iraq,...). This research will only focus on cases during Obama's administration and Trump's administration, which give detailed information on cases such as a proxy war in the Middle-East. As for the limitation, we will base on the previous research by another scholar, which gives them limited access to the information.

1.6 Research methodology

This research will be conducted in the qualitative research format focusing on the impacts and analyze the relation of the two countries with the local experts as well as some perspectives form the international scholars and political analysts.

In order to retrieve data from the primary sources, which we narrowed down to the reachable local expertise, we will be using a semi-structured interview. This research will be conducted through a qualitative method which collected through interviews and analyzed by informants. Most of the research in this thesis is based on secondary sources from the internet, such as news, legal documents, reports, journal, policy papers, and original websites. Those original websites are White House official webpage, Library of U.S. Presidents, International Atomic Energy Agency, Iranian Premier, and many other governmental webpages that are reliable and informative. Besides this, this research will also conduct the interview with three categories of interviewees. The first groups are students in the International Relations field from the Royal University of Law and Economics and the Royal University of Phnom Penh –

Institute of Foreign Languages, whose subject is related to this topic. The second group is the officials whose works were related to the field from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in Cambodia. The third group is the Americans, whose perspectives will be used as the American's perspective toward the issues and confrontations between the United States and Iran in the field of International Relations. The interview is in the format of one on one interview conducting through an online platform.

The interviewers will use a list of questions as an interview guide to help track the spontaneous information from the interviewees. There is a leading question, including the personal experience of interviewee on the International Relations field and how familiar they would be with the topic. After the leading questions, there will be more questions related to the topic. Some questions will have follow-up questions, which will allow participants to express more of their ideas. During the interview, interviewers will use the recording device and written notes to record the conversation.

1.7 Structure of Research

This thesis is organized in 5 chapters. The first chapter consists of 8 points, which are the background of the United States and Iran, statement of problems, research question, research objective, scope and limitation of the research, research methodology, structure of research and literature review. The second chapter will discuss the explanation of the foreign policy between two countries toward each other. The third chapter, which is the main finding, will provide more details about the impacts of the antagonist states which are the United States and Iran. The fourth chapter will describe further impacts on the Middle-East countries and the international community. Last but not least, the fifth chapter will regard the analysis and the discussion on the possible way forward of the main finding.

1.8 Literature Review

Before we are going to analyze the impacts of the United States and Iran confrontation in the Middle East during the modern international relation, we tend to look back to the previous research over the theme of the United States and Iran relations. The topic of **the United States and Iran military and political confrontation** was not well interested in the scholar around the world since the late 20 centuries. There have been several research papers, articles, and books talking about the relation between the two countries. Most of those researches aim to examine the relation of the two countries, which mainly focus on the behaviors of both countries' foreign policy toward each other.

Saba Torabian and Marina Abalakina were the researchers of **the Attitudes toward War in the United States and Iran**. In this journal article, Saba and Marina discussed the possibilities of war between the United States and Iran by looking back on the experiences in the previous warfare in both countries. The research has conducted the questionnaires on both American and Iranian college students to testify their experiences of war in the two countries. ⁷ **The United States and Persian Gulf Security** by Amin Saikal were as well discussed the United States' interest in Iran's neighboring countries' security in the region. The security of the oil-rich countries along the Persian Gulf has been the vested interest for the United States since the end of World War II. The researcher has examined the reshaping of the geopolitics of the region to ensure the long-term stability in the Persian Gulf by the United States president following the global interests of the United States. The objective was to analyze the United States' interest in the Persian Gulf.⁸ Another research report from Eldad Shavit and Sima Shine

⁷ Saba Torabian and Marina Abalakina, "Attitudes toward War in the United States and Iran," *Iranian Studies* 45, no. 4 (2012): 463, doi:10.1080/00210862.2012.673825.

⁸ Amin Saikal, "The United States and Persian Gulf Security," *World Policy* 9, no. 3 (1992): 515, www.jstor.org/stable/40209264.

also talked about the relation between the United States and Iran. **The Dispute Between the United States and Iran- Scenarios and Implication** was the research report from the two-researcher discussed the level of tension between the two states. The research talked about the foreign policy of both the United States and Iran toward one another, which included the JCPOA (Iranian Nuclear deals)⁹. **U.S.-Iran Conflict and Implications for U.S. Policy** was a research report from the Congressional Research Service, which was researched by Kenneth Katzman, Kathleen J. McInnis, and Clayton Thomas. Those researchers are specialists and analysts in Middle Eastern Affairs. In their research, they talked about the increasing tensions between the two states with the reported date and activities. The research also studied the selected militias that have been supported by Iran and the oil shipping lanes in the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf attached to the hostile activities from both the United States and Iran.¹⁰ **Iran and the United States: Engagement or Confrontation** by Reza Simbar was a journal article written about the foreign policy of both U.S. and Iran after the Islamic Revolution 1979. This research testified the policies of both countries to analyze whether the relation is in the form of engagement or confrontation¹¹.

All of the previous researches that have mentioned above are all about the United States and Iran tensions since the end of World War II. This thesis writing is not so far different from the previous researches, but it was the updated data from the older research that had been finished in the previous year. Furthermore, the previous researches have not yet to mention the proxy conflicts played by the United States and Iran in the Middle East and the possible impacts

⁹ Eldad Shavit and Sima Shine, *The Dispute Between the United States and Iran — Scenarios and Implications*, (Institute of National Security Studies, 2019), doi:10.2307/resrep19522.

¹⁰ Kenneth Katzman, Kathleen J. McInnis, and Clayton Thomas, *U.S.-Iran Conflict and Implications for U.S. Policy*, (Congressional Research Service, 2020), <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R45795.pdf>.

¹¹ Reza Simbar, "Iran and the US: Engagement or Confrontation," *Journal of International and Area Studies* 13, no. 1 (June 2006): xx, www.jstor.org/stable/43107130.

of those conflicts to Iran's neighboring countries. Hence, this report will aim to gather the latest data of the proxy conflicts in the Middle East, which have been involved in the two countries' military and political activities. Besides, the report will as well be discussed about the impacts of those conflicts toward the countries in the Middle East and the international community and analyzed the relation between the United States and Iran with the possible way forward between the two countries.

CHAPTER 2: MILITARIES AND POLITICS CONFRONTATION IN CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

2.1 Overview

The United States and Iran have a deep and confusing history, including having been friends and allies, likewise enemies. During the reign of the last Shah of Iran, **Mohammad Reza Pahlavi**, U.S. (**Franklin D. Roosevelt** administration), and Iran preserved their closed ties with each other¹². However, the relation between the two countries became impoverished during the **PM Mohammed Mosaddeq government**. In 1953, the government of Prime Minister **Mohammed Mosaddeq** was overthrown in the **Iranian coup d'état** by Secret Intelligence Service of UK and Central Intelligence Agency of U.S.¹³. Then, the United States helped **the last Shah** to restore his power and gain control over Iran's oil revenue¹⁴. In 1979, there was a revolution - **The Islamic Revolution** - which wanted to oust **the last Shah** and replaced him with the anti-American - **Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini**. Since then, the United States has imposed economic sanctions, namely, Executive Order 12170 of November 14, 1979, which blocking Iranian Government Property (during **Jimmy Carter** administration)¹⁵.

Following the year of 1881 (during the **Reagan** administration), the two countries did not improve their diplomacy relations due to the Iraq-Iran war, which the United States decided to

¹² Brown University, Understanding the Iran-Contra Affairs - The Iran-Contra Affairs, (Brown University, n.d), accessed April 27, 2020, https://www.brown.edu/Research/Understanding_the_Iran_Contra_Affair/i-background.php.

¹³ Lawrence Wu and Michelle Lanz, "How The CIA Overthrew Iran's Democracy In 4 Days," NPR organization, last modified February 7, 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2019/01/31/690363402/how-the-cia-overthrew-irans-democracy-in-four-days>.

¹⁴ Suzanne Maloney, "1979: Iran and America," Brookings, last modified January 24, 2019, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/1979-iran-and-america/>.

¹⁵ Executive Orders 12957—Prohibiting Certain Transactions with Respect to the Development of Iranian Petroleum Resources. Washington D.C: The White House, 1995. <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Documents/12957.pdf> (<https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Documents/12957.pdf>).

support Iraq¹⁶. In 1991 (during **Bush** administration), the relation was stable as the president of the United States announced: “Goodwill begets goodwill.”

On top of that, when Iran helped obtain the freedom of America hostages by Hezbollah, in return, the United States announced the payment of \$278 million in compensation for seized Iranian military equipment¹⁷. Also, Iran has been under constant U.S. unilateral sanctions, which were tightened under the **presidency of Bill Clinton**. In 1995, the United States put sanctions against Iran - Executive Order 12957 of March 15, 1995 – which prohibiting certain transactions concerning the development of Iranian petroleum resources¹⁸. Following by the year of **George W. Bush** administration, Iran and the United States seem to an improved little bit of their relation. Due to the 9/11 attacks caused by the Taliban, who refer themselves as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, thus U.S. and Iran joined together to overthrow the Taliban Regime¹⁹. However, only after four months, President of the United States, gave his speech about the Axis of Evil, which describing Iran along with the other two countries – North Korea and Iraq. Those countries were considered as a threat to world stability also because those countries were seeking to develop nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons²⁰. In the second term of **George W. Bush administration** as well as the newly elected president of Iran - **Mahmoud Ahmadinejad** – the tension raised again between the countries caused by the Iran

¹⁶ Shane Harris and Matthew M. Aid, "Exclusive: CIA Files Prove America Helped Saddam as He Gassed Iran," Foreign Policy, August 26, 2013, xx, accessed April 27, 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/08/26/exclusive-cia-files-prove-america-helped-saddam-as-he-gassed-iran/>.

¹⁷ Don Oberdorfer, "IRAN PAID FOR RELEASE OF HOSTAGES," Washington Post, January 19, 1992, xx, accessed April 27, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1992/01/19/iran-paid-for-release-of-hostages/d3f8754c-9701-4313-b3e5-cca7bcf3df91/>.

¹⁸ Administration of William J. Clinton, Executive Order 12957—Prohibiting Certain Transactions With Respect to the Development of Iranian Petroleum Resources, (The White House, 1995), accessed April 27, 2020, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/WCPD-1995-03-20/pdf/WCPD-1995-03-20-Pg424.pdf>.

¹⁹ Suzanne, "US-Iran Relations Since 9/11," Asia Society, accessed April 27, 2020, <https://asiasociety.org/media/top-stories/us-iran-relations-911>.

²⁰ BBC, "Analysis: 'Axis of evil' capabilities," BBC, February 13, 2002, accessed April 27, 2020, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/1809227.stm>.

Nuclear program. Then, in the **Obama administration**, the relation between the United States and Iran became better. PM **Mahmoud Ahmadinejad** of Iran even send congratulatory to the newly elected president, and it was a good sign for the countries²¹. In 2015, Iran agreed on a long-term deal -**Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action**- with the P5+1 - U.S., UK, France, China, Russia, and Germany²²- and under the agreement, Iran agreed to limit its nuclear activities²³. In 2017 until currently, the year of **Donald Trump** administration, U.S., and Iran diplomacy relations are getting worse.

The U.S. government banned the citizens of Iran along with the other 6 Muslim countries from the country because of measures to protect national security²⁴. Then, the United States government withdrew from the JCPOA and reimposed the economic sanctions against Iran²⁵. In return to the withdrawal, the Iran government announced to restart uranium enrichment on an industrial level without any limitations²⁶. Besides, the tension between the two countries become terrible when the United States assassinated the Iranian General Qassem Soleimani, which led to the confrontation of the two countries²⁷. As this happened, it led to a worse relationship between the countries. Even during the Coronavirus outbreak, Iran is struggling to fight back to the virus due to the United States sanctions, Iran government refused

²¹ Nazila Fathi, "In Rare Turn, Iran's Leader Sends Letter to Obama," The New York Times, November 6, 2008, accessed April 27, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/07/world/middleeast/07iran.html>.

²² Kelsey Davenport, "The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) at a Glance," Arms Control Association | The Authoritative Source on Arms Control Since 1971, last modified May 2018, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/JCPOA-at-a-glance>.

²³ BBC, "Iran nuclear deal: Key details," BBC, June 11, 2019, accessed April 27, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33521655>.

²⁴ BBC, "Trump's executive order: Who does travel ban affect?," BBC, February 10, 2017, accessed April 27, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-38781302>.

²⁵ Mark Landler, "Trump Abandons Iran Nuclear Deal He Long Scorned," The New York Times, May 8, 2018, accessed April 27, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/08/world/middleeast/trump-iran-nuclear-deal.html>.

²⁶ BBC, "Iran nuclear deal: Trump pulls US out in break with Europe allies," BBC, May 9, 2018, accessed April 27, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-44045957>.

²⁷ BBC, "Iran attack: US troops targeted with ballistic missiles," BBC, January 8, 2020, accessed April 27, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-51028954>.

to ask for help from the United States²⁸ even the United States government is willing to help if Iran ask for it²⁹. With all of the up and down diplomacy relations between the two countries over the years, the countries remain no formal relationship with each other with lousy diplomacy relations.

2.2 The Foreign Policies of the United States and Iran

2.2.1 The U.S.'s Foreign Policies toward Iran

2.2.1.1 The Clinton Administration (January 20, 1993- January 20, 2001)

During the first term of the Clinton Administration, the United States' diplomatic relations with the Iranian government were nothing more than a deep animosity on both sides and layers of sanctions. The foreign policy of Clinton administration toward Tehran would be part of a more substantial "Dual Containment" in the Gulf, which maintained to defend any proposing threats from Iraq and Iran to the United States and its allies³⁰. The administration's foreign policy has fluctuated between hard and soft attitude toward Iran.

First, in 1979, the United States embassy layout sanctions on the Iranian government because the United States believed that the Iranian-backed terror grew significantly in the Middle East, which can cause a regional security problem. The United States has imposed two essential economic sanctions, such sanctions are the Executive Order 12957, which banned American companies from providing goods and services to Iran³¹, and the Iran-Libya Sanctions

²⁸ France 24, "Iran's Khamanei refuses US help to fight coronavirus, citing conspiracy theory," France 24, March 22, 2020, accessed April 27, 2020, <https://www.france24.com/en/20200322-iran-s-supreme-leader-khamanei-refuses-us-help-to-fight-coronavirus-citing-conspiracy-theory>.

²⁹ Justine Coleman, "Trump says he'd be willing to give coronavirus aid to Iran," The Hill, April 19, 2020, xx, accessed April 27, 2020, <https://thehill.com/policy/international/middle-east-north-africa/493599-trump-says-hed-be-willing-to-give-coronavirus>.

³⁰ Sasan Fayazmanesh, *The United States and Iran: Sanctions, Wars and the Policy of Dual Containment* (London: Routledge, 2008), 70-96.

³¹ *Executive Orders 12957—Prohibiting Certain Transactions With Respect to the Development of Iranian Petroleum Resources*. Washington D.C: The White House, 1995. <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Documents/12957.pdf>.

Act (ILSA), which further ban the international companies to invest in the Oil industry in Iran

32. Although there is no specific evidence that can prove the Iranian involvement in any attacks on the United States and its allies in the Middle East, President Clinton has made it clear through his diplomatic action to retaliation any attacks on Iran. Not long after that, he quickly realized that such hard power could trigger a full-scale war. So, he decided to seek further investigation on Iran's role instead, while warning Iran not to desist the further attack on American and its allies.

The American Soft Foreign policy had begun with Iran when President Khatami won the elections in 1997. Clinton tries to engage with Iran several times through bilateral meetings. The first time was in October 1997³³. Next, the United States tries to arrange another direct dialogue between Washington and Tehran³⁴. Hopelessly, neither of them got accepted. Eventually, the United States and Iran did talk directly in the multilateral forums, which most actively talked in the 6+2 dialogue brought together Afghanistan's six regional neighbors with the United States and Russia. In the later year, President Clinton becomes more severe with Iran after the evidence developed of Iranian involvement in the Khobar bombing and disruption of Iranian hardliners who opposed an official dialogue between the United States and Iran, in June 1999. The U.S. has made it clear that they had evidence of the Revolutionary Guard members were directly involved in the planning and execution of the Khobar bombing; the activity is unacceptable for the United States³⁵. Even though the United States wanted to improve relations with Iran, but they could not let the murder of American citizens to pass

³² *IRAN SANCTIONS ACT OF 1996*, (Washington D.C: Treasury Department, 1996), https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/isa_1996.pdf.

³³ Louis Kriesberg, *Realizing Peace: A Constructive Conflict Approach* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2015), 167.

³⁴ Kriesberg, *Realizing Peace*, 167.

³⁵ Malcolm Byrne, "Secret U.S. Overture to Iran in 1999 Broke Down Over Terrorism Allegations," The National Security Archive, last modified May 30, 2010, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB318/>.

unaddressed. Thus, Clinton urged for assurances that Iran would cease involvement in terrorist attacks and promised to bring justice to the victims of the Khobar bombing incident. In September 1999, the Iranian government replied that it has conducted a crucial investigation on the Khobar incident and has found that the United States investigation is inaccurate and unrealizable. Iran also included that Iranian have no intention to seek war with the United States but only the United States trying to accuse them³⁶.

At the very end of his term, Clinton's foreign policy has shown soft part again by appearing to apologize for the 1953 coup that overthrew Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh's government. He also announced the lifting of sanctions on imports of Iranian food and carpets and approval for the export of spare parts for Iran's aging Boeing aircraft³⁷. However, the United States' afford were neglected by Iran supreme leader as he blamed the United States for backing Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war³⁸.

2.2.1.2 The Bush Administration (January 20, 2001- January 20, 2009)

The Bush administration started in January 2001. During his administration, the foreign policy was mainly focused on the engagement with Iran on Afghanistan and Iraq. Unfortunately, the engagement did not last for long. Iran started to back the extremist fighters instead. This issue, along with the secret nuclear facilities, soon made the tension between Washington and Tehran worse.

On the State of the Union speech on January 29, 2002, President Bush addressed Iran as one of the three countries, Iraq and North Korea, which sponsored terrorist groups and were

³⁶ Byrne, "Secret U.S. Overture to Iran in 1999."

³⁷ Madeleine K. Albright, "American-Iranian Relations" (speech, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C., March 17, 2000).

³⁸ "Khamenei Rejects US Overtures," BBC News, last modified March 25, 2000, https://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/690551.stm.

believed to have developed the Nuclear weapon³⁹. He called these three states an axis of evil because each of those countries represented a potential link between terrorists and weapons of mass destruction⁴⁰. However, after the 9/11 incident, the administration started to cooperate more with Iran. Both Tehran and Washington were closely worked together at the Bonn Conference in December 2002 to support the main Afghanistan opposition force and created the post-Taliban government in Afghanistan⁴¹. In Iraq after the 2003 invasion, Tehran and Washington sought to bring back the stabled government for Iraq despite the increase of terrorists and insurgent violence. Regrettably, the engagement went downhill in both Iraq and Afghanistan because Iran turned its militaries to support not only the Shai extremists in Iraq and later to back the Taliban in Afghanistan but also provided support to the 2006 war between Hezbollah (rebel group in Lebanon) and Israel in Lebanon⁴². The more involvement of Iran in those militia groups, the higher the tension between Washington and Tehran meant to be.

For the nuclear deal, the relation showed a positive sign at first, but later it appeared to be negative as it has been. For the United States, Bush's foreign policy toward the Iranian Nuclear deal was known as the "Two clocks" strategy, in which one clock refers to the nuclear clock, and another refers to the democracy clock.⁴³ The strategic objective of Western policy is to push back the time before the Iranian regime would have a clear direction toward Nuclear

³⁹ George W. Bush, "President Bush's 2002 State of the Union Address" (speech, State of the Union, The White House, Washington D.C, January 29, 2002).

⁴⁰ David E. Sanger, "THE STATE OF THE UNION: THE OVERVIEW; BUSH, FOCUSING ON TERRORISM, SAYS SECURE U.S. IS TOP PRIORITY," *The New York Times - Breaking News, World News & Multimedia*, last modified January 30, 2002, <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/01/30/us/state-union-overview-bush-focusing-terrorism-says-secure-us-top-priority.html>.

⁴¹ Yvette Hovsepian-Bearce, *The Political Ideology of Ayatollah Khamenei: Out of the Mouth of the Supreme Leader of Iran* (London: Routledge, 2015), 186.

⁴² Robert Grace and Andrew Mandelbaum, "Understanding the Iran-Hezbollah Connection," *United States Institute of Peace*, last modified September 22, 2006, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2006/09/understanding-iran-hezbollah-connection>.

⁴³ Timothy G. Ash, "Two Clocks Are Ticking," *The Guardian*, last modified March 15, 2006, <https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2006/mar/17/guardianweekly.guardianweekly1>.

weapons, and to push forward the time when public pressure would either change its nuclear policy or pressure the government to deal with the international community⁴⁴.

Even though Tehran announced that the process of enriching uranium has resumed⁴⁵, the Bush administration still wanted to engage with the regime through the meetings between EU-3(Britain, France, and Germany) and Iran, the P5+1 (Five UNSC permanent members plus Germany), and many bilateral and multilateral meetings.⁴⁶ After all of those meetings, it went nowhere. President Ahmadinejad was just publicly rejected the deals and gradually expended the nuclear activities. As Iran continued to neglect the nuclear deals, the Bush administration and the other EU countries sought International actions from the UN Security Council. The UNSC has passed four resolutions: 1737, 1747, 1803, and 1855⁴⁷, which focused on sanctioned Iranian missile and nuclear-related entities and persons, imposed asset freezes and travel bans, and required international vigilance regarding arms sales to Iran. Separately, the United States also sanctioned the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and the Iranian state-owned banks⁴⁸. Plus, they also warned the foreign central banks and multilateral companies to stop doing business with Iranian banks or various Iranian entities due to the potential of those entities might engage in any of the three practices with Iranian government: facilitating Nuclear proliferation, supporting terrorists, or money laundering activities.⁴⁹ Undoubtedly, both

⁴⁴ Zack Beauchamp, "The Iran Deal Began with George W. Bush," Vox, last modified July 14, 2015, <https://www.vox.com/2015/7/14/8958245/iran-nuclear-deal-bush>.

⁴⁵ "Timeline of Nuclear Diplomacy With Iran," Arms Control Association | The Authoritative Source on Arms Control Since 1971, last modified April 2020, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Timeline-of-Nuclear-Diplomacy-With-Iran#2006>.

⁴⁶ Taleh Ziyadov, "IRAN'S NUCLEAR DEMANDS: TOWARD A NEW ERA OF CONTAINMENT?," Jamestown, last modified June 15, 2006, <https://jamestown.org/program/irans-nuclear-demands-toward-a-new-era-of-containment/>.

⁴⁷ Kelsey Davenport, "UN Security Council Resolutions on Iran," Arms Control Association | The Authoritative Source on Arms Control Since 1971, last modified August 2017, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Security-Council-Resolutions-on-Iran>.

⁴⁸ Jeffrey Donovan, "New Sanctions Sharpen Confrontation," RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, last modified October 25, 2007, <https://www.rferl.org/a/1079027.html>.

⁴⁹ Steven R. Weisman, "U.S. Puts the Squeeze on Financing in Iran and North Korea - Americas - International Herald Tribune," The New York Times - Breaking News, World News & Multimedia, last modified October 16, 2006, <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/16/world/americas/16iht-sanctions.3173938.html>.

international sanction and the American sanction can damage Iran's economy, and the regime would face hardship in financial problems.

The Bush administration turned its engagement from the Iranian government to its people directly. His policy was to support the freedom of Iranian as it has shown that it still stood with the people of Iran, regardless of different political tendencies between the two states. Bush announced, "We respect your right to choose your own future and win your own freedom. And our nation hopes one day to be the closest of friends with a free and democratic Iran".⁵⁰ In 2008, the administration wanted to encourage Iranian people to demand their freedom to vote like the other two neighboring countries, Iraq and Afghanistan, by spending around \$60 million to promote democracy in Iran⁵¹.

2.2.1.3 The Obama Administration (20 January 2009- 20 January 2017)

The administration's goal was engaged with the Islamic world, including Iran. However, this is not easy because the turmoil oil policy of Tehran by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was complicated, frustrating, and challenging to understand. Since 2005 until 2013, the dialogue between the two countries cannot exit their four traditional responses, which is never saying yes to anything because it appears weak; anything that another side proposes is a trick; the other side is nothing than a hostile, devious, and irrational; whenever the little progress is made, someone will coincidentally wrack it.

Barrack Obama, just like his predecessor, President Bush, tried to engage directly with Iranian several times. He mentioned, "The children of Adam are limbs to each other, having

⁵⁰ George W. Bush, "President Bush Delivers State of the Union Address" (speech, State of the Union Address, The White House, Washington, D.C., January 31, 2006).

⁵¹ Jason Leopold, "State Department's Iran Democracy Fund Shrouded in Secrecy," Campus Watch, last modified July 10, 2008, <https://www.meforum.org/campus-watch/13096/state-department-iran-democracy-fund-shrouded-in>.

been created of one essence."⁵² He also talked about engaging with Iran on Cairo speech (June 4, 2009) to the broader Muslim world. The relationship between the United States and the Muslim world, he also accepted the difficulties in overcoming the wall of mistrust. However, he promised to bring forward the relation without preconditions based on mutual respect.⁵³ After the 2015 election in Iran, there was a brutal incident in Tehran that led to open fires at supporters of the defeated presidential candidate, Mir Hossein Mousavi, who had defied an official ban on a mass rally in central Tehran⁵⁴. Not long after that, the Obama administration stepped in with its public statement, emphasized universal rights, insisting to support the Iranian people to choose their leaders freely and the right to expression without fear. Following the incidents, on his Oslo speech accepting the Nobel Peace Prize in December 2009, President Obama said that "I know that engagement with repressive regimes lacks the satisfying purity of indignation. But I also know that sanctions without outreach - and condemnation without discussion - can carry forward a crippling status quo. No repressive regime can move down a new path unless it has the choice of an open door"⁵⁵ meaning that the United States is prioritizing the more considerable interest in changing an unproductive relationship. In March 2010, Obama's administration sent another message to Tehran by saying that "We know what you are against," he continued, "Now, let tell us what you are for."⁵⁶

In October 2009, there was the exchanged fuel program proposed by IAEA to exchange the fuel 1200kg of low-enriched uranium (around 80% of Iran's enriched uranium stock) to

⁵² Barack H. Obama, "The President delivers a special message for Nowruz" (speech, Celebration of Nowruz, The White House, Washington D.C, March 20, 2009).

⁵³ Barack H. Obama, "The President's Speech in Cairo: A New Beginning" (speech, Cairo University , Egypt, June 4, 2009).

⁵⁴ "Iran: Violent Crackdown on Protesters Widens," Human Rights Watch, last modified June 23, 2009, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2009/06/23/iran-violent-crackdown-protesters-widens>.

⁵⁵ Barack H. Obama, "President Obama's Nobel Peace Prize Speech" (speech, Accepting Nobel Peace Prize, Oslo, Norway, December 10, 2009).

⁵⁶ Barack H. Obama, "President Obama Marking Nowruz" (speech, The White House, Washington D.C, March 20, 2010).

Russia, where it would enrich and sent back to France for the conversion process for Tehran's reactor.⁵⁷ This protocol was later signed by the parties in Geneva, 2009. As the Iranian contrasted the deal, the Obama administration used the "a dual-track" policy to deal with it by keeping engagement as possible and trying to push new sanctions⁵⁸. Eventually, on May 17, 2010, the tripartite deal was signed between Turkey, Brazil, and Iran. However, the terms that deal with Brazil, Turkey, and Iran did not seem acceptable in May 2010 because the original deal in October 2009 called for Iran to swap low-enriched uranium of 1200kg, which represents 80% of Iran's stock. However, in May 2010, the same amount of low-enriched uranium was only about one-half of its stock. The United States, France, and Russia viewed that obviously, Iran attempts to avoid UN sanctions. Hence, the Obama administration continued to work with the other superpower countries, such as Russia, Britain, France, and Germany, to propose a new sanction on Iran. After six months of negotiation, UNSC released resolution 1929 on June 9, 2010, which acquired members to cut off either the nuclear-related technology or the commercial access to uranium mining in their territories. It also banned the travel of Iranian officials and IRGC and also called members to block new branches of particular Iranian banks in their territories.⁵⁹ Meanwhile, the United States put additional sanctions (CISADA)⁶⁰ on the institutions and individuals that they believed to be linked with terrorism, the nuclear program,

⁵⁷ "IAEA Statement on Proposal to Supply Nuclear Fuel to Iranian Research Reactor," International Atomic Energy Agency | Atoms for Peace and Development, last modified February 16, 2018, <https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/iaea-statement-proposal-supply-nuclear-fuel-iranian-research-reactor>.

⁵⁸ Roy Blunt, "The Demise of the Dual-Track Approach on Iran?," The United States Senate Republican Policy Committee, last modified November 13, 2013, <https://www.rpc.senate.gov/policy-papers/the-demise-of-the-dual-track-approach-on-iran>.

⁵⁹ United Nations Security Council, "Security Council Imposes Additional Sanctions on Iran, Voting 12 in Favour to 2 Against, with 1 Abstention," The United Nations, last modified June 9, 2010, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2010/sc9948.doc.htm>.

⁶⁰ Bureau of Economic, Energy and Business Affairs, Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act (CISADA), (Washington D.C: U.S Department of State, 2011), <https://2009-2017.state.gov/e/eb/esc/iransanctions/docs/160710.htm>.

and the human rights abuses in Iran following by Executive Order 13553⁶¹, Executive Order 13574⁶², and Executive Order 13590⁶³.

After along mistrust relation over three decades, U.S.-Iran relations changed quickly thanks to the new President, Hassan Rouhani, who was finally able to respond to the United States counterparts about what is leftover from President Ahmadinejad. For nuclear negotiations, the two parties agreed with each other regardless of the past complexes and eventually brokered the Joint Comprehension Plan of Actions in 2015.⁶⁴ In response to this positive outcome, the United States and the international community have eased the sanctions on Iran. However, the relation between the United States and Iran remains suspicious, but at least it was able to talk better than before. In Tehran, the supreme leader still insists not to have a direct relation with the United States despite reality. On the other hand, in Washington, there is still sharp criticism about Iranian's support on terrorists, Assad's regime in Syria, and also its anti-Israeli rhetoric.

2.2.1.4 The Trump Administration (20 January 2017- present)

Unlike any other administrations, Trump did not want to engage with Iran. Trump's Iran policy was known as the "Maximize pressure," which turn the relations from accommodation to the confrontation. The administration kicked the relation up with the travel ban after the

⁶¹ Office of the Press Secretary, "Executive Order 13553-- Designating Iranian Officials Responsible for or Complicit in Serious Human Rights Abuses," White House, last modified April 29, 2013, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2010/09/29/executive-order-13553-designating-iranian-officials-responsible-or-comple>.

⁶² Office of the Press Secretary, "Executive Order -- Revocation of Executive Orders 13574, 13590, 13622, and 13645 with Respect to Iran, Amendment of Executive Order 13628 with Respect to Iran, and Provision of Implementation Authorities for Aspects of Certain Statutory Sanctions," White House, last modified January 16, 2016, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/01/16/executive-order-revocation-of-executive-orders-with-respect-to-iran>.

⁶³ Office of the Press Secretary, "Executive Order 13590 -- Iran Sanctions," White House, last modified May 24, 2013, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/21/executive-order-13590-iran-sanctions>.

⁶⁴ Kelsey Davenport, "The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) at a Glance," Arms Control Association, last modified May 2018, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/JCPOA-at-a-glance>.

inauguration on January 27, 2017⁶⁵, which included the Iranian people, who were believed to be sponsored the terrorists in the Middle East, from entering into the United States. On May 8, 2018, the administration announced the withdrawal for Iran Nuclear Agreement, which is referred to JCPOA in 2015 by saying, “In fact, the deal allowed Iran to continue enriching uranium and, over time, reach the brink of a nuclear breakout.”⁶⁶ The President also re-imposed the sanctions on Iran by the Executive Order 13846. This sanction is also known as the oil sanction in which it has frozen the Iranian oil market. Later a year, President Trump announced to end all waivers on imports of Iranian oil and warned those buyers of Iranian oil to stop purchases by May 1, 2019, or face sanctions.

Trump’s foreign policy toward Iran is the coercion policy. In April 2019, the United States Department of State designated the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corp, including the Quds Force, into the Foreign Terrorist Organization.⁶⁷ On May 5, U.S deployed U.S aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln carrier Strike Group and four B-52 bombers to the Middle East, preparing for any imminent attacks.⁶⁸ Five days later, on May 10, Trump administration sent the USS Arlington and missiles to confront Iran (offensive weapons), claiming that Iran had engaged in an escalating series of threatening actions and statements in recent weeks.⁶⁹ The tension between Tehran and Washington were overwhelmed as both sides were showing their

⁶⁵ National Security & Defense, "Executive Order Protecting The Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into The United States," The White House, last modified March 6, 2017, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-protecting-nation-foreign-terrorist-entry-united-states-2/>.

⁶⁶ Donald J. Trump, "President Trump on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action" (speech, Diplomatic Reception Room, The White House, Washington D.C, May 8, 2018).

⁶⁷ Foreign Policy, "Statement from the President on the Designation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps As a Foreign Terrorist Organization," The White House, last modified April 8, 2019, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-designation-islamic-revolutionary-guard-corps-foreign-terrorist-organization/>.

⁶⁸ Matt Spetalnick and Idrees Ali, "U.S. Deploying Carrier, Bombers to Middle East to Deter Iran," Reuters, last modified May 6, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-iran/u-s-deploying-carrier-bombers-to-middle-east-to-deter-iran-bolton-idUSKCN1SC01B>.

⁶⁹ Bill V. Auken, "With B-52s, Carrier Battle Group in Place, US War Against Iran on a Hair Trigger," World Socialist Web Site, last modified March 31, 2020, <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2019/05/11/thre-m11.html>.

strengths to one another. The blamed game between the United States and Iran on the proxy conflicts has begun. The pressure on both sides continued and became overwhelmed due to the endless argument and military actions between Tehran and Washington. There are many critical timelapse including the Iranian shot down U.S. drone in June 2019⁷⁰, the United States jammed the Iranian drone control system⁷¹, the rockets attack by Kata'ib Hezbollah on K1 military base⁷², and the raid on U.S. embassy in Baghdad by Iranian protesters.⁷³ President Trump never has the intention to engage or negotiate with Tehran. In his eyes, Iran remains a hostile state and one of the states that sponsored terrorists.

In the first month of 2020, President Trump ordered the drone strike to execute the Iranian top general, Qasem Soliemani, in Baghdad international airport, Iraq. Trump administration announced immediately afterward, "Monster was killed."⁷⁴ For the United States, the commander of Quds Force, Qasem Soliemani, was a sinister threat as he was believed to be the man behind every proxy conflict in the Middle East and the second powerful man in Iranian after the Iranian supreme leader. Killing the Qasem Soliemani was a masterpiece for the United States and Americans, but for Iran, it was a desperate loss for the entire nation. Up until April 2020, the relation between Trump administration and Iranian leader has not been better. Even

⁷⁰ Natasha Turak, "Iran Shoots Down American Drone in International Airspace in 'unprovoked Attack,' US Says," CNBC, last modified June 20, 2019, <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/06/20/us-drone-shot-down-by-iranian-missile-in-international-airspace.html>.

⁷¹ Kate O'Flaherty, "U.S. Warship Took Down Iranian Drone Using New 'Jamming' Technology," Forbes, last modified July 22, 2019, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kateoflahertyuk/2019/07/22/u-s-warship-took-down-iranian-drone-using-new-jamming-technology/#29b353733363>.

⁷² "U.S. Civilian Contractor Killed in Iraq Base Rocket Attack: Officials," Reuters, last modified December 27, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-security/u-s-civilian-contractor-killed-in-iraq-base-rocket-attack-officials-idUSKBN1YV1IX>.

⁷³ Mustafa Salim and Liz Sly, "Supporters of Iranian-backed militia end siege of U.S. Embassy in Baghdad," The Washington Post, last modified January 2, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/supporters-of-iranian-backed-militia-start-withdrawing-from-besieged-us-embassy-in-baghdad-following-militia-orders/2020/01/01/8280cb34-2c9e-11ea-9b60-817cc18cf173_story.html.

⁷⁴ Donald J. Trump, "President Trump on the Killing of Qasem Soleimani" (speech, National Security and Defense, Mar-a-Lago, Palm Beach, Florida, January 3, 2020).

though the world is currently facing the global pandemic (Covid-19), there are still conflicts between the two bitter friends. Hope for a better relationship between the United States and Iran cannot be expected in this current administration, but there is still an unclear path for the distant future.

2.2.2 The Iranian Foreign policy

Although Iran's president has the power to make some changes in the country's political matter, his decision cannot be final sometimes. Only the supreme leader, who leads the Islamic Republic, has this unique power to decide what to do in political aspects ultimately.

As a matter of fact, Iran's foreign policy priorities the survival of the Islamic Republic. To maintain this survival, Iran depended on its ambitions and the perception of what threatens it. The United States was considered an essential threat to this survival, and to counter it, Iran has to divide its strategies on both deterrence and competition in the Middle East. To deter any growing power of the United States military presence in the Middle East, Iran retaliated by pursuing asymmetric, low-intensity warfare in both inside and outside the country. They also developing its offensive and defensive systems; building missile and anti-missile systems; cultivating nuclear program which has the potential to achieve the nuclear warhead. To compete with the United States in the regional arena, Iran has to be active and responsive to neighboring countries so that it can increase its power from the Levant, the Persian Gulf to the Caucasus, and Central Asia.

2.2.2.1 Counter Hungry Wolf

In Iran, the anti-American idea was developed after the 1953 coup that ousted Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq and replaced him with the Shah of Iran. Later, this idea was strengthened when Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini opposed the treaty of granting legal immunity to U.S. military advisers to Iran and declared that Iran had become a U.S. colony and

the Shah is American's puppet.⁷⁵ After the fall of the Shah of Iran, the anti-American idea was spread throughout the entire country. In Khomeini's view, American is the great Satan to Iran. The relation between the two countries can be described as a zero-sum game, and the ideas of anti-American and anti-Iranian were spread upon both sides. Back then, in the 1980s, during the Iraq-Iran war, the U.S government had an intention to seek the opportunity to stage a coup in Tehran, which also known as Nojeh coup d'état, and hold back Iran from winning the Iraq war.⁷⁶ The idea of Anti-American helps Iran to build a stronger relationship with the foreign organizations, whom the United States considered as terrorist groups, and to create an active lobby in Iran and many other based through the middle east. Just like his predecessor, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei viewed the United States as a hostile state. He believed that the United States always wants to change a regime in Iran by funding its oppositions, provoking strife among Iran's ethnic minorities, supporting Sunni fighters, which has been a significant threat to the nation.

2.2.2.2 Responsive policy

The response here refers to the responding with all American's influence in the Middle East. The policy contains four components, which are military engagement, weapon modernization, offensive and defensive missile development, and nuclear program.

First, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has played an important role in internal order after the U.S troops had arrived in Afghanistan and Iraq. The presence of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps was meant to fight an asymmetric, low-intensity war, throughout

⁷⁵ Thomas Juneau and Sam Razavi, eds., *Iranian Foreign Policy Since 2001: Alone in the World* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 43.

⁷⁶ Ayatollah Khomeini, "Nojeh Coup Plot in 1980 Displayed Western Animosity Towards Islamic Revolution," International Affairs Department the Institute for Compilation and Publication of IMAM Khomeini's works, last modified May 12, 2003, https://en.imam-khomeini.ir/en/n26731/Nojeh_coup_plot_in_1980_displayed_western_animosity_towards_Islamic_Revolution

and beyond the Middle East. Not only that purpose, but the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps also have the potential to retaliate any invasion or surgical strikes from any parties against Iran and its allies. The best example to describe this scenario was the civil war in Lebanon, in which 220 U.S. marine corps were killed by the Hezbollah (the organization that was believed to be backed by Iran Revolutionary Guard Corps)⁷⁷.

Second, Iran spent a certain amount of money to develop its weaponry capacities. Even though this regime hardly survives the economic sanction, the regime still managed to spend around \$31 billion on the military sector in between 2002-2006 compared to only \$48 billion on four states' defense system (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates) in the same year⁷⁸. In April 2019, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) reported that Iran's military spending in 2018 was more than \$13 billion, which was ranked 18th in the world military expenditures⁷⁹.

Third, Iran had put a lot of affords into both defensive and offensive missiles building capacities. Iran has begun building missiles since it fought a war with Iraq. During the war, Iran and Iraq have shown off their missiles to one another. It was believed that Iran had been helped by China and Russia, to improve its military capacities, especially missile systems.⁸⁰ Currently, Iran has its missiles, which are divided into two categories (the Shahab and the Ghadr). Both missiles claimed the capabilities of reaching Israel within minutes. These missiles have given

⁷⁷ "Whitehouse, Cotton, Colleagues Introduce Resolution Honoring Beirut Bombing Victims," Sheldon WhiteHouse, last modified October 23, 2019, <https://www.whitehouse.senate.gov/news/release/whitehouse-cotton-colleagues-introduce-resolution-honoring-beirut-bombing-victims>.

⁷⁸ "Iran Military Power: Ensuring Regime Survival and Securing Regional Dominance," last modified 2019, https://www.dia.mil/Portals/27/Documents/News/Military%20Power%20Publications/Iran_Military_Power_LR.pdf

⁷⁹ Pieter D. Wezeman and Alexandra Kuimova, Military Spending and Arms Imports By Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE, (Sweden: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2019), https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/fs_1905_gulf_millex_and_arms_transfers.pdf.

⁸⁰ Michael Eisenstadt, "Russian Arms and Technology Transfers to Iran: Policy Challenges for the United States," Arms Control Association | The Authoritative Source on Arms Control Since 1971, accessed May 8, 2020, <https://armscontrol.org/act/2001-03/iran-nuclear-briefs/russian-arms-technology-transfers-iranpolicy-challenges-united>.

Iran the power of retaliation against any attacks in specific areas from the Persian Gulf, throughout the Middle East, or even to nearby Central Asia.

Fourth, the big card in Iran's hands is the nuclear program. Although Iran claimed that its nuclear program was designated for peaceful purposes, the United States still accused Iran of secretly building the nuclear warhead missiles, which is the act against international law⁸¹. As a matter of fact, until now, no evidence can prove Iran building a nuclear weapon. However, this skepticism has shown the strength of this country⁸². Former president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani claimed in 2005, "We possess nuclear technology that is not operational yet. Any time we decide to weaponize it, we can do so rather quickly." There are reasons why Iran choose not to drop its nuclear program despite the hard constraints by the international community. First, this nuclear program is the energy resource in the country, which provides efficient energy to Tehran and offered scientific development. According to the IAEA, nuclear power generates around 2.6 percent of the energy used in Iran.⁸³ Second, this nuclear program helps the Iranian government to prove that the U.S is holding back Iran from reaching economic prosperity, and it also helps Iran in weighing the future negotiations with countries, especially the United States

2.2.2.3 Counter-containment

As the United States has tried to contain both Iraq and Iran, the supreme leader has provoked the central power states against one another, seeking alliances, and injecting Iran's interests at the regional and global levels. Iran has overseen the benefit of increasing trade with the European Union as it could help exploit the different political tendencies among the 27

⁸¹ Julian Borger, "US Accuses Iran of Secret Nuclear Weapons Plan," The Guardian, last modified September 14, 2002, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/dec/14/iraq.iran>.

⁸² Greg Bruno, "Iran's Nuclear Program," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified March 10, 2010, <https://www.cfr.org/background/irans-nuclear-program>.

⁸³ "Iran, Islamic Republic of 2019," International Atomic Energy Agency, accessed May 12, 2020, <https://cnpp.iaea.org/countryprofiles/IranIslamicRepublicof/IranIslamicRepublicof.htm>.

countries in Europe from supporting the regime change in Tehran. Although the European Union has imposed certain economic sanctions on Iran, the EU still maintains to be the leading trade partner with Iran calculated around 16.3 percent of Iran's total international trade⁸⁴. In simple words, Iran has tried to convince the EU to support the United States' policy toward itself by maintaining trading relations. Iran also engaged not only the EU but also China and Russia. In Iran's view, those countries are the right counterbalanced to the United States. Iran also believes that those countries are the neutral allies when it comes to economic pressure by the United States' unilateralism⁸⁵. In the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Iran has asked to upgrade its status to a full member so it can receive support whenever they received attacks. Russia and China have shown support for Iran to join this organization⁸⁶. Just like its norm, Iran has put it afford to spread the idea of anti-American throughout the regional organization, such as the Non-aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Besides, Iran also played the Oil and Energy diplomacy to reward who stand by its side. After the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act was entered into force to pressure the Oil industry of Iran, Iran has signed a 2\$ billion deal with the French oil and gas company, Total, in 1997⁸⁷. Due to the increasing tension in the oil business, Iran has changed its market from the West to new partners, such as Japan, China, India, South Korea, and Italy, in 2008⁸⁸. Iran also wanted to open up the Persian

⁸⁴ European Commission, "Iran - Trade - European Commission," European Commission, last modified April 23, 2020, <https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/iran/>.

⁸⁵ Sune Engel Rasmussen and Aresu Eqbali, "Iran Seeks to Rally International Support Against U.S. Pressure," The Wall Street Journal, last modified June 18, 2019, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/iran-seeks-to-build-international-alliance-against-u-s-pressure-11560870847>.

⁸⁶ Jonathan Fulton, "Could the SCO Expand Into the Middle East?," The Diplomat, last modified February 24, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/02/could-the-sco-expand-into-the-middle-east/>.

⁸⁷ Iran Watch, "Senate Banking Committee Hearing: The Iran-Libya Sanctions Act," Iran Watch, last modified October 30, 1997, <https://www.iranwatch.org/library/government/united-states/congress/hearings-prepared-statements/senate-banking-committee-hearing-iran-libya-sanctions-act>.

⁸⁸ Shayerah Ilias, Iran's Economic Conditions: U.S. Policy Issues, (Iran Watch, 2010), accessed May 12, 2020, <https://www.iranwatch.org/sites/default/files/us-crs-irans-economic-conditions-042210.pdf>.

Gulf to China and Russia by signing the multibillion-dollar contracts with Chinese company Sinopec⁸⁹ and promised Russia to be allowed access to the Azadegan oil field⁹⁰.

2.2.2.4 Iranian mastermind

After the United States invaded Iraq and removed the Taliban, Iran has become a significant major power in the Middle East. By these changes, Iran has expended its influence to the west, the north, and the east. Iran has put lots of afford to support, manipulate, control over many extremist fighters in the middle east to fight against the unfriendly nations toward it and to spread the idea of anti-Americans.

Iran has a huge ambition to become the dominant military power in the Persian Gulf and across the Middle East. Iran has injected its influence on Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Afghanistan, and Iraq by helping the pro-Iranian organizations such as Syria government, Hezbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Hamas in Lebanon. Since the end of World War II, Iran and Syria have built an enduring alliance by supporting the Assad regime⁹¹. In Iraq and Afghanistan, Iran has played a significant rule with the U.S to promote stability in the countries. It is worth noticing that although Iran and U.S have the same goal as to help Iraq recover stability, to fight the Taliban in Afghanistan, and to eliminate al Qaeda, both of them are also trying to get rid of one another. Iran has also helped Hezbollah, Iraqi militias, and Houthis (the extremist groups) to develop strict discipline, extensive economic, weaponry, social support,

⁸⁹ Parisa Hafezi, "Iran, China's Sinopec Sign Oil-field Deal," Reuters, last modified December 9, 2007, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-china-oil/iran-chinas-sinopec-sign-oil-field-deal-idUSBLA92867220071209>.

⁹⁰ "Gazprom Neft Eager to Develop Oilfields in Iran," Tehran Times, last modified September 7, 2008, <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/177309/Gazprom-Neft-eager-to-develop-oilfields-in-Iran>.

⁹¹ Daniel L. Byman, "Syria and Iran: What's Behind the Enduring Alliance?," Brookings, last modified July 28, 2016, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/syria-and-iran-whats-behind-the-enduring-alliance/>.

and the pervasive anti-western sentiments⁹². Iran not only helped Shiites but also some pro-Iranian Sunni fighters, such as Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.⁹³

All of these supports help Iran to increase its power in the future bargain with the United States and even bring Iran deep down to the heart of Sunni Arab, which means that it has undermined such powerful Sunni states as Saudi Arabia. Iran has changed itself from surrounded by its enemies to surrounding its enemies, which means that Iran has built secure networks connecting around its enemies.

⁹² Claire Parker and Rick Noack, "Iran has invested in allies and proxies across the Middle East. Here's where they stand after Soleimani's death," The Washington Post, last modified January 3, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2020/01/03/iran-has-invested-allies-proxies-across-middle-east-heres-where-they-stand-after-soleimanis-death/>.

⁹³ Karim Sadjadpour, "Iran Supports Hamas, but Hamas Is No Iranian 'Puppet'," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified January 8, 2009, <https://www.cfr.org/israel/iran-supports-hamas-but-hamas-no-iranian-puppet/p18159>.

CHAPTER 3: THE IMPACTS OF THE TWO ANTAGONIST STATES

3.1 The Impacts in Iran

The United States and Iran have suffered long and deep mistrust among one another. The tension between the two countries has been changed according to the government on both sides. In the United States, there are two dominant political parties, which are Democrats and Republicans. Whereas in Iran, the foreign policy is depending partly on presidents but mostly on Iranian premiers. As the tension increase, both countries have severe impacts from the tension. The below points will further discuss the impacts on Iran in both political and military impacts caused by the tension.

3.1.1 The Political Consequences

3.1.1.1 The Unfriendly Diplomacy

Since the 1979 Iranian revolution, there is no formal diplomatic relation between the United States and Iran. The conflict of interests accumulated the tension between the United States and Iran. During the Trump administration, the very last events that could almost cause the full-scale war between Iran and the United States were the drone incident and the drone strike on Iranian top General Qasem Soliemani.

3.1.1.2 The Economic Hardship

- **The United States withdrawal from JCPOA and New Economic Sanctions**

Aside from diplomatic impact, the confrontation between the United States and Iran has also hit Iran's economy hard. American has more sanctions on Iran than it does on North Korea, Cuba, Venezuela, and Libya combined. Most importantly, President Trump withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and also restored economic sanctions on Iran, which cause an unexpected economic crisis in Iran's economy.

First, the economic sanctions pushed Iran's economy down the hill. As before 2015, Iran has suffered a lot under strictly enforced economic sanctions by the United States. After signing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran's economy bounced back in track, with a grew of 12.3% in 2016.⁹⁴ In 2017, there was a little slide back, with 3.7% grew, which was still acceptable⁹⁵. However, in 2018, the United States abandoned the Iran Nuclear Deal and further imposed more economic sanctions on the energy, shipping, and financial sectors, which made it hard for the country that depends heavily on exporting energy and oil like Iran to withstand this economic pressure. As has been expected, Iran's GDP in 2018 was contracted 4.8%, and in 2019, it down to minus 9.5%, according to the International Monetary Fund.⁹⁶

Second, the economic sanctions brought down Iran's oil export. It all began with the United States left the Iran nuclear deal and reimposed sanctions. In 2018, the Iran oil industry had produced 3.8 million barrels per day and was exporting only around 2.3 million barrels per day.⁹⁷ The oil was only exported to the eight countries that were under United States' sixth-month exemptions on Iranian energy sanctions. Those countries are China, India, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, Greece, and Italy. In June 2019, President Trump declared the exemption to be expired and announced his intent to bring Iran's oil export to zero⁹⁸. By October 2019, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries has reported that only 2.1 million

⁹⁴ "Islamic Republic of Iran," International Monetary Fund, last modified 2017, <https://www.imf.org/~media/Files/Publications/CR/2017/cr1762.ashx>.

⁹⁵ "Islamic Republic of Iran".

⁹⁶ "Iran Economy to Shrink 9.5% This Year Amid Tighter U.S. Sanctions, Says IMF," Reuters, last modified October 16, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-economy-imf/iran-economy-to-shrink-95-this-year-amid-tighter-us-sanctions-says-imf-idUSKBN1WU28M>.

⁹⁷ "OPEC Says Iran's Oil Production Down By 1.65 Million Bpd Since US Sanctions," Radio Farda, last modified November 14, 2019, <https://en.radiofarda.com/a/opec-says-iran-s-oil-production-down-by-1-65-million-bpd-since-us-sanctions/30272297.html>.

⁹⁸ "President Donald J. Trump Is Working to Bring Iran's Oil Exports to Zero," The White House, last modified April 22, 2019, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trump-working-bring-irans-oil-exports-zero/>.

barrels were produced per day in Iran, and only 260,000 barrels were exported.⁹⁹ This significant downfall of the Iran oil business has even led to a severe problem on foreign exchange earnings, which is predicted to drop nearly \$70 billion in 2020.

Third, the inflation in Iranian currency was hard to control because of the value of Rial drop that results in a serious risen cost of living. Iranian currency was stable almost four years under President Rouhani, but it lost nearly 50% of its value when the United States abandoned the nuclear deal.¹⁰⁰ According to Statista data, Iran had an inflation rate of 41.06% in 2019 and was predicted to be 34.22% in 2020 and 33.5% in 2021.¹⁰¹ If it is better as predicted, even though the inflation rate will happen to drop nearly 7% from 41.06% in 2019 to 34.22% in 2020, Iranian currency still faces a severe problem. According to the World Bank, the inflation rate in Iran has been high in food productions, particularly with meat products, in about 116% more expensive.¹⁰² Thus, this issue will be related to the lack of foods in some rural populations that are disproportionately affected. The inflation was also high in the petrol price in Iran. According to the Guardian, the petrol price raised almost double to 30,000 rials a liter (0.24\$), which led to the massive protest in Iran.¹⁰³

All in all, the United States' withdrawal from Iran nuclear deal and economic sanctions on Iran has left a deep wound to the Iranian economy. The Iranian government has spent its saving

⁹⁹ "As Trump's Sanctions Bite, Iran's Oil Exports Slide Further in June," Reuters, last modified June 24, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-oil-iran-exports/as-trumps-sanctions-bite-irans-oil-exports-slide-further-in-june-idUSKCN1TP1F0>.

¹⁰⁰ "How Renewed US Sanctions Have Hit Iran Hard," BBC News, last modified December 9, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-48119109>.

¹⁰¹ "Iran: Inflation rate from 1984 to 2021," Statista, last modified May 5, 2020, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/294320/iran-inflation-rate/>.

¹⁰² Saeed Ghasseminejad, "Inflation in Iran is on the Rise," Foundation for Defense of Democracies, last modified April 30, 2019, <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2019/04/30/inflation-in-iran-is-on-the-rise/>.

¹⁰³ Patrick Wintour, "Iran Supreme Leader Backs Petrol Price Rises As Protests Spread," The Guardian, last modified November 17, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/16/protests-erupt-in-iran-after-government-raises-price-of-gas-by-50>.

budget of around \$2.5 billion to recover the Iranian economic crisis. However, it seems to be a short-term solution, which can only delay the time. Later on, these problems led to widespread public outcry, and hundreds of thousands of people took a street protest.

3.1.2 The Military Consequences

3.1.2.1 The Drone strike killing Iranian Top General

In early January 2020, President Donald Trump authorized a drone strike that killed Qasem Soleimani, who was the second most powerful man in Iran and the famed leader of Iran's Quds force.

To understand the reason why the president Trump authorized the strike killing Qasem Soleimani and how important that man is Iran as well as the Middle East regime, we have to look into this operation across the Middle East. Qasem Soleimani was the one who spread the influence of Iran to the nearby regime¹⁰⁴. After the 1979 Iranian Revolution, Iran was surrounded by the enemies (Saudi Arabia's allies, including Iraq and the United States).¹⁰⁵ However, due to the Qasem's network and influences in the regime, Iran has changed the circumstance from being surrounded to surrounding the enemies by its proxy fighters in Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq, and many other organized armed groups¹⁰⁶. Qasem Soleimani also commanded the Quds forces, which has played a critical role in Middle East affairs. Such activities are the Middle East Cold War against Saudi Arabia and the United States Iran's involvement in Iraq insurgency, and the conflict of Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Palestine. These

¹⁰⁴ Damien McElroy, "Qassem Suleimani: a CEO Tasked with Spreading Iran's Influence Across the Middle East," The National Opinion, last modified January 5, 2020, <https://www.thenational.ae/opinion/comment/qassem-suleimani-a-ceo-tasked-with-spreading-iran-s-influence-across-the-middle-east-1.959609>.

¹⁰⁵ Sam Ellis, "How Iran's Soleimani Became a US Target," Vox, last modified January 28, 2020, <https://www.vox.com/2020/1/28/21112468/iran-soleimani-us-trump-war>.

¹⁰⁶ Ellis, "Soleimani Became a US Target."

were the operations that Qasem Soleimani was undertaking during his command on Quds force, which led him to be the top target for the United States.

The drone assassination was only fueling the anger of Iranian people toward the United States. The action was the most dreadful moment of Iranian people and his supporter throughout the regime, where he undertook the operations. A moment later, the Iranian supreme leader declared the death of Qasem Soleimani as the murder and demanded an act of severe revenge on the United States¹⁰⁷. A few days later, there were a hundred thousand Iranian who came out to mount the Qasem's death¹⁰⁸. The demonstration of his death has not occurred only in Iran but also in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen¹⁰⁹. The morning and demonstration have shown the signal of unwelcoming toward American present in those who support Qasem, which strengthen the idea of anti-American across the Middle East. Furthermore, this event has left a scar on the United States and Iran relations regardless of regimes or administrations change in both countries. The Iranian will never forget what Americans have done that day.

3.2 The Impacts on the United States

The United States has also dramatically affected by the tension. Since the tension has emerged in the new administration, the United States, under its 47th President, has received many impacts by receiving many criticisms on politics and military strategies.

¹⁰⁷ "Iran Vows 'severe Revenge' for Top General's Death," BBC News, last modified January 3, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-50986185>.

¹⁰⁸ Jen Kirby, "How Thousands of Iranians Went from Mourning a General to Protesting the Regime, in a Week," Vox, last modified January 16, 2020, <https://www.vox.com/2020/1/16/21065638/iran-protests-soleimani-trump-jcpoa>.

¹⁰⁹ Najmeh Bozorgmehr, "Huge Crowds Turn out to Mourn Iran's Soleimani," Financial Times, last modified January 5, 2020, <https://www.ft.com/content/9d43fb2e-2fb6-11ea-a329-0bcf87a328f2>.

3.2.1 The Political consequences

3.2.1.1 The Criticism on the Maximize pressure by Donald Trump and his election campaign

President Trump's policy toward Iran has been known as the "Maximize pressure" campaign. This strategy has given Iran a hard time and squeezed the country's economy. President Trump hoped that the strategy might push Iran toward the negotiation table about the old Nuclear Deal. Without offering a coherent rationale, Trump first shredded the nuclear accord with Iran and then launched what has become a relentless escalation of economic sanctions.¹¹⁰ "Although the 'Maximum pressure' has caused unprecedented economic pain for the Iranian regime, but has not yet resulted in any outcome that advances American interests," says Michael Singh, who was senior director for Middle East affairs at the National Security Council during the George W Bush administration. Moreover, the relation between the United States and Iran has been drained from the accommodation to confrontation, which received many criticisms. The public views that the public is an absolute failure compared to the previous administration's policy. The Dual containment by President Bill, the Two clocks by President Bush, and the Reengagement by President Obama has proven its engagement toward Iran rather than being dominant in the deal, just like the maximum pressure by President Donald Trump.

By hoping to gain advantages before a deal with Iran on the nuclear negotiation, Trump has put more pressure on Iran's economy. Since the Iranian-backed groups have attacked U.S. forces in Iraq more than twenty times, claimed the Washington Post.¹¹¹ After that, President

¹¹⁰ Michael Singh, "Iran and America—The Impasse Continues," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, last modified January 2020, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/iran-and-america-the-impasse-continues>.

¹¹¹ Jackson Diehl, "How Trump's failed 'maximum pressure' tactics could inspire a pre-election provocation," The Washington Post, last modified June 7, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/how-trumps-failed-maximum-pressure-tactics-could-inspire-a-pre-election-provocation/2020/06/07/512a816a-a674-11ea-b619-3f9133bbb482_story.html.

Trump was with no options rather than to either respond or look impotent. It was also worth noticing that either way, his November election campaign likely would be negative.

3.2.1.2 The Criticism of JCPOA withdrawal

The withdrawal of the Nuclear Deal, which President Trump declared on May 8, 2018, shocked the world, and at the same time, it was also one of the reasons why the international community criticized Trump for his decision. With the withdrawal, Trump already destroyed the image of the trustworthy state into pieces. The U.S. plays its card by withdrew from the deal and reimposed sanctions, which made Iran faced with the economic crisis¹¹². However, at the same time, U.S. disregarded all the advice from their allies to not wrecking the withdrawal. It could lead to a bad reputation and relation between the United States and other states, namely, the signatory's states. A senior member of the House Armed Services and Intelligence committees said that it is a mistake and the decision to withdraw was foolhardy¹¹³. The former U.S. secretary of state, John Kerry, criticized Trump's decision by saying that it breaks America's words, isolates the United States from European allies, empower Iran's hardliners, and damaging the ability of future administrations to make international agreements¹¹⁴.

Moreover, the international community concerned that the withdrawal of the United States will be led to the collapse of the deal, and Iran would use this chance to continue to produce nuclear weapons. It could make the world peace unstable and put the Middle-East region in danger. The United States wreck the deal and have no plan B is a dangerous decision.

¹¹² Belfer Center, "Consequences of the U.S. Withdrawal from the JCPOA" (presentation, Iran Project Seminar Series, Harvard Kennedy School, Massachusetts, May 16, 2018).

¹¹³ Anne Gearan and Karen DeYoung, "Trump pulls United States out of IRan nuclear deal, calling the pact 'an embarrassment'," The Washington Post, last modified May 9, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-will-announce-plans-to-pull-out-of-iran-nuclear-deal-despite-pleas-from-european-leaders/2018/05/08/4c148252-52ca-11e8-9c91-7dab596e8252_story.html.

¹¹⁴ "World Leaders React to US Withdrawal from Iranian Nuclear Deal," Al Jazeera, last modified May 9, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/05/world-leaders-react-withdrawal-iranian-nuclear-deal-180508184130931.html>.

Even though other signatory states tried to maintain the deal with Iran, Iran supreme leader already said that he will not trust the European partner again and will not stay in the agreement¹¹⁵. Thus, If Tehran decides to resume its nuclear activities, it could quickly get back to where it was in 2013, which capable of producing enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon in 2 or 3 months¹¹⁶.

3.2.2 The Military Consequences with Iran

3.2.2.1 Drone shut down over the Strait of Hormuz

Since the new administration took office in January 2017, the tension escalated to series of military operations. First, in June 2019, the Iranian military shoots down the U.S drone in the Strait of Hormuz, claiming that the drone has flighted in Iranian air space¹¹⁷. The United States, on the other hand, claiming that the drone was an unprovoked attack in the international airspace over the Strait of Hormuz.¹¹⁸ (The Strait of Hormuz was located in between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, is an essential oil trading lance as well as the most dangerous spot of oil attacking. It was also worth noticing that many British and other countries' oil tankers have been attacked many times since the 1980s). The down strike tension almost creates severe revenge from the United States, but it was called off in the last minutes by the President. He also confessed publicly that he wanted to talk with the Iran side.

3.2.2.2 The December attacks in Iraq

Another critical incident took place in December 2019. Iranian-linked groups so-called Kata'ib Hezbollah launched a rocket attack on the K1 military base in Iraq, which houses the

¹¹⁵ "The P4+1 and Iran Nuclear Deal Alert, May 16, 2018," Arms Control Association, last modified May 16, 2018, <https://www.armscontrol.org/blog/2018-05-16/p41-iran-nuclear-deal-alert-may-16-2018>.

¹¹⁶ Kelsey Davenport, "By Violating Iran Deal, Trump Jeopardizes National Security," Time, last modified May 9, 2018, <https://time.com/5271040/trump-reckless-violation-iran-deal-national-security/>.

¹¹⁷ "US Confirms Drone Was Shot Down by Iranian Missile," BBC News, last modified June 20, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-48700965>.

¹¹⁸ "US Confirms Drone Was Shot Down."

United States and Iraqi forces, killing one U.S. civilian contractor and wounded several U.S. and Iraqi personnel¹¹⁹. Two days later, the United States retaliated by an airstrike against the Iranian-linked military in Iraq and Syria, leaving at least 25 deaths.¹²⁰ A few days later, the United States embassy in Baghdad had been stormed by protestors chanting ‘Death to America’¹²¹. They burned buildings and defaced property of the United States in Iraq. The group of people left the embassy on January 1, leaving the embassy severely damaged. In response, the President of the United States, ordered a drone strike killing the Iranian top general, Qassem Soliemani, commander of the Quds Forces.

¹¹⁹ "U.S. Civilian Contractor Killed in Iraq Base Rocket Attack - Officials," The Reuters, last modified December 27, 2019, <https://de.reuters.com/article/uk-iraq-security/u-s-civilian-contractor-killed-in-iraq-base-rocket-attack-officials-idUKKBN1YV1IT>.

¹²⁰ Julian E. Barnes, "U.S. Launches Airstrikes on Iranian-Backed Forces in Iraq and Syria," The New York Times, last modified December 29, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/29/world/middleeast/us-airstrikes-iran-iraq-syria.html>.

¹²¹ Falih Hassan, Ben Hubbard, and Alissa J. Rubin, "Protesters Attack U.S. Embassy in Iraq, Chanting ‘Death to America’," The New York Times, last modified December 31, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/31/world/middleeast/baghdad-protesters-us-embassy.html>.

CHAPTER 4: THE SHADOWS OF WASHINGTON AND TEHRAN ON THE MIDDLE-EAST/INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

4.1 The Impact on other Middle-East countries

The United States and Iran tension have occurred since the middle of the 20th century until the early 21st century. The bitter relations between the two countries have not only affected Iran alone but also spreading across the Middle East and beyond other nearby regions. The United States has accused Iran of sponsoring terrorists, being a potential nuclear threat to the world, and responsible for the chaotic situation in the Middle East. In contrast, Iran accused the United States of being dominant, manipulate, and spreading its influences in the regime to hold back Iran's prosperity in both politics and economics.

The Middle East regime has been well-known for armed conflicts, oil crisis, terrorist, and rebellions. In the region, many uprising conflicts occurred because of the conflict of interest between the United States and Iran. The more United States engaged in the conflict, the more responsible for Iran to support another side. Interestingly, three significant rival conflicts in the Middle East have been involved by the United States and Iran, which are the conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran, the conflict in Iraq and Iran, and the tripartite conflicts between Syria, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Israel.

Last but not least, the confrontation has led to wars and organized armed conflicts between the governments and rebels. So, as a result, there will be devastating to countries' infrastructure as well as the environment atmosphere.

4.1.1 The Saudi-Iran conflicts in American's Shadow

The confrontation between the United States and Iran has enormously influenced the conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Saudi Arabia has been a friendly nation to the United States for almost 60 years. Furthermore, the kingdom has sought American as an ally to protect

its interest in the Middle East against the rising power, Iran. On the other hand, Iran has been an American's hostile state since the 1979 Iranian Revolution. As an ally to Saudi Arabia, the United States has a reason to be involved in the Middle East Cold War and protect its interest by supporting Saudi Arabia against Iran. This conflict was involved in many events, including the domination of power, oil business, and, most important of all, the religious matters of Sunni and Shia populations.

4.1.1.1 The Misleading Diplomacy

Saudi Arabia and Iran have no formal diplomatic relations together. The relation between Iran and Saudi Arabia collapsed when Iran turned against the United States and established the Islamic Republic of Iran, which removed the Shah of Iran from power. Since the Iranian Revolution 1979, Iran has drifting away from Saudi Arabia because Saudi Arabia was one of the United States' closed allies in the Middle East. Iran maintained no relation with the United States' allies in the Middle East as they always keep in mind about proposing anti-Americanism.

Iran and Saudi Arabia used to have a good relationship together. Flashback to the 1953 coup d'état in Iran, United States was trying to restore Iran's monarchy into power. From 1953 to 1979, Iran has maintained a closed relation between the United States in the anti-communist campaign, and in those days under Shah ruling, Iran made no interest to compete with Saudi Arabia. During the 1960s-1970s, Iran and Saudi Arabia had built a secure connection together as the Shah of Iran even visited Saudi Arabia for several times. Both countries have shared a robust diplomatic tie as Western-backed monarchs governed them.

The relation did not last for long. Iran started to change their interest under the new regime, which led by the Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Khomeini. The two countries have become attractive in expending their power to the Middle East region. Khomeini has opposed

the idea of monarchy as un-Islamic and even compared Saudi Arabia's sovereign and the Shah as American's puppet. Iran considered Saudi Arabia and its allies as a potential threat to Iran's national security. In 1980, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) revealed that Iran was attempting to export the Islamic revolution to neighboring countries. This caused the fear of Iran becoming a supranational in the Middle East, which triggered Saudi Arabia to take immediate action. The Iranian propaganda has led to a massive protest in Qatif, home to Saudi Arabia's Shia majority.

A year later, in 1981, Saudi Arabia proposed the idea of the Gulf Cooperation Council. This alliance was known as the United States' essential collective of friendly and wealthy states that prepared under three menacing developments: the Iranian Revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and the start of the destructive Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988).¹²² Two years into the Iran-Iraq war, Saudi Arabia and the United States saw Iran as an enemy, thus decided to provide military and financial support to Saddam Hussein in Iraq.¹²³ Later on, in 1987, there was a protest against anti-American in Saudi Arabia, which led to the clash between Iranian pilgrims and Saudi security teams resulted in almost 400 deaths.¹²⁴ Following this event, Saudi Arabia declared the suspension of its relations with Iran for three years.¹²⁵ Over the next decades, the relation between the two countries remains unfriendly, while the United States still supports Saudi Arabia against Iran. In the 2011 Arab Spring, there was

¹²² Imad K. Harb, "The US and the GCC: A Steep Learning Curve for President Trump," Arab Center Washington DC, last modified September 18, 2017, https://arabcenterdc.org/policy_analyses/the-us-and-the-gcc-a-steep-learning-curve-for-president-trump/.

¹²³ Seymour M. Hersh, "U.S. Secretly Gave Aid to Iraq Early in Its War Against Iran," The New York Times, last modified January 26, 1992, <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/01/26/world/us-secretly-gave-aid-to-iraq-early-in-its-war-against-iran.html>.

¹²⁴ John Kifner, "400 DIE AS IRANIAN MARCHERS BATTLE SAUDI POLICE IN MECCA; EMBASSIES SMASHED IN TEHERAN," The New York Times, last modified August 2, 1987, <https://www.nytimes.com/1987/08/02/world/400-die-iranian-marchers-battle-saudi-police-mecca-embassies-smashed-teheran.html>.

¹²⁵ Thom Poole, "Why Iran and Saudi Arabia Are Rivals," BBC News, last modified January 4, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35221569>.

another uprising tension between them. During the Arab spring, both countries showed their supports to the opposite sides in the regional conflicts.

During the Obama administration, there was a hardline between Iran and Saudi Arabia. On 12 October 2011, An Iranian-American used-car salesman in Texas was accused of planning the assassination of the Saudi's ambassador to the United States. According to the New York Times, the man was arrested on September 29, 2011, at Kennedy International Airport after he pleaded guilty in the planning to bomb a Washington restaurant where the Saudi Ambassador, Adel al-Jubier, dined.¹²⁶ Attorney General, Eric H. Holder Jr., reported that the assassination plot had been involved directly from the high ranking Iranian senior member of the Quds Force with the consent from the Iranian Government. The suspect was believed to be ordered by the senior officials of the Quds force with \$1.5 million to hiring the assassins from a Mexican drug cartel.¹²⁷ Later on, the scheme was made public and led to the rise of tension between the Sunni Royal family in Saudi and the Shiite government in Iran.

This conspiracy was also affecting the relationship between the United States and Iran. The United States has accused Iran of this assassination included the two separated plans to bomb the Israeli Embassy in Washington and Israeli and Saudi Embassies in Argentina.¹²⁸ Iranian government furiously denied all the charges, and the Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations also addressed the letter to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon saying that Iran "strongly and categorically rejects these fabricated and baseless allegations, based on the suspicious

¹²⁶ Benjamin Weiser, "Man Sentenced in Plot to Kill Saudi Ambassador," The New York Times, last modified May 31, 2013, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/31/nyregion/mansour-arbabsiar-sentenced-for-plot-to-kill-saudi-ambassador.html>.

¹²⁷ The CNN Wire Staff, "Iranian Plot to Kill Saudi Ambassador Thwarted, U.S. Officials Say," CNN, last modified October 12, 2011, <https://edition.cnn.com/2011/10/11/justice/iran-saudi-plot/index.html>.

¹²⁸ Charlie Savage and Scott Shane, "Iranians Accused of a Plot to Kill Saudis' U.S. Envoy," The New York Times - Breaking News, World News & Multimedia, last modified October 12, 2011, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/12/us/us-accuses-iranians-of-plotting-to-kill-saudi-envoy.html>.

claims by an individual.”¹²⁹ The conspiracy was remained unclear whether or not Iran has been involved in the plan of the Saudi Ambassador’s assassination.

In the Trump administration, there also another significant tension between Iran and Saudi Arabia related to the Saudi’s support on Iranian civic unrest and the support on the United States’ action against Iran’s interest. In 2015, a group of Yemen hackers claimed to reveal the top-secret documents from Saudi Arabia’s Foreign, Interior, and Defence ministries’ websites¹³⁰. The group was believed to be the Iranian hackers rather than the Yemen hackers or a group of Yemen hackers supported by the Iranian government.¹³¹ The incident was known as the Saudi leaks, and it also included the support of civic unrest in Iran against the Iranian government¹³². In addition to this, the hackers also revealed the Saudi Intelligence Agency that was offering support to the United States in an efficient and preemptive blow to the Iran Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) commanders¹³³. The hackers have posted several documents written in Arabic languages as shreds of evidence through WikiLeaks. However, the Saudi government has publicly announced to the citizens to ignore the posts from WikiLeaks as it was related to the kingdom’s foreign affairs.¹³⁴

All of the above cases have led to the severe diplomatic impact between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Until early 2020, with many attempts but the two countries still have not normalized

¹²⁹ Colum Lynch, "Iran Appeals to Ban Ki-moon over U.S. Allegations of Terror Plot Against Saudi Ambassador," Foreign Policy, last modified October 12, 2011, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/10/12/iran-appeals-to-ban-ki-moon-over-u-s-allegations-of-terror-plot-against-saudi-ambassador/>.

¹³⁰ "Yemeni Group Hacks 3,000 Saudi Govt Computers to Reveal Top Secret Docs – Report," RT International, last modified May 22, 2015, <https://www.rt.com/news/261073-yemen-cyber-hack-saudi/>.

¹³¹ Lorenzo Franceschi-Bicchierai, "There's Evidence the 'Yemen Cyber Army' Is Actually Iranian," Vice, last modified June 26, 2015, https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/wjn9gq/theres-evidence-the-yemen-cyber-army-is-actually-iranian.

¹³² "Saudileaks 29: Docs Unveil Riyadh's Intention to Strike at Iran's National Security," FarsNews Agency, last modified July 7, 2015, <https://en.farsnews.ir/newstext.aspx?nn=13940416000422>.

¹³³ "Saudileaks 32: Saudi Intelligence Agency Offers Unsolicited Aide to US Against Iran's IRGC," FarsNews Agency, last modified August 8, 2015, <https://en.farsnews.ir/newstext.aspx?nn=13940517000336>.

¹³⁴ Ian Black, "Saudi Arabia Tells Citizens to Ignore Latest WikiLeaks Release," The Guardian, last modified November 29, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/21/saudi-arabia-ignore-wikileaks-release>.

the relation between them yet. Furthermore, it is worth noticing that there are no formal diplomatic relations between the two countries since 1979.

4.1.1.2 The Oil Tensions

During the Trump Administration, there also an uprising tension related to the oil industry, which included the Gulf of Oman incidents and the attacks on Saudi oil facilities. These incidents have damaged the Saudi Arabia's oil income and the country's economy as well as the global oil price (the global impact will be discussed later in the next chapter). Although the United Nations finds no pieces of evidence that can prove Iran's involvement in the attacks, the United States still firmly believed that Iran and its proxies had been involved in the attacks on Saudi Arabia. The reason was that the United States saw Iran as its potential threat in the region and also the oil competitor with Saudi Arabia in the global market.

The Gulf incidents begin in mid-2019. On May 12, four ships, including the two Saudi oil tankers was struck at the Gulf just have passed the Strait of Hormuz, where is the primary oil route. In the following month, on June 13, the other two tankers were attacked again near the Hormuz. The United States has blamed Iran for both attacks on Saudi oil tankers. Based on several investigations on the previous attack, the United Arab Emirates said that both attacks were more likely to be sponsored by the state and not the work of terrorists.¹³⁵ In the same year, on September 14, two major Saudi Oil facilities were hit by the Drone Strike, which was later claimed responsibility by Yemen's Houthi rebels, a Shia militia backed by Iran. The attack has also escalated geopolitical tensions in West Asia with the United States pointing fingers at Iran, and Tehran, in turn denying any role in the attacks and warning against any action against it.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ "Saudi Arabia Demands 'decisive' Response to Gulf Oil Tanker Attacks," Deutsche Welle, accessed June 3, 2020, <https://www.dw.com/en/saudi-arabia-demands-decisive-response-to-gulf-oil-tanker-attacks/a-49220859>.

¹³⁶ Ben Hubbard, Palko Karasz, and Stanley Reed, "Two Major Saudi Oil Installations Hit by Drone Strike, and U.S. Blames Iran," The New York Times - Breaking News, World News & Multimedia, last modified September 14, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/14/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-refineries-drone-attack.html>.

Talking about the damages of the Gulf oil tensions, Saudi is the one who was impacted. Two possible impacts were promising after the incidents took place. First, the attacks caused the loss of Saudi's oil income. One of the two oil facilities that have been attacked was Abqaiq, which is the world's largest oil processing facility. The attacks were carried out by drones on the two towers at the oil field, causing damage to about 5 million barrels of the oil per day. As Abqaiq was the main oil facility in Saudi, the damage was claimed to be nearly half of the kingdom's daily production equal over 5 percent of global output.¹³⁷ According to the Aljazeera News, the Saudi government also reported having released its stockpiles of oil to offset the loss of production.¹³⁸ Second, the safety of Saudi's oil industry is at risk. The two recent attacks indicate that neither the oil facilities nor the supply in lines in the region is not safe.

Furthermore, Iran has shown its dominant power in the Gulf as well. In June, Iran shot down one of the American drones that were accused of violating Iranian air space¹³⁹. Iran also engaged with British vessels near the Strait of Hormuz after an Iranian vessel was captured by the British¹⁴⁰. Therefore, the attacks of both supply lines and oil facilities, along with Iranian military actions in the Gulf region are the warning messages to the United States and its fellow allies.

4.1.2 The impacts on ongoing Arab Spring

The confrontation of the United States and Iran has shadowed the conflicts of the Arab Spring. Even-though the conflicts were not caused by both states, the United States and Iran

¹³⁷ Stanly Johny, "Explained | Are Saudi Arabia's Oil Supplies Vulnerable?," The Hindu, last modified September 22, 2019, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/are-saudi-arabias-oil-supplies-vulnerable/article29478951.ece>.

¹³⁸ "Saudi Arabia: 6 Million Barrels of Oil Lost in Drone Attacks," Al Jazeera News, last modified September 16, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/09/saudi-arabia-6-million-barrels-oil-lost-drone-attacks-190916062840158.html>.

¹³⁹ "US Confirms Drone Was Shot Down by Iranian Missile," BBC News, last modified June 20, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-48700965>.

¹⁴⁰ "Iranian Boats 'tried to Intercept British Tanker'," BBC News, last modified July 11, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-48946051>.

have increasingly influenced the crisis. Yemen and Bahrain are more likely to be the frontline for this confrontation.

4.1.2.1 Yemen Civil War Crisis

The conflict in Yemen is a part of the Arab spring revolution. Yemen became the fail state when the Authoritarian President Ali Abdullah Saleh was forced to step down and hand over the power to his deputy, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi. However, the next president still failed to control the states, where the Houthi movement was established and took up armed to fight against the government. The Houthi complained that they were discriminated against and mistreated by the government as they are the Shai minority of the country.

In this conflict, the United States and Iran are involved on different sides. One side was the coalition forces led by Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf Cooperation Council, which were supported by the United States, United Kingdom, and France. The other side was the Houthi militia and the supporters of ex-president Saleh that was backed by Iran.

First, Saudi Arabia, along with western countries, formed the international coalition to reinstall Yemen. The United States was actively involved in the conflict by throwing support to the coalition led by Saudi Arabia. The United States supported Saudi Arabia in Yemen's operation with both weaponry and military assistance. Most Saudi Arabia weapons were made in the United States because Saudi Arabia was the top buyer of the United States weapon industry.¹⁴¹ One of the products that have been bought from the United States and have seen regularly in the Yemen conflict is the F-15 fighting jets. This type of jets was used to bomb the Houthi controlled territories in Yemen. According to the New York Times, the United States was not only supported Saudi with weapons but also provided support on repairing, training,

¹⁴¹ Irina Ivanova, "Saudi Arabia is America's No. 1 Weapons Customer," CBS News, last modified October 12, 2018, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/saudi-arabia-is-the-top-buyer-of-u-s-weapons/>.

technology, tactic, and even the operational assistance, including the refueling Saudi fighting jets while the bombing operation¹⁴². Apart from that, Al-Qaeda's presence in Yemen has been used to justify U.S.-airstrikes in the country.¹⁴³

On another side, the doubt of Iranian's involvement in the Yemen crisis still debatable. In October 2019, Iran officially acknowledged that the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps provided advisory and intellectual support to its ally, the Houthi group in Yemen. According to Major General Mohammed Bagheri, Iranian assistance to the Houthis was limited to the consultative and ideological aspects but never sent missiles or army supports to Houthi.¹⁴⁴ However, U.S intelligence and Saudi Arabia still have concluded that Iran has directly involved in the Yemen crisis as the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps personnel were training and equipping Houthi units, said Reuters News.¹⁴⁵

As the Yemen crisis has been last for many years, Yemeni are as well experiencing the worst humanitarian in the world. The country is battling a cholera epidemic, famine, and war, which have only been severely exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic. About 80% of the population need humanitarian aids and safety needs, while 3.65 million people were displaced¹⁴⁶. Meanwhile, approximately 15.9 million people needed basic necessities, such as food and clean water, and around half of them are almost considered as famine¹⁴⁷. The number

¹⁴² Declan Walsh and Eric Schmitt, "Arms Sales to Saudis Leave American Fingerprints on Yemen's Carnage," The New York Times, last modified December 25, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/25/world/middleeast/yemen-us-saudi-civilian-war.html>.

¹⁴³ Rukmini Callimachi, Eric Schmitt, and Julian E. Barnes, "U.S. Strikes at Leader of Qaeda in Yemen," The New York Times, last modified January 31, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/31/world/middleeast/qaeda-yemen-alrimi.html>.

¹⁴⁴ "Iran Admits Supporting Houthis in Yemen for the First Time," Middle East Monitor, last modified October 3, 2019, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20191003-iran-admits-supporting-houthis-in-yemen-for-the-first-time/>.

¹⁴⁵ Warren Strobel and Mark Hosenball, "Elite Iranian Guards Training Yemen's Houthis: U.S. Officials," Reuters News, last modified March 27, 2015, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-houthis-iran/elite-iranian-guards-training-yemens-houthis-u-s-officials-idUSKBN0MN2MI20150327>.

¹⁴⁶ UNHCR Operational Update, (Geneva, Switzerland: The UN Refugees Agency, 2020), <http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/UNHCR%20Yemen%20Operational%20Update%20-%20-%203JAN20.pdf>.

¹⁴⁷ "Yemen Emergency," United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), last modified February 20, 2020, <https://www.wfp.org/emergencies/yemen-emergency>.

is estimated to go up to 20 million in the future. The United Nations has verified the deaths of at least 7,500 civilians so far by September 2019.¹⁴⁸ In October 2019, the fatalities were reported to more than 100,000, including 12,000 are civilians.¹⁴⁹ The reported cases were related to direct attacks, malnutrition, disease, and a weak health care system in the country. As only half of the country's medical facilities are open, the people are encountering the lack of access to adequate health-care.

Furthermore, the war has also destroyed the infrastructure and country economy. According to UNICEF, around 2 million children are diagnosed as malnourished, while 5% of them are under five years old.¹⁵⁰ As the International Rescue Committee (IRC) has projected, if the war continues for the other five years, the international community will have to spend around \$29 billion to repair Yemen.¹⁵¹ Additionally, despite the current global pandemic, President Trump decided to reduce the humanitarian aids in Yemen, which made it hard for Yemeni in the current situation.¹⁵²

4.1.2.2 Bahrain: Human Rights between Sunni and Shai

The uprising tension between the United States and Iran also shadowed the Bahrain uprising protest. Bahrain has been the latest proxy conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

¹⁴⁸ "Interactive Dialogue on the High Commissioner's Report on Yemen," The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, last modified September 10, 2019,

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=24968&LangID=E>.

¹⁴⁹ "PRESS RELEASE: Over 100,000 Reported Killed in Yemen War," The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, last modified March 23, 2020, <https://acleddata.com/2019/10/31/press-release-over-100000-reported-killed-in-yemen-war/>.

¹⁵⁰ "Too Little or Too Much: More Than 16 Million Children Are Poorly Nourished in the Middle East and North Africa," United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, last modified October 20, 2019, <https://www.unicef.org/mena/press-releases/too-little-or-too-much-more-16-million-children-are-poorly-nourished-middle-east-and>.

¹⁵¹ Patrick Wintour, "Failure to End Civil War in Yemen Now Could Cost \$29bn," The Guardian, last modified December 1, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/dec/01/failure-to-end-civil-war-in-yemen-now-could-cost-29bn>.

¹⁵² Michael LaForgia, "U.S. Cuts Health Care Aid to Yemen Despite Worries About Coronavirus," The New York Times, last modified March 27, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/27/world/middleeast/yemen-health-care-aid-coronavirus.html>.

However, more noticeably, the United States also got involved with its ally in this conflict to support the Sunni royal family in Bahrain to withstand the Shai protestor that was believed to be provoked by Iran. The United States also has two navy bases in Bahrain in which it should be concerned about the uprising of Shai outcry in that country¹⁵³.

The situation in Bahrain is all about discriminatory by the Sunni ruling government on the Shai population in the country. The hatred and discrimination have led the conflict into the frontline of significant power state confrontation. The growing support of Iran on the Shai Bahraini protestors has not only threatened the Sunni Royal families in the Middle East but also bring concerns to the United States about Iranian influence in the region. Tehran has strongly condemned the crackdown in Bahrain by its ruler.¹⁵⁴ As Saudi Arabia and its Gulf Cooperation Council have sent their troops to intervene in the situation in Bahrain, Tehran also sparked to reasserting support for Shiite protestors in the country. According to the Iranian political opposition, Hassan Shariatmadari, it is worth to concerned that if Iran has more actively interfered in the Bahrain issues, the United States will not stay still as it has vested interest in Bahrain as well as two Navy bases in the country.¹⁵⁵

Although the uprising protest in Bahrain was dismissed, there still human rights conflicts in this country. Iran still further supported the Shiite population to provoke its interest in the country. Whereas, Saudi Arabia, the United States, and other GCC countries still throwing support to the Sunni ruling family and preventing Shiite to held a senior position in the government, which somehow helps them maintaining their interest, especially the United States Navy bases in the country. Bahrain has become the arena from those countries to

¹⁵³ "NSA Bahrain Navy Base in Bahrain, Bahrain," Military Bases, last modified January 5, 2018, <https://militarybases.com/overseas/bahrain/nsa-bahrain/>.

¹⁵⁴ "Iran's Support for Bahrain Protesters Fuels Regional Tensions," Deutsche Welle, last modified April 15, 2011, <https://www.dw.com/en/irans-support-for-bahrain-protesters-fuels-regional-tensions/a-6504403-1>.

¹⁵⁵ "Iran's Support for Bahrain Protesters".

challenge their interests, where the Shiite population has further suffered under the discriminatory and hatred by the Sunni ruler, which violated their rights provided under the ICCPR. According to the Human Rights Watch, after nine years of Bahrain conflict, the human rights in Bahrain still worsen, and the Shiite still has demonstrated a zero-tolerance policy for any free and independent political thought. They have imprisoned, exiled, or intimidated into silence anyone who criticizes the government.¹⁵⁶

4.1.3 Iraq: The Flashpoint between the United States and Iran

Iraq is one of the countries in the Middle East that was strongly influenced by the confrontation between Iran and the United States. Iraq has a secure connection with both countries since the 2003 Iraq invasion, and inevitably have to maintain both countries relations despite the growing tension between them. First, Iran has unbreakable ties in the Iraqi parliament and other political sectors, most likely the Shiite senior Iraqi officials. The influence of Iran on Iraq is mainly through militia groups. Iraq is a majority Shiai country, while Iran claimed to be the leading Islamic Shai nation. When Saddam Hussien fall in 2003, Iran started to reclaim control over some Shia-militia fighters and train them to serve the purpose of Tehran. One organization has been known as the Badr Organization, which is a militia group as much as an anti-U.S. political party in Iraq today¹⁵⁷. Meanwhile, the United States acts like an Iraqi guardian to protect Iraqis from regional threats and terrorists. The United States' missions in Iraq serve many purposes, from reforming economic to military assistance, but one of the primary purposes is to push back the ISIS movement in northern Iraq.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Aya Majzoub, "Nine Years After Bahrain's Uprising, Its Human Rights Crisis Has Only Worsened," Human Rights Watch, last modified June 9, 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/02/25/nine-years-after-bahrains-uprising-its-human-rights-crisis-has-only-worsened>.

¹⁵⁷ "Badr Organization," Counter Extremism Project, last modified March 31, 2020, <https://www.counterextremism.com/threat/badr-organization>.

¹⁵⁸ "U.S. Relations With Iraq," United States Department of State, last modified November 13, 2019, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-iraq/>.

Since the conflict has emerged, Iraq has been the vulnerable frontline between Iran and the United States since its new government took place. The significant tensions between the United States and Iran in Iraq took place since late 2019 when the American Embassy in Baghdad stormed by the pro-Iranian armed groups. The tension escalated to the killing of one Iranian power general, Qassem Soleimani, and other prominent Iranian and high-ranking Iraqi officials. After the assassination, Iran also retaliated by dozen missiles strike to U.S air bases in Iraq. All of these military actions were taking place in the sovereign territory of Iraq, which led to the shaming of Iraq's sovereignty that fails to prevent the foreign military action that took place within its territory without any consent. The incidents also led to a diplomatic tension, furious public outcry, and political struggles, as the two nations have strong influences in Iraq.

Iraq has faced the diplomatic dilemma between Iran and the United States. On the secure line to the White House, Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi said that "Iraq is between friends who are 5,000 miles away from us and a neighbor we have had for 5,000 years. We cannot change the geography nor history". Tehran and Washington have competed for influence in Iraq since the United States 2003 invasion, and in that battle, Iran is already winning, and the United States still has a big card that was yet to play. For Iraq, the relation with Iran appeared to be deeper and historical than the United States. However, the protection offered from the United States has made the relation inevitably to be neglected. Iraq also faced a hard decision to deal with the United States' troops on their soil.

After the assassination, the Iraqi parliament voted with 170/328 to demand the withdrawal of U.S. personnel on Iraq territory. However, the Secretary of State Mike Pompeo urged not to leave the country by saying that "We are happy to continue the conversation with the Iraqis about what the right structure is. Nevertheless, the American mission in Iraq is to train Iraqi forces to fight the Islamic State, he said, and "we are going to continue that

mission.”After the parliament voted, President Trump has threatened to imposed the sanction on Iraq and even demanded the cost of military spending of the United States personnel in Iraq missions. In this situation, Iraq has to choose between the United States and Iran. First, if Iraq chooses Iran’s side, the United States’ troops have to leave the country.

In contrast, Iraq has to face severe sanctions from the United States and even be vulnerable to be attacked by terrorist groups, such as ISIS. The security of Iraq mainly depended on the United States’ military. Second, if Iraq chooses to stay with the United States, the country has to deal with the anger of Iran and the Shiite majority in Iraq. There is also a debate between Shiite and Sunni in parliament, which led to political differences between Iraq for several days. Shiite members argued that “The process of the United States withdrawal reclaims a part of Iraq’s dignity after the airstrikes and violations of Iraqi sovereignty.” Meanwhile, the Sunni questioned back, “Are our neighbors, our friends or our masters?” referring to Iran. “Are we going to hand the country’s wealth and decisions into the hands of neighboring countries?”. At last, after days of consideration, the U.S and Iraq Joint Military Operation has resumed.

All in all, the case has reflected that Iraq has taken the relation with Iran for granted; however, when it comes to the pressure of the United States troop's withdrawal, Iraq cannot deal with the departure of the United States personnel. Hence, Iraq has no other alternatives, rather than put its sovereignty into a gambit of the United States and Iran.

4.1.4 The Setback in Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Pakistan

The long-standing conflicts are in Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Pakistan. Within these four countries, there are many armed conflicts involving many outsiders, including the United States and Iran. These conflicts have a similar root cause, which is the uprising against the government. With the support of outsiders, the protestors took up arms and become rebels and extremist fighters.

4.1.4.1 The Syrian Civil War

The Syrian war is the most complicated compared to other armed conflicts in the middle east. The country was divided into four significant opponents, and each side has their foreign backer. The first group is the president Assad regime that maintaining a durable tire with Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah in Lebanon. The second group is the well-known terrorists, ISIS. The third and the fourth are American backed militias. Kurdish fighters were supported by the Democrat government of the United States, and the Free Syrian Army was supported by the Republican government, Jordan, Turkey, and the GCC led by Saudi Arabia. It is worth noticing that Iran has helped Assad to stay in power because he was the Shiite ruler among the majority Sunni population in Syria. At the same time, the United States and other GCC countries led by Saudi Arabia, trying to help the Free Syrian Army to counter Iran's influence in Syria as much as in the Middle East.

More likely, with other conflicts in the middle east, the Syrian Civil war started by the peaceful protest known as the Arab Spring. However, the conflict developed gradually to become a battlefield of many foreign countries. In 2013, the Assad regime with Russian and Iranian support used the chemical weapon against the rebels led to the death of many civilians. In September, the United States during the Obama administration has condemned the act of violated international and declared to take serious action with that regime.¹⁵⁹ A few days later, Russia proposed that Syria has appeared to step down to avoid the United States military strike. Only a week later, the American CIA reached Syria to train the rebels and supply them against the Assad regime.¹⁶⁰ In 2014, one group of extremists in the Syrian rebel broke apart and formed

¹⁵⁹ Barack H. Obama, "Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on Syria" (speech, Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, Washington D.C, September 10, 2013).

¹⁶⁰ "US Troops to Train Syria Rebels," BBC News, last modified January 16, 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-30847689>.

the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). This armed militia fight all the armies in Syria and Iraq. The United States has turned its focus from the Assad regime to primarily taking action on ISIS. In 2017, President Trump won the election and vowed to step out of the Syrian Civil war. In spring 2017, Assad with the support of Russian airstrike and Iranian militia support used another chemical weapon against the civilian¹⁶¹. This brutal attack has attracted many dozen missiles, which fired directly from the United States Navy to Syrian's air bases with support from France and the United Kingdom.¹⁶² In the following days, the Secretary-General of the United Nations addressed the issue in Syria as the most severe threat of the confrontations and proxy wars involving several nations. He also asked all the members to restrain their actions in order to reduce the suffering of Syrian civilians.¹⁶³ In late 2019, the conflict still has not finished yet as President Assad continued to reclaim the lost cities from rebels.

The Syrian Civil war has caused many destructions, including economic devastation and human lives. First, the almost ten-year-war has cost approximately \$388 Billion to repair the economic damage in Syria. According to the U.N Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA), the damage of roads, infrastructure, homes, and other physical objects worth around \$120 billion to reconstruct while the other \$268 billion was the lost of country's gross domestic product¹⁶⁴. Second, the Syria economy is crumbling due to the long-standing battlefield of foreigners. The foreign exchange rate of the Syrian pound drops dramatically

¹⁶¹ "Assad Regime Used Chlorine As a Chemical Weapon, Says US," The Guardian, last modified September 27, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/sep/26/syria-assad-chlorine-chemical-weapon>.

¹⁶² "US and Allies Launch Air Strikes on Syria," BBC News, last modified April 14, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43762251>.

¹⁶³ Addressing Security Council on Air Strikes against Syria, Secretary-General Reminds Members of Responsibility for Maintaining Peace, (New York: The United Nations, 2018), <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sgsm18990.doc.htm>.

¹⁶⁴ Carla E. Humud and Christopher M. Blanchard, Armed Conflict in Syria: Overview and U.S. Response, (Congressional Research Service, 2020), <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RI.33487.pdf>.

compared to the United States dollar. By June 2020, 515 Syrian pound equals 1 U.S. dollar.¹⁶⁵ This number was expected to drop further as the conflict still has not been settle. Due to the low-valued of the Syrian pound, some shops and pharmacies are keeping their door shut because they cannot deal with the traders.

Furthermore, in June 2020, the United States has imposed new sanctions on the Syrian government, which is the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act. The new sanction was predicted to hurt the Syrian economy due to inflation, and the shortages worsen Syrian poverty¹⁶⁶. Third, there is a war; there is a loss of human lives while some other people were abandoned and displaced. Syria was one of the most concerned battlefields that required humanitarian aids. By early 2019, approximately 13 million people needed humanitarian assistance, while 50 percents of them need it desperately¹⁶⁷. The country was divided due to the occupation of various armed groups, which led to many displacements and refugees. The report from the UN refugees Agency indicated that around 5.5 million Syrians are living as refugees in foreign lands, while at least 6.1 million others are internally displaced.¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, this bloody conflict has also claimed more than 380,000 lives in almost ten years, reported by the French24 News.¹⁶⁹ In short, even though the root cause of the Syrian civil war was not about the United States and

¹⁶⁵ "XE: Convert USD/SYP. United States Dollar to Syria Pound," The World's Trusted Currency Authority: Money Transfers & Free Exchange Rate Tools, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=1&From=USD&To=SYP>.

¹⁶⁶ Ben Parker, "Inflation, shortages worsen Syrian poverty on eve of new US sanctions," The New Humanitarian, last modified June 5, 2020, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2020/06/09/Syria-economic-crisis-currency-exchange-rate-crash-us-sanctions>.

¹⁶⁷ Humanitarian Update Syrian Arab Republic, (United Nation Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, 2019),<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Humanitarian%20Update%20No.%201%20February%2019%2C2019.pdf>

¹⁶⁸ "The Refugee Brief: 11 March 2020," The UN Refugees Agency, last modified March 11, 2020, <https://www.unhcr.org/refugeebrief/the-refugee-brief-11-march-2020/>.

¹⁶⁹ "Syria Death Toll Tops 380,000 in Almost Nine-year War: Monitor," France 24, last modified January 4, 2020, <https://www.france24.com/en/20200104-syria-death-toll-tops-380-000-in-almost-nine-year-war-monitor>.

Iran confrontation, the two countries have played a crucial responsibility in this bloody conflict as they have to provide supports to the opposing sides in the war.

4.1.4.2 Uprising Lebanese demonstration

The Lebanon crisis was also considered as the proxy battle between the United States and Iran. In early 2020, the demonstration in Lebanon was still going on because of the economic nightmare, high taxes, unemployment, and corruption. Currently, Lebanese do not have access to public services, 24/7 electricity, lag of clean water. The sewage system also failed the same as the garbages, which is dumped all over the country. Many shops, businesses, and stores are closed due to the low inflation of the country's economy. The lives of the Lebanese people were never recovered from the battle of foreign backers. There are two political alliances in Lebanon, which are March 8 and March 14, in which each of them has its foreign backers. The March 8 alliance is the Shia Hezbollah, which was supported by Iran, and Syria while the March 14 alliance is the former prime minister Saad Hariri, which was backed by Saudi Arabia and the United States.

Due to a rumble corruption, there have been many demonstrations, which demand government reform. After the prime minister Saad Hariri resigned, the opposing party claimed to form a new government. However, the protest was still going on in early 2020 despite the global pandemic. There are many critics on the new government, which was supported by the March 8 alliance (the Hezbollah, Iran's proxy militia). Hezbollah is the most powerful military in Lebanon, which was formed by the Shai fighters since the 1980s Lebanon civil war, and developed a strong tie with the Iranian IRGC. This group was designated as the terrorist organization by the United States since 1995. As this group has been involved actively in the many armed conflicts in the Middle East, including the Syrian civil war, the United States also imposed economic sanctions on Hezbollah and related Lebanese companies that involved in

with Assad's regime. Not only that, but the EU also blacklist this military group. Hence, the new government, which was believed to be backed by Hezbollah, was struggling received funds from the international community. In a simple explanation, Lebanon's economic crisis is closely related to the political struggle in the country with some related issues of Hezbollah and the United States. The tension escalated when President Trump imposed sanctions on three senior Hezbollah officials, including two members of Lebanese parliament in Lebanon, by accusing them of having support on the Iranian government.¹⁷⁰ On January 5, two days following the killing of major Iranian General, Hezbollah vowed to retaliate against the United States for the assassination¹⁷¹. One month later, the United States blacklisted several companies that they believed to be linked to Lebanon's Hezbollah, in another round of sanctions against Iran-backed organization.¹⁷² Apart from those sanctions, the Caesar Act in Syria also affects some Lebanese companies because Lebanon and Syria are jointly doing trade together, concerned by the Lebanese political circles.¹⁷³

The United States' economic sanctions on Hezbollah, along with the Caesar Act, obviously squeezed the Lebanese economy. The Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah of Hezbollah has acknowledged that the sanctions hurt them economically; however, they claimed to be used to it for years. He addressed that it is time that the Lebanese government has to look after its citizens under this particular circumstance. According to an associate professor of economics at the Lebanese American University, Walid Marrouch, Lebanon's economy is 70%

¹⁷⁰ Alan Rappeport, "U.S. Imposes Sanctions on Hezbollah Officials Accused of Supporting Iran," The New York Times, last modified July 9, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/09/world/middleeast/us-sanctions-hezbollah-iran.html>.

¹⁷¹ Timour Azhari, "Hezbollah Vows Retaliation Against US for Soleimani Killing," Al Jazeera News, last modified January 5, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/01/hezbollah-vows-retaliation-soleimani-killing-200105193320827.html>.

¹⁷² "US Imposes Sanctions Against Hezbollah-linked Lebanese Companies," Middle East Eye, last modified February 26, 2020, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/us-imposes-sanctions-against-hezbollah-linked-lebanese-companies>.

¹⁷³ Najai Houssari, "Lebanese MPs Warn Hezbollah over US sanctions," Arab News, last modified May 27, 2020, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1680416/middle-east>.

dollarized. He continued, “We are already living in a crisis, and it will only make it worse if Lebanon decides to stop abiding by U.S. Treasury Department orders. It is worth noticing that the United States’ sanctions were particularly wanted to hunt Hezbollah and to pressure the Lebanese government to stay away from this organization. In response, according to a journalist close to Hezbollah, Imad Marmal wrote that the group wants the Lebanese government to put forward the plan for countering American siege that will affect not only the Shiite community but it will hurt the whole nation’s economy. The United States wanted to hunt down Hezbollah by using economic pressure; however, it turned out to be different. The sanctions were hurt not only Hezbollah but also the whole of Lebanon’s economy.

4.1.4.3 The Double state conflict between Israel and Palestine

The conflict between Israel and Palestine boundaries has happened long ago since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Since then, the British took control of the territory and later on the left by giving Israel a state and giving Palestinian an independent, which was the started point of conflict. The conflict got involved by many countries, including the United States and many Arab countries. However, after the Six-days war between Israel and Arab countries, the Arab world gradually maintained good relations with Israel.

In the modern era, the double state conflict still has not been settled. The conflict was mainly about the Israeli settlement in West Bank, missiles raining by Hamas from Gaza, and the tension over the religious landmark, the Holy Jerusalem. There are new players involved in the conflict, including Hamas and Palestinian Jihad. Hamas was a Palestinian armed militia in Gaza, which has a strong tie with Iran. The Iran-backed group was the Islamic Jihad movement in Palestine, which is a second-largest militant-based Gaza strip. Israel was in the middle of the two West Bank and Gaza, which has been a closed ally with the United States.

Iran has actively supported both Hamas and Palestine Islamic Jihad to stand against Israel. Hamas and Palestine Islamic Jihad were two different militants' group, but both of them maintained a strong relationship with Iran. Hamas was the largest militant group that controlled the Gaza Strip apart from the Palestinian authority. Iran admitted to increasing support for Hamas to around \$30 million per month in August 2019 in exchange for the information on the location of Israel's missile stockpiles, reported by the Times of Israel¹⁷⁴. According to the same source, Iran has been a longtime financial donator of Hamas. Although Iran has financially supported Hamas, Hamas was not Iranian's puppet in the conflict with Israel, said by Karim Sadjadpour, a leading researcher on Iran¹⁷⁵. Although the two groups were supported by Iran and share the same enemy, both of them have different objectives in their armed struggle against Israel. Palestine Islamic Jihad was known as the Iranian proxy in Gaza. This group was politically, economically, and military influenced by Iran¹⁷⁶. The group has planned the many missiles strikes on Israel. The recent attack on November 12, 2019, Israel has assassinated one senior Islamic Jihad commander. This assassination has put Hamas on the fine-line between peace and war. Palestine Islamic Jihad responded by firing a hundred missiles to Israel and Israel answering by forces killing 34 Palestinians, reported by the New York Times¹⁷⁷. The two days of fighting have left Hamas to restrain from joining the conflict. At the same time, the

¹⁷⁴ Michael Bachner, "Iran Said Increasing Hamas Funding to \$30m Per Month, Wants Intel on Israel," The Times of Israel, last modified August 5, 2019, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/iran-agrees-to-increase-hamas-funding-to-30-million-per-month-report/>.

¹⁷⁵ Karim Sadjadpour, "Iran Supports Hamas, but Hamas Is No Iranian 'Puppet'," by Bernard Gwertzman, Council on Foreign Relations, last modified January 8, 2009, <https://www.cfr.org/israel/iran-supports-hamas-but-hamas-no-iranian-puppet/p18159>.

¹⁷⁶ Yossi Mansharof, "How Iran Funds Palestinian Islamic Jihad," Israel Defense, last modified February 24, 2020, <https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/42064>.

¹⁷⁷ David M. Halbfinger, "As Islamic Jihad and Israel Battled, Hamas, in a Twist, Sat on the Sidelines," The New York Times, last modified November 13, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/13/world/middleeast/gaza-israel-islamic-jihad.html>.

Palestine Islamic Jihad still seek for further confrontation with Israel as it was part of Iranian's regional strategy¹⁷⁸.

On the other hand, the United States has renewed its warm relation with Israel during the Trump administration. Some experts have suggested that the Israeli-American has been strengthened by fighting jihadism, while some others believed that it was the idea of democracy¹⁷⁹. This unique relationship allows made Israel received around \$118 billion over the years, calculated to over \$3 billion annually for the United States. According to the Institute for Policy Studies, the United States security assistance has mainly supported Israel not only against terrorism and related threat but also focus on aggressive policies in the regional threat, such as countering Iranian's influences¹⁸⁰. With the United States' supports, Israel becomes one of the most reliable military power in the region with well-equipped and best-trained soldiers, which qualified to stand against Iranian proxy not only in Israel but also in Lebanon and Syria. Furthermore, President Trump also recognized Israel's capital at Jerusalem by moving the U.S embassy there¹⁸¹. The United States' endorsement of Israel helps nothing to the peace between Israel and Palestine, but it just made the situation worst.

4.2 The Impact in the International community

In this twenty-first century, the world was considered a peaceful time. Although in the world was seen that way, there still many conflicts of interest clashed between the superpower countries and the uprising power countries, particularly the confrontation between the United

¹⁷⁸ Sirwan Kajjo and Mehdi Jedinia, "What Does the Recent Fighting in Gaza Mean for Iran?," Voice of America, last modified November 18, 2019, <https://www.voanews.com/extremism-watch/what-does-recent-fighting-gaza-mean-iran>.

¹⁷⁹ Michael Eisenstadt and David Pollock, "Friends with Benefits: Why the U.S.-Israeli Alliance Is Good for America," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, last modified November 7, 2012, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/friends-with-benefits-why-the-u.s.-israeli-alliance-is-good-for-america>.

¹⁸⁰ "U.S. Security Assistance to Israel," Institute for Policy Studies, last modified May 7, 2014, https://ips-dc.org/us_security_assistance_to_israel/.

¹⁸¹ "US Recognition of Jerusalem: Trump's Speech in Full," BBC News, last modified December 7, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-42264868>.

States and Iran. The previous chapter has already discussed the impacts of the conflict on the nearby countries, including Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Yemen, and Bahrain. However, this conflict has also affected the international community through many aspects, namely the impact on diplomatic relations among countries, fluctuated global economic, debatable International violation, and, most importantly, human rights.

4.2.1 International Politics instability

The conflict between the United States and Iran is confusing the world's diplomatic relations. Even though the United States and Iran have no formal diplomatic relations, both countries still have direct and indirect relations between each other. For instance, the relation which they had due to an agreement that signed since 2015, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. This agreement helped both countries to decrease their tension and confrontation. However, the deal was not here for a long time; after the new president of the United States, Donald Trump announced the withdrawal. The announcement of Trump's administration lead to the chaos of the international community, especially it caused an awful image of the United States to the other countries.

Looking back to 2015, the **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action**, the agreement of the P5+1 (U.S., UK, China, France, Germany, and Russia) with Iran which also known commonly as the Iran nuclear deal or Iran deal, is an agreement on the Iranian nuclear program reached in Vienna on July 14, 2015. The deal is to limit Iran's nuclear activities and allow in international inspectors. In return, the P5+1 country agreed to lift some sanctions (U.S. sanctions and EU sanctions) on Iran¹⁸² , which we can say that it can improve the diplomatic relation between countries base on the treaty.

¹⁸² Arms Control Association, "The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) at a Glance," Arms Control Association, last modified March 2018, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/JCPOA-at-a-glance>.

Even so, in 2018, President of the United States, **Donald Trump**, declared the withdrawal from the deal and claimed that it is the worst deal ever, and it is a waste of money¹⁸³. Despite all of the opposing from the signatory's countries that did not want him to withdraw from the deal, he still declared the withdrawal. Mr. Donald Trump announced that Iran is a leading state sponsor of terror and even and supports terrorist proxies and militias¹⁸⁴. He said that the previous administration signed the nuclear with Iran in order to protect American people and allies from the nuclear weapon of Iran. However, instead, the deal gave the benefit to Iran and gave Iran the chance to support the terrorist more than before¹⁸⁵. Trump claimed that the nuclear deal did not bring peace to the world, and it never will. Thus he decided to withdraw from it.

This decision is an impact on diplomatic relations as when the United States declared the withdrawal, not only the signatory's countries opposed the decision but also other countries, namely, middle-east countries and G20.

- **Signatory's countries that opposed:**

1. Iran: the president of Iran announced that the United States does not respect its commitment and claimed that the words from the president of the United States are cheap and petty¹⁸⁶.

¹⁸³ Mark Landler, "Trump Abandons Iran Nuclear Deal He Long Scorned," The New York Times, May 8, 2018, xx, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/08/world/middleeast/trump-iran-nuclear-deal.html>.

¹⁸⁴ Victoria Gatenby, "US calls Iran world's leading 'state sponsor of terrorism'," Aljazeera, November 2, 2019, xx, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/11/calls-iran-worlds-leading-state-sponsor-terrorism-191102153948052.html>.

¹⁸⁵ The New York Times, "Read the full transcript of Trump's speech on the Iran Nuclear Deal," The New York Times, May 2018, xx, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/08/us/politics/trump-speech-iran-deal.html?action=click&module=Intentional&pgtype=Article>.

¹⁸⁶ Khamenei.ir, "The presence and speech of the Revolution leader at Farhangian University," KHAMENEI.IR, last modified 2018, <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/news-content?id=39523>.

2. France, Germany, UK: the president from these three countries tried to change Mr. Trump's mind but still couldn't, and they said they regret the decision of Mr. Trump that he decided to withdraw from the deal¹⁸⁷.

3. Russia: Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, criticized the United States by saying that Washington is trying to revise vital international agreements¹⁸⁸.

4. China: China's foreign ministry announced that all parties should continue to uphold the Iran nuclear agreement¹⁸⁹, which shows that China did not support the idea of the withdrawal of the United States at all.

- **Middle-east countries that opposed:**

1. Jordan, Syria: Jordanian Foreign minister said that it is "dangerous repercussions" and a possible arms race in the Middle East¹⁹⁰ while the Syria foreign minister said that the withdrawal of the United States would create a severe tension to the world¹⁹¹.

- **Other countries that opposed:**

¹⁸⁷ BBC News, "Iran nuclear deal: Trump pulls US out in break with Europe allies," BBC News, May 9, 2018, xx, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-44045957>.

¹⁸⁸ Euronews, Reuters, and Associated Press, "Russian and Iranian foreign ministers discuss future of Iran nuclear deal," Euronews, n.d.xx, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://www.euronews.com/2018/05/14/russian-and-iranian-foreign-ministers-discuss-future-of-iran-nuclear-deal>.

¹⁸⁹ Reuters, "China reiterates call to continue upholding Iran nuclear deal," Reuters, May 2, 2018, xx, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-iran-china/china-reiterates-call-to-continue-upholding-iran-nuclear-deal-idUSKBN1I30ZX>.

¹⁹⁰ Reuters, "Jordan's foreign minister sees arms race if Iran nuclear deal ends," Reuters, May 8, 2018, xx, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-jordan-germany/jordans-foreign-minister-sees-arms-race-if-iran-nuclear-deal-ends-idUSKBN1I91FC>.

¹⁹¹ Reuters, "Syria 'strongly condemns' U.S. withdrawal from Iran nuclear deal," Reuters, May 9, 2018, xx, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-syria/syria-strongly-condemns-u-s-withdrawal-from-iran-nuclear-deal-idUSKBN1I931E>.

1. Turkey: Spokesman for Turkish President said that the decision by the United States would only cause instability, new conflicts to the world¹⁹², and even without the United States, the agreement would continue.

2. Switzerland: Swiss foreign ministry expressed concern over the United States withdrawal, but still, Swiss authorities will always respect the accord and do not change their position despite the United States decided to withdraw¹⁹³.

Then again, the consequence of this did not impact only the relation between the two countries but also impact the diplomatic relation with other countries as well. Due to the withdrawal of the United States from the nuclear deal, it discredited the United States from a trustworthy negotiating partner as the United States openly violate the provisions of the agreement and wreck the deal¹⁹⁴. On top of that, the UK, France, Germany, China, and Russia are still doing business with Iran company as well as they join Iran in accusing the United States to violate the agreement¹⁹⁵. By this, it reflects that the relationship between the United States with its allies is not in the right term; also, the United States already discredit itself from a trustworthy state.

4.2.2 World Economic

Due to its direct and indirect conflict, the two countries cause the world a pretty concern. After the withdrawal of JCPOA, U.S. was reinstating sanctions against Iran, and it caused Iran's economic collapse. However, how can the economics of Iran collapse have anything to do with

¹⁹² Reuters, "Turkey says U.S. decision on Iran deal will cause instability, new conflicts," Reuters, May 9, 2018, xx, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-trump-turkey/turkey-says-u-s-decision-on-iran-deal-will-cause-instability-new-conflicts-idUSKBN1I92XD>.

¹⁹³ Swissinfo, "Swiss still respect Iran nuclear deal despite US withdrawal," Swissinfo, May 8, 2018, xx, accessed June 14, 2020, https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/politics/foreign-policy_swiss-worried-about-us-withdrawal-from-iran-nuclear-deal/44105372.

¹⁹⁴ Dan Smith, "The US Withdrawal from the Iran Deal: One Year on," SIPRI, last modified May 7, 2019, <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/expert-comment/2019/us-withdrawal-iran-deal-one-year>.

¹⁹⁵ Mark Landler, "Trump Abandons Iran Nuclear Deal."

the world economy? Due to the sanctions from the United States, it is hard for Iran to export oil to other countries; thus, the country might consider that if Iran is not able to sell oil, then no one else should be¹⁹⁶.

In September 2019, the oil facility of Saudi Arabia - Saudi Aramco - was attacked by drones, which lead to no death, yet it impacted the loss of the world's economy. Saudi Aramco is one of the world's largest companies proven crude oil reserves, and the most significant daily oil production. According to Reuters News, "The attack cut 5.7 million barrels per day (BPD) of Saudi crude output, over 5 percent of the world's supply¹⁹⁷." Barber Financial Group also reported that "Oil prices saw the biggest move with West Texas Intermediate (WTI) oil futures rising by 15% the day of the attack¹⁹⁸." Also, NBC News reported that "Brent crude futures jumped nearly 20 percent, the biggest intraday percentage gain since the Gulf War in 1991, to a session high of \$71.95 a barrel at the opening, while U.S. crude futures surged more than 15 percent, to a session high of \$63.34 a barrel¹⁹⁹." Hence, due to the increase in oil prices, it led to the reduced economic growth for both Saudi Arabia and global. The attack of the Saudi Arabia oil facility was a concern to the world economy as the oil facility is not only used in the region but also imported to other countries like India²⁰⁰ and ASEAN countries²⁰¹.

¹⁹⁶ Omar Ahmed, "Was Iran really behind the attack on Saudi Aramco facilities?," MEMO Middle East Monitor, September 20, 2019, xx, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20190920-was-iran-really-behind-the-attack-on-saudi-aramco-facilities/>.

¹⁹⁷ Reuters, "Explainer: How the Saudi attack affects global oil supply," Reuters, September 16, 2019, xx, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-aramco-oil-global-explainer/explainer-how-the-saudi-attack-affects-global-oil-supply-idUSKBN1W11WH>.

¹⁹⁸ Barber Financial Group, "Saudi Oil Attacks Impact on the Global Economy," Barber Financial Group, last modified September 30, 2019, <https://barberfinancialgroup.com/saudi-oil-attacks-impact-global-economy/>.

¹⁹⁹ Yuliya Talmazan, "Oil prices spike after attack on Saudi facilities hits global supply," NBC News, September 16, 2019, xx, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/oil-prices-spike-after-attack-saudi-facilities-hits-global-supply-n1054691>.

²⁰⁰ Times of India, "How Saudi oil attack may impact India, global economies," Times of India, September 17, 2019, xx, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/how-saudi-oil-attack-may-impact-india-global-oil-supplies/articleshow/71162725.cms>.

²⁰¹ Jun Arima, "Saudi oil attack is wake-up call for Asian economies," Nikkei Asia Review, September 19, 2019, xx, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/Saudi-oil-attack-is-wake-up-call-for-Asian-economies>.

Few hours after the attack, the Houthi armed movement claimed responsibility for the attack and vowed that the next operation would be more extensive and painful²⁰². Even the Houthi armed movement announced to responsible, Saudi Arabia, and the United States believe that Iran was behind the attack, but Iran itself already denied any involvement of the attack²⁰³. According to U.S. officials, the attacks had come from a west-north-west direction - not Houthi-but launch sites in the northern Gulf, Iran, or Iraq²⁰⁴. Even so, the Iranian president claimed that his country has nothing to do with the attack and saying that the international community needs to have evidence to accuse Iran of the attack²⁰⁵.

Even so, how is it relevant to the conflict between the United States and Iran?

As we know, Saudi Arabia is viewed as the long-term oil reserves of the global oil market. On the other hand, Iran, due to sanctions, the country focuses more on the high price in order to help the standard of living of its people and view it as the short-term oil reserves. Moreover, Saudi Arabia is a close-tie ally with the United States, yet, Iran and the United States are a harsh enemy since 1979. Thus, as an ally of the United States and the enemy of the oil market, Saudi Arabia and Iran is not on a proper term.

²⁰² Aljazeera, "Houthi drone attacks on 2 Saudi Aramco oil facilities spark fires," Aljazeera, September 15, 2019, xx, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/09/drones-hit-saudi-aramco-facilities-fires-190914051900472.html>.

²⁰³ Martha Raddatz, "Iran fired cruise missiles in attack on Saudi oil facility: Senior US official," ABC News, September 16, 2019, xx, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://abcnews.go.com/International/iran-fired-cruise-missiles-attack-saudi-oil-facility/story?id=65632653>.

²⁰⁴ BBC News, "Saudi oil attacks: US says intelligence shows Iran involved," BBC News, September 16, 2019, xx, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-49712417>.

²⁰⁵ Dan De Luce, "Iran denies it staged attack on Saudi oil sites, demands proof," NBC News, September 27, 2019, xx, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/iran-denies-it-staged-attack-saudi-oil-sites-demands-proof-n1059211>.

4.2.3 Rule of Law

One of the consequences which impacted from U.S. and Iran conflict is brought doubts to international law and norms. In order to maintain global stability and peace, each country shall obey international law, however, if countries break the law, what will happen to the world?

In early 2020, U.S. drone strike in Iraq which killed Iranian major general Qassem Soleimani along with the nine others that included 5 Iraqi nationals. General Qassem Soleimani was considered as the second most powerful person in Iran after the Supreme Leader of Iran; thus, the assassination of him created more serious tension between U.S. and Iran. However, how can this assassination affect international law?

According to the United States Department of Defense, General Soleimani was actively developing plans to attack American diplomats and service members in Iraq and throughout the region. General Soleimani and his Quds Force were responsible for the deaths of hundreds of American and coalition service members and the wounding of thousands more²⁰⁶.

The U.S. justified the strike as an **act of self-defense** due to the reason that Qassem Soleimani had been plotting an attack on Americans²⁰⁷. However, according to the U.N. official in charge of examining targeted killings, Agnes Callamard, said that the United States did not share any specific detail which could involve Soleimani planning to attack and even under international human rights law, a country can attack as an act of self-defense only under

²⁰⁶ U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, "Statement by the Department of Defense," U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, last modified January 2, 2020, <https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Releases/Release/Article/2049534/statement-by-the-department-of-defense/>.

²⁰⁷ Andrew Chung, "U.S. 'self-defense' argument for killing Soleimani meets skepticism," Reuters, January 4, 2020, xx, accessed June 15, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-security-blast-legal-analysis/u-s-self-defense-argument-for-killing-soleimani-meets-skepticism-idUSKBN1Z301R>.

imminent attack²⁰⁸. However, according to Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, a state can only use the self-defense in the time of the imminent attack or shall use of force in another state's territory when an armed attack occurred only²⁰⁹. Also, the United States violated the principle of Jus ad Bellum as the principle clearly stated that the state could use force only when there are proper authority, right intention, reasonable hope, proportionality, and last resort²¹⁰. However, U.S. assassinated the top Iranian general alone without the UNSC authority and even without the consent of Iraq, which is violated the Iraqi territory.

Also, Prime Minister of Iraq - Adil Abdul Mahdi - said the killing of Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, which was killed alongside the General of Iran in the United States airstrike, violates the conditions for the presence of American troops in the country²¹¹ and also considered as an **act of aggression** too²¹².

Furthermore, the supreme leader of Iran announced, "severe revenge awaits the criminals" behind the attack²¹³, which showed that Iran is seeking for revenge due to the loss of General Qassem Soleimani. Later on, the Iranian Foreign Minister announced that the United

²⁰⁸ Ken Dilanian, "Was it legal for Donald Trump to order the killing of a top Iranian general?," NBC News, January 4, 2020, xx, accessed June 15, 2020, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/was-it-legal-donald-trump-order-killing-top-iranian-general-n1109961>.

²⁰⁹ Agnes Callamard, "The Targeted Killing of General Soleimani: Its Lawfulness and Why It Matters," Just Security, January 8, 2020, xx, accessed August 26, 2020, https://www.justsecurity.org/67949/the-targeted-killing-of-general-soleimani-its-lawfulness-and-why-it-matters/#_ftn3.

²¹⁰ Mere Agency, "A Brief Introduction to the Just War Tradition: Jus Ad Bellum," ERLC, last modified August 17, 2017, <https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/a-brief-introduction-to-the-just-war-tradition-jus-ad-bellum/>.

²¹¹ Jessie Yeung et al., "Iran's top general Soleimani killed in US strike," CNN, January 4, 2020, xx, accessed June 15, 2020, https://edition.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/baghdad-airport-strike-live-intl-hnk/h_55a8d7469d7b87207494e198f21c6c67.

²¹² Archit Shukla, "The Killing of General Soleimani – A Blatant Violation of International Laws," JURIST - Legal News & Commentary, last modified April 14, 2020, <https://www.jurist.org/commentary/2020/04/archit-shukla-general-soleimani-international-law/>.

²¹³ BBC, "Qasem Soleimani: Iran vows 'severe revenge' for top general's death," BBC, January 3, 2020, xx, accessed June 15, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-50986185>.

States would pay for the assassination and describe the airstrike as **an act of terrorism and act of war**²¹⁴.

As a result of this matter, the United States and Iran faced a severe confrontation with each other and gave grave concern to the international community. Only after five days of the airstrike, Iran launched missiles and attacked U.S. bases in return²¹⁵.

In short, the impact of the confrontation between the United States and Iran, resulting in breaking international law. As the United States killed people within Iraq territory without permission is violating International Law, the United States claimed that killing General Qassem Soleimani as self-defense. In contrast, Iran claimed it is an act of terror and an act of war.

With the breaking of the rule of law, many doubts raising and question about the outcome of what the United States had done, such as what happened to the United States when they killed Iranian general in another state territory? Where is the justice for the Iranian people who lost their top general and for the family who lost their beloved one? What is the use of international law or United Nations charters if the United States, which is the superpower country, killed people, and nothing happen to them?

4.2.4 Human rights

After Trump got elected as president of the United States, in January 2017, he signed an executive order 13769 to ban people from 6 countries, namely, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria, Yemen, and North Korea. The title of the executive order is Protecting the Nation from Foreign

²¹⁴ Scott Neuman, "Iran's Foreign Minister: U.S. Strike On Soleimani An Act Of Terrorism And War," NPR, January 7, 2020, xx, accessed June 15, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/01/07/794150712/irans-foreign-minister-u-s-strike-on-soleimani-an-act-of-terrorism-and-war>.

²¹⁵ The Guardian, "Iran launches missiles at Iraq airbases hosting US and coalition troops," The Guardian, n.d.xx, accessed June 15, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/08/suleimani-assassination-two-us-airbases-in-iraq-hit-by-missiles-in-retaliation>.

Terrorist Entry into the United States as known as the Muslim ban due to the six countries mostly are the Muslim majority countries. It was known as the first horrific discriminatory policies under the Trump administration due to the executive order trample upon U.S. commitments to religious freedom, non-discrimination, and refugee protection²¹⁶.

The Muslim ban seems to target Iranian people as Trump administration approved only 2.9 percent of the applications by Iranians seeking to be reunited with their family living in the United States between December 2017 and March 2019²¹⁷. This could reflect that Trump administration set the target to ban Iranian people from entering or visit the United States. Moreover, in early January, a U.S. border officer said that he was instructed to target and interrogate Iranian-born travelers to enter the United States²¹⁸. According to CBC News, “Iranian-Canadian and his family of four adults were headed to the Peace Arch border crossing Saturday morning. When they arrived at the border, he said they were told to go inside by U.S. border patrol agents. Their passports were confiscated, and they were questioned for hours about birthplaces, family members, schooling, work histories — the same questions being asked over and over again. Finally, they were released to go back to Canada at 7:30 p.m. PT — 8.5 hours after they had arrived.²¹⁹”

²¹⁶ Human Rights First, "Stop Trump's Muslim Refugee Ban," Human Rights First, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/campaigns/stop-refugee-ban>.

²¹⁷ Dean Obeidallah, "Donald Trump Loves the Iranian People So Much He's Banned Them From the U.S.," Daily Beast, January 16, 2020, xx, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/donald-trump-loves-the-iranian-people-so-much-hes-banned-them-from-the-us>.

²¹⁸ Sophai Harris, "U.S. border officers were told to target Iranian-born travellers, officer alleges in email," CBC News, January 23, 2020, xx, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/u-s-border-peach-arch-crossing-iranian-travellers-cbp-1.5436384>.

²¹⁹ Cathy Kearney, "Iranian-Canadians say they were detained, interrogated at U.S. border crossing," CBC News, January 5, 2020, xx, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/iranian-canadians-detained-interrogated-at-us-border-1.5415782>.

According to ICCPR, Article 2(1), Article 18, Article 23(1), Article 26, and Article 27 are directly related to the issues²²⁰ , which means that the United States used the Muslim ban that violated the Human Rights.

Article 2(1): each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to respect and to ensure to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the present Covenant, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Article 18: Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice, and teaching.

Article 23(1): the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and the State.

Article 26: all persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this respect, the law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Article 27: in those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.

²²⁰ OHCHR, OHCHR | International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, (United Nation Human Right, n.d), accessed June 14, 2020, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>.

To conclude, the ban of the six countries to enter the United States, which is known as the Muslim ban due to the countries are Muslim majority, affects the immigrant and also the image of the United States as a whole. According to data from the United States State Department, the number of visas issued for the country of Iran decreased by 92% between 2017 and 2018, Somalia experienced 86% decrease in the number of visas issued, Yemen's visas reduced by 83%, Libya and Syria are decreasing by 80% and 77% respectively²²¹. This show that the United States ban the Muslim majority countries from entering the countries might violate the Human Right.

²²¹ Vahid Niayesh, "Statistics Show That Trump's "travel Ban" Was Always a Muslim Ban," Quartz, last modified October 29, 2019, <https://qz.com/1736809/statistics-show-that-trumps-travel-ban-was-always-a-muslim-ban/>.

CHAPTER 5: THE ANALYSIS OF THE UNITED STATES AND IRAN RELATIONSHIP

The previous chapters have already been discussed about the impacts of the tension between the United States and Iran. Within this chapter, there will be an analysis of the relation between the United States and Iran based on the personal understanding of the writers, primary data collected in the interviews, and the secondary data. In order to deeply analyze the relationship in more detail, there will be four analytical themes to be discussed. After discussing the nature of the relation between the two states, the research also aims to provide some recommendations to ease the tension.

5.1 Analysis of the Relation between the United States and Iran

5.1.1 The Underlying Causes of the tension between the two countries

As have been discussed in Chapter 2, the tension between the two countries has long been started since the 1970s. The causes of the relation can be the political differences between the superpower and the emerged regional power. Before the 1979 Iranian Revolution, there was also a coup d'état contributed by the CIA of the United States and the MI6 of the U.K in the plotting against Iranian prime minister and restored the Iran monarchy. The action has shown clearly that the superpower like the United States has seen its interest in this significant power states in the Middle East since that time. Noticeably at the time, the United States and Iran had shared the same political view as they were an alliance. However, the Shah of American did not last long. Until 1979, the Iranian people grew furious and urged to demise their king and replaced by Iranian Supreme Leader Ruhollah Khomeini. The causes of the Iranian Revolution were mainly about the criticism of the Shah being an American's puppet ruler, which was marked as the political tension between the United States and Iran. When there was a regime change, the new Iranian administration was no longer interested in American policies, which

made the relation robust. A similar perspective was also mentioned by the participants in the interview conducted by this research. Four out of the seven participants also shared their perspective that the root causes of the tension started from the conflict of political interests. One of the participants argued in his own words, "...When leader change, they have different perspectives and follow different policies..."²²²

However, some perspectives are saying that the causes of such tensions related to the economic interests and unfriendly relations. Three out of seven participants shared the same view. One among them continued that it also related to the unfriendly relations in the past. Although the overlapping economic interest and robust relations can be the causes that escalate the tensions, the political differences were still the root cause of the confrontation. As already mentioned, the started point of the tension was the time of the 1979 Iranian revolution, which caused the two states could not work together. The revolution has shut down the ways to reunite the two countries' diplomacy. Hence, since then, Iran and the United States have shared different political views, which cause many contraries and tensions in trading, formal diplomacy, and as much as military tensions.

All in all, the tension was caused by the dominant behavior of the superpower country like the United States toward the emerged significant power state like Iran in the Middle East. The dominant behavior was sometimes working things out, which is referred to as the 1953 Coup d'état and the friendly relations in the 1950s to 1970s. However, once the dominant behaviors reach its maximum pressure, the relationship could turn into a disaster, which refers to the tension that started since the 1979 Iranian Revolution until nowadays.

²²² Retrieved from the data interviewed with Student 1. (For more information, please refer to Appendix 5: Interview Transcript)

5.1.2 The impacts of the tensions and the potential of International involvement

As the research has already indicated, the impacts are severe affect both regional and international community in security as well as economic aspects. The tension has created many proxy warfares that left thousands of lives in the grief. Besides the regional security and stability, the tension also impacts the global economy due to the economic sanctions on the oil trading industry of Iran, who is one of the biggest oil suppliers. According to their responses answers from the interview, all of the interviewees agreed that the impacts of the tension were severe and spill effects over the countries in the Middle East and beyond to the international community in both security and economically. Among the seven participants, one interviewee shared his idea as following "...the impacts also go beyond to the economic aspects as the tension has involved sanctions. So, for me, I think the impacts were serious and noticeable..."²²³

As the impacts are seriously spreading throughout the Middle East and even beyond to the international community, whether or not should the international community put more serious attention to it. As the situation of the tension has become more critical in recent years, it should be concerned more from the international community. Although it was the tensions of two states, the impacts of the tension have grown beyond the two states' affairs, which is why it needs third parties from the international community, specifically the UNSC, UNICEF, WTO, OHCHR and other relevant international bodies. Similarly, four participants in the interview also agreed that the impacts of the tension were severe, and the international community should pay more attention to it.

²²³ Retrieved from the data interview with Official 2. (For more information, please refer to Appendix 5: Interview Transcript)

5.1.3 The Legal discussion on the assassination of Iranian Top General, Qassem

Soleimani

After the killing of Qassem Soleimani (Section 3.1.2.1), the United States claimed that it was self-defense. On the other hand, Iran vowed severe revenge by claiming that it was a murder. The question should be as was whether or not the assassination is justified.

Talking about the self-defense in *Jus ad bellum* principle, the first thing we have to look into is the imminent threat. The U.S. has claimed to prove that Qassem was actively plotting in the region to take action; however, there is no concrete evidence to be publicly disclosed. Technically speaking, the assassination was not self-defense. First, the United States could not reveal the shreds of evidence proving the imminent threats or demonic attack by Qassem Soliemani. Second, the action was conducted in the individual form and not collectively. Third, the United States has not informed any information in advance to the international community, its congress, Iraq, nor Iran's authority. The similar claim raised by one participant in the research interview, He mentioned that "...Talking about legality, I do not think it was self-defense because the United States fails to provide any evidence to prove the imminent threat caused by Qassem in his visit to Iraq..."²²⁴ There were also many disagreements on how to characterize the killing as self-defense from many experts in the international field. "I think the best definition would be either one of assassination or murder," Gary Solis, a retired Marine who taught on the laws of war at West Point, tells NPR. He says what happened is comparable to Iran killing a high-ranking U.S. military official with a bomb on U.S. soil.²²⁵

²²⁴ Retrieved from the interview data with Official 2 (For further information, please refer to Appendix 5: Interview transcript)

²²⁵ Merrit Kennedy and Jackie Northam, "Was It Legal For The U.S. To Kill A Top Iranian Military Leader?," National Public Radio, last modified January 4, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/01/04/793412105/was-it-legal-for-the-u-s-to-kill-a-top-iranian-military-leader>.

Another claimed was that the action could be claimed as a lawful execution during an armed conflict. Ashley Deeks claimed as a legal professor that "As a legal matter, if he were intimately involved in planning and blessing these attacks, then that does not seem to render it as assassination."²²⁶ Although that was true that the action can be defined as a lawful execution based on the specific pieces of information or imminent threats by Qassem, the United States also has to follow or respect article 2 of the UN Charter, stating clearly that the self-defense action shall proceed collectively. Plus, there is no evidence showing that Qassem was plotting a sinister action against the United States, which fail to claimed self-defense in both article 51 of the UN Charter and the *Jus ad bellum* principles. Therefore, the drone strike killing top Iranian general was an assassination of foreign personnel on foreign soil.

5.1.4 The relation between the two states

Deeply analyze, the United States is the one that has emerged dominant and caused the rise of tension with Iran. As we have discussed many times before, the tension escalated from the political differences started by the U.S in the 1953 coup in Iran. Later on, Iran rises and tackled back in the Iranian Revolution 1979. No difference in the Trump administration, the United States started the setback of relation by banning the travel of Iranian citizens to the United States, withdrawing from the JCPOA, designating Iran-linked military as terrorists, and assassinating the Iranian top general. These actions provoked Iran's anger, and it has become the setback in the relation between the two, which has been tried to rebuild by the previous administration.

The relation between the two countries is not secure at the moment of writing. The relations were on the brink of war in early 2020, and it will remain the same until there are changes in either side. Based on the interview related to the nature of the relations between the

²²⁶ Kennedy and Northam, " Was It Legal For The U.S. To Kill A Top Iranian Military Leader?."

two states, all of the interviewees described the relationship as being unhealthy in the current situation. Most of the participants also concerned about the possibility of war that could happen between the United States and Iran. In recent months, President Trump is conducting the strategy so-called “maximizing pressure policy” toward Iran, which aims to suffocate Iran’s economy in hopes of forcing its government to get back on nuclear negotiation. Such action was considered as the rigid power policy, which might somehow create more tension rather than reducing it. Iran responds by a series of escalatory military operations, which President Trump would refrain from responding consequentially. Instead, the President has retaliated by assassinated the Iranian General, which cast a further tension with Iran in the Middle East. Compared to the previous administration, President Trump did not try to engage with Iran, but instead, he tried to push Iran to come by itself to negotiate a new deal on Iranian Nuclear potential. It was also worth noticing that the more United States push Iran, the further the relation and the more tension they have.

All in all, the relation between the two states is dysfunctional at the time of writing. The relation can also be described as an abusive relationship by both sides. The United States has put much economic pressure, while Iran tries to harm the United States’ interests and its allies in the Middle East.

5.1.5 The Way Forward

After discussing the analysis of the relations (Section 5.1.4), the relation between the two states is not healthy at the time, and it would remain unhealthy until there is a change in the administrations in both or one side of the two states. Even though the relationship could be better in the next administration, the hostility between the states might not forgive and forget by Iran’s side. As the current administration in the United States had already exited the limit line, it would not be any easy for the next administration to conciliate with Iran in order to rebuild or normalize the relation. In the interview asked relatively toward the way forward of

the tension, one participant provide an interesting answer. He replied as follows, “I think it depends on the state of the country after the election and who is in the and power, and what is their overall foreign policy? But personally, the relation won’t easily normalize...”²²⁷

Talking about the war possibility, it was less likely to happen because, after the assassination and the missile retaliation, both sides have appeared to stand down. If the two states trying to pursue war, they would not stand down and will take an aggressive more against one another. It was less likely to happen, but it does not mean that there is no possible sign of war. As mentioned above, the relation between the two states is on the brink of war. If there is one side trying to further act aggressively toward one another, the possibility of war will increase due to the strong military capability of both sides. One participant from the interview related to the possibility of war said that “... This is a payback and it still not equivalent to the United States’s assassination. Iran will have to seek further revenge if the United States still curries the harsh policy toward Iran...”²²⁸. Despite the actual war directly between the two countries, there have been many proxy conflicts, which were backed by both sides in the Middle East. Those conflicts will further spread the impacts directly and indirectly to the countries in the Middle East and beyond if it would not stop. It was also worth noticing that amid of global pandemic of COVID-19, the United States and Iran got their hand full of internal affairs rather than foreign policy.

Overall, the next move between the two states cannot be defined at the time; however, it would not easy for the next administration to normalize the relations in the future. The same thing applies to the possibility of war, and there is no specific answer. However, the relation was already on the brink of war. If there is one mistake or aggressive move by one side, it would

²²⁷ Retrieved from the data interviewed American Citizen (For further information, please refer to Appendix 5: Interview Transcript)

²²⁸ Retrieved from the data interviewed Official 1 (For further information, please refer to Appendix 5: Interview Transcript)

be a full scale of war or even an alliance war, including essential and powerful allies from both sides.

RECOMMENDATION

Before finishing the research study, there are also some recommendations to the topic in order to ease the tension, help recuse the s, and rebuild the relation. The recommendations will be divided into three categories regarding the actors that should be involved to ease the tension and help conciliate the rivalry.

- **The Conflict parties**

There are ways to release the tension between the two states by themselves. First, the United States shall reengage in the Nuclear deal and lift economic sanctions on Iran. The United States shall reconsider the option in order to ease the tension. As when the Nuclear deal reestablished and sanctions lifted, Iran's economy will be rescued, and therefore, the tension is somehow climb down to the lower level. Although the mistake about assassination will not easily forget, the severe revenge would at least less likely to happen. Second, both parties shall establish the people's connectivity with one another. The power of people to people connectivity is beyond imaginable. The United States shall lift the travel ban from Iran (Executive Order 13769) and trying to make more engagement with Iranian people just like the previous administration has done before. Lastly, in order to ease the tension, the conflict parties shall establish direct talk to one another. Direct talk here does not mean formal diplomacy, but instead, it is like a negotiation platform between the two countries. The matters that are concerned between the two countries should be raised and addressed directly back and forth in order to eliminate the misunderstandings. Iran, on the other hand, shall keep the grief on one side and trying to think of the future that is coming. Iran will continue to suffer economically further if the sanctions are still laid down. Hence, the direct talk might somehow make things work between the two countries amid tension.

- **International Bodies**

As the tension emerged since 2017, the international community shall put more affords into the tension. Based on the impacts discussed in the previous chapters, there are many warfare, humanitarian needs, and financial supports for the significant population in the Middle East, regardless of Sunni, Shai, Islam, and Christian. Many people are suffering in the middle of constant warfare due to the increasing proxy wars. The International bodies, such as UNICEF, OHCHR, World Bank, IMF..., shall take a closer look at the situations and provides humanitarian assistance, financial needs, and the solutions to lift the tension between the two states. Moreover, as being mentioned in the previous that there are many proxy conflicts and human rights violations, the relevant international bodies, such as the UNSC, ICC, and ICJ, shall investigate to resolve the tension or at least prevent the situation from spreading larger. Lastly, the IAEA shall also keep an inspection of Iran's nuclear capability. As Iran Nuclear program is also the growing concern to both regional and international stability, it is also related to the increasing tension with the United States.

- **Friendly Alliances**

Lastly, there still have ways to de-escalate the tension between the United States and Iran by third-party alliances. The European allies—France, Germany, and Switzerland—and some of the more independent parties in the Gulf, such as Oman, could act as mediators, a host meeting, negotiator for the conflict parties. These countries have maintained the best relations with both sides and might have potential or influence to avert the conflict. They should take a neutral side in listening to the conflict parties, which could somehow ease the tension between the two states.

CONCLUSION

Answer to the Main Finding

As have been analysed above, The United States and Iran have a long-confused relation due to the political differences. The relations can be described as robust in recent years. In early 2020, the relations were on the brink of war, which have concerned not only the countries in the middle but also the international community. Despite those critical situations, the tension also spills effects over themselves, the countries in the Middle East, and beyond to the International Community in both politics and economics.

The impacts of the conflict between these two countries are awful for the Middle-East as well as for the world. First, the United States faced with the criticism of Trump withdrawal from the JCPOA and make the world diplomacy unstable. Also, the countries in Middle-East, such as Iran and Lebanon, both suffer from the economic crisis, which they struggle due to the sanctions from the United States Iran which is the enemy of the United States, suffer from many sanctions which crumble their economic while Lebanon which suffer from the economic crisis after the U.S impose sanctions due to their political that was support by Iran. Moreover, Saudi Arabia and Iraq are faced with confusing diplomacy due to the influence of Iran and the U.S in their countries. The fact that Saudi and the U.S are allied with each other already could tell that Saudi and Iran were not on the right side, and they even have the problem in the oil industry in Middle-East due to both countries are the leading state which provides the oil. As for Iraq, in the middle of the confrontation between the United States – the one who provide Iraq the protection and Iran- the one who had been a friend for 5000 years is hard to take on any side. Furthermore, Yemen, Bahrain, Syria, Israel, and Palestine face the long run confrontation, and Iran and the United States supported those countries by providing them the weapon and military

to fight against each other. While the United States and Iran support each of their allies, it helps nothing but only worsens the situation.

Therefore, there is no doubt that the confrontation between the United States and Iran is the concern for the Middle-East region as well as for the world due to the impacts that came from the conflict of both countries.

Recommendation for Further Research

This research is not a pragmatic study; thus, further research should understand more about the foreign policy of the United States and Iran toward each other due to the different periods. Notably, the ongoing conflict, both direct and indirect conflicts, need to take into account in order to discuss its impacts seriously. There would be more uprising events related to the topic, which have not been happening at the time of writing. Therefore, some data both primary and secondary would also need to be up-to-date due to different time frames of the researches.

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APPENDIX 1. EXPLANATORY STATEMENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

Royal University of Law and Economics Department of International Relations

Dear

We are the senior students at Royal University of Law and Economics undertaking the bachelor degree of International Relations. We are, **Phong Panharith and Ear Chansovisa**. We are undertaking a graduate thesis at Royal University of Law and Economics. The title of my research is: “ The United States and Iran Political and Military confrontation in the Middle East in contemporary international relations”.

The main objectives of this research are (1) to understand the root cause of the tensions between the United States and Iran, (2) to discuss about interviewees’ perspectives on the impacts of the confrontation between the United States and Iran in the Middle East (3) to seek for suggestions and possible solutions that are expected to ease the tension between the two states.

In order to achieve the above objectives, I will be interviewing students from the related fields, such as International Relations, International Studies or the Studies of Global Affairs, local experts from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that are currently working on the related topics, and American citizens that are concerning on the topic above. The interviewees will be arranged into three separated groups as students, local experts, and citizens of America. The credential of students group is based on the Academic study in the related fields. Therefore, it might be useful as to represent the students’ views on the topic. Local experts will considered as the someone who have experiences in the global affairs related to the topic. The local experts include the official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia. The last group is the Americans. The data gathered from the last group is based on the their own perspectives as the American citizens and it was regardless of professional jobs. The data will be represented the Americans’ view on the topic but not for any organization or any governments’ organs.

As you are considered one of the above selected interviewees, We are inviting you to participate in my research. Your participation will involve answering a series of questions based on your experience and your views regarding the research topic mentioned above. The interview will take approximately between 30 to 45 minutes. Your participation in this research is of a voluntary basis, and you may reserve the right to withdraw yourself from this research at any time.

We assure you that no findings which could identify any individual participant will be published. Only the investigators of this project will have access to the data. The data collected will be analyzed for this project, and the results may appear in academic publications. However, the data collected will be treated in a way that protects the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

Should you have any questions regarding this research project, please do not hesitate to contact me through our email: phongpanharith@gmail.com, chansovisaear@gmail.com.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Phong Panharith,

Ear Chansovisa,

International Relations students

Royal University of Law and Science Economics

APPENDIX 2. CONSENT FORM

Royal University of Law and Science Economics

Prescribed Consent Form for Persons Participating In Research Projects Involving Interviews, Questionnaires, Focus Groups or Disclosure of Personal Information

UNIVERSITY **Royal University of Law and Science Economics**

DEPARTMENT OF **International Relations**

Name of participant: _____

Research Topic: **The United States and Iran Military and Political tension in the Middle East in the contemporary International Relation**

Name(s) of investigators:

(1) Phong Panharith Phone: +85577215810 EMAIL: phongpanharith@gmail.com

(2) Ear Chansovisa Phone: +85517998536 EMAIL: chansovisaear@gmail.com

1. I have received a statement explaining the interview/questionnaire involved in this project.
2. I consent to participate in the above project, the particulars of which - including details of the interviews or questionnaires - have been explained to me.
3. I authorize the investigator or his or her assistant to interview me or administer a questionnaire.
4. I give my permission to be audio taped/photographed Yes/No (delete if inapplicable)
5. I give my permission for my name or identity to be used Yes/No
6. I acknowledge that:
 - a) Having read the Plain Language Statement, I agree to the general purpose, methods and demands of the study.
 - b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.
 - c) The project is for the purpose of research and/or teaching. It may not be of direct benefit to me. The privacy of the information I provide will be safeguarded. The privacy of the personal information I provide will be safeguarded and only disclosed where I have consented to the disclosure or as required by law. If I participate in a focus group I understand that whilst all participants will be asked to keep the conversation confidential, the researcher cannot guarantee that other participants will do this.

d) The security of the research data is assured during and after completion of the study. The data collected during the study may be published, and a report of the project outcomes will be provided to my supervisor and the examination committee. Any information which may be used to identify me will not be used unless I have given my permission (see point 5).

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I, _____, have read the information above, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions. I have been asked and answered to my gratification. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study “**The United States and Iran military and political tension in the Middle East in the modern International Relation**”. My signature below demonstrates my consent.

Participant’s Consent

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(Participant)

APPENDIX 3. INDICATIVE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following list provides an indication of the type of questions asked, although the wording and order of questions varied according to the circumstances of each interview. Interviews were conducted in English.

I. Background Information of interviewees

1. Could you please tell me your position and a little bit of your background on your experience in IR field?
2. Have you ever heard or read any thing related to the United States and Iran tension in the Middle East?

II. The Root cause of the tension between the United States and Iran

3. What do you think are the underlying causes of the United States and Iran in the Middle East?
4. Why does United States focus much in the Middle East affairs?
5. Why does Iran want to counter the United States' involvement in the Middle East and impose the anti-American movement in the region?

III. The perspectives and personal opinion on the impacts of the confrontation between the United States and Iran in the Middle East

6. What do you think about the impacts of the US and Iran tension? Should the international community concerned about this uprising tension?
7. What make US kill Qassem Soleimani in the early 2020? In your opinion, was it legal for the United States to do so?

IV. The suggestions and possible solutions that are expected to ease the tension between the two states

8. What will be the next step for the United States and Iran relation? Is it getting worst or better in the future? Could it be a full scale of war between the United States and Iran?
9. In your opinion, what should be the way to release the tension between the two states?

APPENDIX 4. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Sector	Interviewees	Number
Students	Royal University of Law and Science Economics, Department of International Relations, Year 4 students	2
	Institute of Foreign Languages, Department of International Studies, Year 3 students	2
Local Experts	Officials at Ministry of Foreign Affairs	2
Americans	Lecturer at Royal University of Law and Science Economics	1
	Total	7

APPENDIX 5: THE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

- **The underlying causes of the tension between the two countries**

Student 1: I think the underlying cause of the tension is about the national interests. When leader change, they have different perspective and follow different policies, in which causing the political tension. Iran is the strategic geography for oil industry, which attract U.S attention. On the other hand, Iran feel being take advantages of and started the revolution on Shah, who they think as U.S's puppet.

Student 2: From what i have read about the United States and Iran, the root casue of the tension is that: In 1950s, the relations between the two is good. However, after the Iranian revolution, Iran has captured US diplomatic staffs as hotages, which is the started point of tension and started developing until nowadays.

Student 3: The root cause of the tension was obviously about the political interest between the two states over the Middle East region. The United States, which is the power player in international arena wanted to increased their influences while in the middle East, Iran, after the Iranian revolution, changed it attitude toward the United States and act agasint the american's interest in order to encounter the American movement in the region. It also worth to notice that Iran has also emerged to become one of the significant countries in the middle east that have played major influences in the political aspect of the region.

Student 4: The relationship between US and Iran has always been a tricky one. The conflict has been going for many years through many administrations of office. Since the two countries does not share the same political views, it cannot see eye to eye. The tension mostly came from the different political view and since Iran is a Muslim country which limited the human right, thus the relation with the US, which is a democratic country, is far from ideal.

Official 1: In my opinion, the underlying causes of the US and Iran in the Middle East is what happened during the 1970s Iranian revolution and genuinely escalated more complicated in the early 2020. As we have noticed, after the revolution, Iran has completely wipe out all the relations with the United States. The two states share none formal diplomatic relation since that day onward. Until 2018, the relation was on the brink of breakpoint when President Trump withdraw from the JCPOA, and in the early 2020 the killing of an Iranian high rank general Qassem Soleimani that was done by the US has also caused thing to more out of hands.

Official 2: Personally, the root cause of the tension was obviously related to the revolution in the 1979 in Iran. If we investigated further, we would notice about the CIA and MI6 activities in the Iranian coup in 1953. After the coup, the United States restore the Shah power in Iran, which later got demised by the Iranian people, and got replaced by the Iranian supreme leader, Ruhollah Khomeini. From that spot onward, the relation between the two countries was cursed. Iran try to counter American movement while the United States trying to stop the Iran's influence in the region.

American Citizen: ...like US reliant on oil from the Middle-East was also another tension, I said like they wanted to secure oil supply and so part of that was economically motivated and like also the fact that Iran has nuclear capabilities was also a concern for America which was like the imminent threat but no nuclear weapon actually found there. Anyway, that Iran having

nuclear weapon was seen as very threaten to the American interest as well as the security in the region, in which the United States concerned.

- **The perspectives toward the impacts of the confrontation between the United States and Iran**

Student 1: The tension affects many countries, including Iran and the United States themselves. The impacts was seriously affect the economy of the related countries in the middle east and also go beyond to the many other countries that dealing with oil industry in the Middle East due to the security of trading line and economic sanction on the oil producer...

Student 2: The tension is spill over the middle east region and create the proxy wars, which cause stabilities to the peace in the Middle East. Such an exple can be seen in the Yemen crisis and Syrian Civil war. It also related to the nuclear potential of Iran, which will threaten the regional security as well as the international peace...

Student 3: As we have seen recently, the tension has caused many unstability as well as security in the middle east. It also gose beyond to economic impacts not only in the middle east, but also the international enomic as because Middle East is one of the big oil producors in the world...

Student 4: ... It's a huge impact on the world peace and safety as there were already proxy armed conflicts have taken placed. The tension may lead to further tension directly between the two states and even a full-scale of war could happened if the situation keep getting worse. Moreover, the United States possessed the nuclear weapon while Iran has potential nuclear capability. The more tension between the two rise, the more concerned about the regional and international security it is.

Official 1: The tension between the US and Iran is every bad and it will result in many impacts on the world's security and peace. As we can see, the situation in the Middle East is now a constant warfare between two or more parties that was directly and indirectly related to the two rival states (the United States and Iran). Not only that but also the economic impacts due to the strict sanction by the United States on the oil industry in Iran and other related partners.

Official 2: Well, the impacts of the tension were widespread in the Middle East as the United States and Iran have played different roles in the conflicts. Whether it is the demonstration between the citizens or the rebel groups against the authority or between the rival states, the impacts were obviously affect the regional security and threaten the lively hood of local citizens. For instance, the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Jihad in the Gaza strip causes major impacts on countries' security. More interestingly, the impacts also goes beyond to the economic aspects as the tension has involved sanctions. So, for me, I think the impacts were serious and noticeable...

American Citizen: This is just my opinion on it, the United States has gone to far in the foreign policy. which means like we're trying to do too many things in too many places and I feel like that is in some senses like where we do good that is good thing for people asked us to be there and (we're) honest to be there, I think that's okay and places where it's clearly not wanted and not wanted and people don't want us there then we shouldn't be in those places.

When American try to involved in those conflicts, the more armed conflicts has happen and the more threat it spread along with the unstable security. Such action can be seen in the Yemen bombing and Syria war for instance.

- **The assassination of Iranian Top General, Qassem Soleimani**

Student 1: the United States fears that Qassem would be an imminent threat to the United States' interest in the middle east due to the strong network between Qassem and other proxy fighter in the region. Moreover, it also depend on the aggressive policy of United States' 47th president, who used the harsh policy toward Iran since his early term as president, started from withdrawing from JCPOA and many military action against Iran in foreign countries.

Student 2: Based on the information i gathered, the United States claimed that Qassem is a dangerous individual inside the middle east region. He is one of the most powerful people after the Iranian supreme leader, who will deal with spreading Iran's influence in the region. such evidence can be proofed by the network that Qassem has supported the Hezbollah fighter in Lebanon to counter American movement in the region. Thus, U.S. concluded that he is a threat to the peace process in the middle east, which is the reason why U.S chose to eliminate him. Talking about the legality, I think the United States has fail to claim as self-defence because the United States shall inform the international community, specifically the UNSC before the striking.

Student 3: Personally, the reason that the United States eliminate the top iranian general is because Qassem was one of the active player in the middle east's affair. IF we do a deep research about his activities in the middle east, we will see how important this individual to many uprising movements and armed organisation in many countries in the middle east, shortlisted from Hezbollah, Hamas, Hudthi, which were all designated as terrorists by the United States Whether it is lawful or not? If we evaluate the action, the United States fail to claims the criteria of self-defence.

Student 4: For years, whether it be in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria or elsewhere, Soleimani has been a key instigator in expanding and extending Iran's influence through planning attacks or bolstering Tehran's local allies. He was accused of plotting attacks on the US diplomats and other relevant figures. About the legality of this action, I think the U.S has claimed as the self-defense. If the United States had informed the Iraqi government or the congress before the attack, the United States wouldn't have succeed the assassination of Iranian General as he might have informed about the plotting.

Official 1: According to statement of the US's government and the president, Donald Trump, the killing of Qassem Soleimani was an act of self-defense and anti-terrorism. The US claimed that Soleimani was behind the attack on the US embassy in Baghdad, Iraq. They also said that General Soleimani was planning the attack on the US in form of terrorism and that's why the US ordered the execution of the Iranian general.

Official 2: I did heard about the assassination. According to the International political analysts, the United States afraid of the Qassem's influence in the Middle East as well as the strong relation he had with many extremist fighters in the Middle East. The United States also claimed that qassem Soliemani has also planned attacks on American diplomats and service members

in Iraq. Talking about legality, I don't think it was a self-defence because the United States fail to provide an evidence to prove the imminent threat caused by Qassem in his visit to Iraq.

American Citizen: Yes, I did hear about that. I don't have all the information but I feel like that wasn't necessary. The current administration would claim otherwise. I have heard that the Iranian Top General was the major influencer in the region and he also has a close tier with some extremist fighters that the U.S had designated as the terrorists. But just from the situation, the U.S president should inform the congress before ordering such an action just because that what he wanted to do.

- **The way forward between the United States and Iran relations**

Student 1: Due to withdrawal of JCPOA and the assassination, the relation between the trump administration and Iran would get any better for now. However, if the next administration of U.S could or would restore the JCPOA, the relation might become better. For the war possibility, i don't think it would led to that stage because nowadays country is more being aware of economic rather than traditional security, such as full-scale of war.

Student 2: I think from now on to the end of trump's office, the relation won't get any better due to the harsh action taken by the United States in the early 2020. In the future, there is no certain answer for it but i think it will depend on the future administration of both countries. I don't think Iran and U.S will go for war because as we can see, both countries appear to stand down after the retaliation, which mean that they didn't want a wider conflict.

Student 3: The next move between the two countries is really depend on the future administration of both sides. If the next administration of the U.S is going to be the democrat, it seem more likely to have softer relation than the republican administration. For the possibility of war, both countries aren't going to persue war as it will cost alot from both sides.

Student 4: The future of the United States and Iran will remain unclear but it might be getting worst. With the history of the US's conflict with other nation such as Iraq, Libya, Turkey, and many others, we all can see what the future might withhold. Since the attacked in January, Iran has remained in silence ever since, thus the conflict might be very much solved.

Official 1: As I mentioned in the previous question, Iranian people are seeking revenge on the US and they already have done once, the attack on an airbase in Iraq. Iran said they have killed a few American soldiers in this attack but the US denied that no one was killed but only injured. This is a payback and it still not equivalent to the US's assassination. Iran will have to seek for further revenge if the United States still curry the harsh policy toward Iran as they did nowadays. For me, I think the relations between the two countries will not be better, it's only getting worse. 'If' there's still no further actions taken to solve this problem, one day, I don't know when but there will be a war between the US and Iran or it might a larger war between alliances of these two countries.

Official 2: The relation between the United States and Iran is not so good at the time of speaking. Honestly, it was dreadful. Taking about the next move, there is still a grey area to spot the starting point to rebuild the relations. But, the next administration of both countries are the answers to this questions. It very depend on the willingness between the states to get back

together or still want to make it worse. Talking about war, it is still depending on the next governments. If one of them still play aggressive act just like they did in the early 2020, war is inevitable.

American Citizen: I think it depends on the state of the country after the election and who's in the and power and what is their overall foreign policy? But personally the relation won't be easily normalise. For the possibility of war, it is a very hard question to answer but in my opinion, I think there wouldn't be a full scale of war between the two countries as war will cost a lot for them. Moreover, I think the next administration of both states will consider the development of the relations rather than the setback just as they did in the early 2020.