

**BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS**

**POWER AS A DECISIVE FACTOR IN INTERNATIONAL  
RELATIONS**

**BACHELOR THESIS**

**Zuzana Barysz**

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## DECLARATION OF ORIGIN

I, the undersigned Zuzana Barysz, hereby declare that I have produced this thesis on my own using sources listed in References, under the guidance of my thesis advisor Mgr. Dagmar Kusá, PhD.

Zuzana Barysz (signature):

Date of Birth:

Address:

In Bratislava, Date: April 30, 2011

# **POWER AS A DECISIVE FACTOR IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

Name: Zuzana Barysz

Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts

Advisor: Mgr. Dagmar Kusá, PhD.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis introduces a new and refreshing view of a global problem that is currently raising many questions and controversies within the field of international relations. Since the Cold War, there has been a great fear of the weapons of mass destruction. Nowadays, uranium is being enriched in countries like Iran. Intentions of these countries are questionable and thus the fear of the world actors is growing.

What if Iran is not enriching uranium to create weapons, but to raise its position of power? It chose to balance the American power by building up its own nuclear program and thus causing a security threat. After examining the real position of Iran in the current world affairs, the thesis will confront the findings against the scientific theories within international relations. The outcome will enable the readers not to judge countries on the basis of first-hand surface information they come across, but to consider possible motives of their actions.

### **Key words:**

Realism, power, balance of power, security dilemma, uranium enrichment, Iran, sanctions.

# **MOC AKO ROZHODUJÚCI FAKTOR V MEDZINÁRODNÝCH VZŤAHOCH**

Meno: Zuzana Barysz

Bratislavská medzinárodná škola liberálnych štúdií

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## **ABSTRAKT**

Bakalárska práca ponúka nový a svieži pohľad na svetový problém, ktorý momentálne vyvoláva veľa otázok a kontroverzií v medzinárodných vzťahoch. Od čias studenej vojny všetkých ovládal veľký strach zo zbraní hromadného ničenia. V dnešnej dobe sa urán obohacuje v krajinách ako je Irán. Zájmy týchto krajín sú pochybné, čo spôsobuje nárast strachu medzi svetovými aktérmi.

Čo ak Irán neobohacuje urán aby vyrábal zbrane, ale aby si posilnil svoju pozíciu moci? Rozhodol sa vyvážiť moc Ameriky budovaním vlastného jadrového programu a tým spôsobil ohrozenie svetovej bezpečnosti. Práca skúma skutočnú pozíciu Iránu v súčasnom svetovom dianí a zistenia porovnáva s vedeckou teóriou v medzinárodných vzťahoch. Zistenia pomôžu druhým brať do úvahy možné motívy konania krajín a neposudzovať ich podľa prvotných informácií.

### **Kľúčové slová:**

Realizmus, moc, rovnováha moci, dilema bezpečnosti, obohacovanie uránu, Irán, sankcie.

## **FOREWORD**

The aim of this bachelor thesis is to analyze and explain the current world affairs through the theory of realism and to show that the balance of power is still a relevant concept when studying the relations of power on the world scene. The reason for choosing this topic was my interest in international relations and controversies therein. The general portrayal of Iran in the media is that it is a dangerous country set on developing nuclear weapons, yet I found no convincing evidence of this. On the contrary, this thesis argues that Iran's actions have different primary motives.

## Table of Contents

Declaration of origin .....	iii
Abstract .....	iv
Foreword .....	vi
Table of Contents .....	7
1. Introduction .....	8
2. Power Politics .....	9
International Politics .....	9
Realism .....	9
Why Power? .....	11
Sovereignty .....	11
State .....	12
Power Analysis .....	13
Status Quo vs. Revisionist .....	14
Balance of Power .....	15
Security .....	16
Security Dilemma .....	17
Maximizing Power .....	17
3. Case study of Iran .....	19
The Isolation of Iran .....	19
Developments .....	20
Change .....	22
Nuclear Program Controversy .....	23
Uranium Enrichment .....	23
U.S. Sanctions .....	25
Application of Theory .....	25
4. United States contra Iran .....	26
Exercising vs. Having Power .....	26
Mistakes of the Past .....	28
Use of Sanctions .....	29
Analysis of Iran-Iraq War .....	30
Analysis of Iran Enriching Uranium .....	31
Comparison of Analyses .....	31
Spiral Model .....	32
5. Conclusion .....	35
Resumé .....	36
Bibliography .....	38

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The problem of uranium enrichment in certain countries has been a widely protracted problem for years. Recent unsettling of the situation in Iran and North Korea caught the world's attention. Many observers were viewing their actions as an unquestionable threat. However, other explanations of their reasons to establish or pursue programs of uranium enrichment exist.

International system always tends towards establishing a balance of power between the dominant states of the world. This can be achieved through their foreign policy, money, military, and other means to convince other states of their strength and capability. The most successful are viewed as the world leaders and few dare to oppose them.

On the other hand, there are those states that want to climb up the power ladder, gain respect and equal position in the world affairs. If they lack tangible resources, they choose different means in order to be recognized and taken for sovereign actors. One of those means on the current world scene is the usage of highly enriched uranium. It has become a strong manipulative means that holds the rest of the world players at unease.

This bachelor thesis will focus on the problem of balance of power and other concepts connected to it within international relations, relying mostly on the approach of realism. It will evaluate a current case study of Iran's project of uranium enrichment within the presented theoretical framework. Finally, it will explain the mutual position of Iran and the United States on three different models of power.



## 2. POWER POLITICS

International relations have been formed by division of power. Naturally, power is not something that easily withers away, nor does it keep its alliance with its holder forever. For this reason, it is necessary to know its essence and understand it.

### *International Politics*

Since the formation of modern states as international actors, politics has become an article of international relations. States had to look increasingly outwards to regulate their relations with the others. The actors needed to build up and sustain their position through international politics. Hans J. Morgenthau puts it succinctly in stating that:

“International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power. Whatever the ultimate aims of international politics, power is always the immediate aim. Statesmen and people may ultimately seek freedom, security, prosperity, or power itself. They may define their goals in terms of a religious, philosophic, economic, or social ideal. They may hope that this ideal will materialize through its own inner force, through divine intervention, or through the natural development of human affairs. But wherever they strive to realize their goal by means of international politics, they do so by striving for power. The crusaders wanted to free the holy places from domination by the Infidels; Woodrow Wilson wanted to make the world safe for democracy; the National Socialists wanted to open Eastern Europe to German colonization, to dominate Europe and conquer the world” (Morgenthau, 1978, p. 13).

### *Realism*

While looking at the world with the focus on conflicts within international relations, it is necessary to choose a suitable perspective to analyze and evaluate them from. The conflict discussed in this thesis is the one between Iran and the United States. It is a conflict of power, thus the thesis will analyze it from the perspective of international realism, which explains international relations largely in terms of power and interests.

This thesis does not consider the liberal view of international conflict as both sufficient and as an efficient explanation for the behavior of the different actors. The first presupposition of international liberalism is that the liberal republics will use

force only in self-defense and not to exploit others. Furthermore, the comparative advantage<sup>1</sup> will guarantee their cooperation rather than conflict. Second, the world is learning from its mistakes and it evolves, therefore states will tend to avoid conflict more and more. Third, through the spread of democracy and thus of mutual interests, there will not be any anarchy on international scene (Betts, 2008, p. 120).

The reality proves that liberalism fails in explaining the behavior of states. First, liberal republics do not use force only in self-defense as can be seen on the example of the United States invading Iraq. Maybe the world learns from its mistakes, but it does not mean that it ceases to make new ones. As governments change frequently, they only have the opportunity to make their own mistakes, from which they can learn. It is unlikely that they learn from someone else's mistakes. States might even try to avoid conflict, although it does not prevent the actual conflict from occurring. Lastly, democracy does not provide inherent mutual interests and its forced spreading does not guarantee its successful implementation.

The thesis does not underestimate the role or importance of liberalism in the academic field of international relations. Liberalism brought about the existence of multiple international organizations and shaped international law. However, both are losing their trust and dominance in the current state of the world affairs.

This thesis supports realism over liberalism also as a rational theory that will provide answers to the "why" questions.

"Realism, believing as it does in the objectivity of the laws of politics, must also believe in the possibility of developing a rational theory that reflects, however imperfectly and one-sidedly, these objective laws. It believes also, then, in the possibility of distinguishing in politics between truth and opinion—between what is true objectively and rationally, supported by evidence and illuminated by reason, and what is only a subjective judgment, divorced from the facts as they are and informed by prejudice and wishful thinking" (Morgenthau, 1978, pp. 4-15).

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of comparative advantage is usually attributed to the English economist David Ricardo (Ricardo, 1821). He describes a situation, in which one country decides in a certain way because it pays off more than deciding the other way. For example, it is expensive to produce wine in England, but it is relatively cheap to produce cloth. In Portugal, both wine and cloth are cheap to produce, but it pays off to produce extra wine for exchange of some English cloth. As a result, each country specializes in the production, which is cheaper. Portugal has a comparative advantage in wine and England in cloth.

Finally, selection of the realist approach is related to the focus of this thesis. While liberal approach may be more suited to study the international society and law, realism is primarily concerned with the state, its power and its relations with others, which are also the primary focus of this thesis.

### ***Why Power?***

The thesis focuses on international affairs. It derives from and aims to prove Hans J. Morgenthau's conclusion that "international politics is of necessity power politics" (Morgenthau, 1978, p. 31). Power is the decisive determinant on the international scene, yet it is difficult to define and measure it. States are sovereign actors and therefore there is no central authority in international relations that either rules over them or solves conflicts among them. Sovereignty<sup>2</sup> is a supreme authority within a territory (Philpott, 2003). A sovereign state is an independent state, which has the right and power to regulate its internal affairs without foreign interference.

### **Sovereignty**

Sovereignty is crucial for each state to retain its highest authority in order to make decisions over the affairs within its own territory (Fujioka, 2004, p. 23). Since 1945 until 1990, the world affairs were dominated by two power blocs. The Soviet Union and the United States had the power divided. Sovereignty of individual states was limited because they were protected and decided upon by the superpowers in order to survive the threat of nuclear weapons. They were dependent on their "protectors" and could not make independent decisions. After liberalization in the Soviet Union and the fall of the Iron Curtain, the states were able to either gain or build up their sovereignty. They have realized that sovereignty was legitimizing their standpoint on the international field and without it they would not be able to effectively rebuild their economies and politics. Since then, more states were able to gain power. They became internally stronger and independent. Sovereignty has guaranteed them a successful rise. They have learned their lesson from the Cold War. Each state has to rely on self-

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<sup>2</sup> The concept of modern state sovereignty was set up in 1648 in the Treaty of Westphalia. It was defined as the non-acquisition of territory by force against the will of an existing sovereign state. Since its creation it has gone through changes reflecting the fluid international norms and the current power politics.

help to sustain its power. Likewise, the state is not supposed to interfere in the internal affairs of another state, because it would act against its sovereignty and entice a conflict.

## **State**

Many have questioned the role of states since the fall of the Iron Curtain. Mainly in the 1990s, they believed that the nation state was on its downfall and that international organizations were rising to substitute its role. They supported their argument with the theory of ever growing interconnectedness in the emerging globalizing world.

The 1990s were an era of the hegemony of Anglo-American ideology. The spreading of democracy and orientation towards the West was motivating states to become members of international organizations such as the European Union, NATO and the OECD. States which gained their sovereignty were willing to give up some of it in exchange for profit.

“The collapse of the bipolar world has diminished the power of state-centric political and military rivalries to dominate international relations. Simultaneously, the growth of opportunities for transnational economic gains has laid the foundation for a new series of arguments about why states are anachronisms<sup>3</sup>” (Evans, 1997, p. 63).

Is decline in sovereignty resulting in a diminishing role of the state? A common answer to this question tends to be *yes*. However, there are other opinions which suggest an opposite view based on economic argumentation.

“The state is not eclipsed by the simple fact of its becoming more dependent on trade. Existing cross-national statistics suggest that greater reliance on trade is associated with an increased role for the state rather than diminished one. Moreover, a look at the nations that have been most economically successful over the last thirty years suggests that high stateness may even be a competitive advantage in a globalized economy” (Evans, 1997, pp. 67-68).

For a better explanation, it is essential to show why exactly a strong state is necessary and thus prove that its role is not diminishing.

“Higher trade shares increase a country’s vulnerability to externally induced traumas; a larger public sector provides a protective counterweight” (Evans, 1997, p. 68).

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<sup>3</sup> Anachronism is something that is no longer suitable for or relevant to modern times.

Externally induced traumas are for instance economic and financial crises which can be caused by many incentives including *vis major*. The state has to be strong in order to overcome this crisis. Through a large public sector it provides fulfillment of basic human needs for its citizens and protects them from the direct strike of rough negative events.

Although many states are members of international organizations, their sovereign power is not diminishing, as it is many times thought. Recent actions of the European Union or of the United Nations are supporting this stance. For instance, the European Union did not successfully implement changes in the economic policy of Ireland, nor it was successful in ratifying a common European Constitution. The United Nations Organization is becoming known for its vague articulation of international law and its powerless position when it comes to the Security Council's decision-making. The power to veto any decision by one of its five permanent members is clearly stating that those in power will not give up on it. Furthermore, it shows an imbalance of power distribution among states since the very foundation of this organization. It would be unwise for states to give up more sovereignty than they already have.

### **Power Analysis**

Power is a wide concept that can be broken down to two different levels of analysis. One is a national power approach and the other is a relational power approach. The national power approach equates power with the possession of resources by states, e.g. the level of military expenditure, the size of armed forces, gross domestic product, territorial size, and population. All of the mentioned elements "can be combined and measured to provide an indicator of the aggregate power of a state" (Schmidt, 2005, p. 529). On the other hand, the relational concept of power suggests that power is a process of interaction. Thus, "a state is able to exercise influence over the actions of another state" (Schmidt, 2005, p. 530).

Morgenthau provides another definition of political power, which could be understood as a relational power approach. He defines political power as:

“a psychological relation between those who exercise it and those over whom it is exercised. It gives the former control over certain actions of the latter through the influence which the former exert over the latter’s minds” (Morgenthau, 1978, pp. 26-27).

This thesis is operating with a combination of both national and relational levels of analysis. It accepts that the term ‘power’ is a complex set of various factors within the realm of international politics.

### ***Status Quo vs. Revisionist***

The actors in international relations are various. In general, they are individual states. The phenomenon of globalization has led to an emergence of other actors, most importantly international organizations and multinational corporations. These have been increasingly gaining power relative to states in global decision making. This thesis omits those actors and focuses on individual states as the primary carriers of power in international relations.

“As a political concept, power designates a relationship between men. Yet since it simultaneously designates a potential and not an act, it may be stated that power is the potential possessed by a man or a group for establishing relationships with other men or other groups that accord with his own desires” (Aron, 1992, p. 257).

There are great powers in the international system, also known as the *status-quo* powers. These actors are large in size, have high level of income, are rich in natural resources, have popular support of government, industrial capacity, and possess highly enriched uranium. All these factors have guaranteed them long-term power that cannot be easily disturbed. Great powers are also the most influential. According to the political scientist Randall Schweller, ‘Status-quo states are content to preserve the essential characteristics of the existing international order and the general distribution of power’ (Bennett, 2010, p. 1). However, that does not imply or automatically guarantee peace.

On the other hand, there are middle powers like Iran, which can become revisionist powers. Revisionism is “a state’s dissatisfaction with the international order. Instead

of acting to preserve international order, a revisionist or 'revolutionary' state has a strong will to change the norms accepted by status quo nations" (Bennett, 2010, p. 3).

"Revisionist states seek to undermine the established order for the purpose of increasing their power and prestige in the system<sup>4</sup>" (Taylor, 2007, p. 30). There are many ways to do it. It depends on the position of the revisionist state which power resources it uses. They are "elements that an actor can draw on over the long term. Less tangible long-term power resources include political culture, patriotism, education of the population, and strength of the scientific and technological base" (Goldstein, 2005, p. 60). If the state lacks in any of the mentioned fields, it should manage to develop it. Only then can it change its status.

### ***Balance of Power***

As Morgenthau poignantly sums up, "the struggle for power is universal in time and space" (Morgenthau, 1978, p. 17). The presupposition for the balance of power theory is that states are unitary actors who seek their own preservation and drive for universal domination (Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 1979, p. 118). In the current multipolar world, the degree of proportion is tending to disappear between powers. The great powers become uncertain and concerned about losing their exceptional position, which initiates their misguided decisions and dubious actions.

"In the great-power politics of a bipolar world, who is a danger to whom is never in doubt" (Waltz, *The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory*, 2008, p. 92). Such was the situation during the Cold War. Neither the United States nor the Soviet Union with their alliances were able to predict the actions of the other, which created a certain equilibrium in terms of power. Rigidity of alignment also resulted in more flexibility of strategy and greater freedom of decision for few countries.

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<sup>4</sup> „Contrary to majority thought, the political scientist Randall Schweller describes that just because a state appears to be discontented, it does not mean that it is a valid conclusion to say that it is revisionist. Rather, revisionists will use military force to change, not preserve, the international status quo and extend their values" (Bennett, 2010, p. 3). This thesis takes Schweller's opinion into consideration, but does not operate with it. It understands revisionist power as a state that wants to change the status quo, but not necessarily through military force.

However, after the end of the Cold War, the former allies were free to draw relations with the “ex-enemies” on the basis of economic proficiency. This slowly led to a formation of international cooperation that resulted in international interdependence and a multipolar world. “In the great-power politics of a multipolar world, who is a danger to whom and who can be expected to deal with threats and problems are matters of uncertainty” (Waltz, *The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory*, 2008, p. 92). The uncertainty implies the existence of a new equilibrium of power. However, a multipolar world has its dangers. As was already mentioned, there are actors with greater power and those with lesser power. According to Waltz, miscalculation of great powers endangers this world. “It is likely to permit an unfolding of events that finally threatens the status quo and brings the powers to war” (Waltz, *The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory*, 2008).

To prevent such danger, the balance of power needs to be accomplished. There are only two ways how to do it. Either the greater powers let go of some of their power, which is unrealistic, or the actors with lesser power enlarge their own share of it.

### ***Security***

Power is a means to undermine security on the one hand, but it is also a means to achieve security on the other hand. Only balance of these two opposing forces can guarantee a sustainable world. Waltz explains that “in crucial situations,... the ultimate concern of states is not for power but for security” (Waltz, *The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory*, 1989, p. 40). States are then ‘security-maximisers’ rather than ‘power-maximisers’. As a result, they seek an appropriate amount of power to balance their relative power and thus to fulfill their security need, not an excessive amount of power.

“At times in modern Europe, the benefits of possible gains have seemed to outweigh the risks of likely losses. Statesmen have hoped to push an issue to the limit without causing of the potential opponents to unite. When there are several possible enemies, unity of action among them is difficult to achieve” (Waltz, *The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory*, 2008, p. 92).

Hence maximizing power is important for all states, but mainly for the revisionist, in order to ensure a firm position on the international scene. To meet this aim, states use various tools that are dependent on their particular situation.



## **Security Dilemma**

Security dilemma is a situation in which states become imprisoned when they seek to juxtapose their security to the security of the other.

“When states seek the ability to defend themselves, they get too much and too little – too much because they gain ability to carry out aggression; too little because others, being menaced, will increase their own arms and so reduce the first state’s security” (Jervis, 1976, p. 64).

Since no state is certain about other state’s intentions and amount of power, it naturally seeks to maintain its security.

Typical for security dilemma is a spiral model, which has its roots in the defensive realism<sup>5</sup>. There does not have to be an aggressor for the status quo powers to fall into a spiral of perceived threats and following increased armaments. State’s defensive actions are misinterpreted as offensive by other state(s). As a result, each state thinks it is obvious that its actions are merely defensive. When others react, those actions are automatically viewed as offensive. The spiral model usually results in war.

The security dilemma is a precarious one. On the one hand, if a state has more power relative to its neighbors; it encourages them to build up their own means of defense. On the other hand, if a state has less power relative to its neighbors, it signifies weakness and it may potentially become liable to aggression. Thus, states constantly seem to be building up their means of defense and aggression. The relationship is reflexive, when one does it, the others follow. Those that are weakest constantly try to reach for slightly more power, while those that are strongest constantly want to maintain their advantage.

## ***Maximizing Power***

To successfully maximize power, states need to use legitimate tools. Why legitimate? If they were allowed to use any means to gain power, they would not be successful. Each state is bound by international law and has to act according to it. If it uses a tool

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<sup>5</sup> Defensive realism is a theory in international relations which states that anarchy on the world stage causes states to fear for their security. Thus, a security dilemma is formed, in which states tend to increase their security.

that is considered by other actors illegitimate, it will bear the consequences and those would very soon outweigh any potential short-term gains.

States cannot act in breach of international conventions and treaties. If they violate these legally binding measures, they can be sanctioned. There is a vague line between what is legitimate and what is not. Although, generally *pacta sunt servanda* (treaties are obeyed) is valid in international law. According to Louis Henkin, “almost all nations observe almost all principles of international law and almost all of their obligations almost all of the time” (Henkin, 1979, p. 47). In another words, state must think twice to act otherwise, because naturally it is better for it not to risk. If there are exceptions, then the state has to be prepared for dealing with the consequences.

The state chooses from a variety of tools. If it focuses on arms race, it directly maximizes its power in terms of force. If it orients on the development of strategic technology, which brings independence and a competitive advantage, then it maximizes its position from an economic perspective. Economic power brings along any other power wished for. This is the tool Iran has chosen to maximize its power.

Iran is gaining economic power through its nuclear research. It is enriching uranium to be independent from other countries in terms of energy. It is also building its own medical research reactor, which would enable Iran to deepen its cancer research and possibly gain prominent place in technologies.

### 3. CASE STUDY OF IRAN

Iran is a country with non-democratic regime and strategic resources, yet it has been able to prevail. What is more, it has dared to build its power on a controversial nuclear program and thus endanger itself by overreaction of the United States.

#### *The Isolation of Iran*

Since its foundation, the Islamic Republic of Iran has gone through many political changes. They left a deep track on the country and predestined its current state, which is a situation of international isolation. To better understand Iran's recent decisions considering its nuclear program, it is necessary to discuss what caused the political isolation of Iran.

The presidency of George W. Bush internationally isolated Iran as a member of the "Axis of evil"<sup>6</sup>. George W. Bush strengthened the position of Shiite Mullahs in the country as never before. He removed the power of Saddam Hussein in the West (Iraq) and weakened the radical Sunni Taliban in the East (Afghanistan).

In 2009, mass protest started in Iran after a rigged presidential election. The emergence of the opposition and the break in the establishment of regimes destabilized the regional government. Iranians called for freedom which caused a descend into one of the worst crises since the Revolution.

The internally shaken state could have attempted to stabilize and legitimize its increasingly vulnerable regime only by outer harshness. Economic, social and political developments have also contributed to the weakening of the regime in Iran.

The Shiite theocracy is not a historically fortified regime. In 1989, after the war and the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, a new regime began to consolidate its rule. However the reorganization of the state was prevented by the international

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<sup>6</sup> A term used by George W. Bush throughout his presidency, which describes governments that he accused of helping terrorism and seeking weapons of mass destruction. He labeled Iran, Iraq, and North Korea as Axis of evil.

isolation caused by fatwa<sup>7</sup>, which Khomeini had called four months before his death. After eight years of conservative rule under the President Ayatollah Rafsandshceni, who had expanded the power base of the Presidential Office and abolished the Prime Minister's Office, the Republic was setting into the next major crisis with the surprise election of the reformer Mohammad Khatami. Since 1997, Khatami ushered in a period of cautious liberalization, which led to years of crippling and bitter power struggles. In 2005, the conservative forces of the spiritual and military establishment won the election with Ahmadinejad again (Bätz, 2009, p. 66).

However, the conservative forces faced downfall. The Green Movement of the opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi may officially have been inferior in the Presidential election, but the voice of the people cannot be faked. The opposition candidates have accused the President Mahmud Ahmadinejad to have maneuvered the country with its economic policies to the edge of the abyss (Bätz, 2009, p. 66).

### *Developments*

There have been several developments which have weakened Iran recently. Most of them have affected tangible sources of power. The first of these developments to be discussed is the disastrous economic situation. The fall in oil prices caused a deficit in the state budget. The combination of mismanagement, corruption and sanctions also dragged Iran down. Bonyads, or charitable trusts, control an estimated 20% of Iran's GDP. They are exempt from taxation and government control on the one hand, while receiving massive subsidies on the other. Iran has a chronic lack of investment, the unemployment rate is high, and young people find little work. A galloping inflation of 26 percent also lowers real income, wipes out savers, and greatly reduces pensions. According to the International Monetary Fund, economic growth of the emerging economy was expected to be only about three percent last year. As a result, dissatisfaction raises in all population groups. Iran's economy is a hindrance rather than a mean towards securing a respectable place among world's superpowers.

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<sup>7</sup> According to Miriam-Webster Dictionary, 'fatwa' is a legal opinion or decree handed down by an Islamic religious leader.

The oil sector needs separate consideration. Tehran's political ambitions rise and fall with the prices of crude oil and natural gas, which form up to two thirds of the state budget. There is no doubt that Iran is a geologically rich country. It has an estimated 137.6 billion barrels of proven oil reserves, which is about 10 percent of the world's known reserves. Overall, Iran has the world's third largest proven oil reserves (Energy Information Administration, 2010).

However, it has a structural problem with extraction of the wealth from the soil. The output of the Iranian oil fields decreases mainly because of a lack of investment. The U.S. and the UN sanctions are not responsible for it. The Western oil companies, which largely failed as investors, worsened Iran's position. They blocked the delivery of much needed technologies and thus discouraged international banks from granting loans. Simultaneously, the domestic consumption of Iran is rising more and more because of the subsidized price of gasoline. Experts believe Iran may no longer be a net exporter of crude oil in just a few years (Surprise: Oil Woes In Iran, 2006).

Two years ago, the Oil Minister Kazem Vaziri Hamaneh, expelled by Ahmadinejad, stated the following: "If we do not find a solution to the energy problem in the next 15 years, the country will face a catastrophe" (Financial Thomson, 2007). If the fuel consumption continues to rise, it will guide the country towards a disaster. Iran currently has to import around 40 percent of the gasoline at the world market prices, but sells the fuel subsidized, which costs the state billions of dollars annually. Subsidies promote inefficiency, pollute the environment and are fatal to the state budget. Therefore, the Government adopted a system of rationing of subsidized gasoline in 2007 and raised the price to the equivalent of 7.8 euro cents per liter. According to IMF, the indirect and direct price subsidies for oil derivatives with an average market price of 86 dollars per barrel added up to lost revenue of over 44 billion dollars in 2009 (QFINANCE). This is equivalent to twelve percent of the GDP. If the oil price climbs back to \$ 115 in average, it will cost Iran 16.6 percent of total economic output. However, Ahmadinejad does not want to remove the subsidy. He claims that the "ordinary" people should benefit from oil wealth (Bätz, 2009, p. 68). Thus it is a typical situation of the state attempting to fix a problem of overconsumption due to what is essentially price-fixing, by imposing rationing measures.

His various subsidy programs, which add up to total 27 percent of economic output, have been mainly the effect of fueling inflation. The inflation rate was 26 percent according to the IMF in 2008 (IMF, 2008).

The oil and gas wealth is both a curse and a blessing. It provides 80 percent of export earnings and more than 50 percent of government revenue, but it brings along inefficiency and subsidies. Further, Teheran is dependent on goods which market price fluctuates greatly (Foreign & Commonwealth Office: Iran, 2010). Iran cannot build an oil-refinery without foreign aid. So it started to look for alternatives of energy. Iran has changed its orientation from oil as a tangible source of energy to long-term power resources. So it decided to build its own nuclear program, which alarmed the international society.

### *Change*

Nearly two-thirds of all Iranians (around 50 million people out of 77 million) are younger than 30 years old and half are under 20 years of age (The 30-Days Prayer Network: Iran Muslims - insights into...). They are educated, unemployed<sup>8</sup> and dissatisfied. They demand more freedoms. If Iran wants to quiet these unemployed people, it needs to develop a labor market for them. Its own nuclear program comes handy also in this case. It is interconnected with the development of technology, various other fields of industry and services, which provide working places for educated people.

The nuclear program can increase the popularity of Iranian leaders, thus strengthening the regime and internally uniting the country.

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<sup>8</sup> Iran's unemployment rate for the year 2010 was 14.6 percent (Central Intelligence Agency).

### ***Nuclear Program Controversy***

Each Party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty<sup>9</sup> (NPT) has a legal right to develop research, production, and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Since Iran is a signatory of the Treaty, it cannot be discriminated on these grounds.

According to Ian Anthony's analysis:

“Iran has asserted its legal right to design any nuclear program that it chooses provided that it is not aimed at producing nuclear weapons. By extension, Iran has also asserted its right to engage in related industrial processes –such as uranium enrichment– and to acquire a wide range of materials, equipment, technology and know-how to that end. According to Iran these activities are legal when they take place without the intention to develop a nuclear weapon at this time. Indeed, facilities of the kind Iran has developed (or others that are equally sensitive from a proliferation perspective) can already be found in countries like Brazil and Japan that do not have, and are not suspected of developing, nuclear weapons” (Anthony, 2010, p. 1).

The fact is that Iran has not been open about its nuclear program. It was under the surveillance of the IAEA<sup>10</sup>, which proved that Iran was not cooperating on the subject. Iran hid critical aspects of the program and it was caught for violating its safeguards agreement. Its documentation was not consistent with the reality. Iran evaded IAEA's questions and also refused to provide access to the Agency's investigators into its nuclear facilities. “Critics point out that the specific configuration of facilities and capacities revealed by Iran is inappropriate to the stated goal of generating electricity but very well suited to producing nuclear weapons. Iran also conducts other activities, such as developing medium-range ballistic missiles, consistent with the objective of acquiring nuclear weapons in the future” (Anthony, 2010, pp. 1-2).

### ***Uranium Enrichment***

The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) is the main official body engaged in nuclear research. Its responsibility is to implement regulations and operate nuclear

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<sup>9</sup> Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was signed on 1 July 1968 and came to force on 5 March 1970. Its purpose is to guard the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, disarmament and the right to peacefully use nuclear technology.

<sup>10</sup> International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was set up in 1957 within the United Nations. The Agency works to promote safe, secure and peaceful nuclear technologies. It regularly inspects civil nuclear facilities to verify the accuracy of supplied documentation. It also checks inventories, samples and analyses materials. Its main concern is the enrichment of uranium and use of produced plutonium by nuclear reactors. The IAEA reports to UN General Assembly and to the Security Council.

energy installations in Iran. Currently, it is constructing several medium-size nuclear power reactors and support facilities for producing and refining uranium into fissile material with Chinese and Russian aid (Afary, Avery, & Mostofi).

## Highly Enriched Uranium around the World



Nowadays, there are 35 countries in the world which have highly enriched uranium. Iran is among them. Out of this number, at least eight countries have unstable regimes. Paradoxically, no one seems to be calling attention towards their enriched uranium programs. North Korea has a specific position, because it already has nuclear weapons. Yet, the United States are using positive sanctions<sup>11</sup> to control its behavior. However, countries like Libya, Serbia, Pakistan, Belarus, Vietnam or Taiwan do not cause fear on international scene in terms of highly enriched uranium.

Why is then Iran a specific case?

<sup>11</sup> Positive sanction is a rewarding act that regulates conduct in conformity with one's intentions.



### *U.S. Sanctions*

U.S. sanctions, according to U.S. Department of the Treasury, apply to all U.S. persons and entities (companies, non-profit groups, government agencies, etc.) wherever located. They basically serve as a blockade of Iranian economic growth. A special point on Iranian petroleum industry restricts following:

U.S. persons may not trade in Iranian oil or petroleum products refined in Iran, nor may they finance such trading. Similarly, U.S. persons may not perform services, including financing services, or supply goods or technology that would benefit the Iranian oil industry (U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2011).

The United States impose additional sanctions on Iran frequently to manipulate its behavior, but largely unsuccessfully. China and Russia are more reluctant in sanctioning Iran; however, Russia is becoming more open towards the sanctions.

### *Application of Theory*

Iran is enriching uranium and building atomic plants at the cost of maximizing its relative power. Most states are disinclined to maximize their relative power, because by doing so, they jeopardize their security. By not acting according to other states' expectations, they create fear in terms of unpredictable behavior. Thus other actors tend to find catalysts in order to interfere and stop the unwanted behavior. Iran is certainly aware of this fact. Yet, it has decided to undertake the jeopardy of its security in a short-term. In exchange, it will guarantee for itself a long-term security on the international scene. Iran is not striving for hegemony. It wants to use its right to maximize its relative power for the prosperity of the country. "Balances of power recurrently form" (Waltz, Theory of International Politics, 1979, p. 128) and Iran is one of them.

Further, Iran is likely to seek the minimum of power that is needed to attain and maintain its security and survival (Grieco, 1997, p. 167). If Iran wanted to maximize its power, it would join the stronger side – the USA, Russia or Israel. However, it did not and that supports the theory of balancing the power in international relations.

#### 4. UNITED STATES CONTRA IRAN

Current international relations are facing a clash of two actors, Iran and the United States. Application of this conflict on three models provides the reader with possible explanations of motives of these actors.

##### *Exercising vs. Having Power*

In the relational concept of power, there is a differentiation between *exercising* power and *having* power. Behavior of the United States is suggesting that Iran is exercising power, but is it really so? Theory might provide an insight into this question. Robert Dahl's model explains the difference between exercising and having power on an example of two agents, C and R.

“We could define the exercise of power in such a way as to require C to manifest an intention to act in some way in the future, his action to be contingent on R's behavior. By contrast, C might be said to have power when, though he does not manifest an intention, R imputes an intention to him and shapes his behavior to meet the imputed intention. If one were to accept this distinction, then in studying the exercise of power, one would have to examine not only R's perceptions and responses but also C's intentions and actions. In studying relationships in which C is thought to have power, even though he does not exercise it, one would in principle need only to study R's perceptions, the intentions R imputes to C, and bearing of these on R's behavior” (Dahl, 1992, pp. 52-53).

While substituting agent C with Iran and agent R with the United States, an interesting outlook on the current situation emerges. Iran (C) enriches uranium, though it does not manifest an intention to create a nuclear weapon. The United States (R) imputes this intention to Iran (C) and shapes its behavior according to that, in this case it imposes sanctions on Iran (C). Automatically, Iran (C) is thought to have power, even though it does not exercise it.

Robert Dahl continues further with explaining the behavior of two agents.

“The distinction between having and exercising power could also turn on the directness involved in the relation between C and R and on the specificity of the actions. In the most direct relationship R's response would be tripped off by a signal directly from C. In this case C is exercising power. But some relationships are highly indirect; for example, C may modify R's environment

in a more or less lasting way, so that R continues to respond as C had intended, even though C makes no effort to control R. In these cases, one might say that although C does not exercise control over R, he does have control over R” (Dahl, 1992, p. 53).

Surpassing the allowed level of uranium enrichment serves as an alarm trigger from Iran (C), because it tripped off an alarmed response from the United States (R). Iran (C) can be viewed here as exercising power; although it did not make any effort to overpower the United States (R). Since Iran (C) does not actually exercise control over the United States (R), indirectly it does have control over it. As an outcome, Iran (C) has already power without aiming to exercise it.

Moreover, it is an evidence of the United States’ failure to exercise power against Iran, failure to even have power, as Iran simply did not modify its behavior according to the U.S. signals.

However, the United States can put indirect pressure on Iran through the international system and Iran is constrained by it. Nonetheless, Dahl’s model proves that the United States has no direct power when it comes to its relation with Iran. There seems to be tension building up on both sides, with the US insisting that its allies and countries generally in the West officially denounce Iran. On the other hand, powerful sanctions as well as US military presence in the Middle East do not seem to have a deterring effect on Iran. The regime that rules Iran seems very stubborn in this regard. From the point of view of the United States, it seems unlikely that they will abandon their policy towards Iran, for it would be a signal of weakness on the part of the US. From the point of view of Iran and its fragile regime, it would be a fatal blow if they were to give into Western demands. Thus, the situation is gradually boiling under the surface.

There are many variables to the present state of affairs. For one, the US still faces a recession and cannot pursue its extravagant foreign policy indefinitely. From a political standpoint, it is very likely that the military-industrial complex, which is already bloated, will have to be cut instead of enlarged. Chances are very unlikely that voters will put up with having to pay for military entanglements while unemployment and inflation are on the rise. Moreover, China, Japan, and Saudi Arabia (essentially America’s bankers) also have an indirect say in the US foreign policy. Therefore, it is

only a matter of time before US leaders are faced with the option of either escalating the conflicts or abandoning them altogether. Yet, these economic variables also apply to Iran, which also faces high unemployment and high inflation i.e., stagflation.

### *Mistakes of the Past*

The position of the United States was not always anti-Iranian. During the Cold War, it was in the interest of the United States to keep good relations with Iran, because it was a strategic buffer that separated the Soviet Union from the Persian Gulf and it had large reserves of oil. The United States' National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane described Iranian political environment and formulated several American interests and goals to achieve in a top secret document, which was later declassified.

“The Iranian regular armed forces represent potential source of both power and inclination to move Iran back into a more pro-Western position. Representatives of every faction inside and outside the regime recognize the potential importance of the military and are cultivating contacts with these forces. However, as long as the Army remains committed in the war with Iraq, it will not be in a position to intervene in Tehran” (McFarlane, 1985, p. 94).

Intentions of the United States come clearly forward from the text. The United States wanted to block the increased Soviet influence in Iran. They also wanted an early end to the Gulf War (Iran-Iraq War), so that the successor of the Shah and the President of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini, would be substituted by someone pro-Western in order to gain moderation on OPEC pricing policy. As a result, President Ronald Reagan authorized McFarlane's suggestion to support Iran-Contras with military equipment.

However, there also was another motivation behind Reagan's decision. Iran held American hostages<sup>12</sup> at that time. Former President Jimmy Carter was not successful in sanctioning policy towards Iran and hostages were not freed, consequently he lost elections for Reagan. The business with military equipment did not just bring economic profit to the United States, it secured the release of American hostages.

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<sup>12</sup> U.S. citizens and diplomats from American Embassy in Teheran were taken hostage by an angry mob (“Imam's Disciples”) on November 4, 1979.

In July 1985, the United States sent 508 American-made TOW anti-tank missiles from Israel to Iran. In exchange, they got a hostage, the Reverend Benjamin Weir. In November 1985, Israelis shipped 500 HAWK surface-to-air missiles to Iran in exchange for the release of all remaining American hostages. From February to November 1986, more shipments of weapons were made (U.S. History: Foreign Affairs, 1985-1992 "Irangate"). This can be interpreted as a visible show of a power tradeoff and an exhibition of Iran's intention of power maximization, which has persisted in Iran to date.

This Persian country was likely to guarantee a pro-Western inclination with the acquired military equipment. Besides, the United States were able to win over the Soviet Union and end the Cold War far from their homeland without being accused of directly supporting Iran, which enabled them to have a future relationship with Iraq.

### *Use of Sanctions*

Talcott Parsons introduced a model that fits into the context of Dahl's conception of power. He used an analytical classification in which, 'the actions of one unit in a system can intentionally be oriented to bringing about a change in what the actions of one or more other units would otherwise have been'. The acting unit of reference is *ego* and the object on which the acting unit operates is *alter*.

"We may then classify the alternatives open to ego in terms of two dichotomous variables. On the one hand ego may attempt to gain his end from alter either by using some form of control over the situation in which alter is placed, actually or contingently to change it so as to increase the probability of alter acting in the way he wishes, or, alternatively, without attempting to change alter's intentions, i.e. he may manipulate symbols which are meaningful to alter in such a way that he tries to make alter 'see' that what ego wants is a 'good thing' for him (alter) to do.

The second variable then concerns the type of sanctions ego may employ in attempting to guarantee the attainment of his end from alter. The dichotomy here is between positive and negative sanctions. Thus through the situational channel a positive sanction is a change in alter's situation presumptively considered by alter as to his advantage, which is used as a means by ego of having an effect on alter's actions. A negative sanction then is an alteration in alter's situation to the latter's disadvantage. In the case of the intentional channel, the positive sanction is the expression of symbolic 'reasons' why compliance with ego's wishes is a 'good thing' independently of any further

action on ego’s part, from alter’s point of view, i.e. would be felt by him to be ‘personally advantageous’, whereas the negative sanction is presenting reasons why noncompliance with ego’s wishes should be felt by alter to be harmful to interests in which he had a significant personal investment and should therefore be avoided” (Parsons, 1992, pp. 104-105).

For the purpose of this thesis, the United States represent ego and Iran alternates alter. As a result, two new behavior studies can be derived from the previous cases.

The United States’ decision first analyzes a study of Iran-Iraq War; the second study analyzes it in the current example of Iran’s uranium enrichment. Finally, the thesis will compare both studies and draw conclusions.

Table 1: Sanctions

Sanction type	Channel			
	Intentional		Situational	
Positive	Persuasion	3	1	Inducement
Negative	Activation of Commitments	4	2	Coercion

Source: Parsons, 1992, p. 105

This table categorizes sanctions according to channel and type. There are positive and negative types of sanctions. Channel can be intentional or situational, depending on the character of a case and preferred outcome. In order to manipulate one’s situation, an agent has two choices. The agent can choose a positive sanction - *inducement* (1) or a negative sanction – *coercion* (2). In order to manipulate one’s intentions, the agent can decide again for a positive sanction - *persuasion* (3) or a negative sanction – *activation of commitments* (4).

### Analysis of Iran-Iraq War

The United States (ego) attempted to gain their end from Iran (alter) by using some form of control over the situation in which Iran (alter) was placed. They decided to change it so as to increase the probability of Iran (alter) acting in the way they wished. The United States (ego) chose to use positive sanctions, which is according to Table 1 *inducement* (1). Specifically, the United States (ego) sold military equipment to terrorist group with ties to Iran (alter), so that Iranian government (alter) would be

replaced by a pro-Western government through this terrorist group. This positive sanction, oriented towards the Iran Contras, worked quite well and the United States (ego) achieved their intended end.

### **Analysis of Iran Enriching Uranium**

In the case study of uranium enrichment in Iran, the United States (ego) decided for the use of negative sanction. Their interest was not to change the situation of Iran (alter), but to change Iran's intentions. Tracking their action from Table 1, it is straightforward that the United States (ego) chose *activation of commitments (4)* as a tool of action. In other words, the United States (ego) imposed heavy sanction on Iran (alter) being in breach with international quotas of uranium enrichment level. This model of behavior did not bring any results and Iran (alter) did not respond to heavy sanctions as expected.

### **Comparison of Analyses**

In the Iran-Iraq War, the United States succeeded in identifying the right channel and sanction type (1) in terms of their decision, although later, they had to face a lot of domestic problems. Contrary, in the second case, the United States identified the right channel, but did not do so well with the type of sanction (4). The question is why they decided to use a negative sanction instead of a positive one. If they were successful in changing Iran's situation (even in the short term) in the past through positive sanction, why did they prefer a negative sanction in changing Iran's intentions? The reasons are in the background of the United States' politics, which is aspiring for power more than ever. However, it brings more disorder than positive consequences.

While looking at the model and the previous experience of Iran-United States' relations, the United States should have chosen a positive sanction, namely *persuasion (3)*. It is not the task of this thesis to predict Iran's reactions, or to judge the behavior of the United States. Its aim is to question steps taken by the United States and to suggest alternative ways of decision making.

Since *persuasion* (3) has a positive charge and offers a win-win situation, it is more likely for alter to work and consequently for ego as well. Nevertheless, even if it does not work, only then should ego change its course to negative sanction (4). Today's policy choices of the U.S. have historical roots in the past. Due to this historical memory, U.S. opts for more negative options. It does not want to face the same situation as it did, when the Iran Contra case became public.

Rising unpopularity of the United States has led the country to change its strategy. Positive sanction policy has changed to negative sanction policy and the once well-thought decisions are now questionable decisions.

### ***Spiral Model***

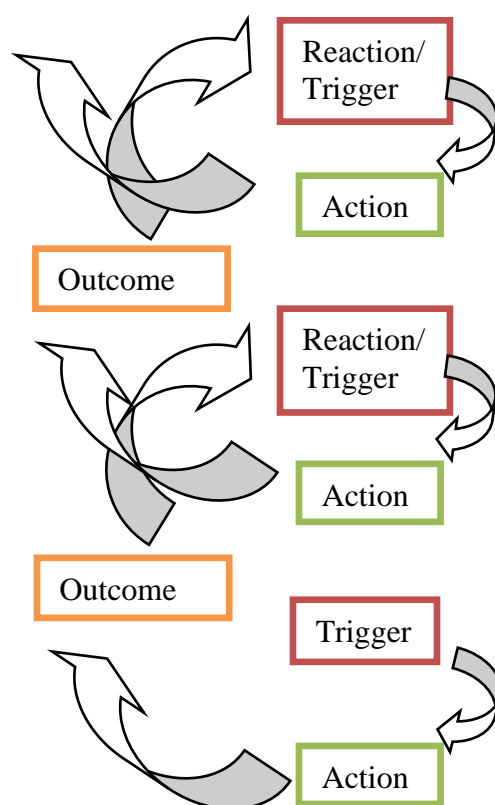
While looking at the Iran-U.S. relations, security dilemma is also a valid concept. It uses spiral model, which is derived from the Prisoner's Dilemma. Once the actors enter the spiral, it is difficult to get out.

“When two countries are locked in a spiral of arms and hostility, such bonds obviously are hard to establish. The first step must be the realization, by at least one side but preferably by both, that they are, or at least may be, caught in a dilemma that neither desires” (Jervis, 1976, p. 82).

The situation of Iran and the United States reflects the spiral model. Both of them expect the worst from the other. Both of them are convinced of the bad intentions of the other. Iran believes that the United States want to dominate the region in order to benefit from the access to oil and gas. On the other hand, the United States believe (or act like they do) that Iran is developing nuclear weapons.



Model 1: Spiral Model of Conflict



The spiral model shows a development of a conflict from a bottom-up order between two countries. The conflict has a trigger (marked in red box) done by one country. The other country decides to act (marked in green box) in response to the trigger. This action has an outcome (marked in orange box), which triggers a reaction of the first country that serves as a new trigger. Such a pattern is likely to circular models; however the previous steps are not forgotten and build on each other. Therefore, a spiral describes the actual behavior of two countries more properly.

Action on one side is followed by a counteraction on the other. Spiral is building up new loops and tension between the two countries is rising.

“In summary, the spiral model holds that statesmen see hostility as indicating that the other is out to get them and believe that the best, if not the only way to cope with his threat is with negative sanctions” (Jervis, 1976, p. 89).

Robert Jervis draws this explanation of use of negative sanctions in spiral model from historical experience during the Cold War. He also claims that cooperative arrangements are not likely to be reached through coercion. His argument supports the

## Barysz: Power as a Decisive Factor in International Relations

Prisoner's Dilemma, in which threats and an adversary posture are likely to lead to counteractions with the ultimate result that both sides will be worse off than they were before (Jervis, 1976, p. 67).

Robert Jervis thus provides another supportive argument for the claim of this thesis, the United States should have used positive sanctions and not negative.

## 5. CONCLUSION

International relations is a broad and evolving discipline, which does not provide exact rules, nor prescribe clear boundaries to states' behavior. That is exactly why it does not have a dominant stream of thought. Two main theories, realism and liberalism are competing for plausibility. Although, neither of them explains all issues in international relations, realism is helpful in evaluating states behavior, especially in conflict.

Realistic theory, when applied to the case study of Iran explains motives of the country and behavior of the United States. Iran has rich crude oil and gas resources, but it is internationally isolated. Thus it cannot fulfill its needs and develop adequately according to its potential. As a result, it seeks to gain certain economic and industrial independence through its own nuclear research and uranium enrichment. From the realistic point of view, Iran tends to maximize its power, so that it can balance out the world status quo powers, such as the United States. It also seeks to insure its security and sovereignty needs, which it has a legal right to.

The United States portray Iran as a dangerous hegemonic country, which wants to develop nuclear weapons. They base their argumentation on the findings of the IAEA which cannot be taken as a conclusive proof of Iran's intentions. Yet, intentions proved to play a key role in this case. Until a state can prove other's intentions as bad, its own actions cannot be justified. Consequently, the United States manifest behavior that can be interpreted as a lack of power, which ultimately worsens the relations with Iran through the use of negative sanctions and may ultimately result in an open war.

## RESUMÉ

Hlavnou myšlienkou práce je dokázať, že realistická teória v medzinárodných vzťahoch je plauzibilným konceptom v súčasnosti. Na rozdiel od realizmu ponúka vysvetlenie konania štátov a nepriamo aj medzinárodných organizácií. Úvodom práca oboznamuje čitateľa s realistickou koncepciou medzinárodných vzťahov a kľúčovými termínmi v rámci témy. Prípadová štúdia Iránu približuje situáciu v krajine, ale aj vo svete vzhľadom ku krajine a vysvetľuje možné motívy jej konania. V závere práca uvádza tri modely, ktoré rozoberajú prístup a správanie Spojených štátov amerických v súvislosti s Iránom.

Nakoľko je konflikt medzi Iránom a Spojenými štátmi konfliktom moci, práca pristupuje k danej problematike z hľadiska realizmu, pre ktorý je problematika moci príznačná. V prvej časti práca približuje realistickú koncepciu a poukazuje na neuspokojivé a nepostačujúce vysvetlenie správania sa štátov z hľadiska liberalizmu v medzinárodných vzťahoch. Štáty sú suverénne a preto neexistuje centrálny rozhodca na medzinárodnej scéne. Práca definuje suverenitu z historického hľadiska a bližšie sa venuje postaveniu štátu. Napriek dlhodobej snahe o jeho nahradenie prostredníctvom organizácií akou je napríklad Európska únia si štát zachováva svoju pozíciu. Dokonca sa zdá, že sa znovu orientuje na upevnenie svojej suverenity. Suverenitu, no nielen ju, je možné upevniť pomocou moci.

Cez analýzu moci práca prechádza k porovnaniu krajín so statusom quo a revizionistických krajín. Status quo krajiny sú veľké, majú vysoké príjmy, sú bohaté na prírodné zdroje, majú rozvinutý priemysel, ich vlády majú silnú dôveru a majú obohatený urán. Revizionistické krajiny nie sú spokojné so svojím postavením. Chcú zväčšiť svoju moc a získať prestíž. V súčasnom multipolárnom svete, v ktorom prevláda vzájomná závislosť, je dôležité nastoliť balans moci. Bez balansu je totiž ohrozená bezpečnosť štátov a dochádza k tzv. bezpečnostnej dileme. Ak má štát viac moci, ostatné štáty chcú posilniť vlastné prostriedky na ich ochranu. Ak jej má štát málo, predstavuje to jeho slabosť a vtedy je citlivý voči agresii. Štáty sa preto snažia maximalizovať moc. Musia však používať legitímne prostriedky, ktoré sú v rozmedzí medzinárodného práva.

Druhá časť sa zaoberá prípadovou štúdiou Iránu. Poukazuje na medzinárodnú izoláciu krajiny, ktorá je spôsobená historickými okolnosťami, režimom a politickou situáciou v krajine. Rozoberá vývoj krajiny, ktorý privádza krajinu k nevyhnutným rozhodnutiam. Irán má rozpočtové straty na obchode s ropou kvôli politike západných štátov. Asi polovica obyvateľstva je mladšia ako tridsať rokov, vzdelaná a nezamestnaná. Krajina nemá možnosť rozvíjať ropný priemysel, nakoľko nemá podporu západných štátov, ktoré by tak prišli o veľké zisky. Irán však musí zadovážiť energetické zdroje svojim potrebám, pracovné miesta vlastným občanom a možno tak získať prestíž i podporu svojej vlády. Rozhodol sa preto rozvíjať vlastný jadrový program, na ktorý má legitímne právo.

Medzinárodná agentúra pre atómovú energiu však odhalila porušovanie noriem zo strany Iránu. Irán síce nadmerne obohacuje urán, ale takto obohatený urán majú aj iné nestabilné krajiny a nevenuje sa im toľko pozornosti. Spojené štáty americké rozvírili hladinu medzinárodných vzťahov svojím presvedčením, že krajina sa venuje vývoju jadrových zbraní. Opakovane uvalili na Irán sankcie, ktoré ale nijako neodradili Irán od svojho jadrového programu. Prostredníctvom aplikácie teórie moci na situáciu krajiny práca dokazuje snahu Iránu o upevnenie svojej pozície.

Tretia časť vysvetľuje rozdiel medzi výkonom a vlastníctvom moci. Teoretický model aplikuje na konanie Iránu a Spojených štátov. Následne sa zaoberá používaním sankcií Spojenými štátmi. Práca porovnáva výber sankcií použitých voči Iránu v minulosti a v súčasnosti. Prichádza k záveru, že Spojené štáty v súčasnosti používajú voči Iránu negatívne sankcie, hoci v minulosti použili pozitívne a tie priniesli svoje výsledky. Analýzu správania sa štátov završuje špirálový model. Tento model jasne ukazuje, že krajiny očakávajú od seba len to najhoršie. Obe sú presvedčené o zlých zámeroch druhej strany. Irán verí, že Spojené štáty chcú dominovať Strednému Východu, aby profitovali z prístupu k ropu a zemnému plynu. Spojené štáty americké sú zas presvedčené, že Irán vyvíja jadrové zbrane.

Práca sa snaží poukázať, že správanie sa Iránu nemožno posudzovať a následne odsudzovať len na základe pohľadu Spojených štátov. Čitateľ má možnosť pozrieť sa na daný problém z nového uhla pohľadu a prehodnotiť svoj postoj ku konfliktu.

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