

**LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY**

**THE INFLUENCE OF THINK TANKS ON UNITED STATES  
FOREIGN POLICY:  
THE CASE OF PRESIDENT OBAMA AND IRAN**

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Masters of Arts in International Affairs

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## DEDICATION

To my parents who allows offer their patience, support, and unconditional love, to Maya who knows just when to make me laugh, and especially to my Stephy who helped me survive “the evil comma” and whose hugs light up my day.

# **The Influence of Think Tanks on United States Foreign Policy: The Case of President Obama and Iran**

**Tania Nassim Bougebrayel**

## **Abstract**

In an attempt to help bridge the gap between policy research and policy outputs, this thesis examines the role of research institutions, or think tanks, as domestic factors of influence on United States foreign policy. A case study is presented which examines the foreign policy outputs of President Barack Obama's administration towards Iran with respect to policy research recommendations made by analysts, scholars, and fellows in four major think tanks in the United States. This thesis seeks to accomplish two tasks. First, it attempts to establish the contribution of think tanks to foreign policy decision makers. Second, it examines the relationship between think tanks and other domestic factors which contribute to making think tanks one of the most important domestic factors of influence on United States foreign policy.

Keywords: United States, Iran, Barack Obama, Executive Orders, Foreign Policy, Think Tanks, Influence

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

The process of foreign policy making in the United States is a complicated and multifaceted one. Foreign policy is conducted in different environments and often is described as a “dual” or “nested” game, implying several levels and factors of influence.<sup>1</sup> Scholars continue to debate on the factors that influence policy and the success or failures of these influences. In addition, much debate continues in the field of international relations on the relationship between research and policy. At the heart of this argument lie policy research institutions commonly known as think tanks.

Varying in size, scope, resources, and areas of specialization, think tanks play an important role in policy making in the United States. The primary purpose of think tanks in the early twentieth century was to promote scholarly research. However, since their inception, think tanks have become more than just research institutions, but also a vital resource for policy makers by directly and indirectly influencing the policy-making process.<sup>2</sup>

In order to better understand the relationship between foreign policy making and the role of think tanks, this thesis asks several questions. First, can think tanks contribute to foreign policy decision making? If so, due to their expanding nature, can think tanks be seen as a domestic source of influence on United States foreign policy? Furthermore, due to the complexities and dual nature of foreign policy decision making, what revelations can be made about the relationship between think tanks and other sources of

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<sup>1</sup> Laura Neack, *The New Foreign Policy: Power Seeking in a Globalized World* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2008), 1-10.

<sup>2</sup> Donald Abelson, *American Think Tanks and their Role in US Foreign Policy* (Great Britain: Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1996), 65-67.

domestic influence? In order to answer these questions, a proper research framework must be created. However, before this framework can be established, a better understanding of the relationship between theory, research, and policy must be formed. By using previous frameworks established on the relationship between theory, research, and policy, I will better be able to refine my own framework and methodology in hopes of showing the contributions of research institutions to United States foreign policy.

The first framework which examines the relationship between theory and policy is provided by Stephan Walt. Walt, in “The Relationship between Theory and Policy in International Relations,” is critical of the current norms that exist in the field of policy making including the wide gap between academic theories of international relations and the actual practice of foreign policy making.<sup>3</sup> In his argument, Walt explains several factors that show why policy and theory rarely meet, many of them resulting in a gap in the academic world. He also cites the widening gap between academic scholars and policy-oriented analysts and argues that the solution to closing these gaps lies in altering the norms of the current international relations academic discipline.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to theory and policy, there are frameworks that examine the relationship between research and policy. David Baldwin in “Success and Failure in Foreign Policy,” highlights the inconsistencies between policy journals and rigorous, academic journals. Baldwin attempts to create an analytical framework that can judge “the success of peacekeeping operations, economic sanctions, military undertakings, and other types of influence attempts.”<sup>5</sup> Perhaps the most convincing portion of Baldwin’s argument is his conception of success which he says is difficult because measuring

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<sup>3</sup> Stephen M. Walt, “The Relationship Between Theory and Policy in International Relations,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 3 (2005): 25.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 33-43.

<sup>5</sup> David A. Baldwin, “Success and Failure in Foreign Policy,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 3 (2000): 170.

success is “slippery,” “misleading,” and “multiple.” Baldwin essentially argues that there are many dimensions to measuring success and failures in foreign policy, none of which are simple. He concludes his analysis by claiming that what is needed is more knowledge in the field of policy making which can only be provided by further understanding effective policy instruments as well as developing concepts and analytical criteria that “permit the comparison of alternative techniques of statecraft.”<sup>6</sup>

There are two points established by Walt and Baldwin that were beneficial in formulating the logic for this thesis. First, Walt highlights the widening gap between theory and actual policy making. Secondly, Baldwin explains the difficulty of measuring the success of research as policy outputs. This thesis seeks to work between these two frameworks in hopes of highlighting the contribution of think tanks as research institutions to foreign policy. Since success of research recommendations is difficult to measure, proving influence of think tanks on foreign policy decision makers will be very challenging. Rather, as both scholars agree, what is needed is more research on the subject and a deeper understanding of policy options which is what this thesis hopes to provide.

The goal of this thesis is to increase understanding and knowledge on policy options provided to decision makers in hopes of working towards closing the gap between theory, research, and policy. In order to do so, this thesis will seek to establish the contribution of think tanks to foreign policy as well as the relationship between think tanks and other domestic factors of influence in the United States. Before diving into a methodological framework for analyzing policy recommendations, a literature review will examine different aspects of foreign policy including different levels of analysis as

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 171-180.

well as varying factors of influence. Establishing a thorough literature review is essential in that it provides a deeper understanding of the complexities of foreign policy making within the United States as well as begins to highlight the relationship between different factors of influence on policy making.

In order to establish whether or not think tanks do contribute to foreign policy in the United States, a case study will be provided which includes policy recommendations for the Obama administration to take towards Iran from four established think tanks in the United States. The case study focuses on the relationship between the Obama administration and Iran for several reasons. First, the relationship between Tehran and Washington became more antagonistic under President Bush and the neoconservatives. Following a policy of complete isolationism, the Bush administration made several miscalculations about Iran's internal dynamics and the regional environment and by doing so, the administration lost the opportunity to "generate real momentum in Iran."<sup>7</sup> The Bush administration's policies left Washington in an even more difficult position with Iran, a position that was later inherited by the Obama administration. Furthermore, during his campaign, Barack Obama pledged to open dialogue with Iran without preconditions, a policy that was in direct contrast of the previous administration. This case study will see if these stark differences in policy approaches will soften the relationship between Iran and the United States. Secondly, Iran is a powerful player in the Middle East whose decisions impact the entire region. As such, the policies of the United States and particularly the Obama administration have an impact on the entire

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<sup>7</sup> Suzanne Maloney, "U.S. Policy Towards Iran: Missed Opportunities and Paths Forward," *The Fletcher Forum for World Affairs* 32, no. 2 (2008): 27-28.

region. Finally, the case of the United States and Iran can be used as an example of policy towards regimes which are neither democratic nor friendly towards the US.

The policy recommendations will be analyzed in light of the policy outputs of the Chief Executive, or President Barack Obama. Executive orders will be used as examples of policy outputs from President Obama. By grouping together policy recommendations based on foreign policy strategy and comparing them to the decisions made in the executive orders, I hope to highlight similarities, if any, between policy recommendations and actual policy decisions. In essence, the decisions of the Obama administration will be examined with regards to policy recommendations of think tanks in hopes of establishing a link between research and policy and in attempts to show that think tanks can help “bridge the gap between the worlds of ideas and actions.”<sup>8</sup>

While this thesis seeks to establish the contribution of think tanks on foreign policy by examining policy recommendations in light of executive orders, this only represents a small piece of a large policy making puzzle. While think tanks play an essential role in policy making, it would be incorrect to assume that they are the only factor that influences foreign policy decision makers. The argument presented here is aware that foreign policy decision making does not occur in a vacuum, but rather, that there is a multitude of influences in the decision making process. As such, the second question this thesis seeks to answer is what revelations can be made about the relationship between think tanks and other sources of influence within the United States? During the preliminary stages of research for this thesis, many additional questions arose regarding factors of influence including how do partisan relationships between the

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<sup>8</sup> Richard Haass, “Think Tanks and the U.S. Foreign Policy: A Policy-Maker’s Perspective,” *U.S. Foreign Policy Agenda* 7, no. 3 (2002): 5.

variety of foreign policy decision makers and think tanks influence policy suggestions and outcomes and what role do other domestic factors of influence have on research institutions and on policy makers? These questions will hopefully be answered by searching for domestic factors of influence on the think tanks. In other words, after sorting through the policy recommendations which will be done to create a link between research and policy, I will next attempt to group together common themes which occur within the different think tanks to highlight and examine the relationship between think tanks and other domestic factors of influence in the United States.

Finally, I hope to draw conclusions based on my research findings by creating links between think tanks and executive orders as well as think tanks and different domestic factors of influence. I hope to increase understanding on the relationship between research and policy as well as highlight the complexity of foreign policy decision making in the United States which may perhaps inspire further studies on the topic.

# CHAPTER TWO

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review for this thesis is vast and attempts to cover many aspects of foreign policy factors of influence. However, before any factors can be examined, a clear definition of foreign policy must be established. According to Laura Neack, defining foreign policy is the first step in studying the subject. Neack cites several definitions of foreign policy as given by policy experts. Charles Hermann, for example, sees foreign policy as a “neglected concept”... [that is the]... “discrete purposeful actions that results from the political level decision of and individual or group of individuals...[It is] the observable artifact of a political level decision. It is not the decision, but the product of the decision.”<sup>9</sup> Neack believes that Hermann’s view is that of a minority of scholars and says policy must involve both the study of formulation and implementation, which she refers to as “how certain goals arise and why certain behaviors result.”<sup>10</sup>

The definition of foreign policy that will be used in this thesis is given by Deborah Gerner who defines it as: “the intentions, statements, and actions of an actor—often, but not always, a state—directed toward the external world and the response of the other actors to these intentions, statements, and actions.”<sup>11</sup> Even though it is Gerner’s definition of foreign policy that will be a starting point for this literature review, the definition given by Neack is also helpful because both descriptions make reference to different entry points for the study of foreign policy, also known as levels of analysis, which will serve as a macro framework for this literature review. The level of analysis

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<sup>9</sup> Neack, 9.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

framework will allow for deeper analysis of the influential factors on foreign policy decision making. This will create a transition into the approach used by this thesis, which uses think tanks and executive orders to show a correlation between research institutions and policy outputs. Lastly, a few definitions will be given which better explain some concepts and key terms used throughout the research.

## **2.1: Levels of Analysis**

Having established a definition of foreign policy, this research continues by using international relations theory found in *Man, the State, and War* by Kenneth Waltz. Waltz's three images, or levels of analysis, provide an excellent starting framework for examining different levels of influence on foreign policy including the individual, the state, and the system. Waltz's meta theory of international relations is used as an entry point for middle range theories provided by other scholars that focus on the individual, state, or systemic factors of influence. What this research has shown is that within each level of analysis lie a multitude of factors that influence foreign policy decision makers.

Kenneth Waltz, father of structural realism, examines several key assumptions which occur in the field of international affairs in *Man, the State, and War*. In his book, Waltz describes three separate images or levels of analysis—individual, state, and the system—as a means of understanding the causes of international conflict. The first image, the individual, is used by Waltz to describe the role the individual decision makers play. Waltz divides the scholars who study the human nature of man into two categories: the pessimists and the optimists. The pessimistic scholars claim that war has its roots in the heart of man, and as such, cannot be changed. Rather, the evil nature of man will dominate in his discourse and decision making. As a result, pessimists look for

political remedies as a solution.<sup>12</sup> In addition, Waltz explains that by "seeing the cause of war in men, [the optimists] seek to change them."<sup>13</sup> With regards to the optimistic scholars, Waltz is critical of them in that he finds them to be naïve and politically ignorant calling their peace-keeping solutions "either hopelessly vague or downright impossible."<sup>14</sup>

Waltz's second level of analysis or image focuses on the characteristics within the nation-state that influences decision making such as "the nature of a state's political institutions, its modes of production and distribution, the quality and origins of its elites, and (sometimes) the characteristics of its people. [These characteristics] determine whether that state will be peaceful or belligerent."<sup>15</sup> Waltz comes to the conclusion that states are either bad or good, and as a result, the actions of the state will either result in conflict or peaceful actions.<sup>16</sup>

The third image is the international system in which states interact with each other. In an anarchical society, states are in a constant power struggle with one another. According to Waltz, "in anarchy there is no automatic harmony" and that "among autonomous states, war is inevitable."<sup>17</sup> This level of analysis examines the balance-of-power theory and helps students of international affairs understand why, under an anarchical system, a state behaves in a certain way in order to protect its own interests and maximize its power.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> J. David Singer, "Review of *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* by Kenneth N. Waltz," *World Politics* 12, no.3 (1960): 454.

<sup>13</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965): 42.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>15</sup> J. David Singer, 457.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, 186.

<sup>18</sup> J. David Singer, 458-460.

Waltz examines the significance of each level in relation to each other in order to have a thorough understanding of political actions. He states, “The third image describes the framework of world politics, but without the first and second images there can be no knowledge of the forces that determine policy; [conversely] the first and second images describe the forces in world politics, but without the third image it is impossible to assess their importance or predict their results.”<sup>19</sup> While this statement implies equal importance placed on each level of analysis, Waltz believes that the third level of analysis best describes the actions of a state in that it offers "a final explanation because it does not hinge on accidental causes-irrationalities in men, defects in states."<sup>20</sup>

The three images presented by Waltz continue to be a topic of debate amongst scholars. In order to establish which level or image is the most effective in describing the catalysts of foreign policy outputs in the United States, each level must be further explored. The work of scholars, foreign policy experts, and political analysts will be examined in order to first determine which level of analysis most impacts foreign policy decisions in the United States.

## **2.2: Individual Level of Analysis**

The first level of analysis, the individual, is needed to better understand the role of the leader in foreign policy decision making. There is much debate amongst scholars still today about the importance of the leader in determining actual foreign policy outputs. Supporters of the first level of analysis believe that the personal characteristics are the most important factor in determining foreign policy.<sup>21</sup> Skeptics, on the other hand, give a variety of criticisms for why political leaders are not the most significant

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<sup>19</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, 238.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 231-232.

<sup>21</sup> Maurice A. East et al., *Why Nations Act* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1978): 50.

aspect of the decision making process including limitations due to social factors, similar policy decisions made by different personalities, and bureaucratic constraints.<sup>22</sup> For the purpose of this research and for the purpose of deciding which level of analysis best explains the most influence in policy making, several opinions are needed on the importance of the role of the individual.

Kenneth Pollack and Daniel Byman, in their article “Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesmen Back In,” find the tendency of scholars to ignore the role of the individual and his/her personality troubling. They argue that over the years scholars have either been too modest or too arrogant in their analyses of the role of the individual. For this reason, Pollack and Byman seek to “rescue men and women, as individuals, from the oblivion to which political scientists have consigned them.”<sup>23</sup> The authors’ argument is established in several sections. First, Pollack and Byman attack several notions established about the individual. For example, while they commend the attention given to the role of the individual by Kenneth Waltz in *Man, the State, and War*, the authors disagree with Kenneth Waltz’s assessment that human nature is constant. In contrary, Pollack and Byman argue that there is a wide range of variance in personality and that these variants in personality result in a multitude of actions and decisions.<sup>24</sup>

The second section of their argument is a number of case studies of leaders that have had a significant impact on the foreign policies of their countries including Adolf Hitler, Otto von Bismarck, Wilhelm II, Napoleon Bonaparte, Saddam Hussein, and Hafiz al-Assad. From these two sections, the authors create thirteen hypotheses that

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Daniel Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack, “Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In,” *International Security* 25, no. 4 (2001): 109.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 111-112.

either describe individual behavior or describe how individuals matter.<sup>25</sup> Lastly, the authors conclude that the role of the individual is essential in understanding the actions of the state as well as to discredit what the authors call the “cult of international relations—inevitability,” which states that because a certain event occurred, it does not mean it was fated to do so.<sup>26</sup>

Robert Jervis also examines the role of the individual in his article “Perception and Misperception in International Politics.” Jervis first examines three different levels of analysis that could be used to predict the behavior of the individual actor: international, domestic, and bureaucratic. Jervis uses these levels of analysis to show that no matter what context is used to analyze the situation, it is near impossible to explain important decisions and policies without knowledge of the preference and worldview of the individual leader.<sup>27</sup> Jervis concludes with a two-step model that relates actor images and perceptions to the actor’s understanding of reality based on available information which he hopes will help explain some state behavior and actor misperception.<sup>28</sup>

Jack Levy’s “Misperceptions and the Causes of War: Theoretical Linkages and Analytical Problems,” also sheds light on the role of individual perceptions and the actions taken by the state. Levy criticizes the lack of importance given to misperceptions by political scientists. As a result, he states that capabilities and intentions are the central forms of misperception, and he focuses his discussion on misperception of adversary’s capabilities, misperception of adversary’s intentions, and misperception of third states. He then links these misperceptions to possible causes for war followed by an analysis of

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 114-145.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 145.

<sup>27</sup> Robert Jervis, “Perception and Misperception in International Politics,” In *International Relations Theory: Realism, Pluralism, Globalism, and Beyond*, Eds. Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999), 257-266.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 266-268.

conceptual and methodological problems resulting from misperceptions of capabilities and misperception of intentions. Lastly, Levy concludes that while there are methodological problems in introducing misperception in conflict theory, they are essential in understanding theoretical causes of war.<sup>29</sup>

While the individual level of analysis provides a better understanding for how a leader can make decisions, there are many factors for which it cannot account for. As some critics have previously stated, one cannot rely on the individual level of analysis only to analyze policy decisions because it cannot explain how different leaders, in similar settings, will react similarly.<sup>30</sup> It also cannot account for the limitations placed on the individuals such as their own political affiliations, role of political advisors, and the role of public opinion. Therefore, we must look to a more complete explanation of policy influences, turning our focus now to the domestic and systemic levels of analysis.

### **2.3: State Level of Analysis**

While individuals represent the human agents of foreign policy decision making, the second level of analysis provides more insight into the structure of decision making.<sup>31</sup> The literature on the factors of influence within the state is vast and was chosen to better explain what is meant by “domestic” influences. In addition, these varying factors of influence help to demonstrate a few things. First, they represent the many complexities that exist within the state. In addition, upon examination, it becomes evident that many of these domestic factors are linked to one another, and can specifically be linked to think tanks, making them essential to the argument presented

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<sup>29</sup> Jack S. Levy, “Misperception and the Causes of War: Theoretical Linkages and Analytical Problems,” *World Politics* 36, no. 1 (1983): 76-99.

<sup>30</sup> Maurice A. East et al., 50.

<sup>31</sup> Valerie Hudson, *Foreign Policy Analysis* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2008): 10-12.

for this thesis. Therefore, this section of the literature review attempts to not only highlight some of the domestic factors but also create a link between them and think tanks.

Michael Barnett and Jack Levy's "Domestic Sources of Alignments and Alliances: The Case of Egypt, 1962-73" is an article that addresses the lack of significance given to the domestic, social, and political variables that attribute to international conflict. The authors examine domestic, political, and economic constraints on a state's ability to mobilize its internal resources and internal threats to the government that could result in external alliances. In turn, these alliances can help in aiding these domestic threats to the regime.<sup>32</sup> By using the case study of Egypt, the authors find that the argument for domestic sources of alignments and alliances can be generalized. While alliances occur and are made at a systemic or international level, "the domestic objectives of state actors and the social, economic, and political constraints that limit the availability of resources in society and the government's access to those resources at acceptable costs must also be considered" because they are essential in explaining alliance behavior.<sup>33</sup> This article is significant because while it highlights external events and policy decisions made as a result of external events, it requires us to look within the system to understand the policy decisions made, which is what this thesis attempts to establish as well. Research institutions, such as the ones studied in this thesis, attempt to examine the role of societal, economic, and political constraints placed by President Obama that result in his policy outputs towards Iran. Therefore, when studying

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<sup>32</sup> Michael N. Barnett and Jack S. Levy, "Domestic Sources of Alliances and Alignments: The Case of Egypt, 1962-73," *International Organization* 45, no. 3 (1991): 369-370.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 395.

the foreign policy towards Iran, we cannot ignore the limitations and expectations placed on a decision maker that result from the complexities within the state system.

Even though the research conducted for this thesis examines the role of the President of the United States as the Chief Executive and the impact of domestic influences on him, the role of the United States Congress cannot be ignored. Since the United States operates on a system of checks and balances, which allows each of the three branches of the government a significant role in decision making, it is necessary to examine the role of the legislative branch. Some foreign policy experts place much emphasis on the role of the United States Congress as a domestic influence on foreign policy. James Lindsay and Randall Ripley, in their article “Foreign and Defense Policy in Congress: A Research Agenda for the 1990s,” examine ways in which the role of Congress can be better understood and appreciated in regards to foreign policy decision making. The authors call for research that seeks to understand, explain, and hopefully predict the foreign policy behavior of Congress conducted through normative questions.<sup>34</sup> Lindsay and Ripley then examine the influence of public opinion, constituencies, the Congressional agenda, interest groups, partisanship, defense committees, and several others on Congress’ foreign policy decision making. The authors conclude that studying the role of Congress is essential in advancing the understanding of policy and politics as well as addressing issues that are of vital importance to the country.<sup>35</sup>

Lindsay and Ripley are not alone in examining the role of Congress in foreign policy decision making. Glenn Hastedt, Laura Neack, Valerie Hudson, and Christopher

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<sup>34</sup> James M. Lindsay and Randall B Ripley, “Foreign and Defense Policy in Congress: A Research Agenda for the 1990s.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 17, no. 3 (1992): 419.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 420-437.

Hill all make mention of the importance of Congress as well as other domestic factors in influencing foreign policy outputs. Glenn Hastedt, in *American Foreign Policy: Past, Present, and Future*, presents many of the domestic factors that contribute to the foreign policy decision making process. He examines the role of leaders, the media, public opinion, elections, interest groups, and Congress. Hastedt also gives a detailed description of the foreign affairs bureaucracy and the important role it plays in foreign policy decisions.

Laura Neack, in her book, *The New Foreign Policy: Power Seeking in a Globalized World*, discusses “national self-image” and explains how different stereotypes in “in-nations” are culturally shared and perpetuated. As a result, siege mentality can dominate. This occurs when members of a group hold a central belief that the rest of the world has negative behavioral intentions towards them.<sup>36</sup> Neack examines many aspects of the domestic factors that shape foreign policy. In addition to structure, she also discusses the importance of the leader as well as the government type. In her explanation of foreign policy as a dual-nested game, she identifies two frameworks that help explain the domestic political games and policy choices. The first framework, established by Hagan, is called “Accommodate, Insulate, and Mobilize.” The second framework is “Democratization and War,” and unlike Democratic Peace Theory, this framework explains how the process of democratization will lead to “societal change, institutional weakness, and threatened interests.” In order to ensure stability, democratic

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<sup>36</sup> Laura Neack, *The New Foreign Policy: Power Seeking in a Globalized World* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2008), 81-90.

norms and institutions must be consolidated together and this must be done without war.<sup>37</sup>

Valerie Hudson explains that foreign policy is simply a continuation of domestic policy by using diversity of viewpoint and equal distribution of power as examples of similarities between domestic and foreign policy. She uses nature of the regime as well as political institutions to show how foreign policy can be either directly or indirectly affected. In addition, Hudson explains that there are many actors in politics that have an effect on foreign policy ranging from the different branches of the United States government, to the media, to interest groups, to epistemic communities.<sup>38</sup>

In a similar regard, Christopher Hill argues that “no one now believes that foreign policy is unaffected by what occurs within states. The billiard ball metaphor has been discarded, together with the notion that foreign policy is essentially a problem of strategy like chess.”<sup>39</sup> In close agreement with Laura Neack and Valerie Hudson, Hill also assumes that foreign policy “is made and conducted in complex domestic and international environments,” or that foreign policy is a “dual-nested game” and decision making is “multifactorial” and “multilevel.”<sup>40</sup> Hill also cites the importance of the foreign affairs bureaucracy by examining the functions of the ministry of foreign affairs, challenges to diplomatic services, and the theory of bureaucratic politics.<sup>41</sup> Hill claims that the bureaucratic politics approach, first introduced by Graham T. Allison, has two general consequences for the studying of foreign policy: “it reinforces the whole domestic politics approach, against the skepticism of realism, neo-realism and some

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 99-109.

<sup>38</sup> Valerie M. Hudson, *Foreign Policy Analysis* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2008), 125-127.

<sup>39</sup> Christopher Hill, *The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy* (New York: Pelgrave, 2003), 220.

<sup>40</sup> See Neack, 6-7 and Hudson, 5-6. These statements support Hill’s position on studying foreign policy, 5-11.

<sup>41</sup> Hill, 75-86.

forms of historicism, and it presents a picture of decision-making in which ‘foul-ups,’ as opposed to either rationality or inevitability, are very prominent.”<sup>42</sup>

Hill and many other international affairs and foreign policy scholars incorporate the work of Graham T. Allison into their work when studying internal factors of foreign policy decision making. Allison creates three different models for policy making and tests these models by using the Cuban missile crisis as a case study. The first model, the Rational Policy Model, is based on the realist notion that the government will take on the role of unitary decision maker in order to find the most pragmatic and rational course of action to fulfill its security goals. The second model, the Organizational Process Model, shows that foreign policy decisions are not rational decisions, but that they stem from outputs of organizational processes. Essentially, Allison is arguing that policy options are already part of standard operating procedures (SOPs). The third model which many scholars cite as key in understanding the domestic actions and behaviors to influence foreign policy is the Bureaucratic Politics Model. Allison describes this model as a positioning game, meaning that politically positioned leaders and organizations are the key players in creating foreign policy. As such, each leader and/or representative will have his/her own positions based on the organization/bureaucracy he/she represents. Therefore, foreign policy is a bargaining game based on bureaucratic positioning and policy outputs are a result of negotiations among leaders.<sup>43</sup>

While Allison’s bureaucratic model is innovative as well as essential to understanding the impact of bureaucracies, it is important to note that many other scholars have built on this argument. Henry Kissinger, in “Domestic Structure and

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 86.

<sup>43</sup> Graham T. Allison, “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis,” *The American Political Review* 63, no. 3 (1969): 689-718.

Foreign Policy,” explains the relationship between relatively stable domestic structures and adventurous foreign policy. According to Kissinger, the more stable the domestic structures are, the less likely the decision maker is to make risky decisions. He examines both the impact of administrative structure and the nature of leadership on foreign policy explaining that bureaucracies can take on an agenda of their own and leaders can drown in standard operation procedures (SOPs). However, bureaucracies are essential to nations because elementary knowledge is needed for judgment, and without a bureaucracy, this is not possible. An important point Kissinger makes is that domestic structures do not exist in a vacuum, meaning they respond to the requirements of the environment.<sup>44</sup>

What do Hastedt, Neack, Hudson, Hill, Allison, and Kissinger all have in common? Other than adding extensive research to the study of foreign policy, they also provide several elements that are present at a domestic level that are important for studying think tanks. Hastedt, for example, analyzes the public opinion and the media, both of which are key to formulating policy in think tanks. Neack and Hudson both touch on norms such as democratic ideals found in a democratic government that can impact policy formation. It is important to understand the different elements of democracy including the protection of human rights and the quest for security because they are also found in the policy research and advice conducted by research institutions. In the collection samples used for this thesis, some publications done by think tanks use democratic ideals such as protection of human rights to place pressure on policy makers,

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<sup>44</sup> Henry Kissinger, “Domestic Structure and Foreign Policy,” *International Politics and Foreign Policy*, Ed. James N. Rosenau, (Toronto: Free Press, 1969), 261-275.

making pressure to uphold democratic ideals a means of influence for think tank analysts.

In addition to public opinion, the media, and democratic norms, Hill, Allison, and Kissinger all discuss the impact of structure on foreign policy decision making. Structure, in their articles, refer to the bureaucratic constraints, standard operating procedures, administrative agendas, and organizational outputs because they create a situation in which decision makers are limited by their positions within organizations, bureaucracies, and so on. These arguments are also important to analyze in light of think tanks because not only do research analysts take into consideration the bureaucratic constraints on a decision maker, but they themselves are also subject to administrative constraints and standard operation procedures. Therefore, it is important to build on these arguments for the purpose of this literature review.

Daniel Drezner, in his article titled “Ideas, Bureaucratic Politics, and the Crafting of Foreign Policy,” also examines the role of the bureaucracy in foreign policy decision making in regards to how the bureaucracy influences institutions. Drezner seeks to fill the gaps in Allison’s argument by suggesting “the origins of bureaucratic preferences, strategies to maximize organizational utility and likely outcomes. In particular, the ability of bureaucracies to use organizational culture as a means of propagating ideas is crucial to determining outcomes.”<sup>45</sup> He does so by examining the placement and ability to create ideas by both insulated agencies and embedded agencies. Drezner concludes that “insulated agencies can create organizational cultures wedded to their founding ideas [and that] this makes insulated agencies robust to challenges from other

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<sup>45</sup> Daniel W. Drezner, “Ideas, Bureaucratic Politics, and the Crafting of Foreign Policy,” *American Journal of Political Science* 44, no. 4 (2000): 734.

organizations and increases the odds of survival.”<sup>46</sup> In addition, “embedded agencies are constrained from crafting a separate organizational culture, making them more vulnerable to manipulation by the larger bureaucracy. If they do survive, however, they are more likely to thrive.”<sup>47</sup>

Steven B. Redd also examines agents within the bureaucracy—in particular, the role of the advisers in influencing foreign policy. Redd uses the poliheuristic theory of foreign policy decision making to test the effects of the presence of advisers on strategy selection and choice as well as influence.<sup>48</sup> Redd finds that decision makers are highly sensitive to and aware of the consequences of their actions and decisions, political or otherwise. He also discovers that political advisers act as “a sensitizing mechanism for decision makers, which led them to adopt noncompensatory decision rules.”<sup>49</sup> In poliheuristic theory, a noncompensatory decision is one which a decision maker is not willing to compromise on—i.e. a nonnegotiable term which the decision maker renders as most important to him/her. As such, when decision makers employ noncompensatory strategies, the role of the political adviser becomes essential because the adviser helps the decision maker decide on what the nonnegotiable terms are.<sup>50</sup>

As previously discussed, the impact of citizens and public opinion are important aspects to consider when examining decision making on a state level of analysis.

Sowmya Anand and Jon Krosnick examine the impact of attitudes towards foreign policy goals and public preferences among the 2000 presidential candidates. The authors discover that citizens evaluate foreign policy goals and these goals have a direct impact

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 746.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Steven B. Redd, “The Influence of Advisers on Foreign Policy Decision Making: An Experimental Study,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46, no. 3 (2002): 335.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 356.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

on the candidates, and this results in candidates taking distinct stands on certain foreign policy issues.<sup>51</sup>

Bartholomew Sparrow and Shibley Telhami also pay attention to the role of public opinion and foreign policy decisions. Sparrow, in his article, “Who Speaks for the People? The President, the Press, and Public Opinion in the United States,” unpacks the relationship between the president, the press, and public opinion in order to better understand who speaks for the people and “determine under which conditions each institution speaks for the public and under which it dominates or is subordinate to the others.”<sup>52</sup> Telhami’s argument builds on Sparrow’s in that he sheds light on the importance of public opinion when making policy decisions, especially when studying the Middle East.<sup>53</sup>

Lastly, it is important to examine the role of interest groups and lobbies because they are another significant factor in foreign policy making in the United States. David Lowery, author of “Why Do Organized Interests Lobby?: A Multi-Goal, Multi-Context Theory of Lobbying,” examine the role of interest groups and lobbies in democratic societies and seeks to understand what results in group mobilization. In his article, Lowery begins by examining a broad variety of interest groups and proposes four theories for why interest groups lobby. The first theory is a derivation of profit maximization theory which argues that interest groups will attempt to maximize their gains. The second theory states that lobby groups go into battle with one another, even

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<sup>51</sup> Sowmya Anand and Jon A. Krosnick, “The Impact of Attitudes toward Foreign Policy Goals on Public Preferences among Presidential Candidates: A Study of Issue Publics and the Attentive Public in the 2000 U.S. Presidential Election,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (2000): 31.

<sup>52</sup> Bartholomew H. Sparrow, “Who Speaks for the People? The President, the Press, and Public Opinion in the United States,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (2008): 578.

<sup>53</sup> Shibley Telhami, “U.S. Policy and the Arab and Muslim World: The Need for Public Diplomacy,” *The Brookings Review* 20, no. 3 (2002): 47-48.

against all odds. The third theory argues that lobby groups behave non-rationally when they compete against each other for policy changes. The last theory states that organized interests lobby due to the complexity of the influence process that occurs within the interest group.<sup>54</sup> While Lowery acknowledges the validity of such arguments, he proposes that they are not sufficient in explaining why organized interests lobby. He proposes a theoretical framework which uses Niche Theory and Resource Dependency Theory to help fill the gap in understanding lobby groups. While both of these theories are primarily used in the field of biology, Lowery uses them in socio-cultural manner to come to the conclusion that interest groups lobby first and foremost for their survival rather than influencing policy. By understanding organizational behavior, Lowery is able to create an abstract model that can take into account the many complexities of successful lobbying.<sup>55</sup>

Lowery's argument that interest groups lobby for survival can be seen in many cases. One example of lobbying for survival can be seen in John Mearsheimer and Steven Walt's essay, "The Israel Lobby," which argues that no special interest group in the United States has the ability to make such an impact on foreign policy decisions like the Israel Lobby. Mearsheimer and Walt dissect how the Lobby has managed to convince Americans that United States' interests and those of Israel are essentially identical.<sup>56</sup> This is significant to this study because lobby groups have the ability to directly influence policy makers, especially if they are well organized and funded. Walt and Mearsheimer argue that Israel has been the determining force of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. Furthermore, they argue that the "rogue states" of the Middle East,

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<sup>54</sup> David Lowery, "Why Do Organized Interests Lobby?: A Multi-Goal, Multi-Context Theory of Lobbying," *Polity* 39, no. 1 (2007), 29-45.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 46-54.

<sup>56</sup> John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, "The Israel Lobby," *London Review of Books* 28, no. 6 (2006).

such as Iran for example, are not so much a threat to the United States as they are an immediate threat to Israel. For this reason, the Israeli Lobby appeals to policy makers to support its interests in the Middle East which include the protection of Israel as the only democratic state in the region, as well as financial and ideological support.<sup>57</sup> Lobbyists not only appeal to decision makers but also to other domestic factors of influence including research institutions. In the data gathered for this thesis, several articles are present highlighting not only the role of the United States towards Iran, but also the role of the United States and Israel with regards to Iran, driving home Walt and Mearsheimer's argument that "U.S. policy in the region derives almost entirely from domestic politics."<sup>58</sup>

Robert Trice also argues the importance of both interest groups and mass public opinion as having an influence on foreign policy. Trice argues that interest groups have no "formal policy-making authority, and must rely on those people within the government who do have such authority to translate their policy preferences into decisional outputs."<sup>59</sup> Therefore, the interest groups first must investigate when decisions are to be made and secondly create an appropriate lobbying strategy. Trice empirically examines the relationship between public opinion and interest groups and concludes that in order to be more effective, interest groups must rely on other resources to influence policy makers in addition to public opinion<sup>60</sup>

Charles McC. Mathias discusses the role of ethnic groups and lobbying in the United States but is critical of the role of ethnic groups. McC. Mathias draws a

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Robert Trice, "Foreign Policy Interest Groups, Mass Public Opinion and the Arab-Israeli Dispute," *The Western Political Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (1978): 238-239.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 252.

distinction between ethnicity which he says “enriches American life and culture, and organized ethnic interest groups, which sometimes press causes that derogate from the national interest.”<sup>61</sup> The author concludes that the strength of ethnic groups and lobbyists lies in their “ability to galvanize for specific political objectives the strong emotional bonds of large numbers of Americans to their cultural or ancestral homes [and that] the effects of these emotional bonds on American foreign policy are in some respects salutary [because] ethnic groups awaken their fellow citizens to interests and injustices that might otherwise be overlooked or sacrificed to more tangible interests.”<sup>62</sup>

#### **2.4: Systemic Level of Analysis**

As previously mentioned, Kenneth Waltz, while examining all levels of analysis, places an importance on the third image claiming it offers “a final explanation because it does not hinge on accidental causes-irrationalities in men, defects in states.”<sup>63</sup> In addition to the realist and balance-of-power theorists, other scholars also examine the importance of the international system. For example, Thomas Mowle, in “Worldviews in Foreign Policy: Realism, Liberalism, and External Conflict,” tries to determine what theory of international relations best fits state behavior. Research was conducted by testing conditions under which decision makers view a problem either with a liberalist or realist point of view. Mowle analyzes thirty-six foreign conflicts, and the results indicate that systemic and situational factors are the most important. Mowle’s research concludes that systemic factors are more important than domestic factors and thus, decision makers take a realist psychological view when making foreign policy decisions.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Charles McC. Mathias, “Ethnic Groups and Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs* 59, no. 5 (1981): 977.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 996.

<sup>63</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, 231-232.

<sup>64</sup> Thomas M. Mowle, “Worldviews in Foreign Policy: Realism, Liberalism, and External Conflict,” *Political Psychology* 24, no.3 (2003): 561.

This level of analysis is perhaps the most frequently used amongst scholars since, per the previous distinction on the definition of foreign policy, foreign policy is directed towards the external world in response to the external world's actions. While this is true, this thesis does not only look at the reaction to external events meaning that while an international event might create a shift in policy, it cannot stand alone as an influence on foreign policy decisions. This will be further discussed in the upcoming approach section.

## **2.5: Think Tanks**

The role of think tanks is “among the most important and least appreciated” when it comes to influences on foreign policy.<sup>65</sup> According to Richard Haass, think tanks affect American foreign policy in five distinct ways: “by generating original ideas and opinions for policy, by supplying a ready pool of experts for employment in government, by offering venues for high-level discussions, by educating U.S. citizens about the world, and by supplementing official efforts to mediate and resolve conflict.”<sup>66</sup> Think tanks, according to Haass, have evolved out of the need to close the gap between ideas and actions, or bridge theory and practice. By tracing the rise of think tanks over three waves, the author explains how the third wave focuses on both advocacy and research so that think tanks can compete with the marketplace of ideas and truly influence policy decisions. While they vary in their location, mandate, and funding, policy makers today agree that think tanks offer their greatest impact by generating “new thinking” that provides policy makers not only with new questions but

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<sup>65</sup> Richard Haass, “Think Tanks and the U.S. Foreign Policy: A Policy-Maker’s Perspective,” *U.S. Foreign Policy Agenda* 7, no. 3 (2002): 5-8.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

also new solutions and perspectives.<sup>67</sup> It is this impact that this thesis attempts to draw attention to. In order to have an impact, think tanks “need to exploit multiple channels and marketing strategies—publishing articles, books, and occasional papers; appearing regularly on television, op-ed pages, and in newspaper interviews; and producing reader-friendly issue briefs, fact-sheets, and web pages.”<sup>68</sup> In essence, this thesis attempts to assess the success of these different marketing strategies. In addition to providing new and innovative ideas, think tanks also provide talent to government officials and incoming administrations—“brain trust” if you will—because they offer a significant amount of experts in the field. For example, former President Jimmy Carter staffed his administration with individuals from the Brookings Institution and the Council on Foreign Relations, whereas Ronald Reagan turned to Heritage and the American Enterprise Institute for policy experts.<sup>69</sup> While these research institutions provide talent to policy makers within the administration, they also serve as an institutional setting for departing officials, recreating a “revolving door.”<sup>70</sup> This means that while some policy makers leave the government service, they are able to become involved in think tanks, where they truly can combine practice and theory. Think tanks also provide policy makers with different venues in which they can exchange ideas including forums, panels, and open debates. In addition to convening professionals and providing policy makers with new ideas, think tanks also engage the public by “educating U.S. citizens on the nature of the world in which they live.”<sup>71</sup> Finally, think tanks impact foreign policy by helping bridge differences. This occurs when think tanks sponsor dialogue and third

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 8.

party mediation, helping to facilitate “Track II” diplomacy. While this is an unofficial undertaking, it is great potential to help build peace and facilitate the reconciliation process in conflict-ridden societies.<sup>72</sup>

Haass is not alone in his assessment of the impact of think tanks on foreign policy. Donald Abelson believes that a decentralized system, in addition to funds from philanthropic organizations, have resulted in the increase of think tanks in recent years. In his article, “Think Tanks and U.S. Foreign Policy: A Historical Perspective,” Abelson give a brief history of the rise of American think tanks explaining how many believed think tanks originated during World War II as a means of creating space for discussion and debate on defense strategies and policies.<sup>73</sup> However, he traces the role of think tanks as evolving over four generations, beginning some time before WWII. The first wave of foreign policy think tanks began in the early 1900s and served strictly as research institutions and forums for which new ideas could be generated. As Abelson cites, think tanks served as “universities without students,” and they were committed to addressing many policy issues. The second wave of think tanks arose after WWII as a result of the changing international paradigm. As the United States found itself becoming a hegemonic power in a bi-polar world, there was a clear need for a new defensive strategy, placing policy researchers and analysts at the heart of foreign policy to serve as government contractors.<sup>74</sup> The third wave of think tanks is the advocacy-oriented think tanks which combine aggressive marketing with policy research and work alongside interest groups with whom they share many ideas and beliefs. These think tanks were quick to jump at policy debates and sought to specifically influence policy

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Donald E. Abelson, “Think Tanks and U.S. Foreign Policy: A Historical Perspective,” *U.S. Foreign Policy Agenda* 7, no. 3 (2002): 9-10.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 10-11.

based on their own interests. Finally, the fourth generation of think tanks is what Abelson refers to as “legacy-based think tanks,” which were created by former presidents as a means to leave their impact on policy.<sup>75</sup>

Abelson, like Haass, also believes in the influence of think tanks on foreign policy. He states that think tanks measure their success by how much influence they have in shaping policy. Abelson attempts to assess the amount of influence think tanks have, but he is unable to quantify their impact. Rather, he is able to state the following: think tanks have an influence, the influence of think tanks depends on how they have contributed to certain policy debates and whether their advice has been taken, and lastly, by measuring exactly how much impact a think tank has on policy makers, the more insight we will have on the exact role of think tanks.<sup>76</sup>

Strobe Talbott also emphasizes the importance of think tanks stating that “think tanks remain a principle source of information and expertise for policy makers and journalists.”<sup>77</sup> Talbott examines the Brookings Institution, one of the oldest think tanks in the United States, as an example of how think tanks work. He traces the role of Brookings prior to World War I up to the current day explaining that as the international environment shifts, as do the goals and research of research institutions. For example, after the terrorist attacks of 9-11, the research conducted by Brookings Institution shifted to focus on the relationship between the West and the Islamic world, terrorism, state-to-state diplomacy, preemptive and preventive warfare, and missile control to name a few.<sup>78</sup> The goal of research institutions is to identify the new and important issues that the

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>77</sup> Strobe Talbott, “The Brookings Institution: How A Think Tank Works,” *U.S. Foreign Policy Agenda* 7, no. 3 (2002): 20.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 19-20.

nation will face, focus on scholarship that will bring these issues to light, provide policy research, and then offer proper advice and recommendations.<sup>79</sup> In order to do so, think tanks must utilize all tools at their disposal, such as the tools mentioned by Haass. Perhaps, if these tools are properly utilized and policy analysts are able to create suggestions for decision makers, policy analysts may truly be able to influence policy outcomes.

It is not only research scholars such as Haass, Abelson, and Talbott that write on the importance of the role of think tanks. Higgot and Stone, in their article, “The Limits of Influence: Foreign Policy Think Tanks in Britain and the U.S.,” use think tanks to observe the changing agenda in international relations and examine the role of think tanks as informers and influencers in the policy process.<sup>80</sup> The authors argue that “in their evolving agendas, foreign policy research institutes are a barometer of change in international relations over time...Further, as foreign policy making has become multifaceted so too, [they] argue, has the think tank industry.”<sup>81</sup> After presenting empirical insights into the role of think tanks and asking conceptual questions, the authors conclude that the role of think tanks is not only to provide a space for interaction and discussion. Rather, successful think tanks have “managed to tap not only the changing international agenda...but also the marketing techniques of the era.”<sup>82</sup>

In previous literature, several domestic factors that influence foreign policy were examined, both in light of how they influence foreign policy and also how they relate to think tanks. Winand Gellner, in his article “The Politics of Policy ‘Political Think

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>80</sup> Richard Higgot and Diane Stone, “The Limits of Influence: Foreign Policy Think Tanks in Britain and the USA,” *Review of International Studies* 20, no.1 (1994): 15.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 34.

Tanks' and Their Markets in the U.S.- Institutional Environment,” examines the process by which policy decisions are shaped by think tanks in light of some of these domestic influences as well. According to Gellner, the United States is crowded by think tanks, which he describes as institutions in the expert market of policy planning and political decision making. He argues that in contrast to Western Europe, policy makers in the United States are becoming more heavily reliant on expert advice, and as a result, “the U.S. market has become a more pluralized field.”<sup>83</sup> Gellner concludes that due to an increase in demand for answers and advice, think tanks are no longer neutral. Rather, think tanks have become more ideological, replaced political parties, and carry out an important role in the political system.<sup>84</sup> This ideological role, which is a result of the partisan political influence within the United States and other domestic influences, will not only shape the research that think tanks conduct, but also the ways in which they influence decision makers. This thesis hopes to better highlight this relationship.

## **2.6: Approach**

As Kenneth Waltz established in *Man, the State, and War*, all images or levels of analysis provide their own benefits and limitations. While Waltz emphasizes the third image, the literature review conducted indicates that there are many influential factors which impact United States foreign policy. They can occur at the individual, state, or systemic level of analysis. When attempting to study U.S. foreign policy decisions, either through the first, second, or third level of analysis, one must take into consideration all the limitations of each level. While arguments can be made for each level of analysis, this thesis attempts to work within the second level of analysis—the

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<sup>83</sup> Winand Gellner, “The Politics of Policy ‘Political Think Tanks’ and Their Markets in the U.S.-Institutional Environment,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (1995): 497.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, 506.

state—in order to better explore the variety of domestic factors of influence as well as the relationship between them. Due to the complexity and variety found within the state level, this thesis explores domestic factors as part of the “dual-nested game” of foreign policy.<sup>85</sup>

Foreign policy is dual nested in that both domestic and international issues are significant to the creation of policy. Therefore, the decision makers make choices that reflect not only what is happening externally, but also choices that reflect the current situation within the state. As the ultimate decision maker, the President of the United States, also referred to as the Chief Executive, must take into account the domestic situation in addition to outside factors. For this reason, it is essential that policy analysts also take into the consideration domestic factors. Research institutions, or think tanks, take these factors into consideration when creating policy papers and making suggestions to policy makers. In fact, upon analyzing the work of think tanks, in addition to the research in the literature review, it becomes evident that the work of think tanks not only reflects the domestic factors of influence on foreign policy, but also that they too are subject to domestic influences. This makes think tanks a useful domestic factor to investigate because they showcase a variety of domestic influences. For these reasons, this thesis will use to the second level of analysis, and particularly the influence of think tanks, to examine United States foreign policy in addition to examining the existing relationships between domestic factors of influence. Specifically, research will be conducted to view how think tanks have contributed to United States foreign policy towards Iran during the Obama Administration.

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<sup>85</sup> Hudson, 5-6.

## **2.7: Executive Orders and Acts**

There are several terms that can be found throughout this thesis, especially in the chapter that highlights the policy outputs of the Obama administration through the use of executive orders. Before this chapter can be presented, an executive order should be defined. In addition, there are acts passed by the United States Congress as well as executive orders that have been passed by previous administrations that will be mentioned in the chapter on policy outputs. While these acts and executive orders are not the focal point of the chapter on policy outputs, they should be defined in order to provide a better understanding of the context in which they are used.

### **2.7.1: Executive Order**

This thesis uses executive orders as part of a case study that attempts to link policy research to policy outputs in which executive orders are the means of measuring policy outputs. Executive orders are defined by the *Encyclopedia of the American Constitution* as “a class of presidential documents that primarily regulate actions of government officials and agencies.”<sup>86</sup> Executive orders can be issued under specific legal authorization or under the President’s own authority under Article II of the United States Constitution. Since executive orders are made by the Chief Executive solely, they will be used as a means to measure the policy outputs of President Barack Obama.

### **2.7.2: Executive Order 12957**

In March of 1995, President William Clinton issued Executive Order 12957 titled “Prohibiting Certain Transactions with Respect to the Development of Iranian Petroleum Resources” as result of “the actions and policies of the Government of Iran [which]

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<sup>86</sup> Leonard Levy et al., *Encyclopedia of the American Constitution*. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986), 669.

constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States.”<sup>87</sup> In this order, President Clinton prohibits the entrance of any United States citizen into any petroleum corporations in Iran or tied to Iran. In addition, it also prohibits any transactions by a United States citizen that evades the prohibitions established in this executive order.<sup>88</sup>

### **2.7.3: Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996**

Passed in 1996 by both the House of Representatives and the Senate and later signed by the President, the Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996 places sanctions “on persons making certain investments directly and significantly contributing to the enhancement of the ability of Iran or Libya to develop its petroleum resources, and on persons exporting certain items that enhance Libya’s weapons or aviation capabilities or enhance Libya’s ability to develop its petroleum resources, and for other purposes.”<sup>89</sup> In addition to the restrictions the U.S. places on Iran, this act also encourages the President to participate in diplomatic relations with other countries in order to establish multilateral trade sanctions against Iran. By doing so, the Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996 attempts to reduce Iran’s development of petroleum resources and also attempts to end Iran’s ability to support international acts of terrorism.<sup>90</sup> This act also states the specific circumstances in which the President may choose to lift the sanctions in addition to placing a minimum duration of two years for the sanctions.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> William J. Clinton, “Presidential Documents: Executive Order 12957,” *Federal Registrar* 50, no. 52 (1995): 14615.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 14616.

<sup>89</sup> 104th Congress, *H.R. 3107 (104th): Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996*, (Washington, DC: GPO, 1996), 1.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-3.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-10.

#### **2.7.4: Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010**

In 2010, Congress passed the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act which amends the sanctions place on Iran by the Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996.<sup>92</sup> This act expresses that further sanctions are indeed necessary due to Iran's increasing nuclear efforts as highlighted by the failure of Iran to disclose the full nature of its nuclear program to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).<sup>93</sup> In addition, the Act also calls for the President to take action towards the severe human rights violations committed by Iran. Section 103 imposes three (3) more sanctions in addition to what was established in 1996 which include prohibition of any imports into the United States, prohibition of any exports to Iran, and freezing of assets of certain individuals and officials. This act also urges the President to impose sanctions on the Central Bank of Iran and any other financial institution that support terrorist groups or proliferation activities as well as submit a list to Congress on officials violating human rights in Iran.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> 111th Congress, *H.R. 2194 (111th): Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010*, (Washington, DC: GPO, 2010), 2.

<sup>93</sup> 111th Congress, *H.R. 2194 (111th): Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010*, (Washington, DC: GPO, 2010), 4-6.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*, 25-36.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Perhaps the most important and difficult aspect of a thesis is establishing a research methodology which best fits the research questions asked. This thesis seeks to establish a link between foreign policy research institutions and foreign policy outputs, and in essence argues that despite how difficult it may be to measure, there is a certain level of impact which research institutions have on United States foreign policy decision makers. Furthermore, it can be said that the null hypothesis of this thesis would be that research institutions have no impact whatsoever on foreign policy decision makers and that the institutions themselves are also not impacted by other domestic factors of influence.

### **3.1: Research Framework**

In order to test the validity of this research question, a framework will be created which best serves the methodology used to answer the question posed. Therefore, this thesis will use a case study of the administration of President Barack Obama and the policy outputs of President Obama towards the country of Iran. In order to provide ground work for this case study, a few steps must be established. First, as the literature review indicated, foreign affairs specialists are bombarded with a variety of influences on a daily basis; as such, it is important to filter out which influences and/or domestic factors have the most impact on foreign policy decision makers—i.e. which factors are more important than others. The literature review provides not only a level of analysis in which foreign policy is to be analyzed, but it also indicates that research institutions, e.g.

think tanks, serve not only as a domestic factor in foreign policy decision making, but that they also are linked to many other domestic factors. In part, this thesis seeks to establish just how significant this link is and to what extent think tanks contribute to foreign policy decision making in the United States. The first step in doing so was examining pre-existing literature and establishing a deeper understanding of all aspects involved in foreign policy decision making.

Having established a thorough literature review, the following step is to create a means in which this case study can be tested. This will be done by conducting a reverse analysis of foreign policy decisions, meaning this thesis will first examine the policy outputs of the Obama administration followed by the possible policy influences referred to as “collection samples.” In the literature review, both Steven Walt and David Baldwin criticize the current inconsistencies and gaps between research and policy outputs. The thesis attempts to work within the existing frameworks to help bridge said gaps by linking outputs to policy influences.

### **3.1.1: Establishing Policy Outputs**

There can be many means in which to examine the policy outputs of an administration because within the administration, there are several different decision makers. Rather than look at the statements and actions of all the different decision makers in the Obama administration, this research only examines the policy outputs of President Barack Obama. It does so by examining the executive orders issued during his presidency that are foreign policy decisions towards Iran. Perhaps a question that arises here is why use executive orders as a means to measure foreign policy output? The logic is two –fold. First, because there will be a multitude of variables in establishing policy influences, it is important that there be consistency and control in measuring policy

outputs. Therefore, the foreign policy actions of the Chief Executive provide a control in that they represent the decisions made by the administration in a simple and concise manner. Second, a presidential administration is filled with foreign policy decision makers, each having their own expertise and each making foreign policy decisions which affect the United States daily. The problem then is how one can measure all the foreign policy decisions made by all the members of the administration with regards to Iran. The reality is that this would be a very difficult and daunting task, not to mention that some decision and/or statements made regarding foreign policy may not actually be turned into policy. This means that just because a member of Obama's administration makes a policy decision, it does not mean that this decision will be upheld and/or adopted by the Chief Executive. Therefore, executive orders were chosen as means to measure policy output because they generally occur as a result of many individual policy statements and/or decisions within the administration, they are carried out solely by the Chief Executive, and they are issued either under legal authorization or the President's own authorization and as such, they regulate the actions of government official and agencies. Chapter four will be dedicated to examining the policy outputs of President Barack Obama by means of executive orders.

### **3.1.2: Creating "Collection Samples"**

Having established policy outputs, this research then attempts to create an example of policy influences using research institutions. Once again, there are many ways in which this can be done, some perhaps simpler and more concise than others. For example, one may argue that comparing a policy research paper from each institution to policy outputs may be one way to measure impact. However, based on the literature review conducted, this would seem lacking because as previously established, think

tanks not only provide policy makers with policy papers, but also they offer individual expertise, a marketplace of new ideas, and many forums in which debate can occur. The question then becomes how can all of this be measured? Rather than isolating one aspect of the type of research conducted by think tanks, this thesis will create “collection samples” from four well known think tanks as a means to examine factors of influence on foreign policy.

Four research institutions were chosen for this case study and will be used to create collection samples. They are the Council on Foreign Relations, the Brookings Institution, the American Enterprise Institute, and the Center for American Progress. These think tanks were chosen based on two requisites. First, they are well known, respected, and extremely visible in the field of policy research, making them some of the most utilized policy research institutions in the United States. Secondly, these four think tanks, while all identifying as nonpartisan, lie on a different place on the conservative-liberal, Republican-Democrat spectrum. The United States is dominated by two major political parties, the Republican Party (right) and Democrat Party (left), and the research institutions chosen each fall somewhere within these two parties. The Council on Foreign Relations and the Brookings Institution both lie somewhere in the middle of the spectrum, with the Council on Foreign Relations falling slightly center-right and the Brookings Institution falling slightly center-left. The other two institutions are more easily identifiable. The American Enterprise Institute falls to the right of the spectrum, whereas the Center for American Progress falls to the left of the spectrum. Because of their diversity, these four think tanks represent a picture of the different political affiliations within Washington, DC.

Each collection sample will be created by researching each individual think tank as well as an in-depth search through the archives of the think tanks. From the archives, the collection will be formed using a variety of material including editorials, op-eds, policy papers, articles, debates, symposium transcripts, opinion polls, roundtable discussions, and guest lectures. These collection samples will be beneficial for several reasons. First, they allow for more variables to be included as factors of influence on foreign policy. This provides for a more realistic representation of actual real life policy influences. Second, they provide a more holistic and inclusive representation of each research institution. By limiting the samples to one or two types of material only takes into account a few different scholars. However, the purpose of this research is to provide a complete picture of different types of work done by think tanks and the extent to which they are influential. Lastly, diverse collection samples help to better bridge the gap between research and policy because they offer more insight into the complexities of policy making as well as the interconnectedness of policy research found within Washington, DC.

Once the material is gathered for the collection samples, it will be divided into three time periods within each think tank: prior to 2009, 2009 to 2010, and 2011 to present. The first time period, while it falls prior to the Obama administration, is necessary because it helps show which foreign policy challenges will be significant to the incoming administration. In addition, this section will be used to highlight that foreign policy does not occur in a vacuum or single time frame. Rather, foreign policy develops on a continuum and that while administrations may vary drastically in partisanship, the foreign policies of said administrations may be more similar than one

may think. The second and third time frames were used because they are a logical midway division for Obama's four year term.

### **3.1.3: Analysis, Measuring Influence**

Once both the policy outputs and the collection samples have been established and created, they will be analyzed with regards to one another. In order to measure whether or not research influences policy, this thesis will attempt to link similarities between the policy research presented in the collection samples to the actual policy outputs of the Obama administration. Each think tank will be analyzed individually with regard to policy outputs in two categories. First, how accurate was the think tank in predicting changes or shifts in foreign policy and foreign policy challenges? Are there any similarities between the research conducted by the think tanks and the executive orders? If so, what themes appear in the collection samples taken from the think tanks and how do they manifest as factors of influence on foreign policy within the executive orders? The second category looks at the variety of influences within the think tanks. What does this reveal about think tanks themselves? Can they be considered the most influential domestic factors of influence on foreign policy? By using these two categories as a means of analysis, this thesis will attempt to identify a link between research institutions and policy decisions.

### **3.2: Research Challenges and Limitations**

As with any research, this thesis is not without its own challenges and limitations. It would be ideal for this research to be conducted in a pre-existing statistical framework to measure exact levels of impact of research institutions on foreign policy decision makes. Since no such framework exists, it was a challenge to find an exact

means of measuring influence, so rather than a quantitative method of measurement, this thesis relies on assumptions made based on existing similarities.

Deciding on the selection for each collection sample proved to be a challenge because of the vast amount of literature that is available. Initially, I was going to compare one or two policy papers from each think tank rather than create a collection sample. However, even though there are many policy papers in the think tank archives, they do not occur around the same time. Therefore, it would be inaccurate to use them as a control in this research. In addition, there is no equal amount of material available from each archive; therefore the size of each collection sample varies. Once again, this is due to the large variety of material that was available as well as the significance of the material to this case study. Some collection samples rely more heavily on internal policy papers, while others use outside research and opinions of policy scholars. One cannot say that one is more important than the other; therefore, one cannot create equal size collection samples.

Lastly, while this thesis examines policy influences from a domestic level of analysis, it does not attempt to negate the role of an individual leader or a sudden event or crisis in the international environment. However, it does attempt to show that domestic levels of influence, specifically think tanks, are significant to policy decisions. By making this statement, this thesis devotes the bulk of the research to domestic factors only.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### POLICY OUTPUTS, EXECUTIVE ORDERS

In the case study presented, executive orders are used as a means of identifying policy outputs. These executive orders have been issued by President Barack Obama during his administration, from the year 2009 until present day.<sup>95</sup> They were obtained from archives through the White House, and they address the changes made with respect to United States foreign policy towards Iran. All of these executive orders were taken “in response actions of the Government of Iran occurring after the conclusion of the 1981 Algiers Accords, and are intended solely as a response to those later actions.”<sup>96</sup>

#### 4.1: Executive Order 13553

Executive Order 13553, “Designating Iranian Officials Responsible for or Complicit in Serious Human Rights Abuses,” was issued by President Barack Obama on September 29, 2010 under presidential authority granted by the Constitution, the National Emergencies Act, and the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 in order to take additional steps with respect to Executive Order 12957. This order blocks the property of certain individuals (listed in the annex of the order) with respect to serious human rights violations by the government of Iran.<sup>97</sup>

Section One blocks all property and interests in property that are in the United States or come within the United States of the people listed in the Annex of the order and any person deemed by the Secretary of Treasury to be: a) an official of the Government

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<sup>95</sup> Note: For the purpose of this research, the last executive order used was issued February 6, 2012. Any executive orders regarding Iran after 02/06/2012 were not used.

<sup>96</sup> Barack Obama, Office of the Press Secretary, *Executive Order 13553: Designating Iranian Officials Responsible for or Complicit in Serious Human Rights Abuses*, 29 September 2010. \*\*Found in all Executive Orders.

<sup>97</sup> Barack Obama, Office of the Press Secretary, *Executive Order 13553: Designating Iranian Officials Responsible for or Complicit in Serious Human Rights Abuses*, 29 September 2010.

of Iran or a person action on behalf of the Government of Iran who is guilty of ordering, controlling, or participating in serious human rights abuses against Iranian civilians on or after June 12, 2009, b) a person having provided any support or assistance to the aforementioned persons in (a), or c) a person who is owned by or acts in support of or in behalf of any person blocked by this order. In addition, any donations made to any person blocked by this order is prohibited including but not limited to provision of funds, goods, or services provided to blocked persons.<sup>98</sup>

Section Two places restrictions on United States citizens and states that any transaction that is made by a United States citizen that would in any way jeopardize this order is prohibited as is any conspiracy to violate this order. Section Four allows the measures taken in this order to happen without prior warning. Sections Five, Six, Seven, Eight, and Nine give more authority to the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of State authorizing them to take actions necessary to carry out this order, allowing them to imposing visa sanctions (with consultation of the Secretary of Homeland Security), and requesting updated lists of persons subject to this order.<sup>99</sup>

#### **4.2: Executive Order 13574**

Executive Order 13574, “Concerning Further Sanctions on Iran,” was issued by President Barack Obama on May 23, 2011 under presidential authority granted by the Constitution, the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, the National Emergencies Act, the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996, and the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010.

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

Section One explains sanctions already put in place by the Iran Sanctions Act (ISA) of 1996 including prohibition of loans from United States financial institutions, prohibition of foreign exchange, transfer of credits, or payments, the blocking of all United States property or interests that come in possession or control of an ISA sanctioned person, and the restriction and prohibition of goods by any sanctioned person. The order adds to these sanctions and prohibits any donations that would benefit any ISA sanctioned person including but not limited to the donation of funds, goods, or services. Once again, Section Two places restrictions on United States citizens and states that any transaction that is made by a United States citizen that would in any way jeopardize this order is prohibited as is any conspiracy to violate this order. Section Four also allows the measures taken in this order to happen without prior warning. Finally, Section Five gives the authority to the Secretary of the Treasury and Secretary of State as well as all agencies of the United States Government to carry out all purposes of this order.<sup>100</sup>

### **4.3: Executive Order 13590**

Executive Order 13590, “Iran Sanctions,” was issued by President Barack Obama on November 21, 2011 under presidential authority granted by the Constitution, the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, the National Emergencies Act, and Executive Order 12957. This new round of sanctions includes more stringent guidelines as well as gives more authority to the different agencies and officials in the United States government.

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<sup>100</sup> Barack Obama, Office of the Press Secretary, *Executive Order 13574: Concerning Further Sanctions on Iran*, 23 May 2011.

Section One allow the Secretary of State, Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of Commerce, United States Trade Representative, the President of the Export-Import Bank, and the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System to impose sanctions on an persons who: a) sells, leases, or provides goods, services, technology, or support to Iran over fair market value of \$1,000,000.00 that could contribute to Iran's ability to develop petroleum resources located in Iran or b) sells, leases, or provides goods, services, technology, or support to Iran over fair market value of \$250,000.00 that could contribute to Iran's ability to develop petroleum resources located in Iran. Other people possibly affiliated with (a) and (b) such as a successor, or any person that owns or controls a person and has knowledge of illicit actions which undermine these sanctions are also subject to sanctions.<sup>101</sup>

Section Two gives authority to the Secretary of State to implement sanctions on persons found guilty of the actions in Section One. Heads of relevant agencies must work with the Secretary of State in order to implement these sanctions. For example, the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank shall deny approval of the issuance of any guarantee in connection with the exportation of any goods to a sanctioned person. In addition, agencies are not to enter into a contract with or procure any goods or services from a sanctioned person nor are they allowed to issue any specific license or permission to export or reexport goods by a sanctioned person without the approve of the United State government. If the "sanctioned person" is a financial institution, the Chairman of the Board of the Governors of the Federal Reserve System can deny designation of the institution as a dealer in the United States government.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Barack Obama, Office of the Press Secretary, *Executive Order 13590:Iran Sanctions*, 21 November 2011.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

Section Three allows the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to prohibit any US financial institution from making loans or credits to a sanctioned person totaling more than \$10,000,000.00, prohibit transactions in foreign exchange, prohibit any transfers of credits, block all property that are in the United States, and restrict or prohibit goods, technology, and services into the US from a sanctioned person. As in previous executive orders, prohibitions include the contribution of funds, goods, or services. Once again, if any American citizen attempts to evade or conspire against these sanctions, he/she will also be sanctioned. Finally, Section Seven gives authority to the Secretary of the Treasury and Secretary of State as well as all agencies of the United States Government to carry out all purposes of the order.<sup>103</sup>

#### **4.4: Executive Order, February 2012**

On February 6, 2012, President Barack Obama issued an executive order titled, “Blocking Property of the Government of Iran and Iranian Financial Institutions,” under the presidential authority granted by the Constitution, the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, and the National Emergencies Act. This executive order is meant to build on Executive Order 12957. It is in response to the deceptive practices by the Central Bank of Iran and other Iranian banks that are attempting to conceal transactions with previously sanctioned parties.<sup>104</sup>

Section One states that the property of the Government of Iran, including the Central Bank of Iran, that are within the United States are blocked and may not be transferred, paid, exported, or withdrawn. This also applies to any Iranian financial institution and any person or institution that acts on behalf of already blocked persons or

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Barack Obama, Office of the Press Secretary, *Executive Order: Blocking Property of the Government of Iran and Iranian Financial Institutions*, 6 February 2012.

provides donations to said blocked persons. Section Two and Three outline the prohibitions that are included in this order including provision of funds, goods, and services which would aid any person whose property has been blocked. As with other executive orders, any American citizen attempting to evade or conspire against these prohibitions is also prohibited. Section Eight allows these measures to occur without prior warning. Lastly, Sections Eight through Eleven give authority to the Secretary of State, Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of Energy, and the Director of National Intelligence to exercise the proper functions necessary as described in the order.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## POLICY INFLUENCES, RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

This portion of the thesis is devoted to collecting data from four different research institutions that currently promote policy research. The data collected from each institution is a collection of articles, policy research publications, op-eds, polls, interviews, roundtable discussions, debates, conference transcripts, and editorials. The research collected from each institution will make up a collection sample from that institution and will be later analyzed with respect to policy outputs and content.

### 5.1: United States/Iran Relations

In order to understand the context of the policy recommendations made by scholars from the four research institutions, some background on the political situation in Iran must be explained. The policy suggestions in the collection samples reflect the political environment in Iran as well as the relations between Iran and the United States during the selected time periods.

#### 5.1.1: Prior to 2009

Prior to the Obama administration, the relationship between Iran and the United States was tense and hostile. The relationship further deteriorated when former President George W. Bush labeled Iran, along with Iraq and North Korea, an “axis of evil” due to their development of long-range missiles. This resulted in outrage in Iran, especially from reformists and conservatives.<sup>106</sup> In November of 2003, Iran claimed it had suspended its uranium enrichment program and would allow inspections by the United Nations and the IAEA. However, by the fall of 2005, Iran has resumed uranium

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<sup>106</sup> “Iran Profile.” *BBC Online* (2012). <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east14542438>.

conversion and was found in violation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty by the IAEA.<sup>107</sup>

In addition, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a hard line conservative, was elected President of Iran in 2005 resulting in more hostility from Tehran towards the United States.<sup>108</sup>

By 2006, Iran resumed uranium enrichment and by succeeding in doing so, failed to suspend their nuclear program as requested by the UN Security Council. In addition to nuclear enrichment, by December of 2006, a conference on the Holocaust was held in Iran where many delegates denied the existence of the Holocaust.<sup>109</sup> This resulted in outrage and fear in Israel which felt an even greater need to defend its right to exist. By 2007, the Iranians claimed they had the capability to produce nuclear fuel in massive quantities and on an industrial scale. As a result of the growing nuclear capabilities in Iran, the United States imposed a new wave of tough sanctions in Iran in 2007.<sup>110</sup> In addition to increased sanctions imposed by the US, the UN Security Council also tightened economic and trade sanctions on Iran. By 2008, an incentive package was offered to Iran by the Western officials in hopes of deterring Iran's nuclear activities. The UN Security Council also passed a new resolution demanding Iran stop its nuclear activities.<sup>111</sup>

During his campaign for President of the United States, Barack Obama offered to open dialogue with Iran without any preconditions. By November of 2008, Obama was elected as President of the United States and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad congratulated the president-elect on his win.<sup>112</sup> This move was surprising and indicated a

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

possible shift in United States foreign policy towards Iran from one of isolationism to one of engagement.

### **5.1.2: 2009 through 2010**

While Ahmadinejad agreed to talks with the United States on the basis of mutual respect, Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei made a statement in early 2009 that President Obama's policies in the Middle East will be just as misguided as the policies of President Bush, especially with regards to the United States' support of Israel.<sup>113</sup> By June of 2009, presidential elections occurred in Iran. President Ahmadinejad declared a victory despite much speculation of corruption in the election process. The corrupt elections resulted in massive demonstrations in Iran which left over thirty people killed and thousands arrested.<sup>114</sup> Throughout 2009, Iran continued uranium enrichment which resulted in an offer by the UN for Iran to enrich uranium abroad. This offer was rejected by Tehran as Iran refused to end its nuclear program.<sup>115</sup> Tensions continued to rise in 2010 as the UN Security Council imposed a fourth round of sanctions towards Iran over its nuclear program. In addition to the continuation of its nuclear program, Iran continued to commit serious human rights violations which resulted in international outcry.<sup>116</sup>

### **5.1.3: 2011 to Present**

In February of 2011, Iran sent two warships through the Suez Canal. This immediately sparked fear and suspicion, especially from Israel who saw this as an act of provocation.<sup>117</sup> Tensions continued to rise between the United States and Iran as two US

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

citizens are arrested in Iran and found guilty of espionage. In addition, the United States government accused Iran of an alleged plot to kill the Saudi ambassador to the United States.<sup>118</sup> By November of 2011, the IAEA issued a report claiming that Iran was attempting to develop a nuclear bomb trigger. This resulted in a response from the United States because by January of 2012, the United States imposed a new round of sanctions which affected Iran's central bank. In response, Iran threatened to block the Strait of Hormuz which would stop the transport of oil in addition to cripple the international economy.<sup>119</sup>

## **5.2: Collection Sample One: Council on Foreign Relations (CFR)**

The Council on Foreign Relations was founded in 1921 as a result of the difficult negotiations of the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. Diplomats decided that Americans needed to be better versed in decision making and better understand the responsibilities of decision making in foreign affairs. As a result, the Council of Foreign Relations was formed to “afford a continuous conference on international questions affecting the United States, by bringing together experts on statecraft, finance, industry, education, and science.”<sup>120</sup>

Since its inception, the Council on Foreign Relations, abbreviated CFR, has been a nonpartisan and noncommercial institution. Its members consist of individuals that are able to contribute to discussions and debate with an extensive knowledge in foreign affairs. CFR continues to carry out its mission of educating the public on important foreign relations issues by hosting discussions and debates, publishing articles, and

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> *Council on Foreign Relations*, “Council on Foreign Relations and Foreign Affairs History,” <http://www.cfr.org/about/history/index.html> (accessed 15 April 2012).

conducting field research.<sup>121</sup> Even though debates, guest lectures, and roundtable discussions proved to be successful, the founding fathers of CFR were not satisfied so they founded *Foreign Affairs*, a quarterly magazine published by CFR.<sup>122</sup> *Foreign Affairs* contains editorials, op-eds, research articles, and policy publications by a variety of experts in the field. Due to its popularity and contributions to foreign policy research, it continues to be a successful and influential publication today. Many of the scholars that publish articles and research in *Foreign Affairs* are scholars and/or members of the Council on Foreign Relations, and for this reason, the collection sample of the policy research created from CFR has been published either through CFR or in *Foreign Affairs*.

### **5.2.1: Prior to 2009**

The policy research sample for the Council on Foreign Relations begins in 2007 with an article written by senior fellow Michael A. Levi titled “Got the Sticks. Now the Talks” which examines the age old question of when to apply pressure versus when to establish communication in foreign relations. Having been written only several months after the establishment of a United Nations Resolution which bars Iran from exporting arms, this article calls for using the UN Resolution’s success as a means to engage Iran. Levi argues that while the United States may not be ready for negotiations, it should not rely simply on the real pressure of the resolution—the stick—to disarm Iran. Rather, Levi calls for a combination of sanctions and diplomacy—the talks—to “bring around Iran.”<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Michael A. Levi, “Got the Sticks. Now the Talks,” *Council on Foreign Relations* (2007), <http://www.cfr.org/iran/got-sticks-now-talks/p12966>.

The Council on Foreign Relations' website hosts many outside publications it finds relevant to the field of foreign affairs. In a 2007 publication by the American Jewish Committee, Ari Friedman and Maxine Kaye, scholars on human rights, document the human rights abuses occurring in Iran. The publication highlights the systemic violations of due process that occur in Iran as well as the many cases of torture and the astounding amount of trials whose guilty verdict results in capital punishment.<sup>124</sup> In addition to torture and capital punishment, the authors highlight other violations of human rights in Iran including the segregation of women, the persecution of religious minority groups, censorship of the media, the cruelty towards children, and the punishment of homosexuals by death. The American Jewish Committee calls for a breaking the silence and speaking up against these human rights about by calling for international condemnation.<sup>125</sup>

Lionel Beehner, senior fellow at CFR, in his article “Iran Inches Toward Nuclear Red Line,” explains the three major perspectives of different CFR scholars towards the crisis with Iran. Some, such as Max Boot, justify attacking Iran militarily before it acquires nuclear weapons. Other scholars, such as Seymour Hersh echo this sentiment stating that the United States has clandestine plans to attack Iranian nuclear facilities. There are also scholars that seek tighter sanctions—i.e. “squeezing Iran financially”—as a means to solving the crisis with Iran. Lastly, Beehner states that there are some scholars who do not support military action nor sanction, but rather active engagement.<sup>126</sup> In another article Beehner emphasizes the role of the Iranian civil society

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<sup>124</sup> Ari Friedman and Maxine Kaye, “Human Rights In Iran.” *American Jewish Committee*, (March 2007): 1-3.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid*, 4-17.

<sup>126</sup> Lionel Beehner, “Iran Inches Toward Nuclear Red Line,” *Council on Foreign Relations* (2007), <http://www.cfr.org/iran/iran-inches-toward-nuclear-red-line/p13026> .

and states that some scholars believe that lifting U.S. sanctions on Iran will result in more open dialogue and a more powerful Iranian civil society.<sup>127</sup>

In a discussion hosted by the Council on Foreign Relations, Michael Levi and Graham Allison discuss the question: How likely is a nuclear terrorist attack on the United States? In the discussion, both scholars debate the probability of a nuclear attack, and while they disagree upon the magnitude and the timing, they both agree that the possibility of an attack is real and that what is needed is thinking through what factors may result in a nuclear terrorist attack and what means are needed to prevent these factors.<sup>128</sup>

Ray Takeyh, former US Department of State official, suggests that the actions of the Bush Administration will not succeed because threatening Tehran will not work; rather, what is needed is a realistic understanding of Iranian politics. In his article, Takeyh explains that conservatives within Iran are not likely to participate in discussions with the U.S. or want to have anything to do with a rapprochement. He argues that the direct talks are not likely to occur, and rather than continuing to threatening Iran, the United States should “create an environment conducive to diplomacy.”<sup>129</sup>

While foreign policy scholar Greg Bruno’s article “Washington’s Diplomatic Thaw” implies a slightly diplomatic shift in the U.S’ behavior towards Iran, whereas Kupchan and Takeyh argue that Washington’s behavior of attempting to contain and isolate Iran is failing as “Iran Just Won’t Stay Isolated.” Bruno’s argument is not that the

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<sup>127</sup> Lionel Beehner, “Iranian Civil Society and the Role of U.S. Foreign Policy,” *Council on Foreign Relations* (2007), <http://www.cfr.org/iran/iranian-civil-society-role-us-foreign-policy/p13503>.

<sup>128</sup> Michael A. Levi and Graham T. Allison, “How Likely is a Nuclear Terrorist Attack on the United States?” *Council of Foreign Relations* (2007), <http://www.cfr.org/weapons-of-mass-destruction/likely-nuclear-terrorist-attack-united-states/p13097>.

<sup>129</sup> Ray Takeyh, “Try Jawboning Iran, Not Chest-Thumping,” *Council on Foreign Relations* (2007), <http://www.cfr.org/iran/try-jawboning-iran-not-chest-thumping/p13453>.

United States policy has necessarily gone soft, but rather that “pragmatism appears to be driving Washington’s maneuvering” because of the actions of the Bush Administration that imply a “courting of historical foes.”<sup>130</sup> Kupchan and Takeyh make an opposing argument and state that the Arab allies to the United States refuse to isolate Iran. Rather, Arab states see open dialogue and taming Iran will eventually bring regional cooperation. The authors see the Gulf Cooperation Council as an ideal framework for the United States to encourage “a cooperative regional security order,” as envisioned by the U.S.’s Arab allies, which will lead to the reduced Iranian threat.<sup>131</sup>

The Council on Foreign Relations conducted an interview with Gary Sick, former staff member at the National Security Council, and asked him if a deal could possibly be in the works between the United States and Iran. In the interview, Sick explains that even after thirteen years of sanctions, Iran has not stopped expanding nuclear capabilities. Sick also addresses the Israeli threats about attacking Iran claiming that not only are they nearly impossible to carry out alone, but that they would also jeopardize the relationship between the United States and Israel as an Israeli attack on Iran would inevitably drag the United States into war as well. The interview concludes with Sick stating that the United States need to take a more realistic approach about how many centrifuges are spinning and the delusion that Iran would agree to stop all centrifuges.<sup>132</sup>

Prior to the Presidential Election of 2008, the Council on Foreign Relations evaluated where the importance of foreign policy stands with regards to the American

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<sup>130</sup> Greg Bruno, “Washington’s Diplomatic Thaw,” *Council on Foreign Relations* (2008), <http://www.cfr.org/iran/washingtons-diplomatic-thaw/p15143>.

<sup>131</sup> Charles A. Kupchan and Ray Takeyh, “Iran Just Won’t Stay Isolated,” *Council on Foreign Relations* (2008), <http://www.cfr.org/iran-just-wont-stay-isolated>.

<sup>132</sup> Gary G. Sick, “Will Deal With Iran Be Worked Out?” Interview by Bernard Gwertzman. *Council on Foreign Relations*, 21 July 2008, <http://www.cfr.org/iran/deal-iran-worked-out/p16827>.

people as voters. In his article, “Little Discussion of Foreign Policy,” Richard Haass, President of the Council on Foreign Relations and former Director of Policy Planning at the Department of State, explains that the American people believe that the economic recession and other domestic issues take precedent over foreign policy in the 2008 election. Haass also states that American voters believe the possibility of going to war with Iran is no longer a threat as per the published National Intelligence Estimate on Iran’s nuclear program.<sup>133</sup>

Despite the belief of some Americans that the threat of Iran’s nuclear program decreased, the scholars at CFR would disagree. In September of 2008, mere weeks before the 2008 Presidential Election, the Council on Foreign Relations conducted a three day program dedicated to Iran and the policy options the incoming President of the United States may take with Iran. In session one, scholars Ali Ansari, Farideh Farhi, and Lee Cullum debate the internal leadership of Iran where they discuss the difference between previous regimes, current ones, and possible regime shifts in the future.<sup>134</sup> In session two, panelists discuss the nuclear dimension and Iranian foreign policy. Like many articles already published by CFR, scholars debate on the likelihood of and capabilities of an Iranian nuclear threat and the position this places the United States and her allies in.<sup>135</sup> Session three is devoted to formulating options for the upcoming administration. First, the panelists begin with stating the most likely goals of the

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<sup>133</sup> Richard Haass, “Little Discussion on Foreign Policy,” *Council on Foreign Relations* (2008), <http://www.cfr.org/us-strategy-and-politics/little-discussion-foreign-policy/p15302>.

<sup>134</sup> Ali Ansari and Farideh Farhi, “Iran and Policy Options for the Next Administration, Session I: Iran's Domestic Politics,” Discussion led by Richard M. Haass and Lee Cullum, *Council on Foreign Relations, Symposium on Iran and Policy Options for the Next Administration*, September 5, 2008, <http://www.cfr.org/iran/iran-policy-options-next-administration-session-irans-domestic-politics/p17107>.

<sup>135</sup> Ashton B. Carter and Gary Saymore, “Iran and Policy Options for the Next Administration. Session II: The Nuclear Dimension and Iranian Foreign Policy.” Discussion led by Gideon Rose, *Council on Foreign Relations, Symposium on Iran and Policy Options for the Next Administration*, September 8, 2008, <http://www.cfr.org/iran/iran-policy-options-next-administration-session-ii-nuclear-dimension-iranian-foreign-policy/p17120>.

incoming administration including the restraining Iranian power and containing Iran's nuclear program. The panelists also discuss the influence of Iran in the Middle East and the success of policy towards Iran thus far. There seems to be somewhat of an agreement amongst the panel on the overall unrealistic policies so far, with an exception of the human rights foreign policy agenda towards Iran which Takeyh describes as "part of the dialogue with the Iranians." The panelists also agree that the proper course to take with Iran is not one of isolation and intimidation, but one of diplomacy and soft power.<sup>136</sup>

### **5.2.2: 2009 through 2010**

By the beginning of 2009 and the election of President Barack Obama, many scholars were examining the threats posed by Iran and the possible courses of action the new administration may take. In his article, "A Nuclear Iran: Live and Let Live, or Die Another Day?," Richard Haass gives policy options for the Obama Administration towards Iran. The first is similar to that of North Korea which is that of living with the threat. The second option presented by Haass is an attack by the United States, Israel, or both on the nuclear facilities in Iran to destroy their nuclear capabilities. This option, however, will inevitably result in retaliation on the United States by Iran which could result in the loss of many lives and extensive damage to the world economy. Haass' solution is to present Iran with a diplomatic package that offers "Iran access to nuclear energy but not physical control over nuclear materials." While he is skeptical of Iran

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<sup>136</sup> Vali Nasr and Ray Takeyh, "Iran and Policy Options for the Next Administration Session III: Policy Options and Recommendations for the Next Administration," Discussion led by Richard M. Haass, *Council on Foreign Relations, Symposium on Iran and Policy Options for the Next Administration*, September 5, 2008, <http://www.cfr.org/iran/iran-policy-options-next-administration-session-iii-policy-options-recommendations-next-administration/p17121>.

accepting such a package, Haass urges President Obama to make another attempt at diplomacy with Iran.<sup>137</sup>

In an article in the *Foreign Service Journal* posted on CFR.org, Robert McMahon, foreign relations specialist, discusses the issue of democracy promotion—that is true promotion of democracy versus the Bush Administration’s “Freedom Agenda.” McMahon summarizes recommendations made by foreign policy experts who support democracy promotion as a foreign policy objective. Some of these recommendations include taking a realistic approach to democracy promotion in the Middle East, drawing a distinction between regime change and democracy promotion, not using military power in the name of democracy promotion, and establishing more modest goals for promoting democracy.<sup>138</sup>

In an interview with Bernard Gwertzman, David Albright, President of the Institute for Science and International Security, states that he believes Iran may achieve capability to create a nuclear weapon by 2009. Like other scholars, Albright believes this not only poses a serious threat to the United States but to her allies as well. When asked how the United State should react if Iran was willing to talk but refusing to negotiate on their nuclear program, Albright responded that an important goal for the United States to maintain is Iranian suspension of uranium enrichment. In addition, he also stated that it is essential to negotiate with Iran and bring in other key plays of importance to the United States and Iran. Bringing in more key players is the key to striving for a Middle

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<sup>137</sup> Richard Haass, “A Nuclear Iran: Live and Let Live, or Die Another Day?” *Council on Foreign Relations* (2009), <http://www.cfr.org/iran/nuclear-iran-live-let-live-die-another-day/p18209>.

<sup>138</sup> Robert McMahon, “A Brave New World on Democracy Promotion,” (*Foreign Service Journal*, January 2009), 38-39.

East without nuclear weapons.<sup>139</sup> There are some scholars who doubt the threat of Iran achieving a nuclear weapon. Frank Procida, a National Intelligence Fellow, makes the argument that while Iran may have the capacity to create a nuclear weapon, they are not likely to use it as it would result in more devastation and destruction for the Iranians themselves. Procida argues that the rhetoric used by Obama on Iran's nuclear capability is similar to that of his predecessor and that the international community should not fear Iran's nuclear capability any more than any other country with nuclear weapons.<sup>140</sup>

Scholars Gerson and Hertog are nervous of the policy toward Iran the United States had established by early 2009 calling it both cautious and confused because of the mixed signals regarding urgency the administration has sent. On one hand the administration acknowledges the capabilities of Iran due to their sufficient stockpiles of low-enriched uranium. On the other hand, members of the administration are stating that Iran is not close to creating a weapon. This confusion, according to Gerson and Hertog, will neither persuade nor intimidate Iran.<sup>141</sup>

In a similar regard, Leslie Gelb, President Emeritus of CFR, establishes that the United States is at a crossroads, one in which it can either choose to continue to assert US power on crises where the U.S. is weakest or choose to play to its strengths by building allies. Gelb suggests that the U.S. needs to redefine its own power and strengths and seek relationships with other powers because it will help the U.S. gain stability in its foreign policy.<sup>142</sup> Richard Haass makes a similar argument stating that a change is

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<sup>139</sup> David Albright, "Iran May Achieve Capability to Make A Nuclear Weapon in 2009," Interview by Bernard Gwertzman, *Council on Foreign Relations*, 20 February 2009.

<sup>140</sup> Frank Procida, "Overblown: Why an Iranian Nuclear Bomb is Not the End of the World," *Council on Foreign Relations* (2009), <http://www.cfr.org/world/overblown-why-iranian-nuclear-bomb-not-end-world/p19691>.

<sup>141</sup> Michael J. Gerson and Roger Hertog, "Brake Lights on Iran: From Obama, a Mix of Caution and Confusion," *Council on Foreign Relations* (2009), <http://www.cfr.org/brake-lights-on-iran/>.

<sup>142</sup> Leslie H. Gelb, "It's Time to 'Go to Strength' on Foreign Policy," *Council on Foreign Relations* (2009), <http://www.cfr.org/foreign-policy-history/s-time-go-strength-foreignpolicy/p18901>.

indeed needed in US foreign policy and encourages the US to work with other governments democratic or otherwise.<sup>143</sup>

Many scholars also commented on the presidential election in Iran in 2009 and analyzed how this may bring about changes in the United States. In an interview with Greg Bruno, Djavad Salehi-Isfahani, foreign policy scholar, is asked about the impact of economic sanctions on Iran. Djavad states that he doesn't really know what the effect of sanctions or the tightening of sanctions because there are many ways to get around sanctions. He tells Bruno that he sees sanctions as an ineffective tool to affect international relations or relations with Iran.<sup>144</sup>

Gary Sick argues that the United States should tread with caution in its policies towards Iran after the stolen election. In an interview with Bernard Gwertzman, Sick states that it is clear that beginning negotiations or discussions with Iran will be more difficult and complicated after the stolen election and coup in Iran. Sick urges the Obama administration to behave cautiously because there is a series of domestic problems the U.S. must overcome.<sup>145</sup> Bruno and McMahon also suggest that the Obama Administration be careful of offensive language because it prompts speculation about the Obama Administration's ability to engage Iran.<sup>146</sup>

Michael Zenko, a fellow at the Center for Preventative Action at CFR believes that the likelihood of an Israeli attack on Iran is highly likely. In his argument, Zenko gives three examples of when Israel saw "Iranian nuclear weapons [as] an existential

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<sup>143</sup> Richard Haass, "Return of American Realism," *Council on Foreign Relations* (2009), <http://www.cfr.org/foreign-policy-history/return-american-realism/p19304>.

<sup>144</sup> Djavad Salehi-Isfahani, "Poor Policy, Not Sanctions, Weakens Iran's Economy," Interview by Greg Bruno, *Center on Foreign Relations*, 26 March 2009.

<sup>145</sup> Gary G. Sick, "U.S. Should React Cautiously to Iran's 'Stolen Election,'" Interview by Bernard Gwertzman, *Council on Foreign Relations*, 14 June 2009.

<sup>146</sup> Greg Bruno and Robert McMahon, "Treading Carefully on Iran," *Council on Foreign Relations* (2009), <http://www.cfr.org/iran/treading-carefully-iran/p19693>.

threat, [and it became] deaf to entreaties from U.S. officials to refrain from using military force.” Zenko predicts that if Tehran refuses to bargain away its nuclear capability, an attack from Israeli, with or without U.S. permission, is likely.<sup>147</sup>

As tensions continue to rise through the end of 2009 and into 2010, so do the different policy options presented by scholars. Several scholars present the abysmal human rights abuses in Iran as an important aspect that should factor into US foreign policy making. In an interview, scholar Ali Ansari says the West should be more upfront in confronting the human rights violations occurring in Iran. Ansari argues that the West, specifically the United States should not see Iran only in terms of its own security or the security of Israel. Rather, the West should be making a statement about “certain values and certain aspects of basic human dignity that should be upheld.” Ansari says the Obama administration should not be afraid to speak out on unacceptable violations of human rights occurring in Iran.<sup>148</sup>

Ray Takeyh takes the human rights argument one step further by saying the Obama administration should “take a cue from Ronald Reagan and persistently challenge the legitimacy of the theocratic state, and highlight its human rights abuses.” By using systemic language to condemn human rights abuse, Takeyh argues that Iran will be forced to take domestic issues just as seriously as international issues such as nuclear capability. Much is said and done by the US to hold Iran responsible for its

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<sup>147</sup> Micah Zenko, “Israel Has Iran in its Sights,” *Council on Foreign Relations* (2009), <http://www.cfr.org/israel/israel-has-iran-its-sights/p20109>.

<sup>148</sup> Ali Ansari, “Time to Speak Out on Iran,” Interview by Bernard Gwertzman, *Council on Foreign Relations*, 13 January 2010.

nuclear obligations, the US, as the longest standing democracy in the world, is failing at hold Iran accountable for its human rights obligations.<sup>149</sup>

In an interview with CFR, Rudi Bakhtiar, the Director of Communications at the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, Rudi calls the human rights record of Iran “excruciating,” especially after the protests. Rather than being able to peacefully protest an unwanted regime, Iranians are being fired upon, jailed, and killed. Bakhtiar asks that “the outside world must continue to apply pressure on Iran and hold this government accountable for its unacceptable human rights record and violations of international treaties it has voluntarily signed.”<sup>150</sup>

The use of force continues to be an option discussed by scholars. In the article “The Force Needed to Contain Iran,” James Lindsay, Senior Vice President at CFR, and Ray Takeyh say if Iran is to acquire nuclear weapons, it would take a considerable amount of American skill to contain Iran. The authors believe that “Washington would need to be explicit about its red lines: no initiation of conventional warfare against other countries; no use or transfer of nuclear weapons, material or technologies; no stepped-up support for terrorist or subversive activities. Washington would need to be just as explicit about the consequences of crossing those lines: potential U.S. military retaliation by any and all means necessary.”<sup>151</sup>

Leslie Gelb disagrees that force is a considerable option for Iran. In the article “The Wrong Way on Iran,” Gelb argues that there is a better US policy to solve the Iranian crisis that does not involve military force. This solution is to “strengthen our

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<sup>149</sup> Ray Takeyh, “From Conciliation to Coercion,” Interview by Bernard Gwertzman, *Council on Foreign Relations*, 11 February 2010.

<sup>150</sup> Rudi Bakhtiar, “Iran's 'Excruciating' Human Rights Record,” Interview by Bernard Gwertzman, *Council on Foreign Relations*, 19 February 2010.

<sup>151</sup> James M. Lindsay and Ray Takeyh, “The Force Needed to Contain Iran,” *Council on Foreign Relations* (2010), <http://www.cfr.org/iran/force-needed-contain-iran/p21496>.

friends in the Gulf region and try to weaken the Revolutionary Guard regime with quiet and practical persistence.” Gelb says this would include the following: “continuing to bolster the legitimacy of friendly regional governments plus very public upgrades of U.S. capabilities to defend them, as the Obama administration is doing with missile defenses, proceeding with sanctions against the Revolutionary Guard, and continuing to try to sabotage Iran’s uranium-enrichment and other nuclear programs as well.”<sup>152</sup>

Senior fellow Walter Russell Mead, while agreeing that military strikes against Iranian nuclear facilities are not a good idea, he believes that all options must be discussed. Mead states that if Iran were to attack the United States, the United States would retaliate and this would lead to a full on war—a war in which Iran will suffer and be subject to regime change. Mead does not support the Obama administration making hotheaded threats towards Iran, but rather suggests they quietly communicate to Iran “that an attack on the forces of the United States would be an act of suicidal folly.”<sup>153</sup>

Sanctions also continue to be a topic of discussion in 2010. Former Deputy National Security Advisor on Iraq and Afghanistan Meagan O’Sullivan states that in order for sanctions to properly work, two conditions must be met. The first condition is “whether the sanctions regime is structured in a way that is conducive to the goals that are being pursued.” The second condition is whether or not there are other foreign policy tools in place that could aid/support sanctions such as incentives. O’Sullivan says that if

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<sup>152</sup> Leslie H. Gelb, “The Wrong Way on Iran,” *Council on Foreign Relations* (2010), <http://www.cfr.org/iran/wrong-way-iran/p21507>.

<sup>153</sup> Walter Russell Mead, “Thinking the Unthinkable: War With Iran,” *Council on Foreign Relations* (2010), <http://www.cfr.org/iran/thinking-unthinkable-war-iran/p2157>.

sanctions alone are not successful, they may come to the aid of other foreign policy options such as military force or containment.<sup>154</sup>

### **5.2.3: 2011 to Present**

Beginning in the fall of 2011 and up until the present time, the field of foreign policy has been flooded with articles and different policy options for the US's foreign policy towards Iran. In an article titled "The March Toward a Nuclear Iran," Ray Takeyh explains that "Iran's scientific infrastructure has grown in sophistication and capability in the past two decades," and Takeyh estimates that within a period of only a few years, Iran will be able to detonate a nuclear device.<sup>155</sup> This estimation makes scholars uneasy and caused them to search for viable policy solutions. Scholar Madison Schramm urges the United States to engage Iran and push for cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Schramm states that Iran is nuclear capable, not nuclear armed, and is thus still able to cooperate with the IAEA and not violate the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Schramm also believes that Obama's increased sanctions have failed and that a military option would only delay Iran's nuclear abilities. Rather, Schramm calls for more incentives from the Obama administration to contain a nuclear Iran, rather than attempt to prevent it.<sup>156</sup>

*Foreign Affairs* contributors Sarah Morgan and Andrew Apostolou argue that Obama should highlight human rights abuses in Iran as a foreign policy strategy. These scholars argue that the only way to neutralize Iran is to "exploit the regime's main vulnerability: its false claim to legitimacy." The best way to do this, according to the

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<sup>154</sup> Meaghan L. O'Sullivan and Jeane Kirkpatrick, "The Limits of New Iran Sanctions," Interview by Bernard Gwertzman, *Council on Foreign Relations*, 8 July 2010.

<sup>155</sup> Ray Takeyh, "The March Toward a Nuclear Iran," *Council on Foreign Relations* (2011), <http://www.cfr.org/iran/march-toward-nuclear-iran/p25586>.

<sup>156</sup> Madison Schramm, "Iran's Nuclear Program - Deal With It," *Council on Foreign Relations* (2011), <http://www.cfr.org/iran/irans-nuclear-program---deal/p25751>.

authors, is to place pressure on Tehran by supporting its dissidents and highlighting human rights abuses on the world stage. This will expose the hypocrisy within Iran and hopefully result in domestic change from within.<sup>157</sup>

There is currently a debate amongst scholars as to whether or not it is a good time to attack Iran. In an article in *Foreign Affairs*, Matthew Kroenig, nuclear security fellow at CFR, argues that a surgical strike on Iran is the “least bad option.” Kroenig believes that a nuclear Iran will pose a threat not only to the US and Israel, but that it would also limit US freedom of action in the Middle East. In addition, Kroenig believes deterring Iran will inevitably result in a nuclear exchange with Israel which will place the US in the middle of a nuclear war. Kroenig suggests that Washington conduct surgical air strikes on Iran’s nuclear facilities and destroy them which will greatly damage and slow Iran’s nuclear ambitions. He goes as far to suggest means to avoid collateral damage limit the extent of Iran’s retaliation. Kroenig’s bottom line? Attack now before it’s too late.<sup>158</sup> Eric Edelman et al. also present an article that makes a very similar argument to that of Kroenig stating that “United States faces the difficult decision of using military force soon to prevent Iran from going nuclear, or living with a nuclear Iran and the regional fallout.”<sup>159</sup>

Scholars on the other side of the debate are seriously concerned with the possibility of an attack on Iran. Alexandre Debs and Nuno P. Monteiro believe there are three major flaws present with Matthew Kroenig’s argument to attack Iran. They are: “First, its view

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<sup>157</sup> Sarah Morgan and Andrew Apostolou, “Why Obama Should Highlight Iran's Human Rights Abuses: The Naming and Shaming Strategy,” *Foreign Affairs* (2011), <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136651/sarah-morgan-and-andrew-apostolou/why-obama-should-highlight-irans-human-rights-abuses>.

<sup>158</sup> Matthew Kroenig, “Time to Attack Iran: Why a Strike Is the Least Bad Option,” *Foreign Affairs* (2012), <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136917/matthew-kroenig/time-to-attack-iran>.

<sup>159</sup> Eric S. Edelman et al. “Why Obama Should Take Out Iran's Nuclear Program: The Case for Striking Before It's Too Late,” *Foreign Affairs* (2011), <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136655/eric-s-edelman-andrew-f-krepinevich-jr-and-evan-braden-montgomer/why-obama-should-take-out-irans-nuclear-program>.

of Iranian leaders' risk calculations is self-contradictory. Second, it misreads nuclear history. And third, it underestimates the United States' ability to contain a nuclear Iran.”<sup>160</sup> Rather, the authors suggest that the United States should learn from the mistakes with North Korea and not preemptively attack Iran, but rather, live with the possibility of a nuclear Iran.<sup>161</sup>

Colin Kahl, senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security, contradicts the article published by Matthew Kroenig in his article titled “Not the Time to Attack Iran.” Kahl says there are many flaws in Kroenig’s argument stating that there is not a hurry to act immediately and that Kroenig’s timeline is misleading. Kahl also attacks Kroenig’s underestimation of Iran’s retaliation of an attack on its facilities, as well as an inaccurate estimation of minimizing spillover. Kahl concludes that while the Obama administration is not taking the option of using force off the table, it should remain a last resort and not a first option as its consequences are grave.<sup>162</sup> Scholars Jamie M. Fly and Gary Schmitt believe the United States is seeking a regime change but that this will not happen easily. Fly and Schmitt believe that a military attack may result in a regime change, but only by an attack that would eliminate the current regime, not just wound it. Therefore, the authors believe that a military option should remain on the table and may be used if necessary.<sup>163</sup>

Military options are not the only ones being discussed. In her article “Obama’s Counterproductive New Iran Sanctions,” Suzanne Maloney, former US State

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<sup>160</sup> Alexandre Debs and Nuno P. Monteiro, “The Flawed Logic of Striking Iran: Handle it Like North Korea Instead,” *Foreign Affairs* (2012), <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137036/alexandre-debs-and-nuno-p-monteiro/the-flawed-logic-of-striking-iran>.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>162</sup> Colin H. Kahl, “Not Time to Attack Iran: Why War Should Be a Last Resort,” *Foreign Affairs* (2012), <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137031/colin-h-kahl/not-time-to-attack-iran>.

<sup>163</sup> Jamie M. Fly and Gary Schmitt, “The Case For Regime Change in Iran: Go Big --Then Go Home,” *Foreign Affairs* (2012), <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137038/jamie-m-fly-and-gary-schmitt/the-case-for-regime-change-in-iran>.

Department Policy Advisor, argues that the increased sanctions will only result in a more determined nuclear Iran. Maloney believes that what really needs to be examined is realistic way in dealing with the leadership of Iran. Maloney believe the new sanctions eliminate all prior hope of engagement and the prospect of negotiations. By doing so, the United States has backed itself into a corner because it is essentially seeking regime change in Iran as it is unwilling to work with the current leadership.<sup>164</sup>

Lastly, Hossein Mousavian, Iranian policy maker and scholar, argues that the actions of the Obama administration have ben contradictory to what they originally set out to do. Rather than engage Iran, the Obama administration has been really seeking a regime change. Mousavian argues that “the door to rapprochement is closing,” and if the US every wishes to engage Iran it should do the following: declare that it does not seek a regime change and show goodwill. Doing so will keep the door open for engagement and a healthier relationship between Iran and the United States.<sup>165</sup>

### **5.3: Collection Sample Two: The Brookings Institution**

The Brookings Institution was founded in 1916 by Robert S. Brookings and other government reformers who were devoted to creating an organization which conducts fact-based study of national policy issues. It was first known as the Institute for Government Research and later merged with its two sister schools, the Institute of Economics and a graduate school to become what we now know as Brookings Institution. Since its inception, the Brookings Institution has carried out its mission to “promote, conduct and foster research in the broad fields of economics, government

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<sup>164</sup> Suzanne Maloney, “Obama's Counterproductive New Iran Sanctions: How Washington is Sliding Toward Regime Change,” *Foreign Affairs* (2012). <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137011/suzanne-maloney/obamas-counterproductive-new-iran-sanctions>.

<sup>165</sup> Hossein Mousavian, “How to Engage Iran: What Went Wrong Last Time—and How to Fix It,” *Foreign Affairs* (2012), <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137095/hossein-mousavian/how-to-engage-iran>.

administration and the political and social sciences.”<sup>166</sup> As a nonprofit public policy organization, Brookings continues to conduct research and provide recommendations for policy makers.

### **5.3.1: Prior to 2009**

The policy research sample from the Brookings Institution, hereby referred to simply as Brookings, begins in 2007 with an article by Suzanne Maloney titled “Fear and Loathing in Tehran.” Maloney, one of Brookings’ policy experts on Iran explains how the foreign policy goal of the United States towards Iran for many years has been an attempt at regime change with the ultimate end goal being democracy promotion. Maloney explains how over the years the United States has committed a series of blunders that only result in fear and loathing, and these blunders have only lead to deeper suspicions in Tehran that the ultimate goal of the United States is to eradicate the Islamic Republic. Maloney makes two suggestions for the incoming administration based on the mistakes of the past: accept that regime in Iran is here to stay and accept that US involvement will most likely impair rather than advance an attempt at democracy in Iran.<sup>167</sup>

Maloney suggests that the best policy for the United States is to engage Iran. In an article written in 2007 by Maloney and Ray Takeyh, the suggestion given to policy makers is that engagement should be the primary thrust to American foreign policy in order to restrain and redirect Tehran’s dangerous policies.<sup>168</sup> In a lecture given to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform National Security and Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the reality of the situation in Iran, Maloney attributes the

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<sup>166</sup> “Brookings Institution History,” *Brookings Institution* (2012), <http://www.brookings.edu/about>.

<sup>167</sup> Suzanne Maloney, “Fear and Loathing in Tehran,” *The National Interest*, September/October 2007, 42-48.

<sup>168</sup> Suzanne Maloney and Ray Takeyh, “Engage Iran,” *Democracy Journal*, Fall 2007, 36.

failure of United States policy towards Iran to a severe lack of understanding about the Iranian regime. She offers five possible suggestions for a diplomatic way forward with Tehran. “First, and most importantly, a successful American approach to Iran must acknowledge that diplomacy is the only alternative available to U.S. policymakers... Second, diplomatic engagement is an appropriate and potentially effective tool for addressing our deep differences with Tehran... Third, modest pressure is unlikely to produce dramatic changes in Iranian policy or its leadership’s strategic calculus... Fourth, a broad international coalition is the best vehicle for exerting external influence on Iran... Fifth, containment is a viable alternative strategy, if ultimately second-best.”<sup>169</sup>

On February 21, 2008, Suzanne Maloney appeared before the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom and gave a lecture titled “Advancing Religious Freedom and Human Rights in Iran.” In her lecture, Maloney addressed different policy options towards Iran based on advancing religious freedom and respect from human dignity.

In discussing human rights and religious freedom in Iran, Maloney frames her argument in context of the leadership of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the detrimental impact it has had on Iran’s political and social environments. According to Maloney, Ahmadinejad’s regime has resulted in censorship of books and other media intensifying dramatically, Islamic dress codes and other social prohibitions strictly

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<sup>169</sup> Suzanne Maloney, “Iran: Reality, Options, and Consequences,” *Brookings Institution* (2007), [http://www.brookings.edu/testimony/2007/1107\\_iran\\_maloney.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/testimony/2007/1107_iran_maloney.aspx).

enforced, and the targeting of intellectual, dissidents, student activists, lawyers, union leaders, and human rights advocates for repression and imprisonment.<sup>170</sup>

Maloney explains that under the Iranian regime, religious minorities are being poorly treated. Despite the so called protection and guarantees of political representation offered to religious minorities in post-revolution Iran, the truth that they are not protected. Thousands of minorities fled during the revolution, and as for the minorities that remain, some are denied basic rights to practice their faith, their educational opportunities are limited, and many have been imprisoned. As of 2008, the latest US strategy for Iran was to give Iran an option to choose between moderation or isolation. While this strategy did initially receive international consensus, Maloney argues that it has failed to achieve its aims due to the “misinformed assumptions about Iran and the region that senior American officials nurtured even in the face of contradictory evidence.”<sup>171</sup>

The solution to the current problems with Iran that Maloney presents are the same as those present in the article “Iran: Reality, Options, and Consequences,” where she restates her five suggestions to a diplomatic way forward in Iran. She does, however, make a few additional points regarding human rights stating that engagement does not mean that the US should no longer criticize Tehran’s abuses of its citizens’ rights. Rather, Maloney calls on the US to speak up for greater social, political, and economic liberalization in Iran as well as a condemnation of the regime’s repression. In order to

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<sup>170</sup> Suzanne Maloney, “Advancing Religious Freedom and Human Rights in Iran,” *Brookings Institution* (2008), [http://www.brookings.edu/testimony/2008/0221\\_iran\\_maloney.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/testimony/2008/0221_iran_maloney.aspx).

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

promote human rights and religious freedom in Iran, the US must not continue to seek a regime change, but rather, retool democracy promotion programming in Iran.<sup>172</sup>

The Center for a New American Security published a policy paper written by Suzanne Maloney titled “Diplomatic Strategies for Dealing with Iran: How Tehran Might Respond.” Maloney argues that the biggest challenge for US policy makers is an inadequate understanding of Iran and once again states that the key to a diplomatic process is the ability and willingness on behalf of the enemies of Iran to accept a level of ambiguity in Iran’s undertakings.<sup>173</sup> Maloney remains optimistic that if the United States is willing to learn from the past, the relationship between Tehran and Washington may be improved. By “devising an effective formula for engaging Tehran, and maintaining momentum, [the United States may be able to find] mechanisms that succeed in drawing in a leadership that is insular and profoundly suspicious of Washington.”<sup>174</sup>

### **5.3.2: 2009 through 2010**

Debates over the best policy options for United States policy towards Iran continue in 2009. In an article titled “Misreading Tehran,” Suzanne Maloney explains that the United States gravely miscalculated the political dynamics in Iran which resulted in erroneous assumptions that would begin after the 1979 Iranian revolution and continue until present day. These misperceptions became even more evident in light of the June 2009 election in Iran. Maloney argues that while many scholars were studying how the election would affect the balance of power within Iran, many could not foresee

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

the impact that defiance of the supreme leader or the mass protests would have on Iran.<sup>175</sup>

The author gives four points—or lessons learned—from the situation that transpired in Iran post-2009 election. First, the belief that supreme leader, Ayatollah Al Khamenei is a relative moderate—a balancer, if you will—proved to be false after he aligned himself with Iran’s conservatives and fully supported hard-liner, President Ahmadinejad. Second, Iran’s representative institutions, which were once believed to be legitimate, proved to be a means for manipulation in the elections, elections which were manipulated in order maintain the Iranian regime’s control and stability. Third, many observers once believed that as a result of “revolutionary fatigue and political cynicism,” Iranians were not willing to participate in any political movement. In light of the massive movements, this notion proved to be false. Finally, and perhaps the most relevant to this case study, Maloney argues that the economy isn’t Iran’s primary vulnerability. She suggests to policy makers to understand that the economy is not what spurred uprisings in Iran, but rather, the desire for democratic, basic human rights sparked the unrest.<sup>176</sup>

In her testimony to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on developments in Iran after the June 12, 2009 election, Suzanne Maloney addresses the internal turmoil occurring in Iran and offers suggestions for ways in which US foreign policy towards Iran may move forward. Maloney argues that the unrest in Iran further strengthens the Obama administration’s policy for diplomacy is the best policy to be used towards Iran. The worst policy alternative would be military action which would only result in a more unstable Middle East and most likely strengthen Iran’s nuclear ambitions. Maloney

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<sup>175</sup> Suzanne Maloney, “Misreading Tehran.” *Brookings Institution* (2009), [http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2009/0626\\_iran\\_maloney.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2009/0626_iran_maloney.aspx).

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

remains a supporter of engaging Iran as she sees the splintering regime in Iran to become more problematic for the United States. She sees the intensification of sanctions as necessary only when engagement fails because economic pressures alone rarely result in substantive modifications to Iranian policy.<sup>177</sup>

Maloney continues to remain critical of sanctions towards Iran. In an article written by Maloney and Takeyh, “Sanctions Will Not Curb Iran’s Nuclear Ambitions,” the authors explain that while the new United Nations Security Council sanctions against Iran passed on June 9, 2010 are a significant achievement for the Obama administration, they doubt that the sanctions will actually be able to deter Iran’s nuclear ambitions. The passing of the new round of sanctions, which places curbs on the conventional arms sales, are argued by the authors to be the major development themselves. The success of the sanctions, however, remains to be proven as Iran will continue to seek nuclear capability.<sup>178</sup>

In his article, “Iran Sanctions: Who Really Wins?,” Djavad Salehi-Isfahani explains how the Obama administration’s policy of engagement is actually similar to that the old policy of “carrot and sticks” as the focus of the US has shifted to Iran’s economy.<sup>179</sup> Salehi-Isfahani argues that “the emerging consensus in Washington that new, ‘crippling’ sanctions could persuade Iran to change its nuclear policy seems in part based on the lack of a better alternative.”<sup>180</sup> The author says this statement is based on two incorrect assumptions being made in Washington: first, that the weak economy in

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<sup>177</sup> Suzanne Maloney, “Iran: Recent Developments and Implications for U.S. Policy,” *Brookings Institution* (2009). [http://www.brookings.edu/testimony/2009/0722\\_iran\\_maloney](http://www.brookings.edu/testimony/2009/0722_iran_maloney).

<sup>178</sup> Suzanne Maloney and Ray Takeyh, “Sanctions Will Not Curb Iran’s Nuclear Ambitions,” *Brookings Institution* (2010), [http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/0610\\_nuclear\\_iran.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/0610_nuclear_iran.aspx).

<sup>179</sup> Djavad Salehi-Isfahani, “Iran Sanctions: Who Really Wins?,” *Brookings Institution* (2009), [http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2009/0930\\_iran\\_sanctions\\_salehi\\_isfahani.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2009/0930_iran_sanctions_salehi_isfahani.aspx)

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*

Iran is a result of existing sanctions, and two, said weak economy resulted in the demonstrations of June 2009. Similar to previous arguments made by Maloney, the author states that the Iranian economy was not the cause of the demonstrations, but rather a desire for better living standards and way of life was. Rather than hurting the regime of Iran, the author argues that the main victim of the sanctions will be the lower classes who will suffer the most, and their suffering will not weaken the Iranian government. Lastly, the author argues that engagement may be the most reasonable approach to Iran as it may inspire an interest in non-proliferation (assuming here that Iran is as close to nuclear capability as it claims). If the US can emphasize positive inducements, it might shift Iran's role from military to economic development by encouraging building infrastructure.<sup>181</sup>

In an article by Martin S. Indyk, former US Ambassador to Israel, and Kenneth M. Pollack, former CIA analyst and National Security Council staff member, the authors argue that the Obama administration is faced with a new set of complex challenges in the Middle East, one of which is curbing Iran's nuclear problem. Indyk and Reidel believe that as of 2010, the Obama administration had made more progress with Iran than did the Bush administration due to its ability to enact a new approach towards Iran.<sup>182</sup> However, there is much still to be done. The Obama administration was quick to adopt an engagement policy which includes "carrots and sticks." The problem, however, is that within months of adopting said policy, disputes over the June 2009 election occurred. These disputes led to the increased power of an already hard-liner regime. Despite international support, the authors find it unlikely that increased sanctions towards Iran

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Martin S. Indyk and Kenneth M. Pollack, "The Obama Administration: Facing Challenges in the Middle East." *Brookings Institution* (2010). [http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/0113\\_middle\\_east\\_policy\\_indyk\\_pollack.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/0113_middle_east_policy_indyk_pollack.aspx)

will convince the Iranian regime to suspend its uranium enrichment program. In addition, the United States has been lacking in condemning the violent repression and consistent violation of human rights by the Iranian regime in hopes that this will result in Tehran seeking compromise. However, avoiding increasing pressure on Iran's violation of human rights in hopes of engagement with the regime is leading the Obama administration nowhere.<sup>183</sup>

Some scholars have been more vocal in the criticizing the direction that US policy is headed towards in Iran. In their article, "Do Not Even Think About Bombing Iran," Michael E. O'Hanlon, senior fellow, and Bruce Riedel, former CIA analyst and counterterrorism specialist, argue that a long-term strategy for dealing with nuclear Iran is needed and it should not be limited to military action. While not fully convinced about the current effectiveness of sanctions, the authors argue that the strike option lacks logic because while a massive strike may slow down Iran's nuclear progress, it will not be for long. Not only will a strike be technically difficult, but it will also most likely to strengthen the hard-line, anti-West regime of Tehran. The best way forward is a three-pronged approach according to the authors: sanctions, deterrence, and containment. If sanctions are restructured properly, they may evolve into a containment strategy for a nuclear Iran which could work as a nuclear umbrella to Israel and other US allies similar to that of the containment strategy for the Soviet Union during the Cold War.<sup>184</sup>

### **5.3.3: 2011 to Present**

In a lecture given to the House Subcommittee on National Security, Homeland Defense and Foreign Operations, and Committee on Oversight and Government Reform,

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Michael E. O'Hanlon and Bruce Riedel, "Do Not Even Think About Bombing Iran," *Brookings Institution* (2010), [http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/0228\\_nuclear\\_iran\\_strategy\\_ohanlon\\_riedel.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/0228_nuclear_iran_strategy_ohanlon_riedel.aspx).

Suzanne Maloney comments on the progress of the Obama administration towards Iran as of November 2011. She begins with assessing the Obama administration's policy and says that on one hand, it deserves recognition for seeking engagement with Iran. In reality, however, the Obama administration has used policy tools used by the previous administration of George W. Bush —sanctions. Maloney believes this is not unexpected as it is difficult to shift from diplomacy during the Clinton administration, to absolute isolation under the Bush administration, and back to diplomacy again with Obama.<sup>185</sup> She also states that “despite some stylistic differences, the Obama administration has retained the second-term Bush policy framework for Iran. The designation of Iranian individuals and institutions under the counter-proliferation and counter-terrorism statutes remains a powerful tool for creating ripple effects across the global landscape of the country's trade ties.”<sup>186</sup> Maloney also criticizes the sanctions put in place by the Obama administration claiming they have only heightened paranoia in Tehran.

Maloney concludes her lecture by offering five ways in which the United States can have a more successful foreign policy agenda towards Iran. By doing so, the United States has the possibility to make actual progress towards Iran. Maloney states:

First, multilateral cooperation is vital to influencing Iran's bottom line as well as its strategic decision making...Second, Washington must recognize—and must articulate clearly to both its diplomatic partners and to the American people that—that tough measures toward Tehran will entail tough tradeoffs for U.S. interests...Third, Washington should never unilaterally take diplomacy off the table...Fourth, the use of force must remain within the universe of policy options for dealing with any urgent threat, but the intemperate invocation of threats does little to advance U.S. interests or those of the international community in ensuring a peaceful, prosperous Middle East... [and lastly], Washington should

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<sup>185</sup> Suzanne Maloney, “Progress of the Obama Administration's Policy Toward Iran,” *Brookings Institution* (2011), [http://www.brookings.edu/testimony/2011/1115\\_iran\\_policy\\_maloney.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/testimony/2011/1115_iran_policy_maloney.aspx).

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

rethink the universe of possibilities for advancing political change within Iran.<sup>187</sup>

Another subject of debate amongst scholars is the role Israel plays in the foreign policy of the United States towards Iran. Bruce Riedel's "Will Israel Really Strike Iran?" analyzes Israel's growing threats of a possible attack on Iran. Riedel argues that if Israel were to attack, Iran and its allies in the region would have the means to retaliate, and it would not only hurt Israel, but the US as well. Iran and its allies would be able to carry out an attack on US bases in Gulf States as well as attacks on American diplomats. Riedel suggests that regardless if there is any validity in the threats made by Israel, President Obama should quietly inform Israel of the dangers and foolishness of a strike against Iran.<sup>188</sup>

Dean of John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies Vali Nasr, in his article, "Dangerous Mix: Iranian Oil and U.S. Sanctions," warns of the dangers of further pressuring Iran with sanctions. In December of 2011, Iran threatened that it will retaliate against President Obama's newly proposed sanctions on Iranian oil by closing the Strait of Hormuz where one-fifth of the world's oil passes through daily.<sup>189</sup> Nasr explains that US strategy assumes that by cutting Iran out of the oil market, Saudi Arabia will compensate for the loss. According to Nasr, this assumption is a problem because it is not clear whether or not Saudi Arabia would actually increase production, which would have detrimental effects on the world economy. Iran threatening to shut down the Strait of Hormuz is an attempt to intimidate the US away from the new sanctions. Nasr believes the behavior of the US and Iran will eventually lead to a war if not as a result of

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Bruce Reidel, "Will Israel Really Strike Iran?," *Brookings Institution* (2011), [http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2011/1102\\_israel\\_riedel](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2011/1102_israel_riedel).

<sup>189</sup> Vali Nasr, "Dangerous Mix: Iranian Oil and U.S. Sanctions," *Brookings Institution* (2011), [http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2011/1229\\_iran\\_nasr.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2011/1229_iran_nasr.aspx).

military action, then as a result of sanctions that will end up accelerating the path to war.<sup>190</sup>

As a policy expert on Iran, Suzanne Maloney continues to provide analyses as well as suggestions for policy makers. In light of the increasing tensions between Iran and the United States in the winter of 2011, Maloney wrote an article titled “How to Contain a Nuclear Iran.” Many of the arguments presented by Maloney are similar to those presented earlier in this collection sample. Maloney says that neither the Obama administration nor the possible Republican candidates running for president in 2012 offer a logical solution to Iran. Over the years, there has been growing support for simply “dealing” with a nuclear Iran, and while this is a possible solution, Maloney warns that it makes negotiations and concessions difficult. She also argues that even though the original policy objectives of President Obama have veered off course and rely on increasing pressure, she maintains that engagement should and must continue. Negotiations without trust are extremely difficult, but Maloney also says they are necessary in order to keep the tensions from escalating.<sup>191</sup>

Maloney then takes her argument one step beyond simple diplomacy and says that the Obama administration must reassess its approach towards Israel. The administration must be able to differentiate between Israel’s legitimate fears and its empty threats as well as provide new measures that reassure Israeli leaders of the American commitment to Israel. Maloney is telling policy makers that they should not abandon Israel, but they should encourage Israel to refrain from using inflammatory language that will only heighten tensions. Finally, Maloney concludes that Washington’s

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Suzanne Maloney, “How to Contain a Nuclear Iran,” *Brookings Institution* (2012), [http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2012/0305\\_nuclear\\_iran\\_maloney.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2012/0305_nuclear_iran_maloney.aspx)

policy toward Iran should be to continue to attempt to deter their nuclear capability as well as deter the influence of the current regime.<sup>192</sup>

Marvin Kalb, news analyst for Fox News, is also worried about the tension between Iran and the United States and whether or not this will lead to confrontation. Kalb explains how the United States, in response to the Iranian threats to close the Strait of Hormuz, has threatened to take military action. This response has led to statements made by the United States government that imply if Iran crosses this “red line,” military action will be taken, and all the while Iran continues with their nuclear program. Kalb argues for caution in actions and words saying that Iran and United States are headed towards an ugly confrontation and now is the time to attempt to diffuse the situation.<sup>193</sup>

The Brookings Institution also provides policy analysts with polling results and analysis. In an article titled “Do Israelis Support a Strike on Iran?” by senior fellow Shibley Telhami, it is revealed that while the Israeli government is willing to initiate a strike against Iran with or without US backing, the Israeli people feel different. According to a poll conducted by Telhami “only 19 percent of Israelis polled expressed support for an attack without U.S. backing... while 42 percent endorsed a strike only if there is at least U.S. support, and 32 percent opposed an attack regardless.”<sup>194</sup> Telhami also states that Israelis remain confident that the US will support them, or even join them in combat on Israel’s behalf.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Marvin Kalb, “The United States and Iran: Heading Toward Dangerous Confrontation,” *Brookings Institution* (2012), [http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2012/0118\\_iran\\_kalb.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2012/0118_iran_kalb.aspx).

<sup>194</sup> Shibley Telhami, “Do Israelis Support a Strike on Iran?,” *Brookings Institution* (2012), [http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2012/0229\\_israel\\_iran\\_telhami.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2012/0229_israel_iran_telhami.aspx).

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

## 5.4: Collection Sample Three: American Enterprise Institute (AEI)

In 1939, the American Enterprise Association (AEA) was formed by a group of business in New York in response to the growing threat of Congress making wartime price and production controls permanent in order to avoid another economic depression. Faced with this threat, the group founded AEA in order to advocate “rapid postwar economic demobilization” and to shed light on the consequences of the decision by Congress on the economy.<sup>196</sup> By 1943, AEA opened an office in Washington, DC and became known as the American Enterprise Institute (AEI). AEI became the result of “the migration of business and trade associations from commercial centers to the nation's capital and the emergence of the policy ‘think tank.’”<sup>197</sup> Since its inception, the American Enterprise Institute continues to serve an important role in providing research and informing policy debates.

### 5.4.1: Prior to 2009

The collection sample for the American Enterprise Institute begins with an article by Reuel Marc Gerecht, a resident fellow at AEI, titled “U.S. Must Be Firm with Iran.” In his argument, Gerecht begins with analyzing the involvement of Iran in the US war with Iraq and challenges the notion that Iran wants stability in Iraq. He explains that the US can continue to exercise “soft power—through sanctions, resolutions, diplomatic isolation, and rougher rhetoric,” towards Iran but that it will not change their radical tactics, especially in Iraq.<sup>198</sup> What the United States really needs to do is take a firmer, harder approach towards Iran.

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<sup>196</sup> “History of AEI,” *American Enterprise Institute* (2012), <http://www.aei.org/about/history/>.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Reuel Marc Gerecht, “U.S. Must Be Firm with Iran,” *American Enterprise Institute* (2007).

<http://www.aei.org/article/foreign-and-defense-policy/regional/middle-east-and-north-africa/us-must-be-firm-with-iran/>.

AEI scholar Joshua Muravchik is also worried of the strength of Iran. In his article, “Iran Bomb ‘Intolerable,’” Muravchik believes there are only two options for the US: accept Iran with nuclear weapon or destroy its nuclear program by force. The idea of a nuclear capable Iran is unacceptable, so Muravchik suggests to policy makers that they take a realistic approach and rely on hard power. Regardless of whether or not Tehran would use a weapon against the US or an ally, just having nuclear capability strengthens Iran’s ability to dominate the Middle East and poses a severe threat to the US. The only way to prevent this would be to launch a pre-emptive military strike against Iran.<sup>199</sup>

In an article titled “Iran's Nuke News Shows Danger of Trusting This Regime,” resident scholar Michael Rubin explains how based on the last National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), the Democrats are convinced that Iran does not pose a threat to the United States. He believes this assumption to be wrong and says diplomacy, without any use of strong sanctions or threat of military force, is useless. Rubin questions the capability of Democrats to properly assess the threat posed by Iran and wishes that they were willing to truly understand the danger of a nuclear Iran.<sup>200</sup> In another article on the rose colored foreign policy of the Democrats, Rubin states that he Democrats were quick to criticize the Bush administration’s decision to go to war with Iraq, yet they are delusional about the current threats the United States faces. He says that by projecting “good will” towards the US’s enemies, Democrats “undermine containment and

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<sup>199</sup> Joshua Muravchik, “Iranian Bomb ‘Intolerable,’” *American Enterprise Institute* (2007), <http://www.aei.org/article/foreign-and-defense-policy/regional/middle-east-and-north-africa/iranian-bomb-intolerable/>.

<sup>200</sup> Michael Rubin, “Iran's Nuke News Shows Danger of Trusting This Regime,” *American Enterprise Institute* (2007), <http://www.aei.org/article/foreign-and-defense-policy/regional/middle-east-and-north-africa/irans-nuke-news-shows-danger-of-trusting-this-regime/>.

deterrence, the very strategies necessary to prevent war.”<sup>201</sup> He also criticizes Obama’s call for a diplomatic surge with Iran, a statement that was made the same day President Ahmadinejad boasted about Iran’s nuclear program calling Obama a naïve optimist.<sup>202</sup>

The influence of Israel on the policy decisions of the United States is also a matter of debate amongst scholars. In his article, “America’s Ally in the Middle East,” former economic speech writer for President George W. Bush David Frum says that the US support of Israel is not the work of a conspiracy or the Israeli, but rather Americans see Israel as an ally amongst enemies. Frum traces the relationship of the United States and Israel back to Israel’s inception and shows American support of the Israeli through polls conducted since 1948. Despite all the different variations in the polls, they reveal that overall the American public strongly supports the state of Israel. Frum also explains that after the attacks of 9/11, many Americans began to see Arabs as the “enemy” and became convinced that Israel and United States should continue to be strong allies. He concludes his argument saying that if the enemy were to “disavow genocide, eschew religious extremism, halt terrorism, adopt democracy, practice tolerance, and offer and accept reasonable compromise” there would be no need for conflict.<sup>203</sup>

Reuel Marc Gerecht asks what to do with the growing tension with Iran in his article, “Countering Iran.” He says Iran’s nuclear program is continuing and the option of a military strike that was once possible vanished when the NIE released its report saying Iran had stopped seeking a nuclear weapon. Upon the publication of this report,

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<sup>201</sup> Michael Rubin, “Rose-Colored Foreign Policy,” *American Enterprise Institute* (2008), <http://www.aei.org/article/foreign-and-defense-policy/regional/middle-east-and-north-africa/rose-colored-foreign-policy/>.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> David Frum, “America’s Ally in the Middle East,” *American Enterprise Institute* (2008), <http://www.aei.org/article/foreign-and-defense-policy/regional/middle-east-and-north-africa/americas-ally-in-the-middle-east/>.

Iranian leadership was quick to celebrate the success of Iran over the West and stir up trouble all over the Middle East, a ploy that Gerecht believes will eventually lead to a confrontation between Iran and Israel. The author then asks the United States to do all it can do to broadcast the crimes committed by Tehran against its own people in order to arrest members of Iran's Revolutionary Guard in order to make public the crimes of Iran. By doing so, the United States can turn its focus toward Iran and hopefully prevent the Iranians from obtaining a nuclear weapon.<sup>204</sup>

#### **5.4.2: 2009 through 2010**

Many analysts argue that the Obama administration is a continuation of Bush's second term. John Bolton, former Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and Internal Security under President George W. Bush, first defends the conservative ideals on foreign policy and national security and says that these policies are actually what the country needs. The problem, according to Bolton, is veering from these core conservative principles which he says are necessary in order to maintain the security and freedom of the American people. Former President George W. Bush veered away from these principles in his second term, and President Obama outright rejects them. This is causing the foreign policy of the United States to be far more than just lenient but almost downright dangerous. Bolton argues that President Obama is unable to establish the difference between an ally and adversary—as evident by his invitation of the likes of Iran to Fourth of July reception—which will prove to be disastrous when Iran has nuclear capability.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Reuel Marc Gerecht, "Countering Iran," *American Enterprise Institute* (2008), <http://www.aei.org/article/foreign-and-defense-policy/regional/middle-east-and-north-africa/countering-iran/>.

<sup>205</sup> John R. Bolton, "Obama Continues Bush's 2nd Term—Badly," *American Enterprise Institute* (2009), <http://www.aei.org/article/foreign-and-defense-policy/regional/middle-east-and-north-africa/obama-continues-bushs-2nd-term—badly/>.

In an article titled “What if Israel Strikes Iran?,” John Bolton explains that in light of the upcoming presidential elections, there remains much speculation about a possible Israeli attack on Iran in order to destroy Iran’s nuclear program. Bolton believes that Israel is at serious risk due to the increasing capabilities of Iran in addition to the Obama administration’s growing distance from Israel. He gives six possible scenarios that could result from a possible Israeli attack on Iran. They are the following: Iran closes the Strait of Hormuz, Iran cuts its own oil exports to raise world prices, Iran attacks U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, Iran increases support for global terrorism, Iran launches missile attacks on Israel, or Iran unleashes Hamas and Hezbollah against Israel.”<sup>206</sup> Bolton believes that all of these scenarios are highly dangerous, but just as dangerous is the notion of a nuclear armed Iran. In addition, due to the growing distance between Israel and the Obama administration, Israel may be in a slightly more difficult position with the US if it were to decide to attack Iran.<sup>207</sup>

In an article titled “Thoughts on Obama and Iran,” conservative political analyst Michael Barone expresses his deep frustration with the Obama administration’s policies towards Iran saying they have been “toothless.” Barone explains how Obama has been consistent in his policy approach towards Iran because in 2007 he was willing to meet with Ahmadinejad without any preconditions. In addition, Barone believes that Obama’s willingness to approach Iran shows his willingness to “mollify evil regimes.”<sup>208</sup> Barone accuse President Obama of appeasing the Iranian regime in hopes that it will abandon its

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<sup>206</sup> John R. Bolton, “What If Israel Strikes Iran?” *American Enterprise Institute* (2009), <http://www.aei.org/article/foreign-and-defense-policy/regional/middle-east-and-north-africa/what-if-israel-strikes-iran/>.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Michael Barone, “Thoughts on Obama and Iran,” *American Enterprise Institute* (2009), <http://www.aei.org/article/foreign-and-defense-policy/regional/middle-east-and-north-africa/thoughts-on-obama-and-iran/>.

nuclear goals which he sees next to impossible because the regime has rejected negotiation attempts by other American administrations. Finally, Barone argues that what is needed is regime change in Iran and that the only way this is even remotely possible is if the Obama administration condemns the actions of Iran and deems them illegitimate.<sup>209</sup>

John Bolton also explores the possibilities of sanctioning Iran in his article “Sanctions Won’t Work Against Iran.” In response to the IAEA’s report which downplays Iran’s continued nuclear ambitions, President Obama is faced with two options. First, he has the option of simply characterizing the freezing of Iran’s nuclear program as a success, but this solution will not stop Iran’s nuclear ambitions. The second option for the Obama administration would be to enforce stronger sanctions on Iran including petroleum sanctions as well as international finance sanctions. While Bolton claims these sanctions indicate progress on behalf of the Obama administration and may result in dissatisfaction from the Iran regime, he does not actually believe they will have any impact as of the current time. He gives several reasons for why these sanctions will have no impact including the unlikelihood of the UN Security Council passing sanctions, the lack of resolve from the EU with regards to Security Council decisions, and Iran’s continued efforts to protect its petroleum products. According to Bolton, Iran is fully aware of the sanctions and is not “standing idly by.” Rather, the government of Iran is preparing by increasing refineries and expanding existing facilities as well as increasing subsidies for natural gas. Bolton concludes that sanctions will not have a significant impact and that the Obama administration is finding yet another way to avoid making

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

“hard decisions” on whether or not to use force towards Iran’s growing nuclear capabilities.<sup>210</sup>

The American Enterprise Institute also conducts public opinion polls to assess the success of the current administration. Public opinion analyst Karlyn Bowman analyzes the latest polls on foreign policy in an article titled “Leave Foreign Policy to the President.” According to the polls as of July 2009, President Barack Obama has a 50% to 55% approval rating on foreign policy. Approximating 61% of people polled believe he is taking the proper steps towards Iran, while other polls indicate that 35% to 40% believe he is not being tough enough and 10% see Iran as a serious threat.<sup>211</sup> Polling also revealed that while Americans primarily focus on domestic issues and leave foreign policy issues to the president, they are still paying attention to Iran. For this reason, Bowman says it is up to President Obama to be more assertive in his discussions on foreign policy. In another poll conducted by Pew in September of 2009, Bowman found that “82% percent said Iran developing nuclear weapons would be a major threat, 12% a minor one and 2% not a threat.”<sup>212</sup>

In an article written on striking Iran, John Bolton argues that amongst the Obama administration, there seems to be disagreement as to how to deal with Iran and Bolton claims that Obama’s two-track policy is not working. He says Obama needs to decide what steps he will be taking towards Iran because he is currently switching between applying pressure on Iran and keeping the door of communication open, both of which

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<sup>210</sup> John R. Bolton, “Sanctions Won't Work against Iran,” *American Enterprise Institute* (2009), <http://www.aei.org/article/foreign-and-defense-policy/regional/middle-east-and-north-africa/sanctions-wont-work-against-iran/>.

<sup>211</sup> Karlyn Bowman, “Leave Foreign Policy to the President,” *American Enterprise Institute* (2009), <http://www.aei.org/article/politics-and-public-opinion/polls/leave-foreign-policy-to-the-president/>.

<sup>212</sup> Karlyn Bowman, “The Public’s Pulse,” *American Enterprise Institute* (2009), <http://www.aei.org/article/politics-and-public-opinion/polls/the-publics-pulse/>.

have the long term goal of a regime change. Bolton argues that the US, and particularly the Obama administration, needs to stop using “sanctions” and “pro-democracy” rhetoric as an excuse for its inaction. Rather, it must take a decisive military plan against Iran in order to destroy their nuclear program.<sup>213</sup>

David Frum presents a contradictory argument to the one present by Bolton in his article “Don't Start Bombing Iran Just Yet.” Frum takes a pragmatic approach to addressing Iran stating that Iran was quick to reveal its current nuclear progress for two possible reasons: the program may not be going well or they might be trying to provoke a strike. Frum presents the possible damage that could result from an attack on Iran including a long, drawn out war, a spike in oil prices, and possible retaliation for Iranian allies. In addition, Frum argues that when assessing attacking Iran, Iranian public opinion must be taken into consideration because the ideal solution in Iran would be a regime change. However, this regime change can only be brought by the Iranian people and this is not likely to occur if the Iranian public opinion of the US is extremely negative. Frum believes that caution is necessary when discussing military options and that the best solution for Iran would be gasoline sanctions.<sup>214</sup>

Michael Rubin argues for keeping options on the table when dealing with Iran. In his article “Containment Won't Work,” Rubin explains that the United States does not have the capacity to contain Iran nor is deterrence an ideal solution. Instead, while acknowledging that it would best serve as a last resort, Rubin says that policy makers must keep a military attack on Iran as an option while bearing in mind the consequences

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<sup>213</sup> John R. Bolton, “The Case for Striking Iran Grows,” *American Enterprise Institute* (2010). <http://www.aei.org/article/foreign-and-defense-policy/regional/middle-east-and-north-africa/the-case-for-striking-iran-grows/>.

<sup>214</sup> David Frum, “Don't Start Bombing Iran Just Yet,” *American Enterprise Institute* (2010), <http://www.aei.org/article/foreign-and-defense-policy/regional/middle-east-and-north-africa/dont-start-bombing-iran-just-yet/>.

of a military attack.<sup>215</sup> Overall, Rubin is pessimistic that anyone will actually be able to stop Iran from developing a nuclear weapon for several reasons. First, diplomacy is not an option as the Iranians are unable to genuinely negotiate. Second, the US is most likely unwilling to launch a strike on Iran, and third, Israel does not have the ability militarily to attack Iran.<sup>216</sup>

### **5.4.3: 2011 to Present**

In February of 2011, AEI's Karlyn Bowman presented new polling information on the foreign policy of President Obama. According to a January 2011 poll on how President Obama is handling foreign policy conducted by CBS and the New York Times, President Obama has a 46% approval rating and a 32% disapproval rating. In a February 2011 Gallup poll on the same topic, Obama has a 48% approval rating and a 45% disapproval rating. When asked how the public feels about how Americans feel about promoting democracy abroad 19% thought it was "very important," and 26% felt it was "not important." Lastly, when polled on which is more important for Obama to focus on, 78% of Americans would rather he focus on domestic policy versus 11% that believe he should focus on foreign policy.<sup>217</sup> By November of 2011, Bowman analyzes some other polling figures taken from Gallup, CBS, Times Mirror, and Pew. With regards to United States involvement in foreign affairs versus domestic affairs, the 2011 poll found that 76% of Americans polled find that the US should concentrate more on national problems and strengthen the US. When asked about Iran, an overwhelming 55%

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<sup>215</sup> Michael Rubin, "Containment Won't Work," *American Enterprise Institute* (2010), <http://www.aei.org/article/foreign-and-defense-policy/regional/middle-east-and-north-africa/containment-wont-work/>.

<sup>216</sup> Michael Rubin, "How Sanctions Can Work with Iran," *American Enterprise Institute* (2010), <http://www.aei.org/article/foreign-and-defense-policy/regional/middle-east-and-north-africa/how-sanctions-can-work-with-iran/>.

<sup>217</sup> AEI Press. "Obama's Foreign Policy: What Do the Polls Tell Us?" *American Enterprise Institute* (2011). <http://www.aei.org/press/politics-and-public-opinion/polls/obamas-foreign-policy-what-do-the-polls-tell-us/>.

felt that the threat of Iran can be contained by diplomacy versus the 15% that believes Iran is a threat that must be dealt with now with military action.<sup>218</sup>

Research fellow Thomas Donnelley's article "War with Iran," states that the United States is already in a low-level war with Iran that is destined to escalate. Donnelley is critical of the policy "pundits" who continue to support covert action because this will only further intensify the situation. Donnelley calls for the policy makers and the Obama administration to face reality in that the US cannot handle a larger war because they are not prepared by any means—diplomatically, militarily, or domestically. The current administration should learn from the misjudgments of the past and not begin a war they cannot finish.<sup>219</sup>

In December of 2011, the American Enterprise Institute published a policy paper by fellow Thomas Donnelly, Vice President of Foreign and Defense Policy Studies Danielle Pletka, and scholar Maseh Zarif titled "Containing and Deterring a Nuclear Iran." In this research paper, the authors thoroughly examine and analyze the costs of containment and deterrence as foreign policy options towards Iran, options the authors say may be forced upon American decision makers. They argue that little in depth research has been conducted that truly measures the costs of containment and deterrence.<sup>220</sup> They created a containment policy for Iran based on the Cold War which addresses the following: the blocking of Iranian expansion in the region, highlighting the nature of the Iranian regime, transforming the regime in Tehran, and of course,

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<sup>218</sup> Karlyn Bowman, "What Do Americans Really Think about US Foreign Policy?," *American Enterprise Institute* (2011). <http://www.aei.org/article/politics-and-public-opinion/polls/what-do-americans-really-think-about-us-foreign-policy/>.

<sup>219</sup> Thomas Donnelly, "War with Iran," *American Enterprise Institute* (2011). <http://www.aei.org/article/foreign-and-defense-policy/regional/middle-east-and-north-africa/war-with-iran/>.

<sup>220</sup> Thomas Donnelly, Danielle Pletka, and Maseh Zarif, "Containing and Deterring a Nuclear Iran," *American Enterprise Institute* December 2011, i-57.

consistent diplomacy. In addition to establishing a concrete containment strategy, this concrete containment policy must also incorporate deterrence. However, adopting containment and deterrence has costs to US nuclear policies, calls for a significant force around Iran's perimeter, and will result in high diplomatic, strategic, and military costs—costs that most policy makers are ignoring.<sup>221</sup>

The discussion on sanctions continues into 2012 with an article by John Bolton titled “On Iran, Sanctions Not the Answer.” Bolton once again criticizes the Obama administration for its naïve approach towards diplomacy and sanctions in Iran. He also believes that Obama's secondary plan to sanction Iran is also “misguided” because the Iranian regime does not believe in the US's ability to deter. This leaves the US with only one option: military attack on Iran.<sup>222</sup>

Bolton also is vocal about the support the United States should give to Israel. In his article, “Israel is Not the Threat, Mr. Obama. Iran Is,” Bolton is extremely critical of Obama's weakening support of Israel and current distanced relationship between the long term allies. He explains that Iran continues to seek a weapon and continues to be an impending threat to the state of Israel. Rather than support its close ally, the Obama administration has gone as far as to leak information about possible Israeli attacks on Iran.<sup>223</sup> Bolton also believes that the ultimate goal of Iran is a complete nuclear Holocaust, and therefore, there are only two options: live with a nuclear Iran or militarily

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> John R. Bolton, “On Iran, Sanctions are Not the Answer,” *American Enterprise Institute* (2012), <http://www.aei.org/article/foreign-and-defense-policy/regional/middle-east-and-north-africa/on-iran-sanctions-are-not-the-answer/>.

<sup>223</sup> John R. Bolton, “Israel is Not the Threat, Mr. Obama. Iran is,” *American Enterprise Institute* (2012), <http://www.aei.org/article/foreign-and-defense-policy/regional/middle-east-and-north-africa/israel-is-not-the-threat-mr-obama-iran-is/>.

destroy its capabilities.<sup>224</sup> Therefore, it seems ridiculous that the US would ever stand in Israel's way, who may be willing to take the steps that the Obama are too afraid to take.

## **5.5: Collection Sample Four, Center for American Progress**

The newest of all the research institutions used in this case study, the Center for American Progress (CAP) is an independent, nonpartisan research institution which builds the progressive ideas and actions of innovators such as Theodor Roosevelt and Martin Luther King. Created in 2003 by John Podesta, the Center for American Progress “develop[s] new policy ideas, critique[s] the policy that stems from conservative values, [and challenges] the media to cover the issues that truly matter.”<sup>225</sup> The Center of American Progress contributes to the world of policy making by conducting research, hosting debates, and initiating dialogue between leaders and citizens in hopes of creating a more open and free society.<sup>226</sup>

### **5.5.1: Prior to 2009**

The collection sample for the Center for American Progress begins with a public opinion snapshot by CAP Senior Fellow Ruy Teixeira who examines the opinions of the American public based on recent polling information to that of policy experts. In this snapshot, Teixeira found that both experts and the American public agree that diplomacy is the proper course with Iran. According to the poll, 57% of Americans believe that the only way to contain Iran is thorough diplomacy whereas only 15% see military action as

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<sup>224</sup> John R. Bolton, “Showdown: Iran’s Plan for a Second Holocaust Must Be Stopped,” *Newsmax*, April 2012, 37-44.

<sup>225</sup> “About the Center for American Progress,” *Center for American Progress* (2012),

<http://www.americanprogress.org/aboutcap>.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*

an option and 20% do not see a threat posed by Iran. Containment and engagement seem to be both what the American public as well as policy experts suggest.<sup>227</sup>

With regards to policy experts' suggestions for engagement and containment, President of Ploughshares Fund Joseph Cirincione and Senior National Security Analyst Andrew Grotto published a policy paper titled "Contain and Engage: A New Strategy for Resolving the Nuclear Crisis with Iran." Prior to giving what the policy analysts see as their best option for dealing with a nuclear Iran, they provide some research into the background of the Iranian nuclear program as well as some insight into the Iranian regime. After stating the implications for US national security, the authors describe several policy options for Iran. These options include: maintaining the status quo, a regime change, air strikes against nuclear facilities, a grand bargain, and containing and engaging. A containment and engagement are meant to do several things including breaking the stalemate that currently exists, opening lines of communication, eventually create political change, as well as kick start security, political, and nonproliferation initiatives.<sup>228</sup>

In "Think Again: The Bush Legacy: Flailing and Failing the World Over," scholars Eric Alterman and George Zornick criticize the Bush administrations' foreign policy towards many countries in the world. With regards to the situation in Iran, the authors explain how Iran is a problem now more than ever as a result to Bush branding Iran an "axis-of-evil" and to the resulting isolationist foreign policy towards Iran. Rather

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<sup>227</sup> "Public Opinion Snapshot: Public, Experts Agree on Iran." *Center for American Progress* (2007), [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2007/03/opinion\\_iran.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2007/03/opinion_iran.html).

<sup>228</sup> Joseph Cirincione and Andrew Grotto, "Contain and Engage: A New Strategy for Resolving the Nuclear Crisis with Iran," *Center for American Progress*, March 2007, 1-46.

than offering diplomacy, President Bush uses brute force and strength—constantly waving the big American stick.<sup>229</sup>

In a public opinion snapshot by Ruy Teixeira conducted in mid-2008, the public was asked for its opinion on whether or not it would be acceptable if the President of the United States met with the President of Iran. They indicate that 59% of the American public polled believes it is a good idea to meet with Iran in comparison to the 39% who disagree. In addition, Americans were asked which approach towards Iran is best—military action or diplomacy and/or an economic approach, 73% favored diplomacy and/or an economic approach.<sup>230</sup>

In a report published by The Century Foundation titled “Democracy Promotion in the Middle East and the Obama Administration,” CAP scholar Brian Katulis addresses the possible hesitation of President Obama wanting to promote democracy in the Middle East due to the previous administration’s manipulation of democracy promotion. Katulis argues that abandoning promoting democracy would not only be detrimental for the United States, but that it would also contradict the core values of Obama’s campaign platform.<sup>231</sup> Katulis’ report analyzes the Middle East, assesses the previous foreign policy actions in the Middle East, and concludes with suggesting core priorities for promoting democracy in the Middle East. These core priorities are taking tangible steps to restoring U.S. credibility, increasing diplomatic efforts in order to promote national consensus in important countries and address conflict in the Middle East, developing an integrated approach to supporting democracy and government reform, increasing

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<sup>229</sup> Eric Alterman and George Zornick, “Think Again: The Bush Legacy: Flailing and Failing the World Over,” *Center for American Progress* (2008), [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/02/bush\\_legacy.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/02/bush_legacy.html)

<sup>230</sup> Ruy Teixeira, “Public Opinion Snapshot: Public Says It’s OK to Meet with Iran,” *Center of American Progress* (2008), [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/06/opinion\\_iran](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/06/opinion_iran).

<sup>231</sup> Brian Katulis, “Democracy Promotion in The Middle East And The Obama Administration,” *The Century Foundation*, 2008, 3-4.

positive incentives for democratic reform, and building a diversity of financial support for democracy promotion.<sup>232</sup>

### **5.5.2: 2009 through 2010**

The transition between the Bush administration and the Obama administration has been a point of interest for researchers. CAP Senior Fellow Larry Korb gives suggestion to President Obama with regards to Iran based on the behaviors of the previous administration. First, Korb argues that Obama must be aware of a few events that have shaped the Iranian opinion towards the United States. For example, the role of the CIA in the removal of Mohammed Mossadegh, Iran's only democratic leader, resulted in the harsh regime of the Shah. In addition, President Bush's labeling of Iran as an "Axis of Evil," in spite of Iran's condemnation of the attacks of 9/11 and its support to the United States during Afghanistan, resulted in bitterness. Lastly, in 2003, the Iranians extended a hand to the Bush administration with the goal of beginning direct negotiations to which the Bush administration never responded. These three events will make approaching Iran more difficult, but Korb argues that it is necessary in order to not only attempt to reconcile difference, but also to gain international support.<sup>233</sup>

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs Spencer P. Boyer and visiting scholar Rammy Salem, in their article "Obama's Perfect Pitch on Iran," argue that despite the criticism of Obama's policy by critics, the president is actually doing exactly what he should be doing. As a result of the corrupt elections in Iran in 2009, President Obama's response has be criticized by both American conservatives who accuse of him of being timid in responding to the Iranian

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid, 7-17.

<sup>233</sup> Larry Korb, "Obama's Approach to Iran, How Should He Proceed," *Center for American Progress* (2009), [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/02/korb\\_obama\\_iran.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/02/korb_obama_iran.html).

corruption, as well as the Iranian government which has excused President Obama of meddling. Luckily, according to the authors, neither accusation is correct nor is either accusation sticking. Rather, the president has found a clever way to focus on the extreme human rights violations rather than the political outcome of the election as a means to reinforce the United States' stance towards Iran which the authors believe is both pragmatic and should continue.<sup>234</sup>

Policy analyst Peter Juul also comments on the recent elections in Iran stating that the stance taken by the United States must remain firm despite the accusations being thrown at it. In his article, "The Iranian Conundrum," Juul explains how the United States is faced with the question of how well diplomacy is working as a strategy for the Obama administration in light of the Iranian corruption as well as the upcoming withdrawal from Iraq. The author also explains how the regime in Iran, now faced with a multitude of domestic problems, may attempt to point the blame at the United States or even shut the United States out. However, due to Iran's complex relationship with Iraq and the regional security issues involved, the Obama administration should not eliminate the possibility of talks with Iran, even if they seem to be going nowhere.<sup>235</sup>

Human rights violations in Iran continue to be a point of discussion for foreign policy analysts. In an article titled "Rebranding U.S. Policy Toward Iran," scholars at the Center for American Progress state that some Iranians fear that the United States prefers regional security to democracy, and the scholars argue that the time is ripe for the United States to live by example. In light of the gasoline sanctions passed on Iran by the US Senate which mainly will impact an already struggling civil society, the authors explain

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<sup>234</sup> Spencer P. Boyer and Rammy Salem, "Obama's Perfect Pitch on Iran," *Center for American Progress* (2009). [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/06/boyer\\_obama.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/06/boyer_obama.html).

<sup>235</sup> Peter Juul, "The Iranian Conundrum," *Center for American Progress* (2009), [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/07/iran\\_conundrum.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/07/iran_conundrum.html).

that the best foreign policy approach for the Obama administration is to remain focused on human rights efforts. The logic presented is two-fold. First, a focus on human rights is more transparent than a policy that attempt so to eliminate nuclear weapons. Second, by focusing on human rights and supporting civil society, the US may be able to “rebrand” its image to the Iranian people, which may be the exact push that is needed to seek change themselves.<sup>236</sup>

In an article titled “Thinking Ahead on Iran,” scholars Brian Katulis and Peter Juul explain the new round of sanctions imposed on Iran by the United States. The authors are unclear of the effectiveness of the sanctions as they seem to not have an impact on Iran’s nuclear program, but rather, on its people. Katulis and Juul argue for a continuation of Obama’s dual-track strategy of engagement and isolation with Tehran because it offers the right amount of pressure and engagement. Another option would be for the Obama administration to go beyond the sanctions. If it were to do so, the authors call for complete support from Congress on Obama’s policies in order to reduce the threat of a nuclear Iran.<sup>237</sup>

In November of 2010, the Center for American Progress put out a publication titled “The Power of the President: Recommendations to Advance Progressive Change,” in which many different scholars, fellows, and analysts from CAP offer suggestions to the president on many different issues and policies. With regard to foreign policy, and especially with regards to Iran, scholars suggest that President Obama focus on pursuing a dual-track policy on Iran with specific emphasis on human rights issues. They suggest the Obama administration continue to diplomatically engage Iran, even if Iran continues

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<sup>236</sup> “Rebranding U.S. Policy Toward Iran,” *Center for American Progress* (2010), [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/02/rebranding\\_iran.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/02/rebranding_iran.html).

<sup>237</sup> Brian Katulis and Peter Juul, “Thinking Ahead on Iran,” *Center for American Progress* (2010), [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/05/iran\\_sanctions.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/05/iran_sanctions.html).

to refuse the administrations overtures because this will raise international consensus on Iran's nuclear program. By remaining committed to diplomacy, continuing to highlight human rights abuses, cutting down on discussing the military option, and making media and anticensorship tools available to Iranian democracy activists, i.e. supporting civil society, the Obama administration can hope to bring about a level of change between the United States and Iran.<sup>238</sup>

### **5.5.3: 2011 to Present**

The last portion of the collection sample for the Center for American Progress begins with an article by Matthew Duss, Director of Middle East Progress at CAP, titled "Corralling Iran." In his argument Duss explains how the newly released report, United Nations experts believe that the UN sanctions passed in June of 2010 have proven to be "having a significant impact on Iran's ability to proceed with its nuclear program [because the new measures] are containing Iran's procurement of items related to prohibited nuclear and ballistic missile activity and thus slowing developing of these programs."<sup>239</sup> According to Duss, the success of the sanctions is yet another achievement in President Obama's engagement policy with Iran. While running for office in 2008, President Obama was willing to talk to Iran without any preconditions in attempts to affirm "tough, direct diplomacy with Iran." In addition, President Obama believed that even if sanctions were not to be successful, they would at least strengthen the US's ability to "form alliances to impose tough sanctions."<sup>240</sup> Duss argues that since Iran is working hard to evade these sanctions, it is essential that the Obama administration, now

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<sup>238</sup> Sarah Rosen Wartell, "The Power of the President: Recommendations to Advance Progressive Change," *Center for American Progress*, November 2010, 44-45.

<sup>239</sup> Matthew Duss, "Corralling Iran," *Center for American Progress* (2011), [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/05/corralling\\_iran.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/05/corralling_iran.html).

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*

more than ever, continues to work in multilateral venues to maintain and enforce the sanctions.<sup>241</sup>

In an article titled, “Diplomacy, Not Military Force Should Be Our Track with Iran,” Matthew Duss encourages policy makers to think twice before propagating the use of military force. In light of an assassination attempt on the Saudi Ambassador, many analysts were quick to recommend immediate military action. Duss refutes their recommendations by saying that due to President Obama’s diplomatic strategies, Iran is much weaker now than when he took office. The success of the international sanctions on Iran and the heightened awareness on human rights violations and resulting investigations have increased international pressure on Iran and weakened Iran’s economy. Duss recommends that the Obama administration continue with a diplomatic approach towards Iran because not only has it been successful, but also because based on the polling information available, the last thing Americans want is another war.<sup>242</sup>

Senior Vice President of National Security and International Policy Rudy deLeon and fellow Brian Katulis also support and encourage the current foreign policy approach of the Obama administration towards Iran. In their article, “Taking the Iranian Nuclear Threat Seriously,” the authors believe that the successful approach adopted by the Obama administration is grounded in three main components: “Unprecedented defense cooperation with regional allies that enhances their security and independence, an international coalition that holds Iran accountable for its actions, and smart, targeted economic sanctions.”<sup>243</sup> After explaining each component a little further, the authors

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<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> Matthew Duss, “Diplomacy, Not Military Force, Should Be Our Track with Iran,” *Center for American Progress* (2011), [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/10/iran\\_diplomacy](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/10/iran_diplomacy).

<sup>243</sup> Rudy deLeon and Brian Katulis, “Taking the Iranian Nuclear Threat Seriously.” *Center for American Progress* (2011), [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/12/nuclear\\_iran.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/12/nuclear_iran.html).

state that the challenge in the coming years for the United States is to strike a right balance between using the diplomatic tools it has. President Obama should continue to work diplomatically and multilaterally to maintain stability.<sup>244</sup>

The possibility of an Israeli attack on Iran continues to be a point of debate amongst scholars. Brian Katulis believes that the United States must discourage Israel from attacking Iran because diplomacy and sanctions are the best course of action currently. Even if Iran continues to acquire nuclear capability, intelligence estimates show that this is not likely to happen for at least another year. In addition, President Obama's current strategy of implementing sanctions and utilizing diplomacy is working, and any attack by a close ally of the United States would jeopardize this success. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the United States to urge Israel to tread cautiously and not to behave unilaterally.<sup>245</sup>

Even though members of the Israeli government may support a military strike on Iran, that does not mean that the Israeli citizens would agree. In a public opinion snapshot, Ruy Teixeira explains that when both Americans and Israelis were polled, there was not much support for an Israeli attack on Iran. In a poll conducted by the University of Maryland, only 19% of Israelis polled believe in a unilateral strike against Iran's nuclear facilities. In addition, 34% polled do not believe in a strike at all. A CNN/ORC poll yielded similar results with only 17% of Americans supporting a military strike and 60% supporting diplomatic and economic affairs.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Brian Katulis, "U.S. Should Discourage Israel From Striking Iran," *Center for American Progress* (2012), [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2012/03/atw\\_katulis\\_israel\\_iran.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2012/03/atw_katulis_israel_iran.html).

<sup>246</sup> Ruy Teixeira, "Public Opinion Snapshot: Americans and Israelis Urge Caution on Military Action Against Iran," *Center for American Progress* (2012), [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2012/03/snapshot\\_031212.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2012/03/snapshot_031212.html).

In April of 2012, the Center for American Progress published a policy paper written by Rudy deLeon, Brian Katulis, Peter Juul, Matt Duss, Ken Sofer titled “Strengthening America’s Options in Iran.” In light of the all the possible options the United States has towards Iran, the authors argue that before a decision can be made on what foreign policy strategy is best fit for dealing with Iran, the right questions must be asked. The authors then propose that the Obama administration, when attempting to find a due course of action, be willing to address these key factors:

What are the best estimates on the transition time from research and development to weapons production in Iran’s current nuclear program? What are the best estimates of Iran’s efforts to transition its research and development program into a weapons program with a delivery system suitable for operational use? What are the current consequences of sanctions and other measures against Iran’s nuclear program? What is the current impact of sanctions on Iran’s economy? What capacity exists to boost oil deliveries to countries now dependent on Iranian oil in the event Iranian oil shipments are not available? What is the status of commercial and military access to international waters in the Strait of Hormuz? Does Israel have the military capacity to go it alone in any military action against Iran? What links already exist between Iran and Middle East terrorist groups, and how might these groups react to an Israeli attack on Iran? What might the negotiations between Iran and P5+ 1 countries (the United States, Russia, China, England, France, and Germany) produce? What additional diplomacy is required?<sup>247</sup>

The authors provide deep and thorough analysis using facts and figures to answer these questions. Even though there is no easy answer for them, it is essential that these questions be addressed because in light of all the policy options available, it’s better to ask now than later.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> Rudy deLeon, Brian Katulis, Peter Juul, Matt Duss, and Ken Sofer, “Strengthening America’s Options in Iran,” *Center for American Progress*, April 2012, 3-4.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*

# CHAPTER SIX

## ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 6.1: Restating the Question

The research of this thesis is aimed to better understand the relationship between policy research and policy outputs, in particular, it attempted to work within existing frameworks to help link policy research and policy outputs by examining the role of think tanks as domestic factors of influence on foreign policy in the United States. In order to do so, this thesis asks the following questions: Can think tanks contribute to foreign policy decision making? If so, due to their expanding nature, can think tanks be seen as a domestic source of influence on United States foreign policy? Furthermore, due to the complexities and dual nature of foreign policy decision making, what revelations can be made about the relationship between think tanks and other sources of domestic influence?

In order to examine the relationship between research institutions and policy, a case study was created using executive orders issued by President Barack Obama and collection samples created from four policy research institutions. First, an analysis is given of what executive orders reveal about the foreign policy of Barack Obama. Second, similarities between the policy research/suggestions and actual policy decisions will be listed which will determine the extent of the contribution think tanks offer foreign policy decision makers. In addition, four charts are included which summarize the policy recommendations from each think tank. Third, some observations and conclusions about the dynamics of domestic influences on think tanks will be examined.

## **6.2: What Do Executive Orders Reveal About the Foreign Policy of President Barack Obama?**

Four executive orders, issued by President Barack Obama, were used as means to measure policy outputs for this thesis. The first executive order used, Executive Order 13553, was concerned with human rights violations in Iran citing a list of people as complicit in human rights abuses. The second and third executive orders used Executive Orders 13574 and 13590, respectively, further extend sanctions on Iran as well as add new sanctions that place even further restrictions on Iran. Finally, as of February 06, 2012, President Obama issued another executive order which blocks government property of the Government of Iran as well as blocks the Central Bank of Iran. Upon further examination, a few observations can be made regarding what policy outputs reveal about foreign policy in the United States. First, human rights are an important cornerstone of United States policy, and as such, they are significant to the foreign policy approaches taken by the United States. Second, as sanctions are a foreign policy tool used as a means of diplomacy, President Barack Obama is using a diplomatic approach towards Iran, which according to the research provided, is in line with the diplomatic approach on which he campaigned for president. Third, economic measures, while remaining a tool of diplomacy, when increased, can be used as a means of providing pressure. Fourth, as all of these executive orders build on a previously issued act or order, foreign policy should be seen as a continuation, bearing in mind that while the policies may vary from one administration to another, there are historical patterns that can be observed.

### **6.3: Similarities between Policy Research and Policy Outputs**

As direct impact is nearly impossible to calculate, this thesis measures influence of research institutions by examining the similarities between what is suggested by policy analysts and experts to that of the actions taken by President Obama vis-à-vis the four executive orders used. The collection samples from each think tank will be analyzed first with regards to similarities between the policy suggestions and the policy actions taken. This part of the analysis seeks to show if each think tank was able to predict changes and offer foreign policy options that meet this changes in policy. More importantly, what themes and/or policy suggestions arise more than others and how do these themes manifest as policy outputs, if at all? The observations presented in the previous section are important because they indicate which policies and strategies have been adopted by the Obama administration towards Iran. In order to establish a link between policy outputs and policy research, the analysis of the collection samples looks for the foreign policy approach taken by the Obama administration which has revealed itself to be diplomacy, and the different tools that fall under diplomacy such as sanctions, engagement, protection of human rights/upholding democratic ideals, to name a few. If similarities can be found between policy research and policy outputs, influence of think tanks on foreign policy decisions may be established.

#### **6.3.1: The Council on Foreign Relations**

The collection sample from the Council on Foreign Relations began in 2007 and continues up to present day. The collection sample provides much research on the different trends in foreign policy as well as provides many possible solutions for the

policy makers to utilize. Several themes and/or policy options dominate this collection sample, and can be grouped into two major categories: diplomacy and military force.

#### 6.3.1.1: Diplomacy

Many scholars, dating back to 2007 support diplomatic efforts as a policy towards Iran. Using the term “diplomacy” implies several policy options which include sanctions, engagement, and human rights advocacy/democracy promotion. Sanctions and diplomacy were presented as an option by Michael A. Levi who argued that sanctions and diplomacy—“stick and talks”—were the only way forward with Iran. Meagan O’Sullivan argues for sanctions, along with proper goals and incentives, as a diplomatic tool to be used towards Iran. O’Sullivan believes that even if they are not successful, they can at least aid to other diplomatic tools. Leslie Gelb also makes this argument for sanctions but takes it one step further arguing that in addition to sanctions, the US must use diplomacy to strengthen allies in the Gulf region which may weaken the Revolutionary Guard regime.

Many scholars in CFR argue that engagement is the best policy to be taken towards Iran. Ray Takeyh argues for the cessation of threats towards Iran and calls for an environment conducive for diplomacy. In an argument by both Takeyh and Kupchan, both scholars call on engaging through the Arab states. By building better relations with the Arab vis-à-vis the Gulf Cooperation Council, the authors believe the Iranian threat can be reduced. In a panel conducted by the Council on Foreign Relations specifically for policy options for Iran, scholars agree that diplomacy and soft power, rather than intimidation, are the best options for Iran.

Many CFR scholars argue for a reassessment of US strategy towards Iran. David Albright argues for negotiations with Iran and for the bringing in of other key players.

Leslie Gelb and Richard Haass also call for better relations, and both scholars find the diplomatic solution to lie within creating better relations with Iran as well as other non-democratic states.

Other strategies towards engagement have been provided by the CFR scholars including Madison Schramm, Suzanne Maloney, and Hossein Mousavian. Schramm asks the administration to engage Iran but to do so by pushing for Iranian cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Schramm also argues for more incentives to entice Iran rather than military action or increased economic sanctions. Maloney argues against increased sanctions and believes the United States need not work towards a regime change, but rather engagement. Mousavian argues that the door for engagement is closing, and like Maloney, believes that the only way to keep this door open is for the United States to claim that it does not actually seek a regime change in Iran.

Human rights and democracy promotion also fall under the category of diplomacy and were suggestions given by many scholars at the CFR as a way to proceed with Iran. In a publication by the American Jewish Committee which was hosted by CFR, Ari Friedman and Maxine Kaye point out systemic violations by the Government of Iran and call for international condemnation. Ali Ansari echoes this sentiment and believes that the West should not be afraid to speak up and be more upfront in confronting human rights abuses in Iran. In an interview with CFR, Rudi Bakhtiar highlights the excruciating human rights record in Iran and asks the outside world to place pressure on Iran and hold the government of Iran accountable for the violation of human rights and the violation of international treaties. Sarah Morgan and Andrew Apostolou take the human rights argument one step further by arguing highlighting

human rights abuses may be the key to neutralizing Iran. They argue that by exposing the serious human rights violations in Iran, the hypocrisy of the regime may be exposed and its legitimacy may be lost.

Similar to the argument for human rights is the argument for democracy promotion. Robert McMahon argues for true democracy promotion in Iran. He says the United States should draw a distinct line between regime change and democracy promotion, neither of which should involve any sort of military. Ray Takeyh also supports a foreign policy based on human rights and says the United States should highlight human rights abuses because as the longest standing democracy in the world, it has an obligation to place pressure on Iran.

#### 6.3.1.2: Military Force

The second major category for policy options is the use of military force towards Iran. Scholars at the Council on Foreign Relations are torn on the issue of military force as some seem to be in support of hard power as a military option while others do not. James Lindsay and Ray Takeyh explain that if Iran was to attain a nuclear weapon, red lines would need to be created. If these red lines are crossed, force may be used. Walter Russell Mead, while not advocating for a direct military strike, says it may be necessary and that all options should be considered. However, Mead does say to render caution when using inflammatory language and threats.

Several scholars at the CFR suggest a direct military strike on Iran. Matthew Kroenig argues that now is the best time for a military strike on Iran. He believes that the threat posed by Iran is imminent, and the only solution is to surgically remove Iranian nuclear facilities. Kroenig is arguing to attack now before it is too late—an argument that is echoed by Eric Edelman who believes attacking Iran now is a better option than

living with a nuclear Iran. Jamie Fly and Gary Schmitt argue for a military attack in order to remove the current regime.

There are also scholars, such as Alexandre Debs and Nuno Monteiro that believe military force should be the last option utilized by the United States. They attack the argument presented by Kroenig and say that the United States should learn to live with a nuclear Iran. Colin Kahl also opposes the argument present by Kroenig and says military force should always be a last option.

### **6.3.2: The Brookings Institution**

The collection sample from the Brookings Institution offers a variety of policy options as well which vary from engagement to deterrence and containment. For the most part, the policy suggestions can be grouped into two categories: diplomacy and deterrence/containment.

#### **6.3.2.1: Diplomacy**

An overwhelming amount of scholars at Brookings are in support of some sort of diplomatic action towards Iran. Engagement is one diplomatic tool that is suggested by many scholars. Suzanne Maloney argues that the US must accept the regime in Iran and not attempt to change it. Rather, the US needs to understand that by meddling in Iran an attempting to change the regime, the United States will only create more loathing from Tehran. Her solution lies in diplomatic engagement with Iran, which both Maloney as well as Ray Takeyh argue should be the thrust of US foreign policy. In a lecture given to different policy makers in Washington, Maloney gives five diplomatic ways forward with Iran which include only acknowledging a diplomatic way forward, utilizing diplomatic engagement, acknowledging modest pressure will not result in any changes, forming an international coalition to exert external pressure on Iran, and utilizing

containment, but only as a secondary option. Even as tensions continue to escalate between the United States and Iran in 2011, Maloney continues to suggest engagement as a means to lower tensions.

Many scholars are opposed to increased economic sanctions and would rather rely simply on engagement. Maloney and Takeyh believe sanctions alone will not curb Iran's nuclear ambition. This is also argued by Djavad Salehi-Isfahani who believes sanctions will only harm the lower class and not the actual regime. Rather, Salehi-Isfahani argues that what is needed is engagement with positive inducements. Vali Nasr goes as far as to say that increasing sanctions will actually prove to be more dangerous as they place pressure on the Iranian regime which may eventually lead to war. Finally, Maloney argues that increased sanctions will only result in more defensive posture from an already paranoid Tehran. She, once again, argues for diplomacy and multilateral cooperation in addition to removal of threats.

Human rights and democracy promotion are also given as possible policy options for the United States to take towards Iran. Suzanne Maloney argues that Iranian President Mahmood Ahmadinejad's regime is oppressive and has detrimental effects on the Iranian citizens. Maloney believes that the United States has been greatly misinformed about Iran and what is needed is a new strategy for Iran. In addition, Maloney states that while the oppressive Iranian regime should be condemned, the United States should not attempt to change the regime, but rather, advocate democracy promotion. The Iranian people want basic human rights and it is this desire that will spark protests and bring change to Iran. The intensification of sanctions should be a last resort and only occur if engagement fails because Maloney does not believe that economic pressure alone will result in a shift in Iranian policy. Martin Indyk and

Kenneth Pollack also make an argument against sanctions saying that increasing sanctions will not stop Iran's uranium enrichment program. In addition, they are critical of the Obama administration stating that it is refusing to criticize Iran's human rights abuses in hopes of engagement but this has not been successful.

#### 6.3.2.2: Deterrence/Containment

Other than diplomacy, there has been one option presented by Brookings Institution scholars which is deterrence and containment. Michael O'Hanlon and Bruce Riedel argue that military should not be the only option considered with Iran. Rather, they suggest a sanctions policy, which if constructed properly, may evolve into a containment strategy. By using the Cold War as a model, the authors say that United States may once again be able to deter and contain a nuclear capable country.

#### **6.3.3: The American Enterprise Institute**

The collection sample from the American Enterprise Institute also varies in policy options. Due to their conservative orientation, some of the suggestions offered by policy scholars echo that of the Republican Party. The policy options can be grouped into three major categories: diplomacy, military force, and deterrence/containment.

##### 6.3.3.1: Diplomacy

The diplomatic solutions offered by AEI scholars may be smaller in number, but they do exist. One diplomatic option is given by Reuel Marc Gerech who suggests that by highlighting the human rights abuses of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, the crimes of Iran will be made public. He hopes that by highlighting these crimes, the United States can focus on Iran's illegitimacy which may help prevent the Iranians from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

Sanctions are another diplomatic policy option offered by AEI scholar David Frum. Frum argues that military actions should not be taken by Iran, but rather, the United States should take a pragmatic approach towards Iran nuclear progress. He pushes for gasoline sanctions as the best policy solution for the US to take towards Iran.

#### 6.3.3.2: Military Force/Hard Power

The majority of the policy options from this collection sample rely heavily on the use of military force and/or hard power. In argument present by Reuel Marc Gerecht, a more firm, hard approach towards Iran is suggested rather than the diplomatic, soft approach previously utilized. Joshua Muravchik is concerned about Iran's growing power and believes that policy tools should be realistic. Therefore, he suggests destroying Iran's nuclear program by launching a pre-emptive military strike. Michael Rubin is also suspicious of Iran's nuclear ambitions and warns the US to not trust the Iranian regime. He believes diplomacy, without actual military force, is useless. He criticizes the diplomatic surge put forth by the Democrats and calls for an attack on Iran.

John Bolton is also critical of the democrats, and particularly the Obama Administration, for their inaction. He believes that using sanctions and pro-democracy rhetoric is an easy way out from making hard decisions towards Iran. In addition, he calls Obama naïve and claims sanctions and diplomacy are not working as a strategy towards Iran. He believes the United States needs a decisive military plan which can destroy Iran's nuclear capabilities.

Michael Rubin argues that containment will not be a sufficient strategy towards Iran as he is pessimistic that it will actually be able to deter a nuclear Iran. He warns of the consequences of military actions towards Iran, but remains confident that it should always be an option. Thomas Donnelley believes the United States is already in a low-

level war with Iran and asks the Obama administration to be aware of the severity of situation and not to enter a war they may not be able or willing to finish.

#### 6.3.3.3: Deterrence and Containment

In a policy paper published by Thomas Donnelley, Danielle Pletka, and Maseh Zarif, AEI scholars present the costs of containing and deterring nuclear Iran. The authors argue that this has been a forced policy option as no other option seems currently feasible. The authors believe that the problem with containment and deterrence is that there hasn't been much thorough research conducted on what it will cost the United States diplomatically, strategically, and militarily. They propose a containment and deterrence policy option based on the Cold War which will block Iranian expansion in the region, highlight the nature of the regime, and eventually diplomatically transform the regime.

#### **6.3.4: The Center for American Progress**

The collection sample from the Center for American Progress, a progressive think tank, offers a variety of policy options that vary slightly from the other collection samples. There are several themes which appear from this collection sample. They can be grouped into the following major categories: Diplomacy and Containment and Engagement.

##### 6.3.4.1: Diplomacy

Once again, many policy options fall under the category of diplomacy. In the case of CAP, the argument for diplomacy begins with an article by Eric Alterman and George Zornick who criticize President George Bush's foreign policy towards Iran claiming that an isolationist strategy will not result in progress. What is needed is a diplomatic strategy towards Iran, not a big US stick. Larry Korb also comments on the

failures of the Bush administration as a challenge to the Obama administration. He explains that the actions of the previous administration will make approach Iran difficult, but that it must be done in order to reconcile differences and gain international support. Peter Juul is also a supporter of diplomacy and argues for continued talks despite the seeming standstill. Matthew Duss is also a supporter for diplomatic strategies and argues that the strategies used by the Obama administration are working. He argues for continued sanctions, continued highlighted human rights abuses, and working in multilateral venues. Lastly, Rudy deLeon and Brian Katulis argue that President Obama is taking the Iranian threat seriously and that he should continue with the diplomatic and multilateral sanctions because they are in fact working.

Democracy promotion and protection of human rights both fall under diplomacy as well. Scholars, such as Brian Katulis, believe that Obama must make another attempt at democracy promotion in order to restore US credibility. He also argues for increased diplomatic efforts in addition to an integrated approach to support democracy. Katulis also calls for government reform in addition to democracy promotion to ensure a secure Middle East.

Spencer Boyer and Rammy Salem argue that President Obama should continue to focus on the extreme human rights violations in Iran as the key aspect of his foreign policy. In a publication by the Center for American Progress, many CAP scholars address the issue of human rights and believe focusing on human rights violations in Iran will be a more transparent policy than one which attempts to eliminate nuclear weapons. This publication also suggests that the US support Iranian civil society so to encourage reform and change from within the country. In addition, scholars at CAP suggest a dual

track policy with emphasis on human rights issues as well as continued engagement and diplomatic efforts.

#### 6.3.4.2: Containment and Engagement

Another policy option/theme that has emerged from the CAP collection sample is containment and engagement. In an article presented by Joseph Cirincione and Andrew Grotto, many policy options are suggested in order to deal with nuclear Iran including maintaining status quo, regime change, to name a few. The authors believe that containment and engagement are the best strategy to be used towards Iran because they will help break the stalemate and open lines of communication. In a similar argument by Brian Katulis and Peter Juul, a continuation for the dual-track strategy of President Obama is recommended. This dual-track strategy, which is a combination of engagement and isolation, is recommended because it offers the right amount of pressure and engagement.

**TABLE ONE**  
Council on Foreign Relations  
Policy Recommendations

★ Diplomacy	■ Sanctions	<b>ICON KEY</b>
♥ Human Rights/Democracy Promotion		
▲ Engagement	◆ Containment	
⊙ Military Force	⊘ No Military Force	
● Concern for Israel	◀ Against Sanctions	

<b>Executive Order 13553</b> , "Designating Iranian Officials Responsible for or Complicit in Serious Human Rights Violations," <b>September 29, 2010</b>	<b>Executive Order 13574</b> , "Concerning Further Sanctions On Iran," <b>May 23, 2011</b>	<b>Executive Order 13590</b> , "Iran Sanctions," <b>November 21, 2011</b>	<b>Executive Order</b> , "Blocking Property of the Government of Iran and Iranian Financial Institutions," <b>February 6, 2012</b>
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	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) Collection Sample One</b>	Levi, "Got the Sticks. Now the Talks," March 30, 2007 ★ ■	Bruno, "Washington's Diplomatic Thaw," January 7, 2008, ★ ▲	Haass, "A Nuclear Iran: Live or Let Live," January 2009, ★	Ansari, "Time to Speak Out on Iran," January 13, 2010, ♥	Schramm, "Iran's Nuclear Problem- Deal with It," July 2, 2011, ★ ◆	Maloney, "Obama's Counterproductive New Sanctions," January 5, 2012 ▲
	Fridman and Kaye, "Human Rights in Iran," March 2007, ♥	Kupchan and Takeyh, "Iran Just Won't Stay Isolated," March 3, 2008, ▲	McMahon, "A Brave New World on Democracy Promotion," January 2009, ♥	Takeyh, "From Conciliation to Coercion," February 11, 2010, ♥	Morgan and Apostolou, "Why Obama Should Highlight Iran's Human Rights Abuses," November 7, 2011, ♥	Debs and Monteiro, "The Flawed Logic of Striking Iran," January 17, 2012, ⊘
	Beehner, "Iranian Civil Society and the Role of US Foreign Policy," July 16, 2007 ♥	Sick, "Will Deal With Iran Be Worked Out?," July 21, 2008, ●	Albright, "Iran Many Achieve Nuclear Capability...," February 20, 2009, ▲	Bakhtiar, "Iran's 'Excruciating' Human Rights Record," February 19, 2010, ♥	Edelman, "Why Obama Should Take Out Iran's Nuclear Program," November 9, 2011, ⊙	Fly and Schmitt, "The Case for Regime Change in Iran," January 17, 2012, ⊘
	Takeyh, "Try Jawboning Iran, Not Chest-Thumping," May 23, 2007 ★	CFR Symposium, "Iran and Policy Options for Next Admin.," September 5-7, 2008, ★ ▲	Gerson and Hertog, "Brake Lights on Iran...," March 18, 2009 ★	Lindsay and Takeyh, "The Force Needed to Contain Iran," February 21, 2010, ⊙	Gelb, "The Wrong Way on Iran," February 21, 2010, ★	Kroenig, "Time to Attack Iran," February 2012, ⊙
			Gelb, "It's Time to 'Go to Strength' on Foreign Policy," March 21, 2009, ★	Gelb, "The Wrong Way on Iran," February 21, 2010, ★	Mead, "Thinking the Unthinkable...," March 10, 2010, ★ ▲	Kahl, "Not the Time to Attack Iran," March 2012, ⊘
			Haass, "Return of American Realism," May 3, 2009 ▲		O'Sullivan, "The Limits of New Iran Sanctions," July 8, 2010, ■	
			Bruno and McMahon, "Treading Carefully on Iran," June 24, 2009, ▲			
			Zenko, "Israel Has Iran in its Sights," August 30, 2009, ●			

**TABLE TWO**  
Brookings Institution  
Policy Recommendations

**ICON KEY**

- ★ Diplomacy
- ♥ Human Rights/Democracy Promotion
- ▲ Engagement
- Military Force
- Concern for Israel
- Sanctions
- ◆ Containment
- ⊘ No Military Force
- ☾ Against Sanctions

<b>Executive Order 13553,</b> "Designating Iranian Officials Responsible for or Complicit in Serious Human Rights Violations," <b>September 29, 2010</b>	<b>Executive Order 13574,</b> "Concerning Further Sanctions On Iran," <b>May 23, 2011</b>	<b>Executive Order 13590,</b> "Iran Sanctions," <b>November 21, 2011</b>	<b>Executive Order,</b> "Blocking Property of the Government of Iran and Iranian Financial Institutions," <b>February 6, 2012</b>
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	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Brookings Institution Collection Sample Two	Maloney, "Fear and Loathing in Tehran," September 2007, ★  Maloney and Takeyh, "Engage Iran," Fall 2007, ▲  Maloney, "Iran: Reality, Options, and Consequences," November 7, 2007, ★ ▲ ◆	Maloney, "Advancing Religious Freedom and Human Rights in Iran," February 21, 2008, ♥  Maloney, "Diplomatic Strategies for Dealing with Iran," Fall 2008, ★ ▲	Maloney, "Misreading Tehran," June 26, 2009, ♥  Maloney, "Iran: Recent Developments and Implications for US Policy," June 2009, ★ ▲ ■  Salehi-Isfahani, "Iran Sanctions: Who Really Wins?," September 30, 2009 ♥ ▲	Indyk and Pollack, "The Obama Administration : Facing Challenges in the Middle East," January 2010, ♥ ▲  O'Hanlon and Riedel, "Don't Even Think About Bombing Iran," February 28, 2010 ⊘ ■ ◆	Maloney, "Progress of the Obama Administration's Policy Towards Iran," January 15, 2011, ★ ▲ ○  Riedel, "Will Israel Really Strike Iran?," January 12, 2011 ●  Nasr, "Dangerous Mix: Iranian Oil and US Sanctions," December 29, 2011 ☾	Kalb, "The United States and Iran: Heading Towards a Dangerous Confrontation," January 18, 2012, ○  Telhami, "Do Israelis Really Support a Strike on Iran?," February 29, 2012 ●  Maloney, "How To Contain a Nuclear Iran," March 5, 2012, ★ ▲ ●

**TABLE THREE**  
American Enterprise Institute  
Policy Recommendations

**ICON KEY**

- ★ Diplomacy
- Sanctions
- ♥ Human Rights/Democracy Promotion
- ▲ Engagement
- ◆ Containment
- Military Force
- ⊘ No Military Force
- Concern for Israel
- ☾ Against Sanctions

<b>Executive Order 13553,</b> "Designating Iranian Officials Responsible for or Complicit in Serious Human Rights Violations," <b>September 29, 2010</b>	<b>Executive Order 13574,</b> "Concerning Further Sanctions On Iran," <b>May 23, 2011</b>	<b>Executive Order 13590,</b> "Iran Sanctions," <b>November 21, 2011</b>	<b>Executive Order,</b> "Blocking Property of the Government of Iran and Iranian Financial Institutions," <b>February 6, 2012</b>
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	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>American Enterprise Institute (AEI) Collection Sample Three</b>	<p>Gerecht, "US Must Be Firm with Iran," August 3, 2007, ○</p> <p>Muravchik, "Iranian Bomb 'Intolerable,'" November 20, 2007, ○</p> <p>Rubin, "Iran's Nuke News Shows Danger of Trusting This Regime," December 5, 2007, ★ ○</p>	<p>Rubin, "Rose Colored Foreign Policy," April 14, 2008, ○</p> <p>Frum, "America's Ally in the Middle East," May 3, 2008, ●</p> <p>Gerecht, "Countering Iran," May 19, 2008, ♥ ●</p>	<p>Bolton, "Obama Continues Bush's 2<sup>nd</sup> Term Badly," June 10, 2009, ○</p> <p>Bolton, "What If Israel Strikes Iran?," June 11, 2009, ●</p> <p>Barone, "Thoughts on Obama and Iran," June 18, 2009, ○</p> <p>Bolton, "Sanctions Won't Work Against Iran," August 1, 2009, ☾ ●</p> <p>Bowman, "Leave FP to the President" and "The Public's Pulse," July 6, 2009 ★</p>	<p>Bolton, "The Case for Striking Iran Grows," February 11, 2010, ☾ ○</p> <p>Frum, "Don't Start Bombing Iran Just Yet," February 13, 2010, ⊘ ♥ ■</p> <p>Rubin, "Containment Won't Work," June 11, 2010, ○</p>	<p>Bowman, "Obama's FP: What Do the Polls Tell Us?," February 22, 2011 ♥</p> <p>Bowman, "What Do Americans Really Think About US FP?," November 18, 2011, ★</p> <p>Donnelley, "War with Iran," November 29, 2011 ⊘</p> <p>Donnelley, Pletka, and Zarif, "Containing and Deterring a Nuclear Iran," December 2011 ◆</p>	<p>Bolton, "On Iran, Sanctions Not the Answer," January 18, 2012, ☾ ○</p> <p>Bolton, "Israel is Not the Threat, Mr. Obama. Iran Is," April 3, 2012, ● ○</p> <p>Bolton, "Showdown: Iran's Plan for a Second Holocaust Must Be Stopped," April 2012, ● ○</p>

**TABLE FOUR**  
Center for American Progress  
Policy Recommendations

**ICON KEY**

- ★ Diplomacy
- Sanctions
- ♥ Human Rights/Democracy Promotion
- ▲ Engagement
- ◆ Containment
- ⊖ Military Force
- ⊕ No Military Force
- Concern for Israel
- ☾ Against Sanctions

**Executive Order 13553**,  
“Designating Iranian  
Officials Responsible for or  
Complicit in Serious Human  
Rights Violations,”  
**September 29, 2010**

**Executive Order 13574**,  
“Concerning Further  
Sanctions On Iran,”  
**May 23, 2011**

**Executive Order 13590**,  
“Iran Sanctions,”  
**November 21, 2011**

**Executive Order**,  
“Blocking Property of the  
Government of Iran and  
Iranian Financial  
Institutions,”  
**February 6, 2012**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Center for American Progress (CAP) Collection Sample Four</b>	<p>Teixeira, “Public Opinion Snapshot: Public, Experts Agree on Iran,” March 9, 2007, ★</p> <p>Cirincione and Grotto, “Contain and Engage: A New Strategy for Resolving the Nuclear Crisis with Iran,” March 2007, ◆ ▲ ★</p>	<p>Alterman and Zornick, “Think Again: The Bush Legacy: Flailing and Failing the World Over,” February 21, 2008, ★ ⊖</p> <p>Teixeira, “Public Opinion Snapshot: Public Says It’s OK to Meet with Iran,” June 6, 2008, ★</p> <p>Katulis, “Democracy Promotion in the Middle East and the Obama Administration,” 2008, ★ ♥</p>	<p>Korb, “Obama’s Approach to Iran, How Should He Proceed,” February 9, 2009, ★ ▲</p> <p>Boyer and Salem, “Obama’s Perfect Pitch on Iran,” June 29, 2009, ♥</p> <p>Juul, “The Iranian Conundrum,” July 17, 2009, ★ ▲</p>	<p>CAP Scholars, “Rebranding US Policy Towards Iran,” February 3, 2010, ♥</p> <p>Katulis and Juul, “Thinking Ahead on Iran,” May 19, 2010, ▲ ■</p> <p>CAP Scholars, “The Power of the President: Recommendations to Advance Progressive Change,” November 2010, ♥ ★ ▲</p>	<p>Duss, “Corralling Iran,” May 16, 2011, ■ ▲</p> <p>Duss, “Diplomacy, Not Military Force Should Be Our Track with Iran,” October 20, 2011, ★ ♥ ⊖</p> <p>deLeon and Katulis, “Taking the Iranian Nuclear Threat Seriously,” December 15, 2011, ■ ★</p>	<p>Katulis, “US Should Discourage Israel from Striking Iran,” March 5, 2012, ★ ■</p> <p>Teixeira, “Public Opinion Snapshot: Americans and Israelis Urge Caution on Military Action Against Iran,” March 12, 2012, ●</p> <p>CAP Scholars, “Strengthening America’s Options in Iran,” April 2012, No Policy Suggestions Given, Questions Asked</p>

**TABLE FIVE**  
Combination of Four Think Tanks  
Policy Recommendations

**ICON KEY**

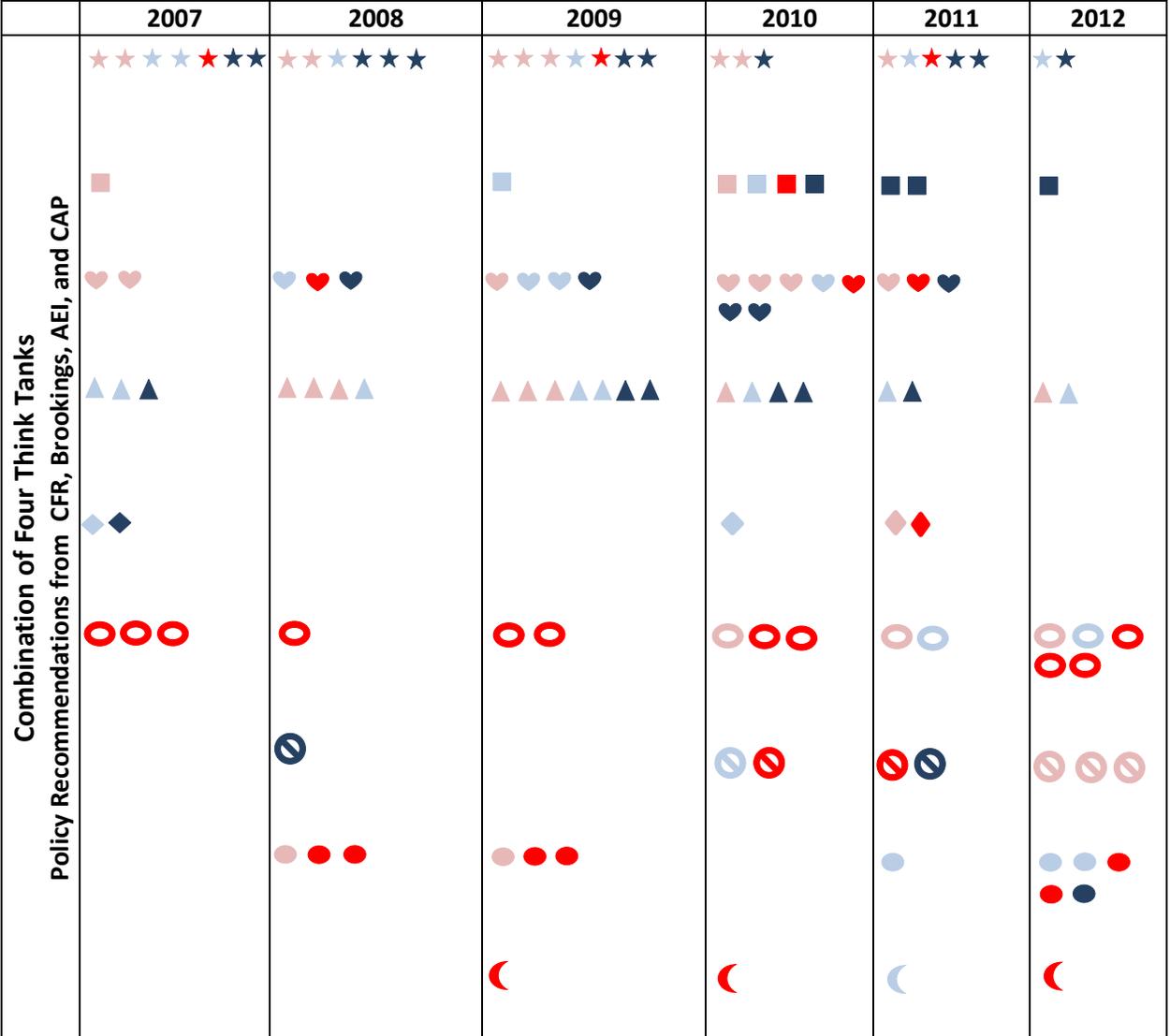
- ★ Diplomacy
- ♥ Human Rights/Democracy Promotion
- ▲ Engagement
- Military Force
- Concern for Israel
- Sanctions
- ◆ Containment
- ⊘ No Military Force
- ☾ Against Sanctions

**Executive Order 13553,**  
"Designating Iranian  
Officials Responsible for or  
Complicit in Serious Human  
Rights Violations,"  
**September 29, 2010**

**Executive Order 13574,**  
"Concerning Further  
Sanctions On Iran,"  
**May 23, 2011**

**Executive Order 13590,**  
"Iran Sanctions,"  
**November 21, 2011**

**Executive Order,**  
"Blocking Property of the  
Government of Iran and  
Iranian Financial  
Institutions,"  
**February 6, 2012**



**COLOR KEY FOR THINK TANKS**

- Council on Foreign Relations, Center-Right
- American Enterprise Institute, Right
- Brookings, Center-Left
- Center for American Progress, Left

## **6.4: What Do These Similarities Mean?**

When examining the relationship between think tanks and policy outputs, influence is very difficult to calculate, especially by any quantitative means. For this reason, this thesis defines influence by establishing the similarities between policy research and policy outputs. Based on the definition, several conclusions can be drawn from the case study presented.

First, based on the nature of the policy suggestions, especially prior to an executive order, it can be concluded that policy experts are able to predict the changing course of foreign policy. As was established by the collection samples beginning prior to the Obama administration and leading up to present day, shifts occur that change the dynamic of the relationship between the United States and Iran. For this reason, new policy options are needed, and it is through these collection samples that these shifts can be detected. For example, the exit of the Bush administration and the entrance of the Obama administration resulted in many new policy options. This is mostly likely due to situational factors as well as the different foreign policy agendas and political affiliation of each president. As such, the collection samples were able to offer suggestions to President Obama based on President Bush's record as well as President Obama's beliefs.

Second, there are similarities in the policy suggestions offered by policy scholars and the policy outputs of President Obama vis-à-vis the executive orders issued. In every collection sample analyzed, think tank scholars recommend diplomacy, and particularly, a focus on human rights violations. As Executive Order 13553 indicates, President Obama uses human rights violations in order to designate officials responsible as well as

hold them accountable. A link can be created here between policy research and policy outputs.

In addition to human rights, the case for sanctions, as a diplomatic tool, can also be highlighted as a similarity. For example, several scholars from the Council on Foreign Relations argue for sanctions in addition to diplomacy as the best policies to be used towards Iran. This is also echoed by scholars at Brookings who believe that sanctions, if properly utilized, can be turned into other policy strategies. This sentiment is echoed by scholars at the American Enterprise Institute as well as the Center for American Progress where the continuation of sanctions is encouraged. This policy suggestion manifests itself in Executive Orders 13547, Executive Order 13590, and finally in an executive order issued in February 2012. These increased sanctions indicated that the Obama administration was set on increase pressure on Tehran, but doing so in a diplomatic manner, linking once again policy research with policy outputs. It can be argued that these similarities between the collection samples and the policy outputs do not actually indicate influence. However, this thesis attempts to create a link and help close the gap between policy research and policy outputs. As such, the similarities between the research provided and the policy actions taken cannot be ignored as they do indicate some level of impact.

## **6.5: What Other Revelations Can Be Made About Think Tanks?**

In addition to having influence on policy makers, several revelations can be made from the collection samples taken from the think tanks based on policy suggestions. Certain conclusions can be drawn about the variety of domestic influences that impact think tanks themselves based on the themes that can be found within each think tank.

These will help us better understand the most influential domestic factor on foreign policy.

### **6.5.1: United States' Relationship with Israel**

Based on the policy suggestions collected from the four think tanks, the US's relationship with Israel seems to be a consistent concern for research policy scholars. One of the suggestions that appears often in the Council on Foreign Relations is protection of the state of Israel. The CFR scholars, such as Gary Sick, emphasize the relationship with Israel and believe that Israelis actions could lead the United States into conflict. Michael Zenko expresses the likelihood of an Israeli attack on Iran, with or without US support.

The Brookings Institution also values the US's relationship with Israel. In an article by Bruce Riedel, the relationship between Israel and Iran is analyzed, and Riedel believes that the Israel is likely to strike Iran. If that be the case, Riedel urges the United States to quietly warn Israel that it would be in the interest of anyone to strike Iran. What's worth mentioning here is that the interests of both the United States and Israel are seemingly identical. Suzanne Maloney, while also acknowledging the special relationship between the United States and Israel, also asks for American decision makers to differentiate between Israel's legitimate fears and its empty threats. She believes the US should not abandon Israel, but rather, it should urge Israel not to use inflammatory language which could only heighten tensions.

Perhaps the most adamant support of Israel can be found in the policy suggestions from the American Enterprise Institute. David Frum argues that Israel and the United States are natural allies. Israel represents friendship to the United States in an area like the Middle East where everyone is an enemy. Frum argues that it is only logical

that their interests be similar. John Bolton is worried about the increasing distance between the Obama administration and Israel saying that it puts Israel at further risk. Bolton calls for a strengthening of this relationship because Israel is in grave danger. Furthermore, Bolton argues that Israel may have the courage to do what the United States is not willing to do—attack Iran. Bolton believes that the United States must always stand by Israel, as they are long term allies, and that the United States should not stand in Israel’s way.

Scholars at the Center for American Progress also emphasize the importance of the actions of Israel. Brian Katulis argues sanctions and diplomacy, the main components of President Obama’s foreign policy strategy, are working. He urges president Obama to discourage Israel from attacking Iran. Katulis argues that an attack by an ally to the US such as Israel would greatly jeopardize the current success of diplomatic efforts.

### **6.5.2: American Opinion/Polling**

The second theme that emerges from the collection samples is the importance of American opinion. In order to gauge American opinion, think tanks conduct opinion polls which can be found in each one of the collection samples. In an article written by Richard Haass for the Council on Foreign Relations, the opinion of the American voters is important in order to form policy suggestions. When polled, it was discovered that domestic issues take precedent to foreign ones. In addition, when polled about Iran, the majority of Americans did not find Iran to be a threat.

Polling is also significant to the research conducted by Brookings. In a poll conducted in 2012, Shibley Telhami asked Israelis if they would be willing to attack Iran without the support of the United States and it was discovered that only 19% of Israelis

polled would be willing to attack Iran without the support of the United States. It was also found that 32% of Israelis polled would not support an attack on Iran at all.

Public opinion also seems to be an important aspect to creating foreign policy suggestions at the American Enterprise Institute. In a poll conducted in July of 2009, President Obama had high approval ratings, especially with regards to foreign policy and Iran. However, since domestic issues rank higher on what is important to Americans, it is advised that President Obama be more assertive in discussions on foreign policy. In polls conducted in 2011, President Obama continues to have a high approval rating. When asked about the threat Americans felt from Iran, 55% of Americans polled felt that the Iranian threat can be dealt with diplomatically, whereas only 15% felt that a military response would be necessary.

The Center for American Progress can be said to rely heavily on polling information when formulating policy strategies. The collection sample for the Center for American Progress begins with some polling information on the proper course to take with Iran. An overwhelming 57% of Americans polled believe that diplomacy is the best course forward with Iran. In addition, 59% of Americans believe it is a good idea to meet with Iran in comparison to the 39% of Americans who disagree. As the relationship with Israel is also of importance to policy makers, a poll was conducted which discovered that 34% of Israelis do not believe in an attack on Iran. In addition, 60% of Americans polled believed in a diplomatic and economic solution with Iran.

### **6.5.3: Criticism of the Obama Administration**

Lastly, criticism of the Obama administration seems to be a theme which reoccurs in the recommendations of the scholars at American Enterprise Institute. Scholars at AEI are critical of the Obama administration's leadership capabilities.

Michael Barone condemns the Obama administration saying it is willing to mollify the evil regime in Iran. Barone believes regime change is only possible in Iran if the regime is condemned but believes this will never happen due to President Obama's policy of appeasement with Iran. John Bolton also condemns the Obama administrations naïve policies towards Iran, stating that sanctions and diplomacy will not work in Iran. Rather, the Obama administration is too cowardly to making the difficult decisions towards Iran.

### **6.6: What Can Be Understood from These Revelations?**

Several conclusions can now be drawn based on the revelations that can be found within think tanks. First, as Israel and American opinion seem to be important aspect in formulating policy decisions, it can be inferred that these domestic factors of influence are reflected within think tanks. During the literature review portion of this thesis, many domestic factors of influence were discussed. These domestic factors were than linked back to think tanks as to show that think tanks do in fact reflect the other domestic factors of influence on US foreign policy. What was discussed in the literature review proved itself to be true based on the collection samples. Several domestic factors of influence such as American opinion, Democratic ideals, the role of advisers, and interest groups proved to be discussed and reflected within the think tanks.

Another factor of influence worth discussing is partisanship within the think tanks. While the Council on Foreign Relations and the Brookings Institution are more moderate, the American Enterprise Institute is clearly conservative in orientation. This effects the policy suggestions that are put forth by scholars. For example, scholars from AEI are quick to criticize the decisions made by the Obama administration calling them naïve and weak in comparison to the Bush administration. The reverse is true with the

Center for American Progress. A progressive think tank, the policy suggestions from CAP tend to support the current administration and condemn the Bush administration. In addition, the policy recommendations will vary from each think tank based on their partisanship. It is not surprising that the American Enterprise Institute would be an advocate for military action, whereas the Center for American Progress commends the continued diplomatic efforts of the Obama administration.

It can be concluded that think tanks not only influence policy makers by recommending policy options, but they are also an optimal domestic factor of influence to study. Many domestic influences found within the second level of analysis can be said to have influence on policy makers. Think tanks are unique in that they bridge these different domestic factors. Within a think tank, one can find bureaucratic constraints, the input of Congress, democratic ideals, public opinion research, and the role of interest groups. It is these influences that make studying think tanks fascinating because not only are think tanks influencing policy makers, but they are also serving as a proxy for other domestic influences, making think tanks one of the most influential factors in formulating US foreign policy.

#### **6.6.1: What about Oil in the Persian Gulf?**

While there were several revelations pulled from the collection samples, there was one aspect which is important to US foreign policy making which was not mentioned: the issue of oil in the Persian Gulf. There continues to be an increase in oil demand and with this increase in demand comes a fear of supply disruption. In an article written by Toni Johnson, the rising concern over oil shortages is discussed, especially with regards to Iran and the Strait of Hormuz. The Strait of Hormuz is a waterway which connects the Persian Gulf to the Arabian Sea through which approximating thirty-five

percent of the world's oil is shipped.<sup>249</sup> The Gulf region, which includes Iran, is home to approximating sixty percent of the world's oil reserves and forty percent of the world's natural gas reserves.<sup>250</sup> Iran is currently one of the world's largest oil exporters providing shipments of about 2.5 million barrels of oil a day.<sup>251</sup> Therefore, the impact of sanctions as well as the consistent threat of closure of the Strait of Hormuz by Iranian officials should be of great concern to the United States when formulating policy. The current tension between Tehran and Washington not only results in increased sanctions which impact Iran's economy, but they also impact the country's long term output of oil. In addition, if the United States was to take military action against any Iranian nuclear facilities, the Iranian government would ensure a blockade of oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> Toni Johnson. "Oil's Trouble Spots." *Council on Foreign Relations* (2012). <http://www.cfr.org/middle-east/oils-trouble-spots/p17068>.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The process of creating foreign policy in the United States is complex and relies on a variety of factors. The President, or Chief Executive, along with his/her administration and other bodies of government are responsible for creating policy that suits the needs of the country and American people. Truly a “dual nested game,” foreign policy relies on many factors, external and internal, domestic and international, in its formulation.

In addition to being a dual nested game, there is a relationship that exists between policy research and policy outputs when it comes to foreign policy. This thesis uses preexisting frameworks established by Stephen Walt and David Baldwin to highlight what they believe is a gap between theory, research and, policy. Research institutions, or think tanks, can serve as a means for closing this gap as they provide more than just research to policy makers. They also provide a space in which to hold debate, conduct interviews, and generate new ideas. Due to their expanding role in the political arena in the United States and in order to better understand the relationship between think tanks and foreign policy decision making in the United States, this thesis asks several questions. First, can think tanks contribute to foreign policy decision making? If so, due to their expanding nature, can think tanks be seen as a domestic source of influence on United States foreign policy? Furthermore, due to the complexities and dual nature of foreign policy decision making, what revelations can be made about the relationship between think tanks and other sources of domestic influence?

In order to answer these questions, a case study was created using executive orders of President Barack Obama and collection samples from four think tanks. The executive orders were chosen as a means to establish policy outputs whereas the four think tanks—the Council on Foreign Relations, the Brookings Institution, the American Enterprise Institute, and the Center for American Progress—were used to establish policy research. The aim of this thesis was to highlight a link between policy research and policy outputs using the recommendations of scholars at each respective think tank. Therefore, the collection samples gathered from each think tank reflect a variety of material including editorials, op-eds, policy papers, articles, debates, symposium transcripts, opinion polls, roundtable discussions, and guest lectures. The collection samples were then analyzed in light of the executive orders issued by President Barack Obama during his four year term.

Upon analyzing the think tank collection samples in light of the executive orders, several conclusions can be drawn with regards to foreign policy, think tanks, and domestic factors of influence within the United States. First, based on the literature review conducted as well as suggestions provided by policy analysis, it can be concluded that the process of foreign policy making in the United States is complex. There are many factors and influences that contribute to the creation of foreign policy and there is no single decision maker in the foreign policy process. As was evident in the second or state level of analysis, there are a variety of decision makers in the foreign policy making process, and as such, the foreign policy decisions of the Chief Executive reflect not only his/her preferences, but also the policy preferences of his/her administration, Congress, and the American people. Foreign policy does not occur in a vacuum, but rather it is a process that continues to occur and change throughout each administration.

In order to properly study foreign policy, one cannot solely study the actions of a single individual. Rather, one must study the actions of the decision maker in light of the complex policy making environment in which he/she lives bearing in mind that there are many constraints and influences placed on the decision maker on a daily basis.

Secondly, this thesis asked if think tanks contribute to the foreign policy decision making process, and it can be concluded that they do in fact contribute to the process of foreign policy making in the United States. The analysis of the collection samples with regards to the executive orders reveals several key points worth mentioning. First, policy research scholars are well versed in the field of policy making and their suggestions reflect years of experience as well a range of diversity that exists within the field of foreign policy. In addition, scholars were able to shape behavior changes in foreign policy and their suggestions support these changes. For example, prior to 2010, the foreign policy discourse was loaded with human rights policy suggestions calling for a condemnation of Iran's serious violations of human rights as part of the United States' policy towards Iran. As Executive Order 13553 indicates, in September of 2010, the Obama administration adopted a policy that would in fact highlight Iran's violations of human rights. In addition to shaping changes, the collection samples indicate that there are similarities between policy suggestions provided by policy analysts and the decisions adopted by the Obama administration. There is a vast amount of recommendations which encourage diplomacy as a foreign policy strategy with Iran. Based on the executive orders of the Obama administration, diplomacy, in addition to sanctions seems to be the policy preference of choice. While influence of the think tanks on the Obama administration is difficult to prove, it is safe to say that think tanks do in fact contribute to the foreign policy decision making process. Furthermore, they not only provide policy

contributions to the President, but they also provide a significant contribution to the political discourse on foreign policy. As such, think tanks can be viewed as a means of closing the gap that exists between theory, research, and policy in the field of international affairs.

Third, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between think tanks and other domestic factors of influence in the foreign policy decision making process. When examining the revelations extracted from think tanks, several themes emerge such as the US's relationship with Israel as well as the importance of American opinion. These revelations indicate that there are many domestic factors and/or key players who are influencing not only decision makers, but policy analysts within the think tanks as well. In addition, there is also a relationship between the partisan affiliation of the think tanks and the policy suggestions recommended for the Obama administration. The American Enterprise Institute, a conservative leaning think tank, was far more critical of the decisions of the Obama administration than the Center for American Progress, a progressive institution. Due to their complexities as well as due to the domestic influences that also impact them, think tanks themselves are not only a domestic factor which contribute to foreign policy, but they also reflect a variety of influences themselves, making them not only helpful to study but also one of the most significant factors in foreign policy making today.

### **7.1: Future Research**

The contribution of think tanks to the field of foreign policy is vast, and while this thesis sheds some light on the impact of think tanks on foreign policy, it is just the tip of the iceberg. In order to continue towards closing the gap between research and

policy in addition to expanding the field of foreign policy, more research can and hopefully will be conducted on the topic of think tanks and foreign policy. There are two ways in which I would like to expand my research in the future. First, the collection samples used for this thesis were only from four research institutions out of hundreds. In the future, I would like to expand my research to include other research institutions as well as they may provide even more insight to the complexities of foreign policy decision making process.

Second, I would like to attempt to show the influence that think tanks have on foreign policy decision makers. However, since proving influence will be a difficult task, I would like to conduct qualitative interviews with policy analysts from think tanks. During these interviews, I would ask them about the recommendations they have made for decision makers. In addition, I would attempt to find policy analysts and analysts that serve as policy advisors to the President and other decision makers. That way, it would be possible to link their policy suggestions to actual policy decisions made and in essence show the influence think tanks have on foreign policy.

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