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The Iranian Nuclear Negotiations as a Two-Level Game: The Importance of Domestic Politics

In July 2015, after over a decade of negotiations, the international community and Iran finally reached agreement over Iran's nuclear programme.¹ All of the work that produced the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was nearly undone, however, by the United States Congress, which came close to killing the agreement.² This episode emphasizes the fact that international negotiations are "two-level games" in which policy-makers must take into account not only their own objectives and those of their interlocutors but also the interests of domestic constituencies if they are to secure the "ratification" of an agreement.³ In many cases securing the consent of those constituencies is unproblematic, whether because the matter at hand is uncontroversial, domestic interests are disengaged, or policy-makers have sufficient autonomy from them to ignore their objections.⁴ In other cases, however, the domestic game can play a huge part in determining the eventual outcome of the negotiating process. As the intensity of the debate within the United States in 2015 and the narrowness of the margin by which the JCPOA survived suggest, the American-Iranian dimension of the nuclear negotiations falls into the latter category.

The impact of domestic political factors on American-Iranian relations has hardly gone unnoticed,⁵ yet there is little systematic analysis of their role and hardly any in relation to the nuclear question.⁶ And to the extent that domestic politics is considered, it is generally taken to be a constraining factor that has made agreement more difficult to reach. The following discussion seeks to provide a systematic analysis of the impact of domestic political factors on American and Iranian policy during the 2009-15 nuclear negotiations and in so doing demonstrate the crucial role of these factors in the eventual outcome of the negotiations while

offering a corrective to the view that domestic politics have acted solely as a barrier to agreement.

In Putnam's conceptualization of negotiations as a "two-level game", level one constitutes the negotiations between the formal representatives of the governments involved and level two the interactions between each government and its own domestic constituencies. Putnam's basic proposition is that, given that the primary goal of any government is to retain power, an international negotiation will only succeed if it is acceptable both to the governments and to sufficient of their domestic constituencies not to undermine the governments' political position. Agreements which meet those criteria constitute the "win-set" of a given state. We employ Putnam's general framework as a heuristic device to guide the empirical analysis, which is structured around Putnam's division of the domestic context into three key areas, these being:

1. The nature of the preferences and political coalitions at a societal level: What are public attitudes toward the proposed agreement? Is the issue highly politicized or not? What is the position and role of key interest groups?
2. The structure of political institutions: To what extent does the institutional structure facilitate or obstruct the ratification of international agreements? Is there institutional consensus or division?
3. The objectives, interests and calculations of "lead negotiators" (president, prime minister or equivalent): What does she stand to gain or lose by the agreement? How strong is her domestic position, to what extent does it allow her to accept some domestic political damage and what strategies are available to her to expand the win-set?

In addition to Putnam's original model of the two-level game, we also employ insights from some of the work that has sought to build on his idea.⁷ In particular, Jeffrey Knopf's argument that a state's alliance partners may constitute an important third level of actors, interacting with, and affecting, both level one and two actors, proves to be highly relevant in this case.⁸

The paper is divided into two sections, examining first the 2009-10 negotiations and then the 2013-15 negotiations. In each case a brief description of the negotiations and their outcome is followed by a detailed analysis of the domestic political factors that shaped the eventual outcome. This analysis is divided into separate sections for each country, within which the areas of domestic constituencies and coalitions, institutional factors, alliance relations and the calculations of level one negotiators are discussed in accordance with their significance.

By the time Barack Obama entered the White House, negotiations over the Iranian nuclear programme had been ongoing since 2003. The Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) had revived the Shah's nuclear programme in the mid-1980s, placing it under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards in accordance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). In 2003, however, the IAEA found evidence of Iranian violations of its safeguards agreement. After Iran repeatedly refused to comply with IAEA demands that it halt its nuclear programme until the latter could verify that it was entirely peaceful, it was reported to the United Nations Security Council in March 2006. Iranian refusal to comply with subsequent UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) requiring cooperation with the IAEA led to further resolutions imposing sanctions from late 2006 onwards. Negotiations between representatives of the European Union (EU) from 2003-5 and the P5 + 1 (2006 onwards) and Iran failed to resolve the conflict, with representatives of the international community insisting that Iran must halt all enrichment related activities and implement the IAEA

Additional Protocol (AP) before talks about a comprehensive deal commence, while Iran insisted that all issues must be discussed simultaneously, without preconditions.⁹

In an effort to break this deadlock, Obama offered Iran negotiations without preconditions - the so-called strategy of "engagement". The resulting talks led, in early October 2009, to the "Geneva Agreement", under the terms of which Iran would exchange 1200kg of low-enriched uranium (LEU) for fuel for the Tehran Research Reactor (TRR). The deal was intended as a confidence-building measure that would serve to underpin further negotiations. The agreement soon unravelled, however, when Iran demanded that fuel be supplied simultaneously, rather than subsequently, to the LEU leaving Iran, an alteration the P5 + 1 refused to accept. Brazil and Turkey subsequently persuaded Iran to agree to a new version of the agreement, known as the "Tehran Declaration", which was announced in May 2010. Despite its being more or less identical to the Geneva Agreement, however, the Obama administration dismissed it and pushed ahead with the passage of a new UNSCR imposing tough multilateral sanctions.¹⁰

To understand Iran's retreat from the Geneva Agreement one needs to recognize that while Iran is an authoritarian state, it is one with democratic aspects, political factions and a degree of genuine competition for political power.¹¹ Moreover, as in most authoritarian states, and more so than in many, the regime seeks to maintain popular legitimacy, since this is a less costly and more effective means of retaining power than simple repression.¹² How any nuclear agreement affects Iranians perceptions of the regime is consequently a matter of significance to Iranian policy-makers, particularly given that the nuclear programme has become a symbol of national pride, with one survey finding that ninety-eight percent of Iranians regarded having a nuclear programme as a "national right".¹³ In addition, Iranians are extremely sensitive to foreign interference, primarily because of a history of humiliating interventions by external powers, with British and American involvement in the 1953 coup

that overthrew Mohammed Mossadegh the most recent source of resentment. The result is an "almost obsessive preoccupation with outside interference in Iran's internal affairs"¹⁴ and a deep suspicion of the motives and intentions of the United States in particular.¹⁵ The leadership of the IRI has reinforced sentiments about the nuclear programme by lauding it and Iran's scientific progress as symbols of Iran's progress and resistance to American bullying.¹⁶

Most Iranians consequently see having a peaceful nuclear programme as a non-negotiable right and view American attempts to prevent Iran enriching as illegitimate interference in Iran's internal affairs. Any Iranian policy-maker signing an agreement perceived as surrendering Iran's "rights" can expect to face a strong domestic backlash, and this appears to be what happened when the Geneva Agreement was announced; many Iranians seemingly regarding the transferring out of the country of a significant proportion of Iran's LEU as the surrender of a key bargaining chip.¹⁷ Popular opposition to the deal was further fuelled by the fact that it was President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad who announced it and who sought to claim it as a diplomatic victory. Given the widespread loathing of both him and the regime in the aftermath of the fraudulent 2009 presidential elections, the mere fact that it was "his" agreement was sufficient to delegitimize it in the eyes of many Iranians.¹⁸

More important than hostility at the level of Iranian society, however, was the turmoil at the institutional level in Iran. If we accept Putnam's contention that the greater the degree of political consensus amongst the governing institutions in a country the easier it will be to ratify an agreement, the Geneva Agreement could not have emerged at a more inopportune moment.¹⁹ Even at the best of times coordination and cooperation between the multiple institutions created by the Constitution of the IRI is poor, and the agendas they pursue frequently contradictory,²⁰ while institutional inefficiency is compounded by the struggle for control of those institutions between a number of political coalitions based on ideological

sympathies, patronage and family ties.²¹ Overseeing this system is the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has ultimate constitutional authority, but who in practice is far from an absolute dictator, being constrained, above all, by the need to prevent factional conflict from threatening the integrity and legitimacy of the regime. Rather than simply dictate, therefore, the Leader plays a balancing role, seeking to advance his preferred positions without decisively alienating any key political faction or domestic constituency. Khamenei is further constrained by the fact that he lacks the charisma and religious authority of his predecessor, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, forcing him to negotiate where his predecessor might have sought to impose his will.²²

The product of this institutional structure is a policy-making process that is subject to recurrent periods of political deadlock in which the regime finds itself incapable of generating the consensus necessary either to take the initiative or to react effectively to proposals from its negotiating partners, and late 2009 was just such a period.²³ The backlash against the outcome of the fraudulent 2009 presidential election had generated a political crisis more serious than any ever faced by the IRI. Massive popular protest was accompanied by brutal repression and vicious inter-factional conflict as the defeated presidential candidates sought to have the election result overturned and the regime sought to repress their protests.²⁴

As soon as the terms of the Geneva Agreement became known, Ahmadinejad's political opponents attacked. Defeated presidential candidate Mir Hosein Mousavi accused Ahmadinejad of "not even safeguarding the undeniable rights of our people" while Hassan Rouhani, a former lead nuclear negotiator, described the terms of the deal as "illegal".²⁵ Given that a strong case could be made that the deal was actually a good one for Iran,²⁶ and that the approach of seeking to protect Iranian rights through negotiation and compromise was precisely what Mousavi and Rouhani had previously advocated (and would do so again in the latter's case in 2013-15) it is clear that their motives for attacking the deal had less to

do with its content than with a desire to damage Ahmadinejad.²⁷ Political opposition to the agreement was further fuelled by what Putnam calls "reverberations" - statements or actions by level one negotiators in one state which influence the views and preferences of societal or institutional actors in the other.²⁸ In this case, Western claims about the Geneva Agreement, designed primarily to aid ratification with their own domestic audiences, reverberated negatively in Iran, with Ahmadinejad facing "huge pressure" domestically after claims in the West that the agreement would significantly weaken Iran's nuclear capability.²⁹

When we examine the political calculations of Iran's lead negotiators, the irony is that Ahmadinejad's decision to accept the Geneva Agreement was apparently driven by a calculation that he could portray the deal as a major diplomatic triumph and in so doing shore up his political position.³⁰ Certainly, the terms of the deal were somewhat at odds with his previously unbending negotiating position. The result, however, was precisely the opposite of that intended. Many of his normal political allies amongst the conservative hard liners attacked the deal because they saw it as giving too much away,³¹ while moderates damned it because of its author, rather than its content. The Supreme Leader, for his part, demonstrated his tendency to adjust his position to accommodate the dominant political forces. Having initially supported Ahmadinejad, he soon withdrew his backing when the extent of the hostility to the agreement became clear. He was also seemingly influenced by the reverberations of the acclaim for the agreement in the West, which he took as an indication that Iran's negotiators had somehow been tricked into signing a deal that was against Iran's interests.³² Once Ahmadinejad realized that his "diplomatic triumph" was having the diametrically opposite effect to that intended he too began to back away from it. Domestic political infighting, and the reverberations from Western efforts to sell the Geneva Agreement, were thus the critical factors preventing its ratification in Iran.

Further confirmation that it was not the content of the agreement which led Iran to walk away from it came when Ahmadinejad announced the signing of the Tehran Declaration in May 2010. The content of the Declaration was essentially the same as that of the Geneva Agreement, but the political context had changed completely. Popular and institutional opposition to the regime had been crushed and its leaders arrested or otherwise silenced.³³ Ahmadinejad's political position was now secure and there was nothing to be gained for his critics by speaking out against the proposal. In addition, the fact that the Declaration had been negotiated with Brazil and Turkey, rather than with the United States, meant that it was much more difficult to do so. There could be no allegations of surrendering to Western pressure this time. Instead, the deal was depicted as a symbol of Iranian autonomy and a product of negotiations amongst equals, making it easier to legitimate with domestic constituencies.³⁴

By that point, however, the Obama administration was no longer interested in the deal, and although American domestic politics played little role in the collapse of the Geneva Agreement, it was a factor in Obama's rejection of the Tehran Declaration.

When we look at level two preferences and coalitions in the United States, the starting point, inevitably, is the degree of hostility toward Iran, which has been subject to a process of demonization, fuelled initially by the Iranian Revolution and the 1979-80 hostage crisis and fed ever since both by its own actions and rhetoric and by their (mis)representation in the American media and popular culture.³⁵ Public opinion polls consequently reveal an overwhelmingly negative view of Iran, with Americans identifying it as the United States' "number one enemy" in every year from 2006 to 2012,³⁶ leading a Department of State official to describe Iran as the "third rail" of American foreign policy politics.³⁷ Public antipathy is reinforced by the constant lobbying and propagandizing of the pro-Israeli lobby, led by the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). Wholly sceptical of Obama's engagement strategy, and determined to see the complete elimination of Iran's nuclear

programme, AIPAC was pressing the administration and, especially, Congress, to impose "crippling sanctions" on Iran in 2009-10.³⁸ In terms of level two preferences and coalitions there was widespread support for taking a hard line against Iran and little taste for compromise.³⁹

Hostility toward Iran was reinforced by the actions of the Israeli government, confirming Knopf's argument about the potential significance of a state's allies to the negotiating process. In addition to directly pressing the Obama administration to take a hard line with Iran, Israel also worked to generate reverberations amongst the American public and in Congress. Specifically, it sought to undermine the engagement policy by demanding that progress be made by unrealistically short deadlines, justifying those demands with apocalyptic (and inaccurate) warnings about time running out to prevent Iran from having nuclear weapons.⁴⁰

When it comes to level two institutions, Putnam notes that "the U.S. separation of powers imposes a tighter constraint on the American win-set than is true in many other countries".⁴¹ Congressional control over trade and spending, and the requirement for congressional approval of treaties, impose significant constraints on the executive. The derailment of President Reagan's attempted engagement with South Africa by sanctions legislation and the Senate's refusal to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty negotiated by President Clinton are cases in point. In this instance, Congressional antipathy toward Iran was as profound as that amongst the American public and had manifested itself in a series of sanctions bills, passed with overwhelming, veto-proof, majorities before Obama came to office.⁴²

Nevertheless, the Democratic majority in Congress demonstrated some willingness to give engagement a chance, with Representative Howard Berman, Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, holding off introducing new sanctions legislation.⁴³ Berman stated, however, that he would act immediately should engagement fail and Congressional willingness to give Obama time was reduced by the June 2009 Iranian presidential election

and the repression that followed. After that, according to a senior White House official, "skepticism in Congress against our strategy turned to outright hostility".⁴⁴ When the existence of a previously undisclosed Iranian nuclear plant was announced in September,⁴⁵ it was the last straw for Berman, who announced that he would introduce the new sanctions legislation in Congress.⁴⁶ Even as the Geneva Agreement was being negotiated, therefore, Congress was moving to impose new sanctions. With AIPAC throwing its full weight behind the new legislation,⁴⁷ bills had passed with large, veto-proof majorities in both houses by early 2010.⁴⁸ In May 2010, therefore, Obama was faced with the inevitable passage of a piece of legislation that he had no choice but to sign and which was guaranteed to make the Iranians suspend negotiations.

That reality informed the unwillingness of Obama's senior foreign policy advisers to explore the Tehran Declaration,⁴⁹ but in many cases the absence of interest reflected a lack of commitment to the strategy of engagement that had existed from the start. Secretary of State Hilary Clinton was noticeably more hawkish on Iran than Obama and had criticized his willingness to talk to President Ahmadinejad during the 2008 election campaign.⁵⁰ With every intention of running for the presidency in 2016, she had little interest in being seen as "soft" on Iran. Secretary of Defence Robert Gates, meanwhile, was a holdover from the George W. Bush administration, where he had not been a prominent advocate of engaging Iran. Both made clear in early 2009 that they had little expectation that engagement would come to anything.⁵¹ Neither Gates nor Clinton was leading Iran policy-making, of course, but the man who was appointed by Obama to do so was, if anything, even more sceptical about engagement. Before his appointment, Dennis Ross had made clear in numerous publications that he expected diplomacy to fail and that sanctions, or even military action, would be necessary to halt the Iranian nuclear programme.⁵² When the Tehran Declaration was

announced, therefore, the innate scepticism of most key American policy-makers inclined them to disregard it even without the pressure coming from the public, AIPAC and Congress.

When we come to the calculations of American level one negotiators, therefore, it is clear that there was no political upside to the Geneva Agreement or the Tehran Declaration from Obama's point of view. And by May 2010 he faced the inevitable passage of new sanctions legislation which was certain to derail any attempted agreement. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to suggest that Obama rejected the Tehran Declaration simply on the basis of domestic political considerations, since he had from the start been inclined to pursue the route of tougher multilateral sanctions, providing only that he could secure support for them.⁵³ In October 2009 Chinese and Russian support for new sanctions had been uncertain. Under those circumstances Obama evidently felt the Geneva Agreement worth pursuing. By the time of the Tehran Declaration, however, he had the agreement from China and Russia to back tougher sanctions at the UN that he needed. In that context pursuing the Tehran Declaration looked unattractive. Taking the sanctions option, in contrast, might serve to secure a future agreement by widening the win-set in two ways. Effective sanctions would increase pressure on Iran to make concessions as well as demonstrating to American domestic constituencies, and Israel, that the administration had done everything it reasonably could to compel Iran to abandon enrichment. Given that the administration had reportedly concluded that it would be impossible to ratify an agreement with Iran if it did not first demonstrate its willingness to impose "crippling" sanctions⁵⁴ domestic considerations were clearly important, but they were not the only reason the Tehran Declaration was rejected.

After the breakdown of mid-2010, further negotiations between 2010 and 2012 failed to produce any agreement. In the meantime, Iran continued to advance its nuclear programme and the Obama administration and its allies imposed further sanctions. These failed to halt

Iran's nuclear progress but had a significant impact on the Iranian economy, which contracted for the first time in two decades in 2013.⁵⁵ Economic problems in turn contributed to the election of Hassan Rouhani to the Iranian presidency in June 2013, which led to new negotiations and the announcement of the "Joint Plan of Action" (JPA). Under this agreement Iran temporarily halted parts of its nuclear programme and reduced its stock of twenty percent enriched uranium in return for limited sanctions relief whilst the two sides negotiated a final agreement.⁵⁶ Multiple rounds of negotiations followed, leading to the announcement of the JCPOA on 14 July 2015, with both sides making significant concessions. The P5 + 1 accepted the continuation of Iran's enrichment programme and Iran accepted a range of restrictions on its nuclear activities.⁵⁷

The fact that Iran signed the JCPOA was undoubtedly due to the acceptance of its continued enrichment, which had always been Iran's "red line". That also altered the political calculus in relation to sanctions which, while biting,⁵⁸ were unlikely to have compelled Iran to accept a deal not containing the right to enrich.⁵⁹ With enrichment accepted, however, rejection of the JCPOA invited continued economic damage in return for limited gains, relative to the deal on the table. The terms of the deal also made domestic ratification easier, for while Iranians continued to show strong support for the nuclear programme, polls indicated that majorities were prepared to accept restrictions on it provided that sanctions were lifted and Iran's "right" to enrich was respected.⁶⁰ The concession on enrichment thus expanded the Iranian win-set by ensuring Iranian public support for an agreement.⁶¹

The concession on enrichment thus made ratification easier, regardless of changes in the Iranian domestic context. Nevertheless, there were such changes and they played an important role in securing ratification. In the first place, the election of Rouhani marked the end of the hard line conservatives' hold on all of the key institutions of state and signalled a shift in the factional balance of power.⁶² Rouhani's position was further reinforced by the fact

that he had "a broader base of support than any [president] in Iran's post-revolutionary history"⁶³ and that his opponents were divided. Ahmadinejad had alienated many conservatives even before the 2009 election but after it intra-conservative squabbles and factionalism became increasingly rancorous, as many blamed his mismanagement for the political crisis facing the regime. The relationship between Khamenei and Ahmadinejad also collapsed in the face of the latter's efforts to enhance his own power at the expense of the Supreme Leader, and by 2011 the two were in open conflict. The impact of these changes was evident in the splintering of the hard-line camp into quarreling factions, the creation of new conservative parties and the proliferation of hard-line candidates for the 2013 presidential election.⁶⁴ These developments first facilitated Rouhani's election and then created the political room for him to pursue negotiations and to test Washington's willingness to negotiate in good faith. They also played out to his advantage when the JCPOA was announced, for while there was strong opposition to the JCPOA from many conservatives, there were others who gave their support to Rouhani, or abstained from attacks on the agreement, rather than align themselves with Ahmadinejad.⁶⁵

The final institutional factor securing Iranian agreement was the support of Iran's Supreme Leader.⁶⁶ No doubt his decision was also shaped by the concession of the right to enrich and the impact of sanctions. However, it is unlikely that the impact of sanctions alone was a decisive consideration for a man who had long expressed disdain for their impact and even welcomed them as a catalyst to Iranian self-reliance. And it was clear from his previous statements that the terms of the JCPOA were far from his ideal outcome.⁶⁷ To understand why Khamenei supported a deal containing constraints he had long opposed, and which sanctions alone would not have compelled him to accept, we need to examine his domestic political calculus and the potential political consequences of the deal's rejection.

The Iranian regime's popular legitimacy had been eroding for some time and was dramatically undermined by the fraudulent 2009 presidential election.⁶⁸ The protests against the election results had "rapidly transformed into protests challenging the legitimacy of the Islamic state" which "revealed just how deep the disconnect between state and society had become".⁶⁹ While the overt protests were eventually repressed, and a degree of normality restored, there was little evidence of any significant recovery in regime legitimacy by 2013-15, with the clearest demonstration of this coming in shape of the reformist refusal to take part in the 2012 legislative elections.⁷⁰ The regime's continued fears for its own survival were also demonstrated by the persistence of a clampdown on the media and the internet.⁷¹

The logical way to restore some degree of popular legitimacy was to end the gross misrepresentation of the popular will manifested in the dominance of all political institutions by hard line conservatives,⁷² and the first unequivocal demonstration of Khamenei's recognition of this fact came in the 2013 presidential election. Rouhani was not Khamenei's preferred candidate⁷³ but, unlike in 2009, the Supreme Leader chose not to allow the election to be rigged. Such an action would have struck a potentially fatal blow to the remnants of the regime's popular legitimacy, while allowing a Rouhani win meant recognizing the popular will and restoring a degree of balance to Iran's factional competition.⁷⁴ The Leader's subsequent decision to back Rouhani over the JCPOA is best understood as a continuation of this policy. In supporting a popular president and a deal favoured by most Iranians, Khamenei put regime stability first.⁷⁵ Had he chosen to oppose the agreement, he would have been aligning himself with a minority of hard line conservatives against a popularly elected president and a clear majority of Iranians. The 2013 election and the attempted restoration of political balance and legitimacy would have been undermined in one action.

Moreover, had he taken that line, Khamenei would have taken the IRI in the direction of relying primarily on repression, rather than legitimacy, to ensure regime maintenance. Such a

recourse would have meant greater dependence on the institutions which wielded the means of repression, particularly the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). The IRGC had grown in power under Ahmadinejad and its role in suppressing the 2009-10 protests had only enhanced its influence, to the point where many observers felt that it was becoming a genuine threat to the dominance of Khamenei and the clerical elite.⁷⁶ By backing Rouhani and an agreement that would restore popular legitimacy, Khamenei would also reduce his dependence on the IRGC and their overall influence within Iran. Khamenei's support for the JCPOA was thus driven largely by a calculation that acceptance of the deal was necessary in order to bolster the legitimacy of the Iranian regime and of his own leadership.

Whereas domestic political considerations were a significant factor driving Khamenei to accept the compromises embodied in the JCPOA, on the American side of the equation they did not play a central role in Obama's decision to sign. Rather than being a move designed to entrench his domestic political position, Obama's decision to accept Iranian enrichment was primarily an effort to stave off a much worse outcome. By 2015 effective, comprehensive sanctions had been imposed and begun to bite, yet the Iranian nuclear programme continued and Tehran still refused to give up enrichment. If Obama did not compromise on enrichment there would be no agreement, Iran's nuclear programme would continue and pressure to take military action, as the only option yet untried, would increase steadily. And if Washington refused to use force, Israel might act unilaterally. In either event, the consequences were highly unpredictable and potentially disastrous. Obama accepted the compromise contained in the JCPOA primarily because he saw it as the only way to prevent a much worse outcome.⁷⁷

Far from seeking to bolster his political position, Obama's willingness to sign the JCPOA was in all likelihood shaped more by the fact that he did not have to stand for re-election again,⁷⁸ given the extent of the continued hostility to Iran and to the JCPOA in the United States. At a

societal level, popular antipathy toward Iran remained as deeply ingrained as ever,⁷⁹ while AIPAC sought to prevent the ratification of the JCPOA with as much vigour as it had used to derail the Geneva Agreement.⁸⁰ This time around there was a more concerted effort to rally support for the agreement, led by liberal Jewish organization J Street and the National Iranian-American Council (NIAC), but they remained heavily outgunned by their much better funded opponents, who coalesced under the umbrella of 'Citizens for a Nuclear Free Iran'.⁸¹ Reinforcing the opposition of the pro-Israeli lobby were the efforts of Israel itself. In March 2015 Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu accepted an invitation from House Speaker John Boehner to give an address to Congress in which he lambasted the proposed agreement. And when the JCPOA was signed he condemned it as a "a bad mistake of historic proportions", while Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely tweeted that Israel would "act with all means to try and stop the agreement being ratified".⁸² Led by its ambassador to the United States, the Israeli government subsequently did precisely that.⁸³

At the institutional level the key issue was, as ever, likely congressional opposition, and whereas Democrats controlled Congress in 2009-10, by 2013 the Republicans, who were viscerally hostile to the proposed agreement, had majorities in both chambers. The 2013-15 negotiations were consequently accompanied by an unrelenting stream of Republican criticism. When the JCPOA itself was announced Boehner claimed that it would only "embolden" Iran while Senator Lindsey Graham denounced it as a "terrible" agreement.⁸⁴ Nor was Republican opposition confined to mere rhetoric. Most dramatically, in March 2015, in a clear attempt to derail the negotiations, forty-seven Republican Senators signed an open letter to the leadership of the IRI in which they implied that Congress would not ratify any agreement reached.⁸⁵ Finally, even those members of Congress who were not instinctively opposed to the JCPOA wanted to assert their constitutional prerogatives. Early in 2015 various members of Congress introduced bills that would require a congressional vote on any

agreement. After initially resisting, the administration gave way when it became clear that the proposal had strong bipartisan support. The Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015, providing for a congressional vote to approve or disapprove of any deal, was approved by Congress on 14 May 2015.⁸⁶

Nevertheless, unlike in 2009-10, there were some domestic factors aiding ratification in 2015. This time Obama's key policy-makers and advisers on Iran were strongly committed to the deal. Secretary of State John Kerry had long favoured a compromise that allowed Iran to continue enriching and, unlike his predecessor, had no further political ambitions to distract him. Consequently, he made enormous efforts to achieve the diplomatic breakthrough that would constitute a key part of his political legacy.⁸⁷ His Deputy, and the man who led many of the key negotiations between 2013 and 2015, William Burns, had also long supported the pursuit of a negotiated solution.⁸⁸ Unlike in 2009-10, therefore, the will to make the negotiations succeed in the face of domestic criticism was present in 2013-15.

In addition, once the JCPOA was signed, it became evident that there was significant public support for this agreement, though the picture was more mixed than in Iran. After an initially positive public reception, public enthusiasm for the agreement declined somewhat, reflecting the impact of the lobbying effort by groups opposed to the deal. Despite that shift, however, while the public was divided fairly evenly between support or opposition, the majority of polls found larger numbers in support of the deal than opposed to it. Finally, and importantly, the polls showed that while Republicans were overwhelmingly opposed to the deal, majorities of Democrats supported it. Rather than homogenous opposition, therefore, the Obama administration faced a divided public in which there was significant support for the deal, especially amongst its own voters.⁸⁹

At the institutional level, while Congress had secured the right to vote on the JCPOA, the legislation required a majority to disapprove, rather than approve, the agreement. And while the Republicans controlled both chambers of Congress, they only had 247 seats in the House and fifty-four in the Senate, meaning that even if every Republican voted to disapprove of the JCPOA, they still required forty-four House Democrats and thirteen Democratic Senators to vote with them to secure veto-proof two-thirds majorities, which proved to be too great an obstacle to overcome. The degree of partisan vitriol now characterizing congressional politics meant that there were increasingly few issues on which members of each party were prepared to vote with those of the other.⁹⁰ Iran and Israel, historically, had been such issues, but in recent years significant differences had emerged between the two parties, as Republicans became uniformly hostile to Iran, supportive of Israel and closely aligned with AIPAC, whilst Democrats developed more nuanced positions than hitherto.⁹¹ Polls demonstrated that Democrats had become much less inclined than Republicans to view Israel more sympathetically than the Palestinians and had a much more negative view of Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu.⁹² When it came to Iran there were similar discrepancies, with a plurality of Republicans willing to support military strikes against Iran while Democrats were strongly opposed. When it came to the JCPOA, as we have already noted, majorities of Democrats endorsed the agreement while Republicans overwhelmingly rejected it.⁹³ This growing gap between the policy preferences of Democrats and those of Israel was also mirrored in Democrats' relationship with AIPAC, which had grown strained in recent years as the latter became ever more clearly the lobby not of Israel but of the Israeli Right.⁹⁴

The average Democrat, therefore, was inclined to support the deal and less than enamoured of both the Israeli government and AIPAC, weakening the influence of both. There was consequently little electoral incentive for most Democrats in Congress to vote against the JCPOA. The likelihood that they would do so was nevertheless decreased by the manner in

which the Republicans, Israel and AIPAC went about trying to defeat the agreement.

Boehner's invitation to Netanyahu to address Congress and the open letter from Republican Senators to the leadership of the IRI angered Democrats, while Netanyahu's speech proved to be a striking example of negative reverberation, with his attempt to influence the domestic American debate infuriating and alienating many Democrats before the debate proper over the JCPOA had even begun. The aggressive and vitriolic nature of AIPAC attacks on the JCPOA and on Obama, along with veiled threats to campaign against Democrats who failed to acquiesce to their demands were similarly counter-productive. As one of those on the receiving end put it, "instead of making them [Democrats] feel compelled to vote against the deal, it has made them feel resentful".⁹⁵

Finally, in addition to the counter-productive intervention of America's Israeli ally, the role of the non-American members of the P5 + 1 proved to be critical in 2015. When critics of the deal argued that a further tightening of sanctions would force Iran to abandon enrichment and accept US demands, Obama was able to point out that the other members of the P5 + 1 would not support such a course, making it unviable.⁹⁶ To reinforce his point, the ambassadors of the other P5 + 1 nations were invited to meet with Democratic Senators, where they confirmed the president's message.⁹⁷

Congressional Democrats thus faced a situation in which half to two-thirds of their own voters backed ratification of the JCPOA. Voting to kill the agreement would therefore have little or no electoral upside whilst handing the Republicans an enormous, morale-boosting victory and destroying the main foreign policy achievement of the leader of their own party. Were that not enough to convince them to support the president, the Republicans, AIPAC and the Israeli government, rather than appeal to bipartisanship, engaged in an all out assault on both the administration and the JCPOA that angered many Democrats, reinforced partisan

divisions and made it increasingly difficult for Democrats to vote against the deal without being tarred with the brush of betrayal by their own party. Finally, Obama and the other P5 +1 members had made clear that the desired alternative of tougher sanctions was simply not available. Given these circumstances, it was hardly surprising that only four Democratic Senators and twenty-five House Democrats joined the Republicans in voting against ratification of the JCPOA.⁹⁸

In conclusion - to reiterate Putnam's original argument - an international agreement will only succeed if it meets the goals of both the governments involved and sufficient of their domestic constituencies to permit its ratification. The Geneva Agreement was acceptable to the level one negotiators who reached it but not to Iran's level two actors, who derailed it. The Tehran Declaration, in contrast, was acceptable to Iran but not to actors at either level in the United States. Domestic considerations played a role in Obama's rejection of the Declaration, but so did his conclusion that the imposition of stronger sanctions would expand his win-set in the longer term, a calculation that proved to be correct - the JCPOA was ratified because both sides made concessions that expanded the other's win-set, and Iran's concessions were partly the consequence of the impact of sanctions on the Iranian economy. Obama's acceptance of Iranian enrichment, for its part, was largely due to his recognition that Iran would not surrender its "right" to enrich and his fear of war. But domestic factors played a critical role in expanding the Iranian win-set, with Iran's "crisis of legitimacy" creating the political space within which Rouhani was able to pursue a negotiated solution and persuading Ayatollah Khamenei to back him.. This latter fact also, of course, serves to demonstrate the inaccuracy of the assumption that domestic politics have acted solely as an obstacle to agreement.

For the most part, therefore, the analysis serves to confirm the utility of Putnam's model. Domestic politics did play a critical role in the outcome of the nuclear negotiations and in two out of four instances - the Iranian decision to walk away from the Geneva Agreement and that to accept the JCPOA - it was the critical factor determining the eventual decision. Specific aspects of the model also stand up well. Putnam's observation about the particular constraints imposed by the American separation of powers was confirmed, while the significance of reverberations (both positive and negative) was clearly demonstrated by the Iranian response to Western claims about the consequences of the Geneva Agreement and the effects of Israeli lobbying in the United States. In addition, Obama's 2010 decision to opt for further sanctions, and his exploitation of the constraints imposed on US options by the other P5 + 1 states' refusal to maintain sanctions if the JCPOA was rejected, demonstrated how leaders are able to act strategically to expand their win-set and that of their negotiating partner.

The analysis also serves to confirm the existence of weaknesses in, and need for adaptation of, Putnam's original model. Knopf's argument about the need to consider the role of allies in shaping the outcome of negotiations is clearly supported. In particular, the reverberations of Israeli and P5 + 1 interventions in 2015 played a key role in ensuring congressional ratification of the JCPOA. Obama's decisions in 2013-15 also confirm the argument that, contra Putnam, under certain circumstances lead negotiators may take actions which are not designed primarily to protect or bolster their domestic political position.⁹⁹ The facilitating, rather than obstructive, role of domestic politics was also unforeseen in Putnam's article.¹⁰⁰ Finally, we have seen that domestic politics was more critical to Iranian decision-making than it was to that of the United States. This finding contradicts one of Putnam's basic hypotheses, namely that authoritarian regimes ought to have greater autonomy from domestic constituencies, and consequently greater ability to adjust their negotiating positions, than

democracies.¹⁰¹ These findings serve as reminders that Putnam created a heuristic device, rather than a theory, and one which should be employed with care and due regard for the evidence.

¹ 'The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action' (JCPOA), 14 July 2015: http://www.eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/docs/iran_agreement/iran_joint-comprehensive-plan-of-action_en.pdf. Accessed 7 September 2015.

² 'Obama's Iran Deal Nears a Major Symbolic Victory', *Washington Post* (8 September 2015); 'House rejects Obama's Nuclear Accord with Iran in Symbolic Vote', *The Guardian.com* (11 September 2015) <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/sep/11/house-rejects-obama-nuclear-accord-iran>. Accessed 12 September 2015.

³ Robert D. Putnam 'Diplomacy and Domestic Politics; The Logic of Two-Level Games' *International Organization* 42 (3) 1988, 427-460. Ratification is used here to signify any domestic process of approval of an international agreement, whether formal or informal.

⁴ For example, the formal parties to the nuclear negotiations in question were Iran and the 'P5 + 1', constituted of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and Germany. In none of those countries bar the US and Iran was there any significant domestic debate over or opposition to the JCPOA.

⁵ See, for example Trita Parsi, *A Single Roll of the Dice: Obama's Diplomacy with Iran* (New Haven, 2012); William O. Beeman, *The Great Satan vs. the Mad Mullahs: How the United States and Iran Demonize Each Other* (Chicago, 2005); David Patrikarakos, *Nuclear Iran; The Birth of an Atomic State* (London, 2012); Ali M. Ansari, *Confronting Iran: The Failure of American Foreign Policy and the Next Great Crisis in the Middle East* (New York, 2006).

⁶ A notable exception being Graeme A.M. Davies, 'Coercive Diplomacy Meets Diversionary Incentives: The Impact of US and Iranian Domestic Politics During the Bush and Obama Presidencies' *Foreign Policy Analysis* 8 (2012), 313-37.

⁷ In addition to Putnam's original article see also Jeffrey W. Knopf, 'Beyond Two Level Games: Domestic-International Interaction in the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Negotiations' *International Organization* 47 (4), 599-628, 601-3; David Milne, 'The 1968 Paris Peace Negotiations: A Two Level Game?' *Review of International Studies* 37 (2) 2011, 577-99; Peter F. Trumbore, 'Public Opinion as a Domestic Constraint in International Negotiations: Two-Level Games in the Anglo-Irish Peace Process' *International Studies Quarterly*, 42 (3) 1998, 545-565; Dinshaw Mistry, *The US-India Nuclear Agreement: Diplomacy and Domestic Politics* (Cambridge, 2014); Peter Evans, Harold K. Jacobson and Robert D. Putnam (eds), *Double-Edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics* (Berkeley, 1993).

⁸ Knopf, 'Beyond Two Level Games', 611.

⁹ Seyed Hossein Mousavian, *The Iranian Nuclear Crisis: A Memoir* (Washington DC, 2012); Patrikarakos *Nuclear Iran*, 118-243; Bernd Kaussler, *Iran's Nuclear Diplomacy: Power Politics and Conflict Resolution* (London, 2014).

¹⁰ The best single account of the 2009-10 negotiations is Parsi, *A Single Roll of the Dice*; see also Mousavian, *The Iranian Nuclear Crisis*, pp. 322-404. The main difference between the two proposals was that by May 2010 Iran had a larger stock of LEU, meaning that, proportionally, it would be handing over less LEU under the Tehran Declaration.

¹¹ Wilfried Buchta, *Who Rules Iran? The Structure of Power in the Islamic Republic* (Washington, 2000); Shahram Chubin, 'Whither Iran? Reform, Domestic Politics and National Security', *Adelphi Paper 342*, (London,

2002); Ali M. Ansari, *Modern Iran Since 1921: The Pahlavis and After* (London, 2003), 240-51; Michael Axworthy, *Revolutionary Iran: A History of the Islamic Republic* (London, 2013), 162-4.

¹² Holger Albrecht and Olivier Schlumberger, "'Waiting for Godot': Regime Change Without Democratization in the Middle East', *International Political Science Review* 25 (4) 2004, 371-92, 373; Steven Heydemann and Reynoud Leenders (eds) *Middle East Authoritarianisms: Governance, Contestation and Regime Resilience in Syria and Iran* (Stanford, 2012); Maaïke Warnaar, *Iranian Foreign Policy During Ahmadinejad: Ideology and Actions* (London, 2013), 35-40.

¹³ 'Iranian Public Opinion on Governance, Nuclear Weapons and Relations with the United States', *World Public Opinion.org* (27 August 2008) <http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/brmiddleeastnafricara/527.php>. Accessed 6 July 2015; Sara Beth Elson and Alireza Nader, *What Do Iranians Think? A Survey of Attitudes on the United States, the Nuclear Program, and the Economy* (Santa Monica, 2011), 11 http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical_reports/2011/RAND_TR910.pdf. Accessed 6 July 2015.

¹⁴ Anoushiravan Ehteshami 'The Foreign Policy of Iran', in Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (eds) *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States* (Boulder, 2002), 285.

¹⁵ 'Iranians Favor Diplomatic Relations With US But Have Little Trust in Obama', *World Public Opinion.org* (19 September 2009) <http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/brmiddleeastnafricara/639.php>. Accessed 7 July 2015. See also Ansari, *Confronting Iran*, 36-40.

¹⁶ Ayatollah Ali Khameni, 'Leader's Address to University Professors and Elite Academics', 13 October 2005 <http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=bayanat&id=3472>. Accessed 5 May 2015.

¹⁷ The evidence is far from indisputable. There is no polling data on Iranian opinions of the agreement, for example, making any analysis of popular Iranian responses to the deal impressionistic, but see Gareth Porter, 'Obama's Iranian Discontent', *Agence Global* (9 December 2009); Kausler, *Iran's Nuclear Diplomacy*, 83.

¹⁸ On the impact of the 2009 elections on Ahmadinejad's and the regime's legitimacy see Ali M. Ansari, *Crisis of Authority: Iran's 2009 Presidential Election* (London, 2010); Ramin Jahanbegloo, 'The Two Sovereignties and the Legitimacy Crisis in Iran' *Constellations* 17 (1) 2010, 22-30; Uriel Abulof, 'Nuclear Diversion Theory and Legitimacy Crisis: The Case of Iran' *Politics and Policy* 41 (5) 2013, 690-722; Naser Ghobazadeh and Lily Zubadaih Rahim, 'Islamic Reformation Discourses: Popular Sovereignty and Religious Secularization in Iran' *Democratization* 19 (2) 2011, 334-351.

¹⁹ Putnam, 'Diplomacy and Domestic Politics', 450.

²⁰ Buchta, *Who Rules Iran?*; Mehran Kamrava, 'Iranian National Security Debates: Factionalism and Lost Opportunities', *Middle East Policy*, 14 (2) 2007, 84-100; Nader Entessar, 'Iran's Nuclear Decision-Making Calculus', *Middle East Policy* 16 (2) 2009, 26-38.

²¹ Kamrava, 'Iranian National Security Debates'; Ansari, *Confronting Iran*; Warnaar, *Iranian Foreign Policy*, 4-5.

²² Waarnar, *Iranian Foreign Policy*, 44-5; Banafseh Keynoush, 'Iran After Ahmadinejad', *Survival* 54 (3) 2012, 127-146, 131; Mousavian, *The Iranian Nuclear Crisis*, 342; Axworthy, *Revolutionary Iran*, 319-20.

²³ Buchta, *Who Rules Iran?*, xii. ; Kamrava, 'Iranian National Security Debates', 98.

²⁴ Ansari, *Crisis of Authority*.

²⁵ Mir Hosein Mousavi statement 30 October 2009, cited in Parsi, *A Single Roll of the Dice*, 148; *E'temad*, (5 November 2009), BBC Monitoring.

²⁶ Seyed Hossein Mousavian argues that the agreement was a step toward acknowledgement of Iran's right to enrich, that it would have strengthened Obama's hand against his own hard liners, and that it would have helped head off further sanctions; Mousavian, *The Iranian Nuclear Crisis*, 358.

²⁷ 'Iran's Politics Stand in the Way of a Nuclear Deal', *New York Times* (2 November 2009), http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/03/world/middleeast/03iran.html?_r=0. Accessed 7 September 2015.

²⁸ Putnam, 'Diplomacy and Domestic Politics', 455. Putnam observes that reverberations can be either positive - facilitating agreement by expanding the win-set - or negative.

²⁹ 'US Embassy Cables: US Fails to Dissuade Turkey from Iran "Meddling"', *The Guardian.com* (17 November 2010) <http://www.theguardian.com/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/235183>. Accessed 7 July 2015.

³⁰ 'Offers, Doubts, Greet Iran Talks', *Wall Street Journal* (2 December 2010) <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704594804575648333557839888>. Accessed 15 May 2015.

³¹ 'Iranian Response to LEU Fuel Deal Unclear', *Arms Control Association* (November 2009) http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2009_11/Iran. Accessed 7 May 2015.

³² US Embassy Dubai, 'Tehran Nuclear Fuel Deal Drawing Domestic Political Fire', 26 October 2009 <https://cablegatesearch.wikileaks.org/cable.php?id=09RPODUBAI459>. Accessed 7 May 2015; Solomon, 'Offers, Doubts'.

³³ Farhad Khosrokhavar, 'The Green Movement', in Eric Hooglund and Leif Steinberg (eds), *Navigating Contemporary Iran: Challenging Economic, Social and Political Perceptions* (Routledge: 2012), 169-184.

³⁴ Warnaar, *Iranian Foreign Policy*, 150.

³⁵ Ansari, *Confronting Iran*, 94-5, 102-5; Paul R. Pillar, 'The Role of Villain: Iran and US Foreign Policy', *Political Science Quarterly* 108 (2) 2013, 211-31; Beeman, *The Great Satan vs. the Mad Mullahs*.

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³⁷ Parsi, *A Single Roll of the Dice*, 224.

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⁴⁰ 'US Embassy Cables: Ehud Barak Sets Deadline to Resolve Iran Nuclear Ambition, 1 June 2009', *The Guardian* (28 December 2010) <http://www.theguardian.com/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/209599>. Accessed 6 May 2015; 'Iran Talks Should Last Twelve Weeks Max', *Jerusalem Post* (18 December 2008); 'Israel Calls for Time Limit on Iran Talks', *UPI* (7 May 2009) http://www.upi.com/Top_News/2009/05/07/Israel-calls-for-time-limit-on-iran-talks/UPI-11331241695592/. Accessed 24 September 2015.

⁴¹ Putnam, 'Diplomacy and Domestic Politics', 448.

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- ⁴⁴ Parsi, *A Single Roll of the Dice*, 108.
- ⁴⁵ See International Atomic Energy Agency, 'Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and relevant provisions of Security Council resolutions 1737 (2006), 1747 (2007), 1803 (2008) and 1835 (2008) in the Islamic Republic of Iran', GOV/2009/74, 16 November 2009, 2-4 <https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/gov2009-74.pdf>. Accessed 7 September 2015.
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- ⁵³ Kaussler, *Iran's Nuclear Diplomacy*, 75; Parsi, *A Single Roll of the Dice*, 219-23.
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- ⁵⁵ International Atomic Energy Agency, 'Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and Relevant Provisions of Security Council Resolutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran', Report by the Director General, 14 November 2013, GOV/2013/56 <https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/gov2013-56.pdf>. Accessed 8 May 2015; Katzman, *Iran Sanctions*, 50-1.

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- ⁵⁸ Concern about the impact of sanctions was evident in the 2013 presidential debates; 'Presidential Hopefuls Clash on Iranian Nuclear Policy', *Reuters* (7 June 2013) <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/07/us-iran-election-debate-idUSBRE9560UR20130607>. Accessed 14 July 2015.
- ⁵⁹ Such a statement is necessarily speculative. Nevertheless, Iran's absolute refusal to compromise on this point, even in their 2003 "Grand Bargain" offer, when they feared that the Bush administration was targeting them for military attack, strongly suggests it is accurate; Trita Parsi *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran and the United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 246-51.
- ⁶⁰ Ebrahim Mohseni, Nancy Gallagher and Clay Ramsay, 'Iranian Attitudes on Nuclear Negotiations', *Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland*, September 2014 http://worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/2014/iranian_attitudes_on_nuclear_negotiations__final__091614.pdf; 'Two-Thirds of Iranians Ready to Preclude Developing Nuclear Weapons in Exchange for Lifting Sanctions' *World Public Opinion.org*, 22 September 2009 www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/brmiddleeastnafrica/640.php. Accessed 12 October 2010.
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- ⁶⁵ Alex Vatanka, 'Beyond Sanctions: The Factional Nuclear Split in Tehran', *Middle East Institute*, 21 May 2015 <http://www.mei.edu/content/article/beyond-sanctions-factional-nuclear-split-tehran>. Accessed 10 July 2015. Bastani, 'How Powerful is Rouhani?'
- ⁶⁶ Khamenei's support was far from effusive, indicating that he was hedging his bets depending upon the domestic reaction to the deal; 'Why Ayatollah Ali Khamenei Could Still Scupper the Nuclear Talks', *The Guardian.com* (1 February 2014) <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/feb/01/ayatollah-ali-khameni-scupper-nuclear-talks-iran-west>. Accessed 18 September 2015.
- ⁶⁷ Even as late as June 2015, Khamenei was expressing opposition to aspects of the deal which he subsequently accepted; 'Iran's Khamenei Rules out Freezing Sensitive Nuclear Work for Long Period', *Reuters.com* (23 June 2015) <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/06/23/us-iran-nuclear-freeze-idUSKBN0P32A420150623>. Accessed 9 September 2015. The political impact of sanctions was also mitigated by the fact that while most

Iranians thought that they had damaged the Iranian economy, they identified domestic mismanagement as of greater significance; Mohseni, Gallagher and Ramsay, 'Iranian Public Opinion on the Nuclear Negotiations'.

⁶⁸ Abulof, 'Nuclear Diversion Theory'.

⁶⁹ Ghobazadeh and Zubadaih Rahim, 'Islamic Reformation Discourses', 344; Ali Ansari, *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran*, (Cambridge, 2012), 281. See also the sources listed in note 18.

⁷⁰ 'Iran's Looming Election: Restoration or Deterioration of Regime Legitimacy?', *www.amec.org*, 11 June 2013 <http://www.amec.org.za/iran/item/1063-iran-s-looming-election-restoration-or-deterioration-of-regime-legitimacy.html#sthash.TeCTyv7z.dpuf>. Accessed 17 September 2015.

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⁷⁷ 'The President Speaks on the Iran Nuclear Deal at American University', 5 August 2015, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2015/08/05/president-speaks-iran-nuclear-deal-american-university>. Accessed 7 August 2015. Though Obama may have used this argument to rally support for the JCPOA there is little reason to doubt that his fears were genuine; see Leon Panetta, *Worthy Fights: A Memoir of Leadership in War and Peace*, (New York, 2015), 403-8; Jeffrey Goldberg, 'Explaining the Toxic Obama-Netanyahu Marriage', *The Atlantic.com*, 9 October 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/10/dennis-ross-iran-obama-netanyahu/409420/>. Accessed 16 January 2016.

⁷⁸ See Milne, 'The 1968 Paris Peace Negotiations'.

⁷⁹ 'Iran' *Polling Report.com* <http://www.pollingreport.com/iran.htm>. Accessed 3 September 2015.

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