Nuclear Negotiations between Iran and the P5+1: How Constructivism Can Increase the Chances of Reaching a Successful Deal

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In Loving Memory of My Grandfather, Nourollah Nemanim
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Declaration By Candidate

I hereby declare that this thesis, “Nuclear Negotiations between Iran and the P5+1: How Constructivism Can Increase the Chances of Reaching a Successful Deal,” is my own work and my own effort and that it has not been accepted anywhere else for the award of any other degree or diploma. Where sources of information have been used, they have been acknowledged.

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Date: July 12, 2015
Chapter 1—Introduction: The Buildup to the Iranian Nuclear Negotiations

The Middle East is an unstable, “complicated,” and “volatile” region of the world that regularly garners media attention (Brzezinski and Gates, 2004: 10), and rightfully so as the daily actions occurring there greatly affect the lives of others throughout the world. Given the number of conflicts spread throughout the region, which over the years have escalated dramatically, two states in particular, the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran, seem to have their hands in every conflict, but typically on opposing sides. Although Iran is native to the region, unlike the United States, it has no natural allies in the neighborhood (Reardon, 2012: 72). As a state governed by Persian Shia Muslims surrounded by states governed by Sunni Arab Muslims, Iran’s geographic loneliness coupled with its history of “persistent invasion by hostile forces” has left a traumatic impact on the government and people while filling both with fear, distrust, suspicion, and insecurity towards other states, thus causing the Iranian government to believe that the best way to survive and protect its state and people is through self-sufficiency (Takeyh, 2006: 61). These sentiments have become the foundation of Iran’s ambition for nuclear capabilities. Iran believes that obtaining nuclear capabilities will allow it to be self-sustainable while allowing the government to influence the region and protect Iran from foreign influence and meddling. Nevertheless, as a result of Iran’s clandestine nuclear activities, anti-Western rhetoric, and support for terrorist organization, Iran’s nuclear ambitions has consequently left it plagued with international isolation. This international isolation is due to the international community’s fear that Iran is seeking to build a bomb with a simultaneous suspicion towards Iran’s justification for nuclear capabilities and its claim that its nuclear ambitions are for peaceful purposes (Kerr, 2012: 2). Unfortunately, although nuclear negotiations with Iran began in 2003, there has yet to be a long term agreement leaving both sides of the negotiating table feeling satisfied or secure.
Chapter 2—Research Proposition

In this thesis I will argue that the nuclear negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 (the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (the United Kingdom, France, China, Russia, the United States) plus Germany) will increase their chances of successfully reaching a deal if the negotiators take a constructivist approach during the negotiation process.

Chapter 3—Methodology

For the analysis of my research proposition regarding the nuclear negotiations between Iran and the P5+1, it is important to utilize a theoretical framework that is suitable for this case as well as a new and untapped approach. I have decided to use constructivism since this approach has important elements necessary in analyzing the failure of the current negotiations. Moreover, taking a constructivist approach is useful in increasing the chances of reaching and implementing a successful long term solution because the approach respects the identities, history, and culture of each state (and its citizenry) involved in the negotiation process. In addition to applying a constructivist approach in my analysis, I will be using qualitative data such as journal articles and books about Iran and nuclear negotiations because their academic value will provide me with detailed and scholarly insight regarding the buildup to the current international situation while simultaneously allowing me to take a critical stance on the issue. I will also be using reports from the United States Congress, reports from think tanks such as the RAND Corporation and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and various newspaper articles written in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Iran all in order to have various perspectives, analyses, and opinions on the current situation. All of the qualitative sources used throughout my discussion have been
published within the last 20 years as I would like to utilize the most information as possible while maintaining their relevance and accuracy.

The academic sources used are reliable since the journal articles were obtained through the library database of the University of Groningen and all books were borrowed from the University library as well. The scholarly journals and books were either published by a university press, credible publishing firm, and/or a professional society, meaning that the sources were peer-reviewed and therefore reliable. Additionally, the sources were indented to be read by other academics in a specific area of study, which is made clear by their detailed and long bibliographies. Moreover, sources used throughout this thesis are published government reports, official government websites and published reports from independent government agencies along with known and reputable organizations and think tanks, therefore increasing the reliability of the information obtained from the sources. In terms of newspaper articles, I consider those from the United States and the United Kingdom reliable due to the reputation for each respective newspaper’s standard of objective and accurate reporting in addition to other reliable academic sources citing articles from published by these newspapers for their own research. Unfortunately, I did not utilize as many news articles from Iran regarding the negotiation process as I had wished. The Iranian government practices censorship regarding material hurtful to the state and deviating from the state regulations (Molavi, 2002: 5). Thus, while certain news sources from Iran, such as the Tehran Times, appear to have a similar level of objectivity and professionalism apparent in the news sources from the United States and the United Kingdom used in this paper, many other news sources from Iran I came across appeared to serve the interests of the leaders in the Islamic Republic, thus their subjectivity could hurt the arguments in this thesis. Moving forward, I will be discussing constructivism as my theoretical approach, using constructivism to explain past negotiation failures, and finally how taking a constructivist approach will increase the
chances of current negotiations successfully culminating, thereby opening the doors for normalized diplomatic relations between Iran and the West.

Chapter 4—Literature

Iran, like other states in the international community, is a state party to the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) (Wanis-St. John, 2012: 66). After the world saw the level of destruction and death from the use of a nuclear bomb at the end of World War II, the international community sought to create conditions where fewer states could access such damaging technology. The “Atoms for Peace” initiative was the driving force behind the NPT, where states were permitted to “develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes” while preventing states without nuclear weapons in 1968 from developing them in the future (Heirannia, 2015). Iran’s nuclear infrastructure was born in the 1950s under the Mohammad Reza Pahlavi Shah but grew with the aid of funds from the United States, the United Kingdom, and France (Ansari, 2009: 307). Iran realized early on the economic and political benefits of exporting hydrocarbon from its nuclear facilities instead of building nuclear weapons and starting a regional arms race, thus incentivizing Iran to become a state party to the NPT (Pollack, 2013: 34). Later one, the Islamic Revolution of 1979 brought Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini into power, who issued a fatwa, a religious degree, preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons in the future as they are ‘un-Islamic’ (Patrikarakos, 2012: 117). Most states in the international community at this point still believed that Iran’s nuclear facilities were for peaceful purposes.

Circumstances changed during the Iran-Iraq War from 1980-1988 when Saddam Hussain invaded Iran when the government was vulnerable and transitioning. However, Saddam was not only utilizing conventional weapons during the conflict—during those eight years that killed over a half million Iranian soldiers and half million Iranian citizens (Pollack,
2013: 10), Saddam Hussain utilized chemical weapons on the Iranian population. While Iran’s government protested against the illegality of the massive number of chemical weapons used on Iran to the international community, Iran’s government and citizens became infuriated and disdainful when most state governments ignored Iran’s claims while simultaneously aiding Iraq in its campaign (Pollack, 2013: 71). This act of international dismissal has left both physical and psychological scars on Iran resonating to this day, becoming both the source of Iran’s current insecurity and mistrust towards other states and a justification to increase Iran’s nuclear capabilities. As Kenneth Pollack states, Iran’s history consistently reinforced the idea that Iran must “acquire any and all weapons to defend itself” because it can never rely on “anyone else’s help” (Pollack, 2013: 71). Thus, for the Islamic Republic, the best weapon is self-sufficiency in all areas.

At the wars end, Iran’s government believed it must deal with the world from a “position of strength” while never compromising since that would be equivalent to compromising the existence of the Islamic Regime (Patrikarakos, 2012: 182). In August 2002, a political opposition group to the Islamic Republic of Iran exiled during the Revolution, the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), revealed Iran’s clandestine nuclear facilities in Natanz and Arak (Reardon, 2012: 14-15), later confirmed by Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); this is when the concerns about Iran’s nuclear abilities emerged. More importantly, the spark igniting the Iranian nuclear negotiations occurred in 2003 when it was revealed that Iran possessed “equipment, material, and know-how related to nuclear weapons” from the network of Pakistan’s Abdul Qadeer Khan (Pollack, 2013: 35). The revelation of Iran’s clandestine nuclear activities in 2002 made Iran willing to engage in nuclear negotiations to peacefully resolve international concerns about its facilities and to prevent a possible international attack or invasion (Kerr, 2012: 5). After an IAEA investigation of Iranian facilities in October 2003 (Kerr, 2012: 6), negotiations began
with the EU-3 (the United Kingdom, Germany, and France). Although Iran suspended its nuclear enrichment voluntarily during this time period, the multiple rounds of negotiations and agreements never amounted to a permanent solution, causing Iran to resume enrichment (Wanis-St. John, 2012: 62). Iran resuming enrichment was consequently due to EU states and Iran having mutually exclusive positions towards the limitations placed on future Iranian enrichment (Reardon, 2012: 16). Eventually, in 2008 the United States involved itself in the multilateral discussions—its first official interaction with Iran since diplomatic ties were cut in 1980 (Dobbins et al, 2011: 74). In December 2010, Iran and the P5+1 began negotiations, which at the time of writing this paper, are still running.

As previously mentioned, the contribution I wish to make with this thesis is to demonstrate the ability of a constructivist approach to increase the likelihood of successful and mutually beneficial outcome in the nuclear negotiations between Iran and the P5+1. I wish to demonstrate that taking a constructivist approach can positively change the international status quo through normalization and eventually help Iran become a partner to the West in stabilizing the Middle East. Most importantly, I hope to demonstrate that when negotiators take a constructivist approach during the negotiations, states will feel more secure in the international community and Iran will less likely desire a nuclear bomb.

**Chapter 5—Theoretical Approach**

In my search to find an approach that would best aid me in conceptualizing the Iranian nuclear negotiations and thereby applying the approach to increase the chances of success in the negotiations, Alexander Wendt’s approach to constructivism stood out the most. In the analysis of my paper, I will be using Wendt’s constructivist approach not only as a descriptive and explanatory theory but also as a particular mindset that Iran and the P5+1 would find useful in increasing their chances of success during the negotiation process.
However, this chapter will give a brief overview to the reader of the basic tenets of Alexander Wendt’s constructivist approach.

Constructivism views international relations as “socially constructed,” not given (Karacasulu and Uzgören, 2007:29), meaning societies and states create their own reality and structures through norms and beliefs. Wendt argues that when these norms and beliefs are repeated on a regular basis, they construct the identity and interests of a state and its citizens while also constructing the relationship between states. Thus, in Wendt’s approach to constructivism, the status of the international system, referring to whether the system is “conflictual or peaceful,” is not related to the concepts of anarchy and power but instead related to “the shared culture created through discursive social practices” (Copeland, 2000:188). Additionally, Wendt’s constructivist approach argues that states “do not exist independently from their social environment” but instead that the social environment plays a role in constructing the state’s identity (Karacasulu and Uzgören, 2007:32). Moreover, the shared beliefs, identities, and “normative practices are a key determinant of state behavior” for constructivists (Burchill, 2005:186), meaning relationships between states in the international system are not static but instead relative and can change under different circumstances (Karacasulu and Uzgören, 2007:33). As a result, because a state’s identity is not permanent since it was created through the “diplomatic gestures” of other states, states can “reshape” the international system through “new gestures,” reconstituting their interests and identities so that states will have a more peaceful interaction with one another (Copeland, 2000, 188). This becomes highly important when it comes to resolving or preventing conflicts between states. Therefore, countering against the Realist theorists approach of an anarchic system controlling state behavior, Wendt argues that states are not required to worry about relative power but instead can take action to “alter the intersubjective culture that
constitute the system, solidifying over time the non-egoistic mind-sets needed for long-term peace” (Copeland, 2000, 188).

In a similar manner, the “social will” of a state alone can free the state from a “dysfunctional” situation that has brought them into a hurtful and disastrous conflict (Copeland, 2000: 190). Thus, in Wendt’s constructivist approach, though a state’s identity and reality are constructed through history and human activity, “new social practices” can slowly fight the “years of socialization” that have created the conflict stricken status of a state in the international system (Copeland, 2000: 191). Additionally, Wendt explains that a state’s new identity and reality can be facilitated through interaction with other states because it helps to move states towards a structure that is “more collective and other-regarding” (Copeland, 2000: 193). Thus, Wendt highlights the need for states to engage with one another instead of participating in isolation which makes it easier for states to mistrust and become hostile towards one another. Furthermore, the constructivist approach explains that the norms, practices, beliefs, and environment constructing a state’s identity are also factors constructing the state’s threat perception and insecurity (Karacasulu and Uzgören, 2007:38). Alexander Wendt exemplifies this situation when stating that the United States views the United Kingdom’s 500 nuclear weapons as less threatening than merely five nuclear weapons in the possession of the North Korean state (Wendt, 1995, 73). Therefore, through the constructivist approach, the way states act in international relations is based on their self-image and their understanding of the world, thus in this case, the United States associates the United Kingdom as a benevolent ally who is less likely to attack compared to the aggressive and adversarial relationship that has been constructed and interpreted through “history, rhetoric, and behavior” between the United States and North Korea (Hurd, 2008: 301).

Finally, Wendt’s constructivist approach explains the shift away from the Hobbesian culture that Realist theorists expect from states towards the Kantian culture that has emerged
in recent years that many theorists associate with constructivism. In the Hobbesian culture, states viewed other states as enemies and therefore placed no limit on the amount of violence used against their adversary when feeling threatened because that violence was the “basic tool” working in favor of the state’s survival (Copeland, 2000, 194). This Realist approach used by all states until the 17th century, explains the aggressive behavior of many states and their concern with relative gains as a means to ensure the longevity of their state. However, in Wendt’s constructivist approach, the Kantian culture explains that states view one another as friends and as a result, violence and force are not used to resolve conflicts but instead states in the international system work collectively together to resolve security threats felt in the system (Copeland, 2000, 194). Thus, in Wendt’s constructivist approach, violence and the negative consequences of a war or military conflict can be avoided through a high level of cooperation in favor of peace, stability, and friendly relationships between states.

Chapter 6—Analysis

6.1 Understanding Iran

The Persian Empire and its geographic span of three continents may no longer exist (Dobbins et al, 2001: 11), yet modern day Iran still perceives itself as the “natural hegemon of its neighborhood” (Takeyh, 2006: 61). Iran’s current hubris and desire for regional domination developed over time from the insecurities of a state that has continuously battled against invasions along with political and economic interferences from foreigners. Iran is strategically lonely in its own region causing it to be suspicious of all its neighbors—it is a “Persian state surrounded by non-Persian powers, depriving it of the ethnic and communal ties so prevalent in the Arab world” (Takeyh, 2006: 62). Although Arab solidarity is rare and Arab states are suspicious of each other as well despite their commonalities, Iran’s loneliness is one environmental factor that has become part of the state’s identity. This next section
briefly covers the foreign challenges Iran faced in the past three centuries, helping to explain Iran’s mistrust and hostility towards the P5+1 during negotiations and Iran’s desire for self-sufficiency through nuclear capabilities despite isolation.

During the 19th and 20th centuries, Iran became a battleground for the Russian and British empires during the era of the “Great Game,” where the two fought for supremacy in the Middle East and Central Asia. By the 20th century, both Empires dominated the government and owned the economic institutions throughout Persia (the legal name of Iran until it change in 1935) (Pollack, 2013: 70). Subsequently, Persia became another battlefield for the armies of the United Kingdom, Russia, and Turkey to fight on during World War I (Pollack, 2013: 71). However, Iran was devastated further with the onset of the Second World War. As World War II began, Iran was invaded and occupied by the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and their allies such as the United States (Pollack, 2013: 71). During the period of occupation, these states gained administrative control of Iran’s government and institution once again. The United Kingdom relied on Iran’s oil while the Allies utilized “Iran’s road and rail network to transport more than one-third of all of the Lend-Lease aid that the Americans were sending the Russians” (Pollack, 2013: 71). By this point alone, one can understand Iran’s resentment and negative perception of the West. After World War II, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union attempted to continue occupying Iran. This attempt was only prevented by then United States President, Harry S. Truman, who ensured both states leave Iran to itself (Pollack, 2013: 71). Again in 1952, the United Kingdom made one last attempt to topple Iran’s government under Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh through military intervention, but was forbidden by the United States (Pollack, 2013: 71).

Nonetheless, in 1953, the new President of the United States, the conservative Dwight D. Eisenhower, gave the green light for the major event that Iran still refers back to as the foundation of the state’s suspicion, mistrust, and hostility towards the West. The event,
known as *Operation Ajax*, was a coup d’état inspired by the United Kingdom but implemented by the CIA which was successful in finally overthrowing the popularly elected Mohammad Mossadegh (Dobbins et al, 2011: x-xi) and consequently reinstating Mohammad Reza Pahlavi Shah and supporting him for 26 years. Through this act, the United Kingdom and the United States managed to engrave humiliation and resentment into the political rhetoric and identity of Iran (Patrikarakos, 2012: 12). In addition to the ill-fated coup, the grievances that the Iranian state holds towards Western states apparent in the current nuclear negotiation encompasses several other occasions during the 20th century. In 1979, United States President Jimmy Carter sent General Robert E. Huyser to Tehran “to try to convince the Iranian military to mount a counterrevolution” (Pollack, 2013: 71); this mentality in favor of covert action inside post-Revolutionary Iran continued throughout the 1990s, although nothing came of it (Pollack, 2014: 71). As previously mentioned, during the Iran-Iraq War, many states aided Saddam Hussein with weapons while dismissing his use of chemical weapons against Iran’s population (Dobbins et al, 2011: x-xi). Finally, the grievances include the United States Navy shooting down an Iranian civilian airliner over international waters in 1988 and the unilateral and multilateral sanctions and resolutions on Iran devastating its economy (Dobbins et al, 2011: x-xi). These events left a psychological impact on Iran’s identity as a state. Foreign interference over two centuries humiliated and hurt the state reinforcing the environmental identity of Iran’s loneliness in the Middle East and need to protect the state from outside forces.

The 21st century brought indirect foreign influence to Iran. The United States and several European states invaded Iran’s neighbor to the east, Afghanistan, in 2001 (Reardon, 2012: 68), bringing down the Taliban who brought instability to the region. In 2003, the United States invaded Iran’s western neighbor, Iraq, ultimately bringing down Iran’s former adversary, Saddam Hussein (Reardon, 2012: 68). Although the two invasions brought short
term benefits, such as the removal of two security threats to Iran while opening up a power vacuum for Iran to influence the region (Reardon, 2012: 68), the invasions ultimately resulted in more challenges for Iran and increased the state’s need for nuclear capabilities. Due to the invasions, there was increased instability in the region, an increase in Western troops on two sides of Iran’s borders, and the increased possibility of a long-term presence of foreign influence in the Middle East (Reardon, 2012: 68), meaning that Afghanistan and Iraq would be influenced and supported by foreign states. Thus, in its own region, Iran was challenged politically when surrounded by troops of adversarial states endangering Iran’s security, legitimacy, and domestic stability. Thus, by seeking nuclear capabilities, Iran is projecting its fear towards the West and the West’s capabilities to further disrupt Iran’s environment while attempting to create a method to prevent any internal disruption (Reardon, 2012: 69).

The interferences by Western states in Iran’s internal affairs and environment over three centuries developed Iran’s nuclear ambition, hostility during negotiations, and refusal to make large concessions. To increase the chance of success during the current nuclear negotiations, it is necessary to understand Iran’s identity and world perception created by these grievances. Nevertheless, Iran is by no means innocent during the nuclear negotiations. The P5+1 have their own grievances attached to their state identities which facilitated their desire to prevent Iran from ever developing nuclear weapons. For the United States, grievances begin in 1979 when Iranian students stormed the US Embassy in Tehran as a means of protest of supporting the Shah and subsequently holding the staff hostage for 444 days (Dobbins et al, 2011: x-xi). This action was followed by Iran’s connection to terrorist attacks on US Marines in Lebanon in 1983, the Lebanese hostage crisis between 1982 and 1992, terrorist attacks on US troops in Saudi Arabia in 1996, Iran supporting terrorist organizations and attacks in Lebanon, Gaza, Iraq, and Afghanistan which threatens Western troops and allies, and Iran’s anti-Western rhetoric (Pollack, 2013: 71-72). Additionally, there
was the storming of the United Kingdom’s Embassy in Tehran in 2011 by protestors while police watched and did nothing (Siddique and Dehghan, 2011), Iran’s continuous support of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, and his government’s human-rights violations (Dehghan, 2012). Ironically, Iran fails to realize that the states actions have brought hostility and anger to its front door when the state’s objective was to force foreign entities and influence out of the region (Pollack, 2013: 71-72). Iran’s misperception of current Western intentions along with Iran’s continued grudge from past events has ignited animosity on both sides. Therefore, if neither side acknowledges the past wrongdoings, the negotiations will not be able to increase their chances of a successful outcome.


The international community has been paying attention to Iran’s nuclear facilities for over 13 years now. At the center of Iran’s aspirations for nuclear capabilities is the state’s desire for self-sufficiency by producing nuclear fuel and thereby generating it into electricity for domestic consumption (Wanis-St. John, 2012: 64). By relying more on nuclear power for electricity and less on its on oil and gas as it does now, Iran believes it would benefit economically by exporting the fossil fuels that other states need (Kerr, 2012: 2). However, states are concerned that Iran’s nuclear program is not truly for peaceful purposes but instead a cover to buy time to produce nuclear weapons (Wanis-St. John, 2012: 64). Nevertheless, despite these fears and uncertainties about Iran’s ambitions, there is still no evidence that Iran has an active nuclear weapons program. Although an IAEA report in August 2003 revealed that’s Iran’s uranium enrichment program set up in 1985 (Wanis-St. Joh., 2012: 69), the United States National Intelligence Council concluded that “Iran abandoned its weapons program in 2003: (Wanis-St. John, 2012: 64), possibly to demonstrate the state’s rationality
and good-will after the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. This section will elaborate on the failed negotiations once Iran’s secret facilities became public knowledge.

European states maintained political and economic ties with Iran until the early-2000s. The revelation of Iran’s secret facilities caused three states within the European Union—Germany, France, and the United Kingdom referred to as the E3—to acknowledge the foreign policy advantages of choosing engagement with Iran as a form of conflict resolution rather than isolation and ending their relationships (Wanis-St. John, 2012: 68). The E3 reached a verbal agreement in October 2003 with Iran known as the Tehran Declaration, where Iran voluntarily suspended all nuclear enrichment, permitted repeated inspections on its facilities, and continued open negotiation. In exchange, the E3 made “ambiguous commitments” to assist Iran in obtaining “easier access to modern technology and supplies in a range of areas” (Wanis-St. John, 2012: 70). This agreement eventually frustrated Iran because the government believed it was receiving no tangible benefits from its suspension. The Paris Agreement, signed on November 15, 2004, was an extension of the Tehran Agreement and opened Iran’s facilities to more rigorous inspections while suspending Iran’s research and development activities once again (Wanis-St. John, 3012: 73).

Iranian leaders and negotiators began expressing their disapproval of the dragged out negotiation process which they believed was at the expense of Iran. The Islamic Republic’s President, Mahmood Ahmadinejad, stated his doubts on reaching a successful conclusion in 2005 because he claimed the negotiation process was disproportionately more favorable to the European states and demeaning to Iran (Wanis-St. John, 2012: 75). This expression of doubt and disapproval may have inadvertently paved the way for increased tension between both sides of the negotiations and an inability to reach a successful outcomes both sides could stand behind. Thus, everything the E3 had worked towards fell apart towards the end of 2005 as Iran declared in August that it would resume its “uranium conversion activities, while
continuing to suspend other enrichment-related activities” (Wanis-St. John, 2012: 75). By 2006, the E3 demanded more stringent adjustment’s to Iran’s policies and actions or be forced to face the United Nations Security Council for repercussions (Wanis-St. John, 2012: 78), fueling Iran’s hardliners to threaten continuation of enrichment while cutting the number of inspections the IAEA could have on Iran’s facilities. Eventually, the United Nations Security Council, to the opposition of Russia and China, passed its first set of resolutions against Iran in the fall of 2006 (Reardon, 2012: 18). Consequently, the end of the year formed the P5+1 (the permanent five members of the UN Security Council (the United Kingdom, France, China, Russia, and the United States) plus Germany), as the negotiating body which is still in effect today. Still, the United Nations imposed a second round of sanction in 2007 causing Iran to announce less cooperation with IAEA inspectors (Wanis-St. John, 2012: 83-84) and eventually causing Iran to resume enrichment in 2008. The stalemate led to another round of sanction in March and an incentive package in June where Iran could continue to enrich uranium but was prohibited from expanding the size of its current program, which Iran rejected (Reardon, 2012: 20). More UN resolutions against Iran and the beginning of unilateral sanctions by individual states began in 2009 after the incentive package rejection (Reardon, 2012: 24) and the revelation in September that Iran had a second secret uranium enrichment plant in the mountainous area of Fordow (Borger and Dehghan, 2014).

In the same year, the P5+1 offered Iran a “tentative agreement to export much of Iran’s enriched uranium in exchange for Western-supplied fuel nodes for its medical research reactor” (Maloney, 2014: 24). This deal was believed to give the negotiating parties a fair tradeoff yet Iran explained its inability to take the word of its negotiation counterparts due to past transactions regarding fuel swaps (Wanis-St. John, 2012: 85). Iran claims that in the past when it purchased its uranium from foreign sources, the companies withheld Iran’s payments without sending the product or granting Iran a refund (Wanis-St. John, 2012: 85).
received a justification from the governments’ of the companies stating that due to the “fall of the Shah’s government,” the compliance clauses of their contracts requiring the delivery of purchased material was null and void (Wanis-St. John, 2012: 85). If negotiators would have taken a constructivist approach at this point in the negotiations, the chances of actually reaching a successful deal may have been very high. If the P5+1 at the time realized that Iran’s identity as a state was filled with mistrust and grievances such as this particular fuel-swap incident, the P5+1 could possibly have made the tentative agreement more secure for Iran by attaching collateral to ensure Iran receives the material it purchased in the future. For example, if the companies Iran would be purchasing fuel from decided to hold Iran’s funds again, Iran would be permitted to resume and expand its enrichment. Thus, both the P5+1 and Iran have incentives to hold up this part of a tentative agreement because Iran wants its fuel and an end to international isolation and the P5+1 do not want Iran to enrich uranium domestically at such high levels and thus prefer Iran purchase its fuel for international security reasons. Therefore, since the negotiators from all states took an approach Realist theorists would expect and focusing on their own relative gains and state securities, the negotiations were unable to successfully conclude.

As a response to Iran’s decline of the tentative agreement, June 2010 saw another round of UN sanctions implemented while the United States Congress approved stricter unilateral sanctions against Iran as well (Wanis-St. John, 2012: 85). The negotiation process seemed to be failing at this point, and all parties involved were culpable. The negotiators from the P5+1 were failing to understand the uncertainty and ambiguity Iran was being served throughout the process, which ultimately increased tensions on both sides. The P5+1 “mistakenly concluded that Iran would permanently forgo the development of a nuclear fuel cycle in exchange for the opportunity to apply to the World Trade Organization” (WTO) while continuing trade negotiations and other pertinent issues with Europe (Wanis-St. John,
2012: 87). Iran mistakenly assumed the P5+1 had ulterior motives and were imposing their will on Iran creating Iranian negotiators unwillingness to give up the certainty of nuclear enrichment for the uncertainty of ambiguous promises (Wanis-St. John, 2012: 87). Thus, by acting in the way that Realists theorists expect and approaching the nuclear negotiations as a zero-sum game while concerned about the relative gains of their individual states instead of the absolute gains for the international community and global security, the negotiators from all states continuously diminished any chance of success from occurring over the years.

The P5+1 met again in December 2010, January 2011, and April 2012, none of which produced positive results. The tension and stalemate at this time cause the United States to tighten its unilateral sanctions against Iran yet again (Reardon, 2012: 25). The process of engagement that initially started to resolve a conflict of interests had now became a confrontation game filled with threats from both sides of the negotiations. Iran still has not weaponized and continuously states that it has no intention to do so, yet the peaceful engagement that started in 2003 is now filled with coercion and non-cooperation from all parties involved (Wanis-St. John, 2012: 64). During the time of this writing, negotiations between the P5+1 and Iran continue and the sanctions have escalated while Tehran has increased the number of centrifuges it has installed for enrichment in addition to working with heavy water reactors for the process (Borger and Dehghan, 2014). The focus of current negotiation deals with the notion of breakout capacity, which is related to the number of centrifuges Iran has in place. The higher number of centrifuges Iran has for enrichment, the more quickly Iran would be able to create material for a possible nuclear weapon if it decided to do so (Borger and Dehghan, 2014). The concern now is the possibility of Iran increasing the number of centrifuges without the IAEA noticing and thus preventing states from having a sufficient amount of time to react. Given the past clandestine activity by Iran, the P5+1 is
demanding that IAEA’s monitoring on Iran be dramatically enhanced to prevent the threat of a secret program hidden in another secret location (Borger and Dehghan, 2014).

The goal throughout the whole negotiation process and the initial reason why the E3 chose engagement over isolation is to find a cooperative and peaceful way to prevent Iran from becoming the tenth nuclear weapons equip state that could threaten others and spread its influence. Moreover, the international community wants to prevent another world war, especially one using nuclear weapons. During the current phase of negotiations, Iran has stated its willingness for IAEA “managed access” for inspections on nuclear facilities and military sites (Associated Press in Tehran, 2015) while agreeing to reduce the number of centrifuges down, shrink its current enriched uranium stockpile, convert its research center at Fordow, and suspend its enrichment for at least 15 years (Mitchell, 2015). For all these concessions, Iranian negotiators demand immediate relief from sanctions crippling the Iranian economy, hurting the regular citizens more than the political elite, and preventing necessary pharmaceutical products from entering Iran (Iran News Daily, 2013). Nonetheless, the P5+1 state sanctions will be phased out over time once Iran demonstrates continued cooperation, compliance, and non-clandestine activity (Mitchell, 2015). Unfortunately, it appears that years of failed negotiations has left a shadow of skepticism on both sides preventing a successful agreement that feeds the basic needs and requirements of each state from being reached.

6.3 Iranian Intentions: Why Iran Should be Trusted

David Patrikarakos summed up Iran’s recent history that has played a large factor in creating the current state’s mentality towards the world in the best way possible:

“Over the last century Iran has experienced two revolutions, two world wars (and a resulting occupation), a coup d’état, the end of a centuries-old tradition of monarchy,
the arrival of an Islamic Republic, a devastating war with Iraq, a rupture with the
world's last remaining superpower, seemingly endless sanctions and international
isolation. The country has emerged into the twenty-first century unsure of itself and of
its place in the world and the Iranian consciousness is accordingly sundered: a strong
sense of Iran's importance combined with the insecurity of a 'fallen' nation”

Although Iran is proud of its history, it appears the regime wishes to distance itself from the
events of the last century and instead show their modernity and progress, both of which
would be achieved without any foreign assistance or interference. In their eyes, the best way
to accomplish this goal and demonstrate their state’s prestige is through the development of
nuclear capabilities. A nuclear program, which utilizes a higher level of technological
capability, separates modern and the modernizing countries (Partrikarakos, 2012: 29), and
when achieved, its prestige morphs into a part of a country’s national identity. Although it is
a “fundamentally intangible quality,” in international politics prestige has the ability to build
a state’s power through reputation rather than the other way around (Patrikarakos, 2012: 28).
Instead of improving other areas domestically, having nuclear capabilities can display to the
world that Iran is a modern state in the international community. Moreover, since prestige
relies on the perception of others (Patrikarakos, 2012: 81), Iran has already managed to
change its reputation and gain power internationally—no other state meets regularly with
Thus, this is one of the simplest reasons why the P5+1 should trust Iran in terms of
nonproliferation.

Nuclear capability and the discussion of Iran one day possibly weaponizing is enough
to give Iran the prestige, power, and influence it desires while changing its international
reputation and acknowledging the Islamic Republic’s legitimacy; it does not need nuclear
weapons to accomplish that. In addition, nuclear capabilities symbolize Iran’s modernity, progress, and distance from the developing world. Furthermore, if Iran were to build a bomb, it would not only face a regional arms race diminishing the impact and power of its tentative nuclear arsenal but it would likely ensure a direct conflict with Iran against the United States that would devastate Iran since the number and power of Iran’s weapons would be no match those of the United States (Pollack, 2013: 69). The Islamic Republic’s reputation would more likely get hurt if it developed nuclear weapons, which may be the reason why Iran repeatedly states its efforts are peaceful while referring to the fatwa banning nuclear weapons.

Patrikarakos continues his argument by stating that Iran does not wish to develop a nuclear weapon because it does not want to disrupt the status quo of the “international order,” but instead Iran wants its “rightful place within the order” so its voice can be heard and its own fears and ambitions acknowledged (Partrikarakos, 2012: 290). Iran is pragmatic: it wants more engagement with the world, not less, and as demonstrated with North Korea, isolated states are the ones that desire bombs, not states integrated and contributing to the international society (Lawrence, 2015). If Iran wished to disrupt the status quo, it would easily have done so by now by leaving the NPT long ago instead of engaging in nuclear negotiations for over a decade. Moreover, if Iran does weaponize, both Russia and China—the two states that helped Iran’s economy survive and minimized the severity of UN sanctions over the years—will be compelled to cut all ties with Iran and join in implementing harsher and more devastating multilateral sanctions against Iran. This will completely isolate Iran and “paralyze the Iranian economy” worse than it already is, causing more suffering to the Iranian people and the government (Pollack, 2013: 56).), a scenario demonstrating again why Iran is not seeking nuclear weapons but merely domestic capabilities for self-sufficient.

Ironically, Iran’s nuclear program is the Islamic Republic’s “ultimate expression of its desire for acceptance” in the international community and the modern world. However, it
appears that the international community refuses to accept a possibly “rogue” state
developing a certain level of nuclear capabilities as a peaceful and modern partner—a refusal
specifically linked to their lack of interaction and engagement with Iran—thereby creating a
fear that Iran may one day attack its adversaries with nuclear weapons (Patrikarakos, 2012: 291).
Nonetheless, Iran’s persistence for nuclear capabilities is marred to it history which has
repeatedly taught Iran that in an “unforgiving world,” acceptance can only be achieved
through a position of strength and power (Patrikarakos, 2012: 291). Thus, nuclear
capabilities, not nuclear weapons, will give Iran a position in the international order it has
wanted since the Islamic Republic established over 35 years ago. To demonstrate their
peaceful intentions, the Iranian government claims it is “playing by the rules” by allowing
“thousands of hours of IAEA inspections” to produce evidence showing Iran’s compliance
with the NPT (Adebahr, 2014: 12). Additionally, Iran points to the example of its neighbors
that are more politically unstable—India, Israel, and Pakistan—who are not state parties to
the NPT and weaponized outside the treaty, yet have neither been isolated nor had rigorous
sanctions and resolutions implemented against them but instead of maintained close alliances
with many Western states (Adebahr, 2014: 12). Furthermore, Iran’s nuclear intentions should
arguably be trusted because the country promotes nonproliferation in other areas. For
example, with respect to chemical and biological weapons, the Islamic regime is explicitly
against their use or development and advocates for the complete elimination of chemical and
biological weapons as a result of being “one of the few victims of deadly non-conventional
weapons attacks” during the eight year was against Iraq (Adebahr, 2014: 14).

Finally, Tehran point to the five states with nuclear weapons and state parties to the
NPT (the United Kingdom, France, the United States, China, and Russia) who have a double
standard when it comes to Iran. The NPT has three pillars: nonproliferation, disarmament,
and peaceful nuclear energy, however these five states emphasize the first pillar and ignore
the second one (Heirannia, 2015). These states not only have increased their number of nuclear weapons (Heirannia, 2015), but have demanded Iran eliminate its facilities for nuclear energy or face severe consequences. The five states themselves are violating “a formal and specific obligation” in Article VI of the NPT for disarmament (Adebahr, 2014: 14) frustrating Iran because these states are not held to the same level of accountability as Iran. This double-standard in the eyes of Iranian officials therefore begs Tehran to question why it must be the only nation to eliminate its arguably peaceful domestic enrichment.

Moreover, this situation causes many critics within Iran to believe that the former imperialist powers who now have technologically advanced weapons, still withhold the imperialist mentality and as a result, are still attempting to impose their will and way of life on other less powerful states who do not have the same capabilities or hold the same status in the international community. Thus, although Iran is subject to a double-standard, Iran’s promotion for non-proliferation for other dangerous weapons and the government’s cooperation with inspections and NPT guidelines demonstrates that Iran’s intentions are not to develop nuclear weapons and therefore that Iran will follow through on any deal reached and eventually becoming a partner in peace in the long run.

A repetitive concern is that once Iran develops nuclear weapons, it will distribute nuclear weapons to the various terrorist organizations Iran funds in order to do its bidding while escaping any blame. However, if Iran really wanted to do damage on a large scale, it would have found a way to pass chemical, biological, and/or radioactive material to these terrorist groups to use on an attack right now. Nonetheless, Iran has “never sought to mix its support for terrorist groups” and weapons of mass destruction (Pollack, 2013: 68)—this would most likely not change if it were to ever go back on its word and develop nuclear weapons. Iran has not done such a thing because it understands the “crushing retaliation” it would receive for this action in addition to the lack of full control Iran would have on the use
of the distributed nuclear weapons (Pollack, 2013: 69). Iran has no way to ensure how, when, and where these types of weapons would be used and therefore does not trust the various terrorist organizations it funds possessing such deadly weapons. Once the terrorist organizations have the weapons in their control they can hit the intended target, choose their own, or not use them at all. Thus, this ambiguity would give Iran more anxiety and cause further international isolation which is the opposite of what Iran wishes to ultimately achieve. Moreover, the international community must keep in mind that “no regime in the history of the nuclear age has ever been known to transfer nuclear material to a nonstate [sic] group” (Pollack, 2013: 69); this includes Iraq, who widely used weapons of mass destruction during the Iran-Iraq War, Libya, who was “notorious” for its state sponsored terrorism during the Muammar Qadhafi regime, and finally North Korea, a nation and government that are “so opaque, so unpredictable, and so bizarre as to make the Iranians seem bland and transparent by comparison” (Pollack, 2013: 69). Furthermore, if Iran wished to partake in covert action involving nuclear weapons, it would use its own Quds Force and Intelligence Services as they are considered a “far better vehicle” to carry out an action for the Iranian government than “unpredictable and uncontrollable” terrorists (Pollack, 2013: 69). Thus, given the precedent that other less stable and more rogue states have set by not passing their nuclear weapons to non-state actors, Iran would not be different in this respect.

The final concern about Iran’s sincerity throughout the negotiations and the state’s ultimate intentions has much to do with enriching fuel. A possible deal would include Iran halting its domestic enrichment completely in return for purchasing reactor fuel from foreign companies to use domestically. This measure is considered more cost effective and cheaper than Iran producing its own fuel (Lawrence, 2015); Iran has been against this measure causing many critics to believe that this means Iran wants the fuel to produce a bomb. However, Iran is not concerned about a cheaper way to obtain reactor fuel because the
government believes their domestic nuclear power reactors are long term investments for the states, eventually amounting to more profit and success, especially because the reactors are meant to last for decades (Lawrence, 2015). Therefore, Iran is more concerned about a secure and permanent method to access fuel for years to come than about saving some money upfront, specifically because of Iran’s past cooperation with the West and IAEA and paying for foreign reactor fuel and technological-transfer, only to never received physical material or receive its money back for its purchase, thereby reinforcing Iran’s desire for self-reliance and self-sufficiency demonstrated through its desire to maintain a level of domestic nuclear capability. Moreover, although the West points to Iran’s clandestine nuclear activity, those actions were most likely Iran’s only option in obtaining fuel for domestic needs after other states backed out of the fuel swap program (Lawrence, 2015). Furthermore, the international community should not be suspicious that Iran is willing to compromise and limit the number of centrifuges it has domestically even if the number falls below an “industrial scale” but is still very insistent on continuing a level of domestic enrichment (Lawrence, 2015). By having running centrifuges, even if the number is small, it allows Iran to keep its “centrifuge expertise in a healthy and advanced state” while leaving open the option to rely on itself in case history repeats itself and the international community decides it will no longer supply Iran with material it purchased (Lawrence, 2015).

The intelligence of many states shows that Iran halted any program to develop a nuclear bomb in 2003 and has never reinstated the program again (Lawrence, 2015). On the other hand, Iran has been further isolated and thus forced to become self-reliant and find ways to become self-sufficient in most areas, especially the nuclear sector. The harsh sanctions against Iran did not bring the country to the negotiating table as many Western hard-liners like to promote. Iran was willing to negotiate in 2003 before sanctions escalated and willing to make concessions in a deal much better than any agreement that could be
reached currently (Lawrence, 2015). The increased isolation has instead caused Iran to become an expert at enriching fuel while making Iran distrustful towards the West, skeptical of making a deal, and against any complete disarmament of their nuclear facilities so history does not repeat itself. Many states could easily break out of the nonproliferation treaty, however the only state that has done so to date is North Korea, therefore possibly foreshadowing Iranian circumstances if the West does not change its policies towards Iran. When states become politically and economically isolated, they seek nuclear bombs (Lawrence, 2015) and therefore we should trust Iranian peaceful intentions, engage with the state instead of furthering the isolation, and reach a deal that understands the grievances of the parties involved so there is long term success, nonproliferation, and peace.

6.4. Negotiation Failure and the Obstacles in the Way

The notion of mutual trust is an important concept in the international system. We trust that state sovereignty is to be recognized and respected, trust that states will act civil towards one another (Wendt, 1995: 76), and most importantly, we trust that states will not trick or manipulate each other for their own benefit. However, in the eyes of some, the fundamental obstacle that has been the basis for failed nuclear negotiations for more than 13 years between Iran and its counterparts is due to the “lack of trust between the two sides—validated by their respective historical narratives and exacerbated by their contentious domestic politics” (Maloney, 2013: 25). The P5+1 along with their allies doubt if they can trust that Iran will adhere to any commitments it makes during the negotiation process and never build a nuclear bomb, potentially threatening the international community. Moreover, given Iran’s known support regarding terrorist organizations such as Hamas and Hezbollah (Aghsan and Jakobsen, 2010: 569), the P5+1 find it difficult to trust that if Iran gains nuclear weapons, that it will not pass the weapons or the technological know-how to weapons onto
those groups. Tehran on the other hand is unable to trust the P5+1 and their allies in light of making large concessions during negotiations regarding their nuclear capabilities as they fear it will be another foreign ploy to create Iranian dependence on Western assistance and once again force Iranian livelihood and stability in the hands of foreign entities. Thus, after all this time, what the negotiating process boils down to is building long lasting trust that will eventually become part of the historical narrative of the parties involved in the negotiations. Furthermore, this mistrust causing a failure in negotiations can be viewed from each side’s method of negotiation.

Much like the uniqueness that Iran represents in its region as a state governed by Persian Shia Muslims surrounded by states run by Arab Sunni Muslims, Iran engages in a unique method of negotiations, creating another obstacle in the way and consequently causing the negotiation process to fail time and time again. Iran’s negotiation techniques reflect the state’s cultural traits, which are products of Iran’s environment (Bar, 2004: iii). There are three sides to the Iranian negotiation technique. First, negotiators are meticulous in their preparation for discussions (Bar, 2004: iii). They have detailed notes on the topic of discussion, have a legal understanding of the topic at hand, and moreover, many negotiators form Iran have lived and studied abroad and consequently have the advantage of retaining in depth knowledge of the negotiating tactics of the other side and their cultural tendencies.

Second, during negotiations, Iran’s negotiators are known to mainly focus their arguments towards short-term benefits (Bar, 2004: v). During the talks, Iran’s negotiators will seldom offer or accept an agreement or deal where the benefits will come much later (Bar, 2004: v). This sentiment present in their negotiating technique is associated with Iran’s desire for trust, reciprocity, and equalization. Iranians would be displeased and disapprove if placed in a situation in which the other party will benefit more or sooner—they want to be equal in status and outcome. Thus, the only way to ensure the equalization in negotiations and a true quid
pro quo deal in Iran’s eyes is to create a deal where the benefits will be immediately shown. However, this side of Iran’s negotiating technique has been troublesome over the several years and has facilitated the failure of the negotiating process since the West does not want to give Iranians immediate benefits. Due to past clandestine activities, failure to inform the IAEA of enrichment activities, and anti-Western rhetoric, the P5+1 negotiators cannot trust the Iranians and believe it would be dangerous to grant them anything which would benefit them immediately instead of being phased in. Thus the mistrust of Iranian negotiators and the belief that benefits should emerge in years to come has only increased Iran’s hostilities, animosity, and mistrust of the West and has been another obstacle that has caused negotiations to repeatedly fail over the years.

Finally, the last side of the Iranian negotiation techniques is the most complex and is the cause of much miscommunication, frustration, and mistrust. Iran’s negotiators are “allusive and indirect” in their word choice but also rely on interpreting messages through context such as “non-verbal clues” (Bar, 2004: iii). This cultural method of negotiations is indeed in stark contrast to the culturally Western line of communication, especially during negotiations, which relies on directness and finding a “lowest common denominator language in order to ensure maximum and effective mutual understanding of the respective intents of both sides” (Bar, 2004: iii). Therefore, one can argue that negotiations have been failing the past several years due to the stylistic differences of communication between the two sides of the nuclear negotiations. Whereas the United States and its European counterparts say exactly what they mean and what they want from the other side, Iran’s negotiators are more ambiguous and dance around with their desires during the negotiations so that their true intentions are not always clearly known until much later when they have more information from the other side. Consequently, tensions and frustrations increase on both sides as a result of the miscommunications from cultural practices used during negotiations from each side,
inevitably becoming obstacles preventing a successful negotiation process that has ultimately been failing in each round of talks. In sum, it appears that both sides of the nuclear negotiations are playing the same game but each side is using a different set of rules for the game in order to win.

The final factor and the latest obstacle in the negotiation process that has hindered any progress and will most likely be the cause of another round of failed negotiation with Iran has to do with the United States Congress, and more specifically, the Republican Party elected to the United States Senate. Although current United States President Barack Obama is in favor of reaching a deal during the current round of negotiations, the same cannot be said about the Republicans in the United States Senate. On March 8, 2015, 47 Republican Senators signed a letter warning that if a deal is struck during the Presidency of Barack Obama, it become an executive agreement since Congress did not approve it, and therefore can be thrown out the window when the next president takes office (Rosen, 2015). Moreover, by writing, signing, and publishing this letter directed at the leaders and diplomats of Iran, the Republican Senators indirectly threatened the Iranian regime and the nuclear negotiation process simultaneously. Furthermore, the Republicans in the United States Senate in their letter continued to explain that they will do whatever is in their power to “kill a deal with the Iranians, even after it’s already been signed” (Gharib, 2015). Thus, these 47 Republicans are not only stating clearly that they will make themselves an obstacle in the current rounds of negotiation but that in any future talks, they will be there to prevent a successful deal from occurring.

Although the United States will still be bound under international law to follow through with a tentative deal regardless of who is in charge of the presidency—which the Iranians are aware of (Gharib, 2015)—this is still an large obstacle that will resonate with the Iranians. The actions of these Senators increases hostilities during the current (and possibly
future) negotiations by demonstrating an absence of trust, thereby causing the Iranian camp to believe that one or all the parties involved in the P5+1 talks do not trust Iran’s sincerity with respect to their nuclear concessions and claims for peaceful ambitions. As a result, Iran may continue its distrust of the other parties and forego engaging in a deal altogether.

Furthermore, due to the actions of the US Senators, if these select Republicans are successful and if the next president does end a deal signed with Iran, the rest of the world will doubt the “president’s general ability to meet US commitments and devastate the foreign policy authority essential for every president” (Rosen, 2015), thereby causing the rest of the world to act more skeptical towards the United States and their statements. Ironically, as President Barack Obama stated, these 47 Republicans of the United States Congress have created an unlikely “coalition with the Iranian hardliners, who also seek to block a deal at any cost” (Gharib, 2015).

The Republican members of the United States Senate are against granting any realistic deal with Iran and therefore have made themselves obstacles in the way of the nuclear negotiation process for three main reason, all of which circle around the concept of trust. First, those 47 individuals against a deal believe Iran is receiving too many benefits. In their eyes, allowing Iran to maintain a small number of centrifuges while allowing any of Iran’s nuclear facilities to operate, regardless of their purpose, will make it easier for Iran to eventually break the agreement and create a bomb that will not only threaten the West but also create a nuclear arms race in the region and further destabilize it (Beauchamp, 2015). The lack of trust is demonstrated by believing that any domestic abilities in Iran is a threat to the world. However, the dream of the Senate Republican of complete nuclear disarmament and eliminating any amount of enrichment domestically in Iran is not feasible. This demand would never be accepted by Iranians, which they have been stating from the beginning, since their nuclear program gives them self-sufficiency, even if it is to a small degree. As Deputy
Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi of Iran stated, the economic and scientific benefits the nuclear facilities provide Iran are highly important to the Iranian society and its state’s pride (Beauchamp, 2015). Thus, through the Iranian lens, demanding the dismantlement of all facilities in addition to the elimination of all enrichment would be asking Iran to give up its foreign policy and its self-sufficiency while forcing it to damage its own national pride. Therefore, whether the Republican members of the United States Senate wish to recognize it or not, any deal with Iran at any time will include some degree of trust in Iranian claims and a level of domestic enrichment capabilities because there is no way to negotiate with nationalistic sentiments and domestic survival.

Second, the Republican have created an obstacle for the negotiation process because they believe a deal eventually lifting all economic sanctions and UN resolutions against Iran will thereby allow Iran to become more aggressive and on a much larger scale, resulting in a further destabilization of the region (Beauchamp, 2015). For the hard-liners in the United States, they do not trust that Iran will use the increased funds entering the country on its own people and the nation’s own infrastructure. They instead believe that the additional money flowing in once sanctions are lifted will be used to fund Iran’s support of various extremist groups while also opening the door for Iran to pass a nuclear bomb or its technology to these groups. However, “no country could transfer nuclear weapons without running a high risk of being found out,” according to Kenneth Waltz (Waltz, 2012). Thus, if those groups used nuclear related weapons, not only would the world know it was a result of Iranian doing, but it would also result in Iran getting the blame and receiving some form of retaliation. In addition, no country would be able to control or predict what terrorist organizations would do once they have the weapons in their hand, who they would target, and where they would use it. This uncertainty is very dangerous and Iran would most likely not risk its own domestic welfare and stability on an unreliable entity. Finally, history has shown us that once states
obtain the bomb, they become more vulnerable to greater powers, since they become potential targets that must be balanced out, which “discourages nuclear states from bold and aggressive actions” (Waltz, 2012). The leaders of Iran are considered more rational that those of Maoist China and Stalinist Russia (Fitzpatrick, 2008: 81), who also never used a nuclear bomb on their Western adversaries. Yet the United States and Western European states were able to live with and eventually work with these two nations regardless of their nuclear weapons arsenal. In the eyes of the Iranian leaders, Iran should be treated no different, especially when its neighbors in the Middle East, such as Israel, Pakistan, and India have weaponized and yet the world has not ended. This lack of trust on behalf of the Republicans and the assumption that Iran will always be an evil entity with ulterior motives will inevitably increase hostilities and mistrust in the long run, inevitably causing another failure in negotiations.

The third reason why Senate Republicans are making themselves obstacles to the possible nuclear deal with Iran is because they criticize the lack of rigorousness in inspections and believe the deal overall will not be strict enough, both of which allow Iran to build a nuclear bomb down the line, either through cheating the system or building a bomb after deal has expired (Beauchamp, 2015). These last criticisms are adding more salt to the Iranian wound. It not only fails to acknowledge that Iran needs a level of domestic enrichment for its internal stability and its political legitimacy, but it also denies any value of Iran’s word when they sign the negotiations. Additionally, this last criticism simultaneously refuses to acknowledge the historical grievances Iran has felt from Western powers, where on several occasions Iran has been subject to foreign entities controlling its nation’s future while stripping power away from the Iranian government and forcing the Iranian people to become dependent on outsiders. Furthermore, it is not far-fetched to say that the alternative that Republicans in the United States Senate have been advocating for would result in war
The demands being made from Iran on behalf of its nuclear facilities are demands that Iran has consistently stated they will not accept. Iran wants to make a deal where all states are making compromises, not just Iran’s negotiators (Heirannia, 2015).

The impossibility to achieve these goals is known by the Senate Republicans yet they continue to make them. These individuals disapprove of the current government in Iran—mainly a result of Iran’s actions in the Middle East, its anti-US sentiments, and support of terrorist organizations—and have been vocal about it over the years, even to the point of advocating for forcible regime change (Brzezinski and Gates, 2004:42). The aggressive language used hinting at a military option to forcibly change the leadership of Iran “evokes the problematic history of US involvement with the 1953 coup that unseated Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh” (Brezeninski and Gates, 2004: 42). Thus this language concerned with relative-gains is counter-productive because it will entice nationalistic sentiments in Iran while causing Iran to actually develop nuclear weapons in order to protect itself, its people, and their interests against military strikes. Unfortunately, these 47 Senators do not believe they can trust the Islamic Republic or their nuclear negotiators demonstrated by their unwillingness to cooperate with the Iranian diplomats with unfeasible demands, their unwillingness to acknowledge Iran’s historic grievances, and Iran’s need for self-sufficiency. This in turn causes the Iran’s negotiators to mistrust the ultimate goal of the P5+1 during negotiations and focus on their own state’s relative gains, as Realist theorists would expect. Due to their rocky past, many of Iran’s negotiators and leaders do not trust the other Western states because they believe that once they fully dismantle all their facilities and technological capabilities, they will inevitably be attacked and their country will be thrown into chaos. The point of the negotiations is to prevent Iran from going nuclear but nevertheless, the actions and statements of the Senate Republicans in the United States Congress are causing both
current and future negotiations to fail while inevitably becoming the reason why Iran would
decides to weaponize for its own protection.

There have been various forms of obstacles in the way of mutually beneficial nuclear
negotiation over the years. However, the world must keep in mind that no matter how
difficult negotiations can be, it will without a doubt be easier to prevent Iran from developing
nuclear weapons than fighting another war in the region—and a nuclear one at that. The
negative impacts of Afghanistan and Iraq have left the international community scarred and if
another war in that vicinity erupts, it with destabilize Iran, further destabilize the region, and
force Western countries to rebuild an Iran—a nation who is historically resentful of any type
of foreign interference. If an agreement is reached during the P5+1 negotiations and the
United States Congress is the factor in blocking the deal, the United States will be viewed by
the international community as the party to blame for the failure, not Iran. This action will
cause countries to “question the present sanctions,” international solidarity built over the
years will erode, and furthermore, as British ambassador Sir Peter Westmacott put it, the
“international community would be pretty reluctant, frankly, to contemplate a ratcheting up
further of the sanctions against Iran” (Salvin, 2015). Iran’s hatred and mistrust towards the
West, especially against the United States, will intensify while Iran will be able to do as it
pleases with no oversight, and the entity to blame would inevitably be the United States.
Thus, if these individuals in Congress continue advocating for certain policies and demands,
it might cause Iran to walk away from the negotiating table forever. And if Iran ever decides
to participate in negotiations again, Iran will need more of a reason to trust the West and
more concessions benefiting Iran in the long run rather than demands stripping Iran on what
it believes is its national right. All in all, in order for current negotiations to increase their
chances of success, the constructivist approach must be taken.
6.5 The Perfect Timing for Negotiation Success

William Zartman, an American professor, claims the reason why certain negotiations are able to reach successful outcomes while others continue to fail has to do with when negotiations take place, or at a point of “ripeness” (Zartman, 2010: 5). Ripeness refers to a point in a conflict where parties have recognized they have reached a “mutually hurting stalemate,” or a point where both sides believe they are in a painful deadlock, and if the conflict intensifies further, neither side will be granted a victory, and therefore the parties need an alternative strategy, or a “way out” to resolve their differences and end their pain (Zartman, 2010: 5). Pain in this circumstance refers to the costs or losses, be they “physical, financial, or less tangible” due to the stalemate,” that each party feels (Zartman, 2010: 13). In this case, pain for the P5+1 states includes the loss of thousands of lives over the years due to funded attacks by Iran throughout the Middle East. Additionally, due to the reoccurring attacks by Iran and its proxy organizations, the stability, security, and democratization efforts the P5+1 states have been working towards for over a decade are regularly jeopardized and set back in years of time, effort, and labor (Pollack, 2013: 71-72). On the other hand, the losses and costs include the increased presence of troops from foreign states surrounding Iran’s borders has diminished Iran’s regional influence along with the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientists in order to hinder Iran’s progress (Heirannia, 2015). Economically, the stalemate has cause a surge in prices for oil and natural resources for the P5+1 and other states while simultaneously damaging the Iranian economy by barring it from the global market. Thus, these conditions have brought to the attention of the P5+1 and Iran that they are in a mutually hurting stalemate and need to find an alternative method to end their current pain.

Most importantly, the sanctions and resolutions have prevented much needed medicine to enter Iran, causing patients to suffer and other’s to die without the necessary
drugs. Thus, this is not only causing pain and losses for Iran domestically but in a manner of speaking, shows that the United States who is the producer of the majority of the drugs, is arguably violating the basic rights of Iran’s citizens explained in the Fourth Geneva Convention (Iran News Daily, 2013), which goes on to hurt the reputation of the United State of America. Furthermore, since Iran cannot obtain these in need pharmaceutical drugs, Iran depends on “international criminal networks” to illegally smuggle in medicines and at skyrocketing prices (Iran News Daily, 2013). Thus, the increased presence of international criminal organization networks as several negative consequences hurting all states involved in the nuclear negotiations. The presence of criminal organization networks creates destabilization in Iran and in its neighborhood, further hurting the efforts that states have globally participated in to stabilize and democratize states in the region while minimizing corruption. It also allows the criminal network to make large margins of profit without being taxed and thereby increasing the flow of money in the pockets of criminals that could be used for further illegal and dangerous activity, increasing the amount of money flowing out of Iran’s devastated economy, and decreasing the amount of money that funnels back in to Iran’s economy. Finally, by relying on international criminal networks for pharmaceutical drugs that Iran needs, it simultaneously increases the power of these racketeering groups and their ability to control state interests and shacking up the international status quo, which would hurt Iran by inevitably throwing it into domestic chaos while further hurting Western troops already in the area and increasing the amount of time, money, and lives that Western states will need to dedicate to stabilize and rebuild Iran and its infrastructure which may lead to more grievances towards Western states in the future. This issue further demonstrates why Iran and the West must find a “way out” of their current situation by reaching a nuclear deal.

A cue to other states that Iran and the P5+1 are willing to find a “way out” of the deadlock can be seen with a change of state leadership. A change in state leadership, such as
replacing a hard-liner with a soft-liner or a political conservative with a political liberal in the higher levels of power can indicate party readiness to resolve the conflict (Zartman, 2010: 15). By changing the leadership, the party has demonstrated that they do not agree with the policies of that previous individual in power as he or she may be the factor that increased the state’s and its citizen’s level of pain. Therefore, only by choosing a different individual who perceives the situation differently, can the state eventually return to a more peaceful and better situation. This political shift can be viewed in both Iran and one of the P5+1 states. In 2008, the United States elected a President from the Democratic Party, Barack Obama, whose views on engagement with Iran after years of isolation was a complete contrast to the hawkish mentality towards Iran demonstrated by the administration of former Republican President George W. Bush. The Bush administration’s stance on Iran included complete isolation, economic destruction, and possible regime change through military efforts, which ultimately caused a hindrance of any progress in the negotiation efforts while increasing Iran’s frustration, hostility, and grievances. In 2013, Iran also saw a shift in its head of state. The hardliner President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad—who was a regular and outspoken critic of the nuclear negotiations and most interaction with Western states, thus also preventing progress in the negotiation process—was replaced by a more progressive Hassan Rouhani, who like the leaders of the P5+1, was also in favor of engaging with Western states, participating in negotiations, reaching a deal, and becoming an active member of the international community. Thus, although the parties to the negotiations have suffered pains and losses, the shift in political leadership in the United States and Iran, who were the two active preventers for a deal successfully being reached, demonstrated a point of ripeness has been reached because of their desire to end the mutually hurting stalemate and find a “way out” that each party could benefit from.
6.6 Increasing the Chance of Negotiation Success through Constructivism

Alexander Wendt argues that in constructivism, material objects, such as nuclear weapons, are given value and meaning by states and their actions in the “structure of shared knowledge” they are surrounded by (Wendt, 1995: 73). This is why in the aforementioned example, the United States fears more the five nuclear weapons that North Korea has in its possession rather than the 500 nuclear weapons of the United Kingdom. Although the United Kingdom has a larger nuclear arsenal in this scenario, the United States views North Korea as a threat to its livelihood whereas the United Kingdom is viewed as an ally and partner thus less likely to attack the United States. These two different perceptions are consequences of the function of “shared understanding” present in the social structure that states have created (Wendt, 1995: 73). Thus, when it comes to the United Kingdom, the United States is dealing with a security community whereas with North Korea, the United States is dealing with a security dilemma (Wendt, 1995: 78). Moreover, in Wendt’s approach to constructivism, social structures exist not because of the power or “material capabilities” of states but due to the practices of states that reinforce their identity and their relationship to other states (Wendt, 1995: 74). For example, the Cold War created a social structure of shared knowledge that was the governing force of the 20th century (Wendt, 1995: 74). The shared knowledge of this era was the foundation of the way states acted towards one another, determined who was an ally and who was a foe, and determined what policies states would implement. However, once states stopped acting based off of this structure of shared knowledge, the Cold War in essence was over (Wendt, 1995: 74). Since states no longer reinforced the old identities and relationships, the old identities and the old structure of shared knowledge essentially disappeared and were replaced with new perceptions, policies, relationships, and diplomatic gestures. Using this example can be very advantageous for the nuclear negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 in increasing the chances of success through the constructivist approach.
Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran and the following hostage crisis, a structure of shared knowledge was created. For years, the notion of Iran as a dangerous state attempting to shake the international order has been continuously reinforced by statements made by states, their relationship with Iran, and the policies in place against the Islamic Republic. These structure of shared knowledge essentially governed power relations and the international system since 1979. In this structure of shared knowledge, Iran is viewed as an enemy, rogue state that cannot be trusted. It is viewed as a state that wants to ruin the status quo, threatens Western troops and lives with terrorist attacks, and if ever in the possession of a nuclear bomb, would attack states it disliked. Additionally, this structure of shared knowledge views Iran as a state who is trying to spread its influence and power and therefore must be stopped. On the other hand, this power knowledge from Iran’s perspective views the P5+1 as imperialist power who are still attempting to impose their will on less powerful states. The P5+1 are viewed as states that want to eliminate the Islamic Republic and who are not opposed to attacking and invading Iran in a similar fashion that Iraq and Afghanistan were subject to. Finally the P5+1 in this shared knowledge are viewed as states making Iran’s economy crumble and threatening Iran in its own neighborhood.

This structure of shared knowledge has created hostilities, mistrust, grievances, and a resistance to compromise during negotiations and thus repetitive failures in the negotiation process. Therefore, one way to increase the chances of success during the nuclear negotiations through the constructivist approach is to essentially stop acting on the basis of this social structure in place for over three decades between Iran and the P5+1. If the P5+1 and Iran stop reinforcing the structure of shared knowledge that has been in place since 1979, it increases the probability that the animosity and hostility present in the current negotiations will diminish. That also means that it increases the probability that the fears that states have between one another, their security concerns, and how they act on those concerns, such as
through sanction implementation or terrorist attacks, will also decrease or be completely eliminated in favor of opening a path for friendship between states in a new social structure developed through new shared knowledge. As a result, this change in the social structure will help rid the international system of the security dilemma it is facing with Iran and help create a security community where states can work together for a common goal or benefit, and thus increase the chances of success in the nuclear negotiations. This is possible because the states will no longer be acting upon the old structure set up in 1979, so the concept of Iran as an enemy and a threat to the status quo will die out. Iran’s nuclear capabilities in a security community will no longer be viewed as threatening and as a result, when the security dilemma no longer exists, the states will be able to promote nonproliferation together elsewhere in order to expand the peace and stability in the international system.

This paper has already discussed how relationships in the international system are socially constructed through norms, ideas, and beliefs (Karacasulu and Uzgören, 2007: 32) and therefore are neither given nor static (Hurd, 2008: 302). With respect to Iran and the P5+1 states, the antagonistic relationship present for decades is more than able to transcend into a more friendly status if the states choose to allow this. Alexander Wendt reminds his readers that cultures of states are also “not reified givens, but products of historical social processes” (Copeland, 2000: 195). For Wendt and other constructivists, the past is what matters. Past interactions and past diplomatic gestures have socialized states over time to act a certain way (Copeland, 2000: 205). However, new gestures and policies between states would be the method to change the status of their relationships in the international system. In the case of this paper, new gestures and policies during the nuclear negotiation process would allow the P5+1 states and Iran to move away from the Hobbesian culture of states as enemies towards the Kantian culture of states as friends (Copeland, 2000: 195), thereby creating another method where the constructivist approach will help increase the chances of success in
Alexander Wendt agrees that international politics is an anarchic structure and that states will always do their best to survive within that structure (Wendt, 1995:72). However, Wendt explains that hostilities, arms racing, and war are all avoidable in our structure, not inevitable consequences in an anarchic system that we are forced to deal with (Copeland, 2000: 198). States cause themselves to fall into the unfortunate circumstance of conflicts because of their “social practices, which reproduce egoistic and militaristic mindsets” (Copeland, 2000: 198). Therefore, it is the fault of the P5+1 and Iran that a security dilemma has been created regarding Iran’s domestic nuclear enrichment and that it is each state’s social practices that have reinforced hostilities and their aggressive behaviors preventing progress and success during the nuclear negotiations—not the fault of living in a system of anarchy. This reinforces the idea that states create their own reality and that an anarchic system does not determine how a state will act. As a result, Wendt’s constructivist approach creates an opportunity for the P5+1 and Iran to not only prevent a war and an arms race from occurring but also creates an opportunity to end their current antagonistic relationship and thus increase the chances of success during the negotiations through the utilization of new gestures. The new gestures by states may go against their current tendencies and approach expected from Realist theorists who worry “constantly about survival and therefore about relative power” (Copeland, 2000: 198). However, in turn, it allows the states to “transcend their past realpolitik mindsets” by implementing newer policies and practices that consider
other states and their reality, in hopes of creating a future resembling a Kantian culture where states in the international system are friends who can work together instead of enemies that must violently eliminate one another (Copeland, 2000: 198-9). The gestures that will be beneficial in the P5+1 and Iran nuclear negotiations are diplomatic statements of acknowledgment for past mistakes by states, which will thereby legitimize the grievances and help the states work together to create policies that encompass each states reality and needs.

Since the past shapes a state’s identity, the way states understand reality, the way states perceive other states, and the way states socialize in the international system (Copeland, 2000: 205), it would increase the chances of success during the negotiations if the states participating would acknowledge their past wrongs towards one another and the grievances that were consequently created. Acknowledging each state’s history, identity, and grievances in order to increase the chances of success in negotiations through Wendt’s approach of constructivism creates a blank slate for states to work on. It does not mean that “past grievances and historical traumas” will be forgotten and replaced with a “harmonious relationship” (Kelman, 2007: 67). Instead it means that states will no longer use the past to justify their current hostile actions towards each other when it would be more advantageous if they would look to the future filled with more cooperative and friendly interactions and the benefits that friendly relationship would bring to each state. Additionally, verbal statements given at the nuclear negotiation table acknowledging past wrong-doings by both sides have a “powerful psychological impact” that open a pathway for confidence building eventually translating into a solution (Kelman, 2007: 75). Statements are viewed as a powerful psychological tool during negotiations because they end the systematic denial of a state’s identity that has existing through generations. Moreover, when verbal statement are used, it reassures the other side that their claims of wrongdoing are legitimate, and therefore are now being accepted so current concerns can be addressed and solved during the negotiation.
process (Kelman, 2007: 75). Thus, for the constructivist approach to increase the chances of success in the nuclear negotiations, the first thing that must be acknowledged and addressed is the notion of state sovereignty.

Alexander Wendt writes that sovereignty is an “institution of mutual recognition and non-intervention” (Wendt, 1995: 79). In essence, when a state is recognized and respected as a sovereign entity, it is legitimized and therefore has an increased probability of survival in an anarchic system as opposed to states who sovereignty is ignored (Wendt, 1995: 79). This notion of respected and recognized sovereignty is a fundamental issue for Iran for over 35 years and has caused problems during the nuclear negotiations. Since the Islamic Revolution of 1979 that overthrew the Western supported Shah in favor of an Islamic theocracy, states within the international system, especially the United States, have had trouble accepting the change. As a result, the Islamic Republic’s sovereignty has not been recognized by every state in the international community, especially some key players that Iran is sitting at the negotiating table with. Many states cut diplomatic and economic ties with Iran after the transition while other states actively tried to mount a counter-revolution while over the years simultaneously advocating for forcible regime change. By ignoring Islamic Republic’s legitimate status and its sovereignty as a state by calling for forcible regime change, the Islamic Republic’s chance of survival in the international system decreases dramatically according to Wendt’s analysis. Instead, to be recognized and accepted, Iran engages in various other activities to have its voice heard and presence felt, such as supporting terrorist attacks in the Middle East and seeking domestic nuclear enrichment, all in order to ensure its survival as a state in the anarchic system. Therefore, the new gesture that the P5+1 states can make during the negotiation process is recognizing and accepting the Islamic Republic of Iran as a sovereign state and thereby ending any interventionist mentality calling for forcible regime change. Consequently, this gesture may also result in other states in the international
to do the same—if they haven’t already done so—which will increase the Islamic Republic’s chances of survival in an anarchic system according to Wendt’s constructivist approach, thus diminishing Iran’s need to participate in threatening or deadly activity in order to have its voice heard and legitimacy acknowledged. Moreover, even if Iran has a level of domestic enrichment, it will not have an urge to build a nuclear bomb for protection or deterrence reasons because the new gesture of sovereignty recognition is a step away from the Hobbesian culture where states are enemies towards the Kantian culture of cooperative and friendly states in the international system. Furthermore, the new gesture of states recognizing and respecting the Islamic Republic’s sovereignty reinforces Wendt’s constructivist approach that states create their own structure and their own reality and therefore are also the force that can help states transition out of a “dysfunctional” situation created from a conflict (Copeland, 2000: 190).

The next new gesture that will have a positive psychological effect on Iran is the P5+1 acknowledging that the considerable influence and presence of Western forces in the Middle East heighten Iran’s insecurity while making it feel unwanted and skeptical in its own neighborhood. These feelings are intensified as international isolation against Iran increases through unilateral and multilateral sanctions to the point that Iran’s economy is crumbling and Iran’s ordinary citizens, not the political elite, are the ones suffering, creating an amplitude of domestic issues for the state. In this manner, if the P5+1 reassure Iran that the sanctions will be lifted upon reaching an agreement, the chances of success will increase because Iran will be more cooperative and less hostile. This new gesture shows that the P5+1 have acknowledged that they have brought harm to Iran through high inflation, lack of needed pharmaceutical drugs, increased unemployment, and an almost non-existent banking system. Moreover, the gesture will help end the international isolation that Iran has been subject to for years and caused the state to find methods of fending for itself because it does
not have reliable partners. If Iran’s isolation ends, its interactions with the West becomes positive and the state’s fears of foreign interference diminish as Iran engage more with other states. In this manner, Iran will be less inclined to hinder peace and democratization efforts throughout the Middle East through attacks because its future will be negatively impacted by those attacks on several levels. Furthermore, by ending international isolation, the door is opened for “interstate interactions” (Copeland, 2000: 211), further increasing the chances of the states reaching a deal during the negotiations. Interstate interactions help create a state’s new perception of self and other states, essentially promoting cooperative and interactive behavior that helps to end the conflict stricken attitudes between the P5+1 and Iran (Copeland, 2000: 211). Thus, this constructivist approach will allow the P5+1 and Iran to create new perspectives and policies towards each other and thereby view each other as friends as the Kantian culture would expect states to do, allowing them to work together for collective security both currently and in the future through this gesture. Interstate interactions will also help the states transition away from the realpolitik mindsets that brought them into the conflict in the first place and instead help create a new structure of shared knowledge where states accept each other as diplomatic and economic partners, which will become their means of survival in the anarchic system in place of the elimination of other states through violence.

The next gesture that will have a positive psychological affect for Iran would be acknowledging the mistake of the United Kingdom and the United States in overthrowing Mohammad Mossadegh in a coup d’état in 1953 and reinstating and supporting Mohammad Reza Pahlavi Shah for 26 years. For Iran, this incident in their recent history demonstrates a time where Iran did not have control of its own state. This incident has also made Iran fear further foreign influence in its affairs, both due to the calls for forcible regime change through military action which revives past sentiments of a time when Iran did not have
control of its future along with the huge presence of foreign forces along its borders. Additionally, calls for forcible regime change, as previously mentioned, trigger Iran’s fears that their state will be invaded and occupied like in the 19th and 20th centuries and/or suffer the same fate as its neighbors, Iraq and Afghanistan, in the 21st century since Iran was placed on the United States’ “Axis of Evil” with North Korea and Iraq even though Iran aided US efforts in Afghanistan and stood in solidarity against the 9/11 attacks (Reardon, 2012: 69). This gesture of acknowledgement will ensure the Iran’s survival as a state while helping to reassure Iran that the P5+1 want to move away from their adversarial status and find a method where both sides are satisfied with the terms reached, thereby increasing the chances of success during the negotiation process.

Building trust and building peace are two way streets; they cannot be accomplished alone by the P5+1 making gestures through policy changes and acknowledgments of past mistakes towards Iran. Iran must also acknowledge that it took the wrong course of action by storming the United States Embassy in 1979 and holding the staff hostage for 444 days and attacking the United Kingdom’s Embassy in 2011 to demonstrate their disapproval of the two states. To the rest of the world, these actions demonstrated Iran’s lack of concern for diplomatic norms and cordiality along with Iran’s desire to destroy the status quo and shake up the international order. A gesture of acknowledgment of wrongdoing and statements that Iran will take action to prevent similar actions in the future will help reassure the rest of the world that Iran will move away from its realpolitik mentality towards a more cooperative behavior. Iran should next acknowledge its part in sponsoring terrorist attacks throughout the Middle East which consequently killed troops and civilians of Western states and their allies while also increasing instability and democratization forces in the Middle East, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan. This arguably rogue behavior of Iran by exerting its power and influence in the region against Western interests and allies directly correlates with the world’s
fear of Iran potentially building a nuclear bomb and further destabilizing the region and the world order. If Iran is willing to cause high levels of destruction, damage, and disruption through conventional weapons in terrorist attacks, the West is understandably scared of what Iran would accomplish with weapons equipped with more deadly and advanced technology. Therefore, by acknowledging and accepting Iran’s error in partaking in those atrocities—activities that have become part of the Western identity on how to interact with Iran—Iran could reassure the P5+1 that it will become a partner in peace instead of an actively resistant foe. Moreover, this gesture of acknowledgment will force the Islamic Republic to admit to the activities that it has escaped the blame from for years and therefore, states will not be hesitant to point the blame at Iran in the future if another attack occurs, which would hurt Iran as sanctions and isolation could be re-implemented and Iran’s economy and people will suffer once again.

Furthermore, for the P5+1 and Iran to have a clean state for Wendt’s constructivist approach to increase the chances of reaching success during negotiations, the next statement that Iran should make to positively affect the P5+1 psyche relates to Iran’s clandestine facilities. On two different occasions Tehran lied about the existence of nuclear facilities and domestic enrichment to the IAEA and United Nations, causing the P5+1 to believe that Iran will continue to lie about their level of enrichment unless all their facilities are completely dismantled and enrichment is fully eliminated. If Iran acknowledges the concerns of the West and accepts the fact that it must be subject to regular inspections and purchasing of the majority of its reactors fuel like other non-nuclear weaponized NPT state parties, the new gesture might help the P5+1 move past former events and see that Iran is becoming more cooperative, eventually transforming their future relationship with Iran. Finally, for the negotiations to have a fresh start and allow the constructivist approach to increase the chances of a successful solution, Iran must acknowledge its role in the prevention of a lasting peace in
the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Iran has on several occasions single handedly prevented any positive progress let alone a peace agreement from occurring between the two sides, mainly through its funding of organizations such as Hamas and Hezbollah to carry out attacks, resulting in massive amounts of violence, chaos, destruction, instability, and insecurity in the region for decades. For years, different P5+1 states have invested much time, money, and labor to help create a lasting and mutually beneficial peace agreement between the Israelis and Palestinians but Iran and its sponsored organizations have been there every step of the way to prevent that from occurring in a variety of methods. Iran does this because it views Israel as an extension of Western force and influence that does not belong in the region and therefore Iran must be the entity that forces it out. If Iran is willing to acknowledge that its efforts have prevented a peaceful resolution for this long-standing conflict, which subsequently adds to the Western identity’s fears and concerns about Iran, then the P5+1 can begin to change their perception towards and relationship with Iran. Moreover, if Iran reassures the P5+1 that it will no longer actively support preventative efforts with respect to that conflict, the gesture will demonstrate that Iran is moving away from its focus on relative gains expected from Realist states and towards the benefits reached from collective security efforts understood in the Kantian culture of cooperation and friendship between states.

Another new gesture that must be made to increase the chances of negotiation success through constructivism is changing the negotiating approach states have at the table. One of the major problems both sides encounter is miscommunication due to the different culture techniques the parties use during negotiations. Therefore, after the two sides of the negotiation process have acknowledged their past mistakes towards one another, the P5+1 and Iran must agree to use the same method and technique during the negotiating process because this will force an equalization in each party’s status. This gesture can go one of two ways: either the P5+1 can partake in the same indirectness that Iranians have been using for
years during the negotiations—which may further contribute to the current failures since productivity and progress would be non-existent—or Iran will have to agree to use the same platform of negotiation directness through the rest of the process. Although it may appear that this is to Iran’s disadvantage, in the long run, it will bring Iran more benefits in the areas it really needs. If the second option is taken for status equalization, it does not mean that Iran will forever have to give up its cultural norm of indirect communication. Instead, this means that both sides will use a method where they say exactly what they want, what they need, and by when they need their demands met so any confusion, misinterpretation, frustration, or ambiguity are non-existent during the negotiation process or after a deal has been agreed upon. If all parties participating in the nuclear negotiations agree to using directness for the remainder of the process, negotiation will be more productive and efficient while tensions and hostilities are less likely to arise because confusion and miscommunication are less likely. Moreover, if directness is used to bring about equalization, issues and desires are clearly addressed which further allows the parties to play the same game but this time by the same rules.

Finally the last policy change that must occur for current negotiations to have a successful outcome would be implementing a direct line of communication between the United States and Iran. As previously mentioned, the Republicans in the United States Senate are actively working to prevent any deal signed by the President of the United States from remaining permanent and long-term. Therefore, I propose establishing a direct line of communication between any President of the United States and either President of Iran or Supreme Leader of Iran. In this manner, if any fears and concerns arise, a party’s security is threatened, or one party believes it is being exploited by the other, Iran and the United States can directly talk through this hotline to resolve their conflicts and concerns instead of engaging in direct conflict due to miscommunications and misperceptions. This tactic of
direct communication was established between the United States and the Soviet Unions during the Cold War to prevent a nuclear war from breaking out. The successfulness of the “red telephone” between the White House and Kremlin allowed each leader to allay their respective problems, concerns, and ideas to the other instead of engaging in costly, deadly, and massively destructive conflicts, especially something as horrible as a nuclear war. Therefore, if a similar means of communication between the United States and Iran can be established, it would help alleviate concerns and complaints in a peaceful manner. This is important when it comes to US Congressional members would may oppose a deal because the critical Senate Republicans will have the ability to tell the US President their thoughts and fears, then allowing the President to directly discussing these topics with Iran instead of acting rash or hawkish. In addition, if Iran is concerned about United States activities (or the activities of US allies) in the Middle East, Iran could alternatively discuss its worries with the United States rather than using terrorist attacks to have its voice hear and force felt, thereby creating less damage, instability, and destruction in an already chaotic region. Furthermore, rather than re-implementing sanctions against Iran if it engages in hostile activities, which would hurt the economies and diplomatic relationship between both sides, the US and Iran can contact one another rather than act on their problems and creating future grievances. Hence, for a deal’s success to be long lasting without requiring either side to sacrifice their identity, this policy should be implemented in the name of peace, security, and stability.

Bringing parties to the negotiating table is hard, acknowledgment of past mistakes towards others is harder, and implementing new policies and engaging in new gestures is the hardest. However, acknowledgments make a large impact because the “systematic denial” that created high levels of fear and insecurity undermining the “other’s claim to nationhood” and right of existence will come to an end and thereby the readiness of state’s to move on from the past to increase their chances of success for a mutually beneficial deal (Kelman,
The acknowledgments that end the systematic denial of these historical traumas also goes on to reassure that one state is no longer a threat to the other state’s security or identity, hence creating a safe and comfortable environment for negotiations to take place. Moreover, the new gestures that the P5+1 states and Iran should engage in can change the conflict ridden relationship through the new gestures between the states to increase the chances of a win-win solution, which relies on creating a new discourse between each side, using positive language, and a shifting away from power politics during the negotiations in favor of “mutual responsiveness, reciprocity, and openness” for the new relationship to become long lasting (Kelman, 2007: 102). If both sides acknowledge and accept the past and implement the new policies, Wendt’s constructivist approach will then have the ability to increase the chances of the states reaching a successful deal during the nuclear negotiations, which will ensure long term benefits for all states without any of them sacrificing their identities.

6.7. Benefits of a Negotiated Deal

Iran’s economy is a disaster. Inflation and unemployment have skyrocketed and international financial institutions are barred from interacting with Iran thus preventing Iranian companies from receiving loans, credits, or investors, forcing many businesses to work under a barter system in order to keep Iran’s economy functioning (Fitzpatrick, 2008: 47). More importantly, oil exports, Iran’s “main source of revenue,” have dramatically and continuously fallen over the years due to the international sanctions and resolutions in place against the government (Adebahr, 2014: 4), which further causes distress, frustration, and resentment in Iran’s citizens towards the government and its policies. It appears that to an extent, the sanctions and other international efforts to curb Iranian activities have been able to place much pressure on the Iranian government but not in the way the West wishes. Instead
of caving in from the consequences of the international efforts, Iran’s government has been gripping on tighter to their power to prevent any domestic unrest and political upheaval (Adebahr, 2014: 4), and therefore are neither changing their policies nor shifting away from an Islamic regime. However, if a nuclear deal is reached now during the negotiation’s time of ripeness, especially through the lens of Wendt’s constructivism, the West may eventually see a shift in both its relationship with Iran and a shift in Iran’s government that many Western states have been longing for since the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

If a nuclear deal is reached in the very near future, Iran has the possibility of transitioning into the reliable partner the West has been wanting for decades. Iran will no longer views Western forces in the Middle East as a threat to Iran since a deal will make the various states Iran’s political and economic partners. As a result, Iran will no longer focus its efforts on foreign troops throughout the region to prevent their influence that would hurt Iran internally and externally. Therefore, once Iran halts its attacks, it could become a force to help stabilize other states such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and even a force to team up with to fight against ISIS by ridding the region from extremist groups while helping rebuild regional infrastructure and creating legitimate and peaceful states in place since that will make Iran’s borders safer in the long term. Moreover, when Iran becomes a political and economic partner after a deal is agreed upon, international banks will be able to work in Iran and with Iranian businesses while foreign companies can begin to re-invest in Iran and its infrastructure. This will increase job opportunities for Iran’s citizens both domestically and internationally, which will positively affect the economies of the states involved in the interactions. In addition, since Iran has the “second-largest gas reserves, third-largest oil reserves, and significant rare earth deposits,” Iran re-entering the global market will bring down prices for highly needed products benefiting Iran’s economy along with benefiting individuals and businesses globally (Winsor, 2014). Furthermore, when any state’s economy
is doing well, the state will take pragmatic and rational steps to maintain their economic health because it will reflect on the happiness of the people and the stability of their nation. Thus, Iran’s leaders would not risk the state’s success, domestic stability, and integration into the global market by building a nuclear bomb or continuing its support of terrorist organizations, especially because the level of threat it feels from foreign countries and businesses should decrease when their livelihood and success becomes intertwined.

Likewise, if a nuclear deal is reached, creating engagement and normalization with Iran, travel will increase between Iran and states throughout the world. An increase of travel would help local businesses, produce tax revenue, and increase the amount of money flowing into the states through all around purchases thereby positively affecting Iran’s economy and that of any state Iranian’s travel to. More importantly, an increase of travel increases the amount of exposure to other cultures, political systems, people, and ways of life. Therefore, there is a high probability that once the Iranian economy becomes healthier and unemployment goes down, Iranians, especially the youth, will be traveling to Western states. The exposure to different lifestyles without censorship and religious regulations but with free and fair elections, representative government, and all around freedoms, is likely to stir up displeasure with the restrictions in place in Iran and cause many to rally against the Iranian government to demand changes, liberties, and opportunities. If and when this happens, this will be the regime change that the West has wanted for over 35 years. The current government will do all that it can to maintain its hold on power while simultaneously trying to keep the Iranian people content so they do not revolt against the government. Therefore, it will cause a gradual change in the state instead of another revolution, where Iran’s government will progressively change policies and laws to keep their power and to keep the citizens happy while making Iran more open and democratic. The people themselves will change the government towards a more democratic entity. When the people make the shift
towards democracy and more Western friendly state instead of a foreign force, the state is viewed as more legitimate and stable. Therefore, a major benefit of reaching an agreement during the nuclear negotiations, although it may take several years to occur, is that the Iran’s citizens will cause a regime change and create a states that will be more aligned with Western interests and more of an open and free democracy.

6.8. Devil’s Advocate: Why Distrust towards Iran is the Right Move

Iran and its society have been known to be highly secretive by nature (Pollack, 2013: 4). This may have been a survival method over time or it may have been a method of deception and manipulation. Many attribute the secretive nature of Iran to the Shia concept known as taqiyyah, or the “practice of dissimulation” (Pollack, 2013: 4). In essence, this Shia Islam concept both forgives and encourages individuals to “mislead others about one’s faith and other important information” (Pollack, 2013: 4). This religious lie that permits concealment and deception may be an extension of the Iranian state’s secrecy regarding the true nature of their nuclear facilities. The religious concept of taqiyyah would thereby allow the Iran to deny its true intentions for a nuclear weapon as a method of survival so that the nation is neither threatened nor attacked. Thus, the international community should arguably be suspicious of Iran’s intentions due to the concept of taqiyyah. Iran as a theocracy running under Islamic law therefore arguably uses the concept of taqiyyah to aid Iran in safely achieving its national goals. This Iranian diplomatic strategy of deception, much like the Iranian indirectness during negotiations, as a result uses language purposely intended to confuse other parties (Gold, 2009: 189), which could be used to threaten its Western counterparts during nuclear negotiation, all while staying within the bounds of their Shia Islamic religion.
The concept of *taqiyyah* also brings up suspicions regarding Khomeini’s *fatwa* prohibiting Iran from developing or obtaining nuclear weapons since it would be un-Islamic. *Taqiyyah*, or “dissembling to avoid danger” causes the validity of the *fatwa* to become weak in the eyes of the international community. The Iranian state can merely have the religious decree in place to deceive other countries for Iran’s own livelihood. This concept falls in line with criticisms of the constructivist approach stating that “deceptive actors” will “state-manage” a situation” to cover their “true views” and create an illusion that they are being cooperative while in reality they are merely serving their own personal interests (Copeland, 2000: 202). Moreover, the Iranian government has reversed and ignored other *fatwas* “when reasons of state made them inconvenient” (Pollack, 2013: 58). As two Iranian specialists, Michael Eisenstadt and Mehdi Khalaji, assess that the Iranian government can ignore and reverse these *fatwas* in the interests of the Islamic regime, or in other words, through the Persian concept of *maslaha* which has guided Iranian politics for generations (Pollack, 2013: 58). Furthermore, the father of the Iranian Revolution and the Islamic Republic’s first Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, stated that the “Islamic Republic could destroy a mosque or suspend the observance of the tenets of Islam if its interests so dictated” (Pollack, 2013: 58-59). Thus, since the Supreme Leader is the individual with near absolute authority in Iran and thereby the individual that decides what the best interests are for Iran, then in the eyes of the Iranian government, the Supreme Leader can easily cancel laws, fatwas, and policies with no objection or religious consequences, all to keep Iran and its interests safe. As a result, if the Supreme Leader allows the burning of mosques if it will benefit the Iranian state, there would be no problem for the Iran to lie to other states regarding its nuclear intention or about actually building nuclear weapons (although stated as un-Islamic) if in the end it will benefit the interests of Iran’s regime. Therefore, the West has more of a reason to be suspicious of the statements, claims, and actions of the Iranian government throughout the
negotiation process because it seems nearly impossible to tell what the government really means or wants.

A Persian adage states that “a lie which brings benefits is preferable to a truth which causes damage (Bar, 2004: 34). This adage, simply referred to as dooroughe maslehati, is a reason why the deception, dissimulation, and cleverness conducted in the name of taqiyyah is a highly respected trait in Iran for diplomats, regardless if it is conducted by an Iranian or foreign envoy (Bar, 2004: 34), and thus can be used as a justification by Iran’s leaders for their actions and statements. If an individual, or in this case a state, will benefit, it is socially and religiously acceptable therefore to use lies and false pretenses in order to achieve a desirable outcome. This mentality causes problems in building credibility between the states needed to increase the chances of a success during nuclear negotiations and after a deal is reached because the manipulation, deception, and misleading information used as a method of engagement in a diplomatic setting guarantees a failure in diplomacy since Iran and its statements cannot be trusted during the nuclear negotiations. Moreover, it appears that under the concepts of taqiyyah and maslahat, Iran is concerned with misleading the P5+1 since it believes by doing so that Iran will have the upper-hand during the time that the P5+1 is attempting to build trust since the P5+1 states believe that will open a pathway for cooperation (Gold, 2009: 189); this has been demonstrated in the “long track record” of Iranian mullah’s and leaders lying, cheating, and deceiving the P5+1 and IAEA officials regarding Iran’s nuclear facilities and ambitions (Hannah, 2015). Iran actions in this scenario demonstrate the criticisms towards constructivism because Iran is “pretending to be peaceful” during the negotiations and claiming that is shares a “certain conception of the world” with the P5+1, when the opposite is actually the truth (Copeland, 2000: 202). In history, we saw Hitler and his followers deceive other states and leaders in order to achieve a position of “military superiority” in order to expand his power and influence, which should be a noted
example for the international community to take a position of “prudent mistrust” towards Iran during the nuclear negotiations (Copeland, 2000: 202). The international community should arguably continue to doubt Iran’s claims about their peaceful nuclear intentions during the negotiation process and Iran’s desire of maintaining a level of domestic enrichment because in the end it would lead to dangerous consequences for the P5+1st and any state Iran dislikes. The rules of engagement during the negotiations go out the window because of taqiyyah and maslahat cause Iran and the P5+1 to play the same diplomatic game under but under different rules (Gold, 2009: 189).

Moreover, if the normalization of state relationships with Iran resumes and communication between Iran and the West increases, it does not mean that states will automatically have friendly and benign relationships. The Iranian leadership is arguably fearful that if engagement and normalization occur, Iran’s “revolutionary credentials” will “tarnish,” thereby hurting its reputation and legitimacy in the region (Dobbins et al, 2011: 94-95), arguably an incentive for Iran to eventually deceive its Western counterparts and eventually develop nuclear weapons secretly during the years of the deal or after the deal has expired and a reason as to why Western states should doubt Iran’s peaceful claims. Additionally, history shows that the regimes that the United States has engaged in have eventually been overthrown while those that have been more isolated have maintained their survival (Dobbins et al, 2011: 95), incentivizing Iran to limit is engagement and the amount of foreign influence it still allows into its state, regardless of its form, and still finding methods to protect its government and ensure the regime’s survival. Furthermore, given Iran’s support of terrorist organizations, subversive behavior, and secretive actions, developing a “nuclear shield” might actually “increase Iranian risk-taking behavior” (Dobbins et al, 2011: 105), further preventing the international communities ability to stop or deter Iran from potentially damaging actions. Iran acquiring nuclear weapons would arguably
help the Islamic Regime survive longer and become more oppressive against its own people and more aggressive throughout the Middle East.

Despite Iran’s statements, the international community must keep in mind that Iran’s desire to change its reputation along with its desire for prestige, power, influence, and self-sufficiency are the main driving forces behind Iran’s nuclear ambitions. Nevertheless, the international community must recognize that “ultimate expression of power at the level of international politics would be obtaining the nuclear bomb that Iran denies it is seeking” (Adebahr, 2013: 8), and therefore we should arguably neither trust Iran during the negotiation process nor after a tentative deal expires. If Iran develops a nuclear weapon it will become a deterrent for “forcible regime change,” which Iran has been subject to on several occasions, because Iran will be granted a level of domestic stability since the country can no longer be attacked by foreign forces (Adebahr, 2014: 8). Moreover, Iran would have the ability and confidence to exert its influence and power throughout the region because there will neither be a neighboring country to balance Iran’s nuclear power nor will any state, especially the P5+1 states, be forcibly able to stop Iran from extending its government and its interests. Thus, many critics argue that if the P5+1 continue to make concessions during the nuclear negotiations, Iran’s enrichment program will become legitimate and Iran will eventually pass the nuclear threshold, limiting the world in the way it perceives and responds to Iran. Furthermore, if the international community allows Iran to pass the nuclear threshold as a result of their increasing number of concessions during the negotiations, the influence and power of the West—mainly the UN Security Council permanent members and Germany—will dramatically suffer and diminish in the eyes of the international community because they “misplaced confidence in Iran’s intentions” (Fitzpatrick, 2009: 62). Therefore, if Iran becomes a regional hegemon and a status to be reckoned with in the Middle East, the blame and any future Iranian use of power and influence in the region will be placed on the West.
Likewise, the failure of the P5+1 to prevent Iran from becoming the next nuclear weapon-state would subsequently encourage proliferation in other parts of the world because Iran’s enrichment was eventually legitimized by Western states after years of conflict, sanctions, and negotiations (Fitzpatrick, 2009: 72). States would begin to view the NPT as “superfluous” (Yadlin and Golov, 2012: 12), which may end the idea of global nonproliferation and end the oversight of nuclear facilities to maintain international peace and stability. Increased nuclear proliferation throughout the world will without a doubt increase security concerns internationally and increase instability in various regions.

Another reason to be doubting Iran is because its intentions may start a regional arms race that could be globally devastating. For example, the first state that might develop nuclear weapons if Iran passes the nuclear threshold is Iran’s main and historic regional rival, Saudi Arabia (Pollack, 2013: 86), possibly followed by Egypt (Hemmer, 2007: 51-52). If Iran developed a nuclear weapon, it would essentially limit the types of actions other states can take against Iran because the international community would not want a nuclear war breaking out. Iran know this and Saudi Arabia and other states neighboring Iran do as well. Thus, Saudi Arabia would be the first to weaponize instead of relying on the United States’ nuclear umbrella because the United States abandonment of other pro-Western governments in the Middle East during the Arab Spring (Yaldin and Golov, 2012: 11), thus causing the Saudi regime to take its security into its own hands and creating a regional balance of power against Iran. The Saudi regime has told British and American officials that if Iran nuclearizes, they will follow and nothing will stop them (Pollack, 2013: 86), mainly due to the threat a nuclear weaponized Iran poses to the Al Sa’ud family. The Saudi regime has security concerns regarding Iran being nuclear capable because throughout the region Iran backs one group and the Saudis back another (Pollack, 2013: 84), often bringing the two states into constant conflict. Additionally, Iran has tried to overthrow the Saudi regime on four separate
occasions while attempting to destroy Saudi oil facilities in the Gulf region (Pollack, 2013: 84). Iran also created its own version of Hezbollah in Saudi Arabia in the 1990s that have attacked Saudi Arabia domestically while simultaneously attempting to entice the Saudi Shia population to rise up against the government in support of a powerful Shia government (Pollack, 2013: 84-85). Finally, the Saudis are afraid that Iran would disrupt the oil flow out of the Strait of Hormuz by closing the Strait and preventing crude oil from leaving the region while partaking in attacks on Saudi refineries decreasing the amount of barrels of oil that could leave the region, both financially hurting the Saudi regime and the international community reliant on oil exports for an unknown amount of time (Kemp and Allen, 2013: 114). Thus, as a result, Saudi Arabia fears that if Iran passes the nuclear threshold, Iran will be more aggressive, bring domestic chaos into Saudi Arabia, damage oil prices, and shake up the regional status quo, and there is very little other states can do to stop Iran and as a result, Saudi Arabia must take its security into its own hands by gaining its own nuclear weapons in order to ensure the state’s survival. Furthermore, the Saudi regime fears that its influence and power, especially as the arguably the current unofficial speaker for the Arab Sunni population (Pollack, 2013: 84), will dramatically decease if Iran has nuclear weapons and therefore Saudi Arabia must develop nuclear weapons as well and the existence of the Saudi state would be a thing of the past (Pollack, 2012: 84).

Even during the Mubarak regime, the government viewed Iran as a nuclear power as a strategic threat especially considering that Egypt and Iran cut diplomatic ties in 1979 as well (Yadlin and Golov, 2012: 16). Therefore, Egypt would also arguably develop nuclear weapons if Iran ever weaponized because it wishes to maintain its regional influence (Yadlin and Golov, 2012: 16), which consistently clashes with Shia Iran along with both states desire for regional hegemony. During Egypt’s height of regional influence, the state had an “extensive nuclear development program (Pollack, 2013: 89), therefore it would not be too
much of a hurdle for Egypt to pass in order to achieve this possible goal. Egypt fears that if Iran nuclearizes, it would force Iran’s Arab neighbors into an arms race (Yadlin and Golov, 2012: 16), that would not only can bring regional instability but also regional insecurity because Arab states have their suspicions of each other in the similar way that that Iran is suspicious of its Arab neighbors. Moreover, Egypt would nuclearize because of its fears that Iran’s uncontrollable behavior once nuclear would have on Egypt’s borders. Iran supports Hamas, Hezbollah, and Assad in Syria, which are all in the near proximity of Egypt and could potentially bring conflict to Egypt domestically and throw the state into a dangerous and deadly domestic chaos (Yadlin and Golov, 2012: 17). Thus, in order to further protect itself and create a method of deterrence towards Iran, Egypt would also develop nuclear weapons for its state’s security and in order to maintain the state’s regional influence. If Iran does acquire nuclear weapons, the Middle East will without a doubt become more tense, unstable and dangerous and unfortunately there is major skepticism that a nuclear weaponed Iran would become more restrained but instead the belief is that Iran will actually become more uncontrollable (Pollack, 2012: 360). Furthermore, a regional arms race might spread outside of the Middle East and cause other states to desire a new form of deterrence and protection, ending global nonproliferation and opening the world to the possibility of a “unplanned, uncontrolled, and uncontrollable nuclear confrontation” (Yadlin and Golov, 2012: 22).

Thus, critics argue it is of the utmost importance that Iran be prevented in every way possible from having nuclear capabilities because Iran’s statements and actions cannot be trusted and because its possible power and influence in the Middle East can create more chaos in the world. If Iran was a state without insecurities but instead promoted peaceful behavior throughout the world and worked to maintain the status quo of the international community, the world would not be concerned about Iran’s intentions and thus causing years
of negotiations in attempts to prevent Iran from engaging in domestic nuclear enrichment. The United States doesn’t fear the nuclear weapons from France, the United Kingdom, India, and to an extent, the nuclear weapons in Russia’s possession because the United States understands these state’s intentions as a result of their history, engagement, and interaction with one another (Pollack, 2013: 64). The P5+1 and other states throughout the world do not have the same certainty regarding Iran’s intentions due to the state’s record of lying and its use of *taqiyyah* and *maslahat* as a way to legitimately deceive to benefit Iranian interests. Iran for many reasons wants to harm Western states and has done so through the funding of terrorist organizations through the years (Pollack, 2013: 64), thereby making Iran a threat that must be squashed in the eyes of many nations. Therefore, as a result, many critics to the current nuclear negotiations argue that Iran should not be trusted throughout the negotiation process and that the international community must do everything in its power to prevent Iran from having domestic nuclear capabilities and possibly passing the nuclear threshold one day, all in the interest of international stability and international security.

**Chapter 7—Conclusion**

In this thesis, my proposed research goal was to demonstrate that taking Alexander Wendt’s constructivist approach during the nuclear negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 could help increase the chances of success during the negotiation process. My goal was to demonstrate that the parties have reached a mutually hurting stalemate while laying out the grievances that need to be addressed, the new gestures that must be implemented, and the identities and cultural characteristics that must be kept in mind during the negotiation process. I believe this paper does a good job demonstrating why negotiations have failed in the past and why taking Wendt’s constructivist approach will increase the chances of success in creating a deal with mutually beneficial outcome and help the states move away from the
Hobbesian culture were states view one another as enemies towards a Kantian culture where the states become friends and can work together for their collective security and survival. The nuclear negotiations have been proceeding for over a decade and instead of reaching a successful outcome, has only created more hostilities, frustrations, mistrust, and grievances. For that reason, I believe it is time to move away from the current approaches of the negotiators towards a theory that is more encompassing of a state’s identity, nationhood, and norms.

That being said, there are clear and un-ignorable reasons as to why Iran cannot be trusted throughout the nuclear negotiations, regardless of the approach taken. Taking into consideration both *taqiyyah* and *maslahat* alone are reasons why the statements and actions of Iran cannot be trusted and why the P5+1 must still maintain their Hobbesian culture throughout the negotiation process to ensure that Iran does not threaten the security and stability of the international community. Moreover, the consequences that can arise if Iran does acquire nuclear weapons, such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt also weaponizing, the end to global nonproliferation, and the inability to control and/or deter the behavior and actions or a nuclear weaponed Iran are even clearer reasons why the P5+1 cannot simply change its structure of shared knowledge and view Iran as a friendly state. If it were as easy as to ask states, or any actor for that matter, to merely forget the past, make up with their adversary, and move on to develop a peaceful world, the world and international community would have a very different landscape. Thus, unfortunately, as novel as my constructivist approach may be to the present conflict, certain realities cannot neither be forgotten nor ignored and further research must be done to repair the relationships between the P5+1 and Iran in the future.

Nonetheless, the findings in my paper still mean that conflict of interests between Iran and the P5+1 were not the result of an anarchic system but the actions of Iran and the P5+1 who allowed their histories and past interactions consistently reinforce a conflict stricken
structure of shared knowledge. For the P5+1 states, the storming of the United States
Embassy and hostage crisis of 1979, attacking the United Kingdom’s Embassy in 2011,
clandestine nuclear enrichment, and the terrorist attacks against the forces of Western states
funded by Iran and the subsequent death, destruction, and regional instability have all caused
countries to doubt Iranian claims of peaceful nuclear capabilities and increased their fear that
Iran is building a bomb to use on its foes. The compilation of events that have become part of
each state’s identity and narrative and therefore brought the states to the negotiation table but
also caused them to disagree on the specifics of the deal hence the failure in negotiations. In
equal importance, the findings in my thesis mean that there is a lot of untapped potential in
the Iranian-Western relationship. If a deal is reached, economic, political, and social doors
will be opened, which will positively affect the global market and international relations for
years to come. Whether it is creating peace and stability in a region or a specific country in
the Middle East, dropping prices on certain necessary products, increasing trust in the
international community, or having more cultural interactions, the world will benefit by
having a mutually beneficial partnership between Iran and the P5+1 countries.

Relationships and interactions are not static in the international community, thus Iran
and the P5+1 countries relationship eventually needs to change because the current status quo
is not sustainable and will increase problems if there is a constant fear of attack by the other.
Moreover, Western states cannot keep Iran “in the penalty box forever” (Walt, 2015) and will
reach a point where sanctions and resolutions will have no effect except for consistent pain
for the implementing countries. The international community acknowledged and recognized
the legitimacy of the Soviet Union and Maoist China although they disagreed with their
ideology and goals because the security of the world could not continue without
acknowledging that the two countries were important players in their regions and in the
world; this is the same for Iran. The international community will eventually be forced to
recognize that Iran is a vital and key player in the Middle East and the best way to achieve peaceful and permanent goals in the region is to diplomatically and economically engage with Iran, not further isolation. Isolation will only cause a country to go to extreme lengths, such as building and possibly using a bomb, in order to protect itself, demonstrate its power, and spread its influence.

When discussing the Soviet Union in a radio broadcast, Winston Churchill said that “Russia” was “a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma” (Pollack, 2013: 8), yet in my opinion, this summation is more applicable to Iran along with its history, intentions, and ambitions. Iran’s actions often confuse those both inside and outside of the country. However, these seemingly confusing actions have allowed the nation to survive several centuries despite the trials and tribulations that came its way. Iran’s current government and the nuclear negotiators are arguably appealing to the same methods used in the past to ensure their survival and safety for the long term when in reality, these methods have brought more problems to Iran’s doorstep. Iran will no longer be a confusing entity when its interactions with other countries increases positively and a direct line of communication is established because Iran will become a member of and an important player in the global market and international community while simultaneously showing it is a modern state. Thus, my hope throughout this thesis has been to demonstrate that the P5+1 and Iran can reconcile their differences despite the past, feel less threatened towards one another, and eventually become partners in the international community where both sides can benefit tremendously from the interaction while keeping the world safer and more stable. However, this can only be achieved if the parties look to the future instead of dwelling on the past. I understand that many are doubtful of this process and I understand the reasons behind their fears and skepticism. Nonetheless, if an alternative approach of constructivism is not taken during the negotiation process and the histories and identities of each state and neither respected nor
acknowledged as legitimate, then the world may unfortunately be faced with another deadly, destructive, and costly global conflict— one possibly involving nuclear weapons and bringing an end to the international order as we know it.
Chapter 8—References


