Three is a Crowd

A Critical Analysis of Third Party Actor Influence Regarding the Nuclear Negotiations Between P5+1 and Iran

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The authors of this thesis would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest thanks to our supervisors, Frida Stranne and Jonna Johansson, who have provided us with support and expert knowledge. This thesis would not have been possible without their advice. We would also like to thank our classmates for support and constant motivation over the last three years.
Abstract

This thesis examines third-party actor influence on the domestic level in the ongoing diplomatic negotiations between P5+1 and Iran, with the research question being: *What demands, arguments and strategies does the Congress and AIPAC use to influence the negotiation process between the U.S. and Iran? Secondly, what are their goals for doing so?* Furthermore, the combined theoretical framework has been applied onto the material using a critical method in order to answer the questions. Legislative bills from the Congress, regarding congressional insight to the agreement, have been approved. In this pressured negotiation process with high stakes it is astounding that these actions are allowed. Due to this behavior from Congress, amongst others, it becomes interesting to study the negotiation process and its salient third-party actor influence. The results suggests that legislative actions combined with various demands and arguments, focused on mistrust of Iran, history and the security of Israel, are their main strategies to gain influence. An additional new, third, level has also been discovered by the authors of this thesis in regards to these complicated negotiations.

**Keywords:** Third-party actors, Diplomatic negotiations, Two-level game, Agenda setting
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### Acronyms

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<th>Acronym</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIEF</td>
<td>American Israel Education Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIPAC</td>
<td>American Israel Public Affairs Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E3+3 (or E3/EU+3)</td>
<td>The P5+1 is often referred to as the E3+3 (or E3/EU+3) by European countries, which is also the nomenclature used in the text of agreements with Iran</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU3</td>
<td>France, Germany and the United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>IAEA</td>
<td>International Atomic Energy Agency</td>
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<td>JCPOA</td>
<td>Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action</td>
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<td>JPA</td>
<td>Joint Plan of Action</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>P5+1</td>
<td>The permanent members of the United Nations Security Council plus Germany</td>
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1 Introduction

“We do not want the possibility of a nuclear weapon falling into the hands of terrorists. And we do not want a regime that has been a state sponsor of terrorism being able to feel that it can act even more aggressively or with impunity as a consequence of its nuclear power. [...] We do believe that there is still a window that allows for a diplomatic resolution to this issue [...] (Obama, 2012:1).

When U.S. President Barack Obama took office in 2008, a new beginning in U.S. politics, regarding the negotiations process with Iran and P5+1 started. Since the commencement, the president has been open about his will to make a difference regarding US - Iran relations. This difference is not a way to regain the relations the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran had back in the 1970s, but a new approach regarding Iran’s nuclear status. The President has also been clear on the fact that he will not allow the Islamic Republic of Iran to possess nuclear weapons, and will use sanctions and other coercive methods to make sure of it (Obama, 2013:1).

At the same time, the Middle East has developed a need for the U.S., which makes reaching an agreement more pressing. Iran has during the last few years thrived to become one of the leading players in the oil market along with its growing status among the other countries in the Middle East. Other states in the region look up to the Islamic Republic of Iran and its independence and opposition towards the U.S. In addition, the U.S. has controlled the oil and gas flow in the region for years and also has the aim to transform the Middle East into a pro-Western region (Ben-Meir, 2009:69).

In regards to this, coming to a final agreement is especially crucial not only to the actors involved but also to the rest of the world. On November 24th 2013 the Joint Plan of Action was signed with the purpose to begin talks again in order to reach a mutually agreed, long-term comprehensive solution. However, the goal of reaching a final agreement by June 2014 was not achieved. The P5+1-Iran negotiations has been going on for a decade and was negotiating a deal between 2003 and 2005 with EU3, but the United States then caused negotiations to fail. This round of negotiations has been progressing slowly but is still optimistic. Both parties’ presidents, Barack Obama and Hassan Rouhani, intend to take advantage of this opportunity that also is a historical opportunity for the countries because of their struggle with a hostile relationship for approximately thirty-five years (EEAS, 2013:1-4).

In April, this year, another step towards reaching a final comprehensive agreement was reached when president Obama and Iranian president Rouhani
signed a new, more extensive framework agreement. Even though these steps have been taken, third-party actors like the Congress and AIPAC\(^1\) still continue to influence the demands in the negotiation process with the attitude that a deal, as it is now, should not be signed (Office of the Spokesperson, 2015:1).

**Disposition**

The first chapter of this thesis accounts for the purpose, framing of issue, terminology and limitations. A historical overview regarding the U.S. and Iran will be presented in the second chapter. Thirdly, previous research based on the theory and negotiations is presented. Following this, the theoretical base of this thesis is explained, which is created by Robert Putnam’s two level game and agenda setting theory as these two theories complement each other in this thesis. In chapter five, the methodological approach and material is presented and discussed along with the theoretical framework. The analysis then takes place followed by a presentation of the results. The final chapter consists of a conclusion where the implications are presented combined with thoughts by the authors as well as future research potentials.

**1.1 Purpose and framing of question**

The purpose of this thesis is to examine third-party actor influence and their use of demands, goals and strategies in the negotiation process between the United States and The Islamic Republic of Iran. This case of diplomacy has been affected by actors with intentions to stop or affect the ongoing negotiations; henceforth this study identified the influence of third party actors in these negotiations. Seeing as the relations between the world’s leading hegemony and the Islamic Republic of Iran is tense, this deal could be important in order to stabilize the Middle East and maybe, as mentioned previously, the Obama Administration could succeed in preventing an arms race and create more insight to one of the most closed countries in the world. With this in mind our research question to examine is:

\(^1\) "Consistently ranked as the most influential foreign policy lobbying organization on Capitol Hill, AIPAC is a bipartisan American membership organization that seeks to strengthen the relationship between the United States and Israel. For more than 50 years, AIPAC has been working with Congress to build a strong, vibrant relationship between the U.S. and Israel. With more than 100,000 members across the United States, AIPAC works throughout the country to improve and strengthen that relationship by supporting U.S.-Israel military, economic, scientific and cultural cooperation." (AIPAC, 2014a:1)
What demands, arguments and strategies does the Congress and AIPAC use to influence the negotiation process between the U.S. and Iran?

- Secondly, what are their goals for doing so?

Numerous legislative bills from the Congress, regarding congressional insight to the agreement, has been voted on and approved. In such a high pressured negotiating process with high stakes at risk it is especially astounding that these actions are allowed to take place. Due to this behavior from the Congress, amongst other things, the ongoing negotiating process and its salient third-party actor influence becomes interesting to study. The U.S. Congress have a close connection to AIPAC, which is a pro-Israel lobby group in America. Since the U.S. and Israel are allies and have such close connection but totally different opinions regarding this deal it becomes interesting to see how Israel actively are trying to affect both the U.S. congress and the Obama Administration's negotiation process with Iran.

Scientific relevance

This case study of the U.S. and Iran is meaningful for both non-scientific interests as well as the disciplinary relevance. First, this study addresses the problem of third party actors who influence the negotiation process in order to advocate their own agenda along with their views and goals. Also, since the U.S. and Iran has had a troubled relationship for thirty-five years, the outcome of this negotiation process is of global interest as well. This thesis is of great relevance to the arena of non-scientific interests because it addresses a current situation, which is happening as we write. Depending on the outcome, a confrontation between the countries is a possibility and this is specifically relevant for international politics. Due to this situation, this thesis adds a certain value to the non-scientific interest arena.

In order to address the disciplinary relevance, it can be stated that the framing of question used in this thesis was developed to be of use to further research and also add usage to the field of international diplomatic negotiations. The authors of this thesis found a scientific gap regarding this field and addressed it by actively examine something of interest to a current and interesting issue of today.

1.2 Terminology - Diplomacy and negotiations

This section provides the reader with an overall explanation to the broad term that is diplomacy, which is needed in order to grasp this case study. “The conduct of relations between states and other entities with standing in world politics by
official agents and by peaceful means.” (Bull, 1995:156) This is probably the most commonly used version of diplomacy, alongside with tactics and subtle handling of relations between states that is regarded as “diplomatic”. It is also of utmost importance to distinguish diplomacy and the conduct in consular branches of the maintaining of international relations. This is due to the consular relations to private citizens and the fact that its services differ from one another and therefore often takes place on a local scale rather than on the international arena. Even though there are present plans on merging the diplomatic and consular services they still are separated (Bull, 1995:156-160).

Negotiations is a vital part in the term diplomacy. In today’s world, states are often forced to negotiate and this sometimes takes place without the help and mediation of professional diplomatists. Furthermore, central to the system of states and its functioning in the realm of international relations are diplomatic negotiations, where they play a big role. The negotiations between prime ministers and heads of state is usually only a conclusion of agreements that has undergone a long process of testing different proposals, probing and also preliminary negotiations performed and carried out by professional diplomatists (Starkey, Boyer & Wilkenfeld, 2010:3-4; Bull, 1995:173-174).

To conclude this section, diplomatic negotiations, in a strict sense, can be classified as the communication process between states that seek to accomplish a mutually acceptable outcome regarding an issue or shared concern. Without common interests there is nothing to negotiate for and without differences there is nothing to negotiate about. Negotiations are therefore a form of social interaction. This means diplomatic negotiations can consist of everything from exchange of different views and the practice of coercive diplomacy by which one party unilaterally attempts to impose its wishes on other participating actors (Carnevale & Pruitt, 1992; ref. in Brett, 2000:97; Cohen, 1997:9; Gustavsson & Tallberg, 2009:183).

1.3 Limitations

On November 24th 2013 the negotiating actors, P5+1 and Iran, signed the Joint Plan of Action (JPA) to begin the process of negotiating an agreement with the aim of reaching a settlement suited all parties (EEAS, 2013:1-4). The year of 2013 and this specific date therefore serves as a stepping point for this thesis. It is therefore most relevant to begin the analysis from this point in time since the signing of the JPA is the foundation for today’s negotiations.

These negotiations have mainly been carried out between the U.S. and Iran. One of the main and largest third-party actors in this context is the American Congress. However, this is not the only anti-agreement third-party actor that
exists. AIPAC, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee is a pro-Israel, non-profit lobby organization that interferes with the negotiation process and opposes the ratification of an agreement. Since these are the most vocally active and powerful third party actors, the thesis has chosen to look more deeply into their activities regarding this deal. Due to the fact that none of the authors to this thesis speaks Persian and does not have any other skills in that language and the lack of transparency in the Iranian government, a limitation regarding material from Iran has been done. This means the analyzed material is from a western-American point of view. However, this has been taken into consideration by the authors and objectivity has thus been especially crucial during the analysis. We only provide an analysis and conclusions about these particular third-party actors and their part in the process.

It is also of importance to understand that the negotiation process consists of two levels where negotiations take place and the salient issues that affect the outcomes, one international and one domestic level. This is further discussed in the theory section of the thesis. The fact that third-party actors tend to be concentrated on negotiations on the domestic level has led to an extraction and limitation to that level in a higher extent. To conclude this section; this thesis focuses primarily on third-party actors influencing the negotiation process, more precisely on the domestic level.
2 The U.S. and Iran - An overview

Approximately thirty-five years ago, after a group of Islamist students invaded the United States Embassy in Tehran because of a “set-in”, the nations of Iran and the United States became hostile towards each other. The story behind the indifference that these nations experienced began on November 4th 1979 (Limbert, 2009:1). The incident that took place on November 4th, 1979, was a consequence of Washington admitting the shah of Iran medical treatment two weeks earlier. A group of students, calling themselves “Moslem Students Followers of the Imam’s Path” stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and held the people working there, captive. They demanded that the Shah should be brought to justice for the crimes he committed against his own people, which the U.S. supported because of their allies relationship (Ibid). This incident was regarded as a humiliation endured by the United States and their hostage held diplomats. The diplomats were held hostage for nearly two years and during that time former President Carter planned a rescue mission that failed. This event added to the humiliation from the U.S. point of view (Tarock, 1996:161).

Iran transformed into The Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979 and Khomeini was ruling the country by the Quran. Iran had become a theocracy (Ibid). Since 1979, an existence of no war-no peace status quo, has characterized the relations between the two nations. Both nations have struggled with domestic hostility towards the other nation. The U.S. side’s hostile nature has been bolstered due to the supposed character of the Islamic Republic and its diverse internal actors. This belief tends to reduce in importance the anti-Americanism as an enduring pillar of the Iranian government. Americans are hoping for a reformist figure to change the nature of Iran’s domestic politics (Sanati, 2014:125).

It is important to not forget to view the historic background that has shaped the U.S.- Iranian relations for so long. During the Iraq-Iran war, the United States supported Iraq in order to destabilizing the Iranian government. Further, The U.S. supported Saddam Hussein during his ruling because of their differences with the Islamic Republic. This, of course, has resulted in the hostile view of the USA, from the Iranian’s point of view (Tarock, 1996:160).

From an Iranian perspective, the U.S. leaders and their domestic influences are seen as the main catalyst of U.S. behavior towards Iran. In addition to the domestic view of one another, much of the behavior of both states towards each other stems from the interplay and ultimate collision of their core national interests, posited in the shifting power changes in contemporary history (Ibid: 126).

The U.S. concerns about Iranian nuclear intentions started before the 1979 revolution. They began during the ruling of the shah and during that time the U.S.
promised Iran that they could enrich in the purpose of nuclear energy. Further, the nuclear intentions became more distinct and were exacerbated by the revolution. A central argument regarding this has been the prominence in U.S. strategic thinking of the country and its hegemony within the Middle East, while the long held desire, regardless of regime type, has been functional independence (Ibid).

Since World War II ended and more precisely, since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. has had a status as the preeminent power in the Middle East. This has been crucial to U.S. global primacy. The global economy depends on the oil and gas flow from the Persian Gulf, which the U.S. has been able to secure the physical security of by projecting conventional military force into the Middle East. This factor has given the United States an influence over the economic and political questions and actions in the region of the Persian Gulf. This preeminence has strengthened the U.S. claim to leadership in international economic affairs (Leverett & Mann Leverett, 2013:2).

Since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. has tried to coerce political outcome with the goal of consolidating a pro-American order in the region. To achieve this the United States have been putting military forces on the ground and using sanctions to get their way in the region. The United States has had problems with refusal to come to terms with Iran’s post-revolutionary order. To mention a few actions taken by the U.S. to isolate the Islamic republic of Iran, the U.S. has pressed it economically, excluded it from the mainstream of regional affairs along with isolation of the state diplomatically (Ibid).

According to Diplomat Sayed Hossein Mousavian, the U.S. and Iran has been through three periods of relationship. The third, which this thesis addresses, started after the revolution in 1979 and is described as the “most hostile type of relations”. Despite mutual grievances, mistrust, misunderstandings etc. The main task now is to look to the future (Moin, 2014:75).

Over the years, the U.S. has engaged Tehran in different ways on various issues, but these diplomatic efforts have been vulnerable due to the fact that U.S. policy regarding Iran is extremely negative, and tends to address the negative aspects of the state. No American President, has pursued rapprochement with the Islamic Republic by dealing with it as a legitimate political entity and addressing their central interests. The strategic approach that has been used repeatedly, only offers to negotiate issues that is of interests to the U.S. and not of interests to the Islamic Republic. This follows by pressure and sanctions towards the Islamic Republic as a means to get what the United States wants (Leverett & Mann Leverett, 2013:4-5).

To eventually reach an agreement you must look towards the future when negotiating. It is important to not underestimate the difficulty in overcoming thirty-five years of hostility and estrangement (Limbert, 2009:10;Moin, 2014:75).
Further, president Obama has repeatedly declared his determination to break the downward spiral that has troubled U.S.-Iranian relations for the past several years. When Obama took office, his first foreign policy initiative was to reach out to the Islamic world, Iran included (Limbert, 2015:1).

Lastly, the main goal for the Obama Administration has, from the beginning, been to neutralize the Middle East and by obtaining Iran from developing a nuclear weapon they hope that in turn it will prevent a nuclear arms race in the region, which today is troubled by conflicts and confrontations. Further, it is of special interest to the U.S. to secure its national interests and also secure its allies in that region from threats that would come with a nuclear active Iran (Coll, 2015:1).

Israel, AIPAC and the American Congress

“Many of the same forces that threaten Israel also threaten the United States and our efforts to secure peace and stability in the Middle East. Our alliance with Israel serves our national security interests.” - Barack Obama (AIPAC, 2013b:1).

Israel is the closest ally the U.S. has in the Middle East. They share the same values and with Israel’s strategic support, together they’re working on defeating common threats and supporting American values and policy for global and regional objectives in the Middle East. The U.S.-Israeli relationship stretches from close diplomatic and strategic dialogues to military and intelligence planning and exercising (AIPAC, 2013b:1). The initial agreement with the P5+1 and Iran has raised many concerns from different views and spectrums. One of these views is AIPAC, a powerful lobbying group that is pro-Israel with over a hundred thousand members. Additionally, they have a network of seventeen regional offices. It can be stated that the influence of AIPAC has been a feature of politics in Washington for a long time. Some even say that AIPAC take pride about its influence on the Congress, its senators and thrive on their bipartisanship (Bruck, 2014:1).
3 Previous Research

This previous research chapter addresses the scientific arena regarding this subject of diplomatic negotiations, two-level game and agenda setting, which this thesis contributes to. Similar case studies using suchlike theoretical approach will be portrayed in this section in order to give the reader a clear insight to the chosen field.

Scholars often argue that third-party actors influence the outcomes of disputes and negotiations in favor of their own views and objectives. This insinuates that these actors make rational choices and calculations in order to do that, however, even as true as that is, third-party actors affect more than only the outcomes but also escalation and duration of these negotiations. This therefore makes theories of third-party involvement adequate to use and apply in order to understand the dynamics of intrastate war (Gleditsch Skrede & Beardsley, 2004:379).

The main reason for the need and use of negotiations between states is the existence of some kind of common idea of wanting to communicate and reach a settlement of some sort. Israel and Syria went through a long negotiation process in the year 2000 regarding the position between the two states and the apparent disparity and discrepancy. Negotiations between these countries have consisted of domestic policies as well as regional and strategic maneuvers and considerations (Miller, 2000:118).

Much of the difficulties for the leaders in both Israel and Syria, is to establish a security within the government, which affects the negotiation process with delay. Israel’s task is to convert their sentiments towards the Golan Heights. The main problem in this entire negotiation process, for all parties, lies in the domestic level and in uncertainty of the political leaders to remain at office. Another problem was that even if Israel and Syria signed a peace treaty, it’s not of certainty that it will be followed (Ibid:135-136).

Further, the problems regarding international- domestic negotiations can be seen in the case of Saudi Arabia’s WTO accession. Saudi Arabia is a paradigmatic capital- and resource rich state. This means that it is strongly dependent on one resource but lacking in a number of administrative and institutional deficiencies. However, thanks to the oil trade, Saudi Arabia is economically sovereign and much of its negotiations are performed domestically. It was a top-down decision that made the bureaucracy fall in line and adapt to the changes (Hertog, 2008:651, 669).

This particular case shows the difficulty in international negotiation because of the presence of domestic influence, which is self-explaining since the world exists of sovereign states and (mostly) democracies. International diplomatic
negotiations are not just dependent on the international aspects, but also on the domestic arena as well which this case portrays.

Even though diplomatic negotiations occur between states, it is of importance to understand that these are not achievable without the activity of third-party actors, like organizations and individuals. In this context organizations refers to institutions such as governments, lobby groups, parliaments and official individuals for example, heads of governments and ambassadors. It is vital to be aware of the importance states/organizations/individuals plays in diplomatic negotiations (Faizullaev, 2014:276).

To further explain the theoretical approach of two-level games in other negotiations, another case is to be enlightened. In the 1950s’ and 1960s’ the Palestinian issue, which today is the Arab Israeli issue was regarded by the international community as mainly humanitarian. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency was assigned the task of giving humanitarian aid to refugees and Israel was to absorb one hundred thousand refugees within the framework of unifications of families (Bick, 2006: 447)

In this time the United Nations strived towards finding a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The United States made efforts to achieve a settlement in the Middle East relating to the refugee question. When President Kennedy took office there were other problems of more importance than the Middle East conflict but soon after taking office he initiated a problem to resolve the Palestinian refugee problem, the plan was known as the “Johnson Plan” (Ibid:448).

The negotiations between Israel and the United States over the Johnson plan were conducted at two levels. Level one negotiation was conducted between the leaders of government and the foreign policy advisors while Level two negotiations were happening around the domestic table. Both the U.S. President and the Israeli Prime Minister each consulted their own domestic political advisors on the issues. Above that, both Israeli and U.S. Leaders wanted to recruit the American Jewish Community as an influence on U.S. politics, from the Israeli side and to influence Israeli politics from the U.S. side (Ibid:450)

The negotiations resulted in success for Israel, they managed to abort the Johnson Plan. Several factors contributed to this outcome. Some of them were the willingness of non-state actors to intervene and pressure/influence its government (Ibid:467).

Regarding various types of incitements in diplomatic negotiations it has been discovered that information sharing in negotiations were closely connected with joint gains. Therefore is seems adequate to presume that information sharing becomes a significant incitement in negotiations (Ibid). This also adds pressure on media, both national as well as international, and its responsibility to inform the public opinion. Lobbying from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in
international affairs and negotiations is not an uncommon find (Gilboa, 2008:59-60).

These actors work through external pressure created by exploiting media events as well as global new networks in order to cultivate international, and in some cases global, support for their own agenda. This differs significantly from how governments conduct diplomacy. More recent domestic models suggests that governments that use PR firms and even lobbyists to some extent in its target country find it more effective than direct government-sponsored ways of achieving its aims. This conclusion may be due to the fact that the latter model helps conceal the funding sources as well as the true forces behind the communication and effort (Ibid). This highlights that governments may be the one behind lobbyists and other influential organizations that can interfere in various negotiations, regarding diplomacy as well as influencing the agenda. Focusing on influencing and promoting own agendas, there is some relevant previous research in that field. One article also recognizes, in accordance to this thesis, how different actors and their preferences affected the agenda revolving nuclear issues in South Korea. Agenda setting theory is used in order to shed light on these events as well as actors (Hermanns, 2015:265).

Furthermore, other research points to the use of agenda setting as a way of increasing the salience of an issue and therefore generates legislative influence. This particular study also takes place in the U.S. and examines the American Congress but is focused on presidents instead of third-party actors (Canes-Wrone, 2001:183). This tells us that agenda setting theory is valuable when studying these types of processes and especially third-party actors.

The previous research serves as an orientation within the field this thesis belongs to. The research provides this thesis with different aspects of the theoretical framework and starting points of the international negotiations field regarding third-party actors, the two-level game and agenda setting. This thesis has combined these three aspects into one case where they are all noticeable. With the previous research the authors wants to enlighten the reader that there is not much research that consider these three particular aspects in one specific case, but this thesis will and is therefore of great relevance in the research field of international negotiations. In the last chapter of this thesis, previous research from this chapter will be discussed in regards to the analysis conducted. This is done to broaden the field of which it is in as well as to shed light to interesting discoveries.
4 Theory

In this section the theoretical basis for the analytical framework is portrayed. The main frame of the theory has been inspired of Robert Putnam, but in order for it to have effects and render in a plausible analysis of the material, the framework has been complemented with agenda setting theory. The operationalization of our analytical framework is presented later on in section 5.1 in a shorter, structured and simplified table.

4.1 Two-level game: domestic and international interactions

The politics of many international negotiations can often be conceived as a two level game, the international and the domestic level. At the national level, you find different domestic groups who pursue their interests by putting pressure on the government in order for them to adopt policies favorable to themselves. Further, politicians seek power by forming coalitions among those groups (Putnam, 1988:434).

At the international level, national governments seek to maximize their own ability to satisfy any domestic pressure while they, at the same time, try to minimize the adverse consequences of foreign developments. Central decision-makers cannot ignore these two levels, as long as their countries remain interdependent and sovereign (Ibid).

International negotiations are pursued with different goals in mind: that no agreement shall damage the domestic political calculus (Putnam, 1988: 428-440). It is therefore safe to say that the international system has effects on domestic politics and their characters. Different forces influence the political development, for instance ideology, type of regime, specific decisions, political relationships between the negotiators, power and also various policies (Gourevitch, 1978:882-883).

You can find each national political leader at both levels, as well as diplomats and foreign counterparts. Furthermore, the negotiation table at level- two may consist of domestic policy makers such as political parties and parliamentary figures, spokespersons for domestic agencies, representatives of key interest groups and leaders of own political advisers. These actors can be classified as third-party actors since they are influencing the negotiation process in different ways and therefore often have impact on the outcome (Putnam, 1988:431-434).

International negotiations between states proceed at the domestic level (intranational) and the international level. In order for negotiations to move forward, leaders are compelled to see to the needs and concerns of domestic actors. The international representative/negotiator does this by granting concerns and building
coalitions. International negotiations focus primarily on the idea that any agreement will not cause damage to domestic actors and its politics (Putnam, 1988: 427-440).

Since world war two international governance beyond the nation state has developed. In recent decades, state-dominated international organizations has been supplemented with governance arrangements that involve public as well as private actors, or even organized entirely on a private basis. Global governance is today a favored term for explaining complex patterns of authority in worlds politics (Rosenau 1995; ref. in Jönsson, 2008:83). Issues that previously were the domain of democratic decision-making at the national level have been shifted to the international level, but the means of decision-making at this level to a large extent remain the exclusive preserve of state officials and international bureaucrats, with limited opportunities for participation by civil society actors.

Just as important democracy is on the international agenda, it is important to recognize the domestic level and democracy when negotiating between states. Democracy is today questioned when discussing world politics since the democratic decision-making is originally created on the national level. It is therefore important to acknowledge the domestic actor when negotiating internationally (Jönsson, 2008:83).

**Win-sets**

‘Win-sets’ are what happens when priorities of both parties at both levels overlap, who must ratify the agreement, and therefore creates a possibility for international negotiations to proceed. For further clarification it can be explained as a process of ratification amongst the negotiation participants, however the situations tends to be more complex than that. If an agreement is sought to be undertaken between negotiators representing two organizations it must first be ratified by their respective organizations. This is the constraint that follows any tentative agreements of a two-level basis. Therefore negotiators, as well as lobbyists and other third-party actors, seek to achieve a package deal that will be acceptable and attractive to his constituents (Putnam, 1988:434-436,459). This process is relevant for this thesis because of its explanatory feature regarding third-party influence on the different levels. In order for the reader to fully grasp this terminology a model has been made in this section to further explain the ratification process.
This model has been created on the basis of the two-level game to explain the ratification process. Due to the fact that either sides, or negotiators, must ratify an identical agreement means that a preliminary agreement on Level 1 cannot be amended at Level 2 without going back to Level 1 and reopening the negotiations there. Therefore is it essential that a final ratification either is voted for or against, and if there exists any modifications to the agreement in Level 1 all other parties must approve this otherwise it is considered as a rejection (Putnam, 1988:437).

As explained above this process takes place in two stages and negotiations are therefore different depending on which level it takes place on. Bargaining between the negotiators, using different arguments and various demands, that then turns into a tentative agreement is most common at the first level but does exist at the second level as well. Although, for this to even take place the negotiators must not expect a rejection at level two in the ratification process because this may abort the talks in level one. Formal action in level two is therefore not a necessity in order to terminate prior negotiations and the chance of a tentative agreement being formed in Level one, which shows how delicate and sensitive this process is as well as how level two ratification affects the level one bargaining (Putnam, 1988:436).
Negotiators are often seen as merely serving agents on the behalf of their domestic constituents, although Putnam and his two-level game theory argues that they are actors likely to have their own agenda and interests which they try to pursue. This means that negotiators can act autonomously and strategically within the boundaries of the domestic “win-set”, thus including all possible negotiating outcomes acceptable to their domestic constituents (Putnam, 1988:437).

Two-level game in the U.S. and Iran nuclear negotiation

This system of ratification that needs to take place domestically in order to create international agreements might seem as an uncharacteristic aspect in democracies. It should be pointed out that ratification is not always democratic in the normal sense. It is a way of reducing different political power to a common denominator (Putnam, 1988:436-437). Seeing as the ratification process is explained rather theoretical, an example is given to bring the process into life and give it another dimension. As mentioned previously a ratification of a tentative agreement in level one needs to take place in level two. Looking at the U.S. Congress, which is especially relevant in this case study, it may entail as a formal voting procedure where the constitutionally required two-thirds of the votes are necessary for ratifying treaties. Although it is not essential, it can in some cases be suitable to think of ratification as a parliamentary function (Ibid:436).

Having explained the win-set we can now conclude that for a level two constituency to take place, all possible agreements in level one that would “win” is given a proper ratification has prevailed, by being voted up or down. It is also worth mentioning that incitements of larger win-sets make a level one agreement more likely to happen (Ibid:437).

It is also important to acknowledge that this case is especially salient when it comes to the domestic level, where third party actors actively oppose the Obama Administration’s incitements on the nuclear deal with Iran. To fully analyze the effects and influence that the third party actors, on the domestic level, have on the negotiation process and its outcome the two-level theory has been combined with agenda setting theory. This is to be able to analyze the influence and strategies third party actors are using to affect the framework agreement. Seeing as international and domestic negotiations is a broad term and therefore difficult to operationalize and analyze with just this theoretical aspect, it is therefore of interest to us to combine this with the theory of agenda setting as a complement regarding third party actor influence.
4.2 Agenda Setting Theory

Agenda setting is commonly known as the media's way of influencing the agenda and it discusses which agendas and issues that will be salient and also the matter of political decision-making. It is not necessarily an institutionally controlled process but rather a more open one, and a matter of negotiations between actors with interest in the agenda and therefore trying to affect it. Power of the agenda is therefore about power as an ability to affect rather than power to make decisions. Moreover agenda setting is a way of influencing people into thinking some reality descriptions, facts or issues are more credible by using symbols, actions and words in a special way (Strömbäck, 2014:48-49).

In this thesis it is used as a theory that complements the two-level game in order to receive a better understanding regarding the third-party actor influence in these negotiations. Since Level 2 has been extracted from the two-level game theory it is of importance to complement that level with agenda setting theory to comprehend the process behind it. Thus, is agenda setting not used here for its explanation regarding media but rather as a way of looking at the bases of which actors try to influence others and different agendas as well as salience specific issues.

It is also worth mentioning framing due to its close connection to the agenda setting theory and salience. Facts can conclude that the way an issue is framed can have different as well as measurable behavioral consequences. The attributes of an issue that some actors makes salient can influence other actors’ direction of opinions and point of view. Agenda setting is therefore a process that can alter how one issue is thought of and what is thought of depending on various strategies as framing and also attributes (McCombs & Shaw, 1993:62-63).

“To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.” (Entman, 1993:52)

Due to the fact that third-party actors in this negotiation are against the achievement of an agreement, it becomes apparent that agenda setting is used as a way of means in influencing the outcome. Worth noting is even though text document is stated in the quotation above it can also be examined and discovered in actions and speeches, which is highly relevant to this case study. What Entman describes can also be incorporated to Tallberg’s thought of trail regarding influence. Tallberg refers to influencing as agenda setting as well as agenda structuring. As stated above, the standard agenda setting can be explained as the
introduction of new issues on the policy agenda. However, agenda structuring refers to issues already on the agenda, more specifically the emphasizing and de-emphasizing of these issues. This means that an actor, in this case Congress or AIPAC, can influence just as much when de-emphasizing or withholding matters from collective consideration as when adding new issues to the agenda or emphasizing already existing ones. (Tallberg, 2011:5).

This theory is important to this thesis because of its tendencies to look into the underlying reasons, in this case third-party actors influence. It has special significance when it comes to answering the second research question in this thesis.
5 Methodology & Material

In this section the chosen and described methodology of this thesis is presented. A critical methodological approach within the field of qualitative text analysis has been used to analyze the material from third party actors influencing the negotiation process in regards to the research questions. The purpose of this section is to give the reader a clearer view of how this thesis has developed and the methodological approach used to reach the main purpose and answer the questions that the analytical framework asks the material of the thesis as a whole.

5.1 Analytical framework

In this following section the theoretical framework that is used in this thesis and accounted for in the section above, is elaborated and operationalized. In order for the reader to understand the underlying theory throughout the analysis and how the analysis has been carried out, a table has been constructed and will therefore work as guidance as well as a clarification. All the terms in the left column has been further explained underneath the table. In the next section, 5.2, the used methodological approach along with the material is presented and explained in detail.

<table>
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<th>Model of Analytical Framework</th>
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<th>Congress</th>
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<td>What demands are expressed?</td>
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<td>Which are the most salient ones?</td>
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<td>Strategies</td>
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Source: Authors’ own data

Demands/Arguments
In this thesis, demands are characterized as requirements the U.S. Congress and AIPAC have on this specific negotiation in order to give their full support and reach a final agreement. The demands are believed to be vital in both the negotiations and in a final agreement between the U.S. and Iran. AIPAC and the U.S. Congress have different agendas and therefore different arguments that are tailored to their own agenda. Arguments are closely connected to demands and is
used as a way of highlighting various demands, which explains why they are put together as one in this thesis.

**Strategies**
In order to influence various negotiations, actors tend to have a strategy behind their demands and arguments. This is to ensure that the actors will reach their goals. It can be, loosely, compared to as a way of acting. In this thesis, strategies become rather relevant because of its explanatory feature to demands/arguments. These terms are also closely connected.

**Goals**
Goals are characterized as what AIPAC and the U.S. Congress aim to reach with influencing the nuclear agreement. It is the reason to why these third-party actors influence the negotiations. Goals can therefore be classified as the summary of strategies, arguments and demands expressed by the two actors opposing this deal. This particular term is created to answer the second research question in this thesis; *what are their goals for doing so?*

Based on the theory of agenda setting and the research questions in this thesis, these terms and their explanations above is considered highly significant in creating relevant questions for the authors to ask the material in order to complete a correct analysis. They act as a guide through the material and lets the authors analyze the underlying factors behind third party actor influence in this case.

### 5.2 Critical method

This thesis main question is to examine third party actors’ influence in the negotiation process between Iran and the U.S. After several years of trying to reach a settlement regarding the nuclear question, they still haven’t reached a final peace treaty between the two countries. To accomplish this, a critical methodology has been used. This method highlights elements that could be seen as natural and unproblematic to some but in a critical researchers eyes it would be seen as something far more interesting and therefore sparking an interest. This method has been applied on official documents and reports concerning the negotiation process as well as news articles, speeches and hearings. As mentioned previously, the type of design in this thesis is a case study describing the case of diplomatic negotiations between the U.S. and Iran.

Further, we have extracted the domestic level of the negotiation process since it is of most interest to us in this particular case. This level together with the agenda setting theory has helped us to operationalize and create an analytical framework,
which is presented in the section above. The influence of third party actors is common and described in many cases of foreign policy and diplomacy although there are lacking material on theoretical approaches to third parties whom influence in a negative manner. The reason why this case is interesting from a critical point of view is the constant actively suppressant, towards the process of reaching a final agreement, from the American Congress and also the AIPAC.

When studying from a critical perspective it is particularly interesting to study patterns of dominant discourses. To some extent isolated social phenomenon are worth researching (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000:164-165). The critical research points its attention towards situations, relations, occurrences, institutions, ideas and social processes which can be affected by a discursive self-containment. What is interesting is not the most obvious actions or phenomenon but the more subtle aspects. Further it is what contemplates as natural, self-evident and unproblematic which can be seen in different ways that excite the researchers interest (Ibid:163).

In a critical approach it is important to examine opinions and standpoints that can occur in structures and processes. Further, as a researcher you should test the legitimacy and how they can be seen as an expression for systematically disturbed communication (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008:328).

This thesis searches the meaning and use of arguments and actions in different ways and contexts that can be studied without a discourse analysis. The critical methodology tends to search for a meaning in some discourses in political and institutional context, which is what this thesis aims to accomplish. Furthermore the critical method encourage the researcher to identify meaningful themes or categories and its characteristics which we, as researchers, are interested in, including dominant ideas and understandings and also discourses and more. There are a wide variety of aspects to examine which makes it possible to consider alternative understandings when using critical methodology (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000:164).

The use of reference framework is important to be able to perform valid interpretations. Interpretation is the study of smaller parts within the bigger picture. The interpretation can either be details or more aggregate kinds of phenomena based on combinations of specific empirical materials. The interpretations start off with the acknowledgement of something interesting, which then moves into the creation of a visualized picture of this “something”. As a researcher you’ve found something common which can possibly have a less obvious meaning to it. Further, this is what leads the researcher into a search for deeper meaning and tries to shed new light over the phenomenon (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000:165).

The critical research approach involves interpretations. These interpretations involve both explaining and understanding elements. The interpretations force the
researcher to think and rethink. It should therefore, in some sentence, confirm people’s ideas but also challenge them. The goal with this is to reach themes or implications with proves dominance. Critical methodology or research can be explained as hermeneutic (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008:333-348).

Hermeneutic is a form of interpretation and understanding of texts, but focuses on the interpretation of these aspects rather than the action itself. It warns the reader to be absolutely aware of the historical and social context that a text is constructed in, to be able view a text critically and make the interpretation it right (Bryman, 2011:507-508; Deetz & Kersten, 1983; ref. in. Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008:331). Further, when using a critical approach the researcher also goes beyond the simple hermeneutic. Critical research draw on the unconscious processes, ideologies, power statuses and other expressions for dominance, which contribute, that certain interests benefits from others (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008:350; Alvesson & Deetz, 2000:165-166).

The authors of this thesis chose to use a critical methodological approach because its focus on interpretations to explain and understand social contexts. Furthermore, critical method focuses on the interpretation, which in this case is applied to the use of arguments and actions of third-party actors and their salient goals. Since this thesis does not aim to analyze neither the discursive meaning nor the language used, a discursive approach is therefore not suitable. We are well aware of the similarity as well as explanation of discursive meaning within our chosen methodological approach and therefore it is important to highlight the reasons for why this thesis contains a critical research method as approach to this case study.

5.3 Discussion of methodological approach

This thesis acknowledged a gap in this specific area when studying previous research within cases of diplomatic negotiations. The study of third party influence in international negotiations are lacking somewhat when it comes to actually understanding the underlying reasons for influencing. Further, the case of diplomatic negotiations between Iran and the U.S. is currently well discussed and on the table at this very moment which makes it interesting to examine.

When beginning this thesis we identified the presence of third party actors influencing the negotiation process and therefore saw the connection between them. Furthermore, this thesis combined two theories. The “Two-Level Game” was used in order to understand the negotiation process and the levels where influence would be most likely to take place. To operationalize further when the extraction of the domestic level had taken place, it needed a complement to the two-level game. To give the thesis a better understanding and the means to
succeed in reaching its purpose it was therefore complemented with agenda setting theory.

Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity are different kinds of measurements focusing on quality and more general potential, which can be achieved on the basis of certain methodology choices and principles concerning subjects. Validity however is about whether you measure, observe or identify what you were supposed to. In other words, validity sets out to see if you have accomplished what you have set out to accomplish in a text, thesis or article (Bryman, 2011:352).

Validity and reliability can further be divided into external as well as internal validity or reliability. External validity seeks to find out whether you can replicate the same study again, using the same methods and material, and getting the same results (Esaisson et. al, 2012:58; Bryman, 2011:352). In this thesis the external validity is somewhat low due to its association with the context and this particular case. However, given our material used in this thesis and theoretical framework, it is still manageable and therefore makes the external validity higher. The same theory can be used in order to find out which argument’s being used from the perspective of third party actors, however it is a highly current subject and often affected by media and other social contexts that is hard to replicate (Bryman, 2011:352).

Internal reliability is when the researchers in a research team agree on how they should interpret what they examine. Therefore, because of the authors close collaboration with each other in this thesis, a very high internal reliability has been ensured. Furthermore, the internal validity states that it is when there is a good understanding between the researcher’s observation and the theoretical ideas that develops from this (Esaisson et. al, 2012:63; Bryman, 2011:352). With regards to this thesis the internal validity is high. Since this thesis analyzes its material on the basis of a theory, the likelihood that it finds what it is searching for is also high. Further, it is also important to acknowledge the fact that some implications towards the theory can be of concern to future studies (Bryman, 2011:352).

Finally, external validity is about how the results can be generalized to other social environments or contexts (Esaisson et. al, 2012:58-59). For this thesis to achieve a high external validity it is important that the results of this case study can in turn generate a generalization to other social contexts. This is uncertain but still possible. The results of this thesis will explain the influence of third party actors in this negotiation process and their reasons for influencing the agenda. This could possibly be used in other circumstances but not to the fullest extent.
First of all this is a case study of Iran and the U.S. negotiations which means everything revolves around this particular case and is therefore bound to this specific context and its outcomes. This thesis is studied with a deductive approach, which means that we study the relationship between theory and practice where the theory control the study’s procedure (Bryman, 2011:26).

Further, it is important to acknowledge some problems that arose along the way of creating this thesis. To begin with, this topic is highly up to date which also means that it hasn’t been studied yet. There are a lot of studies in the field of foreign policy as well as international relations, but it was lacking in the particular area that this thesis sought to examine; the influence of third party actors when examining diplomatic negotiations. This gave us a broader sense of the different theories currently being used, which made us certain that the choice of two level game complemented with agenda setting theory was indeed optimal. This is also another reason for why this thesis is important and contributes to further research as well as the scientific arena within this area of research.

Regarding the choice of method in this thesis, it can be stated that other types of methods may be of a more fitting nature. However, in this case and with the research questions in mind, a critical perspective was found most adequate at the time being. This is because the aim was to find out underlying reasons as to why and how third-party actor influence takes place in this particular case.

5.4 Material

The material used in the analysis section was chosen based on two major occurrences in the process of reaching an agreement between Iran and P5+1, the JPA and the framework agreement JCPOA. The first step, the JPA, was taken in November 2013 while the latter step, the JCPOA, was taken recently in April of 2015. These two occasions serves as a base line for our information gathering. Around the time of these two occasions, a great deal of remarks was given which is useful to this thesis since the analysis is looking for strategies, arguments and goals by third-party actors around this negotiation process and the opposition towards these agreements outcome.

Further, this thesis material consists of official documents, hearings in Congress, memos and also news articles revolving around this particular issue. The thesis also used a speech given by Israeli Prime minister, to the Congress. The authors of this thesis are well aware of the fact that official documents and reports are bias but this is a necessity in order to perform an analysis. When using hearings in Congress certain people become more featured when debating, this is due to the fact that they usually hold the position of chairman or other more
outstanding positions in committee such as the Foreign Affairs Committee in both the House and the Senate.

To clarify for the reader what a hearing is, it can be described as a collective method for the Congress to collect and analyze material in early stages of policymaking. These specific hearings that have been chosen to act as material are hearings that have been held in combination with the signing of the JPA and also the JCPOA. These hearings serve as responses and influence on the agenda that these two agreements have brought. Further, the questioning of Kerry in Congress, that we’ve used as our material is important to include since Kerry is the main negotiator in this process with Iran and also, all hearings that we’ve used are covered by media broadcasts which also highlights the importance of these particular hearings. These hearings are important to this thesis because they give us information live and inside from the Congress, which is important in order to .

The reason for choosing AIPAC as an actor and the material provided through AIPAC is because of their influence of the American Congress and its policymaking in various ways and the case of Iran and the U.S. nuclear deal is no exception.

To further discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the material used in this thesis it is of importance to highlight the fact that the material used in regards to the American Congress is consistent of legislative bills and resolutions adopted in Congress and presented on the Congress library website. These bills and resolutions are highly formal and may not express specific arguments or actions in that sense but mostly their aim and demands of the nuclear negotiations. Although, the broadcasts from inside the Congress and their hearings, are likely to present actual argument for the opposition of this nuclear agreement. Therefore it is important that the material is based on both aspects.

Since AIPAC is outspoken pro-Israel in its views and stands of policy the collection of material has resulted in subjective material. However, the authors agreed that in this particular context, these sources are legitimate to this case and are therefore not risking the validity or reliability of this thesis.

A speech by the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the American Congress has also been viewed and analyzed. This was relevant to this thesis because AIPAC acts like an extension of the Israeli government, which actively tries to influence the Congress in favor of Israel. The fact that the Congress invited Netanyahu to speak was especially interesting and had to be analyzed further.
6 Analysis

In this section the thesis highlights the specific aspects that were found in the material when viewing it using the analytical framework. Furthermore, for the structure in this analysis to be apparent and how the third party actors influence the negotiations, we have structured this section into two main categories: The American Congress and AIPAC. Under each category we will discuss the questions asked to the material regarding the specific actors involvement in the negotiations. Lastly, this section also contains an analysis of a speech from the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

AIPAC

Goals

After the first round of negotiations, Iran received a seven month extension and according to AIPAC that only resulted in Teheran yielding further economic relief without the increased pressure on the state. Sanctions relief valued at approximately 10 billion dollars has been favored Iran since the negotiations started without, as stated by AIPAC, production of results. This also means that Iran has not fully complied with the JPA, especially regarding its centrifuges, which has caused reactions within AIPAC (AIPAC, 2014c:1).

“AIPAC continues to believe that tough pressure brought Iran to the negotiations and that the threat of additional pressure will strengthen America’s bargaining position. We share the goal of an effective, sustainable agreement that ensures Iran will not have a path to the bomb, and we believe that increased pressure is the best way to achieve that objective. Conversely, gestures of accommodation to Iran have failed to yield a suitable Iranian response.” (AIPAC, 2014c:1)

This statement is interesting because it clearly points out which goals AIPAC discloses in this part of the negotiation process as well as salient strategies and demands. Their key of influencing this process at this point revolves around trying to influence the Congress and their legislation to benefit their goals and attributes. AIPAC encourages the American Congress to send a message to Tehran stating that the U.S. will not further tolerate this behavior. This message, AIPAC wishes to be in form of new bipartisan sanctions legislation. Additionally, it is of importance that Congress will remain critical and play its traditional role to ensure
a final agreement that eliminates all Iran’s capability to create nuclear weapons (AIPAC, 2014c:1).

Moreover, AIPAC also stated; “AIPAC urges the full House and Senate to continue to play a strong role on this critical issue. AIPAC urges Congress to do its utmost to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability and to help Israel acquire the means necessary for self-defense.” (AIPAC, 2014b:1). This statement illuminates AIPAC’s goals for influencing the negotiations; making sure Israel can acquire the means necessary for self-defense. It is also evident that the Congress is playing a vital role in this two-level game. In accordance with the theory, important interest groups and politicians try to make their own agenda part of the actual negotiations going on in level 1.

Demands/arguments

On April 2nd this year, the P5+1 reached a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) aimed at restricting Iran’s nuclear abilities. However, the P5+1 stepped back from some of its demands and allowed Iran to maintain one secret underground facility and continue development of centrifuges. In other words, this means that JCPOA relies on supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Since elements of this JCPOA could potentially result in a final agreement it is of importance that a few criteria’s are to be met to ensure it meets U.S. objectives as well as AIPAC’s, especially regarding Iran’s history of not complying with international obligations (Office of the Spokesperson, 2015:1).

"Congress Has a Critical Role to Play in the Iran Talks. Since implementation of elements of any final agreement will almost certainly require new congressional legislation, it is entirely appropriate for Congress to continue playing its historic foreign policy role and help shape the outcome of the negotiations. A Congressional Role Would Improve Prospects for Diplomacy Congressional involvement would establish an important marker by detailing the terms of an acceptable final deal, affirming the oversight role Congress has in ensuring existing sanctions are maintained, and providing for additional sanctions if Iran refuses to negotiate an acceptable final agreement. A Final Deal Must Result in the Dismantlement of Iran’s Nuclear Program Any acceptable final agreement must lead to the dismantlement of Iran’s nuclear program such that it cannot develop a nuclear weapon. As President Obama has pledged, any agreement must “make it impossible [for Iran] to develop a nuclear weapon.” (AIPAC, 2015g:1)
Since the negotiators are closing in on finalizing a nuclear agreement with Iran in level 1 of these negotiations, AIPAC thinks that it is now time for Congress, on the domestic level, to press American diplomats to insist on a good deal on an international level. In order for it to be a good deal it must eliminate every Iranian pathway to a nuclear weapon. According to AIPAC themselves, a total of five conditions regarding a final agreement with Iran is therefore crucial and must be met. These five conditions are not entirely unlike the ones stated above but change the perspective of their demands in some ways;

“(1) Inspections and verification. Inspectors must be permitted unimpeded access to suspect sites. […] (2) Possible military dimensions. Iran must fully explain its prior weaponization efforts. […] (3) Sanctions. Sanctions relief must commence only after Iran complies with its commitments. […] (4) Duration. Iran’s nuclear weapons quest must be blocked for decades. […] (5) Dismantlement. Iran must dismantle its nuclear infrastructure so it has no path to a nuclear weapon. […]” (AIPAC, 2015d:1; AIPAC, 2015e:1)

With these five criteria’s it becomes very apparent that these are in fact AIPAC’s demands regarding a finalized deal. Crucial to AIPAC’s new demands is the time frame regarding the duration of a final agreement. This new long-term demand and the military dimensions of Iran combined with the changed approach to economic sanctions are highly interesting to examine. These factors indicate a changed approach in AIPAC’s strategy and perhaps in terms of their agenda. In their strategy, focus appears to have shifted from a very strict policy to a somewhat reasonable stand. The demands are not as tough as prior ones, although it needs to be mentioned that these criteria’s are still strong ones that will not, if even, be met easily. The fact that domestic interest groups keep pushing for their own interests in the level 1 negotiation process is interesting. Even though the third party actors exists on the domestic level their work and aim is essentially to influence the level 1 agreement.

Strategies

The most salient theme in these criteria’s is AIPAC’s forceful approach. They have no tolerance for letting Iran require nuclear weapons and they are willing to use strict measures in order to establish this. Further, AIPAC is advocating for a Congressional role to be established. This is interpreted by the authors of this thesis as a way of incorporating AIPAC’s own agenda by proposing that the Congress should act as a reviewing body of the final agreement. In this way, the Congress plays an important role as well as AIPAC because of its influence on the
American Congress. These demands can therefore be classified as strategies that eventually lead up to the fulfillment of their goals. Advocating these demands is a strategy from AIPAC’s point of view that in the long run will benefit them, their agenda and Israel and therefore result in fulfilled goals.

In a policy memo issued by AIPAC themselves, their encouragement on the Congress regarding added pressure on Tehran stands clear (AIPAC, 2013a:1; Gerstein, 2013:1).

"Congress has provided the leverage to spur Iran to seek talks; now it must press the Administration to negotiate a verifiable agreement that will prevent Iran from ever building nuclear weapons. Congress must also legislate additional sanctions, so that Iran will face immediate consequences should it renege on its commitments or refuse to negotiate an acceptable final agreement.” (AIPAC, 2013a:1)

AIPAC acknowledges the sanction relief Iran will gain whilst still being able to continue its nuclear program in this memo as well as referring to the UN Security Council resolutions and how this initial agreement is in violation of them (AIPAC, 2013a:1; Gerstein, 2013:1).

In this memo, it is possible to see the strategies that AIPAC intends to use throughout the negotiations as a way of influencing it. The Congress is seen as a vital part and key to being able to make certain issues and demands salient in order to promote AIPAC’s own agenda.

When Congress passed the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015, AIPAC released a press release stating that they commend the Senate for doing so. AIPAC also refers to it as an overwhelming bipartisan passage conducted by Sens. Bob Corker (R-TN), Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Ben Cardin (D-MD). Furthermore, AIPAC urges the House to move fast on the congressional review legislation as well as sending it to the president so that it can be signed into law. This they urge because AIPAC believes the legislation is a tool for which the Congress can assert its foreign policy role and to ensure it and other agreements meets U.S. objectives. Moreover, this legislation is thought to harden the possibility of relief of the sanctions the Congress imposed for Iran if they breach the agreement. This will therefore ensure Iran’s compliance with the agreement on a higher level, according to AIPAC (AIPAC, 2015a:1; AIPAC, 2015b:1; AIPAC, 2015f:1).

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2 (R-TN): Republican Party – State of Tennessee
3 (D-NJ): Democratic Party – State of New Jersey
4 (D-MD): Democratic Party – State of Maryland
According to Huffington Post, AIPAC’s efforts to spoil negotiations with Iran are a threat to overall peace and bring the U.S. down a dangerous path to war. In order to influence the Congress, in this issue as well, AIPAC invites and takes these U.S. representatives on trips to Israel for free. These efforts to influence the Congress are almost seen as obligatory for every new member of Congress. Even though this kind of behavior and strategies are illegal for lobby groups and organizations to conduct in, AIPAC seems to get around this using AIEF (American Israel Education Foundation), which has the same staff as AIPAC, to organize the trips on behalf of them. When in Israel the members of Congress see only what the Israeli government allows them to which further helps cement their values and ties between each other allowing AIPAC’s influence to become maximized (Benjamin, 2015:1).

The American Congress

Goals

The House of Foreign Affairs committee illuminates that a mutually agreed agreement is not to result in allowing Iran to continue its enrichment program but to ensure that Iran cannot continue down a path of nuclear weapons possession. This is what has to be ensured in order for the Congress to agree to any agreement. Congress is skeptical regarding sanctions release because it might as well allow Iran to deceive the agreement and continue its enrichment program anyway (Engel, 2013:13,50-15,40min). If Congress does not approve of the deal the Obama Administration presents, the international level in these negotiations will once again be put on hold because of domestic interference, which is what the Congress and AIPAC wants. Regarding Putnam’s two-level game, the real power exists on the domestic level since an agreement has to be passed with majority in Congress to have legislative power.

Chairman Royce (R-CA5) argues that the U.S. need to keep their allies safe and this treaty is risking their national security, referring to Israel, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries in that region. Secretary of State, John Kerry replies; “[...] whatever we do, it’s got to make Israel safer, the world safer [...]” (Ibid:47,28min). This is interesting because Israel’s safety is a thoroughgoing theme in these negotiations.

To fast forward to the year of 2015 and the response to the signing of the JCPOA, on April 14th, the Foreign Affairs Committee debated on the Iranian nuclear framework allowing Congress to review any agreement between the P5+1. Chairman Bob Corker of the committee states that the Iran nuclear

5 (R-CA): Republican Party – State of California
negotiations are incredibly important to the citizens that the committee represents. Further he states that; “[…] all of us would like to see a strong negotiated agreement that insures that Iran does not get a nuclear weapon”. (Corker, 2015:21.48min).

The committee highlights the fact that if an agreement gets approved in Congress, the Administration must certify every 90-days that Iran is complying with the agreement in every way. According to the committee this is important for the Congress to be able to “[…] discover any violations quickly so Congress can act quickly and bring back sanctions […]” (Corker, 2015:24.42min).

“There is a strong common commitment in the Congress of the United States and in the white house to make sure Iran never becomes a nuclear weapons state […]” (Cardin, 2015:27.56min). It is important to acknowledge that a nuclear Iran would be a game changer for the Middle East, which is something that the U.S. cannot allow to occur (Ibid:28min).

“There is no disagreement in this committee, in the Congress, that we cannot trust Iran […]” (Cardin, 2015:28.45min). The Committee highlights that only Congress can permanently change or modify the sanction regime which is clearly part of what the president is negotiating in regards to the Iran nuclear program (Ibid:30,56min). This also brings us back to the fact that the domestic level has the upper hand in this sense. The President has the power of veto but all legislative bills and regulations have to pass in Congress and this agreement is no exception.

“This is a complicated enough agreement we’re not going to be able to solve all the problems with Iran. If we can prevent Iran of becoming a nuclear weapon state, that’s the objective of these agreements” (Cardin, 2015:32,56min). Further the committee feels that the Congress bill on review actually strengthens the president’s ability to negotiate in regards to the nuclear framework itself. “[…] The security of Israel and the survival of Israel is clearly one of the prime out goals […]” (Cardin, 2015:34,05min) referring to the possible agreement between the P5+1 from the U.S. point of view.

This is interesting because the highlights are all pointed to the fact that Iran must not obtain a nuclear weapon, which is the main goal and further the security of Israel.

Demands/Arguments

The arguments and demands stated by the U.S. Congress, and AIPAC as well, is their way of letting the Obama Administration know that they want to participate in these negotiations and that they are not going to let the deal pass them by without their opinion being heard. As the theoretical framework suggests, these are all bricks in the two-level game as well as the aspects of agenda setting theory.
Third-party actors use these tools to influence the agenda, which then will affect the Obama Administration’s negotiation process in level 1, the international level. The U.S. Congress sees towards their interests in this deal and AIPAC likewise. The outcome of the nuclear agreement will have different effects on all parties involved which explains why these third-party actors are keen on influencing the agenda in the different levels.

In a hearing in the House of Foreign Affairs Committee in December 2013, about a month after the signing of the JPA, Committee chairman Ed Royce point to the argument that “[...] sanctions have worked elsewhere in the world” (Royce, 2013:7,26min). This is referred to the part in the negotiated agreement that is suggesting sanctions relief if Iran complies with the nuclear deal.

Another argument is presented at the hearing with John Kerry and the first step agreement with Iran and its nuclear status. Chairman Engel (D-NY6) sheds light on the fact that sanctions brought Iran to the negotiating table and believes the U.S. should keep sanctions to maintain the pressure on and let the pressure strengthen the Administration's role in the process “[...] it is not about forcing Iran to negotiate, its about forcing Iran to give up its enrichment program [...]” (Engel, 2013:53,16min).

On December 19th 2013, about a week after the hearing and witness of John Kerry in Congress, the bill S.1881 “Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act of 2013” was introduced in Senate. The bill begins with stating five demands for the U.S. Iran nuclear treaty.

“[…] (1) Iran must not be allowed to develop or maintain nuclear weapon capabilities; (2) Iran does not have an inherent right to enrichment and reprocessing capabilities under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; (3) the imposition of sanctions under this Act is triggered by Iran's violations of any interim or final agreement regarding its nuclear program; (4) if Israel takes military action in self-defense against Iran's nuclear weapons program the United States should provide Israel with diplomatic, military, and economic support; and (5) the United States should continue to impose sanctions on Iran and its terrorist proxies [...]” (Bill S.1881, December 19th 2013).

When the JPA was signed, the bill regarding the U.S. Congress conditions for agreeing on an eventually signed comprehensive agreement was stated and passed through Congress. This is also a way of influencing the agenda when it comes to

6 (D-NY): Democratic Party – State of New York
the outcome of these negotiations. The bill refers to conditions of sanctions and set of regulations that can be suspended for a period of one year if;

“ [...] (1) dismantle Iran's illicit nuclear infrastructure, (2) bring Iran into compliance with all United Nations (U.N.) Security Council resolutions related to Iran's nuclear program and resolve all issues of concern with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), (3) permit continuous on-site inspection and monitoring of all suspect facilities in Iran, (4) require Iran's full compliance with the Agreement between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards in Connection with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and (5) require Iran's implementation of measures that include IAEA verification of Iran's centrifuge manufacturing facilities and uranium mines and mills.” (Bill S.1881, 2013:1)

This bill along with the hearing of Secretary of State John Kerry, are interesting actions taken by the Congress in order to influence the agenda of the Obama Administration’s negotiations with Iran. With Congress opposing this deal, in all possible ways, the Obama Administration’s way towards a final comprehensive agreement slows down. “[... If the P5+1 and Iran ultimately achieve a comprehensive agreement by the June deadline, at the end of the day Congress must have oversight responsibility and this legislation provides it.” (Menendez, 2015:38,27min), regarding the bill on Congress review of any agreement. Moreover, senator Menendez illuminates the fact that “[...] sanctions relief is not a given and certainly, not a price for signing the dotted line.” (Menendez, 2015:39.40min). Further, they discuss the fact that according to Congress and the negotiations agreement, Iran must fully agree with all demands that comes with the agreement in order for sanctions relief to take place (Ibid:41,27min).

This is noteworthy in this thesis because this argument illuminates that the Congress is pointing to ‘if they reach a comprehensive agreement’ they want full control over the situation.

“[...] The reason that this is difficult is that we are negotiating towards two different goals [...]. The U.S. and the world want to negotiate to a point where the Iranians cannot ever have a nuclear weapon. The Iranians are negotiating to get this very specific clear path forwards, of how they can get a nuclear weapon [...] 10-15 years is nothing to them [...] they patiently can put one step in front of the other and get to where they want to go [...]. That leaves people that are going to be
sitting in these chairs in the future, to deal with that” (Risch, 2015:42,19min).

Further, Senator Risch (R-ID\(^7\)) states that he believes that this agreement, between the P5+1, does not get the Iranians to the point where they’re abandoning their nuclear ambitions (Ibid:45min). This is a clear argument, from the Senate and the House, which gives reason for not striking a deal with Iran. Congress shows obvious resistance towards the nuclear deal.

**Strategies**

“[…]

*Congress has played a key role in U.S. policy towards Iran, mainly by driving sanctions against the regime […]*” – Chairman of the House of Foreign Affairs Committee, rep. Ed Royce (Ed Royce, 2013:1,24min) Chairman and republican Ed Royce continue his introduction to the witness in the House of Foreign Affairs Committee and John Kerry’s defense of Iran nuclear deal to Congress. Royce points out that when voted in legislation, the bill on obtaining Iran from enriching and processing nuclear weapons, passed unanimously in Congress. Further, Royce points to the fact that the U.S. can bargain that away by a false confident that they can block Iran’s key use of developing a nuclear possession (Ibid: 0-2min).

Furthermore, Royce continues his long introduction with pointing out that Iran is the country that came up with the term “death to America” (Ibid:4,30min).

“[*…*] *often times the way a country treats its own citizens tells you how it might treat others *[*…*]” (Royce, 2013:4,40min). This citation follows by an argument that Iran is threatening the U.S. allies with extinction. Further Royce points to the fact that Iran is saying that Israel is a country that can be destroyed using only one single bomb. Yet another reason that is being expressed in Congress regarding the aim of reaching an agreement with Iran is that “[*…*] *Iran has a history of deceiving the international community with regards to their nuclear program *[*…*]” (Royce, 2013:5,30min). These quotations are all interesting since they point to strong words regarding Iran such as mistrust although they never express their oppression of Iran. Other strategies are pointing to Iran’s view of the U.S. and the catch phrase ‘death to America’.

To further build to the sanctions, the Congress points out that it is U.S. policy to make sure that other countries in the world reduce their purchase of Iranian oil, thus excluding them further from the market. It is also expressed that the Congress authorize the President to suspend the application of sanctions for a 180-days period of time if the president reports to Congress every 30 days, that Iran is

\(^7\) (R-ID): Republican Party – State of Idaho
upholding the demands of the JPA and is engaged in the negotiations with good faith (Bill S.1881, 2013:1). This is an active strategy to influence the Obama Administration’s agenda, which is particularly interesting in this thesis.

In “An open letter to the leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran”, U.S. senators explains how the American Constitution works when it comes to international negotiations and that the president negotiates international agreements and that “[...] Congress plays the significant role of ratifying them [...]”. (United States Senate, 2015:1).

The reason for writing this open letter is expressed as “[...] while observing your nuclear negotiations with our government that you may not fully understand our constitutional system [...]”. (United States Senate, 2015:1). The letter is written by the senators of the American Congress and was sent without the President’s knowledge, as an active third party action. The writers also highlight the significant rule of how many years a president can serve on the contrary to the Congress. To strengthen their point they wrote; “[...] what these two constitutional provisions mean is that we will consider any agreement regarding your nuclear-weapons program that is not approved by the Congress as nothing more than an executive agreement between President Obama and Ayatollah Khamenei [...].” (Ibid). In regards to the theory, it can clearly be stated that the Congress has shifted from the domestic level to level 1 in the negotiations. This shift is especially remarkable because of the fact that they only serve as third-party actors.

While the U.S. Congress, AIPAC and Israel all oppose these nuclear negotiations between the Obama Administration and Iran, the rest of the world is mainly viewing this as something historic. “Probably we make history last night by spending nine hours [...] negotiating” (Rouhani in Russia Today, 2015:0,15min). “The United States, together with our allies and partners, has reached a historic understanding with Iran” (Obama in Russia Today, 2015:0,24min).

Most of the western world responds to these news as “historic”, the U.S. Senate however passed a bill that would require President Obama to submit any nuclear deal with Iran to Congress for approval. This action from the Congress gives them an opportunity to intervene on the road to a final agreement. “The bill offers the best chance for our constituents, through the Congress they elect, to weigh in on the White house’s negotiations with Iran” (McConnell, 2015:1,13min). While Congress is weighing in, Obama will not be able to lift sanctions on Iran. Lawmakers then have a limited time of 30 days to disapprove of the negotiated nuclear deal (Russia Today, 2015). This is interesting because it is a clear strategy to allow themselves to influence the agenda, and make it easier for the Congress to have a say in the matter.
On May 7th, the bill “Iran Nuclear Agreement Act of 2015” passed the senate. The bill states that the Foreign Relations committee shall hold hearings and briefings during the 30-day period following the President’s transmittal of such agreement. Further, the President has to keep the Congress fully and currently informed of all aspects of Iranian compliance with respect to an agreement (H.R. 1191, 2015:1). This is further discussed in a hearing in the senate's Foreign Affairs committee. The committee shed light upon the fact that the sanctions relief that are to be lifted if Iran follows the rules of the agreement only applies to the nuclear sanctions that are in place today. The bill that was amended in Congress “[...] gives us more reporting on terrorism than we’ve ever had, more reporting on ballistic missile testing than we’ve ever had, more reporting on human rights than we’ve ever had [...]” (Corker, 2015:25,39min).

Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s Speech to the American Congress

On March 3rd 2015, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was invited to speak in the U.S. Congress. “I’m deeply humbled by the opportunity to speak for a third time before the most important legislative body in the world, the U.S. Congress.” (Netanyahu, 2015:1,39min). Netanyahu continues with thanking Congress and the U.S. for their support of Israel year after year, decade after decade. He is thankful for all the years of American support to Israel and the fact that Obama has helped in any kind of way (Ibid:2,30min).

Netanyahu acknowledges the fact that the relationship between the U.S. and Israel has forever been above politics and must stay above politics because, as Netanyahu claims, “[...] America and Israel share the same destiny [...]” (Netanyahu, 2015:3,30min).

Goals

In the Middle East, at the moment, Iran now dominates four Arab capitals. This deal is a hope to many that Iran will join the world community but Iran is gobbling it up instead, claims Netanyahu. “[...] we must all stand together to stop Iran’s march of conquest subjugation and terror.” (Netanyahu, 2015:13,10min). Netanyahu continues his speech with discussing the fact that the nuclear deal that is on the negotiation table is a hope that Iran will bring change and moderation revolving this particular issue and also the domestic politics within the country. Though Netanyahu call attention to what he says “[...] Rouhani’s government hangs gays, persecutes Christians, jails journalists and executes more prisoners
that before.” (Netanyahu, 2015:13,55min). “Iran cries death to America, now louder than ever” (Netanyahu, 2015:14,35min).

Demands/arguments

Netanyahu refers to history of several occasions where threats to destroy the Jewish people have taken place. “Today the Jewish people face another attempt to destroy us, Iran’s supreme leader spills the oldest hatred of anti-Semitism with the newest technology” (Netanyahu, 2015: 8min). He continues this statement with the fact that Iran is dangerous and “Iran’s regime poses a great threat, not only to Israel but also to the peace of the entire world” (Netanyahu, 2015:9,30min). The differences between Iran and the U.S. according to Netanyahu are “[...] America’s founding documents promises life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Iran’s founding document pledges death, tyranny and the pursuit of jihad” (Netanyahu, 2015:10.40min). He brings light upon the fact that “the pursuit of jihad” is exactly what Iran wants to do. “Iran is backing terrorism all over the world” (Netanyahu, 2015:11min).

These arguments are interesting because it is highly influencing the American Congress in its view of this negotiations process. The U.S. and Israel are close allies and therefore Israel and AIPAC have a lot of influence regarding the agenda of the Congress, whom in turn influence the Obama Administration’s struggle towards reaching this nuclear deal.

“If the deal, now being negotiated is accepted by Iran [...] we lose the war. That deal will not prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, it will all but guarantee that Iran get those weapons, lots of them.” (Netanyahu, 2015:17,15min). Netanyahu urged that his deal will not disarm Iran’s nuclear infrastructure, it will remain intact which in turn will give Iran a short “breakout time” when this nuclear deal cease to exist (Ibid, 18,40min). To finish these arguments that imposes for a deal not to go through, Netanyahu says:

“This deal has two major concessions: (1) leaving Iran with a vast nuclear program and (2) lifting the restrictions on that program in about a decade- that’s why this deal is bad. [...] it doesn’t block Iran’s path to the bomb, it paves Iran’s path to the bomb. So why would anyone make this deal? [...] why should Iran’s radical regime change for the better when it can enjoy the best of both worlds; aggression abroad, prosperity at home.” (Netanyahu, 2015 23,45,min)
Furthermore, AIPAC made a statement shortly after Prime Minister Netanyahu addressed the Congress where they expressed positive response to both the speech itself and the bipartisan attendance. According to AIPAC, a message like this to the Congress as well as the American people is crucial at this point because; “[…] is critical at a moment when there is a danger that an agreement will be reached that fails to dismantle Iran’s program such that it does not have a path to a nuclear weapon.” (AIPAC, 2015c:1) In accordance to this, the statement also presented more of their views such as;

“AIPAC believes that on a matter as crucial to U.S. national security as preventing a nuclear-capable Iran, Congress must assert its historic foreign policy role, review any agreement, and object if a bad agreement is reached. That is why AIPAC strongly supports adoption of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015 […]” (AIPAC, 2015c:1).

This statement clearly points out how AIPAC use the Congress for its own benefit in order to support their own and Israel’s agenda. Merely making this report in regards to Netanyahu’s very strong speech is a clear statement from behalf of AIPAC.

**Strategies**

To further point out why Iran cannot be trusted, which is a thoroughgoing theme in this speech Netanyahu explains that; “[…] just last week, Iran carried out a military exercise blowing up a U.S. aircraft carrier… that’s just last week, while they’re having nuclear talks with the United States.” (Netanyahu, 2015:11,37min) “For the last 36 years, Iran’s attacks against the U.S. have been anything but mock and the targets have been all too real […]” (Netanyahu, 2015:11,55min).

To further make his point on Iran not being trustworthy and unreliable he brings history to the table and highlights that “Iran took dozens of American hostages in Tehran, murdered hundreds of American soldiers/marines in Beirut and is responsible for killing and claiming thousands of American service men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan […]” (Netanyahu, 2015:12min). Aside from everything that is happening in the Middle East that involves Iran and is military support, Iran is attacking the world through its global terror network and bombing embassies (Ibid:12,26 min). This use of strategy is interesting because Netanyahu is actively pointing to something that is possibly going to affect the opinion of big parts of the Congress, which in turn can affect the Congress influence on the Obama Administration’s agenda.
To give the Congress and input on his feeling regarding the U.S. Iranian relations, Netanyahu claim; “[...] this regime will always be an enemy of America [...]” (Netanyahu, 2015:14,55min). Further Netanyahu states; “[...] the greatest danger facing our world is emergence of militant Islam with nuclear weapons.” (Netanyahu, 2015:16,30min). Netanyahu urges that this is something that the world cannot let happen.
7 Results

In this section, the thesis presents the results of the analysis. This is not for a classifying purpose but to clarify for the reader which distinct demands/argument, goals and strategies are the most salient.

7.1 Conclusions

This thesis main conclusions states that the U.S. Congress and AIPAC does not formally and explicitly express their opposition towards the nuclear deal with Iran, they use arguments that point to mistrust, history, active strategies and a long row of demands in order to put a spanner in the works for the Obama Administration’s hard negotiations with Iran. However, it is important to acknowledge that the history of hostile relationship between the U.S. and Iran is also legitimate from Iran’s point of view.

They have as many reasons for mistrusting the U.S. as the U.S. have to mistrust Iran. When viewing the material in the analysis, it is our general opinion that they influence to make sure a deal does not go through. We discovered that many of AIPAC’s statements supports what the Congress expresses in hearings and passed bills. This is something that is of great interests to us because it shows that AIPAC and the Congress work closely together, thus influencing and supporting each other in these questions.

Moreover, it is interesting that AIPAC and the U.S. Congress have demands saying that Congress should be able to review any development throughout these negotiations. These demands have all been approved which means that third-party influence in this case is salient. With two major and powerful actors actively working against the Obama Administration, it is not easy for Obama to reach an agreement smoothly. Another main conclusion, which we have discovered when analyzing the material, is that both Congress and AIPAC pushes towards the security of Israel in this nuclear deal. Israel is a dominant underlying actor of the U.S. Congress as well as the Obama Administration and its goal of reaching an agreement.

AIPAC

When analyzing AIPAC’s reasons for influencing this case, two main goals become especially apparent. Firstly, AIPAC would like to see an efficient and sustainable agreement between the U.S. and Iran, which ensures Iran will not have a path towards obtaining a nuclear weapon. Furthermore, on AIPAC’s agenda is a clear need for help. They want the U.S. to help Israel acquire the means that
would be necessary in order to defend themselves against Iran and are doing so by influencing the Congress. Iran has expressed clear threats towards Israel multiple times and it is consistently stated throughout the material that Israel plays a major part in these negotiations and influence on both Congress and in turn, the Obama Administration.

To move on to the demands that AIPAC expresses in the material, one of the articulated demands is that sanctions relief is only to begin after Iran has proven that they are adapting to the changes required of them, through this nuclear deal. In order for AIPAC to approve of this deal it must be considered as a long-term solution and last for decades. This is to ensure the survival of the Israeli people. This is interesting because Israel has a major impact on the U.S. Congress and this demand pushes the U.S. to stand by their ally. The U.S. has several security interests in that region which makes it interesting for them to stay ‘friends’ with the countries in that region.

Further, AIPAC is skeptical towards Iran and their underlying reasons for wanting this agreement and one demand from AIPAC is that Iran must explain their earlier weaponization efforts, to assure that they now are sincere in their negotiation efforts. Moreover, AIPAC as well as Congress, states that inspectors must have unlimited access to suspicious locations. This is to ensure that Iran is not secretly maintaining their enrichment program. One of the reasons for the Obama Administration to negotiate this deal is to get better insight in the Iranian state, which is now difficult to infiltrate.

Some of the strategies that are distinguished in the analysis are AIPAC’s pressure on Congress to effectively influence the negotiation process and the possible outcome. The Congress is seen as a vital part and key to being able to make certain issues and demands salient in order to promote AIPAC’s interests in this process. They also voted for more sanctions towards Iran instead of relief in order for the Congress to act instantly in case Iran violates the deal.

Like Congress, AIPAC insist on a good agreement and they would rather have no deal instead of a bad deal. If a deal becomes possible Congress must, according to AIPAC, have a role in the agreement and also be satisfied with the deal. AIPAC supports Congress in this matter, which is a strong indication that Congress and AIPAC are close and therefore affects and support each other.

A strategy that is not obvious was Obama strengthening U.S. sanctions towards Iran. AIPAC later thanked him and praised his actions. This indicated that these actions are appreciated from the view of the Israeli lobby group. Other strategies performed by AIPAC to get the U.S. Congress to hear their opinions and support them actively, AIPAC invites several Congressmen to free vacation trips to Israel although it goes through different foundations in order for it to be legal.
The U.S. Congress continuously illuminates the main goal, from the Congress point of view, which is to ensure that Iran cannot continue down a path of nuclear weapons. Further, in the analysis Chairman Ed Royce argues, in the hearing of Kerry, that the U.S. needs to keep their allies safe, referring mainly to the safety of Israel, which was pointed out earlier, but also the other countries in the region.

Although it is obvious that the U.S. Congress want to influence this deal to the point where it breaks, the Congress stated in December of 2013 that they would like to see a strong negotiated agreement that insures that Iran does not get a nuclear weapon. This goal is somewhat misleading because although it is their goal to reach a ‘well negotiated agreement’ it is still in their interest that Iran never have the possibility to obtain an enrichment program, not even for energy purpose which was promised to Iran during the ruling of the Shah. With this, Congress does not want to agree to any sanctions relief because of earlier mistrust towards the Islamic Republic.

To strengthen this goal, the Congress believes it is important to acknowledge that a nuclear Iran would be a game changer for the Middle East, which is something that the U.S. cannot allow occur. The U.S. has several national interests in that region and it is too big of a risk to allow anything that could change that.

Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu expresses in his speech to Congress that from Israel’s point of view it is important to stop Iran’s dominance of terror in the Middle East. The hope is to get Iran to join in the rest of the international community.

Some of the argument/demands that are presented from the Congress with regards to this deal is that the use of sanctions have been proven effectively and should not be removed. Sanctions allow the Congress to supervise and control Iran’s capability to stay in put. Congress and AIPAC use the same demands here, the sanction should be used in order to make sure Iran never becomes nuclear ready. At the same time these sanction should be ready to implement directly in case Iran decides to violate the agreement. Further, if Iran violated the agreement Congress shall support Israel military, financially and diplomatic in the defense towards Iran.

Further, they require Iran to comply with UN Security Council's resolutions regarding non-proliferation and also work together with IAEA and allow inspections. They shall allow inspections everywhere and anytime. There has to be a good insight.

Netanyahu does not share the same tone as Congress, with constructive arguments for an agreement to possibly work. Instead he encourages the Congress to use a more strict approach towards the deal with Iran and does this by
mentioning Israel’s historical reasons for feeling threatened by Iran and even more if they obtain a nuclear weapon. Further, Netanyahu agrees with Congress on the importance of inspectors and their access to everything. Netanyahu believes that this deal won’t stop Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon instead it will clear the path towards actually achieving a nuclear bomb.

To move on to the strategies that Congress are using to influence the negotiation process. These sanction that the Congress are continuously discussing is one strategy of keeping control over the situation. To further build to the sanctions, Congress points out that it is U.S. policy to make sure that the rest of the world reduce their purchase of Iranian oil. This argument is to justify their use of sanctions as a strategy.

Another strategy used by Congress to go over Obamas head in these negotiations is the open letter to the leaders of Iran that the Senate sent. They point to the fact that Congress plays the significant role of ratifying any agreement. This strategy can be viewed as a sign of power in order to ‘scare’ the Iranian negotiators and in turn influence the agenda of the negotiations.

As pointed out in the analysis, the U.S. Congress invited Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is explicitly opposing this nuclear deal, to speak in Congress. Netanyahu’s strategy in his speech is to clarify that Iran cannot be trusted and should not be trusted in these negotiations. To strengthen this Netanyahu points to occurrences throughout history were Iran has deceived the U.S. and other countries. Although, neither the Congress AIPAC nor Netanyahu acknowledges the fact that the U.S. has deceived Iran throughout history. This invitation to speak in Congress gave Netanyahu an opportunity to influence the Congress whom in turn influences the Obama Administration.

Moreover, a key behavior from the U.S. Congress that can be discovered in this analysis is that both the JPA and the JCPOA has led the Congress to pass two bills, one after the JPA and another right after the signing of the JCPOA. This is a strategic move from the Congress to make sure they stay in control over the situation and also influence the Obama Administration’s ability to close the deal.

### 7.2 Implications

Regarding our research questions; “What demands, arguments and strategies does the Congress and AIPAC use to influence the negotiation process between the U.S. and Iran? Secondly, what are their goals for doing so?” the authors of this thesis has come to the conclusion that AIPAC and the U.S. Congress both use demands, arguments and different actions as strategies, were they point to fragile subjects and history in order to justify their means for influencing the Obama Administration’s agenda in the negotiation process.
The goal to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear bomb is agreed in both Congress and AIPAC, although there are some differences according to how to achieve that goal. The Obama Administration push for some sanctions relief in order to meet the Iranian motives and goals for this negotiation. As mentioned in the background, U.S. strategy in earlier attempts for negotiating was characterized by only discussing the topics of interests to the U.S. In accordance with the theoretical approach used in this thesis the Obama Administration’s negotiation can be placed under Level 1 in the “two-level game” theory. The recognition of this level is important with regards to where the world is at today, with global governance and transnational cooperation’s dominating the world's diplomatic and democratic agenda (Jönsson, 2008:83; Putnam, 1988:434).

As the theory also implies, the original arena of democracy, which diplomacy originates from, was originally on the domestic level, level 2. The authors of this thesis would however, with the analysis in mind, argue that a third level has arisen within the grounds of these negotiations. The U.S. Congress has gone from a third-party actor trying to influence and shift the outcome in favor of their own agenda to act as its own institution, or arena. This is because Congress has, so far, conducted its own negotiations between the U.S. and Iran as well as Israel.

When looking back at the analysis in this thesis that becomes especially apparent on the international level with regards to the letter Congress wrote on behalf of them, acting as an independent and almost supranational negotiating partner with American values, to Iran. The strategy of inviting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to hold a speech in Congress can also be perceived as way of negotiating between the two actors. In the domestic arena, Congress acts as a negotiator between the Obama Administration and AIPAC. Instead of Putnam’s original “two-level game”, there are now three levels within the boundaries of these negotiations. This creates a new dimension when studying the negotiations in the future and can definitely be used as a stepping board for further research.

Just as Putnam’s theory suggests, there is little chance of achieving a long-term diplomatic agreement between two parties if the domestic level does not agree with the agreement at hand. Due to the fact that Congress and AIPAC strongly oppose this agreement, it would be difficult for the Obama Administration to get this deal approved in Congress.

With connection to previous research from Gleditsch Skrede and Beardsley, it can be concluded that third-party actors, in fact, make rational choices in order to benefit their own agendas and objectives. In this particular case they have not only influenced the outcomes but also the escalation of the negotiation process itself. This thesis also confirms their original thoughts about the fact that third-party influence can affect more than just the outcome of negotiations but also the
duration (Gleditsch Skrede & Beardsley, 2004:379). This becomes very clear in this specific case because of the constant prolonging of the negotiations, as stated on page 27 regarding AIPAC’s demands/arguments.

Furthermore, as Gilboa states as well as modern domestic models, government's use lobby organizations to achieve its aims in their target country (Gilboa, 2008:59-60). This is especially apparent when studying AIPAC’s goals. The Israeli government uses AIPAC to influence the American Congress and therefore the negotiation process in order to reach their goals because its efficient nature, which otherwise would be difficult to obtain. In accordance to Canes-Wrone and the analysis of this thesis, a connection can be made about the fact that third-party actors have a strong legislative influence, which is framed and influenced by their own agenda (Canes-Wrone, 2001:183). Further, AIPAC and the Congress demands of congressional overview have affected the Obama Administration’s agenda regarding a final nuclear deal. This supports Hermanns article, which we mentioned in the section “previous research” (Hermanns, 2015:265). This also complies with Tallbergs thoughts about agenda setting and through that it is possible to classify the third-party actors influence as agenda structuring as well as the traditional agenda setting, mainly because they tend to emphasize issues already on the agenda (Tallberg, 2011:5).

As Putnam's theory of the two-level game suggests, the domestic level which consists of interests groups and political groups such as the Congress, put pressure on the government in order for them to adopt policies favorable to themselves. Politicians seek power by forming coalitions among those groups (Putnam, 1988:434). As the analysis shows, AIPAC and Congress work closely together in order to influence the outcome of this deal. It is also apparent that certain political figures have more impact than others. The authors of this thesis have identified a number of names that has repeatedly spoken their way in the Congress. Israeli President Netanyahu is a strong spokesperson for this topic and he is also a well-known figure within the American politics as the U.S. and Israel are close allies.

Although this thesis has reached somewhat strong results it needs to be pointed out that this is a specific case and because of the U.S. status as hegemony in the world, they operate according to different rules and stakes. Since this issue has a chance of developing into a military confrontation, different stakes are at the table, which creates different policy approaches. This puts an overwhelming responsibility on the U.S. to resolve this peacefully. Adding to that, the U.S. legislation is founded in a different way than the EU for example, which supports the lobbyist movement and therefore these third-party actor situations tend to arise.

Just as the theoretical base of this thesis suggests, international negotiations are pursued with different goals in mind. The international system has effects on
domestic politics and their character (Putnam, 1988:427-440; Gourevitch, 1978:882-883). It therefore becomes clear that history also has effects on the American policy towards Iran. Due to the fact that this nuclear deal will affect Israel and AIPAC differently, they have other reasons for influencing the process. As Netanyahu says in his speech to Congress, the Iranians have threatened Israel and that there is a more modern anti-Semitism going on in the world at the moment, from the Iranian government. This could also explain why AIPAC serve as such a big third-party actor in these negotiations. Since the U.S. and Israel are such close allies, AIPAC or Israel’s goals have become slightly intertwined with the Congress goals in these negotiations.

As we presented above in the results, both the JPA and the JCPOA has been followed by passed bills in Congress. These bills are an effect from the Congress in order to stay on top of the situation throughout the negotiations. A reason for being able to pass these bills are the arguments, active actions and demands that has been expressed in Congress and AIPAC. Although these actions and arguments influence are not expressed explicitly in the chosen material, it has been up to the authors to interpret their actions, which therefore has lead to a level of hermeneutics in this thesis. Since the negotiation process is still ongoing when writing this thesis, the lack of transparency becomes noticeable which creates obstacles in noticing the influencing factors. Despite this, a result has been achieved as well as a noticeable and interesting contribution to the scientific arena.

AIPAC has continuously affected and put demands on Congress, where important congressmen have reached out to the rest of the Congress and gained an almost unanimous vote to control this negotiation process. Therefore it is interesting, from the point of the results, if certain Congressmen are more important and act as active third-party actors themselves. This is something that could be interesting to do further research on.

Furthermore, we would like to point out that there are interesting effects that has been discovered, with our interpretation in mind, that the use of strategies can bee summarized down to four more specific factors or main subjects: mistrust towards Iran, the history that has characterized U.S. Iranian relations and how Iran is known to deceive deals and last the security of Israel and the threat that this deal creates. These are the main strategies and reasons that third-party actors are using through arguments, demands and active actions in this case. We noticed a very close similarity between the Congress and the AIPAC, that they use the same demands and the same use of words to express their way.

This shows a close relationship between the two actors, which explains a lot of the influence that has been used on the Obama Administration and its strong position. It also becomes apparent that the need to influence from the third-party
actors point of view has grown stronger from the signing of the JPA in 2013 up to date. The two-level game that first characterized the negotiations is now a complicated three-level game, with powerful third-party actors trying to influence the agenda.
References


Analysis


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