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Understanding coercive nuclear reversal dynamics: a comparative case study of US coercive diplomacy against the nuclear programs of Iran, Libya, and South Africa

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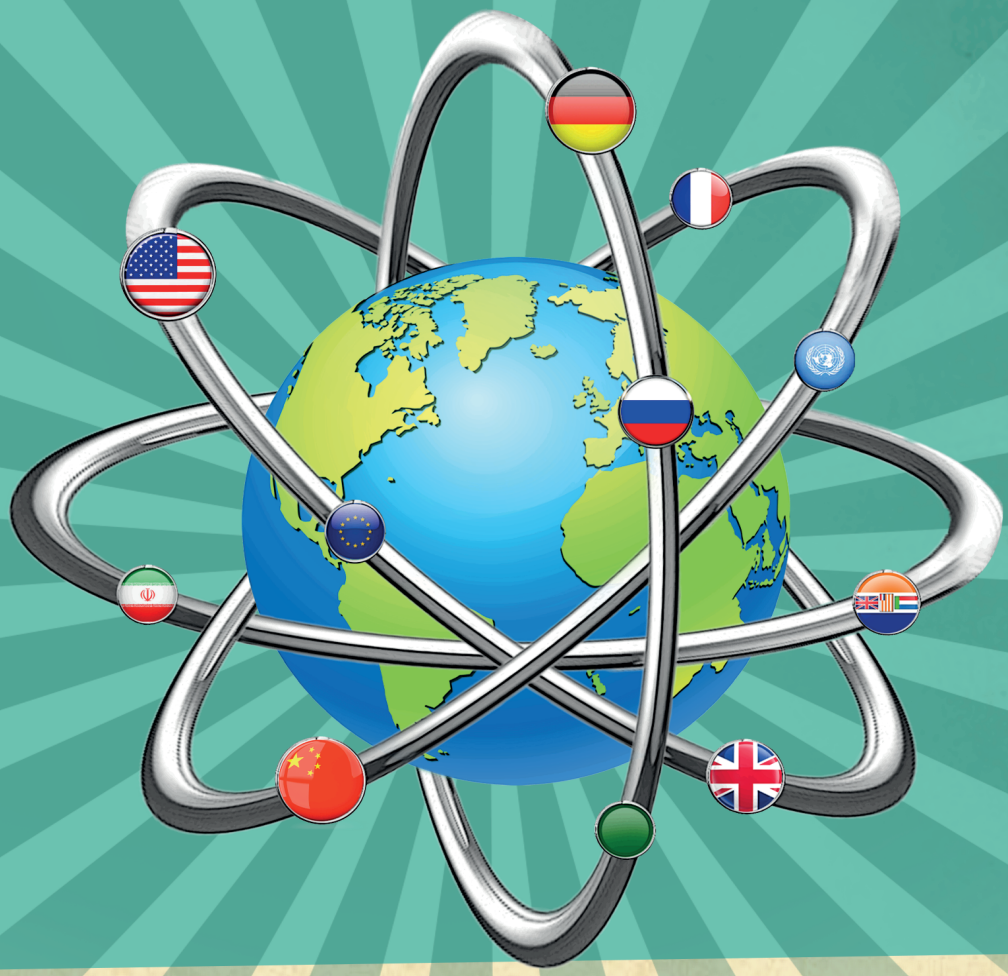

UNDERSTANDING COERCIVE NUCLEAR REVERSAL DYNAMICS

A comparative case study of US coercive diplomacy against the nuclear programs of Iran, Libya,and South Africa.

Jean Yves Ndzana Ndzana

UNDERSTANDING COERCIVE NUCLEAR REVERSAL DYNAMICS. A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF US COERCIVE DIPLOMACY AGAINST THE NUCLEAR PROGRAMS OF IRAN, LIBYA, AND SOUTH AFRICA.

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PhD THESIS

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UNDERSTANDING COERCIVE NUCLEAR REVERSAL DYNAMICS. A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF US COERCIVE DIPLOMACY AGAINST THE NUCLEAR PROGRAMS OF IRAN, LIBYA, AND SOUTH AFRICA.

Candidate: Jean Yves Ndzana Ndzana

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AEB	Atomic Energy Board
AECA	Arms Export Control Act
AEOI	Atomic Energy Organization of Iran
ANC	African National Congress
ANO	Abu Nidal Organization
BPD	Barrels per Day
CAAA	Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy.
CISADA	Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act
DIO	Defense Industries Organization
EGOMA	Experts Group of Multilateral Approaches
EO	Executive Order
EU	European Union
FEP	Fuel Enrichment Plant
FNLA	National Front for the Liberation of Angola.
FPA	Foreign Policy Analysis
FRELIMO	Liberation Front of Mozambique
GDP	Growth Domestic Product
IEEPA	International Emergency Economic Powers Act
ILSA	Iran Libya Sanction Act
IR	International Relations
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IRGC	Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps

KEC	Kalaye Electric Company
LEU	Low Enriched Uranium
MCSUASCA	Montreal Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation
MEC	Mesbah Energy Company:
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MIT	Massachusset Institute of Technology
MODAFL	Ministry of Defense and Arms Forces Logistics
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPLA	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
MWe	Mega Watt Electrical
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCRI	National Council of Resistance of Iran
NFC	Nuclear Fuel Cycle
NIC	National Identity Conception
NIE	National Intelligence Estimate
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
NSCWMD	National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction
NSS	National Security Strategy
NWS	Nuclear Weaponized States
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania
PFLP	Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PM	Prime Minister
PNE	Peaceful Nuclear Explosive
PSI	Proliferation Security Initiative
PT	Process tracing
RCC	Revolutionary Command Council
S.A.	South Africa
SAA	South African Act
SADF	South African Defense Force
SBIG	Shahid Bagheri Industrial Group
SHIG	Shahid Hemmat Industrial Group
SMP	Single-Member Plurality
SNSC	Supreme National Security Council
SSC	State Security Council
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organization
SWIFT	Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication
TNRC	Tajoura Nuclear Research Center
TRR	Tehran Research Reactor

TUT	Third Universal Theory
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola.
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VOC	Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWII	World War II

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SAMENVATTING

Dit proefschrift richt zich op het identificeren van bevorderende omstandigheden voor dwangdiplomatie (coercive diplomacy) in de context van nucleaire proliferatie. Aan de hand van de ervaringen van de Verenigde Staten met Iran, Libië en Zuid-Afrika onderzoeken we de drijvende factoren achter de uiteenlopende en paradoxale resultaten van dwangdiplomatie in deze landen. Onze keuze voor deze casestudies is gebaseerd op de verschillende stadia van hun nucleaire programma's ten tijde van confrontatie met de Verenigde Staten en de aard van de eisen geformuleerd door de dwingende partij in relatie tot de bilaterale relaties van de betrokken partijen.

We stellen dat een partij zijn nucleaire (wapen-)programma kan opgeven onder dwangdiplomatie als aan twee voorwaarden is voldaan: de dwingende partij benut de zwaktes van de doelpartij en als de dwangarbeider blijk geeft van de motivatie om een aanhoudende campagne te voeren om zijn doelwit te dwingen zijn kernwapenprogramma op te geven. De interacties tussen de Verenigde Staten en elk van de genoemde doelen bieden inzichten in het verbeteren van dwang, zowel theoretisch als praktisch.

Onze benadering is theoretisch geïnspireerd door de wisselwerking tussen binnenlandse politiek en internationale druk. We benadrukken de cruciale rol van binnenlandse actoren bij het verlichten of verhogen van de systemische druk met betrekking tot de nucleaire programma's van de doelwitten. We bouwen voort op neoklassiek realisme en process-tracing om deze dynamiek te beschrijven en om causale verbanden tussen oorzaak en gevolg te ontrafelen. We versterken de relevantie van onze bevindingen door gebruik te maken van een structuurgerichte vergelijkende methodologie en triangulatie van primaire en secundaire bronnen.

Onze bevindingen ondersteunen de hypothese van het aandrijfeffect van binnenlandse variabelen in relatie tot externe druk. We identificeren vergelijkbare en diverse mechanismen in onze drie casussen, wat ons helpt de juistheid van onze initiële hypothese te verifiëren en de relevantie van onze onderzoeksstrategie met betrekking tot de complexiteit van dwangdynamiek in het non-proliferatie domein te bevestigen.

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims at identifying the conducive conditions of coercive diplomacy in the context of nuclear proliferation. Drawing on the US experience with Iran, Libya, and South Africa, we examined the driving factors behind US coercive diplomacy's divergent and paradoxical results or outcomes in these countries. We chose our case studies based on two factors: the different stages or levels of their nuclear programs when confronted by the US and the nature of the demands formulated by the coercer in relation to the bilateral relations of the parties involved.

We hypothesized that two conditions could compel a target subjected to coercive diplomacy to abandon its nuclear (weapons) program: if the coercer's strategy exploits the target's vulnerabilities and if the coercer demonstrates the motivation to have a sustained campaign to compel its target to abandon its nuclear weapons program. The interactions between the US and each of the targets mentioned above provide insights into improving coercive diplomacy, both theoretically and practically.

The interplay between domestic politics and international pressures theoretically inspires our approach. We emphasized the critical role of domestic actors in alleviating or increasing systemic pressure related to the targets' nuclear programs. We used neoclassical realism and process tracing to describe these dynamics and unravel the causal relationships between the coercer's demands and the targets' responses. Using the structured-focused comparative methodology, we reinforced our findings' relevance and triangulated our primary and secondary sources.

Our findings support the hypothesis of the driving effect of domestic variables in relation to external pressures. Hence, we identified similar and diverse mechanisms in our three cases, which helped us verify the validity of our initial hypotheses and confirmed the relevance of our research strategy regarding the complexity of coercion dynamics in the non-proliferation domain.

RÉSUMÉ

L'objectif de cette thèse est d'identifier les conditions propices de la diplomatie coercitive en contexte de prolifération nucléaire. En nous appuyant sur l'expérience américaine avec les programmes nucléaires iraniens, libyens et sud-africains, nous avons examiné les facteurs déterminants les résultats divergents et paradoxaux de la diplomatie coercitive américaine dans ces précédents Etats. Deux principaux facteurs ont motivé le choix de nos cas d'étude : les différentes étapes ou niveaux des programmes nucléaires des cibles lorsqu'elles ont été soumises aux pressions américaines, et la nature des demandes formulées par l'émetteur à la cible eu égard aux relations bilatérales des parties impliquées.

Nous avons formulé deux hypothèses comme conditions essentielles d'effectivité de la diplomatie coercitive en contexte de prolifération nucléaire : si la stratégie coercitive de l'émetteur exploite les faiblesses de la cible et si l'émetteur démontre la motivation (volonté) d'avoir une campagne de pression soutenue et pérenne pour contraindre sa cible à abandonner son programme (d'armement) nucléaire. Les interactions entre les États-Unis et les cibles précédemment mentionnées nous ont permis d'aboutir à un raffinement substantiel de la stratégie coercitive, aussi bien d'un point de vue théorique que pratique.

Du point de vue théorique, notre approche s'inspire des interactions entre les pressions internationales et les configurations politiques intérieures. Nous avons insisté sur le rôle crucial des acteurs nationaux dans l'atténuation ou l'amplification des pressions systémiques liées aux programmes nucléaires des cibles. C'est ainsi que nous nous sommes appuyés sur le réalisme néoclassique et le traçage de processus (process tracing) pour décrire ces dynamiques, ainsi que les relations causales (cause à effet) entre les demandes de l'émetteur et les réponses de la cible. Nous avons renforcé la pertinence de nos résultats en utilisant la méthode dite du structured-focused comparison et en triangulant nos sources primaires et secondaires.

Nos résultats soutiennent l'hypothèse de l'effet de transmission des variables domestiques par rapport aux pressions externes ou systémiques. Nous avons ainsi pu identifier des mécanismes causaux similaires et différents dans nos trois cas d'étude, vérifier la validité de nos hypothèses initiales, et confirmer la pertinence de notre stratégie de recherche concernant la complexité des dynamiques de coercition dans le domaine de la non-prolifération nucléaire.

DEDICATION

To

My parents: Jean-Pierre Ndzana and Cathérine Menyene Bessala.

My brothers: Anthony Michel Ondoua Ndzana and Thierry Gaston Bessala Ndzana.

My sisters: Régine C. Laure Evina, Paule Ornella Ntolo Ndzana and Ange Cathérine Menyeng Ndzana.

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The arrow shot by the archer may or may not kill a single person. But stratagems devised by a wise man can kill even babes in the womb. — Kautilya, Indian Philosopher and Strategist.

Strategy is the most important department of the art of war, and strategical skill is the highest and rarest function of military genius. — George Stillman Hillard, American lawyer.

INTRODUCTION



"Why do the United States and its allies so often find themselves unable to force lesser adversaries to change behavior?" This question highlights the core issue of a famous article published by Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman.[1] These authors aimed to solve a major paradox regarding the overwhelming power capabilities of the US and its inability to compel minor powers to comply with its demands. As they noted, "despite the lopsided US edge in raw power, regional foes regularly defy threats and ultimatums. (…) The US record of coercion has at best been mixed. Even when threats are carried out, adversary resistance often actually increases rather than decreases."[2] Robert Art and Patrick Cronin dwell on this as they argue that "Washington's coercive diplomacy gambits have failed more often than they have succeeded."[3] Several authors shared the same goal with Byman and Waxman and provided different explanations to the repetitive failures of the US coercive strategies. For instance, Phil Haun argues that the nature of the demands formulated by the coercer and the impact of the concessions on the target in case it complies explain the success or failure of the US coercive strategies. More precisely, he argues that "the survival concerns of weak States and their leaders provide a better explanation for coercion failure. (…) The survival argument proposes that a weak State will resist the demands of a great power because concession would result in the loss of the State's and/or the regime's sovereignty."[4]

1.1 Background of the study.

Our interest[5] in coercive diplomacy is twofold: from a political and theoretical standpoint. From a political perspective, coercive diplomacy gained a greater interest in international politics and academia after the Cold War. This is not to say that there was no diplomatic coercion during the Cold War, for the Cuban missile crisis is always referred to as a prominent example of coercive diplomacy during that era.[6] Yet, the imperatives of the Cold War and the related strategic balance between the former two Great Powers (the USA and USSR) led to a greater political and academic interest in the

1 BYMAN Daniel and WAXMAN Matthew, **Defeating US coercion**, Survival, Vol. 41, N.2, p.107
2 BYMAN Daniel and WAXMAN Matthew, **Defeating US coercion**, Ibid., p.107
3 ART J., Robert and CRONIN M., Patrick (Eds): **The United States and coercive diplomacy**, Washington, United States Institute of Peace Press, 2003, p.475. (Accessed online)
4 HAUN, Phil: **Coercion, survival, and war: why weak States resist the United States**, Standford, Standford University Press, 2015, p.8. (1st ed. - Accessed online)
5 The personal pronoun "we" should not mislead the reader into thinking that the thesis is co-authored. This research was written only by the PhD candidate under the guidance of his supervision team. "We" is merely used here for humility purposes (French academic tradition.)
6 NATHAN, James, **The heyday of the new strategy: The Cuban missile crisis and the confirmation of coercive diplomacy**, Diplomacy & Statecraft, 1992, Vol. 3, N.2, pp.303-342. Read also BYMAN L, Daniel., WAXMAN C., Matthew, and LARSON Eric, **Explaining success or failure: the historical record**, in BYMAN L, Daniel., WAXMAN C., Matthew, and LARSON Eric: **Air power as a coercive instrument**, Santa Monica, California, RAND Corporation, 1999, pp.29–56 (1st ed.)

notion of deterrence – one of the two versions of coercive diplomacy as we will see in the next chapter. Coercive diplomacy logically gained impetus in political and academic milieu following the collapse of the Berlin wall in 1990.

As Sayde-Hope Crystal confirms it, "since the end of the Cold War, coercive diplomacy has become a prominent tactic of crisis management. The exploitation of potential force to induce an adversary to comply with one's demands is an attractive alternative to traditional military strategies in the contemporary post-Cold War international environment."[7] Several recent examples demonstrate the relevance of Crystal's argument; for example, the US threatened to impose economic sanctions on Turkey in 2018 to obtain the freedom of the American Pastor Andrew Brunson. Even key partners like the EU "conducted outreach to the US administration to reiterate its concerns at the growing use of sanctions, or the threat of sanctions, by the United States against European companies and interests."[8] With respect to the nuclear proliferation issue, President Trump pulled-out from the 2015 Iranian deal (JCPOA) in 2018 and launched a mixed result "maximum pressure" campaign to compel Iran to re-negotiate the terms of a new agreement over its nuclear program.[9]

1.2 Research puzzle.

A widely accepted belief suggests that targets should be prepared to acquiesce to the wishes of more influential actors to avoid harm or adversity. Branislav Slantchev asserts in this regard that "the stronger an actor is, the worse the expected war outcome for the adversary, and the more that adversary should be willing to compromise to avoid it."[10] However, this conventional wisdom is challenged by empirical evidence. For instance, Todd Sechser's analysis of compellent military threats made by major powers against weaker targets from 1918 to 2001 reveals that coercive actors achieved their objectives in only 36% of cases.[11] Similarly, in the context of 22 US coercion cases,

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[7] CRYSTAL, Sayde-Hope, **Coercive diplomacy A theoretical and practical evaluation**, Glendon Journal of International Studies, 2015, Vol. *8,* N.1-2, p.3

[8] PAYNE, Adam, **24 EU countries complained to the Trump administration about its use of sanctions, taking US officials by surprise, according to a report**, Business Insider Nederland, 14 August 2020. Accessed on May 26, 2022 from the link https://www.businessinsider.nl/report-twenty-four-eu-states-complain-to-trump-administration-about-us-sanctions-2020-8/

9 NURUZZAMAN, Mohammed, **President Trump's 'maximum pressure' campaign and Iran's endgame**, Strategic Analysis, 2020, Vol.44, N.6, pp.570-582

[10] SLANTCHEV L., Branislav, **Feigning weakness**, International Organization, 2010, Vol. 64, N.3, p.360

[11] SECHSER S., Todd, **Militarized compellent threats, 1918–200**1, Conflict Management and Peace Science, 2011, Vol 28, N.4, 24 pages.

Robert Art and Patrick Cronin found a success rate of only 32%.[12] These poor records can be explained by specific issues related to coercive diplomacy as a crisis management tool and foreign policy instrument. Peter Viggo Jakobsen grouped them into two categories: *inherent difficulties* and *practical problems*. On the one hand, Inherent difficulties mainly encompass psychological factors like the necessity for the coercer to *frighten and reassure the adversary at the same time*,[13] or to refrain from formulating demands with humiliating consequences for the target. Practical problems on the other hand refer to the necessity for the coercer to understand its adversary's mindset, motivations, interests, behavioral style, decision-making process, and military strategy.

This thesis focuses on the application of coercive diplomacy in the specific realm of nuclear proliferation and this choice is not empty grounded. As a foreign policy tool, coercive diplomacy has been applied in other areas like terrorism, economics or even migration.[14] But what's the specificity of the nuclear proliferation area? According to Nah Liang Tuang: "with their unmatched deterrence capabilities, nuclear arms are both shunned for their horrific destructive potential and desired as a strategic equalizer to convince adversaries not to threaten the nuclear proliferator's security."[15] It's important to note that the results of the research cannot be easily duplicated to other domains due to the specificity of the nuclear weapons domain (actors, rationality, interests etc.) Logically, in the specific realm of nuclear proliferation, the US extensively relied on coercive diplomacy to pursue its nuclear non-proliferation goals, although with mixed outcomes, as exemplified by the Iranian case, among others. This thesis primarily arises from the observation of a prior political anomaly or paradox: the stark contrast between the overwhelming power capabilities (political, economic, and military) of a coercing entity (in this case, the U.S.) and the mixed results of its coercive policies against weaker States (such as Iran, Libya, and South Africa). Its objective is to outline the fundamental components of a successful coercive strategy in the context of nuclear proliferation.

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[12] ART J., Robert and CRONIN M., Patrick: **The United States and coercive diplomacy**, ***Op. Cit.*** Cited by TÜRKCAN L., Muhammed, **The (In)Effectiveness of coercive diplomacy: The US maximum pressure campaign on Iran**, TRT World Research Centre, December 2019, 21 pages. (Report)

[13] JAKOBSEN V., Peter, ***Coercive diplomacy*** in COLLINS, Alan (Ed): **Contemporary Security Studies,** Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013, pp.251-251 (3rd ed.)

[14] GREENHILL Kelly and KRAUSE, Peter: **Coercion. The power to hurt in international politics,** New York, Oxford University Press, 2018, 384 pages.

[15] TUANG L., Nah: **Security, economics and nuclear non-proliferation morality: keeping or surrendering the Bomb,** Cham, Springer International Publishing, 2017, p.1

1.3 Research goal, question, and argument of the thesis.

This PhD thesis aims to identify the conditions of successful coercive strategies in the nuclear realm in general and that of the US specifically. However, as we will see later in the literature review chapter, several scholars, including Alexander George, identified contextual variables and operational conditions for successfully implementing a coercive strategy. Thereof, this thesis' research goal is to humbly identify the **essential or core conducive conditions**[16] of a coercive diplomacy strategy in the context of nuclear proliferation. In this regard, our research question is the following: **what are the conditions under which coercive diplomacy can compel a State to abandon its nuclear weapons program?** We hypothesized that coercive diplomacy could be effective under two conditions: first, **when the coercer's strategy exploits the vulnerabilities of its target**, and second **if the coercer demonstrates a motivation to have a sustained campaign to compel the target**. **Furthermore, this motivation could be rooted in the vital threats posed by the target's nuclear program to the coercer's strategic interests, or in the support of domestic/international constituencies for the coercive or counter-coercive strategy**.

The vulnerabilities of the target and the motivation of the coercer will be measured by specific variables. The **changes in the target's domestic politics and economic settings** following the sender's coercion will account for the former, while the **escalation dominance**[17] will account for the latter. The previous hypotheses will be tested out of the US coercive strategy against the nuclear (weapons) programs of three States: Iran, Libya, and South Africa. That is, we will analyze the coercive dynamics between the US and Iran, Libya, and South Africa against the backdrop of our hypothesis, by always asking ourselves whether the US coercive strategy exploited the vulnerabilities of its targets and if the US demonstrated a motivation to have a sustained campaign to compel the target. But more precisely, in essence, does the target's response to US demands stem from the coercive-based domestic (political and economic) changes or the fear of heightened threats?

This thesis asserts that coercive diplomacy hinges on the coercer's prowess in crafting a good strategy comprising four crucial elements:

[16] This thesis uses the notion of *conducive conditions* interchangeably with Alexander George's notion of *favoring conditions*.
[17] These two variables related to our hypotheses will be substantially analyzed in the theoretical framework of thesis.

- **the crafting by the coercer of a strategic empathy-based coercive strategy.**
- **the formulation by the coercer of clear and acceptable demands by the target.**
- **the display by the coercer of a stronger resolve than the target to achieve its objectives.**
- **the offer of convincing incentives to the target as a reward for its compliance.**

In other words, the likelihood of a State's coercive diplomacy to compel another State to abandon its nuclear program depends, among other on first, its ability to formulate acceptable demands based on the importance of the nuclear program for the target; that is when crafting their coercive strategies, the State policymakers should primarily ask a simple question: how important is the nuclear program for the target and what are the drivers of the building of the nuclear program? Second, the coercer must formulate demands that are not politically costly to the target. Third, the coercer must have the edge regarding the escalation dominance by effectively having recourse to all its power capabilities, including political, economic, and military force (cyber, air strikes and ground soldiers), to demonstrate his/her greater motivation to achieve his/her political goals than the target. Lastly, the coercing State should propose a credible exit gate to its target if his/she complies with his demands. These incentives must meet the target State's domestic demands and international position. It's important to highlight that while the favorable conditions mentioned apply to both parties involved in the conflict, the sender, who initiates the coercive strategy, bears a greater responsibility in ensuring the success of his strategy by gathering these conditions effectively.

1.4 Research gap and added value of the thesis.

Several previous PhD theses investigated the conditions under which US coercive diplomacy could successfully change the nuclear course of particular States. For instance, Seunghoon Paik analyzed the US coercive diplomacy against the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea18 while Robbie W. Baillie investigated the effectiveness of the US coercive diplomacy against Libya and North Korea against the backdrop of Peter Viggo Jakobsen's ideal policy. Robin Markwica's PhD thesis argues that the emotions of target leaders can help to explain why compellence succeeds in some cases but not in others. One should also consider Ebrahim Mohseni-Cheraghlou's PhD thesis which investigated the effectiveness of US coercive diplomacy against Iran. A common feature among the previous PhD theses is their choice of cases based on the contestation of the US-led international system. It is also worth highlighting that apart

[18]PAIK, Seunghoon: **Taming the Evil: US Non-proliferation coercive diplomacy and the counter-strategies of Iran and North Korea after the Cold War**, PhD thesis, Durham University, Durham, 2017, 380 pages.

from Ebrahim Mohseni-Cheraghlou's thesis, the other three theses apprehended the principal belligerents as unitary actors. That is, they did not consider the input of domestic factors in the nuclear decision-making of the target States; These three previous factors affected the power of their findings despite their relevant theoretical insights concerning their research goals. This thesis aims to humbly fill a research gap by offering fresh insights on the effectiveness of coercive diplomacy, notably by shifting from the traditional State-centered to a non-State perspective.

This thesis's main contribution to the advancement of coercive studies lies in the humble identification of the core conducive conditions of coercive diplomacy, hence the formulation of a new theoretical model of diplomatic coercion. This was achieved thanks to two main factors: the choice of our case studies and our methodological and theoretical stances. Regarding the sampling of our cases, unlike the previous PhD research which chose their case studies based on the perception of the unjust US-led international system, we opted for cases not restricted to a contestation-driven foreign policy of the international system. This approach allowed us to gauge the sincerity of US efforts in compelling potential proliferators and bolstering the nuclear regime. Additionally, our case selection was based on the advancement of their nuclear programs, a pivotal factor in determining a state's readiness to comply or resist coercive demands, thus significantly shaping the dynamics of coercive diplomacy. A state's evolving security and strategic interests, influenced by its nuclear progress, dictate its response to external pressure. Grasping these dynamics is paramount for policymakers and diplomats to craft effective strategies dealing with varying nuclear-capable states.

In addition, the nature of the bilateral relations between the coercer and the target State is a critical factor that deeply influences the target's readiness to comply or defy the coercer's demands. The quality or nature of these relations can either facilitate cooperation or exacerbate resistance, making it an essential aspect of coercive diplomacy; indeed, the nature of bilateral relations between the coercer and the target is a multifaceted and dynamic factor that significantly shapes a state's readiness to comply or defy coercive demands. Hence, a nuanced understanding of these relations, combined with a careful assessment of other contextual factors (like the nature of the coercer's demands or threats), is also essential for effective coercive diplomacy and nuclear reversal.

Regarding our methodological and theoretical choices, the rarity of PhD theses that undertake a comprehensive analysis of U.S. coercion in nuclear reversal by integrating methodological and theoretical approaches from multiple and to some extent contradicting schools of thought is also noteworthy. This approach combines insights from constructivism, (classical and neo) realism, and domestic politics, resulting in a

holistic framework that sheds light on the intricate dynamics of how coercion can effectively lead to the reversal of a State's nuclear policies. The eclectic approach's major explanatory power lies in its ability to offer complex and diversified insights into why and how coercion can succeed in reversing a State's nuclear course. By considering a State's emotional and historical context, alongside (domestic and regional) structural factors, this approach unveils the intricate web of motivations, calculations, and perceptions that drive a State to change or maintain its nuclear policies in response to external pressure. Hence, it offers a nuanced grasp of when coercion can genuinely reshape a state's strategic course in the nuclear domain, making a substantial contribution to international relations and security studies.

But more importantly, this thesis emphasizes how systemic pressures are translated by domestic variables in the target's decision to comply or defy the coercer. Such an approach allowed us to identify better *the pulling and hauling of various forces within the target State*[19] that explain the nuclear resistance or compliance of the State. In other words, our thesis shifted from the classic State-centric perspective to a non-State-centric one. This strategy unveiled hidden actors in target state nuclear decision-making and revealed the causal mechanisms driving their responses to external pressures. Hence, we pinpointed the target State's vulnerabilities and the flaws in US coercive strategies against resistant nuclear states. Additionally, our sampling, while quantitative weak, offered qualitative strengths, providing valid theoretical insights for policymakers when dealing with similar cases in the future.

1.5 Structure of the thesis.

This thesis is composed of seven chapters. Following this introductory chapter is the chapter on the literature review. The third chapter will elaborate on the theoretical framework and methodology, and the fourth chapter, which focuses on analyzing the American coercive dynamics with Iran, will inaugurate our analytical chapters. The fifth chapter focuses on the Libyan nuclear issue and the sixth' on the South African case. It is worth noting that each analytical chapter comprises five sections which, in line with our structured-focused comparison approach, includes the following structure: an analysis of the nature of the relations between the target State and the Great Powers (section I), then the context of the emergence of the nuclear program for the target State (section II), followed by an analysis of the political system and decision-making of the target State (Section III). We will then dig into the coercive dynamics between the US and the target State (section IV) and draw theoretical conclusions from the previously

[19] MOHSENI-CHERAGHLOU, Ebrahim: **When coercion backfires: the limits of coercive diplomacy in Iran**, PhD thesis, ***Op. Cit.***, p.2

analyzed coercive dynamics (section V). The seventh chapter will conclude the thesis and comprises two sections: the first will present the result of our empirical investigation and discuss the related-theoretical findings; the second will present the theoretical lessons of the research and practical advice for policymakers. In line with the previous information, the next chapter will focus on the literature review.

LITERATURE REVIEW: WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THEORIES OF COERCIVE DIPLOMACY AND NUCLEAR REVERSALS?

2

This chapter aims to provide a substantial overview of the previous theoretical knowledge on coercion and nuclear reversal. Concerning the former, we will stress the prosperous conditions of coercion in general, particularly coercive diplomacy. But we will first emphasize the different types of coercive strategies and mechanisms. Concerning the latter, we will stress the definition and the various theories related to nuclear reversal dynamics. Hence, this chapter is divided into two sub-parts: the first will emphasize the theoretical aspects of coercion (strategies, instruments, mechanisms, and theories), and the second will stress the theoretical aspects of nuclear reversal. It's crucial to emphasize that our research objective is to pinpoint the favorable conditions for successful coercive diplomacy. The first subsection will delve into coercion, with a specific focus on coercive diplomacy. This will involve an in-depth examination of coercive strategies, instruments, mechanisms, and theoretical models for effective implementation.

2.1 SECTION I - COERCION: STRATEGIES, INSTRUMENTS, MECHANISMS AND THEORIES.

2.1.1 Coercion: strategies, instruments, and mechanisms.

2.1.1.1 Coercive strategies

2.1.1.1.1 Punishment-based coercive strategy.

The strategy of punishment seeks to raise the societal costs of continued resistance to levels that overwhelm the target state's territorial interests, causing it to concede to the coercer's demands.[20] When implementing this strategy, the coercer usually focuses on what the adversary treasures. David Johnson confirms it as he argues that it involves "threatening to kill or harm civilian populations, to kill soldiers in combat, or virtually any other threat to inflict harm against something that the enemy decision-makers value."[21] As we will see later in the coercive instrument sub-part, the punishment strategy is usually implemented with economic sanctions. Another coercive strategy often used by decision-makers is denial. According to Robert Pape, punishment strategies usually fail because they lack credible or significant coercive leverage in many regards. First, there is a discrepancy between the means and the goal the coercer tries to attain.

[20] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win: air power and coercion in war,** New York, Cornell University Press, 1996, p.18

[21] JOHNSON E., David et al: **Conventional coercion across the spectrum of operations: The Utility of U.S. military forces in the emerging security environment,** Santa Monica, Rand corporation, 2003, p.16

Economic sanctions and punishment-driven air bombings are weaker or minor instruments compared to political goals such as the seizure of territory, which are in the highest interest of the target. In this case, decision-makers are usually ready to bear the cost of civilian casualties, especially when they are emboldened by security and nationalist-based motivation. Consequently, the expected unrest mechanism, which refers to the public contests that could topple the government, will likely fail. In this case, the punishment strategy is likely not only to fail but also to backfire as it will trigger a rally-around-the-flag effect in the population instead.[22] Taking the example of WWII, Karl P. Mueller confirms the unexpected effect of strategic air bombings on the target's population in these terms: "strategic bombing campaigns failed to produce the sort of rapid, decisive results originally envisioned by many of their proponents. Populations subjected to terror bombing did not revolt against their governments, demanding capitulation in order to stop the carnage as Douhet had predicted."[23]

Also, the risk of losing the face or being framed as cowards usually encourages decision-makers to adopt firm stances, considering especially the fact that [military] coercion usually occurs in the context of war. As Pape argues, "the experience of war and government propaganda can demonize the enemy and lead to an uncompromising "us or them" attitude in which anything less than victory comes to be seen as disaster."24 Another cause of the failure of punishment strategies is their incapacity to inflict unacceptable damage on civilians. In addition, more and more States develop strategies aimed at preventing substantial collateral damage to their population; this can be done through evacuation of threatened areas or rapid adjustment to economic dislocations.

2.1.1.1.2 Denial-based strategy.

Unlike punishment-oriented strategies, which aim at increasing the cost of resistance to the target, the objective of denial-based strategies is to decrease the appeal or advantage of resistance to the target. A seminal work on denial-based coercive strategy is Robert Pape's classic *Bombing to win: air power and coercion in war.*[25] Pape's objective in this book is to demonstrate, among others, that denial strategies are more effective than punishment strategies; we will elaborate substantially on Robert Pape's work in the sub part dedicated to military coercion. A denial strategy aims at breaking the resolve of the target to fight, notably by undermining his strategy. More precisely, it

[22] LAMBERT J. Alan et al, **Threat, politics, and attitudes: toward a greater understanding of rally-'round- the flag effects,** Sage Journals, 2011, 6 pages.
[23] MUELLER P., Karl, **Air Power**, RAND Corporation, John Wiley and Sons, Ltd, 2010, p.3.
[24] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win: air power and coercion in war, *Op. Cit.,*** p.22
[25] Robert Pape's work is analyzed here regarding his inputs on a specific coercive strategy, and not on the types of coercion like air bombings as analyzed later in the research project. This precision is made for the reader not to have the feeling of repetition.

threatens to defeat the adventure, so that the challenger gains nothing but must still suffer the costs of the conflict.[26] Considering the fact that war is not always a zero-sum game (Schelling), one can assume that the resolve to fight depends on the worthiness or advantages of the conflict. Therefore, when deprived of his expected gains, the target will likely surrender. As Karl Mueller described it, *when the enemy recognizes that resisting the demands of the coercer offers no hope of producing an outcome better than conceding would be, it should choose to give in rather than continue to suffer the costs of war for no purpose.*[27] This can be achieved by the seizure of the enemy's territory or the destruction of strategic military infrastructures of the enemy.[28]

Robert Pape argues that *the key to the success of denial strategies rests in the interaction of the two sides' military strategies.*[29] The interaction between the two actors is important because it sheds light on the strengths and weaknesses of the target and/or on the sender. Based on the information revealed by the interaction of the conflicting military strategies, the coercer can effectively adjust his strategy. However, Robert Pape advises not only to *thwart the opponent's strategy* but also to anticipate and nullify *any possible countermeasures of the opponent*.[30] This can be done if the coercer has previously identified the type of military strategy adopted by his target. In this regard, Robert Pape highlighted two main military strategies: *mechanized (or "conventional") war and guerrilla (or "unconventional") war.* Therefore, the coercer should adjust its actions and responses depending on the target's strategy. After all, as Byman, Waxman, and Larson stressed regarding coercive air power, "the successful coercive use of air power requires favorable conditions and often depends more on the strategy chosen by the adversary than on the overall might of the coercer."[31] Notwithstanding the previous advantages of denials strategies, they also have limits.

Coercive denial strategies present several limits. First, the effectiveness of denial strategies depends on the nature and the scope of the demands made by the coercer. Indeed, if his demands outweigh the main bone of contention, his denial strategy is likely to fail; this is because the coerce can interpret it as a willingness to target his vital interests and will consequently resist. Conversely, limited demands are likely to encourage the target to comply, thus facilitating the success of the denial strategy. As Robert Pape put it, "if the target State is persuaded it will lose one territory but not

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[26] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win: air power and coercion in war, *Op. Cit.,*** p.7.
[27] MUELLER H., Karl, **Strategies of coercion: denial, punishment, and the future of air power,** Security Studies 7, N.3, 1998, p.188
[28] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win, *Op. Cit.,*** p.13
[29] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win, *Ibid.,*** p.29
[30] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win, *Ibid.,*** p.30
[31] BYMAN Daniel, WAXMAN Matthew and LARSON Eric: **Air power as a coercive instrument**, California, RAND Corporation, 1999, p.29

another, it will concede only the one that is lost. If the coercer demands more than it can persuade the target State, it would lose in continued fighting, coercion will fail even though denial was partly achieved."[32] In this regard, Robert Pape shares Alexander George's point of view regarding the favorable conditions for the implementation of coercive diplomacy, precisely the clarity of the terms of resolution of the crisis, as we will see later. Indeed, the clarity of the terms of the resolution of the political crisis is decisive as it reassures the adversary of the impossibility of the coercing State to make additional demands than those which were formulated at the beginning of the crisis.

The necessity for the coercer's ability to continuously pressure its target constitutes the second limit of denial strategies. Indeed, a gesture of appeasement is likely to be interpreted by the adversary as weakness. From a domestic perspective, a target is likely to comply when the political demands made by the coercer aim at modifying the composition of a political system and not substantially the system as a whole by attacking its core values. *The likelihood of concessions is higher when replacement of the target state's ruling elite can be accomplished by evolutionary rather than revolutionary change. Regime members have less reason to resist if their main social values are not under threat,* Pape argues in this regard.[33] The third coercive strategy we will emphasize is the risk-based strategy.

2.1.1.1.3 Risk-based strategy.

Risk-based strategies have been substantially analyzed by Thomas Schelling in his classic *Arms and influence.* Although he denied having been influenced by Clausewitz,[34] the premises of Schelling's description of risk-based strategy are similar to Clausewitz's. In fact, as Clausewitz argued in his classic book *On war*, "when we attack the enemy, it is one thing if we mean our first operation to be followed by others until all resistance has been broken; it is quite another if our aim is only to obtain a single victory, in order to make the enemy insecure, to impress our greater strength upon him, and to give him doubts about his future."[35] Hence, this strategy is rooted in the manipulation of the interests of the target by the progressive increase of the pain or damage inflicted by the coercer. In other words, the logic behind the risk strategy is that by effectively implementing the threats he previously announced, the coercer sends a clear signal to his target about what awaits him in case of further defiance. As Robert

[32] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win: air power and coercion in war, *Op. Cit.,*** p.31
[33] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win: air power and coercion in war, *Ibid.,*** p.31
[34] Schelling denied having been influenced by Clausewitz in an interview with Robbie W. Baillie. More precisely, he argued that he "didn't learn anything from Clausewitz." See BALLIE W., Robbie: **The utility of Jakobsen's *ideal policy* as a strategy of coercive diplomacy to prevent States attaining nuclear weapons,** PhD thesis, ***Op. Cit.***, p.21
[35] HOWARD Michael, PARET Peter (ed.): **Carl Von CLAUSEWITZ: On war**, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1989, p.92. (Consulted online).

Art and Kelly Greenhill describe it, the *risk is essentially the promise to inflict pain if no pain has yet been inflicted, or to inflict more (and more) pain if some has already been administered, in order to convince the target to concede.*[36]

The causes of the failure of risk strategies are threefold, according to Robert Pape. First, the fact that risk-based strategies highlight the perception of the target does not *address a real distinction in the causal mechanism of the strategies.*[37] Consequently, (second reason) the effects of perceived damages can never match the actual damages caused by concrete military actions. Not to mention the fact that the target can easily adapt to the effects of the coercer's action and even retaliate with countermeasures. In other words, risk strategies cannot inflict decisive pain on the target. Finally, (third reason) risk strategies can also undermine the credibility and resolve of the coercer, as Rob de Wijk previously noted, though it was in the context of military coercion. *Instead of being convinced of the coercer's resolve to inflict maximum damage if demands are not met, the opponent is more likely to be convinced that the coercer will never escalate far above current restrained levels,* Pape warned.[38] Robert Pape identified a fourth coercive strategy which, in his words, *pursues both punishment and denial effects*: the decapitation strategy.

2.1.1.1.4 Decapitation coercive strategies.

The decapitation strategy aims essentially at breaking the target's will to fight of State by directly attacking its leadership and core telecommunication facilities. Paraphrasing John Warden, Ellwood Hinman IV argues that this strategy "to paralyze and incapacitate the enemy by destroying the maximum number of political leadership (…) in the minimum amount of time."[39] As Robert Pape argues, *the ideal decapitation campaign would attack key leadership facilities and communications networks in the opponent's political centers, in addition to vital nodes in a nation's economic infrastructure, such as electric power and petroleum refining*.[40] The basic calculus of the coercer when implementing a decapitation is that once the leader is taken down, the other constitutive elements of the structure of resistance will surrender because the main pillar has been destroyed.

"Regardless of the strength of a state's fielded forces or military-industrial capacity, if the leadership is knocked out, the whole house of cards comes down," as Robert Pape

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[36] ART Robert and GREENHILL Kelly, ***Coercion. An analytical overview***, ***Op. Cit.***, p.20
[37] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win: air power and coercion in war, *Op. Cit.,*** p.28
[38] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win: air power and coercion in war, *Op. Cit.,*** p.28
[39] HINMAN IV P. "SKIP", Ellwood: **The politics of coercion toward a theory of coercive airpower for post–cold war conflict**, CADRE Paper, Alabama, Air University Press, 2002, N.14, p.19.
[40] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win: air power and coercion in war, *Ibid.,*** p.56

sums it up.[41] He distinguishes three types of decapitation strategies: first, the leadership decapitation, which focuses exclusively on the life of the main leader, second the political decapitation, where the goal of the coercer aims at creating circumstances where political groups will topple the regime (this is very close to the power-base erosion mechanism that we will analyze later), and third, *military decapitation, which attacks national command and communications networks in order to isolate the central leadership from its units in the field, so that the leaders can no longer give strategic direction or adjust to enemy moves*.[42] The following table summarizes well Robert Pape's coercive air strategies.

However, it is important to note that Christopher Moss stresses that inducements can also be considered a coercive strategy since they play two main roles: they *lower the costs of compliance* **(shield strategy)** and increase the benefits of compliance.[43] We challenge this argument because coercion is first and foremostly rooted in the idea of the use of threat or force as its etymology *cohercen* ("restrain or constrain by force of law or authority.") describes it. Therefore, putting forward inducement, which is *induce* ("to lead by persuasions"), as a coercive strategy deprives coercion of its core assumption. Inducement should be considered, at best, as an instrument in a broad coercive strategy or a mechanism aimed at influencing the calculus of the target.

Table 4. Coercive air strategies

Strategy	Theorist	Target set	Mechanism
Punishment	Douhet	cities	popular revolt
	Trenchard	cities	popular revolt
	Air Corps Tactical School	key economic nodes	social disintegration
Risk	Schelling	gradual civilian damage	avoid future costs
Denial	Luftwaffe	frontline forces	battlefield breakthrough
	Committee of Operations Analysts	weapons plants	equipment shortages
	Enemy Objectives Unit	POL/transportation	operational paralysis
Decapitation	Warden	leadership	leadership change or strategic paralysis

Table 1: Robert Pape's coercive air strategies.[44]

[41] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win: air power and coercion in war, *Op. Cit.,*** p.56
[42] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win: air power and coercion in war, *Ibid.,*** p.80
[43] MOSS J., Christopher: **Elegant coercion and Iran: beyond the unitary actor model,** Master thesis, School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Air University, 2005, p.9
[44] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win: air power and coercion in war, *Ibid.,*** p.57

2.1.1.2 Coercive instruments

From its Latin etymology, *instrumentum (tool, means),* an instrument refers to *a tool or device that is used to do a particular task*.[45] In our research, instruments are the tools used by the coercer to implement its coercive policy. Our research will focus on three main types of instruments: **economic, military, and political instruments.** With respect to the political instruments, we have coercive use of political leverage such as diplomatic isolation, while economic instruments refer to embargoes, and boycotts; we will elaborate deeper on these instruments in the sub-part dedicated to economic-based coercive strategies. Military instruments refer to the official use (air and marine strikes, deployment of ground troops) or covert use of military assets (cyber-attacks, operations carried out by the secret services.)

2.1.1.3 Coercive mechanisms

Mechanism: Daniel Byman defines a [coercive] mechanism as the "process by which the threat or infliction of costs generates adversary concessions."[46] In other words, the mechanism is the transmission belt between the coercive strategy and the coercive effect, which leads to a specific outcome. Byman identified four main coercive mechanisms: **power-base erosion, unrest, decapitation, weakening and denial**.

2.1.1.3.1 Power-base erosion.

Daniel Byman argues that the power-base erosion mechanism describes a process through which the target is expected to comply with the coercer's demand due to the risk of losing its core domestic support.[47] This is very similar to Pape's political decapitation we formerly analyzed. The coercer usually triggers this mechanism by putting "pressure on the adversary's constituency, which in turn causes an unhappy populace to pressure the government to alter its policy."[48] The pressure can be imposed via measures like economic sanctions, travel bans or other forms of measures which usually fall under the punishment strategy umbrella.

2.1.1.3.2 Unrest

Like the power-base erosion mechanism, the unrest mechanism also involves punishment strategies. Yet, unrest mechanisms occur through "popular disaffection." By applying punishment-based strategies like economic sanction to the target, the

[45] **Collins's online dictionary** https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/instrument. An information accessed on the 12th of December 2019.
[46] BYMAN Daniel and WAXMAN Matthew: **The dynamics of coercion. American foreign policy and the limits of military might,** The UK, Cambridge University, 2002, p.48
[47] BYMAN Daniel and WAXMAN Matthew: **The dynamics of coercion, *Op. Cit.,*** p.59
[48] ROMANIUK N., Scott and WEBB T., Stewart: **Insurgency and counterinsurgency in modern war,** The London, Routledge, 2015, p.109 (1st ed.)

coercer aims at increasing the cost of living in the country, which will lead to the population's unrest and demonstration, threatening, therefore, the survival of the regime or the government. As Byman described it, "the hope is that pressure placed on a country's population may "trickle up" and prompt decision-makers to concede."[49] According to Byman, the unrest mechanism can be effective under three conditions. First, in case the leader or decision-maker cares for the population and wants to alleviate its suffering. Second, the target's regime is one where there's considerable "popular input into the decision-making" and lastly, the population may revolt and try to topple the regime if it does not comply.

2.1.1.3.3 Decapitation

As previously analyzed with Pape, in this case, the coercer aims at threatening the personal security of the top leadership, which could be replaced by a less hawkish leader eager to comply. Byman argues that "actual assassination can bring to power a different individual or regime that may change the policy."[50]

2.1.1.3.4 Weakening/incapacitation

Weakening mechanisms usually occur when the coercive strategy aims at undermining the core infrastructures of the target to incapacitate the entire country. According to Rob de Wijk, a synonym of the weakening mechanism is "incapacitation," as its aim is to target *critical infrastructure, communications and other institutions that make up a country's economic strength and political cohesion.*[51] For the weakening mechanism to lead to the target's compliance, the coercer should focus on the target's "pressure points," which refer to the points that the adversary cannot "impenetrably guard," Byman argues. This was the case, for example, when the US compelled the British to stop their invasion campaign against Nasser's Egypt in 1956 by threatening to deny them access to financial assets, which could lead to an economic crash in the UK.[52] However, the weakening mechanism cannot be effective against autocratic regimes, which usually deviate the coercive effects towards the political opposition.

2.1.1.3.5 Denial

As we have seen previously, denial strategies aim at making the adversary realize the inefficiency of its counter-coercive strategy. As a mechanism, it occurs when the leader is dissuaded from continuing its controversial track or pattern. Byman emphasizes the necessity of distinguishing coercive denial and warfare denial. While the former "hinges

[49] BYMAN Daniel and WAXMAN Matthew: **The dynamics of coercion, *Ibid,*** p.65
[50] BYMAN Daniel and WAXMAN Matthew: **The dynamics of coercion, *Op. Cit.,*** p.72
[51] DE WIJK, Rob: **The art of military coercion. *Op. Cit.,*** p.140
[52] BYMAN Daniel and WAXMAN Matthew: **The dynamics of coercion, *Ibid,*** p.77

on the perception that benefits will not be achieved," the latter "rests on making that perception a reality."[53]

2.1.2 Theories of the successful conditions of a coercive strategy.

Like the definition of coercion and coercive diplomacy, there is no consensus in the literature regarding the conditions under which coercive diplomacy can be successfully implemented.[54] Certain authors emphasized a specific coercive strategy, while others stressed on the decisive role played by a specific coercive instrument. Before analyzing those different visions, we will first stress the pioneers of coercion, then on the different theories of coercive diplomacy that were developed, starting with Alexander George's conditions for the successful implementation of coercive diplomacy.

2.1.2.1 The pioneers of coercive diplomacy.

2.1.2.1.1 Sun Tzu

The seeds of the use of force as political leverage hark back to antiquity with the Chinese general Sun Tzu, and in the 18th Century with the Prussian General Car Von Clausewitz. In their respective seminal works,[55] they analyzed not only how an army could defeat an enemy without risking great losses, but also without resorting to the effective use of force. To understand the role that each of these strategists gives to violence, it is important first to stress their perception of war. According to Sun Tzu, *war is a vital matter of state. It is the field on which life or death is determined and the road that leads to either survival or ruin and must be examined with the greatest care.*[56] Given the strategic importance of the war for stability thus, the survival of the State, it is necessary to implement all the necessary means to win the war. Consequently, the leader must first assess the costs he or she will have to bear before waging a war, and, if possible, avoid it. As Roger Ames puts it, *the first priority is the avoidance of warfare if at all possible. Once, however, a commitment has been made to a military course of action, the project becomes to achieve victory at the minimum cost*.[57]

Sun Tzu identified several conducive conditions that must be considered by the political (or military) decision-maker before embarking on a military campaign. These conditions are mainly two-fold: objective factors and subjective factors. Regarding the

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[53] BYMAN Daniel and WAXMAN Matthew: **The dynamics of coercion, *Op. Cit.,*** p.78

[54] Although it may be tedious to review all the theoretical models of coercion that have been developed to provide an effective coercive strategy against a target, it's also important to have prior comprehensive knowledge of these models, analyze their strengths and weaknesses, then choose one model that will be the main analytical framework of the thesis, based the flaws identified previously.

[55] The Art of war (Sun Tzu) and On War (Clausewitz)

[56] AMES T., Roger: **Sun Tzu: the art of warfare,** New York, Ballantine Books, 1993, p.39 (1st ed.)

[57] AMES T., Roger: **Sun Tzu: the art of warfare, *Ibid,*** p.59

objective factors on the first hand, Sun Tzu lists five variables that can influence the outcome of any battle or warfare.[58] Among the variables likely to play a strategic role in the coercive dynamics is the *Moral Law,* which refers to the necessity for the political decision-maker to match up the military initiative with the laws of the State, but also to have beforehand the assent of his people before getting involved in a military campaign. Ensuring the consent of his people would allow him to have blindly obedient and insensitive people to the potential dangers. Then the *Commander* or *Leadership* which refers here to the intrinsic qualities of the political and/or military leader. These qualities include *humanity or benevolence*; *uprightness of mind*; *self-respect*, *self-control, or "proper feeling," wisdom and sincerity or good faith.*

Regarding the subjective factors on the second hand, Sun Tzu emphasizes that it is necessary for the strategist to have an optimal knowledge of his inner capabilities and that of his enemies. This knowledge will permit him to refine his strategy and adapt it proportionally to the evolution of the battle. As he asserts, *he who knows the enemy and himself will never in a hundred battles be at risk; He who does not know the enemy but knows himself will sometimes win and sometimes lose; He who knows neither the enemy nor himself will be at risk in every battle*.[59] However, victory, according to Sun Tzu, lies less in the ability to get as many victories as battles, but rather to defeat his enemies without having to face them militarily. After all, "to win a hundred victories in a hundred battles is not the highest excellence; the highest excellence is to subdue the enemy's army without fighting at all."[60] The second great strategist who laid the groundwork for coercion is Car Von Clausewitz.

2.1.2.1.2 Carl Von Clausewitz

Carl Von Clausewitz was a famous Prussian general and strategist (nowadays Germany). Although he analyzes war as a zero-sum interaction between rational actors, there are nonetheless scattered but real traces of coercion in his seminal book. However, before analyzing those elements of coercion, we will also emphasize the Clausewitzian perception of war. According to Clausewitz, "War is [..] an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will."[61] In other words, Clausewitz considers war to be an act of subjugation of the adversary to our will by the use of force. Clausewitz clearly lays

[58] Those factors are the ***Moral Law***, ***Heaven***, ***Earth***, ***Commander***, ***Method and Discipline***. See GILES, Lionel: **Sun Tzu on the art of war. The oldest military treatise in the world,** Leicester, Allandale Online Publishing, 2000, p.1. Accessed on 7th of Septembre 2019 at 18h24 from the link https://sites.ualberta.ca/~enoch/Readings/The_Art_Of_War.pdf.
[59] AMES T., Roger: **Sun Tzu: the art of warfare, *Op. Cit.***, p.81
[60] AMES T., Roger: **Sun Tzu: the art of warfare, *Ibid***, p.59
[61] HOWARD Michael, PARET Peter (ed.): **Carl Von CLAUSEWITZ: On war**, ***Op. Cit.,*** p.75

the foundation of his theory of coercion[62] when he argues that *since war is not an act of senseless passion but is controlled by its political object, the value of this object must determine the sacrifices to be made for it in magnitude and also in duration. Once the expenditure of effort exceeds the value of the political object, the object must be renounced, and peace must follow*.[63]

Indeed, it is important to recall that coercion is based on the cost-benefit dyad. Therefore, all actions initiated by a State, or an army must follow the rational scheme. Regarding Clausewitz, the previously mentioned paragraph contains the basic elements of coercive action. Among these, there is the purpose of the war (the political object), which then determines the proportional conditions of sacrifices to be borne (in terms of magnitude and duration). Finally, the threshold from which the assault must be repealed (when the expenditure exceeds the value or interest of the political object). The following diagram clearly illustrates this analysis.

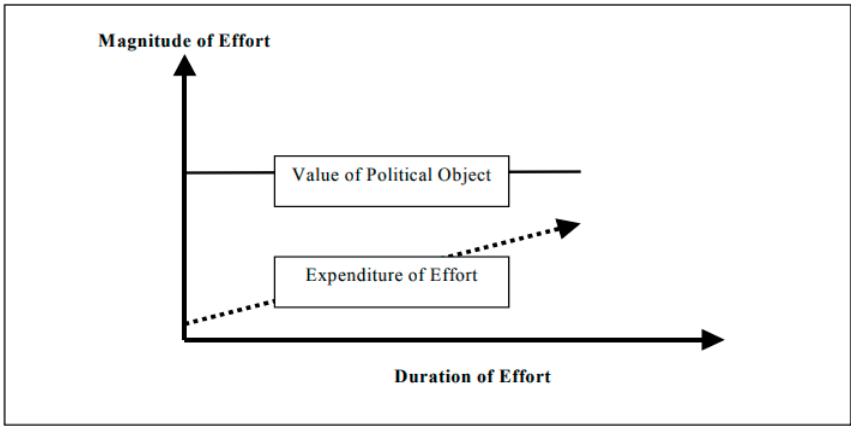

Figure 1: Clausewitzian compellence model from Micheal T. Plehn[64]

Although Clausewitz does not provide a policy-oriented model of coercion, he enumerates three types of coercion similar to those developed by Thomas Schelling or Robert Pape. These include risk-based coercion, punishment-based coercion and denial-based coercion. With regards to risk-based coercion (Schelling), Clausewitz argues that *when we attack the enemy, it is one thing if we mean our first operation to be*

[62] PLEHN T., Micheal: **The sharpest sword: Compellence, Clausewitz, and Counterinsurgency,** Report, Alabama, Air Force Fellows (SDE), Air University, 2005, p.16
[63] HOWARD Michael, PARET Peter (ed.): **Carl Von CLAUSEWITZ: On war**, ***Ibid.,*** p.92
[64] PLEHN T., Micheal: **The sharpest sword: Compellence, Clausewitz, and Counterinsurgency*, Op. Cit.,*** p.17

followed by others until all resistance has been broken; it is quite another if our aim is only to obtain a single victory, in order to make the enemy insecure, to impress our greater strength upon him, and to give him doubts about his future.[65] Regarding punishment-based coercion, he recommends that [one should] *give priority to operations that will increase the enemy's suffering.*[66] Whereas denial-based coercion (Robert Pape) will consist of *wearing down the enemy.*[67] However, these different aspects of coercion do not overshadow the Clausewitzian perception of war as a zero-sum interaction. Clausewitz's work has had a great influence on the modern theorists of coercion, among whom, first and foremost, Thomas Schelling.

2.1.2.1.3 Thomas Schelling

Thomas Schelling's work has substantially improved the study of conflict and cooperation through game theory. He developed a theoretical model of coercion by applying the theoretical models of game theory to foreign policy. Although he does not admit having been influenced by Clausewitz, as previously noted, it is undeniable that there are similarities between these two great theoreticians. For instance, just like Clausewitz, Schelling's theoretical model of coercion is rooted in a rational assumption. As he argues, *the threat of pure damage will not work against an unmanned vehicle.*[68] In addition, both theoreticians rely on an abstract deductive model. However, there are also many differences between them. Before dwelling on these differences, it is important to analyze the theoretical core of Thomas Schelling's model of coercion. In the first pages of his classic *Arms and Influence*, he first recalls the classical functions of force (*repel and expel, penetrate and occupy, seize, exterminate, disarm*) and then reveals a subtle but no less effective function of the force: *the power to hurt*. Unlike conventional functions, which primarily have an essentialist view of the adversary, the power to hurt is an existentialist one; In other words, it aims at targeting the adversary's interests.

By targeting the interests of the opponent, which is what he treasures, the power to hurt appears to be a bargaining leverage. Indeed, it compels the adversary to weigh the advantages or disadvantages of his compliance with the coercer's demands. The subsequent latent violence virtually creates an interaction between the two protagonists. By **complying** with the coercer's request, the target makes **concessions**, hence shifting from his original stance regarding the bone of contention. But more importantly, he is **rewarded** through the lifting of the threats he was subject to initially. In this regard, the power to hurt is effectively a bargaining power. *The power to hurt is bargaining power. To exploit it is diplomacy - vicious diplomacy, but diplomacy,* Schelling

[65] HOWARD Michael, PARET Peter (ed.): **Carl Von CLAUSEWITZ: On war**, ***Op. Cit.,*** p.92
[66] HOWARD Michael, PARET Peter (ed.): **Carl Von CLAUSEWITZ: On war**, ***Ibid.,*** p.93
[67] HOWARD Michael, PARET Peter (ed.): **Carl Von CLAUSEWITZ: On war**, ***Ibid.,*** p.93
[68] SCHELLING, Thomas: **Arms and influence**, Connecticut, Yale University, 2008, p.5

argues.[69] By asserting that *[war] appears to be, and threatens to be, not so much a contest of military strength as a bargaining process — dirty, extortionate, and often quite reluctant bargaining on one side or both — nevertheless a bargaining process,*[70] Schelling distant himself from Sun Tzu and Clausewitz's argument that war is a zero-sum game. Nonetheless, Schelling seems to contradict himself when he declares that *with sufficient military force that a country may not need to negotiate.* Schelling describes the act through which an opponent complies with one's demand as compellence.

Compellence appears to be a more difficult strategy to implement than deterrence, for it's about stopping or undoing the course of actions carried out by the target. Nevertheless, a practical solution that Schelling recommends is substantial prior knowledge of the adversary. As he puts it, *to exploit a capacity for hurting and inflicting damage, one needs to know what an adversary treasures and what scares him.*[71] Therefore, it is the risk of losing one's valuable goods or assets that will induce the adversary to comply with the demands of the coercer. After all, "it is not alone the threat that is effective – the threat of pain or loss if he fails to comply – but the corresponding assurance, possibly an implicit one, that he can avoid the pain or loss if he does comply."[72] According to Schelling, coercion can only be effective if the coercer clearly demonstrates his resolve to effectively carry out the initial threat if the adversary does not behave accordingly. This resolve must be clearly communicated to the adversary and can be implemented through actions such as the mobilization of military troops etc. Schelling logically warns that *if the commitment is ill defined and ambiguous – if we leave ourselves loopholes through which to exit – our opponent will expect us to be under strong temptation to make a graceful exit.*[73] Schelling's work has had a significant impact on coercion studies, notwithstanding the limitations identified by his spiritual heirs.

Thomas Schelling's inputs to the improvement of coercion studies is undeniable both from a theoretical and a practical (policy) point of view. From a policy perspective, by emphasizing the transactional function of war, Thomas Schelling made an important paradigmatic shift. Indeed, until the publication of the classic book *Arms and Influence*, strategic studies analyzed war only from the Clausewitzian perspective. That is to say, an apprehension of [war] as the art of making an adversary renounce. Thanks to Schelling, there has been a growing interest in the bargaining approach to war and coercion, anchored in the ability to inflict (unacceptable) damage. In addition, his research served as a groundwork for Alexander Georges' work on coercive diplomacy.

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[69] SCHELLING, Thomas: **Arms and influence, *Op. Cit.***, p.2
[70] SCHELLING, Thomas: **Arms and influence**, ***Ibid.***, p.7
[71] SCHELLING, Thomas: **Arms and influence**, ***Ibid***, p.3
[72] SCHELLING, Thomas: **Arms and influence**, ***Ibid.***, p.4
[73] SCHELLING, Thomas: **Arms and influence**, ***Ibid.***, p.48

From a theoretical point of view, Schelling has deepened studies on game theory by laying the basis of the notion of the sub-game perfect equilibrium.[74]

Irrespective of the previous contributions, Schelling's ideas have certain limits. First, Thomas Schelling's model is essentially abstract; in other words, it cannot be easily adapted in empirical research. Moreover, the omnipresence of the rational postulate in the ideas of Thomas Schelling does not provide sufficient information on the motivations behind decision-maker actions. Also, more subjective perspectives like psychology are important in the understanding of foreign policy. Notwithstanding these criticisms, Thomas Schelling is the *quintessential author* to read when it comes to coercion studies. He has many inheritors, among whom Alexander George and William Simons.

2.1.2.2 General theories of diplomatic coercion

2.1.2.2.1 Alexander George and William Simons

Motivated by the desire to make clear and practical recommendations to policymakers regarding the effectiveness of coercive diplomacy, A. George and W. Simons relied on an inductive approach and reached their theoretical conclusions based on historical cases in which coercive diplomacy had been used. In this regard, they first analyzed (1971) three historical cases in which coercive diplomacy had been used: the Laos crisis (1961), the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) and the North Vietnam Crisis (1965). To strengthen their theoretical model of coercion, they later (1994) added four cases: Japan (1941), Nicaragua (1980), Libya (1986) and Iraq (1990). After studying the previous cases, A. George proposed a theoretical model of coercive diplomacy based on the rationality of the actors involved. This model is mainly divided into two main groups: the contextual variables during the implementation of the coercive strategy, and the necessary operational measures for an effective coercive strategy.

2.1.2.2.1.1 The contextual variables.

Peter Viggo Jakobsen argues that "contextual variables should be used initially to decide whether coercive diplomacy is a viable strategy in a given crisis. (Indeed,) the success variables enter the decision-making process in the second stage only if analysis of the contextual variables suggests that a coercive diplomacy strategy may work."[75] Alexander George also recognized the importance of considering the unique characteristics of each individual crisis, although his main objective was to establish policy recommendations applicable to policymakers. Paraphrasing George, Jack Levy

[74] AVINASH, Dixit, **Thomas Schelling's contributions to game theory**, The Scandinavian Journal of Economics, Vol. 108, N.2, June 2006, p.218.
[75] JAKOBSEN V., Peter, ***Coercive diplomacy, Op. Cit.,*** p.245

emphasizes that *coercive diplomacy is highly context dependent. Its effectiveness is a function of the type of provocation, the magnitude and depth of the conflict of interests, actors' images of the destructiveness of war, the degree of time urgency, the presence or absence of allies on either side, the strength and effectiveness of leadership, and the desired postcrisis relationship with the adversary*.[76]

Therefore, the policymaker should set and adapt the implementation of the coercive strategy according to the specific features he/she has to deal with. The following are the contextual variables[77] he needs to consider: first, ***the international strategic environment,*** second, ***the nature of the provocation of the target state***. The coercive measures adopted by the coercer depend on the nature or type of provocation of the adversary. As a result, some problematic behaviors can be more easily addressed than others. For example, the effective invasion of the territory of one State by another State *(fait accompli)* is more difficult to address than the beginning of the invasion process. This was particularly illustrated by the Gulf War, which was a failure of *type B* coercive diplomacy.

The third contextual variable to consider is ***the perception of war***. Indeed, the sensibility of a State with regard to war affects its readiness to resort to coercive measures or not and can lead him to a more conciliatory approach. In this regard, A. George argues that *had Saddam Hussein perceived "the mother of all battles" in images even approaching the destruction levied on Iraq's forces and infrastructure, he could have more seriously considered the negotiating initiatives advanced by others in the international coalition arrayed against him*.[78] The fourth contextual variable refers to the possibility for the coercer to rely on ***unilateral or multilateral coercive diplomacy*** (coalition). According to Alexander George, multilateral diplomatic coercion is more difficult to implement despite the level of pressure on the target state. The challenges of such an initiative depend particularly on the resources to be mobilized, the unity and the *raison d'être* of the coalition, which are fragile given the generally conflicting interests of the coalition members.

The fifth contextual variable is the ***isolation of the opponent.*** The isolation of the adversary is vital for the success of coercive diplomacy. Indeed, an isolated adversary is more exposed and vulnerable to coercive measures and is more likely to compromise. As Timothy Crawford demonstrates, the Soviet compellence strategy against the Japanese during the Mongolia-Manchuria border war had been effective thanks to the

[76] LEVY S., Jack, **Deterrence and coercive diplomacy: The contributions of Alexander George**, Political Psychology, 2008, Vol. 29, N.4, p.540
[77] CALDWELL, Dan: **Alexander L. George: A pioneer in Political and Social Sciences,** Cham, Springer, 2019, p.230 (1st Ed.)
[78] GEORGE, Alexander: **The limits of coercive diplomacy, *Op. Cit.,*** p.273

Nazi-Soviet pact,[79] which deprived Japan of the military and political support it was expecting from Germany. Notwithstanding their importance, the previous contextual variables are mainly theoretically rooted. It is, therefore, important to analyze the practical conditions for an effective coercive strategy.

2.1.2.2.1.2 The operational conditions for an effective coercive strategy.

For a coercive strategy to be effective, Alexander George recommends four major tasks. The **first** consists of ***filling in the missing boxes*****.** In other words, the decision-maker should first answer the following four questions:

What do we ask the opponent? The answer to this question involves the balance of interests and motivation of the protagonists.

Should we and how could we create a sense of urgency for compliance with our request? This approach entails risks and is achievable thanks to a deadline for compliance, warnings and the deployment of military troops. This step is as strategic as it highlights the issue of credibility through the communication of intentions made by both statements and actions undertaken.

What could be the punishment in case of non-compliance, and how make it powerful and credible? The risk of punishment can be communicated through military or politico-diplomatic actions.

Should we offer incentives, and if so, which carrot should we couple with the stick? Potential incentives can take many forms but must meet the expectations of the adversary.

The second task refers to the need to choose the appropriate coercive variant considering the specific case. According to Alexander George, there are three variants of coercive diplomacy depending on the manipulation of the variables underpinned by the previous questions. These variants are the **"classic ultimatum"**, **"the tacit ultimatum",** the **"gradual turning of the screw,"** and **"the try and see."**[80] Among the components of the classic ultimatum, we have *the demand, a deadline to comply,* and *the threat of punishment for non-compliance*. However, as previously analyzed, Alexander George warned about the limits of the "ultimatum" variant of coercive diplomacy.[81]

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[79] CRAWFORD W., Timothy, **The strategy of coercive isolation in US security policy,** RSIS working paper, Singapore, 2013, p.13
[80] GEORGE Alexander and SIMONS Williams (Eds): **The limits of coercive diplomacy, *Op. Cit.,*** p.18
[81] GEORGE L., Alexander: **Forceful persuasion: coercive diplomacy as an alternative to war, *Op. Cit.*,** p.7

Unlike the classic ultimatum, the tacit ultimatum does not contain a deadline for the opponent to comply with the request. Regarding the gradual turning of the screw, it refers to a gradual or progressive increase of the pressure on the opponent without creating a sense of urgency (this is the main difference with the classic ultimatum). The "try and see" variant is simply about formulating a request and observing the opponent's reaction. This conceptual clarification is important because it also clarifies the objectives or intentions of the coercing State.

The third task consists of replacing the rational premise of interactions with the coerce with an empirical-based analysis of the behavior. (This is a major shift from Schelling's approach.) Indeed, leaders and decision-makers do not always behave according to rationality patterns. Other more subjective and versatile variables, such as psychology and information processing, can explain leaders' decisions in specific circumstances. Moreover, theoretical tools such as the operational code and political and cultural psychology should be considered in the explanation of political decisions. **The fourth task** recommends emphasizing the contextual realities of the case study. Indeed, each case study has very specific characteristics that impose an equally appropriate strategy. Therefore, an analogue transposition of the strategies of a case study on another case is likely to lead to the failure of the coercive strategy. As Alexander George argues, "the abstract model of coercive diplomacy spins out its general logic without reference to the characteristics of any particular situation. In this sense, the abstract model is context-free. But in transforming the model into a variant of the strategy to be used in actual situation, the policy maker must pay close attention to whether and how the logic associated with successful coercive diplomacy can be achieved in that particular set of circumstances."[82]

To secure the success of a coercive diplomacy strategy, the coercer must act under certain conditions. These include **clarity of purpose, high motivation, an asymmetry of motivation, a sense of urgency, a strong leadership.** In addition, there should be **domestic and international support, the fear of escalation by the target** and **clarity of the terms of conflict resolution.** The clarity of the intended purpose is important as it facilitates the choice of the instruments or response options; Furthermore, the clarity of purpose also indicates to the adversary the relevance of the aim pursued by the coercing State. After all, *the victim has to know what is wanted, and he may have to be assured of what is not wanted*, as Schelling rightly argues.[83] Not to mention that fuzzy goals reduce the chances of a successful negotiation. The strength of the motivation helps to secure strong domestic support for an effective coercive strategy. In other words, the challenge is to convince the domestic audience to bear the political cost of

[82] GEORGE, Alexander, **The limits of coercive diplomacy, *Op. Cit.,*** p.20
[83] SCHELLING, Thomas**: Arms and influence, *Op. Cit.,*** p.4

the diplomatic strategy, which makes the strategy more credible in the eyes of the adversary.

The asymmetry of motivation puts at stake the perception of the determination or resolve of the protagonists. According to Alexander George, a coercive strategy is more likely to succeed when the asymmetry of perception favors the coercing state over his adversary. In other words, it consists of making the adversary believe that the determination of the coercer is greater than his willingness to resist. The asymmetry of motivation is closely linked to the asymmetry of interests. The side whose interests are more important will have a greater willingness to achieve its objectives. Consequently, we can modify the asymmetry of motivation either by the nature of the request made (which must not jeopardize the vital interests of the adversary) or by the nature of the incentives formulated (which will reduce the propensity of the adversary to resist). Just like the asymmetry of motivation, the **sense of urgency** also puts at stake the opponent's perception. By creating a sense of urgency, the coercing state creates an urgency of compliance in the target minds. However, this approach carries risks, as we saw earlier with the variant of the ultimatum.

The presence of a **strong leadership** in the coercing state is another condition for a successful coercive strategy is. Leadership, especially at the highest level of government, makes it possible to signal the importance of the issue for the coercing state to the adversary. Subsequently, the management of the political crisis at a lower bureaucratic scale in the government would signal to the adversary lesser importance is given to the issue, which would not motivate him to respond favorably to the demand. According to Alexander George, the nature of the demands made by President Kennedy during the Cuban missile crisis, and especially his personal involvement in the deployment of US military and missile forces, were decisive in the outcome of the crisis.

In addition, domestic and international supports are necessary for the success of a coercive strategy. For example, the support, or rather the neutrality of the American Congress in the political crisis of Laos, was instrumental in the outcome of the crisis of Laos. The same was true in the Cuban Missile Crisis, during which American public opinion and congressional consensus contributed greatly to Kennedy's foreign policy success. In this regard, Kenneth Schultz also made a substantial contribution to the analysis of the impact of domestic support (in democratic states) on successful coercive strategies against an adversary.[84] According to him, political decisions in liberal democracies are generally the result of the competition of internal political coalitions. Consequently, the domestic consensus increases the intensity of the coercive strategy

[84] SCHULTZ, Kenneth: **Democracy and coercive diplomacy,** Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001, 324 pages.

and hence the credibility of the coercing state. This analysis is close to the analysis of Robert Putnam's "win-set."[85] In terms of international support, Alexander George maintains that the lack of European support, for example, contributed to the failure of President Reagan's coercive diplomacy against Qaddafi's Libya.

Finally, the non-acceptance of the risk of escalation and the clarity of the terms of resolution of the political crisis play a non-negligible role in the successful implementation of a coercive strategy. According to Alexander George, the impact of coercive diplomacy is enhanced if the initial actions and communications directed against the adversary arouse his fear of an escalation to circumstances less acceptable than those promised by accession to the coercing power's demand.[86] In other words, the main objective is to force the adversary to comply with the demands of the adversary. Otherwise, he will expose himself to even greater damage. A coercive preventive measure will therefore have the effect of influencing the opponent's strategic calculations by leading him to favor his interests (benefits) over costs or losses. The clarity of the terms related to the resolution of the political crisis is decisive as it reassures the adversary of the impossibility of the coercing State to make additional demands to those which were formulated during the beginning of the crisis. It is, therefore, a confidence-building measure granted to the target by the coercing state, which must which most bind himself with limited and realistic objectives. There is a great academic consensus over the prominence of Alexander George's work in coercive diplomacy studies, despite a few limits to his work.

Alexander George's contribution to the evolution of coercion studies is immense. First, by developing an operational theoretical model, George improves Thomas Schelling's model, which was very abstract. Hence, George's model is more policy-oriented than Thomas Schelling's. In addition, his theoretical conclusions are strengthened by his inductive approach, which relies on a historical and structured focus analysis of the cases where coercion was used. George also made a significant contribution to coercion studies with the addition of the incentive or inducement variable. Incentives are important because they reflect more the interactive perspective of coercion previously discussed by Thomas Schelling.

Notwithstanding these strengths, George's work also has some weaknesses. First, George's model does not substantially analyze the notion of "coalitional coercion." In fact, George only highlighted the challenges that surround this specific form of coercion.

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[85] A win-set designates the likelihood of an international agreement to be accepted or ratified by the domestic constituencies of a State. Read PUTNAM, Robert, **Diplomacy and domestic politics: The logic of two-level games, *Op. Cit.***, p.437.

[86] GEORGE, Alexander and SIMONS E., William: **The limits of coercive diplomacy, *Op. Cit.,*** p.285

In this regard, Peter Jakobsen Viggo criticizes the fact that "George and Simons limit themselves to observing that coalitional use of coercive diplomacy is harder than unilateral use, a claim that other scholars question."[87] Jakobsen also points out the difficulties encountered during the implementation of three important variables in George's model (the asymmetry of motivation, the opponent's fear of unacceptable escalation and urgency for compliance). Rob de Wijk also criticizes the fact that both George and Schelling's theoretical models are essentially Cold War based.[88] In this respect, Jakobsen rightly developed a post-Cold War based theoretical model of coercion.

2.1.2.2.2 Peter Jakobsen Viggo

Peter Viggo Jakobsen's work in coercion studies is also remarkable. Influenced by renowned theoreticians such as T. Schelling, A. George and Lawrence Freedman, he developed a theoretical model of coercion aimed at improving George's theory: this is the *ideal policy.*[89] Jakobsen first noted a growing interest in coercive diplomacy by policymakers and scholars after the Cold War. According to him, this can be explained by the substantial change in the international strategic environment (implosion of the Soviet Union and resurgence of failed states). Moreover, Western powers resort more and more to coercive diplomacy as it is a cheaper strategy when successfully implemented, but politically expensive in case of failure. Paradoxically, the use of coercive diplomacy has poor records. As Jakobsen noted, *what is surprising about the Western use of coercive diplomacy against military aggressors after the Cold War is that the results to date have been poor.*[90] Motivated by the West repetitive failed coercive diplomacy campaigns, he developed a theoretical model based on three main questions; ***why have the results (of coercive diplomacy) been so poor? Is coercive diplomacy likely to be used more effectively by the Western powers in the future? Does the need for collective action and effective coercive diplomacy?***[91]

According to Jakobsen, the ideal policy contains four main variables: a credible threat of the use of force, a deadline to comply with the demand, guarantees against future demands and finally, incentives (carrots) for compliance. An important condition for the effective implementation of the ideal policy is the coercer's willingness to threaten and even resort to force. This willingness to threaten depends on several variables: the nature of the interests at stake, the prospect of military success and the level of

[87] JAKOBSEN V., Peter: **Western use of coercive diplomacy after the Cold War. A challenge for theory and practice,** London, Palgrave Macmillan, 1998, p.21
[88] DE WIJK, Rob: **The art of military coercion.** ***Op. Cit.,*** p.103
[89] JAKOBSEN V., Peter: **Western use of coercive diplomacy after the Cold War.,** ***Ibid.,*** 229 pages.
[90] JAKOBSEN V., Peter: **Western use of coercive diplomacy after the Cold War,** ***Ibid,*** p.1
[91] JAKOBSEN V., Peter: **Western use of coercive diplomacy after the Cold War,** ***Ibid,*** p.2

domestic support. Before thoroughly analyzing each of the above variables, we should emphasize the importance of the following factors, which also play a crucial role in the willingness to threaten or use force effectively; Those factors are interests-driven behavior, government-driven behavior and domestic-driven behavior, which will also be discussed later in the chapter. By incorporating the above variables, it is obvious that the aim of the ideal policy is to build "a theoretical framework that can provide substantial explanations of the success and failure factors of coercive diplomacy."[92] In this regard, Jakobsen was inspired by the theoretical models of his predecessors to develop a theoretical model that meets conventional methodological and epistemological requirements. In other words, his theoretical framework had to be based on empirical cases, generate verifiable hypotheses, and be parsimonious.[93]

According to Jakobsen, States are more likely to implement the ideal policy under three major conditions. First, their actions will be driven by the nature of the interests threatened by the action of the aggressor. Based on the realist school of IR, precisely the motivations behind the action of States in international affairs, (survival and prestige), Jakobsen identified four main types of interests: vital interests, strategic interests, interests of stability and finally, moral/ideological interests. Vital interests refer to the existential threats against a State, such as the defense of the homeland against aggressors (terrorism, secession etc.), while strategic interests refer to the States' power assets like the economy with access to raw materials, for example. Interests of stability are related to security issues in the neighborhood of the state, as the main goal here is to avoid a *domino effect* on a state in case of instability in its neighbors.

Moral interests refer to "the protection of values and ideas concerning the international order. These interests are very similar to the soft power developed by Joseph Nye, although the classification made by Jakobsen does not take into account the ***reputational parameters***" developed by Larry Berman.[94] Jakobsen dismisses vital interests in the formulation of the ideal policy not only because of the low risk that one State will attack a stronger one, but also because he is only interested in "acts of aggression against a third party." Conversely, other types of interest are relevant only under certain conditions: for example, when strategic interests are highly threatened compared to moral interests. The chances of success of a military expedition are the second factor likely to induce a state to resort to the ideal policy.

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[92] JAKOBSEN V., Peter: **Western use of coercive diplomacy after the Cold War, *Op. Cit.,*** p.25
[93] Jack LEVY, quoted by Jakobsen in **Western use of coercive diplomacy after the Cold War, *Ibid.,*** p.26
[94] Larry Berman cited by Jakobsen in **Western use of coercive diplomacy after the Cold War, *Op. Cit.,*** p.37

Jakobsen argues that "State leaders are most likely to use force if the chance of success is perceived as high and vice versa."[95] In other words, the propensity for a threat or effective use of force depends on the initial calculations of the State regarding the actual or perceived chances of such an initiative. Jakobsen listed four important factors based upon which states assessed their chances of military success. Those are the ***balance of power*** between the actors, a third-party intervention, and especially a major international Power. Then the vulnerability of the target to the military coercion of the coercer. Regarding the balance of power, the coercive State should have a relative or absolute military advantage compared to its opponent, particularly in terms of military logistics and expertise. Although the number of troops is important, the technological differential substantially affects the outcome of a battle. The intervention of a third international power could change the balance of power between the two actors. This variable is very close to the ***isolation of the adversary*** previously proposed by A. George.

Finally, the vulnerability of the adversary refers to the hurting capacity of the military strategy of the coercive state. In this regard, it is important for the coercer to challenge the aggressor in conventional warfare because if it is asymmetric warfare, like a war of attrition, the chances for the coercer to inflict unacceptable damage to the opponent are reduced. Consequently, the relevance of the ideal policy will be diminished for at least two reasons: first, because the "success" of the ideal policy depends on the ability of a state to formulate a credible threat supported by the ability to inflict unacceptable damage quickly and easily to a target.[96] Second, the target's use of an unconventional war strategy would reverse roles, and the coercive would paradoxically suffer counter-coercion from the target, which would lengthen the duration of the war. As Jakobsen argues, "the probability of military success is uncertain when it is perceived to be an affair. [...] It only takes an adversary capable of executing an effective guerrilla strategy in a favored field to ensure that victory or lengthy counter-insurgency campaign."[97] The fourth factor, the balance of abilities, is almost like the power balance.

The third parameter likely to induce a state to resort to the ideal policy is international or domestic political support.[98] Political support affects the propensity for threat or effective use of force in three ways. First, political support may constrain or limit the bellicose tendencies of a government, as it had been the case with US presidents

[95] JAKOBSEN V., Peter: **Western use of coercive diplomacy after the Cold War,** ***Op. Cit.,*** p.39
[96] JAKOBSEN V., Peter: **Western use of coercive diplomacy after the Cold War,** ***Ibid.,*** p.39
[97] JAKOBSEN V., Peter: **Western use of coercive diplomacy after the Cold War,** ***Ibid.,*** p.40
[98] Regarding the influence of domestic politics on war or foreign policy, read LEVY S., Jack, **Domestic politics and war,** the Journal of interdisciplinary history, Vol. 18, N.4, 1988, 22 pages. Read also FEARON D., James, **Domestic politics, foreign policy, and theories of International Relations,** Annual review of political science, 1998, 25 pages.

Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt. Second, domestic political support may also force a state to resort to force regardless of the will of its leaders. For example, Ernest May argues that *it was because of domestic pressure that President William McKinley was 'led unwillingly toward a war (against the Spanish in 1898) that he did not want for a cause in which he did not believe.'* [99] Finally, domestic support can also be used for political or electoral purposes by policymakers.

The operationalization of the "domestic political variable" should be evaluated based on the degree of political consensus expressed by the different social groups (interest groups, bureaucratic organizations etc.) regarding the use of coercive diplomacy, Jakobsen argues. Thus, "domestic support will be coded as high when the use of coercive diplomacy enjoys support from most segments of society. It will be coded as a medium when divisions among the different groups exist and use of coercive diplomacy is a topic of heated debate."[100] Jakobsen also developed three "patterns most likely to create the will to threaten force." Firstly, an interest-driven pattern, then a government-driven pattern and a domestic pressure-driven pattern.

The interest-based behavior is rooted in the idea that the government is willing to run huge risks when the strategic interests of the state are threatened. This variant is important because the interest at stake is one of the main priorities of the government. Consequently, regardless of the real and perceived chances of success, the government will be inclined to resort to the threat or actual use of force. Moreover, political support is likely to be high when strategic interests are at stake, by triggering a rally-around-the-flag effect. As stated by Alan J. Lambert, "people are motivated to see the world as a secure/predictable place, and all suggest that a salient threat—such as the 9/11 attacks—should lead people to affiliate themselves with the American president and with other cultural institutions that offer an actual and/or symbolic sense of security and safety."[101]

Second, the government-driven pattern is based on the idea that the interests in stability generally motivate governments to threaten or use force. However, as Jakobsen argues, "the prospect of military success must be high for this to happen as casualties are hard to justify when the interest is medium or lower."[102] Third, domestic pressure-based behavior emphasizes the issues of legitimization, and the risks involved, which will limit the government in its will to threaten or resort to force when moral interests are put at stake unless public opinion pushes for such action and the

[99] JAKOBSEN V., Peter: **Western use of coercive diplomacy after the Cold War, *Ibid.,*** p.42
[100] JAKOBSEN V., Peter: **Western use of coercive diplomacy after the Cold War, *Ibid.,*** p.42
[101] LAMBERT J. Alan et al, ***Threat, politics, and attitudes: toward a greater understanding of rally-'round-the flag effects, Op. Cit.***, p.2
[102] JAKOBSEN V., Peter: **Western use of coercive diplomacy after the Cold War, *Op. Cit.,*** p.43

chances of success are high. In order to overcome one of the weaknesses he observed in relation to A. George's theoretical model, Jakobsen, analyzed the impact of collective actions on the application of the ideal policy.

According to Jakobsen, one of the main challenges of collective action is the building and stability of consensus on the "goals and means within a coalition employing coercive diplomacy."[103] The notion of consensus here is similar to Thomas Schelling's focal point. Generally, coercive diplomacy is used to restore or guarantee the stability of the international system. However, when relying on multilateral support for its coercive strategy, the coercer usually faces many obstacles. Among these is the public good issue. The public good issue highlights the distribution of costs (political, and financial) between actors. Given that the peace and stability achieved by coercive diplomacy are politically costly, many countries generally refrain from taking the risks associated with this strategy but benefit from coercive diplomacy if it's successfully implemented. On the other hand, the role of international organizations is problematic during the implementation of coercive diplomacy. Indeed, they can substantially reduce the military force expected by the coercer, but paradoxically increase the credibility of the threat and the resolve of the coercing state to the target. All the preceding components of Jakobsen's theoretical model have had a significant contribution to coercion studies, notwithstanding their limitations.

The ideal policy of Jakobsen considerably deepened the understanding of coercion. With his ideal policy, he proposed an improved theoretical model which could be useful for decision-makers. Indeed, he proposed an accurate model which contained fewer variables compared to George's. His model also contains operational and hence testable variables, which significantly reduce the risk of misinterpretation and miscalculation. From the academic perspective, Jakobsen used a structured-focused comparative model, which strengthens his theoretical conclusion concerning the successful implementation of the ideal policy in a coercive strategy. However, the *ideal policy* is too narrow, as it addresses only issues related to military aggression, explaining the importance he pays to strategic superiority. Furthermore, the *ideal policy* is a one-sided model, as it focused essentially, if not only on the coercer and neglects the features of the target. Jakobsen justified it by stressing on the difficulty of accessing the primary source of information from the target, especially authoritarian regimes. Bruce Jentleson and Christopher Whytock designed a model which fills the gap in Jakobsen's ideal policy model.

[103] JAKOBSEN V., Peter: **Western use of coercive diplomacy after the Cold War, *Ibid.,*** p.44

2.1.2.2.3 Bruce Jentleson and Christopher Whytock: "know your enemy."

Like Peter V. Jakobsen, Jentleson and Whytock tried to analyze the conducive conditions to the effective implementation of the coercive strategy. They developed a dynamic coercive theoretical model based on the Libyan case.[104] In other words, their model integrated both the features of the coercer and its target. This theoretical model contains five components: first, **proportionality, reciprocity, and credibility**, second, **limited objectives from the coercer**, then, **strong multilateral support** for coercive diplomacy, also, a consideration of the **target's weaknesses or vulnerabilities** and lastly, **positive inducements**. The first three variables focus on the coercer (the first set), while the remaining two variables focus on the target (the second set). The Libyan case is interesting as it analyzed coercive diplomacy applied in the context of WMD. As they declared, "as the strongest case of coercive diplomacy success since the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, the Libya case provides useful insights for more general propositions about the scope and limits of this balancing of force and diplomacy."[105]

Three spanned US administrations – which correspond to the three phases of the American coercive strategy – tried to address to security challenges posed by Gadhafi's Libya controversial international behavior. Ronald Reagan's administration was the first one to address the "Gadhafi issue." His coercive strategy relied heavily on sanctions and force,[106] while Bush (father) and Clinton's administration first years shifted toward a "more multilateral and sanctions-based strategy," and Bush (the Son) conducted secret direct negotiations initiated during Clinton's last year in office. Each of the previously mentioned strategy stroke specific outcomes with regards to the main goal of the US's Libya's foreign policy goals. Before analyzing the reasons for the success and failures of the coercive strategies implemented by each of the previous administrations, let us first dwell on the content of the coercion framework developed by Jentleson and Whytock.

For a coercive diplomacy strategy to work, Jentleson and Whytock advises that it should meet several criteria both from the coercer's perspective and the target'. Regarding the coercer, the strategy should meet the conditions of proportionality, reciprocity, and credibility. By **proportionality,** they mean the necessary match-up of means and ends. In other words, the coercer should adjust the coercive instruments to the nature of the demands. The demand here is the independent variable as it affects both the coercer

[104] JENTLESON W., Bruce and WHYTOCK A., Christopher, **Who "won" Libya? The force-diplomacy debate and its implications for theory and policy, *Op. Cit.***
[105] JENTLESON W., Bruce and WHYTOCK A., Christopher, **Who "won" Libya?, *Op. Cit.***, p.50
[106] The New York Times, **Executive order for sanctions against Libya**, January 8, 1986. Accessed from https://www.nytimes.com/1986/01/08/world/executive-order-for-sanctions-against-libya.html on the 13th of September 2019 at 18h05.

options and the target's perception. As the authors put it, *the more the coercer demands of the target, the higher the target's costs of compliance and the greater the need for the coercer's strategy to increase the costs of noncompliance and the benefits of compliance*.[107]

The **Reciprocity** variable highlights the issue of the timing between the coercer's incentives and the target's concession. Basically, it's a confidence-building pattern of action as it helps assess each actor's intentions. The coercer must not let the target believe that he can obtain the inducements without putting something on the table. Jentleson and Whytock described it in these words: "the balance lies in neither offering too little too late or for too much in return, nor offering too much too soon or for too little in return."[108] The last variable, **credibility**, stresses the necessity for the coercer to "convincingly conveys to the target state that non-cooperation has [painful] consequences,"[109] which will modify its strategic calculus and induce him to comply. The second set of variables stresses the target's features. In terms of the "target vulnerability", the authors recommend the coercer pay closer attention to the domestic constraints that can expose the target to the coercive strategy; those constraints are usually made of political (bureaucratic and public opinion) and economic conditions. Building on the regime survival assumption, the authors insist that knowing the target's vulnerability is important because it informs about the target's domestic cost/advantage of compliance or resistance.

One of the main added values of Jentleson's and Whytock's model is that it highlighted the necessity for the coercer to pay close attention to the features of the target. This will enable him to adjust the coercive strategy accordingly. This was a major flaw of Jakobsen's theoretical model of coercion. Also, they proposed testable variables which could be applied in other cases and hence strengthen their theoretical conclusions. However, their model falls under the binary model of cost/benefits, which does not always provide substantial answers regarding the international behavior of States. Adding the strategic and political culture of a State could also be quite useful in this regard. Based on all the previous analyses, we would rely on Jentleson's model of coercion. This choice is twofold. Firstly, it is so far the only coercive model applied in the domain of WMD after the Cold War. Additionally, it contains all the components of the previous model in the trinity of "proportionality, reciprocity and credibility." We will now analyze the relevance of some coercive strategies, beginning with coercive military strategies.

[107] JENTLESON W., Bruce and WHYTOCK A., Christopher, **Who "won" Libya?, *Op. Cit.,*** p.51
[108] JENTLESON W., Bruce and WHYTOCK A., Christopher, **Who "won" Libya?, *Ibid.,*** p.52
[109] JENTLESON W., Bruce and WHYTOCK A., Christopher, **Who "won" Libya?, *Ibid.,*** p.52

2.1.2.3 Theories of general coercion based on the typology of coercive strategies.

2.1.2.3.1 Military-based coercion

2.1.2.3.1.1 Rob de Wijk

According to Rob de Wijk, the success of a coercion campaign or policy depends on a good strategy which refers to the *link between political objectives and the military means available.*[110] Hence, the key to the success of a military coercion campaign lies in the strategy implemented by the decision-maker, be he or she a civilian or military authority. Rob de Wijk stresses that decision-makers should consider two main variables when crafting their coercive military campaign: their political room and military capabilities on the one hand, and the characteristics of the target on the second hand. The issue of the available political room is twofold: domestic and international constraints.

Regarding the domestic constraints, Rob de Wijk shares Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman's points of view regarding the challenge of liberal democracies, notably in terms of public support for the military campaign. Because political actions in the West are essentially rooted in issues like legitimacy, accountancy etc., decision-makers are therefore compelled to obtain the necessary political support for their political goals. Public support can come in many forms: parliaments, media, or surveys. Coercive strategies lacking public support are likely to fail, for *if the population no longer supports the cause, the intervention will lose legitimacy* [111] and ultimately fail.

Regarding international support, coercing States, especially Western Powers, tend to rely on international coalitions to increase the legitimacy and credibility of their actions vis-à- vis the target. Despite the advantages of this strategy, coalitional coercion policies also pose challenges that should be addressed. One of those, and certainly not the least, is the stake of unity in the coalition. States usually accept to join the effort to achieve a specific goal against the backdrop of shared values or common interests, which affect or shape their political culture. While there is no doubt regarding the strength of the transatlantic relation, irrespective of the actions of the US administration, European and American do not share a common political and military culture. As Rob de Wijk noted, "the Americans put emphasis on the defense of interests, while most Europeans emphasize the promotion of values and the strengthening of the international rule of law."[112] Subsequently, European might be less eager to use force than their American

[110] DE WIJK, Rob: **The art of military coercion.** ***Op. Cit.,*** p.20 Strategy usually encompasses: the interests at stake, the knowledge of the adversary's motivations and expected risks.
[111] DE WIJK, Rob: **The art of military coercion.** ***Ibid.,*** p.313
[112] DE WIJK, Rob: **The art of military coercion.** ***Ibid.,*** p.298

partners. Moreover, the use of force is even more controversial in our post-Cold War era, which witnesses a security paradigm shift with the rise of non-classic warfare[113] and the growing role of Great Powers like China which usually oppose foreign interventions in domestic affairs of other States.

2.1.2.3.1.1.1 The successful application of force.

Rob de Wijk identified three main conditions regarding the successful application of force. First, in light of Sun Tzu's precept *he who knows the enemy and himself will never in a hundred battles be at risk,*[114] he recommends focusing on the target. More precisely, he encourages the decision-maker to craft a *denial strategy* which aims at *reducing the target's ability to carry out its undesired course of action.* Second, the coercer should set realistic goals or objectives and, finally, the readiness of the coercer to bear the consequences of its decision to use force.[115] The last condition is closely related to the nature of the interest at stake. The higher the interest, the stronger the motivation of the target, who would easily afford to take risks, thus increasing the probability of its success.

Furthermore, the coercer should follow as much as possible the principles of military operations like *credibility, flexibility, legitimacy, unity in effort, initiative, simplicity or concentration.*[116] Another important parameter to consider is the timing of the intervention. According to Rob de Wijk, the timing of the intervention is crucial on the battlefield as it sends signals to the adversary about the credibility and resolve of the coercer. Indeed, a late response of the coercer to the controversial behavior of the adversary due to bureaucratic decision-making issues in the coalition approach could put in jeopardy the principles of initiative or unity in efforts. Lastly, *successful interventions are only possible when a dispute has not (yet) turned into armed conflict*.[117]

2.1.2.3.1.1.2 The operational challenges to the implementation of a coercive military strategy.

As we previously noted, Western Powers generally prefer to implement their coercive military strategies through coalition. Yet, the implementation of multilateral-based coercive military campaigns presents certain challenges during the operational phase of the strategy. The first one is the clarity of the mandate, which will serve as the main

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[113] SCHNEIDER R., Barry and GRINTER E., Lawrence: **Battlefield of the future: 21st Century warfare Issues - Air theory for the 21st Century, cyberwar, biological weapons and germ warfare, new-era warfare,** Alabama, Air University Press, 1998, 279 pages.
[114] AMES T., Roger: **Sun Tzu: the art of warfare, *Op. Cit.***, p.81
[115] DE WIJK, Rob: **The art of military coercion, *Op. Cit.,*** p.301
[116] DE WIJK, Rob: **The art of military coercion, *Ibid.,*** p.304
[117] DE WIJK, Rob: **The art of military coercion, *Ibid.,*** p.305

referent or framework for the military campaign. The mandate refers to *the authority given to an elected group of people, such as a government, to perform an action or govern a country.*[118] Hence a mandate encompasses, first and foremost mission to fulfil or an objective to attain. Yet sometimes, coalitions lack a clear mandate and even when there's a clear mandate, States don't always pursue the same interests in a coalition they agreed to be part of. Consequently, the coercive strategy is likely to fail because, as Rob de Wijk argues, "unclear mandates will jeopardize three important principles of military operations: objective, credibility and legitimacy."[119]

Another main challenge to overcome regarding the operational conditions of military coercion is coalition warfare. Coalition warfare poses a double challenge to the success of a military coalition. On the first hand, the issue over **interoperability** and on the second hand, the issue over **unity in command.** Regeena Kingsley defines the unity of command as *the existence of a sole overarching source of authority to direct, control and coordinate all military forces participating in an operation.*[120] It *supports the national strategic direction through close coordination with the other instruments of national power.*[121] The unity of command is important in many regards; It facilitates the success of the coercive strategy during the implementation phase through the coordination of the strategic actions of the entire coalition. The inconsistency in the unity of command can undermine military coercion as it can lead coalition members to pursue different, if not conflicting, goals. Furthermore, a lack of unity of command can lessen the credibility of the coercive signals sent to the target, which can ultimately use this tactical advantage against the coercive coalition. Interoperability refers to *the ability of different military organizations to conduct joint operations*.[122]

2.1.2.3.1.1.3 The political preconditions to a military coercion campaign.

Echoing Gen. Wesley Clark, Rob de Wijk identified three main political preconditions to military coercion. These are: "no body bags, no collateral damage and the unity of the alliance and/or coalition." The *nobody bag* precondition refers to the imperative to avoid military casualties in the coalition or alliance as much as possible, considering the

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[118] **Cambridge online Dictionary** https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/mandate on the 22nd of October 2019.
[119] DE WIJK, Rob: **The art of military coercion.** ***Op. Cit.,*** p.306
[120] KINGSLEY Regeena, **The fundamental principle of "unity of effort" in multinational operations,** Accessed on the 23rd of October 2019 from the website http://militarycaveats.com/7-the-fundamental-principle-of-unity-of- effort-in-multinational-operations/
[121] Department of Defense, **Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States,** 25 March 2013 (Incorporating Change I - 12 July 2017) Accessed from https://fas.org/irp/doddir/dod/jp1.pdf on 23rd Oct. 2019.
[122] NATO, **Interoperability for joint operations,** July 2006. Accessed from the website https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_publications/20120116_interoperability-en.pdf on the 23rd October 2019.

political consequence it might have back home and the morale of the troops. This precondition can seriously undermine the effectiveness of the military campaign as it will prevent the full implementation of the military strategy. The *no collateral damage* precondition highlights the necessity to avoid civilian casualties. From a strict military coercion perspective, this precondition affects the effectiveness of the coercive strategy as it signals the resolve, thus, the credibility of the coercer. As Byman and Waxman put it, *extreme sensitivity to casualties and suffering among the enemy civilian population similarly shapes the application of US force.*[123] Civilian casualties can also negatively affect the implementation of a coercive diplomacy strategy by withdrawing international and domestic support, which is necessary for the legitimacy and credibility[124] of the coercer's actions. Finally, the unity of alliance strengthens the credibility of the coercer's intentions and actions.

2.1.2.3.1.1.4 Concept of operations and the balance of means and ends.

The concept of operation is "a statement that directs the manner in which subordinate units cooperate to accomplish the mission and establishes the sequence of actions the force will use to achieve the end state."[125] According to Rob de Wijk, the concept of operation should be formulated with the appropriate means to enhance the credibility of the coercer, hence the success of his strategy. The concept of operation is generally implemented in a progressive manner or *gradualism,* which is similar to Alexander George's notion of "gradual turning of the screw." However, Rob de Wijk warns against such a method in a classic military coercion scenario but encourages it in the context of coercive diplomacy as it could be useful *to demonstrate resolve, [...] to gain support at home [and] signal that large-scale destruction could still be avoided.*[126] As it has been previously highlighted, a good strategy is one which combines the appropriate means to achieve the established goal. To attain the right balance between goals and means, Rob De Wijk recommends setting limited and clear political goals. As he argues, *large-scale, complex operations are likely to fail because of budgetary constraints, political caveats, unrealistic objectives, ignorance of the local dynamics and the asymmetrical tactics of the insurgents*.[127]

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[123] BYMAN Daniel and WAXMAN Matthew, **Defeating US coercion,** Survival 41:2, 1999, p.109. Another interesting research in this regard is SESCHER, Todd, **Costly signals, coercion, and the use of force in U.S. foreign policy,** University of Virginia, 2018, 11 pages. BYMAN Daniel and WAXMAN Matthew: **The Dynamics of Coercion. American Foreign Policy and the Limits of Military Might,** Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp134-137

[124] THOMPSON, Alexander, **Coercion through IOs: the Security Council and the logic of information transmission,** Cambridge University Press, International Organization, Vol. 60, N.1, 2006, 35 pages.

[125] Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) cited by DEMPSEY Richard and CHAVOUS M., Jonathan,
Commander's intent and concept of operations, Military Review, Nov-Dec 2013, p.63

[126] DE WIJK, Rob: **The art of military coercion. *Op. Cit.,*** p.314

[127] DE WIJK, Rob: **The art of military coercion. *Ibid.,*** p.315

2.1.2.3.1.2 Robert Pape and the coercive use of air power.[128]

Robert Pape's "Bombing to Win" seeks to understand successful military coercion, focusing on air power. Pape shares Daniel Byman's argument that the success of a coercive strategy depends on the coercer's ability to identify and exploit the vulnerability of its opponent. However, this is never an easy task since the target usually tries to undermine the coercer strategy by developing counter-coercion measures. This is what Daniel Byman called the "dynamics of coercion." Pape categorizes coercion theories into four types ("the balance of resolve, the balance of interest, the balance of forces, and the vulnerability of the adversary" that he prefers over the three others.[129] Pape argues that coercers usually employ three main strategies: punishment, risk, or denial; he consequently developed several related theoretical propositions.[130]

2.1.2.3.1.2.1 Pape's propositions regarding the success of a coercive strategy.[131]

Punishment strategies will rarely succeed: "inflicting enough pain to subdue the resistance of a determined adversary is normally beyond the capacity of conventional forces. Punishment strategies will work only when core values are not at stake."

Risk strategies will fail because "they are diluted, and therefore weaker, versions of punishment."

Denial strategies work best "if and when the coercer undermines the target state's military strategy to control the specific territory in dispute."

Surrender of homeland territory is especially unlikely because "nationalist sentiments demand resistance to foreign rule even when physical security cannot be guaranteed." Surrender terms that incorporate heavy additional punishment will not be accepted. Indeed, "there is no incentive to concede when the costs of surrender outweigh those of continued resistance."

Coercive success almost always takes longer than the logic of either punishment or denial alone would suggest. This is because "targets of coercion are usually slow to recognize the magnitudes of both increased civilian suffering and declining military prospects."[132]

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[128] Read also MUELLER P., Karl, **The Essence of coercive air power: A primer for military strategists**, Royal Air Force Air Power review, Vol. 4, N. 3, 12 pages.
[129] Pape argues that theories that do not account for differences in vulnerability cannot accurately predict coercive outcomes; Hence the third theory seems to be the best.
[130] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win: air power and coercion in war, *Op. Cit.,*** p.5
[131] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win: air power and coercion in war, *Ibid.,*** p.20
[132] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win: air power and coercion in war, *Ibid.,*** p.20

2.1.2.3.1.2.2 The coercive strategies of Robert Pape on air power.

With specific regard to coercive air power, Pape considers it crucial for understanding coercion success and failure.[133] He uses criteria such as "timing, target sets, and munitions"[134] and the mechanism leading to the change of behavior of a target to evaluate coercive strategy's effectiveness. Two key assessment instruments are the tactical (destruction of critical infrastructures) and strategic (political impacts) effects. Pape identifies four main air power coercive strategies:

Punishment strategies aim to cause civilian casualties, potentially inciting revolt (in light of Giulio Douhet's theory of air power). Another interesting approach to punishment strategies is *the theory of the industrial web* which emphasizes the necessity for the coercing power to focus on the critical infrastructures of the economy. The logic is that industrial economies' prowess depends on interdependent sectors; Hence targeting those key sectors will make the economy crumble. **Risk-based** strategies progressively increase civilian casualties to induce compliance. The anticipated damages caused by future strikes will incite the population to revolt against the government, thus leading to its compliance. This idea was developed by Thomas Schelling, who argued that "it is the expectation of more violence that gets the wanted behavior, if the power to hurt can get it at all."[135]

Denial: According to Pape, denial campaigns generally center on destruction of arms manufacturing, interdiction of supplies from home front to battlefront, disruption of movement and communication in the theater, and attrition of fielded forces.[136] He listed three main forms of denial strategies. **The first** one aims at providing air support to grounded forces. **The second** one encompasses two sub-forms: the "critical component theory," which is closely related to the industrial web theory and encourages strikes on the strategic economic and military infrastructures, especially those in charge of military production. The second sub-form is "the system wide" approach which encourages air strikes against macro infrastructures rather than targeting critical components of the economic or military system.[137] **The third** denial strategy focuses on the technical and operational capabilities of the target. Robert Pape asserts that denial strategies are more effective in classic warfare than asymmetric ones. This is because classic warfare involves mechanical weapons more vulnerable to airstrikes.[138]

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[133] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win: air power and coercion in war, *Op. Cit,*** p.55
[134] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win: air power and coercion in war, *Ibid.,*** p.56
[135] SCHELLING, Thomas: **Arms and influence**, ***Op. Cit***. Cited by Robert Pape, **Bombing to win,** p.67
[136] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win: air power and coercion in war, *Ibid.,*** p.69
[137] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win: air power and coercion in war, *Ibid.,*** p.72
[138] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win: air power and coercion in war, *Ibid.,*** p.74

Decapitation: decapitation strategies usually aim at the removal of a regime or its leadership.[139] As we previously analyzed, Pape identified three decapitation strategies depending on the target. The first one, **leadership decapitation**, aims at killing or physically incapacitating the leader or main decision-maker of a State. The second one is **"political decapitation,"** which consists of bombing a State with the prospect of having domestic opposition overthrow the government. The third one is **military decapitation,** *which attacks national command and communications networks in order to isolate the central leadership from its units in the field, so that the leaders can no longer give strategic direction or adjust to enemy moves*.[140] However, Pape maintains that, in general, decapitation strategies are not effective because they are very hard to implement. For example, it's difficult to achieve an assassination goal for security and legal reasons. Also, the toppling of a leader does not always automatically translate into a policy change.

2.1.2.3.1.3 Coercive use of cyber capabilities.

John Stuart Craig defines cyber capabilities as *the resources and assets used by states to project and resist influence through computer network operations*.[141] A recent report[142] from the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) confirms that cyber capabilities are an integrative tool for national statecraft. In other words, States increasingly rely on cyber capabilities to promote their interests or achieve their international objectives, as is usually the case with classical instruments like economic or political instruments. Thereof, States can use their cyber capabilities to compel a target to adopt a specific behavior, and this strategy is usually called cyber coercion. Quentin Hodgson defines cyber coercion as Quentin Hodgson defines cyber coercion as *the use of cyber capabilities to compel an opponent to undertake an action it would not normally wish to perform and avoid an undesirable outcome*.[143] Offensive uses of cyber capabilities – cyber-attacks – are politically attractive for several reasons, starting with their relatively cheap cost compared to traditional military weapons. In addition, cyber-attacks can be carried out with the authors unidentified and held accountable for their deeds. Yet, as Christopher Whyte notes, "cyber coercion—in which a state uses digital instruments (sometimes in tandem with conventional actions) to compel a shift in foreign strategic behaviors—remains understudied; (and) the conditions under which

[139] DE WIJK, Rob: **The art of military coercion. *Op. Cit.,*** p.17
[140] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win: air power and coercion in war, *Op. Cit.,*** p.80
[141] STUART CRAIG A., John: **Capabilities and conflict in the cyber domain. An empirical study**, PhD thesis, Cardiff University, 2020, p.ii
[142] International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS): **Cyber capabilities and national power: A net Assessment**, Report, June 2021, 182 pages.
[143] HODGSON E., Quentin, **Understanding and countering cyber coercion**, RAND Corporation Santa Monica, California, 2018, p.73

cyber coercion might be successful and the determinants of strategic gain have yet to be detailed."[144]

To fill this theoretical vacuum, certain scholars, like Miguel A. Gomez, investigated the conducive conditions of cyber coercion in light of several empirical case studies. Based on the cyber-attacks conducted by the Israel/US against the Iranian nuclear program, he concluded that *for coercion to be successful, an aggressor needs to be able to clearly communicate this threat*.[145] On the other hand, Christopher Whyte argues that cyber coercion can be effective, provided the coercer implements its strategy in a conducive socio-political context. "Technology certainly determines the broad parameters of coercive interaction between states and target actors, but success, and therefore most determinants of strategic decisions surrounding cyber coercion, derives directly from sociopolitical context."[146] Yet, just like coercive diplomacy in general, cyber coercion is very context-dependent. Hence, as Hrafn Steiner accurately advises, "more descriptive research on the use of cyber-attacks for political reasons needs to be done before any conclusions can be drawn."[147]

2.1.2.3.2 Economic-based coercion.

2.1.2.3.2.1 The instruments

Economic statecraft refers to "all the economic means by which foreign policy makers might try to influence other international actors"[148] Depending on the goal of the decision-maker, they can be grouped into positive and negative sanctions. Positive sanctions usually aim to incite or reward a State and can take the form of *preferential tariffs, subsidies, foreign aid, investment guarantees, and preferential taxation of foreign investment.* Conversely, negative sanctions aim at punishing a State for forcing him to change its behavior; they can take the form of *embargoes, boycotts, punitive taxation, aid suspensions, and asset freezes.* This negative aspect of using economic assets is close to the notion of economic warfare, which Thomas Schelling defines as the *economic means by which damage is imposed on other countries or the threat of damage used to bring pressure on them*.[149]

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[144] WHYTE, Christopher, **Ending cyber coercion: computer network attack, exploitation and the case of North Korea**, Comparative Strategy, 2016, Vol. 35, N.2, p.3
[145] GOMEZ A., Miguel, **Coercion and cyberspace**, Elcano Royal Institute, 2018, p.6
[146] WHYTE, Christopher, **Ending cyber coercion: computer network attack, exploitation and the case of North Korea, *Ibid*.,** p.94.
[147] STEINER, Hrafn, **Cyber-attacks as coercive instruments,** Analys & Perspektiv**,** N.3 Juli/Septembre, 2016, p.157-158
[148] BALDWIN, David: **Economic statecraft,** Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1985, p.40
[149] BALDWIN, David: **Economic statecraft, *Ibid,*** p.37

There is no consensual definition of the notion of economic coercion. Murray Scot Tanner considers it to be the efforts at coercive or threatening economic behavior by an initiating government directed against a target government; [it] includes the deliberate disruption, or threat of disruption, of "customary" trade, financial, or other economic relations.[150] Another definition of economic coercion is Daniel Drezner's, who defines economic coercion as the threat or act by a sender government or governments to disrupt economic exchange with the target State, unless the target acquiesces to an articulated demand.[151] Those two definitions reinforce each other: the first one includes the deliberate use of economic means by the coercer to influence the behavior of the target; however, it does not insist on the dimension of rational choice imposed by the coercer as the second definition does. Jonathan Kirshner identified four main types of economic coercion: foreign aid, monetary power, financial power, and trade.[152]

2.1.2.3.2.1.1 Foreign aid

Will Kenton defines foreign aid as the money that *one country voluntarily transfers to another, which can take the form of a gift, a grant or a loan*.[153] Foreign aid can be used as a means of power or influence by international donors who subject their financial assistance to a specific demand, they previously formulated. As Alisson Carnegie described it, *donors have long sought to use foreign aid to obtain* political influence *when states comply with donors' demands, the donors often provide additional aid, but when recipients ignore their requests, donors withhold aid.*[154] However, the impact of the coercive use of foreign aid depends on its strategic importance in the target's economy. Kirshner confirms it by saying, "States can allow themselves to become heavily dependent on continued aid. In some cases, aid can become vital for a particular government's operating budget or provide necessary foreign exchange to pay for imports."[155] From this perspective, foreign aid is a relatively weak coercive instrument as *it could exist in the absence of trade relations.*

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[150] TANNER S., Murray: ***Chinese economic coercion against Taiwan. A tricky weapon to use,*** California, RAND, 2007, pp. 4-5

[151] DREZNER, Daniel, **The hidden hand of economic coercion** in International Organization, Vol. 57, Issue 3, 2003, p.643

[152] KIRSHNER, Jonathan: **Currency and coercion, Currency and coercion: the political economy of international monetary power,** Princeton, Princeton Press University, 1997, 300 pages. (3rd ed.)

[153] KENTON, Will, **Foreign Aid,** accessed on the 24th of January 2020 from the website https://www.investopedia.com/terms/f/foreign-aid.asp.

[154] CARNEGIE, Allison, **Instruments of coercion: International Institutions and the sites of power in international relations**, American Political Science Association, 2013, p.5

[155] KIRSHNER, Jonathan: **Currency and coercion: the political economy of international monetary power,** Princeton, Princeton Press University, 1997, 300 p.22

2.1.2.3.2.1.2 Monetary power

According to Andrews, international monetary power exists when one state's behavior changes because of its monetary relationship with another state.[156] In simple terms, it refers to a situation where a State can influence the value of the currency of another country. This can be done both at the Macro and microeconomic levels. Jonathan Kirshner identified three forms of monetary power. The first is currency manipulation, the second is the fostering and exploitation of monetary dependence and finally, the systemic disruption.[157] A classic example illustrating the monetary power of a country is China possessing the most significant currency reserves in the world, with about three trillion USD. China can wield its monetary power by applying a dumping policy on US debts; however, this will be risky because China's currency stability also depends on the US dollar.

2.1.2.3.2.1.3 Financial power

Financial sanctions refer to restriction policies imposed on a government or a firm that prevents it from *carrying out transactions and/or financial services with a person or organization (known as 'the target')*.[158] Their goal is to compel the target to change its problematic behavior regardless of the area of activities (terrorism, proliferation issues).

2.1.2.3.2.1.4 Trade

Trade sanctions are policies or *laws passed to restrict or abolish trade with certain countries*. Examples of trade sanctions are (partial or total) embargoes, Tariff barriers (higher taxes on the import of goods).[159]

2.1.2.3.2.2 Conditions of success of coercive economic strategies.

Can economic sanctions be considered a viable foreign policy instrument? The answer to this question has been the subject of intense debates in the academic milieu. There are two main trends in analyzing the effectiveness of economic sanctions: the first trend analyses economic sanctions from the Manichean perspective of success or failure. In

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[156] ANDREWS M., David: **International Monetary Power,** State of New York, Cornell University Press, 2006, p.1

[157] KIRSHNER, Jonathan: **Currency and coercion: the political economy of international monetary power,**
***Ibid*,** p.8

[158] DeltaNet, **What are Financial Sanctions?** Accessed on the 24th of January 2020 from https://www.delta-net.com/knowledge-base/compliance/anti-money-laundering/what-are-financial-sanctions/

[159] An information accessed from the website https://www.economicshelp.org/blog/glossary/trade-sanctions/ on the 02nd of December 2019 at 10h15.

contrast, the second trend emphasizes the conditions that increase or decrease the likelihood of economic sanctions being achieved, not without defining what success or failure meant. Concerning the first trend, Robert Pape peremptorily argues that economic sanctions do not work. This is because, as he maintains, they generally miss the right target to hurt: decision-makers who genuinely influence the evolution of a controversial process. As he put it, *economic sanctions often inflict significant human costs on the populations of target states, including on innocent civilians who have little influence on their government's behavior*.[160] In his Master thesis, *Effectiveness of united states–led economic sanctions as a counter-proliferation tool against Iran's nuclear weapons program*, Joel S. Millwee also agrees that the economic sanctions imposed by the US on the Iranian economy failed to lead Iran toward a de-proliferation pattern; however, they played a strategic role in halting Iran's nuclear pace.

Michael J. Cole argues that the reason why US or UN coercive measures, including economic sanctions, failed to compel Iran to rollback its controversial nuclear program is that they have "strangled Iranian civil society, the private sector and the middle-class, severing crucial state-society networks, leaving reformist forces vulnerable to the new wave of hard-liner conservatism that has, despite U.S. pressure, gained control of the state apparatus since 2005."[161] Echoing this point of view, Ebrahim Mohseni-Cheraghlou argued that American and UN sanctions failed in the Iranian nuclear crisis because they *intensified Iranian distrust of the US and the post-war international order and have consequently augmented the forces in Iran that promote and have weakened those that oppose Iran's nuclear fuel cycle program*.[162] Nonetheless, certain scholars highlight the necessity to consider the condition under which the sanction policy was implemented and avoid the simple conclusion that they failed or succeeded.

In their classic *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered*, Gary C. Hufbauer, Jeffrey Schott, and Kimberly Ann Elliott dismiss the idea that economic sanctions do not work. While they admit that certain conditions are not conducive to an effective sanction campaign against a target, they also provide successful conditions for economic sanctions. In crafting and implementing economic sanctions, policymakers and decision-makers should consider a couple of variables in the nature of the sanctioning State's demand. As they argued, "the security, political, or other costs of complying with the sender's

[160] PAPE, Robert, **Why economic sanctions still don't work, International Security,** Vol. 23, 1998, p.76
[161] COLE J., Michael: **Iran, Sanctions, and Nuclear Proliferation: In search of a strategic alternative,** Master thesis, University of New Hampshire, Durham, 2013, p.2
[162] MOHSENI-CHERAGHLOU, Ebrahim: **When coercion backfires: the limits of coercive diplomacy in Iran,** Doctoral thesis, University of Maryland, Maryland, 2015, p.2

demands may simply be higher than any pain that can be imposed with sanctions."[163] Another critical element to consider is the overall impact of sanctions on the global system. In other words, the sanctioning State should make sure that its sanction policy does not negatively impact the economic interests of the prominent actors related to the target. In the same logic, Jean Marc F. Blanchard and Norrin M. Ripsman argue that economic sanctions can work, provided they meet one necessary condition: they should have a high political cost for the target state if it persists in the offending policy.[164]

2.1.2.3.3 Political-based coercion

Political-based coercion usually aims to sever diplomatic relations between the target State and the *international community.* This can be done in different ways, but one preferred strategy in this regard is **diplomatic isolation**.[165] There are two main types of diplomatic isolation: bilateral and multilateral. Bilateral diplomatic isolation can take the form of *diplomatic demarches, the withdrawal of ambassadors, (and the) denial of visas to officials*.[166] Multilateral diplomatic isolation can take the form of UN resolutions, *sport and cultural boycotts.*[167] Another strategy of diplomatic coercion is ***naming and shaming campaigns*** refer to *the activity of saying publicly that a person, company, etc. has behaved in a bad or illegal way.*[168] Finally, Timothy Crawford developed a theory of **coercive isolation** which refers to a specific diplomatic practice focusing on isolating an adversary to render *him more vulnerable to military force and more exposed to the costs of fighting.*[169] For example, he demonstrated how the Soviet compellence strategy against the Japanese during the Mongolia-Manchuria border war could only be effective when the Soviet Union successfully deprived Japan of the military and political support it expected from Germany through the Nazi-Soviet pact.[170] The following chapter will focus on the Iranian nuclear coercive dynamics.

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[163] HUFBAUER C., Gary et al: **Economic sanctions reconsidered**, Peterson Institute for International Economics, Washington, 2009, p.159 (3rd ed.)

[164] BLANCHARD F., Jean-Marc and RIPSMAN M., Norrin**, Asking the right question: when do economic sanctions work best?,** Security Studies, 1999, p.224

[165] KLOTZ Audie, ***Diplomatic Isolation*** in: CRAWFORD C. Neta and KLOTZ Audie (eds): **How Sanctions Work. Lessons from South Africa,** London, Palgrave Macmillan, 1999, 312 pages

[166] DE WIJK, Rob: **The art of military coercion. *Op. Cit.,*** p.110

[167] DE WIJK, Rob: **The art of military coercion. *Ibid,*** p.110

[168] **Cambridge online dictionary,** accessed on the 15th of December 2019 from the link https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/naming- and-shaming.

[169] CRAWFORD W., Timothy**, The strategy of coercive isolation in US security policy,** RSIS working paper, Singapore, 2013, p.ii

[170] CRAWFORD W., Timothy**, The strategy of coercive isolation in US security policy, *Ibid.,*** p.13

**Which coercive theoretical model will be used as the main backdrop of our thesis?

The theoretical models provided by Alexander George, Peter Viggo Jakobsen, and Bruce Jentleson on coercive diplomacy collectively contribute to a profound comprehension of coercive diplomacy, illuminating the intricate dynamics between coercive agents and their targets. George's conceptual framework establishes a fundamental basis by elucidating the mechanisms and tactics inherent in coercive endeavors, underscored by the significance of credible threats and the calculus of costs and benefits. Nonetheless, George's model exhibits limitations in its treatment of coalitional coercion and a superficial examination of the psychological facets inherent in coercion.

Jakobsen's scholarly input extends George's groundwork by addressing these flaws, offering elucidations into the complexities and subtleties of coalitional coercion while contemporaneously accommodating post-Cold War realities. However, Jakobsen's focus on strategic superiority and military assertiveness may inadvertently oversimplify the multifaceted nature of coercive interactions, especially within non-military contexts.

Conversely, Jentleson's and Whytock's theoretical framework introduces game-theoretic principles and psychological underpinnings, thereby furnishing a nuanced comprehension of the rational calculations and psychological biases governing the behaviors of both coercive agents and their targets. Jentleson's emphasis on the interplay between coercion and psychology enriches the analytical landscape, unveiling the intricacies of decision-making processes during coercive encounters.

Synthesizing components from all three models engenders a comprehensive and insightful analysis of coercive diplomacy, bridging the schisms between strategic, coalitional, and psychological dimensions. By combining George's strategic focus, Jakobsen's attention to coalitional dynamics, and Jentleson's psychological insights, analysts are poised to cultivate a more robust understanding of the unfolding and evolving nature of coercive interactions. This integrative approach provides more powerful insights for policymakers and practitioners endeavoring to navigate the labyrinthine intricacies of coercive diplomacy amid the burgeoning uncertainties of the contemporary world. Nonetheless, this research will mainly rely on Bruce Jentleson and Christopher Whytock's analytical models for several reasons.

Jentleson and Whytock's theoretical model considers the inputs of both the coercer and the target, which provides a comprehensive understanding of the outcomes of the interactions between the two protagonists. This theoretical input was a significant flaw

of Jakobsen's theoretical coercion model. Also, this model proposed testable variables that can be applied in other cases and strengthen their theoretical conclusions. Also, the triadic axiom "proportionality, reciprocity and credibility" summarize the propositions of the previous theoretical models.

Thereof, we will analyze the coercive dynamics against the US and Iran, Libya, and South Africa against the backdrop of this theoretical model. In other words, we will examine these coercive dynamics against the backdrop of the following core questions: Was the US coercive strategy proportional? That is, were the coercive instruments matching with the nature of the demands formulated by the US? Second, did the US reciprocate accordingly to the offers of the target? Third, were the threats wielded by the US credible enough to influence the nuclear calculus of the target? We will then proceed to a comprehensive analysis of the inputs of this theoretical model in the section dedicated to the theoretical lessons of the coercive dynamics between the US and Iran, Libya, and South Africa.

2.2 SECTION II - THE NOTION OF NUCLEAR REVERSAL IN PROLIFERATION STUDIES.

"Mainstream scholarly work in strategic studies has tended to focus on issues related to the development, deployment, and diplomacy of nuclear arsenals,"[171] regretted Martin J. Sherwin in the 1989 version of Henri Wolf Smyth's Official Report on the development of the atomic bomb under the auspices of the United States Government 1940-1945. From this perspective, research on international nuclear dynamics since the Manhattan Project seemed to indicate that the history of nuclear weapons has been only the history of nuclear proliferation. Several authors published insightful research on nuclear proliferation in this regard; For instance, Stephen Meyer published a book on the *Dynamics of nuclear proliferation*, while Jo Dong-Joon and Erik Gartzke analyzed the *Determinants of nuclear weapons proliferation*, without forgetting the classical article published by Scott Sagan in 1996.[172] Consequently, the literature on nuclear proliferation is consistently rich and abundant. Fortunately, several scholars also researched another neglected dimension of international nuclear dynamisms: nuclear (weapons programs) reversals.

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[171] Martin J. Sherwin in DE WOLF SMYTH, Henry: **Atomic Energy for Military Purposes. The Official Report on the Development of the atomic bomb under the auspices of the United States Government 1940-1945**, California, Stanford University Press, 1989, 324 pages.

[172] MEYER M., Stephen: **The Dynamics of nuclear proliferation**, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1984, 232 pages. Also read DONG-JOON, Jo and GARTZKE, Erik, **Determinants of nuclear weapons proliferation**, The Journal of Conflict Resolution, 2007, Vol. 51, Issue. 1, 28 pages. Read also SAGAN D., Scott, **Why do States build nuclear weapons? Three models in search of a bomb**, International Security, Vol. 21, N. 3, 1996, 33 pages.

2.2.1 Definitions of the notion of nuclear reversal.

The notion of nuclear reversal, like the notion of coercion we will analyze later in the theoretical framework chapter, does not have a consensual definition. For example, Rupal Mehta defines it as "the process by which states stop pursuit of a nuclear weapons program return or dismantle an existing weapons arsenal."[173] But Ariel Levite maintains that one can only speak of a nuclear reversal process when the proliferator's nuclear program or activities face external pressure. Indeed, he defines a nuclear reversal process as a "governmental decision to slow or stop altogether an officially sanctioned nuclear weapons program."[174] The previous two definitions share similarities and differences; regarding the former, both authors insist on the nuclear weapons' aspirations of a proliferator as a critical criterion of a nuclear reversal. In other words, nuclear reversal pertains to the desire of an actor, notably a State, to acquire or maintain nuclear weapons. Regarding the latter, Rupal Mehta provides a neutral definition of nuclear reversal. In contrast, Ariel Levite's definition stresses the importance of external pressures in leading an actor to abandon its nuclear arsenal. These divergent approaches have critical theoretical implications on the "when" and "how" nuclear reversal processes occur.

However, studying nuclear reversal processes presents several challenges for the researcher. Ariel Levite confirms it by arguing that "the literature on nuclear reversal is plagued by a variety of theoretical and methodological problems. Some of these problems are inherent in the very nature of the reversal phenomenon."[175] Among these theoretical and methodological problems stands "equifinality," which refers to the different processes leading to a specific outcome. Two main trends emerged regarding the necessary conditions for effective nuclear reversal outcomes: first, the cooperative approach, and second, the coercive approach. Before dwelling on each of the previous approaches to nuclear reversal, it's important to note that several scholars like Brad Glosserman share the idea that explanations for nuclear reversals lie in nuclear proliferation's drivers. As he argues, "(…) until we know why governments acquire nuclear weapons, it will be difficult to stop them from doing so."[176] In other words, from this perspective, understanding what drove a State towards nuclear proliferation will illuminate the patterns toward the reversal of its nuclear (weapons) program.

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[173] MEHTA N., Rupal: **Delaying doomsday: The politics of nuclear reversal**, New York, Oxford University Press, 2020, p.29. Also read MONTEIRO P., Nuno and DEBS Alexandre, **The Strategic logic of nuclear proliferation**, International Security, 2014, Vol. 39, N.2, p.7

[174] LEVITE E., Ariel, **Never say never again: nuclear reversal revisited**, International Security, Vol. 27, N.3, 2002, p.67

[175] LEVITE E., Ariel, **Never say never again: nuclear reversal revisited**, ***Ibid.***, p.63

[176] GLOSSERMAN, Brad, **Nuclear sword of Damocles**, The Japan Times, August 3, 2004. Accessed from https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2004/08/03/commentary/nuclear-sword-of-damocles/ on December 18, 2019.

2.2.2 The theoretical models of nuclear reversal.

2.2.2.1 The security model of nuclear reversal.

Scott Sagan identified three main models or drivers behind a state's decision to embark on a proliferation pattern. The security model advocates that a State embark on a nuclear pattern to thwart the perceived or actual threat posed by a rival or peer competitor; the domestic model emphasizes the decisive role of domestic constituencies in fostering the nuclear ambitions of a country, while the third model stresses the instrumental role of norms (prestige and/or international statute) in driving a State in a nuclear pattern.[177] Ariel Levite belongs to the security school of thought of nuclear reversals; indeed, he argues that "among the political factors that play a dominant role, external security considerations-however defined by different leaders-stand out as having consistently had a profound impact on states' nuclear choices."[178]

A central-related concept to the security model of nuclear reversal is *security dilemma*. Coined by the American scholar John Herz,[179] it refers to a situation of *"uncertainty and anxiety" about the intentions of others that places "man in this basic dilemma" of "kill or perish," of attacking first or running the risk of being destroyed*.[180] Applied to nuclear reversal studies, the security dilemma concept helps better understand how the fear of conflict escalation can drive states to reverse their nuclear programs; indeed, States may reverse their nuclear programs when they perceive that the possession of nuclear weapons could escalate regional tensions or increases the risk of conflict against an adversary they cannot defeat. Conversely, if a State perceives a rival nuclear program (at the regional or international level) as a balancing leverage or security guarantee, it can maintain its nuclear program). It's also noteworthy that other scholars provided non-security rationales for nuclear reversals. For example, Jacques Hymans argues that the type/nature of leadership plays a decisive role in a country's decision to roll back its nuclear (weapons) program. More precisely, he maintains that the likelihood of leaders building or reversing a nuclear weapons program is highly shaped by their National Identity Conception (NIC).

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[177] SAGAN D., Scott, **Why do States build nuclear weapons?: Three models in search of a bomb, *Op. Cit.***

[178] LEVITE E., Ariel, **Never say never again: nuclear reversal revisited**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.74

[179] HERZ, H., John, **Idealist internationalism and the security dilemma**, World Politics, 1950, Vol. 2, N.2, 24 pages.

[180] WHEELER, Nicholas, **To put oneself into the other fellow's place**, International Relations, 2008, Vol. 22, N.4, p.2

2.2.2.2 The domestic model of nuclear reversal.[181]

2.2.2.2.1 Jacques Hymans and his National Identity Conception.

Jacques Hymans defined the NIC as "an individual's understanding of the nation's identity his or her sense of *what the nation naturally stands for* and of *how high it naturally stands*, in comparison to others in the international arena."[182] He identified four types of NIC which can explain the nuclear decisions of States. These four types of NIC are the following: the ***oppositional nationalist***, the ***oppositional subaltern***, the ***sportsmanlike nationalist***, and the ***sportsmanlike subaltern***. Jacques Hymans argues that the *Oppositional nationalists define their nation as being both naturally at odds with and naturally equal (if not superior) to a particular external other. As a result, when facing the external other, oppositional nationalist leaders are uniquely predisposed to experience two highly volatile emotions: fear and pride*.[183]

The second type, – *oppositional subaltern* – refers to leaders who lack the courage and guts to go nuclear because they believe their country is not equal to their strategic rival; hence they will actively seek a nuclear power's protection (nuclear umbrella).[184] *Sportsmanlike nationalist* leaders "see no reason to build the bomb but also see much reason to build a significant nuclear technology base and even to oppose the international non-proliferation regime. The nuclear policy preferences of these sportsmanlike nationalists undermine the typical equation made by Western policymakers: if you are building up your nuclear infrastructure while opposing the NPT, you must want the bomb."[185] The last type, the *sportsmanlike subaltern* leaders *would lack either the motivation or the certitude required to take such a dramatic step as building the bomb*.[186] Based on the previous analysis, it seems evident that nuclear reversals are less likely when an oppositional nationalist leader rules the country and more likely when facing oppositional subalterns, provided they receive incentives in terms of credible security guarantees.

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181 This model highlights the influence of domestic political dynamics on nuclear reversal decisions. However, its main limit is the negligence of external factors of nuclear reversal decisions due to an over emphasis on internal dynamics.

182 HYMANS E. C., Jacques: **The Psychology of nuclear proliferation: Identity, emotions and foreign policy**, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p.18.

183 HYMANS E. C., Jacques: **The Psychology of nuclear proliferation: Identity, emotions and foreign policy**, ***Ibid.***, p.13.

184 HYMANS E. C., Jacques: ***The Psychology of nuclear proliferation: Identity, emotions and foreign policy, Ibid.,*** p.13

185 HYMANS E. C., Jacques: ***The Psychology of nuclear proliferation: Identity, emotions and foreign policy, Op. Cit.,*** p.14

186 HYMANS E. C., Jacques: ***The Psychology of nuclear proliferation: Identity, emotions and foreign policy, Ibid.,*** p.14

2.2.2.2.2 Etel Solingen and the importance of the political regimes.

Etel Solingen also stresses the importance of domestic variables in understanding nuclear reversal processes. However, unlike Jacques Hymans, she emphasizes the determinant role of the nature/type of the State's political regime in embarking on a nuclear pattern. More precisely, her argument assumes that *while brokering supportive coalitions, leaders embrace models of political survival suitable to the state and societal constituencies that they seek to attract*.[187] From this perspective, the nature of the political regime will logically shape a State's nuclear decision-making. She developed three ideal-typical models regarding political regimes' influence on nuclear proliferation: ***internationalizing, inward-oriented, and compromise-hybrid.*** The ***internationalizing model*** refers to political regimes where leaders own their political survival less to security and military coalitions than economic growth.

Subsequently, leaders operating in these regimes will promote foreign investments, reduce trade barriers and the involvement of military groups in core political decision-making. Regarding nuclear dynamics, choosing a proliferation pattern might be politically risky for the leader, considering the risks of economic sanctions and political marginalization. On the other hand, economic integration and access to cutting-edge technologies are credible incentives if the country is already embarked on a nuclear pathway. As Bill Keller described it back then, the rationale here is simple: "If you wanted to join the party, you checked your nukes at the door."[188]

Conversely to the internationalizing model, the ***inward-looking*** **model** refers to regimes that adopt a recalcitrant posture toward the international system and reject globalized economic architecture. Solingen argues that this model's affinity with nuclear weapons as ultimate technological and political tools stems from three main rationales. First, "nuclear weapons programs enable the construction of a dense scientific, technological, industrial, military, and bureaucratic complex that can dwarf other economic endeavors—state and private—and attracts additional constituencies that have vested interests or values in that complex. Second, the complex can operate autonomously, without formal budgetary oversight, sometimes even under democratic rule. Third, the complex's actual or imaginary output ("the bomb") is a powerful source of myths ripe for exploitation by inward-oriented leaders for domestic as much as external purposes (…)."[189]

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[187] SOLINGEN, Etel: **Nuclear Logics. Contrasting paths in East Asia and the Middle East**, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2007, p.41.
[188] KELLER, Bill, **The Thinkable**, The New York Times, May 4, 2003. Accessed on December 18, 2019 from the link https://www.nytimes.com/2003/05/04/magazine/the-thinkable.html
[189] SOLINGEN, Etel: **Nuclear Logics. Contrasting paths in East Asia and the Middle East**, ***Op. Cit.,*** p.42

The third model – ***the compromise-hybrid*** – refers to regimes where "leaders must build compromise-coalitions in societies deeply divided with respect to internationalization, economic reform, foreign investment, and the role of nationalism, sovereignty, and military power. Under such conditions, different partners to the coalition carve out state agencies under their control, sometimes excluding other agencies from any oversight of their own fiefdoms."[190] In other words, these regimes usually adopt contradicting, if not illogical, patterns regarding their position vis-à-vis the international system, gravitating simultaneously around isolation and cooperation poles. Regarding their nuclear stances, they often send mixed signals by adopting the NPT while building a secret nuclear program.

2.2.2.3 The cooperative approach to nuclear reversal.

As mentioned previously, there are usually two leading schools of thought regarding the drivers of nuclear reversals: the cooperative approach on the one hand and the coercive approach on the other hand. Proponents of the cooperative school of thought emphasize incentives' strategic role in leading proliferators towards nuclear reversal. Bruno Tertrais belongs to this school of thought as he argues that "the presence of a credible security guarantee significantly decreases the chances of a country going nuclear, and conversely that its absence significantly increases such chances."[191] Philipp Bleek and Eric Lorber dive in as they argue that "by allying with a patron that has nuclear weapons, a state can enjoy many of the deterrent benefits of the patron's nuclear weapons while not paying the costs associated with developing its own. A security guarantee serves as a substitute for a state obtaining nuclear weapons; a potential challenger to the protégé state will observe that a nuclear-armed patron protects the protégé and will therefore be less likely to threaten or attack the protégé."[192]

However, Alexander Lanoszka has a more nuanced vision of security incentives in deterring a potential proliferator; indeed, he argues that security incentives can prevent an ally from going nuclear, provided the target has yet to start his nuclear weapons program. He maintains that the allies' economic and technological dependence on the US significantly deters the potential proliferator more than the security incentives.[193] Eleonora Mattiacci and Benjamin Jones also emphasized the importance of the nuclear

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[190] SOLINGEN, Etel: **Nuclear Logics. Contrasting paths in East Asia and the Middle East**, ***Ibid.***, p.43
[191] TERTRAIS, Bruno: **Security guarantees and nuclear proliferation,** Paris, Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique, 2011, Note N.14, p.5. Also read MONTEIRO P., Nuno and DEBS Alexandre, **The Strategic logic of nuclear proliferation**, ***Op. Cit***.
[192] BLEEK C., Philipp, and LORBER B., Eric, **Security guarantees and allied nuclear proliferation**, The Journal of Conflict Resolution, 2014, Vol. 58, N.3, 2014, p.432.
[193] LANOSZKA, Alexander: **Atomic assurance: The Alliance politics of nuclear proliferation**, New York, Cornell University Press, 2018, 216 pages.

progress of the target regarding its likelihood to reverse its nuclear program. As the following figure 2 illustrates well, they identified three stages related to the possibility of a State rolling back or not its nuclear program: the "no nuclear program" phase, the "nuclear program" phase, and the "nuclear weapons" phase.[194]

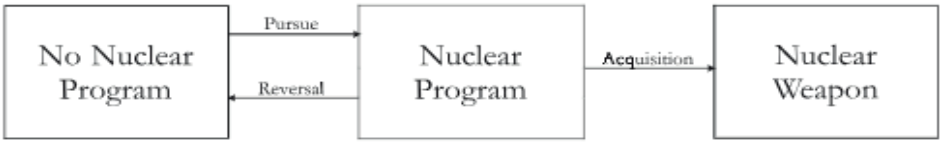

Figure 2: The nuclear development process. Squares indicate phases in the process and arrows define possible transitions.[195]

However, the level of advancement is not the only important factor to consider when assessing the likelihood of a State reversing its nuclear program; indeed, these authors stress another critical variable: the State's rational calculus at each level of the proliferation process. As they argue, "beyond the duration of a state's nuclear program, we theorize the determinants of states' cost-benefit calculations throughout the proliferation process."[196] This rational choice-based argument affects the State's nuclear choices differently at the international and domestic levels. Concerning the international level, they maintain that two factors impact the State's rational choice to transition from a non-nuclear pattern to a nuclear weapons pattern, through the nuclear program. These factors are *the presence of a strong nonproliferation regime, which enables the punishment and isolation of proliferators, and the security environment that a state confronts, as this helps define the potential benefits of increased coercive power*.[197] Regarding the latter, the shaping factors of the State's rational nuclear choice at the domestic level: *nuclear latency, which reduces the costs associated with administering a completing a nuclear program, and the presence of a neo-patrimonial regime, which increases those same costs by virtue of removing constraints on the executive*.[198]

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[194] MATTIACCI Eleonora and JONES T., Benjamin, **(Nuclear) change of plans: what explains nuclear reversals?**, International Interactions, 2016, Vol. 42, N.3, p.531
[195] MATTIACCI Eleonora and JONES T., Benjamin, **(Nuclear) change of plans: what explains nuclear reversals?**, ***Ibid.***, p.531.
[196] MATTIACCI Eleonora and JONES T., Benjamin, **(Nuclear) change of plans: what explains nuclear reversals?**, ***Ibid.***, p.535
[197] MATTIACCI Eleonora and JONES T., Benjamin, **(Nuclear) change of plans: what explains nuclear reversals?**, ***Ibid.***, p.535
[198] MATTIACCI Eleonora and JONES T., Benjamin, **(Nuclear) change of plans: what explains nuclear reversals?**, ***Ibid.***, p.535

2.2.2.4 The coercive approach of nuclear reversal

Regarding the coercive approach of nuclear reversals, Nicholas Miller argues that a coercive strategy, primarily an economic sanctions-related strategy, can successfully compel a State not to develop a nuclear weapons program provided before its leaders have made such a decision. This is because, as he declares, "rational leaders assess the risk of sanctions before initiating a nuclear weapons program, which produces a selection effect whereby states highly vulnerable to sanctions are deterred from starting nuclear weapons programs in the first place, so long as the threat is credible. Vulnerability is a function of a state's level of economic and security dependence on the United States - states with greater dependence have more to lose from US sanctions and are more likely to be sensitive to US-sponsored norms."[199] In this regard, he shares a common view with Etel Solingen regarding the likelihood of an inward-looking regime reversing its nuclear program.[200] Rupal Mehta conceptualized a theory of nuclear reversal which combines elements of the cooperative and coercive approaches. The central argument of her thesis is that "nuclear reversal is most likely when states are threatened with sanctions and offered rewards that are tailored to compensate for a lost nuclear weapons deterrent."[201] However, the effectiveness of the coercive strategy lies in two essential factors: the nature of the bilateral relations between the antagonists (coercer and target) and the instrumental role played by the leaders.

Regarding the bilateral relations of the coercer (the State aiming to prevent the target from proliferating, mostly the US) and the target, Rupal Mehta maintains that if the two parties share similar preferences in terms of policies and values, then the coercer will *be less opposed to the program and can offer incentives to make the proliferator indifferent or satisfied to end the program. This logic accounts for many of the instances of nuclear reversal observed among friends, and often allies, of the United States*.[202] But suppose the two parties do not share similarities in policy preferences, then *the coercer is more likely to be opposed to the program and to resort to a different combination of inducements to encourage nuclear reversal*. (…) *It is important to note that sanctions by themselves are unlikely to delay or stop nuclear development. Rather, they must be employed in tandem with rewards to motivate leaders to reverse nuclear course and agree to accept a deal to forego a nuclear deterrent*.[203] Regarding the instrumental role of the leaders in the effectiveness of a coercive nuclear reversal strategy, Rupal Mehta argues that "the extension of inducements plays a critical role in shifting how leaders view their

[199] MILLER L., Nicholas, **The secret success of nonproliferation sanctions**, International Organization, 2014, Vol. 68, N.4, p.913.
[200] MILLER L., Nicholas, **The secret success of nonproliferation sanctions**, ***Ibid***., pp.915-917
[201] MEHTA N., Rupal: **Delaying doomsday: The politics of nuclear reversal**, New York, Oxford University Press, 2020, p.26
[202] MEHTA N., Rupal: **Delaying doomsday: The politics of nuclear reversal**, ***Op. Cit***., p.27
[203] MEHTA N., Rupal: **Delaying doomsday: The politics of nuclear reversal**, ***Ibid***., p.27

nuclear weapons programs. New leaders may have some preference with which they too may be willing to come to the table and negotiate nuclear reversal. This calculus may evolve upon their entry into office as policy positions change after coming into office."[204]

Another critical factor to consider when analyzing nuclear reversals is the notion of nuclear latency or hedging. It refers to a national strategy of maintaining, or at least appearing to maintain, a viable option for the relatively rapid acquisition of nuclear weapons, based on an indigenous technical capacity to produce them within a relatively short time frame ranging from several weeks to a few years.[205] Nuclear latency is a complex phenomenon which complicates the understanding of nuclear reversal phenomena; indeed, it's an intermediary status between a non-nuclear weapons status and a totally fledge nuclear weapons capacity, which makes it hard for policy-makers and scholars to categorize nuclear hedging states regarding the non-proliferation regime clearly. Several States usually maintain latency capabilities for prestige and status reasons considering the high technological level (uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing) of the latency status. Yet, the previously mentioned technological capabilities also explain the rigorous international scrutiny and monitoring nuclear hedging States are usually subject to, as was the case with Iran under the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).[206]

Regarding nuclear reversal dynamics *per se*, Rupal Mehta argues that nuclear latency can serve as an excellent incentive to a proliferator. As she declares in this regard, "States interested in curbing nuclear weapons proliferation may be able to dangle the carrot of the pursuit or possession of nuclear latency to a proliferator. This incentive may serve as a substitute for a weapons pursuit in the first place or as an attractive off-ramp for dismantling the weapons capability. Seen in this light, latency may suit the needs of both sides in a nuclear bargain. The nuclear aspirant retains some of its advanced nuclear infrastructure as opposed to having to dismantle it entirely, and the nonproliferation community manages to limit the spread of nuclear weapons."[207] But for Tristan Volpe, a nuclear latency capability grants the nuclear challenger leverage against the nuclear non-proliferation gatekeeper. Indeed, by retaining the capacity to cross the nuclear threshold, the challenger can extract certain concessions (in terms of security guarantees) from the nuclear gatekeeper. However, Tristan Volpe considers this strategy quite risky from the challengers, as *they must demonstrate sufficient resolve*

[204] MEHTA N., Rupal: **Delaying doomsday: The politics of nuclear reversal**, ***Ibid.***., p.27
[205] LEVITE E., Ariel, **Never say never again: nuclear reversal revisited**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.69
[206] It is important to mention that the nuclear latency agreements between the protagonist countries are highly influenced by the nature of their bilateral relations and their convergence in terms of policy preferences.
[207] MEHTA N., Rupal: **Delaying doomsday: The politics of nuclear reversal**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.199

to cross the nuclear weapons threshold while also reassuring the target with costly signals that compliance will be rewarded with a nonproliferation commitment. The challenger's level of latent capacity to produce nuclear weapons drives the severity of this tension between issuing credible threats and assurances.[208]

Based on the previous information, we will analyze the coercive dynamics between the US and Iran, Libya, and South Africa by paying closer attention to the input of the earlier theories of nuclear reversal. In other words, as each of our case studies is unique, we will not restrict our analysis to one single theory of nuclear reversal; instead, we will rely on each of the models developed by the previous authors we analyzed the theories of. Consequently, when analyzing the coercive nuclear dynamics between the protagonists, we will pay closer attention to: Jacques Hyman's National Identity Conception (NIC) and the types of leadership the US confronted when addressing the target's nuclear challenge, Etel Solingen's inward-looking, outward-looking, *compromise-hybrid* political regimes. We will also pay attention to the role of incentives (security guarantees and economic stimulus or inducements) in leading States to reverse their nuclear pattern. We cannot ignore Eleonora Mattiacci and Benjamin Jones' argument of the level of advancement of nuclear pattern in leading to nuclear reversal without forgetting Rupal Mehta's model of nuclear reversal, which combines threats (economic sanctions) and incentives. As we mentioned previously, the following chapter encompasses the theoretical framework and the methodology.

[208] VOLPE A., Tristan, **Atomic Leverage: compellence with nuclear latency**, Security studies, 2017, Vol. 26, N.3, p.518.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

3

This chapter is divided into two sub-sections and aims to provide precise information regarding our theoretical and methodological choices. The second sub-section dwells on the methodology we relied upon to obtain and process our empirical data. This includes mainly the choice of the case study approach, the structured-focused comparative method, the process tracing, the triangulation, and the conduct of interviews. We will dwell on these methodological elements in the second sub-section. The first sub-section emphasizes the theory we chose to explain the social phenomenon we are studying in this thesis: the coercive dynamics between the US and Iran, Libya, and South Africa. Indeed, one should remember that a theory refers to "a set of related propositions that suggest why events occur in the manner that they do."[209]

3.1 SECTION I - THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

Since World War II (WWII) ended in 1945, the international system has been characterized by a specific ordering and functional principle. Regarding the latter, the functional principle in international relations is international law. From this perspective, (international) laws should serve as the central reference for the behavior of States. Concerning the former, States interact in an anarchic system; in other words, they interact in a system free of an overseeing higher and central authority. Hence, States cannot confidently rely on institutions to protect or advance their interests. These two principles led to the emergence of two leading Schools of thought in International Relations (IR): the Realist and the Liberal Schools of thought.

Scholars from the Liberal School of thought share an optimistic view of human nature and the international system. Like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, they maintain that man is born good, kind, and free. As Scott Burchill describes it well, "liberals have a belief in progress and the perfectibility of the human condition. Through their faith in the power of human reason and the capacity of human beings to realize their inner potential, they remain confident that the stain of war can be removed from human experience."[210] Applied to international relations, Liberals shares a common hostility of war which they consider as "a cancer on the body politic (which) could be successfully treated with the twin medicines of *democracy* and *free trade*."[211] Liberals will logically promote international cooperation and trade to defend the interests of States in the international arena.

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[209] DONOVAN Todd and HOOVER R., Kenneth: **The Elements of social scientific thinking**, Boston, Cengage Learning, 2013, p.32. (11th ed. - Accessed online)
[210] BURCHILL, Scott et al: **Theories of International Relations**, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p.58 (3rd ed.)
[211] BURCHILL, Scott et al: **Theories of International Relations**, ***Ibid.***, p.59

Unlike Liberals, scholars from the Realist School of thought share a pessimistic view of the human nature and thus of the international system. Just like Thomas Hobbes, they argue that *man to man is an errant wolf*; this is because as Machiavelli argues, "all men are wicked and that they will always give vent to the malignity that is in their minds when opportunity offers."[212] Logically, Realists view the international system as nothing but a jungle or a "brutal arena where States look for opportunities to take advantage of each other."[213] This means that to the moral and reason ideals of the Liberals, Realist oppose necessity and security. As the Realist vision prevailed, the main goal of States in the international arena is to survive and the best way to achieve this is to acquire enough defensive/offensive capabilities. In other words, driven by the necessity to secure their survival in such a self-help environment, States opt to resort to any instrument deemed useful or necessary to achieve their core objective. And one of these instruments is power.

Compelling an actor (individual or State) implies obliging him or her to adopt a behavior he/she wouldn't have chosen on its own will. In other words, the notion of coercion puts at stake the ability of one actor to constraint or force another one to adopt a specific pattern of actions. To achieve its objective, the coercing actor must possess the resources needed to subject its target to its will; that is, he/she should be in a power position. But what does the notion of power refer to? There's no consensual definition of power in International Relations. As Robert Dahl argues in this regard, *most people have an intuitive notion of what it means. But scientists have not yet formulated a statement of the concept of power that is rigorous enough to be of use in the systematic study of this important social phenomenon*.[214]

Power can be apprehended from several approaches, including the relational', the resource' and even the intrinsic'. Scholar from the relational approach always stress on the ability of an actor to influence another one. In this case, *A seeks to influence B because it has established certain goals which cannot be achieved (it is perceived) unless B (and perhaps many other actors as well) does X*.[215] Resource theorists like Joseph Nye usually make a distinction between power instruments (military, economic),[216] the intrinsic approach refers to what Hannah Pitkin describes as "the power to" that is, the "ability

[212] DONNELLY, Jack: **Realism and International Relations**, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p.9
[213] MEARSHEIMER J., John, **The false promise of international institutions**, International Security, Winter, 1994-1995, Vol. 19, N.3, p.9
[214] DAHL A., Robert, **The concept of power**, Behavioral Science, July 1957, Vol.2, N.3, p.201
[215] HOLSTI J., Kalevi, **The concept of power in the study of International Relations**, Background, 1964, Vol. 7, N. 4, p.181
[216] NYE Jr, Joseph S: **Soft power. The means to success in world politics**, New York, PublicAffairs, 2004, 228 pages.

to do or achieve something independent of others."[217] This thesis opted for the relational approach to power.

The relational approach of power is relevant for this thesis as it will permit us to understand how certain States attempt to shape or modify the behavior of other States. This reality is evident in the nuclear order as it is one of the most strategic realms in international relations. Indeed, since the 1945 bombings of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the US, several States have tried to acquire a credible nuclear deterrent capability. Nevertheless, five States have been legally authorized to maintain their nuclear arsenals since the advent of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968. This situation has created a divide between the "nuclear possessors and the nuclear deprived" among States. As sovereign actors driven by security imperatives, certain contesting States of this perceived unjust nuclear order also coveted nuclear weapons. However, as the sole Superpower since the end of the Cold War, the US has always mobilized all its available power resources to prevent these nuclear aspirants from achieving their objectives. The dynamics of these contradicting political objectives are described as power politics in IR.

Martin Wight considers power politics to be the "the relations between independent Powers."[218] In Wight's view, the concept of powers politics is observable among States which maintain "continuous and organized relations among them." However, Alan James stresses that power politics should not be applied to the interactions of all the States in the international arena, but only to those that can substantially impact the international system. As he argues in this regard, the notion of power politics "is quite frequently encountered, as is an associated one which refers to the relations not of all States but of the more important of them, of *the* Powers. They are seen as dominating international politics, so that the smaller States become mere 'pawns.'"[219] From this perspective, just like Daniel Abebe, one should talk about Great Power politics defined as the *images of the powerful nations of the world competing to maximize wealth, territory, and military influence across the globe*. *(It) refers to the pursuit of material power by powerful States in the international system to achieve security*.[220]

However, other scholars like Rob De Wijk disagree with the exclusivity of the Great Powers to get involved in power politics. Though he concedes that smaller countries

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[217] Hannah Pitkin cited by GÖHLER, Gerhard, ***'Power to' and 'power over'*** in CLEGG Stewart R. and HAUGAARD Mark (Ed.): **The SAGE Handbook of power**, London, SAGE publications, 2009, p.28
[218] WIGHT, Martin: **Power politics**, New York, Holmes and Meier publishers, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1978, p.24. (Edited by Hedley Bull and Carsten Holbraad)
[219] JAMES, Alan, **Power politics**, Political Studies, October 1964, Vol. 12, N.3, p.307
[220] ABEBE, Daniel, **Great Power politics and the structure of foreign relations law**, Chicago Journal of International Law, Summer 2009, Vol. 10, N.125, p.127.

can be "pawns" of Great Powers, he nevertheless maintains that they can pursue their autonomous agendas and promote their interests. "(…) smaller countries are by definition the object of a power struggle between the great powers and the superpowers. (…) That is not to say that smaller countries do not pursue power politics. By cleverly picking a side, they can exercise more influence than one might expect, given their position," he argues.[221] In fact, he considers power politics to simply be "a country's readiness to use its power and the way in which it uses it."[222] Thereof, one can expect States to resort either on unilateralism or multilateralism, on military power or diplomacy to achieve their objectives. Evidently, coercion is one of these power politics instruments.

There is no consensual definition of the notion of **"coercion"** in coercion studies; As Patrick Cronin put it, "the literature lacks a clear conceptual framework to analyze coercion."[223] According to Robert Pape, coercion refers to the "efforts to change the behavior of a state by manipulating costs and benefits."[224] Robert Art and Kelly Greenhill define it as *the ability to get an actor - a state, the leader of a state, a terrorist group, a transnational or international organization, a private actor - to do something it does not want to do*.[225] While this definition encompasses the different actors in international politics who can be subject to coercion, however, like Pape's definition, it fails to identify the instruments or tools used by the coercer. Rob De Wijk provides a more accurate and comprehensive definition of coercion by describing it as *the deliberate and targeted use – or threat to use – of power instruments to manipulate and influence the politico-strategic choices of an actor, or player, defined as an entity that plays an identifiable role in international relations*.[226] Due to the conceptual and theoretical challenges surrounding the notion of coercion, there are different types of coercion. Depending on the goal of the coercer, we have two main forms of coercion: compellence and deterrence.

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[221] DE WIJK, Rob: **Power Politics. How China and Russia reshape the world**, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2015, p.69

[222] DE WIJK, Rob: **Power Politics. How China and Russia reshape the world, *Ibid.*,** p.9

[223] BRATTON, Patrick: **When is coercion successful? And why can't we agree on it?,** Naval War College, 2005, p.99

[224] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win: air power and coercion in war,** New York, Cornell University Press, 1996, p.4

[225] ART Robert and GREENHILL Kelly, ***Coercion. An analytical overview*** in GREENHILL Kelly, KRAUSE, Peter: **Coercion. The power to hurt in international politics, *Op. Cit.***, p.5

[226] DE WIJK, Rob: **The Art of military coercion. Why the West's military superiority scarcely matters,**
Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2014, p.16

Deterrence: According to the Cambridge dictionary, to deter means to prevent someone from doing something or to make someone less enthusiastic about doing something by making it difficult for that person to do it or by threatening bad results if they do it.[227] In IR, deterrence can be defined as a coercive strategy designed to prevent a target from changing its behavior. "Just keep doing what you are doing; otherwise, I will hurt you" is the refrain of deterrence.[228] To deter (deterrence) is preventing an actor or target from taking a strategic action that could undermine one's interests by wielding credible threats. One of the significant works on deterrence is Thomas Schelling's classic Arms and influence, where he highlighted the bargaining power of military power. Indeed, unlike the classic assumption that war, hence military power, is a zero-sum game, Schelling maintains that it appears to be, and threatens to be, not so much a contest of military strength as a bargaining process - dirty, extortionate, and often quite reluctant bargaining on one side or both - nevertheless a bargaining process.[229] Based on the rational model, he assumed that States would firstly behave according to what serves best their interest. Compellence is another strategic concept coined by Thomas Schelling.

The notion of **compellence** is one of the greatest conceptual added values of Thomas Schelling's contribution to coercion studies. For theoretical considerations, he could not use the notion of coercion to describe a "threatening action that is intended not to forestall some adversarial action but to bring about some desired action, through "fear of consequences."[230] In fact, the term coercion encompasses both deterrence and compellence. Hence, he coined the notion of *compellence***,** which *involves initiating an action (or an irrevocable commitment to action) that can cease, or become harmless, only if the opponent responds (favorably)*[231] It is *a coercive strategy based on hurting the target (or threatening to do so), to force the target to change its behavior*.[232] In other words, it implies for a coercer to change the course of actions already taken by an adversary or target by the threat or actual use of force.

Consequently, compellence differs from deterrence in many regards, first in the timing and the initiative of the action. Deterrence *sets the stage*; that is, it draws a red line not to cross; In this regard, deterrence is a reactive strategy. On the other hand, compellence involves initiating the action - that is, taking the lead - which will not be stopped until the target has agreed on our demands. From this perspective, compellence is a proactive strategy. Another major difference between deterrence and

[227] Accessed from https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/deter on 15th of January 2020.
[228] ART Robert and GREENHILL Kelly, ***Coercion. An analytical overview, Op. Cit.***
[229] SCHELLING, Thomas**: Arms and influence, *Op. Cit.***, p.7
[230] SCHELLING, Thomas**: Arms and influence, *Ibid,*** p.x
[231] SCHELLING, Thomas**: Arms and influence, *Ibid,*** p.72
[232] ART Robert and GREENHILL Kelly, ***Coercion. An analytical overview, Ibid.***

compellence is the importance of the deadline for compliance. As noted above, deterrence is a reactive strategy. Thus, the threat that underlies it could only be implemented when the adversary has crossed the previously defined redline. Schelling illustrates this by declaring, "if you cross the line, we shoot in self-defense, or the mines explode. **When? Whenever** you cross the line -preferably never, but the timing is up to you."[233] Conversely, compellence requires a deadline for compliance; otherwise, it would be considered a mere wish. Just like Schelling argues, *if the action carries no deadline, it is only a posture, or a ceremony with no consequences. [..] The compellent threat has to be put in motion to be credible, and then the victim must yield. Too little time, and compliance becomes impossible; too much time, and compliance becomes unnecessary.*[234]

However, Alexander George criticized the term compellence on two bases: first, it did not shed light on the offensive or defensive motivation of the coercer, and second, it emphasized too much on threats; As he noticed, "the term compellence, which Thomas Schelling introduced into the literature […] is often employed to encompass both coercive diplomacy and blackmail and sometimes deterrence as well. […] It is useful to distinguish between defensive and offensive use of threats; compellence does not. Second, the concept of compellence implies exclusive or heavy reliance on coercive threats, whereas I wish to emphasize the possibility of a more flexible diplomacy."[235] To address those issues, he coined the notion of coercive diplomacy, which differs from blackmail. While the latter describes the offensive-based use of threats or actual use of force, the former describes the defensive-based use of coercive actions.

Coercive diplomacy: The notion of coercive diplomacy was coined by Alexander George in his book *The limits of coercive diplomacy.* According to him, coercive diplomacy refers to the *efforts to persuade an opponent to stop or undo an action he is already embarked upon*.[236] More technically, Robert Art and Patrick Croning define coercive diplomacy as "the attempt to get a target, a State, a group (or groups) within a State, or a non-State actor-to change its objectionable behavior through either the threat to use force or the actual use of limited force"[237] It is important to emphasize that coercive diplomacy implies the simultaneous use of threat or actual use of *exemplary force* with classic diplomatic resources.

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[233] SCHELLING, Thomas: **Arms and influence, *Op. Cit.,*** p.72
[234] SCHELLING, Thomas: **Arms and influence, *Ibid.,*** p.72
[235] GEORGE Alexander and SIMONS Williams (ed): **The limits of coercive diplomacy,** The US, Westview Press, 1994, p.7 (2nd ed.)
[236] GEORGE L., Alexander: **Forceful persuasion: coercive diplomacy as an alternative to war,** Washington, United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997, p.5 (3rd ed.) – Consulted online.
[237] ART Robert and CRONING Patrick: **The United States and coercive diplomacy, *Op. Cit.***, p.6

However, when it comes to coercive diplomacy, there is yet to be a consensus regarding the content of the notion of exemplary force. As Melanie W. Sisson, James A. Siebens and Barry M. Blechman argue in this regard, "discerning the boundary between limited and full-scale uses of force, demonstrative or massive, is left open for interpretation."[238] Nonetheless, regarding the controversies over the expression of an exemplary use of force in coercive strategies, we argue that the symbolic use of force should be assessed based on two variables: the intentions of the coercer and the actual consequences of the use of force on the target. Another issue in coercion studies is the controversy over the notion of success. Indeed, the risk is too high to consider the complete defeat of the target as the main criterion for a successful coercive campaign. The issue over the notion of exemplary force in coercive diplomacy is intrinsically linked with the notion of success.

Another main issue in coercion studies in general and coercive diplomacy particularly is the assessment of the effectiveness, or more precisely the **success** of a strategy. Indeed, if one could easily validate the Cambridge dictionary's definition as the - *achieving of the results wanted or hoped for*,[239] assessing the success of a coercive strategy is more challenging from a practical perspective. In light of the previous definition, one could argue with Todd Sechser that *a target is considered to have capitulated if (…) it complied with all of the challenger's demands without the use of large-scale military force.*[240] Yet, as Peter Viggo Jakobsen warns, "the problem with this approach is that success in most cases is a question of degree."[241]

It's worth recalling that coercive diplomacy is a bargaining process (Schelling); hence, the outcome of the interaction between the conflicting parties cannot be easily anticipated. The context may lead the coercer to lower its demands. One should also pay attention to actual or perceived role of the threat in leading the target to comply, without forgetting the cost paid by the coercer to obtain the target's compliance. Finally, success should also be analyzed depending on the level of interactions between the conflicting parties. Indeed, the coercer can achieve either *tactical success* during specific periods of the bargaining process or complete or lasting success at the end of the bargaining process. Peter Viggo identified two forms of coercive success – cheap coercive diplomacy success and costly coercive diplomacy success – illustrated in the following table. The former refers to coercive diplomacy successes resulting from the

[238] SISSON W., Melanie, SIEBENS A., James and BLECHMAN M., Barry (Ed): **Military coercion and US foreign policy. The use of force short of war**, London, Routledge, 2020, p.5 (1st ed.)
[239] Information provided by the **Cambridge online dictionary** accessed on the 30th January 2012 at 13h from the website https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/success
[240] SECHSER S., Todd, **Reputations and signaling in coercive bargaining**, The Journal of Conflict Resolution, 2018, Vol. 62, N.2 p.327.
[241] JAKOBSEN V., Peter, ***Coercive diplomacy, Op. Cit.,*** p.248.

use of threats and sanctions (inducement may, but need not, be employed) whereas the latter refers to successes resulting from the use of limited force.[242] we will consider a diplomatic coercion campaign successful only if the behavior of the target matches the initial demands and objectives set by the coercer.

Table 17.1 Measuring success

Strategies	Diplomacy	Coercive diplomacy (CD)		War
Instruments	Persuasion and inducements	Threats, sanctions (and inducements)	Limited force (and inducements)	Full scale/ brute force
Degree of success	CD unnecessary	Cheap CD success	Costly CD success	CD failure

Table 2: Peter Viggo Jakobsen's measuring success of coercive diplomacy.[243]

As an international crisis management strategy, coercive diplomacy did not enjoy the same political and academic interests as deterrence, at least until the end of the Cold War. Alexander George distinguishes two types of coercive defensive diplomacy based on the coercer's objectives. On the one hand, "type A" whose objective is to compel a target before it achieves its objective. On the other hand, "type B" consists of compelling an actor to undo an action. "Type C," introduced by Bruce Jentleson in a famous article,[244] is the most difficult one to implement as it consists of forcing an actor to make changes in the government or the nature of the political regime.[245]

According to Alexander George, coercive strategies usually involve four basic variables: the demand, the credibility which is translated by a sense of urgency created by the coercer, sanctions and incentives. Depending on the manipulation of the previous variables, he identified three variants of coercive diplomacy. These variants are the "classic ultimatum", "the tacit ultimatum", the "gradual turning of the screw" and "the try and see." Among the components of the classic ultimatum, we have: *the demand, a deadline to comply, the threat of punishment for non-compliance*. However, as A. George warned, an "ultimatum, although the starkest variant of coercive diplomacy, is not

[242] JAKOBSEN V., Peter, ***Coercive diplomacy, Op. Cit.,*** p.249
[243] JAKOBSEN V., Peter, ***Coercive diplomacy, Ibid.,*** p.250
[244] JENTLESON W., Bruce, ***The Reagan Administration versus Nicaragua: The limits of 'Type C' coercive diplomacy***, in GEORGE A., SIMONS W. and HALL K., David: **The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy**, 1994, San Francisco and Oxford, Westview Press, 1994, 310 pages.
[245] According to John C. Harrison, there is a "type D" coercive diplomacy whose aim is to create a government in a country that does not have one; basically, it's state-building-based coercive diplomacy. Read HARRISON C., John: **The limits of Type D coercive diplomacy in Somalia,** Master thesis, Monterey, California, Naval Postgraduate School, 1995, 91 pages.

necessarily the most effective."[246] Unlike the classic ultimatum, the tacit ultimatum does not contain a deadline for the opponent to comply with the request. Regarding the gradual turning of the screw, it refers to a gradual or progressive increase of the pressure on the opponent without creating a sense of urgency (this is the main difference with the classic ultimatum). The "try and see" variant is simply about formulating a request and observing the opponent's reaction. This conceptual clarification is important because it also clarifies the objectives or intentions of the coercing State.

Strategy: Etymologically, the concept of *strategy* is rooted in two Greek words: *strategia and strategos.* The first term refers to *the office or command of a general,* while the second term refers to a *general or commander of an army*. In modern times it usually describes *a plan of action that organizes efforts to achieve objectives.*[247] Rob De Wijk considers it to be *the link between political objectives, [expected effects] and the military means available*.[248] Lawrence Freedman contests these definitions because he considers them reductionist as they emphasize only the dialectic between means and goals. Conversely, he argues that we can identify a strategy when there are conflicting interests and a "resolution" from the parties in conflict.

From the previous perspective, the strategy refers to a dynamic process involving two competing sides over a specific issue. As Lawrence Freedman puts it, "strategy comes into play where there is actual or potential conflict, when interests collide and forms of resolution are required."[249] By highlighting the necessity to consider the reaction of one's adversary, he makes a clear difference between a *plan* which "supposes a sequence of events that allows one to move with confidence from one state of affairs to another" and a *strategy* which is "about getting more out of a situation than the starting balance of power would suggest. It is the art of creating power."[250] We will consider both approaches of strategy because we assume that an actor always has a "plan" before engaging or confronting an adversary and depending on the outcome he might choose a different "plan" or not. There are several coercive strategies among which the strategy

[246] The ultimatum variant of coercive diplomacy is risky as well. In fact, an opponent can perceive it either as a bluff or humiliating. It can also be considered seriously by the opponent who could wage a (pre-emptive) war. Lastly, the opponent can also diffuse the robustness of the ultimatum with partial compliance. See GEORGE L., Alexander: **Forceful persuasion: coercive diplomacy as an alternative to war, *Op. Cit.*,** p.7

[247] DREW M., Dennis and SNOW M. Donald: **Making strategy in the twenty-first century: An introduction to national security processes and problems,** Air University Press, Alabama, 2006, p.13 (first published on Aug. 1988)

[248] DE WIJK, Rob: **The art of military coercion. *Op. Cit.,*** p.25

[249] FREEDMAN, Lawrence: **Strategy: A history,** Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013, p.xi

[250] FREEDMAN, Lawrence: **Strategy: A history, *Op. Cit.*,** p.xii

of punishment, denial, risk. But before dwelling on these strategies, we must insist on the notion of military coercion.

Military coercion: According to Peter Viggo, military coercion refers to *the use of military threats and/or limited force to stop or undo undesirable actions already undertaken by other actors.*[251] This definition highlights the exclusive reliance on military instruments in the coercive strategy. Indeed, unlike coercive diplomacy, which involves non-military coercive instruments first and relies on military measures as a backup in case the target does not comply with the demand, military coercion relies heavily on military or raw power instruments. As Rob de Wijk put it, *according to Schelling "[…] it is the threat of damage, or of more damage to come, that can make someone yield or comply." This may be true for coercive diplomacy, but certainly not for military coercion. To achieve political and military objectives, the coercer has no other option but to use force on a massive scale."*[252]

The nature of the demand formulated to the target, hence the strategic interests at stake in the conflict, explains the exclusive reliance on military instruments. Robert Pape describes this specific context in these terms: "in military coercion, the State issuing the threat (assailant) seeks to persuade the target state (victim) to concede territory or other political values that the assailant has not yet achieved on the battlefield. These goals may include compelling the target to reduce political or territorial aims, agree to a ceasefire, withdraw forces, or even surrender."[253] Robert Pape identified two main types of (military) coercion: strategic bombing and interdiction. The former mainly targets *fixed military, industrial, or civilian targets in and near political or economic centers* (while the latter) *focuses on lines of supply between military production and the combat theater, as well as theater logistics, command centers, and fielded forces, usually in support of friendly ground operations*.[254] Irrespective of the type or nature, coercion belongs to a specific type of foreign policy a State decides to rely upon to promote its interests.

Jean-Frédéric Morin and Jonathan Paquin define foreign policy as "a set of actions or rules governing the actions of an independent political authority deployed in the international environment."[255] In the same line, David Kinsella, Bruce Russett and

[251] JAKOBSEN V., Peter, **Pushing the limits of military coercion theory**, International Studies Perspectives, May 2011, Vol. 12, N. 2, p.156
[252] DE WIJK, Rob: **The art of military coercion. *Op. Cit.,*** p.18
[253] PAPE A., Robert, **Coercion and military strategy: Why denial works and punishment doesn't,** Journal of Strategic Studies, Vol. 15 – Issue 4, 1992, p.425
[254] PAPE, Robert: **Bombing to win: air power and coercion in war, *Op. Cit.,*** p.46
[255] MORIN Jean-Frédéric and PAQUIN Jonathan: **Foreign policy analysis. A toolbox**, Cham, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, p.3 (Accessed online).

Harvey Starr argue that a foreign policy is "a guide to actions taken beyond the boundaries of the State to further the goals of the State."[256] Alex Mintz and Karl DeRouen delve as they describe it as "the choices individuals, groups, and coalitions make that affect a nation's actions on the international stage."[257] However, Deborah Gerner provides a more accurate definition of foreign policy as she considers it to be "the intentions, statements, and actions of an actor — often, but not always, a state — directed toward the external world and the response of other actors to these intentions, statements and actions.[258] The accuracy of Gerner's definition is twofold: on the one hand, it combines the inputs of the three previous definitions, notably the guiding or framework aspect of a foreign policy, its interest-driven dimension, and the diversity of the actors involved in its formulation and implementation. On the other hand, Gerner's definition emphasizes the interactive nature of foreign policy. In other words, a specific foreign policy is set not only proactively but also reactively.

From the previous definitions, one can identify several foreign policy's features: first, its level of implementation, which is the international system; second, the drivers behind a foreign policy mainly rooted in a State's national interests. A third feature is the diversity of the actors involved in formulating and implementing a country's foreign policy; they can be the national authorities, the domestic constituency or even the interest groups. Hence, a country's foreign policy results from a balancing strategy aiming at preserving the interests of a State in the international system while simultaneously reflecting the demands of the external world and the imperative of a domestic consensus. The fourth feature is the interactive nature of foreign policy. Based on these previous characteristics, (nuclear) coercive diplomacy can be rightly described as a foreign policy.

Indeed, in our specific case, the US coercive diplomacy targeted three states: Iran, Libya, and South Africa (**External world**). In addition, it aimed at compelling the States mentioned above to reverse their controversial (nuclear) programs (**objective**). It was also set in **reaction** to what Washington considered an infringement of the NPT: the controversial nuclear behavior of Tehran, Tripoli, and Pretoria. Furthermore, although the Administration was the leading implementer of US coercive diplomacy, other domestic actors like the US Congress also played an incremental role in achieving the coercive goals set by the US administration (**diversity of the actors involved**).

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[256] KINSELLA David, RUSSETT Bruce and STARR Harvey: **World politics: the menu for choice**, UK, Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2012, p. 99. (10th ed. – Accessed online).
[257] MINTZ Alex and DEROUEN J., Karl: **Understanding foreign policy decision making**, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p.3. (Consulted online)
[258] GERNER J., Deborah, ***The Evolution of the study of foreign policy***, in NEACK Laura, HEY A. K., Jeanne and HANEY J., Patrick (Ed.): **Foreign policy analysis: continuity and change in its second generation**, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1995, p.18. (Consulted online).

Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that these targets did not passively endure the effects of the US coercive diplomacy. Instead, they designed counter-coercive policies to what they perceived as a US violation of their legitimate right (**reaction**) to either possess a (peaceful) nuclear program (Iran), to assume a more significant international status (Libya), or even protect themselves against an "existential" threat (South Africa) – **the goal**. In some countries like Iran, the domestic constituencies (Revolutionary Guards) and bureaucratic settings played an incremental role in Tehran's recalcitrant nuclear foreign policy **(several actors involved)**. The previous information shows how interactive the coercive dynamics between the US and the targets could create confusion between the independent and the dependent variable.

Nonetheless, our research considers the US as the **primary sender** (with the EU and the UN as supportive actors of the US policy) and the three previous States as the **primary targets**. Indeed, our main research goal is to demonstrate the causality between the US coercive goals and strategies and the targets' response. In other words, we aim to explain how and why the coercer's objective-driven strategy (independent variable) shaped and explained the target's behavior regarding defiance or compliance (dependent variable) with the coercer's demand. However, despite Iran, Libya, and South Africa's commonalities regarding their controversial nuclear behavior, the US government addressed the nuclear challenge of different countries with their domestic specificities. Those specificities include, among others, the political system, the leadership style, and their strategic cultures.

Hence, the target countries' domestic features will be the intervening variables. As we will see later in the research, the US had recourse to several instruments like military threats, cyber-attacks, economic sanctions, and political pressure to implement its coercive strategies and achieve its coercive goals. These instruments fall under power politics and can logically be classified under the Realist school of thought. On the contrary, the elements of the intervening variable fall under domestic politics and can be classified under the *Innenpolitik* School of thought. The different roles of the constituents of the independent variable (systemic pressures) and those of the intervening variables (domestic settings) have an incidence on our epistemological and ontological stance, which is eclectic. However, before dwelling on the theoretical elements of our eclectic choice, it is worth emphasizing two specific aspects of coercive diplomacy.

While coercive diplomacy can be described as a foreign policy in theory, as we previously analyzed, in practice, it differs from other types of foreign policy like trade or global environmental policy. As we will see later in the literature review, coercive diplomacy is a unique form of foreign policy in many regards. First, it combines two

other forms of foreign policy: sanctions and diplomacy. Second, its implementation subtly entails a hierarchical relationship where an actor forces another to stop or undo a policy or set of actions the former deems problematic. However, both actors are *sovereign* entities from a legal standpoint,[259] implying that, in principle, none should impose its will on the other.

Therefore, for a State to successfully subject another to its will, two generic and basic conditions must be met: the coercer should have a higher resolution and more outstanding capabilities (political, economic, and military) than its target. As Bruce Jentleson confirms it, "the essence here is the combination of will and capabilities: that you would take action if necessary – whether that action is military force, sanctions, and/or some other coercive measure – and that your coercion can actually achieve the objectives stated or at least inflict substantial costs and punishment."[260] Nevertheless, as the research puzzle of this thesis highlighted, having the edge regarding power capabilities only does not always guarantee the success of a coercive strategy. Hence, identifying the additional missing ingredients justifies the research question of our thesis. However, why did we choose our specific research question and hypotheses?

3.1.1 Explaining the research question and hypotheses.

As previously mentioned in the introduction, the research question of this thesis is: "what are the conditions under which coercive diplomacy can compel a State to abandon its nuclear program?" Our research hypotheses are the following: coercive diplomacy can compel a State to abandon its nuclear program under two main conditions: first, provided the coercer's strategy exploits the target's vulnerabilities; second, provided the coercer demonstrates a motivation to have a sustained campaign to compel the target. Furthermore, this motivation could be rooted in the vital threats posed by the target's nuclear program to the coercer's strategic interests or in the support of domestic/international constituencies for the coercive strategy. Concerning the research question, compelling an actor – another State – generally implies constraining or forcing its representative to adopt a behavior consistent with one's will or desire.

Thereof, our research question highlights the issue of decision-making in the shadow of force and the use of power at the international level. In this regard, Graham Allison warns that "treating national governments as if they were centrally coordinated, purposive individuals provide a useful shorthand for understanding policy choices and

[259] **Art. 2 (1) of the UN Charter.** An information accessed on the 15th of January 2020 from https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/ctc/uncharter.pdf

[260] JENTLESON, Bruce, **Coercive diplomacy: scope and limits in the contemporary world**, The Stanley Foundation, Policy analysis brief, December 2006, p.7

actions. But this simplification - like all simplifications - obscures as well as reveals. In particular, it obscures the persistently neglected fact of government: the "decisionmaker" of national policy is obviously not one calculating individual but is rather a conglomerate of large organizations and political actors."[261] In other words, one should apprehend the State as a self and integrated-organizing system driven the goal and the need to ward off external threats and promote its strategic interests.

Concerning research on coercive decision-making, Daniel Drezner deplores that "most of the academic research treated the sender and the target as rational unitary actors. Little attention was paid to the causal mechanisms through which sanctions were supposed to lead the target government into acquiescing. (There is a need for) more attention to the causal logic through which sanctions were supposed to work. Both scholars and policymakers called for an opening up of the "black box" of the target State."[262] Based on Allison's and Drezner's advice, we adopted a theoretical framework that should be instrumental in two respects: first, it should enable us not only to identify the diversity of the actors involved but also highlight their roles in the coercive dynamics between the US and the countries mentioned above. Second, it should help us reveal or display the causal mechanisms between the causes and the effects: respectively the coercer's demands and the target's response. The neoclassical realism approach appears to be the best option in this regard. However, before dwelling on the theoretical assumptions of neoclassical realism, we will first justify the choice of our research hypotheses.

We formulated two research hypotheses as the tentative answers to our research question: first, coercive diplomacy can successfully compel a State to abandon its nuclear weapons program, provided the coercer's strategy exploits the **vulnerabilities** of its target and second, provided the coercer demonstrates a **motivation** to have a sustained campaign to compel the target. The first hypothesis is rooted in the tradition of strategists and scholars like Rob De Wijk,[263] who emphasized that any coercive strategy's success depends on the coercer's need to consider the target's weaknesses when crafting his strategy. As Chang Yü commented and advised in the *Art of War* by the famous Chinese strategist Sun Tsu, "take advantage of the enemy's unpreparedness; attack him when he does not expect it; avoid his strength and strike his emptiness."[264]

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[261] ALLISON Graham and ZELIKOW Philip: **Essence of decision: explaining the Cuban missile crisis**, New York, Longman, 1999, p.3. (2nd ed. – Accessed online)

[262] DREZNER W., Daniel, ***An analytically eclectic approach to sanctions and nonproliferation*** in SOLINGEN, Etel: **Nuclear logics: Contrasting paths in East Asia and the Middle East**, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2007, p.155 (Consulted online)

[263] DE WIJK, Rob: **The Art of military coercion. Why the West's military superiority scarcely matters**, ***Op. Cit***.

[264] MCNEILLY, Mark: **Sun Tzu and the art of modern warfare**, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, p.41. (Updated edition – Consulted online).

More precisely, we share Jentleson's and Whytock's approach to a State's vulnerability being "shaped by its domestic political and economic conditions."[265] In the same line, the American strategist Thomas Schelling advises that *to exploit a capacity for hurting and inflicting damage, one needs to know what an adversary treasures and* ***what scares him***.[266]

With specific regard to domestic political and economic conditions, there will be an attention to variables such as GDP, unemployment rate, trade, evolution in the public opinion, changes in the domestic constituencies related to the target's nuclear policies. Target states often find themselves economically dependent on external actors, making them susceptible to economic sanctions or trade restrictions during coercive diplomacy. These measures can result in significant economic costs and wield influence over their decision-making processes. Additionally, the domestic political landscape within a target state may be considered a weak-point, with leaders experiencing pressure from their constituents and public opinion playing a critical role in shaping their responses to coercive strategies. The success of these counter-coercion policies may ultimately depend on the target state's ability to effectively manage domestic pushback. Political and military alliances and international support should not be neglected; indeed, leaving target States without strong allies or diplomatic backing when facing coercive pressure can shape their preferences, thus limiting their resistance or negotiation capabilities.

The second hypothesis is rooted in the issue of the motivation of the belligerents involved in coercive dynamics. Several scholars argue that the balance of motivation among the protagonists is decisive for the outcome of a coercive dynamic. For example, Alexander George stresses that "coercive diplomacy is more likely to be successful if the side employing it is more highly motivated by what is at stake in the crisis than its opponent. What is critical in this respect, however, is that the adversary believes that the coercing power is more highly motivated to achieve its crisis objective than the adversary is to prevent it."[267] Robert Art and Patrick Cronin dwell on as they insist that "a coercer does not resort to force or threats of force unless the interests at stake are of sufficient importance that it is willing to call out the ultimate weapon. (…) Resolve refers to the strength of a party's will to prevail, and the balance of resolve refers to whose will – the target's or the coercer's – is the stronger. (...) Coercive diplomacy attempts are games of chicken that reveal to the target and the coercer which one cares

[265] JENTLESON W., Bruce and WHYTOCK A., Christopher, **Who "won" Libya? The force-diplomacy debate and its implications for theory and policy,** The MIT Press, 2006, p.79
[266] SCHELLING, Thomas: **Arms and influence**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.3
[267] GEORGE L., Alexander: **Forceful persuasion: coercive diplomacy as an alternative to war, *Op. Cit***, p.77 (3rd ed.)

more about something and just how much more."[268] Escalation dominance will serve as the main yardstick to measure the motivation of the coercer.

Escalation dominance is a critical concept in crisis management that revolves around the idea of gaining a strategic advantage by effectively managing and controlling the intensification of a crisis situation. Escalation, in this context, refers to "an increase in the intensity of dispute or conflict between two parties."[269] In other words, it's the process by which a crisis or conflict intensifies or worsens over time. It is often characterized by increasing tensions, the involvement of more actors, and a heightened potential for violence or damage. Understanding escalation is crucial because it helps decision-makers identify the key aspects of thresholds – the points at which a crisis transitions from one level of severity to another. These thresholds can include triggers such as the use of force, the mobilization of additional resources, or the crossing of political, economic, or social red lines. These triggers demonstrate a party's desire to acquire and maintain the "escalation dominance" over the adversary during the crisis. Paraphrasing Herman Kahn who coined the concept, Michael Fitzsimmons defines it as "the ability of a state to maintain such a markedly superior position over a rival, across a range of escalation rungs, that its rival will always see further escalation as a losing bet."[270]

The *escalation ladder*[271] is a fundamental framework within the concept of escalation dominance. It represents a series of steps or stages that a crisis can progress through, with each step indicating an increase in severity and risk. As a crisis escalates, it becomes more difficult to manage, and the potential for unintended consequences or uncontrollable outcomes grows. To maintain escalation dominance, decision-makers must strategically navigate this ladder, carefully considering their actions and responses at each stage to prevent further escalation. There are three primary mechanisms of escalation: vertical escalation, horizontal escalation, and diagonal escalation. Vertical escalation occurs when the crisis intensifies within a single actor's domain, such as increasing military operations or economic sanctions.[272]

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[268] ART J., Robert and CRONIN M., Patrick (Eds.): **The United States and coercive diplomacy**, ***Op. Cit.***, pp. 361 and 365.
[269] SWEIJS, Tim, USANOV, Artur and RUTTEN, Rik: **Crisis and escalation. Back to the brink. Escalation and interstate crisis**, report, The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, StratMon 2016, p.35
[270] FITZSIMMONS, Michael, **The false allure of escalation dominance**, War on The Rocks, November 16, 2017. Accessed from https://warontherocks.com/2017/11/false-allure-escalation-dominance/ on December 23, 2023.
[271] The term was also coined by Herman Kahn. See KAHN, Herman: **On Escalation. Metaphors and scenarios**, New York, Routledge, 2009, 336 pages. (Reprinted edition).
[272] SWEIJS, Tim, USANOV Artur and RUTTEN Rik: **Crisis and escalation. Back to the brink. Escalation and interstate crisis, *Op. Cit.*,** p.39

Horizontal escalation involves the widening of a crisis by drawing in additional elements such as the combination of military operations and economic sanctions at the same time, or different actors or stakeholders, often through alliances or coalitions. Effective crisis management involves recognizing these mechanisms and employing strategies to control them, ultimately ensuring that escalation dominance is maintained to achieve the desired outcomes. Neoclassical realism appeared as the most accurate framework for understanding the coercive dynamics between two actors. Based on the previous information, The thesis will analyze the outcomes of the interactions between the belligerents in light of the underlying indicators of the hypotheses mentioned above. Specifically, the thesis will assess **how the target's decision to comply or resist the sender's request relates to the political and economic effects of coercive diplomacy**. Additionally, the thesis shall examine **how the US escalation's tactics may have influenced the target's ultimate decision regarding the coercer's demands**.

3.1.2 Neoclassical realism as our theoretical framework

3.1.2.1 The philosophical assumptions.

Gideon Rose theorized neoclassical realism in his famous article *Neoclassical realism and theories of foreign policy*.[273] In theorizing neoclassical realism, Gideon Rose aimed to suggest a theoretical model of foreign policy which would fill the analytical shortfalls of domestic (*Innenpolitik* Schools of thought) and systemic approaches (offensive and defensive neorealism) of foreign policy. Indeed, both classical realists and neorealists emphasize specific units of analysis to explain a country's foreign policy. While the former dwells on the domestic elements (leadership style and vision, nature of the regime etc.), the latter dwells on systemic aspects. But as Rose warned, "the chief problem with *Innenpolitik* theories is that pure unit-level explanations have difficulty accounting for why states with similar domestic systems often act differently in the foreign policy sphere and why dissimilar states in similar situations often act alike. (While) pure systemic theories face the reverse anomaly from their *Innenpolitik* counterparts: States in similar structural positions do not always act alike."[274] From this perspective, both former theories provide partial explanations for the causes and ways a State reacted to international demands or pressures. Hence, Rose and his followers' goal is to provide a model that can comprehensively account for the international behavior of a State.

To achieve his goal, Rose developed an explanatory model rooted in the analytical strength of the two previous Schools of thought but changed their role in his analytical

[273] GIDEON, Rose, **Neoclassical realism and theories of foreign policy**, World Politics, Cambridge University Press, 1998, Vol. 51, N. 1, pp. 144–172.
[274] GIDEON, Rose, **Neoclassical realism and theories of foreign policy**, ***Ibid.***, pp. 148 and 150.

framework. This framework is composed of three main elements: an independent variable, an intervening variable, and the dependent variable. This is because neoclassic realists argue that "to understand the way states interpret and respond to their external environment, (…) one must analyze how systemic pressures are translated through unit level intervening variables such as decision-makers' perceptions and domestic state structure. In the neoclassical realist world, leaders can be constrained by both international and domestic politics."[275]

The neorealist premise on the importance of **the distribution of material resources** on a State's position and capacities in the international system serves as the **independent variable** in neoclassical realism. Indeed, neo-classical realists share the view that "the scope and ambition of a country's foreign policy is driven first and foremost by its place in the international system and specifically by its relative material power capabilities."[276] The notion of the "international system" and its components are central in the neoclassical realist theory.[277] Unfortunately, there is usually confusion between the notion of "system" and "structure," as Kenneth Waltz deplored in one of his classic books.[278]

Kenneth Waltz maintains that international political systems are formed by the coaction of self-regarding units. International structures are defined in terms of the primary political units of an era, be they city-states, empires, or nations. Structure emerges from the coexistence of states. No state intends to participate in the formation of a structure by which it and others will be constrained.[279] Waltz argues that the international system differs from national/domestic systems in three regards: first, **the ordering principle** mainly characterized by decentralization and anarchy; second, **the character of the units** as "the States that are the units of international-political systems are not formally differentiated by the functions they perform."[280] The third element to consider is the **distribution of capabilities**: "the units of an anarchic system are functionally undifferentiated. The units of such an order are then distinguished primarily by their greater or lesser capabilities for performing similar tasks," Waltz argues.[281] But Norrin Ripsman, Jeffrey Taliaferro and Steven Lobell regret the fact that "Waltz's conception of system and structure is spare. Nevertheless, it does capture two insights upon which neoclassical realism builds. The first is that while the structure of

[275] GIDEON, Rose, **Neoclassical realism and theories of foreign policy**, ***Ibid.***, p.152
[276] GIDEON, Rose, **Neoclassical realism and theories of foreign policy**, ***Ibid.***, p.146
[277] RIPSMAN M., Norrin, TALIAFERRO W., Jeffrey, and LOBELL E., Steven: **Neoclassical realist theory of international politics**, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016, p.35
[278] WALTZ, Kenneth: **Theory of international politics**, Boston, Addison-Wesley publishing company, 2010, p.58 (1st ed.)
[279] WALTZ, Kenneth: **Theory of international politics, *Ibid.*,** p.91
[280] WALTZ, Kenneth: **Theory of international politics, *Ibid.*,** p.93
[281] WALTZ, Kenneth: **Theory of international politics, *Ibid.*,** p.97

the system imposes constraints by delimiting a range of possible strategic responses and bargaining outcomes. (…) The second insight is that the system's anarchic ordering principle generates pervasive uncertainty among the units."[282]

Regarding this thesis, we will use **the nature of the external threats** from the sender and **the perception of the related threats** from the receiver as our primary independent variable. We did not choose other variables like economic interdependence or international power changes because they were irrelevant in our context. Indeed, the US's power capabilities (military, economic, political, and normative) did not change over time during its coercive strategies with Iran, Libya, or South Africa. The US remained one of the Superpowers in the international system (during the Cold War) and the only Superpower after the Cold War. However, what really changed was the nature/type of the threats the US displayed or wielded and how it affected the calculus of its target. Of course, these coercive strategies were displayed within a specific context or international structure.

There is no consensual definition of the notion of (international) structure. As Colin Wight confirms, "despite the frequency with which the concept of structure appears in sociological and IR literature, the concept remains ambiguous and imprecise."[283] According to Kenneth Waltz, "to define a structure requires ignoring how units relate with one another (how they interact) and concentrating on how they stand in relation to one another (how they are arranged or positioned). (In sum,) a structure is defined by the arrangement of its parts. Only changes of arrangement are structural changes."[284] From the Waltzian perspective, three main criteria should be considered to distinguish one structure from another: the organizing principle, the differentiation of units, and the distribution of power.[285] The structure can also be defined as "a set of overarching principles, rules, roles, and constraints that binds actors together into a larger system. It can organize or order actors into different relative positions of strength, wealth, influence, and status."[286]

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[282] RIPSMAN M., Norrin, TALIAFERRO W., Jeffrey, and LOBELL E., Steven: **Neoclassical realist theory of international politics, *Op. Cit.*,** pp.36-37

[283] WIGHT, Colin: **Agents, Structures and International Relations. Politics as Ontology,** Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p.123.

[284] WALTZ, Kenneth: **Theory of international politics, *Op. Cit.*,** p.80

[285] SHIPPING, Tang, **International system, not international structure: Against the agent–structure Problématique in IR**, The Chinese Journal of International Politics, Winter 2004, Vol. 7, N.4, pp.5-6

[286] **Structure in the International System. Differentiate types of structure and describe how they help shape outcomes in the international system**. Accessed from the link https://revelpreview.pearson.com/epubs/pearson_mcdonaldir1e/OPS/xhtml/fileP7001016344000000000000000000D9.xhtml on the 15th of February 2022.

Two main traditions emerged regarding the nature of the structure in international politics: "the Continental tradition" and the "sociological tradition." *The collective representations account of social facts has been adopted by the continental tradition and tends towards a more qualitative and subjectivist treatment of structure. (And) the sociological tradition of structural inquiry has focused on the morphological variables. This means that this sociological tradition tends towards a rigorous objectivism and eschews all subjective elements*.[287] Depending on its philosophical assumptions, each paradigm emphasized specific constitutive elements of an international structure. For instance, Realists insist on materialist elements like technology or nuclear weapons, while neoliberalists emphasize interdependence and international institutions. Constructivists, on their side, emphasize firstly the power of ideas in shaping the international structure. As Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink argue in this regard, "in an ideational international structure, idea shifts and norm shifts are the main vehicles for system transformation. Norm shifts are to the ideational theorists what changes in the balance of power are to the realist."[288] Irrespective of the ontological elements we considered, analyzing the international structure is decisive in explaining the behavior of the units (States).

According to Jack Donnelly, "structures produce patterned behavior by encouraging, enabling, constraining, and ignoring actions (of actors or units)."[289] With respect to our research, we will consider the following periods as our structures because, as we previously analyzed, Iran, Libya and South Africa behaved in a specific way depending on the international context under which the US implemented its coercive strategies. These contexts are the following: **the Cold War, the post-Cold War, the 9/11 events, the 2003 military intervention in Iraq and the post-2003 US military intervention period in Iraq**. Yet, irrespective of the importance of the previously mentioned contexts, the targets reacted to the US demands based also on specific domestic parameters, which shaped and explain the nature of their response to the US demands. Hence, one can conclude with Michel Foulon that "international pressures from the structure are indirect and translate downward through states-specific domestic intervening variables at State level."[290]

[287] WIGHT, Colin: **Agents, Structures and International Relations. Politics as Ontology, *Ibid.*,** p.125
[288] FINNEMORE, Martha and SIKKINK, Kathryn, **International norm dynamics and political change**, International Organization, Autumn 1998, Vol. 52, N.4, p.894.
[289] DONNELLY, Jack, **The Elements of the structures of International Systems**, International Organization, 2012, Vol. 66, N.4, p.625
[290] FOULON, Michel, **Neoclassical realism: challengers and bridging identities**, International Studies Review, Vol. 17, N.4, p.648

3.1.2.2 The concept of strategic culture and its importance in a State's decision-making.

Jack Snyder coined the notion of strategic culture in his article "the Soviet strategic culture: implications for limited nuclear operations." According to him, the strategic culture of a State refers to "the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behavior that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other concerning nuclear strategy''[291] Like many concepts in Social Sciences, there is no consensual definition of the notion of strategic culture. There are two main approaches in this regard: the first, identified as the first generation, emphasizes a historical trajectory that shaped more or less permanent "values", "beliefs", and "habits" specific to a community and governed its mode of perception and response to an external threat. Among the authors belonging to this school of thought is Théo Farrell or Ken Booth, who defines the strategic culture as a *nation's traditions, values, attitudes, patterns of behavior, habits, symbols, achievements and particular ways of adapting to the environment and solving problems with respect to the threat or use of force.*[292] Although he agrees with the subjective aspects of strategic culture (values etc.) Colin Gray insists on its contextual nature and the particular "behavior" of a community with an equally specific strategic culture.[293]

The second school of thought, spearheaded by Alastair Johnson, defines a State's strategic culture as not through values or beliefs but symbols which frame the "long-lasting strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficacy of military force in interstate political affairs."[294] According to Lord Carnes, the strategic culture of a State is shaped by a set of factors like the geopolitical settling, its international relations, the political and ideological culture of the State, the culture or the military history of the State, its international ties or dynamics with other States, the bureaucratic organization of the State, in particular the relations between the civil and military leadership, and finally the degree of technological advancement of the military forces.[295] The geopolitical setting refers to the geographic location where the State is located.[296] The state's international relations refer to the bellicose or friendly nature of

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[291] SNYDER L., Jack: **The Soviet strategic culture: implications for limited nuclear operations,** Santa Monica, California, Rand Corporation, 1977, p.8

[292] BOOTH, Ken, ***The concept of strategic culture affirmed***, in JACOBSEN G., Carl (ed): **Strategic power: USA/USSR**, New York, St Martin Press, 1990, p.121

[293] GRAY S., Colin, **Strategic culture as context: the first generation of theory strikes back,** Review of International Studies, Vol. 25, N.1, January 1999, p.50

[294] JOHNSTON I., Alastair, **Thinking about strategic culture,** International Security, Vol. 19, No.4, Spring 1995, p.46

[295] CARNES, Lord, **American strategic culture,** Comparative Strategy, Vol.5, Issue 3, 1985, p.272

[296] LANTIS S., Jeffrey, ***Strategic culture: from Clausewitz to constructivism*** in JOHNSON, Jeannie et al: **Strategic culture and Weapons of Mass Destruction: culturally based insights into comparative national security policymaking,** London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p.40

its interactions with its allies and/or adversaries. Political culture refers to the nature of the regime, which can be war-minded, as was the case for aristocratic societies, or anti-war in principle, as is often the case in democratic countries. The State's military culture reflects the country's past military experience, which may have deeply and painfully impacted the nation. A related important notion to a country's military experience is the conflict history of the belligerents. Indeed, *one indicator of a challenger's likely intentions is the historical frequency of conflict between the challenger and target. Frequent conflicts could suggest that there are outstanding disputes or long-standing rivalries that could provoke future demands from the challenger.*[297]

Regarding the bureaucratic relations between the civil and military authorities, Lord Carnes stresses that there should be a balance between civilian and military leadership regarding warfare issues. This is important to avoid "passivity" and spasmodic decisions from the former or drifts in terms of objectives from the latter. A final factor that can influence a state's strategic culture is ethnicity. According to Théo Farrell, "racial and ethnic differences can reduce restraint in the use of force by states and other communities. Against opponents deemed to be lesser beings, anything goes, whereas against other civilized opponents, certain tacit restraints come into force."[298]

Concerning the beliefs, the US considers itself above all as a unique, exceptional country, blessed by the Gods, and invested with a mission of moralizing and granting freedom the other peoples on earth. From this perspective, the primary purpose of American foreign policy is to give "freedom" to people trapped in the net cage of servitude and oppression. The resulting Messianism explains the presence of religious symbols referring to crusades between the forces of the Good on one side (the US) and the forces of Evil (non-democratic nations) on the other. Therefore, resorting to force aims at achieving one primary objective: to defeat the enemy who threatens the stability of the liberal order. According to Walter Lippman, in the American vision, "an aggression is an armed rebellion against the universal and eternal principles of the world society. [Hence] no war can end rightly, therefore, except by the unconditional surrender of the aggressor nation and by the overthrow and transformation of its political regime." Consequently, the American vision of war is different from the European's. While the latter views war as a military instrument in the service of a political project, the former considers it first as the corollary of political failure but also as an opportunity to correct this anomaly. In other words, while Europeans perceive war as a bargaining process (Clausewitz), the Americans consider it to be a zero-sum game whose main objective is

[297] SECHSER S., Todd, **Reputations and signaling in coercive bargaining**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.324
[298] FARRELL, Theo, **Strategic culture and American empire,** SAIS Review of International Affairs, vol. 25, N.2, 2005, p.6 (Project MUSE)

annihilating the enemy. To ensure victory in the various battles, the Americans always make sure to have the technological edge.

Traditionally, the US has a defensive attrition warfare culture and an offensive annihilation warfare culture. Each of these strategies was developed in a specific context; the first occurred during the War of Independence against England, during which American troops lacked economic resources and significant popular support.[299] The second was first experienced during the American civil war before being confirmed in World Wars. The strategy of annihilation in continental, maritime and air space has been theorized respectively by Ulysse Grant, Alfred T. Mahan and William "Billy" Mitchell. Regarding the geopolitical settling, Lord Carnes argues that the isolated character of the United States (surrounded by two oceans) predisposes it to a defensive operational culture. Regarding technological capabilities, "no nation in recent history has valued the role of technology in planning and waging war more highly than the United States."[300]

Indeed, the Americans have developed an obsessive quest for technological superiority in the military realm; this is what Theo Farrell described in terms of "technological fetishism." Several factors explain this obsession with technology; firstly, the solid American desire to be an undisputed leader in all fields, in line with Clausewitz's maxim, which advises "excellence in no single dimension."[301] The American belief also explains the obsession for the technological edge in the American strategic culture in technological progress not only as a guarantee of victory in a conflict but also because of the need to reduce the risk of collateral victims. In this regard, Theo Farrell argues that *the armed forces harness high technology as a means of minimizing U.S. casualties - principally through reliance on airpower and other distance strike assets*.[302]

However, the American passion for technological superiority is mistakenly often interpreted as a panacea, thus becoming a substitute for a strategy which remains one of the main criteria for a military victory. Jeannie Johnson regrets it as she declares, "America's traditional reliance upon technology in war is certainly no recipe for success. Indeed, it is a poor substitute for strategic thinking."[303] The absence of efficient strategy planning results from the divergence between political and military objectives.

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[299] SONDHAUS, Lawrence: S**trategic culture and ways of war,** London, Routledge, 2006, p.54 (1st ed.)
[300] JOHNSON, Jeannie et al: **Strategic culture and Weapons of Mass Destruction: Culturally based insights into comparative national security policymaking, *Op. Cit.,*** p.74
[301] HARRIS, Brice: **America, technology and strategic culture: A Clausewitzian assessment** (Strategy and History), London, Routledge, 2015, p.153. (Consulted online.)
[302] FARRELL, Theo, **Strategic culture and American empire, *Op. Cit.,*** p.10
[303] JOHNSON, Jeannie et al: **Strategic culture and Weapons of Mass Destruction: culturally based insights into comparative national security policymaking, *Ibid.,*** p.75

Although military leaders are subject to political leaders, the US has often stood out with a surprising and paradoxical deficit in strategic planning. According to Mackubin Owens, three main factors explain the shortcomings in the American planning strategy. Firstly, the persistence of a rigid line between the political decision-makers responsible for planning the military strategy and the soldiers in charge of implementing it. In other words, a clear difference between theory and practice, or what Eliot Cohen calls a "normal" theory of civil-military relations.[304] The second factor is the existence of a specific "strategic concept" in each military service. The "strategic concept" determines the "personality, identity, behavior, privileged means of combat" of each military service.[305] Finally, the third factor is the 1986 reform of the Department of Defense which enshrined the idea that "there is an autonomous realm of military action within which civilians have no role. The result of such a disjunction between the military and political realms is that war plans may not be integrated with national policy and that strategy.[306]

Nonetheless, the American strategic culture also has shortcomings that can reduce the credibility of the American threat if its strategic interests are undermined. Among these shortcomings is the aversion to casualties which impacts the use of force, as underlined by Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman.[307] Furthermore, the excessive use of technological tools can clumsily connote the lack of American determination against its adversaries. Indeed, although the use of highly advanced technological instruments makes it possible and easier to protect the American military and limit the risk of collateral damage, it can also be interpreted by the adversaries of the US as a lack of will to pay the high price to preserve its interests, thereby reducing American credibility and determination. In this regard, Jeannie Johnson argues, for example, that "Saddam Hussein saw high-technology warfare as a sign of American weakness rather than strength."[308]

Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman also criticize the American preference for multilateralism, which, for the unity of the coalition, force the Americans to meet the

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[304] Eliot Cohen, cited in OWENS, Mackunbi, **Civil-Military relations and the US strategy deficit**, Foreign Policy Research Institute, February 2010, p.2. Accessed on the 12th of August 2020 from https://www.fpri.org/docs/media/owens_civil-mil.pdf..

[305] OWENS M., Mackunbi, **Civil-military relations and the US strategy deficit**, ***Ibid.*** The US Department of Defense defines the "strategic concept" as a "statement of what is to be done in broad terms sufficiently flexible to permit its use in framing the military, diplomatic, economic, informational, and other measures which stem from it." See LEONARD, Barry: **Department of Defense. Dictionary of military and associated terms**, 12 April 2001 (As amended through April 2010), p.448. (Accessed online).

[306] OWENS T., Mackunbi, **Civil-military relations and the U.S. strategy deficit, *Ibid***., p.3

[307] BYMAN Daniel and WAXMAN Matthew: ***Defeating US coercion, Op. Cit.***

[308] JOHNSON, Jeannie et al: **Strategic culture and Weapons of Mass Destruction: Culturally based insights into comparative national security policymaking, *Op. Cit.,*** p.75

requirements of their allies and comply with international standards in this area. On the other hand, Alexander Thompson maintains that multilateral coercion strengthens the threat's credibility beyond the mere search for legitimacy. In a famous article,[309] he demonstrates, for example, how reaching an international consensus on military intervention in a highly politicized organ like the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) signals the target about the risks he runs if he does not comply with the demand of the coercer.

3.1.2.3 The practical applications of the theory.

The role of the intervening variables in explaining a country's foreign policy is one of the most significant added values of the neoclassic realists. Indeed, as Gideon Rose argued in this regard, "to understand the way states interpret and respond to their external environment, (…) one must analyze how systemic pressures are **translated** through unit level intervening variables such as decision-makers' perceptions and domestic state structure. In the neoclassical realist world, leaders can be constrained by both international and domestic politics."[310] From this perspective, as illustrated in figure 3 below, the intervening variables play the role of the (imperfect) transmitting belt between systemic pressures and a country's decision-making. Norrin Ripsman, Jeffrey Taliaferro and Steven Lobell grouped these variables into four (4) categories: *the images and perceptions of state leaders, strategic culture, state-society relations, and domestic institutional arrangements. (They) include psychological, bureaucratic/organizational, societal, and institutional models, which reflect alternative approaches to foreign policy analysis*.[311]

Concerning leadership, perception refers to "a set of beliefs about fundamental issues of history and central questions of politics as these bear, in turn, on the problem of action. (…) these beliefs also provide norms, standards, and guidelines that influence the actor's choice of strategy and tactics, his structuring and weighing of alternative courses of action."[312] Norrin Ripsman, Jeffrey Taliaferro and Steven Lobell argue that "these "images" are highly personalized, as they are informed by the individual's prior experiences and values. (…) Once formed, they act as cognitive filters that inform how leaders process information – what they pay attention to; what they ignore; and how they understand signals, information, and events. (…) As a result, leaders will react differently to international challenges and opportunities depending on the content of

[309] THOMPSON, Alexander, **Coercion through IOs: the Security Council and the logic of information transmission, *Op. Cit.***
[310] GIDEON, Rose, **Neoclassical realism and theories of foreign policy**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.152
[311] RIPSMAN M., Norrin, TALIAFERRO W., Jeffrey, and LOBELL E., Steven: **Neoclassical realist theory of international politics, *Op. Cit.*,** p.59
[312] GEORGE L., Alexander, **The "Operational code": A neglected approach to the study of political leaders and decision-making**, International Studies Quarterly, 1969, Vol. 13, N.2, p. 191

their images."[313] Another important intervening variable to consider is what Gideon Rose called *the country's State apparatus and its relation to the surrounding society*. This intervening variable to relations between key foreign policy decision-makers and the different bureaucratic institutions which will be directly or indirectly affected by the foreign choices of the country's elite. This parameter puts at stake *the ability of governments to extract and direct the resources of their societies* to support their foreign policy choices.[314]

These domestic actors include but are not limited to the military, economic agents, political actors, and even ethnic groups to some extent. Norrin Ripsman describes them as *veto players* and advises policymakers to consider their role in the target country when framing their foreign policy. In democratic States, for example, "single-issue interest groups (…) can provide an electoral payoff, the legislature that can act as a veto for the government's policy agenda, groups that can frame executive thinking on foreign affairs, and, occasionally, the public as a whole. (While) in non-democratic states, kingmaker societal groups, and those such as the military that can lead a revolt against the leader, should have the greatest influence on national security policy, followed by bureaucratic or economic actors that have the potential to obstruct policy implementation, and in unusual circumstances, public opinion as a whole."[315] This imperative of an internal bargaining between decision-makers and domestic actors is similar to Robert Putnam's two-level analysis model.[316] Another critical intervening variable to consider in the neoclassic realist model is strategic culture.

The strategic culture also plays a determinant role in a country's response to systemic pressures. "Strategic culture or collective expectations shape the strategic understanding of political leaders, societal elites, and even the general public. (…) Theories of the role of strategic culture focus on norms, such as moral restraint on the use of military power, non-use of weapons of mass destruction, and humanitarian intervention."[317] From this perspective, the strategic culture falls under the psychological components of foreign policy analysis. Hence, it helps to understand the

[313] RIPSMAN M., Norrin, TALIAFERRO W., Jeffrey, and LOBELL E., Steven: **Neoclassical realist theory of international politics, *Op. Cit.*,** p.59
[314] GIDEON, Rose, **Neoclassical realism and theories of foreign policy**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.161
[315] RIPSMAN M., Norrin, TALIAFERRO W., Jeffrey, and LOBELL E., Steven: **Neoclassical realism, the State, and foreign policy,** Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, p.184
[316] According to Robert Putnam, the bargaining stance of a State at the international is the outcome of its domestic factions. Hence, when interacting at the international level, States' representatives negotiate with their counterparts and domestic constituencies whose interests are at stake. Read PUTNAM D., Robert, **Diplomacy and domestic politics: the logic of two-level games**, International Organization, Vol. 42, N.3, 34 pages.
[317] RIPSMAN M., Norrin, TALIAFERRO W., Jeffrey, and LOBELL E., Steven: **Neoclassical realist theory of international politics, *Op. Cit.*,** p.67

preference for the military response to a specific crisis based on the social representation or identity the country has of itself.

Concerning crisis management, the strategic culture tends to be a double edge sword. While it can mobilize popular support toward the foreign policy of the elites thanks to shared ideas with decision-makers, nevertheless, it also *constrains elites by raising the domestic political costs of reorienting grand strategy to unacceptable levels and/or by imbuing the elite community with powerful strategic images and conceptions that so orient individuals and bureaucracies toward the attainment of specific goals that desirable policy options are effectively removed from consideration*.[318] The last intervening variable to consider is the setting of domestic institutions related to the power, function and bureaucratic process of the country's institutions when coping with external threats. Why is neoclassical realism an excellent approach to understanding coercive diplomacy?

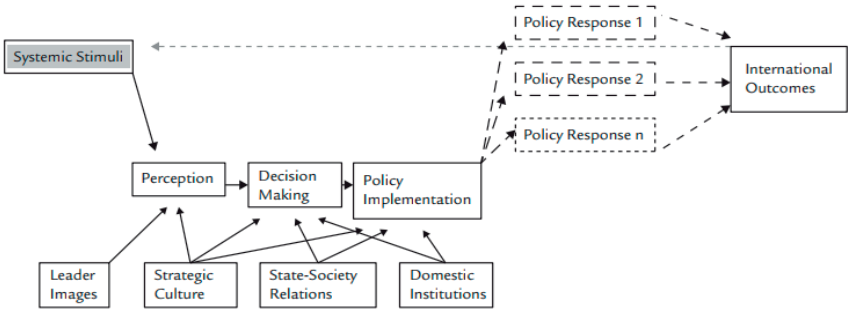

Figure 3: Type III neoclassical realist model.[319]

3.1.3 Neoclassical realism and coercive diplomacy.

As noted earlier, most previous research projects on the conducive conditions of coercive diplomacy in the context of nuclear proliferation considered the State a unitary actor. The principal shortcoming of such approach rest on its exclusive focus on the systemic pressures, hence its inability to dig in on the nuclear decision-making of the target by identifying the actors involved, the interests at stake and how the final decision of the State reflects these domestic inputs. *Innenpolitik* perspectives, on the contrary, stress only the role of domestic actors in the foreign policymaking of a State and neglect the importance of systemic configurations (both the system and the

[318] KUPCHAN, Charles: **The Vulnerability of Empire**, Ithaca, Corneil University Press, 1994, p.15 (1st ed.)
[319] RIPSMAN M., Norrin, TALIAFERRO W., Jeffrey, and LOBELL E., Steven: **Neoclassical realist theory of international politics, *Op. Cit.*,** p.34

structure). This approach can easily mislead decision-makers through miscalculations and misinterpretations about how the international system or the hegemonic Power will react to their defiance. The neoclassical realist approach to foreign policy analysis alleviates both previous analytical shortages by highlighting the crucial role played by the domestic inputs in the foreign policy decision-making of a State in the context of external pressures.

As the previous figure clearly illustrates, domestic configurations serve as a filter between systemic pressures and the final decision to comply with external demands. In other words, by describing domestic settings as intervening variables, neoclassic realists highlight their roles as circuit-breakers or transmitting belts of systemic pressures. Peter Trubowitz shares this point of view as he argues that "the domestic politics approach starts from the premise that societal interests (e.g., industrialists, bankers, merchants, interest groups) have a stake in whether a nation's foreign policy is expensive or cheap, offensive or defensive, or coercive or cooperative. (…) In *Innenpolitik* accounts of grand strategy, States' foreign policy choices are thus constrained, and perhaps even distorted, by societal interests and pressures."[320] Thus, the neoclassical realist perspective permits not only an accurate identification of the interests the decision-makers consider when crafting their foreign policy and the actors involved in the process-making but also considers or integrates the weakness of the target State. In addition, the neoclassic realist eclectic foreign policy analysis model helps unfold the coercive mechanism better and thus the causal explaining process of the target's answer to the coercer's demand.

The combination of different, if not contradicting, Schools of thought's philosophical considerations by the neoclassic realist approach is also relevant for our thesis as it fits with the characteristics of coercive diplomacy as such. As we previously analyzed, coercive diplomacy is a foreign policy set by a State to achieve its goals. Thus, it is important to remember that "in FPA, there is no trench warfare between paradigms. (…) By freeing ourselves from the pursuit of a single explanatory variable, a confusing first impression can be transformed into a creative impulse. (…) FPA is not only multilevel and multidisciplinary; it is resolutely multicausal," Jean-Frédéric Morin and Jonathan Paquin argue.[321] In addition, as Alexander George emphasized, *coercive diplomacy is highly context-dependent, many different variables can affect the variant of the strategy the policymaker selects, its implementation, and its outcome. These contextual factors vary from one case to another so that one must be careful not to assume*

[320] TRUBOWITZ, Peter: **Politics and strategy. Partisan ambition and American statecraft**, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2011, p.3

[321] FPA stands for Foreign Policy Analysis. See MORIN Jean-Frédéric and PAQUIN Jonathan: **Foreign policy analysis. A toolbox**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.8

that because the strategy worked in one case, it ought to be successful in other cases as well.[322] This means that how and why the US implemented a specific type of coercive strategy depended not only on the target but also on additional variables like the perception/beliefs of the leader, the nature of the historical relations with the country, the geopolitical implications of the (actual or perceived) possession of nuclear weapons by the country etc.

Concerning this thesis, we will mainly rely on the following domestic variables to analyze the targets' responses to the coercer's threats and demands: the leaders' perceptions, the strategic culture, the regime type and the related institutions of the country, and the State-Society relations. In other words, we will always pay closer attention to how the policy responses of the target States regarding the coercer's demands and threats reflect the instrumental role played by the previous intervening domestic variables. Were the target's answers to the coercer's demands and threats shaped by its strategic culture, the leaders' perceptions, the interaction of the domestic institutions or the capacity of the State to mobilize the society's resources in terms of popular support? Our analysis of the coercive interactions between the protagonists will be carried out against the backdrop of these questions. This will be done by identifying the causal mechanism related to the drivers of the policy response of the target State. The notion of mechanism will be substantially analyzed in the following sub-section dedicated to our methodology. Yet, we will first emphasize the concept of a case study before delving into the causal mechanism.

[322] GEORGE L., Alexander: **Forceful persuasion: coercive diplomacy as an alternative to war, *Op. Cit.***, p.69

3.2 SECTION II - METHODOLOGY

This sub-part aims at explaining and describing our methodological choices. In other words, it will provide details regarding our *ways of acquiring data*,[323] or more precisely, about the "standardized set of techniques for building scientific knowledge, such as how to make valid observations, how to interpret results, and how to generalize those results."[324] To investigate the conditions under which the US coercive diplomacy could successfully compel Iran, Libya and South Africa to abandon their nuclear (weapons) programs, we adopted the **case study** as our research strategy and **process tracing** as our principal method of investigation. Consequently, this subchapter is divided into two parts: the case study and the process tracing.

Concerning the case study, we will first emphasize the definition of case study research, its strength, and weaknesses as a research strategy, and thus its relevance for this PhD thesis. Then, we will dwell on the choice of our specific variant of the case study and its relevance for the explanation and the understanding of the outcomes of the coercive dynamics between the US and the countries mentioned above. Regarding process tracing, we will first analyze the definitions of the concepts and the type or variant that we relied on (the **explanatory variant of process tracing**) to unfold the causal mechanisms which explain the different outcomes of the coercive dynamics between Washington and Tehran, Tripoli, and Pretoria. This unfolding power of process tracing in general, particularly its explanatory variant, demonstrates the relevance of this method of investigation for our research. We also relied on the structured-focused comparative method to obtain substantial information regarding the similarities and differences among our cases.

For data collection, we used both primary and secondary sources. Our primary sources included memoirs, speeches, official statements, and interviews with key actors like diplomats and civil servants involved in implementing the coercive strategies. Most interviews were conducted online via Skype due to practical reasons, including COVID-19 restrictions and the overseas locations of the interviewees, with only one interview conducted in person at the Iranian embassy in The Hague. We interviewed 11 experts, including theorists and practitioners, for their expertise in our topic. These experts, such as policymakers like Richard Nephew and an Iranian diplomat, along with academic lecturers and researchers, played a crucial role in enhancing our understanding of the nuclear dynamics between conflicting parties.

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[323] PORTA D., Donatella: **Approaches and methodologies in the Social Sciences: A pluralist perspective,** Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p.28

[324] BHATTACHERJEE, Anol: **Social Science research: principles, methods, and practices,** Zurich, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012, p.5 (2nd ed.)

The interviewees provided invaluable firsthand insights into decision-makers' motivations and factors shaping their choices, helping us in challenging established literature on the topic. Regarding secondary sources, books and articles were instrumental in understanding the main actors' coercive dynamics. We also used information from several newspapers chosen on the credibility of the information shared with the public. This credibility is based on the providers of the sensitive data (intelligence community, anonymous sources from ministries etc.) Combined with secondary sources, the primary sources helped strengthen the internal validity of our findings by testing the consistence of the opinions of the experts and researchers (books, articles) with the decisions that were made in the International political arena, especially in the case of Iran.

For the data processing, we mainly relied on the triangulation method. In other words, we compared the relevance of the data collected based on the aforementioned different sources (speeches, official statements or declarations, books etc.) Considering that we interviewed experts as previously mentioned, we also relied on the (inductive and deductive) thematic analysis method which helped us processing with the transcripts of the interviews. Thanks to the choice of specific terms or themes, these methods helped us to understand how and why leaders perceived specific issues and highlighted the importance of particular interests at stakes for the parties involved in the coercive dynamics. As previously mentioned, we will start this section by analyzing the case study as a research strategy with an emphasis on what it is, why it's a good research strategy for our topic, its strengths and weakness, and the different types of case studies.

3.2.1 Case study as our research strategy: what it is.

Colin Robson and Kieran McCartan argue that the case study approach is one of the three main research strategies in social sciences, as the two others include ethnographic study and grounded theory.[325] Like the notions of development or power, there is no consensual definition of a case study in social sciences. But before delving into the notion of a case study, what does the notion of the ***case*** refer to? Alexander George and Andrew Bennett define a ***case*** as an "instance of a class of events," that is, "a phenomenon of scientific interests, such as revolutions, types of governmental regimes, kinds of economic systems, or personality types that the investigator chooses to study with the aim of developing a theory regarding the causes of similarities or

[325] ROBSON Colin and MCCARTAN Kieran: **Real world research**, Chichester, John Wiley & Sons, 2016, p.71 (4th ed.)

differences among instances (cases) of that class of events."[326] Thereof, a **case study** refers to a "well-defined aspect of a historical episode that the investigator selects for analysis, rather than a historical event itself."[327] Colin Robson and Kieran McCartan consider a case study to be *a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence*.[328] Tricia Moore, Stephen Lapan and MaryLynn Quartaroli define it as "an investigative approach used to thoroughly describe complex phenomena, such as recent events, important issues, or programs, in ways to unearth new and deeper understanding of the phenomena."[329]

3.2.1.1 Why is the case study approach relevant for this thesis?

As previously analyzed, the case study approach is not the only research strategy to understand social reality. Hence, under which conditions can it be the most suitable research strategy? In this regard, Robert Yin argues that "the more that your (research) questions seek to *explain* some contemporary circumstance (e.g., "how" or "why" some social phenomenon works), the more that case study research will be relevant. Case studies also are relevant the more that your questions require an extensive and "in-depth" description of some social phenomenon."[330] Our research question meets these two conditions. Indeed, the research question of this PhD thesis is "to what extent can coercive diplomacy compel a State to abandon its nuclear weapons program?" Regarding the first condition, our research question can be transformed into a *how or why question* if we ask, "how can coercive diplomacy compel a State to abandon its nuclear weapons program?" or "why was coercive diplomacy effective at compelling a State to abandon its nuclear program in the X case, and ineffective in Y case?" However, our choice of the case study approach is not rooted only in the previous methodological considerations.

3.2.1.2 Case study as a research strategy: strengths and weaknesses.

The choice of our case studies falls under a specific type of case study. But before dwelling on the typology of case studies, we will first analyze their assets and weaknesses as a research strategy. The main advantage of the case study research approach is its capacity to fix the flaws of quantitative techniques. As Alexander George

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[326] GEORGE L., Alexander and BENNETH, Andrew: **Case studies and theory development in the Social Sciences,** Cambridge, The MIT Press, 2004, p.17 (Consulted online).
[327] GEORGE L., Alexander and BENNETH, Andrew: **Case studies and theory development in the Social Sciences, *Ibid.***, p.18
[328] ROBSON Colin and MCCARTAN Kieran: **Real world research, *Ibid.***, p.150 (4th ed.)
[329] MOORE S., Tricia, LAPAN D., Stephen and QUARTAROLI T., MaryLynn (Eds): **Qualitative research. An introduction to methods and designs**, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass Publishing, 2011, p.243 (1st ed.)
[330] YIN K., Robert: **Case study research and applications: design and methods**, Los Angeles, SAGE publications, 2017, p.33. (6th ed. - Consulted online.)

and Andrew Beneath argue, "case studies are generally strong precisely where statistical methods and formal models are weak."[331] In this regard, they identified four main advantages of the case study research approach: "their potential for achieving high conceptual validity; their strong procedures for fostering new hypotheses; their value as a useful means to closely examine the potential or the hypothesized role of causal mechanisms in the context of individual cases; and their capacity for addressing causal complexity."[332]

Furthermore, Chih-Sheng Hsieh argues that another important asset of the case study approach is its flexibility which is visible in several steps of the investigation, starting with the choice of the case. In addition, "multiple methods of data collection are likely to be adopted depending on how the researcher thinks *reality* can be best revealed. The procedure of data collection is also flexible because there is no fixed end point in data collection."[333] Case study research strategies are also suitable for any epistemological stance adopted by the researcher, whether critical, interpretative or positivist.[334] But "probably the most important feature of case studies is the fact that limiting the research to one or a few cases allows the researcher to invest time and intellectual energy in reflecting on the relationship between empirical observations and the abstract concepts that form the core elements of hypotheses, theories, and mechanism-based explanations. (…) Furthermore, internal validity is enhanced because case study researchers can more easily employ context-specific indicators for theoretical concepts. Finally, case study researchers can take into account a broader set of theories and more abstract theories when analyzing and interpreting cases," Joachim Blatter and Markus Haverland argue.[335] Yet, case studies were also subject to several criticisms.

Alexander George and Andrew Benneth advise differentiating two types of limits regarding the criticism of case studies: *trade-offs* and *inherent limits* of case studies on the first hand and external limits usually highlighted by scholars of quantitative approaches on the other hand. Inherent limits refer to case study researchers' mistakes and methodological biases when conducting their investigations. Those methodological biases include, among others, the case selection bias. Barbara Geddes argues that "the problem with selecting cases for study on the dependent variable stems from the logic

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[331] GEORGE L., Alexander and BENNETH, Andrew: **Case studies and theory development in the Social Sciences, *Op. Cit.*,** p.19
[332] GEORGE L., Alexander and BENNETH, Andrew: **Case studies and theory development in the Social Sciences, *Ibid.*,** p.19
[333] HSIEH, Chih-en, **Strengths and weaknesses of qualitative case study research**, Research articles, University of Leicester, 2004, p.95
[334] CROWE, Sarah et al., **The case study approach**, BMC Medical research methodology, 2011, p.4
[335] BLATTER Joachim and HAVERLAND Markus: **Designing case studies. Explanatory approaches in small-N research**, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, p.20

of explanation."[336] Indeed, case study researchers usually select their cases based on the dependent variable when explaining the discrepancies between two cases in comparative analysis. In other words, in their attempt to explain the difference in outcomes between two or more cases, case study researchers implicitly make assumptions about the explaining factors of the outcome and focus only on cases with similar features. This approach can easily lead to two mistakes: first, to reach conclusions based on partial and oriented observations, that is, *jumping to the conclusion that any characteristic that the selected cases share is a cause*.[337] Second, on the risk of drawing general conclusions about the outcome based on non-representative sample cases.

To overcome the previous challenges, Barbara Geddes suggests a radical approach consisting of identifying the universe of cases to which the hypothesis should apply and to *finding or developing measures of the variables. A sample of cases to examine then needs to be selected from the universe in such a way as to ensure that the criteria for selecting cases are uncorrelated with the placement of cases on the dependent variable*.[338] Though they acknowledge the previous warnings, Alexander George and Andrew Benneth do not completely dismiss the relevance of the dependent variable-based case selection. In fact, they maintain that *cases selected on the dependent variable, including single-case studies, can help identify which variables are not necessary or sufficient conditions for the selected outcome. (…) Selection on the dependent variable can serve the heuristic purpose of identifying the potential causal paths and variables leading to the dependent variable of interest*.[339]

The second inherent limit identified by Alexander George and Andrew Benneth is related to the difficulty for the researcher to *identify the scope conditions and "necessity*." More precisely, they argue that "a limitation of case studies is that they can make only tentative conclusions on how much gradations of a particular variable affect the outcome in a particular case or how much they generally contribute to the outcomes in a class or type of cases. (…) Case studies remain much stronger at assessing *whether* and *how* a variable mattered to the outcome than at assessing *how much* it mattered."[340]

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[336] GEDDES, Barbara, **How the cases you choose affect the answers you get: selection bias in comparative politics**, Political Analysis, 1990, Vol. 2, p.132
[337] GEDDES, Barbara, **How the cases you choose affect the answers you get: selection bias in comparative politics**, ***Ibid.***, pp.132-133
[338] GEDDES, Barbara, **How the cases you choose affect the answers you get: selection bias in comparative politics**, ***Ibid***., pp.134-135
[339] GEORGE L., Alexander and BENNETH, Andrew: **Case studies and theory development in the Social Sciences, *Op. Cit.*,** p.23
[340] GEORGE L., Alexander and BENNETH, Andrew: **Case studies and theory development in the Social Sciences, *Ibid.*,** p.23

Concerning the external limits of case studies, they usually refer to critics addressed by quantitative scholars to case study researchers. These critics revolve around the alleged absence of "rigor" in case studies. As Patricia Lucas, Jenny Fleming, and Julie Bhosale argue, *it has been well cited that a short coming to case study research is generalizability; or, more specifically the lack of valid generalization*.[341] The challenge of generalizability of the findings of a case study – *the extent to which the findings of the enquiry are more generally applicable outside the specifics of the situation studied*[342] – stems from the property or characteristics of the case studied. Indeed, one should remember with Helen Simons that "case study is the study of the **singular**, the **particular**, the **unique**, whether that single case is a person, a project, an institution, a program or a policy."[343] In other words, each case is unique, and this uniqueness makes the applicability of the study's findings in other cases difficult. Therefore, scholars like Henry Mintzberg can logically argue that "if there is no generalizing beyond the data, no theory. No theory, no insight."[344] But qualitative researchers like Sangeeta Mookherji and Anne LaFond suggested alternatives like theory-based case selection to generalization issues.[345] Various case studies in social sciences use different methods but with powerful explanation capabilities of the social reality.

3.2.1.3 Types of case studies

The typology of case studies can be established based on several criteria, and the functionality of the case study is one of the parameters to consider in this regard. For instance, Stenhouse identified four types of case studies: ethnographic, evaluative, educational and action research.[346] Robert Yin suggests a typology of case studies based on the research outcome sought by the analyst: "exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory *case* studies."[347] In explorative case studies, the researcher aims to *develop pertinent hypotheses and propositions for further inquiry.* In contrast, explanatory case studies usually *deal with the tracing of operational processes over time, rather than mere*

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[341] LUCAS Patricia, FLEMING Jenny, BHOSALE Julie, **The Utility of case study as a methodology for work-integrated learning research**, International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning, Special Issue, 2018, Vol. 19, N.3, p.217

[342] ROBSON, Colin: **Real world research: A resource for social scientists and practitioner-researchers**, Malden, Blackwell publishing, 2002, p.93. (2nd ed. – Accessed online)

[343] SIMONS, Helen, **Interpret in context: Generalizing from the single case in evaluation**, Evaluation, April 2015, Vol.21, N. 2, p.175.

[344] Henry Mintzberg, cited in WIKFELDT, Emma, **Generalizing from case studies**, Halmstad University, 2016, p.2

[345] SANGEETA Mookherji and LAFOND Anne, **Strategies to maximize generalization from Multiple Case Studies: Lessons from the Africa Routine Immunization System Essentials (ARISE) project**, Evaluation, July 2013, Vol. 19, N.3, pp.284–303.

[346] Lawrence Stenhouse, cited in ROSE Richard and GROSVENOR Ian: **Doing research in special education. Ideas into practice**, London, Routledge, 2001, p.71. (Consulted online).

[347] YIN K., Robert: **Case study research and applications: design and methods**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.38

frequencies or incidence.[348] More precisely, "a descriptive case study is one that is focused and detailed, in which propositions and questions about a phenomenon are carefully scrutinized and articulated at the outset."[349]

There is also the distinction made by Robert Stake between *Intrinsic, Instrumental* and *Collective* case studies. Intrinsic case studies refer to situations where *the researcher wants better understanding* of the case. (The research) *is not undertaken primarily because the case represents other cases or because it illustrates a particular trait or problem, but because, in all its particularity and ordinariness, this case itself is of interest*.[350] In Instrumental cases, on the other hand, the case is analyzed to *provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization*. *The case is of secondary interest, it plays a supportive role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else*.[351] Collective case studies refer to scenarios where *a number of cases may be studied jointly in order to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition*. (…) *Here, the instrumental case is extended to several cases that are chosen because it is believed that investigating these will lead to a better understanding, and perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases*.[352]

Another variable to consider when establishing a typology of case studies is the number of *cases* being analyzed. Hence, we have single hard cases and collective case studies, usually described as comparative case studies. *Single case studies are those conducted using just one incidence or example of the case at a single site*, (while) *Multiple case studies can be conducted at one site where many examples of the case are examined*.[353] However, irrespective of its typology, every case study must rely on a clear research design to account for the case being analyzed insightfully. The research design can be defined as "logical blueprints. (…) The logic involves the links among the research questions, the data to be collected, and the strategies for analyzing the data — so that a study's findings will address the intended research questions. The logic also helps to boost the accuracy of a study."[354] Robert Yin suggested a generic model of research design composed of five (5) key elements: *the case study's questions, its propositions (or*

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[348] YIN K., Robert: **Case study research and applications: design and methods**, Los Angeles, SAGE publications, 2002, p.6 (3rd ed.)
[349] TOBIN, Ruthanne, ***Descriptive case study*** in MILLS J., Albert, DUREPOS, Gabrielle and WIEBE Elden (Eds): **Encyclopedia of case study research**, Los Angeles, SAGE Publications, 2010, p.288. (Vol. 1)
[350] Robert Stake cited in THOMAS, Gary: **How to do your case study**, London, SAGE publications, 2011, p.98 (Consulted online)
[351] THOMAS, Gary: **How to do your case study**, ***Ibid.***, p.98
[352] SPARKES C., Andrew and SMIT, Brett: **Qualitative research methods in sport, exercise and health: From process to product**, Oxon, Routledge, 2013, p.56 (1st ed.) Consulted online.
[353] MOORE S., Tricia, LAPAN D., Stephen and QUARTAROLI T., MaryLynn (Eds): **Qualitative research. An introduction to methods and designs, *Op. Cit.*,** p.247
[354] YIN K., Robert: **Qualitative research from start to finish**, New York, The Guilford Press, 2015, p.83 (2nd ed. - Consulted online.)

hypothesis), if any, its case (definition and boundaries), the logic linking the data to the propositions, the criteria for interpreting the findings.[355] Our PhD developed a research design which includes all the previous elements. But before dwelling on our research design, we will first justify the choice of our specific cases.

3.2.1.4 Case study and the choice of the US as the main coercer, with Iran, Libya, and South Africa as the main targets.

3.2.1.4.1 Why the US as the main coercer?

Since the advent of the NPT in 1970, Great Powers like France, Russia, UK have played an instrumental role in preserving and sustaining the international nuclear regime. Mohan Malik demonstrates, for example, how China moved from being *a challenger to an upholder of the global non-proliferation regime*.[356] Yet, survival imperatives are the primary motivators for every State. Therefore, it is unsurprising to observe their engagement in strategic areas that enhance their fundamental security. This includes nuclear capabilities for those who demonstrate the technological capabilities and, to some extent, the political will to build and maintain a nuclear (weapons) program. Hence, what makes the US specific compared to the other States?

Regarding the normative power of the US, Joseph Nye argues that Washington, as "the most powerful state in the nuclear issue area used its power to attract others to a normative framework."[357] Rebecca Gibbons dwells on this as she maintains that "as the most powerful State in the system during the nuclear age, the United States has had many tools with which to persuade other States to join or otherwise support non-proliferation agreements. Some States, however, require more persuasion than others. States that are more embedded within the US-led order - States whose policy preferences and political values are largely shared with the United States - adhere relatively quickly. The United States must work harder to persuade states that are less embedded."[358] Therefore, our choice of the US as the main coercer is mainly driven by its tremendous power (political, economic, military and normative) capabilities compared to the other Great Powers.

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[355] YIN K., Robert: **Case study research and applications: design and methods**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.38
[356] MALIK J., Mohan, **China and the nuclear Non-Proliferation regime**, Contemporary Southeast Asia, 2000, Vol. 22, N.3, p.445.
[357] NYE S., Joseph, **Maintaining a Nonproliferation regime**, International Organization, 1981, Vol. 35, N.1, p.17
[358] GIBBONS D., Rebecca: **The Hegemon's tool kit. US Leadership and the politics of the nuclear nonproliferation regime**, Ithaca, Corneil University Press, 2022, p.13

3.2.1.4.2 Why Iran, Libya, and South Africa as the targets?

Theoretical considerations mainly explain our choice of the case study approach as our research strategy. Indeed, coercive diplomacy is a very context-dependent phenomenon to study, which explains the challenges related to generalizing the findings of a specific hard case or multiple cases. In this regard, Alexander George advised diversifying the case in coercive diplomacy studies that could lead to more generalizable theoretical conclusions. In addition, the specific choice to analyze the coercive dynamics between Washington and Tehran, Tripoli and Pretoria are not empty-grounded. Our preference is rooted in two main assumptions regarding the success of coercive diplomacy: first, the nature of the demands formulated by the coercer on the first hand (A. George), and second the level of advancement of the nuclear program. Also, unlike several previous research on this topic, we did not choose countries based only on their anti-US foreign policy; in fact, the choice of South Africa (an ally of the US) helped us to assess the resolve of Washington to prevent all countries (foes or allies) from illegally joining the nuclear club. In addition, the level of advancement and the related importance of its nuclear program for the target also plays an instrumental role in the readiness of the target State to abandon its nuclear program.

As Peter Feaver and Emerson Niou advised US policymakers when crafting their coercive policies, one should consider, among others, *the phase in the proliferation process to which the proliferator has advanced: pre-weaponization, after weaponization but before deployment, the deployment phase, and, finally, full deployment*.[359] Regarding our research thesis, each target country was at a certain level of advancement of its nuclear (weapons) program when being challenged by the US: Libya's nuclear weapons program was still at a rudimentary level, while Iran had managed to reach a nuclear latency capability and South Africa had successfully built several nuclear weapons. These different levels of advancement could explain the reluctance of the target to comply with the sender's demands, considering the importance of the nuclear program and the related cost of abandoning it. Hence, concerning the nature of the nuclear demands formulated by Washington, each of these cases will provide insightful theoretical and political recommendations regarding the conducive conditions of coercive diplomacy. Moreover, the exclusion of case studies such as the US engagement with North Korea's nuclear program stems from the formidable challenges associated with accessing primary source materials.[360]

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[359] FEAVER D., Peter and NIOU M. S., Emerson, **Managing nuclear proliferation: Condemn, strike, or assist?,** International Studies Quarterly, June 1996, Vol. 40, N.2, p.209

[360] This decision suggests a cautious approach to case selection, aiming to ensure that the chosen cases can be thoroughly researched and analysed with access to reliable primary sources. Additionally, it indicates a desire to avoid potential biases that could arise from selecting cases driven only by conflictual political agendas.

3.2.2 The research design of the thesis

Regarding the research question and its propositions, the central question posed is, "what are the conditions under which coercive diplomacy can compel a State to abandon its nuclear weapons program?" The related-hypotheses are: coercive diplomacy could compel a State to abandon its nuclear program under two conditions: first if the coercer's strategy exploits the target's vulnerabilities and second, if the coercer demonstrates a motivation to have a sustained campaign to compel the target. Concerning the cases, we identified Iran, Libya, and South Africa as our case studies. This choice was mainly rooted in the level of advancement of these countries' nuclear programs when coerced by the US. Concerning the boundaries, each case had specific actors and time scope.

Regarding **Iran**, we focused on the coercive dynamics between the Islamic regime (post-1979 revolution). The time scope of the chapter spans from **1979 to 2013,** emphasizing the time frame between **2002 and 2013**. Indeed, it was only in 2002 that Iran's nuclear program effectively became a significant source of concern for the West. Tehran was confronted on this issue until 2013, two years before the 2015 nuclear agreement.[361] The time scope of the **Libyan** case spans from **1969 (after Gadhafi's coup d'état) till 2003,** when Libya signed a deal with the US and UK over its Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) program. It is worth emphasizing that several scholars agreed that achieving a nuclear deterrent capability was an essential goal of Gadhafi's regime since the early hours of his revolution. Lastly, the **South African** case spans **from 1948 (the beginning of the Apartheid regime) till 1994,** when the South African leaders ended the Apartheid regime. However, we are only interested in the nuclear dynamics and the related issues of the Apartheid regime's relations with the US.

Regarding the *logic linking the data to the propositions*, Robert Yin suggested four models of analytical strategies applicable to case studies. The first one, which relies on theoretical propositions, can also be defined as a deductive research strategy as the researcher sets a couple of theoretical propositions at the beginning of the research; these propositions then *shape* the researcher's data collection plan and *yield his/her analytic priorities*.[362] The second research strategy refers to the "ground up" approach and can also be defined as an inductive approach. *Instead of thinking about any theoretical propositions, pour through your data*, Robert Yin advises scholars interested in this strategy. The third analytical strategy can be described as the "time-series analysis." Robert Yin argues that *the important case study objective is to examine some relevant "how" and "why" questions about the relationship of events over time, not merely*

[361] The nuclear deal between Iran and the E3+3 or P5+1 group was signed on July 14, 2015, and is formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).
[362] YIN K., Robert: **Case study research and applications: design and methods**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.216

to observe the time trends alone.[363] The fourth strategy – the logic models – *consists of matching empirically observed events to theoretically predicted events. Conceptually, you therefore may consider the logic model technique to be another form of pattern matching. However, because of their sequential stages, logic models deserve to be distinguished as a separate analytic technique from pattern matching*.[364]

This thesis opted for the fourth research strategy for its pragmatic and explanatory approach. Indeed, it combines deductive and inductive inputs, which fit with our research strategy. Indeed, we formulated two hypotheses (propositions), which served as the backdrop of our data collection and analysis. In other words, the design of our interviews, the review of books and articles and the related data collected was done against the backdrop of one main goal: identifying the causal mechanisms which could either confirm or refute our theoretical propositions related to our research questions. This deductive perspective helped us to remain focused on our research goal. However, we also ran the risk of missing unanticipated or accidental factors, which would not necessarily undermine the relevance of our theory but strengthen it by unfolding new insights. Hence, we combined the deductive perspective with an inductive approach to let the facts or data *speak for themselves*. This allowed us not to be bounded by a single perspective of our different cases, thus, to understand their complexity. Yet, we chose the structured-focused comparison method to obtain insightful findings that could be applied in other cases of nuclear-related coercive diplomacy.

3.2.3 The Structured-focused comparison method

Described as *simple and straightforward,* Alexander George and Andrew Benneth developed the structured-focused comparison method in their classic book: *Case studies and theory development*. They argue that "the method is "structured" in that the researcher writes general questions that reflect the research objective and that these questions are asked of each case under study to guide and standardize data collection, thereby making systematic comparison and cumulation of the findings of the cases possible. The method is "focused" in that it deals only with certain aspects of the historical cases examined."[365] The method was developed in response to scholars who criticized previous case studies either because of the lack of accumulation of their findings or because they were not "theory-oriented." To fix these flaws, George and Benneth suggested three requirements or criteria based upon which the *scientificity* of

[363] YIN K., Robert: **Case study research and applications: design and methods**, Los Angeles, SAGE publications, 2008, p.148. (4th ed. - Consulted online.)
[364] YIN K., Robert: **Case study research and applications: design and methods**, ***Ibid.***, p.145 (4th ed. - Consulted online.)
[365] GEORGE L., Alexander and BENNETH, Andrew: **Case studies and theory development in the Social Sciences, *Op. Cit.*,** p.67

case studies could no longer be contested. The criteria are the following: first, *a clear limitation of the "class" or "subclass" of events - of which a single case or a group of cases to be studied are instances*. Then, *a well-defined research objective and an appropriate research strategy to achieve that objective should guide the selection and analysis of a single case or several cases within the class or subclass of the phenomenon under investigation*. Finally, *case studies should employ variables of theoretical interest for purposes of explanation*.[366]

This PhD included both structured and focused aspects on its methodological design. Concerning the *structured* aspects, we aimed to answer our research questions through a set of questions we applied to our three case studies. These questions are the following: what was the coercive strategy adopted by the US while addressing the nuclear issue of the target State? What were its coercive goals, the expected mechanisms, and its expected outcomes? What were the actual outcomes, and the causes for such outcomes? As our research question is "to what extent can coercive diplomacy compel a State to abandon its nuclear program," applied to each of our case studies, the previous questions will help us understand the specificities of each case when confronted by the US. Hence, by combining and cumulating the findings of the other cases, we obtain more insightful answers to our research question. After all, as George and Benneth emphasized, "a single (case) study cannot address all the interesting aspects of a historical event."[367]

Concerning the *focused* aspects, our research aims to identify the conducive conditions of coercive diplomacy in the context of nuclear proliferation. Therefore, we focused only on aspects highlighting the nuclear-related coercive dynamics between the US and its targets. In doing so, we could better achieve the broader objective of improving the theory of coercive diplomacy. However, to understand the conducive conditions of coercive diplomacy in the nuclear proliferation context, one must identify the causal mechanisms underlying the process which led to a specific outcome. Process tracing is the best option in this regard. Indeed, as Derek Beach and Rasmus Pedersen confirm, *when causation is understood in mechanism terms, the most appropriate designs for investigating this involve tracing these processes using within-case methods like congruence or process-tracing*.[368]

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[366] GEORGE L., Alexander and BENNETH, Andrew: **Case studies and theory development in the Social Sciences, *Ibid*.,** p.69
[367] GEORGE L., Alexander and BENNETH, Andrew: **Case studies and theory development in the Social Sciences, *Op. Cit*.,** p.70
[368] BEACH Derek and PEDERSEN B., Rasmus: **Causal case study methods. Foundations and process for comparing, matching, and tracing**, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2016, p.16

3.2.4 The process-tracing method: what it is.

Initially used in cognitive studies areas, process-tracing methods have recently experienced a surge in popularity within qualitative social science, with numerous doctoral students and established scholars attempting to use process-tracing methods in their research.[369] However, just like several other notions in social sciences, there is no consensual definition of this method. For instance, Alexander George and Andrew Benneth define it as a method that "attempts to identify the intervening causal process—the causal chain and causal mechanism—between an independent variable (or variables) and the outcome of the dependent variable."[370] But Derek Beach considers it "a research method for tracing causal mechanisms using detailed, within-case empirical analysis of how a causal process plays out in an actual case."[371] However, irrespective of their definitions, process tracing scholars agree on the central role of the **causal mechanism** in explaining the causality of a phenomenon; "it's all about mechanism," as Derek Beach accurately summed it up.[372] But what is a causal mechanism?

According to Derek Bleach, "causal mechanisms are one of the most widely used but least understood types of causal claims in the social sciences. (…) Mechanisms are not causes, but causal processes that are triggered by causes and that link them with outcomes in a productive relationship."[373] Thomas Gehring and Sebastian Oberthür argue that "a causal mechanism opens the black box of the cause-effect relationship between the institutions involved and provides an explanation for the causal effect observed. (…) It may be conceived of as a set of statements that are logically connected and provide a plausible account of how a given cause creates an observed effect."[374] The mechanism appears as the intermediary between a cause and effect from the two previous definitions. Unfortunately, this has led several authors to confuse a mechanism with an intervening variable.[375]

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[369] BEACH Derek and PEDERSEN B., Rasmus: **Causal case study methods. Foundations and guidelines for comparing, matching, and tracing, *Ibid*.,** p.2

[370] GEORGE L., Alexander and BENNETH, Andrew: **Case studies and theory development in the Social Sciences, *Op. Cit*.,** p.206

[371] BEACH, Derek, **Process-tracing methods in Social Science**, Oxford research Encyclopedia of politics, January 2017, p.2

[372] BEACH, Derek, **It's all about mechanisms - what process-tracing case studies should be tracing**, New Political Economy, 2016, Vol. 21, N.5, pp.463-472.

[373] BEACH, Derek, **Process-tracing methods in Social Science**, ***Ibid***., p.2

[374] GEHRING, Thomas and OBERTHÜR, Sebastian, **The causal mechanisms of interaction between international institutions**, European Journal of International Relations, 2009, Vol. 15, N.1, pp.128-129.

[375] MAHONEY, James, **Beyond correlational analysis: recent innovations in theory and method**, Sociological Forum, Vol. 16, N.3, 2001, p.578.

Nonetheless, Derek Beach and Rasmus Pedersen counter-argue that causal inferences are possible (in process tracing) only when we have either mechanistic within-case evidence or the manipulated, experimental evidence of difference-making.[376] The authors developed two main types of process tracing (illustrated in figure 4 below) with different ontological and epistemological claims: case-centric process tracing (explain outcomes variant) and theory-centric process tracing (theory building and theory testing variant). "The ambition in theory-centric variants is to build generalizable theories about mechanisms that can travel across cases, within the context in which they are predicted to operate. (…) In contrast, case-centric scholars who employ what we term explaining outcome PT operate with a very different understanding of the social world, viewing it as very complex and extremely context-specific. In this understanding of the world, generalizations become difficult, if not impossible, meaning that the ambition becomes to account for particularly puzzling and historically important outcomes."[377] This thesis relied on the explanatory variant of process tracing as we are interested in understanding the different outcomes of the US coercive policies when confronting our case study States.

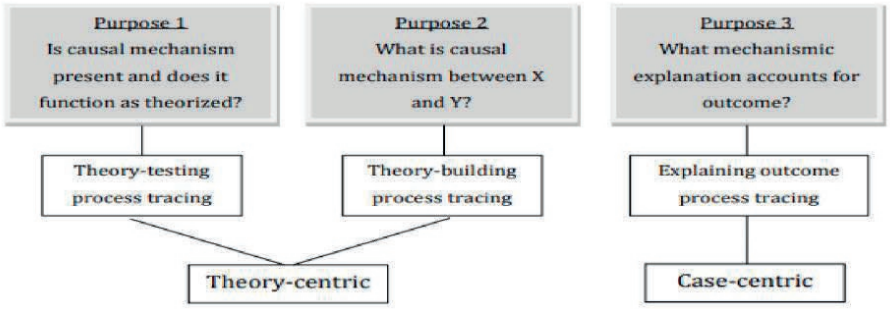

Figure 4; Three different variants of process tracing and their analytical purposes.[378]

[376] BEACH Derek and PEDERSEN B., Rasmus: **Causal case study methods. Foundations and guidelines for comparing, matching, and tracing, *Op. Cit.*,** p.303
[377] BEACH, Derek and PEDERSEN B., Rasmus, **Case selection techniques in process-tracing and the implications of taking the study of causal mechanisms seriously**, SSRN Electronic Journal, 2012, p.7
[378] BEACH, Derek and PEDERSEN B., Rasmus, **Case selection techniques in process-tracing and the implications of taking the study of causal mechanisms seriously, *Ibid.*,** p.7

3.2.4.1 Process tracing and coercive diplomacy.

Why is process tracing a suitable method for research on coercive diplomacy? As we formerly analyzed, previous research projects on this topic apprehended the State as a unitary actor. From this departing point, their authors logically relied on theories that highlighted not only power politics (hegemonic stability, the balance of power, etc.) but also relied exclusively on a State-based understanding of the coercive dynamics between the sender and receiver. As Paik Seunghoon argues, "coercive diplomacy theory is based on the realism of international politics. Realism assumes the state is the single most important actor that has clear sovereignty. Thus, the agent in a coercive diplomacy model is the state and the analysis has to take a state-centric view."[379] We partially share this point of view as we must also emphasize that such a theoretical perspective misses a subtle but critical aspect of coercive studies: first and foremost, coercion is a decision-making-related issue. Indeed, it's about compelling an actor to behave according to one's will or desire, thus leading him/her to realize or decide that his/her interests are better protected when he/she complies with the coercer's demands. Consequently, an accurate and substantial understanding of coercive decision-making requires an assessment of all the hidden and visible parameters or factors that shaped the leader's decision to defy or comply with an external demand. And this is precisely where neoclassical realism and process tracing play an instrumental role in describing the causal mechanism of coercive dynamics outcomes.

Indeed, one of the most substantial added values of process tracing in understanding a phenomenon rests on its ability to dig into the process leading to a specific outcome; in fact, it helps unfold the causal mechanism related to the analyzed outcome. As Rosemary Reilly puts it, "process tracing effectively captures how an issue, situation, or pivotal event evolves, especially when the focus of the case is subject to the dynamics of change and time is an organizing variable. It is used to "unwrap" the causal links that connect independent variables and outcomes, by identifying the intervening causal processes, that is, the causal chain and causal mechanisms linking them. It also is able to consider responses of social actors in their context and to trace events from a static pre causal point to the eventual outcome of interest."[380] Therefore, thanks to the process tracing approach, one can quickly identify the actors involved in the decision-making of the State and their related interests, thereof, the target State's weak points.

Considering the previous perspective, process tracing fits well with the neoclassical realism approach of FPA we previously analyzed. In addition, process tracing helps to

[379] PAIK, Seunghoon: **Taming the Evil: US Non-proliferation coercive diplomacy and the counter-strategies of Iran and North Korea after the Cold War**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.69

[380] REILLY C., Rosemary, ***Process tracing*** in MILLS J., Albert, DUREPOS Gabrielle and WIEBE Elden (Eds): **Encyclopedia of case study research**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.734. (Consulted online)

study the evolution of the relations and coercive dynamics between the actors over time, which permits understanding the classic or unanticipated factors that explain how and why a State decided to behave in a specific way. In other words, it helps to reveal the set of elements which shapes the reaction of a State under external pressure, thus identifying a pattern of behavior of the actor under specific circumstances over time.

3.2.5 Collection and analysis of the research data.

3.2.5.1 Data collection

One of the biggest challenges regarding the understanding of the outcomes of coercive dynamics in an area like nuclear weapons is access to credible information. This is due to several factors, including the sensitive nature of the information and the readiness of diplomats and policymakers involved in the negotiation process to answer our questions, except for Iran, where we could interview an Iranian diplomat and a US key policy advisor. This issue mainly explains the imbalance among our case studies as one can notice later. Indeed, most of the primary sources[381] used in this research are composed of semi-structured interviews (Iran case), speeches and official statements of leaders, memoirs, UN Resolutions, EU restrictive measures, Presidential executive orders, Congress bills from the sender and target country which provided us with factual information related to our research goals.

With respect to the interview, we set several questions[382] aiming at solving our research puzzle, emphasizing issues related to each party's strategies. The memoirs helped us have first-hand information from actors directly involved in the process; indeed, by sharing their negotiation experience, they illuminated the interactions behind closed doors and the parameters the leaders considered when making decisions.

Official statements and speeches by leaders provided valuable insights into their psychology and motivations. Analyzing their choice of words, tone, and recurring themes when addressing or responding to leaders revealed the significance of past experiences with coercive actors, notably evident in Libya and Iran, where leaders often emphasized themes of humiliation and injustice. UN and EU resolutions shed light on the increasing urgency of nuclear proliferation among Great Powers and the negotiations between protagonists to block or secure their adoption. Congress Bills were used to assess how the nuclear issue was dealt with beyond traditional administration members, offering insights into how leaders' declarations resulted from

[381] "A primary source is a work that gives original information. It comes from a time being studied or from a person who was involved in the events being studied." Read KELLER, Susanna: **What are primary sources? Let's find out. Social studies skills**, New York, Britannica Educational Publishing, 2019, p.4. (Consulted online)

[382] The questionnaire for the Iranian case is in the appendix.

interactions between the government and other domestic constituencies of the state. While primary sources supplied some factual information, we also drew upon secondary sources to bolster our research.

A Secondary source can be defined as "research that someone else has already done on a subject."[383] We bolstered our research with secondary sources, including books and articles authored by experts with professional and academic backgrounds in our research topic and case studies. This approach provided diverse perspectives on the same topic, allowing us to triangulate information from these sources to strengthen our findings. By acknowledging the limitations of each source, we adopted the triangulation method to enhance the validity and credibility of our results.[384] Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion and Keith Morrison consider triangulation to be an *attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behavior by studying it from more than one standpoint*.[385] In the same line, Uwe Flick argues that "triangulation means to take several methodological perspectives or theoretical perspectives on an issue under study."[386]

As previously analyzed, each of the previously mentioned methods to collect data presents strengths but also weaknesses. Regarding the interview method, for example, Siti Abdullah and Madya Raman argue that "the major advantage of the interviews is their adaptability. A skilled interviewer can follow up a respondent's answer to obtain more information and clarify vague statements. (…) However, these advantages are offset by certain limitations. It is difficult to standardize the interview situation so that the interviewer does not influence the respondents to answer questions in a certain way."[387] Therefore, to capitalize on the assets of the research methods and alleviate their weaknesses, triangulation appears to be the best alternative. As Derek Beach and Rasmus Pedersen confirm it, "the best solution to the problem of unreliable measures is to collect multiple independent observations. This approach is commonly referred to as triangulation. (…) However, triangulation does not help unless we can substantiate that the sources are independent of each other. Doing three interviews and postulating

[383] HAMILTON, John: **Primary and secondary sources**, Minnesota, Abdo Publishing Company, 2004, p.8. (Consulted online)
[384] DUBEY RASHI Mishra and RASUNDRAM Jovita, **Triangulation an essential tool to enhance the validity of a case study**, SRJIS, Mar-Apr 2017, Vol. 4, N.31, pp.69-74
[385] COHEN Louis, MANION Lawrence and MORRISON Keith: **Research methods in education**, London, Routledge, 2007, p.141. (6th Ed. – Consulted online)
[386] FLICK Uwe (Ed.): **The SAGE Handbook of qualitative data analysis**, Los Angeles, SAGE publications, 2014, p.17 (Consulted online).
[387] ABDULLAH H., Siti and RAMAN S. O., Madya, **Quantitative and qualitative research methods: some strengths and weaknesses**, Jurnal Pendidik dan Pendidikan, Jilid 17, 2000/2001, p.129

that sources have been triangulated is not enough - the researcher needs to substantiate the fact that the interviews are independent of each other."[388]

There are four types of triangulations: method triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation and data source triangulation. "Method triangulation involves the use of multiple methods of data collection about the same phenomenon. This type of triangulation, frequently used in qualitative studies, may include interviews, observation, and field notes. Investigator triangulation involves the participation of two or more researchers in the same study to provide multiple observations and conclusions."[389] Concerning theory triangulation and data source triangulation, Phil Turner and Susan Turner argue that the former *involves using more than one theoretical framework in the interpretation of the data. Theoretical triangulation is the use of more than one theory hypotheses when investigating a phenomenon*; and the latter *involves the use of heterogeneous data sources, for example, qualitative and quantitative. Alternatively, data may be gathered (using the same method) from different sources or at different times, for example, the pre and the post use of a questionnaire*.[390] Based on the previous information, we opted for the method of triangulation for its practical aspects and the easiness of accessing the information we needed, especially regarding books, articles, official documents, and speeches.

3.2.5.2 Analysis of the data.

The analysis of the data collected through the previously mentioned methods was carried-out thanks to several approaches and methods or techniques. Regarding the techniques, we opted for an inductive approach. The inductive approach refers to *a process of reasoning that follows a reverse path — observation precedes theory, hypothesis, and interpretation. Qualitative researchers let the data "speak" to them and try to avoid going into a study with a preconceived idea of what they will find*.[391] It logically follows our research pattern, which is essentially driven by the objective of avoiding any theoretical and methodological restrictions when collecting, processing, and analyzing our empirical data. Thereof, we could confidently identify the causal links and mechanisms related to analyzed coercive dynamics between the US and Iran, Libya, and South Africa. Regarding the methods of analysis of the data, we also triangulated the data obtained via the different collecting data methods previously mentioned. In

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[388] BEACH Derek and PEDERSEN B., Rasmus: **Process-tracing methods: Foundations and guidelines,** Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 2013, p.128. (Consulted online).
[389] CARTER, Nancy et al., **The use of triangulation in qualitative research**, Oncology Nursing Forum, September 2014, Vol. 41, N. 5, p.545
[390] TURNER Phil and TURNER Susan, **Triangulation in practice**, Virtual Reality, September 2009, Vol. 13, N.3, p.171
[391] VANDERSTOEP W., Scott and JOHNSTOND D., Deirdre: **Research methods for everyday life. Blending qualitative and quantitative approaches**, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 2008, p.168. (1st ed.)

other words, we compared the information from interviews, political speeches, and articles with the actual political actions of the leaders on the field. Thus, by *comparing and contrasting results to find and explain commonalities and differences*,[392] we could comfortably reach more credible and reliable findings related to our research questions and goal.

It's important to note that this research also paid attention to the feelings and lexical choices exhibited by leaders of the target states in reaction to US the coercive strategies. The utilization of both thematic and narrative methods assumed pivotal roles in this endeavor. Thematic analysis, characterized by the identification, analysis, and interpretation of patterns or themes within qualitative data, served as a robust framework for systematically coding and categorizing information. [393] This method, indispensable in deciphering recurring themes and patterns, allowed for the extraction of profound insights from a voluminous body of data. Simultaneously, the narrative analysis method delved into the intricate ways individuals construct and communicate their experiences and perspectives through the medium of storytelling. [394] Its significance lies in the ability to unravel the narratives of influential stakeholders, including diplomats, policymakers, and affected parties, thereby illuminating their perceptions and experiences concerning the nuclear issue.

These two methods played a pivotal role in this research endeavor by offering a profound understanding of the mindset of target State leaders when confronted with challenges posed by the United States. Notably, Iran's leaders exhibited expressions of pride, mistrust, and defiance in their responses to US demands. Conversely, Libyan leaders emphasized notions of grandeur and global injustice when contending with American pressure, while South African leaders underscored the theme of security and threats from their regional surroundings to galvanize public support for their nuclear policies. Importantly, within the framework of this research, these methods unveiled how leaders strategically employed specific terminology and concepts to garner political support from their respective populations. The triangulation of the findings, also a result of the synergy between thematic and narrative analyses methods, bolstered the credibility of the research outcomes derived from each method. The forthcoming chapter will delve into the coercive nuclear dynamics between the United States and Iran.

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[392] MOORE S., Tricia, LAPAN D., Stephen and QUARTAROLI T., MaryLynn (Eds): **Qualitative research. An introduction to methods and designs, *Op. Cit.*,** p.99

[393] Read BRAUN Virginia and CLARKE Victoria: **Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners**, SAGE Publications, 2013, 400 pages. (1st ed.)

[394] Read RIESSMAN K., Catherine: **Narrative methods for the Human Sciences**, Los Angeles, SAGE Publications, 2007, 262 pages.

THE US AGAINST IRAN

In any war, the readiness to suffer and die, as well as to kill, represents the single most important factor. Take it away, and even the most numerous, best organized, best trained, best-equipped army in the world will turn out to be a brittle instrument. — Martin Van Creveld, Israeli military historian and theorist.

4

The main goal of this chapter is to analyze the coercive dynamics between the US (supported by the other Great Powers in the EU and the UN) and Iran to explain the positive or negative outcome of the coercive strategies adopted by Washington against Tehran's nuclear program. As previously highlighted, we hypothesized that coercive diplomacy could compel a State to abandon its nuclear (weapons) program under two conditions: if the coercer's strategy exploits the weaknesses of the target and if the coercer demonstrates a motivation to have a sustained campaign to compel the target. Hence, our research analysis will be carried out against the background of our hypotheses; more precisely, we will always consider to what extent the US coercive strategy exploited the weaknesses of Iran, and to what extent the US demonstrated a motivation to implement a sustained campaign to compel Iran to adopt less controversial nuclear policy. Specifically, the chapter will assess **how the Iran's decision to comply or resist the US request relates to the political and economic effects of the Washington's coercive diplomacy**. Additionally, the chapter shall examine **how the Washington's escalation's tactics may have influenced Tehran's ultimate decision regarding the coercer's demands**.

Considering the propositions of our theoretical framework (proportionality, reciprocity, and credibility) and the choice of the structured-focused method, the chapter will be divided into sub-sections which aim at answering the following questions: **what were the objectives pursued by the US when implementing its coercive policies against the Iranian nuclear program? What were coercive strategies adopted to achieve these objectives? What were the expected outcomes of the US after implementing its coercive strategies? What were the actual outcomes at the end of the process, and why such outcomes?** The answer to these questions will help us to demonstrate the validity of the following four elements regarding the effectivity of a coercive strategy in the nuclear realm: the display by the coercer of strategic empathy towards its target, the formulation of clear and acceptable demands to the target, display by the coercer of a higher resolve than the target to achieve his/her objective, and the offer of credible incentives to the target if the target complies. The chapter is divided into five sections: we will first briefly analyze the history of the relations between the US and Iran (section I). We will then stress the context of the emergence of the Iranian nuclear program (section II) and the characteristics of Iranian decision-making (section III). The fourth section will analyze the coercive dynamics between the US and Iran, while the fifth section will highlight the theoretical lessons from the previous coercive dynamics.

4.1 SECTION I – A SHORT HISTORY OF IRAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GREAT POWERS.

Due to its strategic position in Central Asia and its natural resources, Iran has been subject to massive competition from its rivals and opponents, both from the East and the West. However, our research is focused only on Iran-Western relations. Indeed, thanks to its strategic geographical position, Iran straddles two continents (Europe and Asia), which makes it an essential crossroad for international trade. Accordingly, Iran gradually found itself at the heart of an imperialist rivalry between the major global powers of the time, like France,[395] the Soviet empire, and the British Empire. Yet, Russia and the British Empire are the Great Powers which substantially influenced Iranian politics from the 19th to the 20th Century. Indeed, they planned to use the Persian Empire as a significant asset in their respective geopolitical agenda; the subsequent rivalry between these two great powers of the time is better known as "the Great Game", which lasted for about ninety-four years (1803 to 1907).

The two Powers mentioned above have had complex relationships, sometimes peaceful, often acrimonious. As previously mentioned, the geographical position of Iran made it a strategic crossroads for international trade and a rear base for the conquest of Asia. As Lord Curzon, viceroy for India, put it, Persia was "the pieces on a chessboard upon which is being played out a game for the domination of the world."[396] Consequently, the two Great Powers mostly had conflicting geopolitical agendas. However, it is noteworthy that Persian (Iranian) natural resources were not yet the prominent bone of contention between foreign powers. Instead, the geopolitical calculations were more political (in terms of zone of influence) and economic (in terms of markets and domination of seaports for trade). In this regard, Chris Paine and Erica Schoenberger spoke of the "strategic and economic advantage" of Persia.[397] Russia did not hide its geopolitical appetite in this regard.

Russia's ambition was to control Central Asia and the surrounding regional seaports, enabling it to access the Indian market. Establishing a naval base in the Persian Empire was a decisive first step in this regard. However, Moscow had to overcome two main obstacles: on the first hand, it was confronted by the Persian empire and its vast

[395] MALEK, Gabriel : **La place géopolitique de l'Iran des Qâdjârs au sein du Grand Jeu, 1800-1946,** Les Clés du Moyen-Orient, April 24, 2018. An information accessed on the 15th of June 2020 from the link https://www.lesclesdumoyenorient.com/La-place-geopolitique-de-l-Iran-des-Qadjars-au-sein-du-Grand-Jeu-1800-1946-1-2.html

[396] GILLAID, David: **The Struggle for Asia, 1828-1914. A study in British and Russian imperialism.** New York: Holmes and Meier, 1977, p. 214

[397] PAINE Chris and SCHOENBERGER Erica, **Iranian nationalism and the Great Powers: 1872-1954,** Middle East Research and Information Project, 1975, p 3.

territory, and India was already under the control of the British Empire on the second hand. To politically weaken the Shah, Russia forced the Persian Empire to sign the humiliating treaty of Golestan in 1813 and then the treaty of Turkmentchai in 1828, by which it annexed the territories in the northern part of the Arras River. However, Russia's politics in Iran became a source of concern for the British Empire after annexing the western parts of Afghanistan. As Daniel Yergin points out, *to Britain, Russia's expansion was a direct threat to India and the routes thereto.*[398] To counter Russian military and political influence in Iran, the British sought to gain significant economic impact in the Persian Empire, a leverage they obtained thanks to the Anglo-Persian treaty of 1857. In fact, taking advantage of the Crimean war, which pitted the British (France, the Ottoman Empire) against Russia, Nasser-ed-din Chah decided to seize the city of Herat in Afghanistan. The British were hostile to the Persian plans and consequently declared war against the Persian Empire. The war ended with the signing of the previously mentioned Anglo-Persian treaty.

The Anglo-Persian Treaty of 1857 marks the beginning of the economic and political influence of the British Empire in Persian internal affairs. Thanks to this treaty, England was granted numerous rights and concessions, with the most important of them being the concession rights granted to Reuter. The first concession right, in the infrastructure sector, gave the British the exclusive right to build railway lines and exploit mines. Meanwhile, the second concession allowed Reuter to construct the Imperial Bank of Persia. In response to this initiative, Russians successfully called for the creation of a parallel bank: The Bank of Discount. Those banks, which were actual relays of the States to which they belonged, had developed a system of patronage among the Persian elite thanks to an ingenious strategy; Basically, they lent money to the Iranian elite class, and if they could not pay back, they were almost obliged to serve the State to which the bank belonged. It usually involved lobbying the Shah to obtain even more concessions. Nevertheless, Russia had a clear advantage over its British rival. Thanks to an agreement signed in 1880, the Tsar had a military regiment called Cossack in Iran, which received orders only from Russian officers. Russia used this military unit to leverage the Shah to obtain concessions.

Significantly weakened after the war against Japan in 1905, the Russians gradually reduced their imperial ambition until their partial international withdrawal following internal disturbances, notably the Bolshevik revolution of October 1917. As we will see later, this partial withdrawal of Russia from the Persian political landscape allowed the British to increase their influence in Iran, especially during the interwar period, precisely thanks to the concession of D'Arçy and the British oil exploitation that was

[398] YERGIN, Daniel: **The Prize: The Epic quest for oil, money & power,** The US, Free Press, 2008, p.136

permitted. Although lacking the significant political influence of the British, the Soviets still had the opportunity to impact Persian political life and harm British interests. Thus, for example, they supported and financed the 1920 Gelan revolt. This revolt had been defeated by Reza Pahlavi, at the time, minister of war and future shah of Iran from 1925. However, after discovering its large oil reserves, Iran will be of even greater strategic importance.

The discovery of oil wells in Iran was a real strategic and geopolitical revolution. For, if Iran had been so far an economic and political asset for great powers, its current energy and oil capabilities made it the hunting ground of many states. It is important to remember that the Iranian oil potential had been first exploited by D'Arcy, a British (seller) who obtained, through a concession,[399] the exclusive right to use Iran's oil wells, mainly in the country's south. From the political perspective, thanks to D'Arcy's benefit, the British obtained more significant regional political influence. Indeed, it enabled them to prevent foreign interference in Iran's domestic politics as much as possible. Hence, for the British government, losing this concession meant inviting its regional rivals to Iranian internal affairs. As Daniel Yergin noted, *the Treasury's rejection of D'Arcy's loan application seemed terribly short-sighted to the Foreign Office, and Lord Lansdowne immediately expressed concern that* « there is danger of whole petroleum concession in Persia falling thus under Russian control. » Moreover, *the Russians were not the only worry. D'Arcy's visit to Cannes to see the Rothschilds, with the threat that the concession might pass under French control was another geopolitical nightmare the British could not afford to have.*[400]

From a strategic point of view, Iranian oil, albeit in small quantities then, was already a viable source of energy for the British navy, which competed with the German fleet.[401] Having regained political stability, especially with the accession of Stalin to power, the Russians (Soviets) revived an incisive imperial policy in Iran (Persia). Consequently, despite its official neutrality, Iran was invaded again by the Red Army in the north and the British in the south during WWII; The reason for the invasion was due to the economic links between Iran and Germany. This dual occupation led to the abdication of Reza Shah in 1941 in favor of his son Mohammed Reza, and a tripartite agreement that legitimized the presence of foreign troops in Iran was signed in the wake on January 29, 1942. However, Russian militarism and English political influence led to the

[399] More information is available on ***the d'Arcy oil concession.*** A document accessed from http://www.teach- mena.org/themes/movements/handout-arcy-oil-concession.pdf on October 2nd , 2019.
[400] YERGIN, Daniel: **The Prize: The epic quest for oil, money & power, *Op. Cit.,*** p.141
[401] PAINE Chris and SCHOENBERGER Erica: **Iranian Nationalism and the Great Powers: 1872-1954, *Op. Cit.,*** p.8

Iran-Soviet crisis of 1945-1946. This crisis was clear evidence of Russian imperial policy's failure in Iran and the entry of a new player on the Iranian chessboard: the US.

Unlike their contemporary bilateral diplomatic relation, the US and Iran have not always been foes. Considering the Russian-British interference, the Iranian authorities sought an alternative power to arbitrate or balance the geopolitical game between Russian and British on Iranian soil. Faithful to their *third power strategy* or *positive equilibrium* strategy,[402] the Iranian turned to the Americans, who still enjoyed a good reputation in the eyes of the Iranian nationalists. Given the absence of American imperialism in the Middle East at the time, despite heightened US imperial aggression in Latin America and East Asia during the ending years of the nineteenth century, Iranian nationalists considered the US as a benign imperial power, disinclined to encroach upon their sovereignty. However, great was the disappointment of the Iranian leaders with the hesitation of the US to step into the Iranian political game. This American reluctance was explained by its isolationism during the first years after WWII and the Wilsonian sovereignty idealism. However, the almost monopolistic British grip on Iranian affairs, particularly in terms of oil concessions and internal social changes in Iran, forced the US government to adopt a much more pragmatic Iranian policy.

With the end of WWII, the international system slowly but surely entered the American century. Regarding the Middle East, the US considered Iran and Saudi Arabia as the two secular arms of their regional policy. Their goal was to achieve a regional balance, considering the acrimonious relations between these two countries. Consequently, Iran passed under American influence amid the nascent Cold War. However, the dictatorship of Shah Pahlavi sparked several protests, ultimately leading to his regime's collapse and paving the way for the democratic election of Mohammed Mossadeck. The nationalization of the Iranian oil company by the nationalist Premier forced the United States and the British to foment a coup in 1953 against the democratically elected PM and thus restored the Shah, who remained in power until the 1979 revolution. The 1979 revolution and the US hostage crisis a few months later had profound consequences on Iran's domestic politics. On the first hand, it disrupted Iran's internal political order while it led to a geopolitical reorientation of Iran towards the East on the second hand. In other words, Iran deepened its relations with Russia and China.

The relationship between post-1979 Iran and Russia (the Soviet Union until 1990) was very suspicious initially, mainly because of the historical legacy of Tsarist Russia and its harmful influence on Iran's domestic affairs. Therefore, former Supreme Guide Khomeini described Russia as the "lesser Satan" compared to the "great Satan" the US

[402] The free library, **U.S.-Iranian relations, 1911-1951.** An information accessed on October 3rd, 2019 from https://www.thefreelibrary.com/U.S.- Iranian+relations%2C+1911-1951.-a0236631106 .

was. Nonetheless, there was a rapprochement between Iran and Russia during the 1989/99 decade. With the end of the Iran-Iraq war between 1980-1988, the death of Supreme Leader Khomeini, as well as the withdrawal of the Soviet empire from Afghanistan, and finally, the implosion of the Soviet bloc in 1989, relations between Moscow and Tehran warmed up noticeably despite few disagreements (like sharing the resources of the Caspian Sea).[403]

Subsequently, Tehran's opening to Russia was followed by the visit of Iranian President Ali A. Rafsanjani to Moscow in 1989. During Putin's first term, Russia and Iran had challenging relations, especially during the presidency of nationalist president Ahmadinejad. This relationship continued during international talks on Iran's controversial nuclear program. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the complexity of their bilateral relations, Iran is an essential asset in the Russian regional strategy, especially when it came to jeopardizing US interests in the region; Iran was not a strategic asset only for Russia but for China in terms of fighting against American interests.

Unlike Russia, Iran has had good relations with China since ancient times. Since 1970 when they officially resumed their bilateral relationship, Beijing and Tehran maintained warm bilateral ties in several domains, including infrastructures, economic/trade and strategic or military.[404] The excellence of Sino-Iranian relations has been visible during sensitive periods or crises that Iran was going through. For example, unlike the foreign powers that supported Iraq during the war against Iran in 1980, China provided secret military support to Tehran by delivering weapons. Moreover, although China has supported adopting the Security Council's coercive resolutions against Iran over its nuclear program, it has refrained from implementing them, preferring to continue its trade relations with Iran. This is undoubtedly due to the strategic importance of Iran to China. Indeed, since 2013, China's main aim has been to achieve its vast one-road one belt geopolitical agenda connecting Central Asia, Europe and Africa. Consequently, because of its geostrategic position, Tehran plays a pivotal role in the Chinese plan.

Moreover, unlike Saudi Arabia, whose foreign policy is influenced by the United States, Iran conducts an independent foreign policy and manages its natural resources differently from its regional rivals. Consequently, China needs stable and reliable energy suppliers due to its huge energy needs, precisely 1.2 million daily barrels. In this

[403] KATZ N., Mark, ***Russia and Iran,*** Middle East Policy Council, Volume XIX, 2012 Fall N.3. Accessed from https://www.mepc.org/russia-and-iran on October 2, 2019.
[404] LIU Jun and WU Lei, **Key Issues in China-Iran relations,** Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic studies, 2010, 17 pages.

regard, Iran plays an instrumental role in *fueling the dragon's flame.*[405] For instance, China imported 7% of its oil needs from Iran in 2017.[406] But energy security is not the only reason Iran is a strategic partner for China. In fact, Iran also helps China to balance the US regional hegemony. Unlike its regional rivals, Iran has an acrimonious relationship with the US, which is a strategic guarantee for China's interest in the region. In other words, just like Russia, Iran is a strategic shield for China against Western and US regional hegemony in the Middle East.

Several lessons can be learned from this short history of the relations between Iran and the Great Powers. First, modern Iran and Ancient Persia share a common political culture of pride and leadership in the region. Second, irrespective of the form of the State, or the nature of the political regime, there have always been foreign interferences in Iran's domestic politics. Third and consequently, Iranian leaders negatively perceive their region, as they are convinced that they are surrounded by allies of their historical adversaries, especially the US. Therefore, the nuclear and ballistic programs (after the war against Iraq, as we will see later) ensure the country's independence and deter Iran's regional adversaries. Consequently, the next section will analyze the emergence of Iran's nuclear program with an emphasis on its origin, rationale and implications for the region.

[405] DOUGLAS K., John, et al: **Fuelling the Dragon's Flame: How China's Energy Demands Affect its Relationships in the Middle East,** presented to U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission In fulfilment of Contractual Obligations, September 14, 2006

[406] China oil imports. Data from **The Observatory of Economic Complexity**. Accessed on 20th of June 2020 from https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2019/sep/11/irans-increasing-reliance-china

4.2 SECTION II – THE EMERGENCE OF THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM: ORIGINS, RATIONALE, AND REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS.

Why did the Iranian authorities decide to build a nuclear program, and what implications does such a strategic asset have for the region? The objective of this section is to answer the previous questions substantially. Building and maintaining a nuclear program has human, political, and economic costs, and certainly strategic implications. Investigating these elements in the context of Iran will help us understand the importance of the nuclear program for Iran and explain its positions during negotiations with the US.

4.2.1 Iran's nuclear program: origins and rationale.

Ironically, Americans are the Godfathers of the Iranian nuclear program. Considering the significant risks of horizontal nuclear proliferation, but also in the context of the strategic rivalry with the USSR, US President Dwight Eisenhower adopted the "Atom for Peace" agenda. As Michelle Gaietta points out, "realizing that the United States had lost the scientific monopoly on this (nuclear) technology, Eisenhower attempted to shrink the predominant military connotation of atomic energy to revamp the image of the United States and strengthen its influence on the delicate balance of power of the Cold War."[407] The *Atom for peace* agenda was based on the idea that the US would share the nuclear secret with its allies. This nuclear cooperation was concretized by constructing civilian nuclear programs to prevent US allies from building endogenous nuclear programs and falling under Soviet influence.

Consequently, Iran, then an ally of the Americans in the Middle East, signed a nuclear cooperation agreement with the US in 1957. Under this agreement's framework, the Tehran Nuclear Research Centre hosted the Tehran Nuclear Reactor ten years later (1967) with a capacity of 5 megawatts. The Americans pledged to supply the reactor with fuel, while Iran committed to signing the Non-Proliferation Treaty, thus guaranteeing the exclusively civilian or peaceful nature of its nuclear program.[408] However, following several domestic and international factors, the Americans began to doubt the Iranian government's sincere intentions regarding its alleged peaceful use of nuclear energy. Among the external factors are the building of the Brazilian and Indian nuclear programs, while internal factors refer to the logistical capabilities of the Iranian nuclear program.

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[407] GAIETTA, Michele: **The trajectory of Iran's nuclear program,** New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, p.6

[408] REARDON, Robert: **Containing Iran: strategies for addressing the Iranian nuclear challenge, *Op. Cit.,*** p.10

As one of America's main allies in the region, with Israel, Iran under the Shah undoubtedly played a strategic role in shielding the expansion of communism in the Middle East. However, the Shah aspired to render his empire a more prominent actor in the international game, beyond the simple pawn it was in the American chessboard (regional prestige and syndrome of grandeur). In this regard, he envisioned endowing Iran with an energy potential which shed light on his secret ambition to produce nuclear weapons; Moreover, according to Shiam Bhatia, he had reportedly declared during an interview with a French magazine that Iran would *undoubtedly* have nuclear weapons and that will happen *sooner than it is believed.*[409] Although these remarks were later denied, the immense resources allocated by the Shah to carry out his pharaonic project to build thirty-three reactors fueled suspicion of a military nuclear program hidden behind an official civilian nuclear program. For instance, a 15-billion-dollar contract was signed between Iran and the United States for the construction of eight nuclear reactors which could produce 8000 MWe.[410]

In addition, an agreement had been signed with MIT to train Iranian experts. In terms of nuclear infrastructure, a contract of $4.3 billion had been signed between the Iranian Atomic Energy Agency and the German company Kraftwerk Union to construct two pressurized water reactors capable of supplying 1.196 MWe.[411] Regarding the Uranium supply, $700 million contracts were signed with Namibia and South Africa to deliver 600 tons of uranium.[412] However, George Quester argues that *beyond the reactors themselves, the Iranian government has announced an intention to invest in domestic plutonium reprocessing facilities, a move that has raised eyebrows abroad and brought some concerned questions from the United States government.*[413]

External factors, notably regional political and security dynamics, also explained American concerns regarding the Iranian nuclear program. The American government did fear that Iran would embark on a military nuclear program in response to regional military nuclear programs. Indeed, although the Brazilian nuclear program and the risks of a horizontal proliferation from the Argentine rival constituted credible sources of fear of a general proliferation dynamic, the atomic test carried out by India in 1974 aroused more vigilance in Washington regarding its "Atom for peace" agenda.

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[409] BHATIA, Shyam: **Nuclear rivals in the Middle East,** London, Routledge, 2017, p.6 (1st ed.)
[410] MUSTAFA, Kibaroglu, **Good for the Shah, banned for the Mullahs: The West and Iran's quest for nuclear power,** Middle East journal, Vol. 60, N.2, 2006, p.214
[411] ZAKIR AHMAD, Nazir, ***Aryamehr to Ayatollahs*** (Karachi: Royal Book Co., 1988), p 135. Cited by K. Sadjadpour and A. Vaez in SADJADPOUR Karim, VAEZ Ali: **Iran's nuclear odyssey, costs and risks,** Washington, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2013, p.5
[412] ALBRIGHT, David et al, **Is Iran running out of yellowcake?** Institute for Science and International Security, Feb. 11, 2009. Accessed on the 15th April 2020 at 16h44 from the website https://isis-online.org/uploads/isis- reports/documents/Iran_Yellowcake_11Feb2009.pdf
[413] QUESTER H., George, **The Shah and the bomb,** Policy Sciences, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1977, p. 22

According to Robert Reardon, "India's first nuclear test explosion in 1974 sparked reconsideration in Washington of nuclear export policies and greater scrutiny of foreign nuclear programs, including Iran's."[414] Similarly, George Quester argues that *the Indian move raises concern about proliferation to any threshold nations. [...] It raises concern about states geographically near India, because of the mutual fears and potential rivalries for influence. The combination of geographical proximity and material ability to pay for a bomb project, therefore, focuses attention directly on Iran.*[415] Notwithstanding the controversies over the real intentions of the Shah, the Islamic revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini had a profound impact on the development of the Iranian nuclear program.

The 1979 Iranian revolution profoundly influenced the development of the Iranian nuclear program. On the one hand, the new Iranian authorities perceived the nuclear program as the vestiges of the old regime; on the other hand, the precarious economic situation of post-revolution Iran did not rationally permit sustaining such an onerous project. As Farhad Rezai points out, "the provisional government of Prime Minister Bazargan felt that the economy faced too many pressures to allow for a costly and seemingly purposeless nuclear program."[416] However, the primary cause of the political disinterest in sustaining the nuclear program is undoubtedly the fatwa of Supreme Leader Khomeini. Ayatollah Khomeini considered that possessing nuclear weapons and, more broadly, weapons of mass destruction was not in line with the Islamic precepts. However, this vision of the Supreme Leader was not consensual in the Iranian political establishment; in fact, several influential decision-makers shared the opinion that Iran should acquire weapons of mass destruction, first to achieve the goal of exporting the ideals of the Islamic Revolution, but also to protect itself against potential regional adversaries. "Other core leaders, however, held diametrically opposed views. [...] Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti, second in command to Khomeini, was a keen advocate of weaponization. [...] Once in power, Beheshti was eager to restart the shuttered civilian project, a plan that Rafsanjani, whose relations with Beheshti were generally competitive, supported wholeheartedly," Farhad Rezai recalls.[417] Unfortunately, the Iraqi war had proven the weaponization camp right.

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[414] REARDON, Robert: **Containing Iran: strategies for addressing the Iranian nuclear challenge, *Op. Cit.,***
p.11
[415] QUESTER H., George, **The Shah and the bomb**, ***Op. Cit.***, pp. 22-23
[416] REZAI, Farhad: **Iran's nuclear program. A study in proliferation and rollback,** Cham, Springer, 2017, p.26
[417] REZAI, Farhad: **Iran's nuclear program. A study in proliferation and rollback, *Ibid.***

The Iran-Iraq war was a strategic turning point for Iran. When the war began in 1980, the new Iranian authorities were still focused on laying the foundations of the Islamic republic. As a result, Iran was relatively weak on many fronts, such as national defense. This was due to two main factors. First, the army's personnel inherited from the Shah lacked warrior experience, notwithstanding the sophisticated military weapons the Shah had equipped the army with between 1954 after the coup d'état against Mosaddeq (1953) and 1977. According to Ervan Abrahamian, "the military budget grew twelvefold, and its share of the annual budget went from 24 to 35 per cent. […] By 1975, the shah had the largest navy in the Persian Gulf, the largest air force in Western Asia, and the fifth largest army in the whole world. His arsenal included more than 1,000 modern tanks, 400 helicopters, 28 hovercraft, 100 long-range artillery pieces, 2,500 Maverick missiles, 173 F4 fighter planes."[418]

Despite these tremendous military capabilities in terms of equipment, the Iranian armed forces did not have a seasoned warlike experience. Furthermore, the balance of power on the battlefield clearly favored Saddam Hussein's troops, which had logistical support from the West and weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and ballistic weapons. Conversely, the Iranian defense forces did not have equivalent equipment, not only because of the arms embargo imposed by the Americans but also because of the Fatwa mentioned above by the supreme guide Khomeini. Pierre Razoux declares in this regard that "Iran did not have any ballistic missiles at its disposal and could only rely on its artillery and a few dozen Phantoms to strike back at Iraqi cities."[419] Based on alarming reports on the strategic imbalance on the battlefield, the Iranian Supreme Guide lifted his fatwa. Hence, he authorized the production of strategic weapons like ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction (chemical).

Iran's war against Iraq deeply impacted Tehran's collective consciousness. Indeed, bolstered by multifaceted Western support, particularly in intelligence and armaments, Saddam Hussein inflicted considerable human and material damage on a less-armed Iran. As Tytti Erästö stressed, "the role of ballistic missiles in Iran's national security was highlighted in the 1980s, when its cities were left defenseless against Scud missile and air attacks from Iraq under President Saddam Hussein."[420] More precisely, Farhad Rezai estimates that "the cost of war to the Iranians was enormous; some 222,085 dead,

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[418] ABRAHAMIAN, Ervand: **A history of modern Iran,** New York, Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp.124- 125

[419] RAZOUX, Pierre: **The Iran-Iraq war,** Cambridge, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2015, p.303

[420] ERÄSTÖ, Tytti, ***Time for Europe to put Iran's missile program in context,*** Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), October 30, 2017. Accessed on April 24, 2020 from the website https://www.sipri.org/commentary/topical-backgrounder/2017/time-europe-put-irans-missile-programme-context

320,000 wounded and 2 million left homeless by Scud missile attacks on cities."[421] This tactical weakness made Iran aware of the strategic importance of ballistic weapons, thus rekindling their interest in the continuation of the nuclear program temporarily suspended for the reasons mentioned above. Unfortunately, given American international pressure, few countries were willing to sell ballistic missiles to Iran; in fact, only Syria and Lebanon had agreed to deliver these missiles to Iran, notwithstanding their technological gap compared to the weapons possessed by Saddam Hussein's troops. Despite these efforts, Iran failed to fill the strategic deficit it had with Iraq. As a result, Iranian authorities learned two critical lessons from the war against Iraq that will influence Iran's strategic culture.

Iran's post-1979 strategic culture was deeply affected by the war against Iraq, especially because of the behavior of the great powers and the UN. While it is undeniable that any war inevitably leads to human casualties and environmental catastrophe, the impressive number of victims listed above was mainly due to the use of chemical weapons by Saddam Hussein. As Pierre Razoux argues, *Iraqi leaders would not hesitate to make massive use of chemical weapons to push back Iranian assault.*[422] It was a more traumatic experience for Iran as not only did several western governments support Iraq in the production of its chemical arsenal, but they turned a blind eye to the many victims who succumbed to the harmful gases of the chemical weapons used by Saddam's troops. Hence, an endogenous and/or autonomous ballistic program became vital for Iran. As Kamran Taremi argues in this regard, *the lesson the Iranian leadership drew from this war experience was that a strong retaliatory capability was vital if Iran were to be able to deter missile. […] From then on, establishing an indigenous ballistic missile industry became a top priority for the Islamic regime, as the clerical leadership came to perceive missiles in general as "the most important."*[423]

Another important lesson the Iranian authorities learned from the war against Iraq is the ambivalence of the international system and its major actors concerning respect for international treaties and conventions. Notwithstanding the taboo against the use of chemical weapons since WWI, notably with the Geneva Protocol of 1925, several Western and non-Western governments materially and technically supported Iraq in its chemical weapons production. According to Pierre Razoux, "Spain sold the Iraqi regime containers adapted for spreading chemical products, and Egypt sold it large quantities of empty shells. […] According to the accounts of former Iraqi generals, German, Belgian, Danish, Dutch, and even Lebanese companies provided chemical

[421] REZAI, Farhad: **Iran's nuclear program. A study in proliferation and rollback, *Op. Cit.,*** p.19
[422] RAZOUX, Pierre: **The Iran-Iraq war, *Op. Cit.,*** p.234
[423] TAREMI, Kamran, **Beyond the axis of evil: Ballistic missiles in Iran's military thinking,** Sage Publications, Security Dialogue, Vol. 36, N. 1, March 2005, p.98

substances essential to the realization of this clandestine program, notably for the development of neurotoxic agents."[424] The indifference of the United Nations to the overt use of chemical weapons by Saddam Hussein strengthened Iranian authorities' distrust and contempt for international law and the standards underlying it.

Consequently, they decided also to produce such weapons, which they rightly or wrongly considered the only credible shield capable of protecting Iran against any external attack. In this regard, President Ali Akbar Rafsanjani observed that: "with regard to chemical, bacteriological and radiological weapons training, it was clear during the war that these weapons are very decisive. It was also made clear that the moral teachings of the world are not very effective when war reaches a serious stage and the world does not respect its own resolutions and closes its eyes to the violations and all the aggressions which are committed in the battlefield."[425] Like the US, Iran's reaction to external threats is also driven by its strategic culture.

According to J. Matthew McInnis, Iran's strategic culture cannot be easily assessed for at least two main reasons: on the first hand, the absence of a philosophical, military legacy from the Persian Empire; on the other hand, the lack of academic interests in Iranian strategic studies from Western scholars.[426] Nevertheless, two main patterns can be identified as the main drivers of Iran's strategic culture: ideologies and strategic interests. Anthony Downs defines an ideology as *a verbal image of the good society and the chief means of constructing such a society.*[427] At the same time, Maaike Waarnar considers it to be *interrelated ideas (such as norms, values, perceptions, and meanings) that create, recreate, and sustain a socio-political order, while being recreated and sustained by this order*.[428] Both definitions highlight the representation of the ideal society.

In the specific case of Iran, the ideological aspects of the Iranian strategic culture were shaped by several factors, starting with its historical relations with foreign powers. Iran's history was characterized by constant foreign interference in Iran's domestic affairs, as we highlighted previously. From the Sassanid dynasty to the Pahlavi's, including the Qajar's, foreign Powers have always tried and, to some extent, successfully influenced the internal dynamics in Iran in a wide array of political and economic areas.

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[424] RAZOUX, Pierre: **The Iran-Iraq war, *Op. Cit.,*** p.298
[425] SEITZ C., Adam and CONDERSMAN H., Anthony: **Iranian Weapons of Mass Destruction: The birth of a regional nuclear arms race?,** California, Praeger, 2009, p.10
[426] MCINNIS J., Matthew: **Iran's strategic thinking origins and evolution,** American Enterprise Institute, May 2015, p.1
[427] Cited by MARTIN J., Levi: **What is ideology?,** Sociologia, Problemas e Práticas, 2015, N. 77, p.12
[428] WAARNAR, Maaike: **Iranian foreign policy during Ahmadinejad: Ideology and actions,** New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, pp.35-36

From the political perspective, for example, thanks to the support of British intelligence, the Americans masterminded the coup d'état, which toppled the government of the nationalist Prime Minister Mohamed Mossadegh in 1953. This was not the first time. Western powers mingled in Iranian internal affairs. Indeed, after paving the way for the rise of Reza Pahlavi (the father of Mohammed Reza), the British also played an instrumental role in his downfall.[429]

Furthermore, Iran has been involved in several wars against Russia, which ended up with Iran losing parts of its territory through humiliating peace agreements such as the treaties of Gulestan (1813) and Turkmenchay (1828). Regarding the former, Abbas Amanat argues that "Russia had left several articles of the treaty deliberately ambiguous as a pretext for making further territorial and concessional demands. (While the treaty of) Torkamanchay has often been deemed the most disastrous treaty in modern Iranian history."[430] From the economic perspective, British and Russian were granted advantageous concessions to exploit Iran's oil resources, as Daniel Yergin described.[431] Considering the spiritual and material legacy of such a great empire as Persia, all these foreign Powers' interventions in Iran's domestic affairs fostered a sense of great pride among modern Iranians and explained their firm rejection of international action belittling them.

Another shaping element of Iran's strategic culture is its diversity and probably contradicting philosophical legacies inherited throughout its history. Indeed, while the Persian culture can be rightly considered the primary identifying characteristic of modern Iran, other cultural identities also influence how Iranians view themselves and how they view the world and react to external pressures accordingly. One of the most important, if not the essential cultural identity which challenges the Persian one is the Shia Islamic identity of Iran. As Matthew J. McInnis declares in this regard, *the reconciliation of Persian nationalism to Islamic cultural and political pre-eminence after the Arab conquests has been a long, and perhaps still incomplete, process*.[432] Nonetheless, Shiism precepts undoubtedly play a strategic role in Iran's foreign policy. Although a large majority of Sunni countries surround Iran, it considers itself the leader of the Shiite minorities living in neighboring countries. For instance, this is one of the reasons why Iran supports many Shia para-military groups in Iraq and Syria. But more important in Iran's foreign policy is the ideal of martyrdom. Considering the sacrifice of Hussein, who adamantly fought against the troops of Yazid during the battle of Karbala,

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[429] BAKHASH, Shaul: **The fall of Reza Shah: The abdication, exile, and death of modern Iran's founder,** London, I.B. Tauris, 2021, 184 pages.
[430] AMANAT, Abbas: **Iran: A modern history,** London, Yale University Press, 2017, pp. 196 and 211. Consulted online
[431] YERGIN, Daniel: **The Prize: The epic quest for oil, money & power, *Op. Cit.***
[432] MCINNIS J., Matthew: **Iran's strategic thinking: origins and evolution, *Op. Cit.,*** p.4

Iranians have always tried to follow the example set by their hero. This notion of Martyrdom was demonstrated, for instance, in 1982 when Supreme Leader Khomeini rejected the cease-fire with Iraq, with his troops being emboldened by the slogan "war, war until victory."[433]

Regarding vital national interests, post-revolution Iranian leaders have set clear redlines that Iran considers as its vital interests. Although such elements can be described as objective interests emboldened by the revolution ideals, Iranian leaders sometimes surprisingly display a suicidal zeal that could be described as adventurism. This was the case, for example, with the rejection of the peace agreement offered during the Iran-Iraq war, as we previously mentioned. Nonetheless, irrespective of their loyalty to the revolutionary precepts or Persian nationalism, the regime's survival stands at the top of the priorities when addressing or challenging the external world. During the Iran-Iraq war, Ayatollah Khomeini bitterly accepted the cease-fire agreement when he realized the decreasing popular support for the war and the clear battlefield imbalance between his troops and Saddam's. A move he compared to drinking the cup of poison.

Ayatollah Khomeini later established the principle of Maslahat, which constitutes the core philosophical underpinning of the creation of the Council of Expediency. According to this principle, Iranian leaders should first and foremost consider the supreme interest of the regime when dealing with (external) threats, even if it means overlooking the five pillars of Islam. Michael Eisenstadt maintains that "in establishing this principle, Khomeini formalized the supremacy of *raison d'état* over the tenets of Islam as the precept guiding Iranian decision-making."[434] The observance of the Maslahat principle transpired in many actions or declarations of the Iranians later. For example, Supreme Leader Khamenei reportedly declared that he was eager to cooperate with the US (Great Satan) for the sake of Iran. Considering the Council of Expediency, many actors play an instrumental role in Iran's decision-making. We will emphasize the battle among Iran's domestic constituencies when we analyze the characteristics of its political system in the next section.

One of the main regional goals of Iran is to be not only the leader of the Shia communities but also a leading, if not the leading power in the region. This goal is mainly rooted in the Persian Empire origin of modern Iran. Being the inheritors of one of the greatest civilizations in the world has always nurtured a sense of prestige and grandeur among Iranians. Consequently, Iranians have a high esteem of themselves and

[433] TAKEYH, Ray, **The Iran-Iraq war: A reassessment**, Middle East Journal, 2010, Vol, 64, N.3, p.374
[434] EISENSTADT, Michael: **The strategic culture of the Islamic republic of Iran. Operational and policy implications,** MES Monographs, N.1, 2011, p.5

an exceptionalist perception of their role in regional affairs, and to some extent, in global affairs. Kamran Taremi describes this Iranian superiority complex: "Iran has a long history that goes back at least 3,000 years. This long history is rich in experiences that have exercised an important influence on the Iranian national psyche. These historical experiences are one of a glorious past. (…) Although Iran is no longer the major power it was in the past, Iranians still feel proud of this ancient glory and consider themselves superior to their neighbors."[435] Combined with its distrust of foreign powers, as we previously analyzed, the Persian syndrome fostered Iran's desire to be self-reliant in defense and security areas.[436] Yet, irrespective of their glorious past and the greatness of their ambitions, Iran's foreign policy goals cannot exceed their actual capabilities. Hence, Iran's regional policy is based on a network of allied States and proxies aimed at counter-balancing pro-Western regional allies.

The Islamic regime's survival stands at the top of the hierarchy of the drivers behind Iran's international behavior. This survival can be threatened both from inside and outside Iran. Hence, Iranian leaders rely on both military (IRGC) and economic strengths to prevent a regime collapse due to internal upheavals. Indeed, a stable economy is crucial for the regime's legitimacy and survival. Regarding the external threats, the IRGC (including the Quds forces) and several pro-Iran paramilitary groups oversee and address the external security challenges to the government. In addition, Iran has strong political ties with several States in the region like Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. A common denominator among those three States is the presence of pro-Shia governments, especially in Lebanon. While Iran has always had historical ties with some of them, like Syria, the Iran-Iraq bilateral relationship has seriously improved after the downfall of Saddam Hussein in the aftermath of the 2003 US military intervention. Concerning Lebanon, Iran's support for the Hezbollah organization stems from its will to maintain a deterrent force in the neighborhood of Israel. However, Iran's political ties with those States are not only driven by security imperatives since economic interests also constitute an essential driver behind Iran's bilateral relations with its regional allies. For example, its trade relations with Bagdad rose from $1.5 billion (2006) to $8 billion (2010),[437] while since 2013, Iran has provided Syria with three lines of credit for the import of fuel and other commodities, with a cumulative value of over $6.6 billion.[438]

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[435] TAREMI, Kamran, **Iranian perspectives on security in the Persian Gulf,** Iranian Studies, 2003, Vol. 36, N. 3, p.383

[436] TABATABAI, Ariane: **Nuclear decision-making in Iran: implications for US non-proliferation efforts,** New York, Columbia University CGEP, 2020, p.19

[437] VENETIS, Evangelos: **The rising power of Iran in the Middle East: forming an axis with Iraq, Syria and Lebanon,** Middle Eastern Studies Programme, working paper, N. 21, 2011, p.24

[438] HATAHET, Sinan: **Russia and Iran: economic influence in Syria,** Middle East and North Africa Programme, Chatam House, March 2019, p.6

The previously mentioned Iranian strategic interests are shaped by many factors, starting with its geographic location. The northern part of Iran is characterized by the Caspian Sea and a chain of mountains (Zagros and Alborz). These mountains are a double edge sword for Iran; thanks to the difficulties of access, these geographical characteristics constitute a natural shield for Iran, providing at the same time a deterrent capability against threats from the northern part of the country. However, they also foster a sense of isolation in Iran, especially considering the characteristics of the southern border of Iran. Unlike the north, Iran's security on its southern border is more delicate. Not only is Iran surrounded by pro-West neighbors, but the US is also keeping an active military presence in the Persian Gulf to guarantee a stable flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz, controlled by both Oman and Iran. Consequently, one of the main goals of Iran since 1979 has been to chase away hostile foreign presence from the region, especially the US.[439] But the geographical environment does not only shape Iran's interest in the area; it also plays a strategic role in Iran's way of war. As Aycan Özer Ayşe stresses, *ideas about war and strategy are deeply influenced by the physical and geographical environment one is placed in and molded. Because this environment shapes the culture, culture, in return, gives context to act within.*[440]

The presence of hostile neighbors in its southern border, combined with the unmatched military capabilities of the US, undoubtedly impacts Iran's military doctrine. Iran has a deterrence-oriented defensive military doctrine which, according to Michael Eisenstadt, is based upon four main pillars: first the reliance on proxies, second is the use of calibrated violence, third is an emphasis on the psychological, moral, and spiritual dimensions of conflict, and fourth, strategic patience.[441] Iran's preference for proxy warfare stems from its relative capabilities compared to the US's and its tendency to outsource or delegate warfare issues to its subordinates. Michael Eisenstadt confirms it when he declares that "for Tehran, war is a job for its Arab surrogates and not, to the extent possible, for its military. When Iran has wanted to strike out at its enemies, it has done so by commissioning or facilitating operations by others."[442]

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[439] MALONEY, Suzann, **The roots and evolution of Iran's regional strategy**, Atlantic Council, 2017, p.8

[440] AYCAN Ö. I., Ayşe, **Iranian strategic culture**, Ortadoğu Etütleri, Middle Eastern Studies, vol 8, n. 2, Dec.
2016, p.54

[441] EISENSTADT, Michael: **The strategic culture of the Islamic republic of Iran. Operational and policy implications, *Op. Cit.,*** p.8

[442] EISENSTADT, Michael: **The strategic culture of the Islamic republic of Iran. Operational and policy implications, *Op. Cit.,*** p.8

Regarding the calibrated use of violence, Iranian (military and political) leaders prefer a proportional use of violence when addressing internal and external security challenges. For instance, in 2009, when two Israeli warships (the Saar 5) were heading to the Persian Gulf through the Canal of Suez, two Iranian warships (frigate Alvand and the Khar) did the same but were heading toward the Eastern Mediterranean.[443] The spiritual dimension of the war in Iran's strategic culture is rooted in religious beliefs, especially the verses of the Quran which recommend *to prepare against them what you ˹believers˺ can of ˹military˺ power and cavalry to deter Allah's enemies and your enemies as well as other enemies unknown to you but known to Allah*.[444] Strategic patience refers to Tehran's preference for indirect confrontation and attrition warfare strategies. Iranians usually opt for long terms actions over short time aggressive ones. It is essential to highlight that despite its defensive approach and military doctrine, the recent regional upheavals led Iranians to act beyond their borders to defend their allies, as was the case with Syria. Suzanne Maloney maintains that those Iranian foreign interventions affected not only Tehran's core foreign policy underpinnings but also its defensive military doctrine.[445] What are the implications of the Iranian nuclear for the Middle East and the US?

4.2.2 The implications of the Iranian nuclear program for the Middle East and the United States.

The Middle East has always been a strategic region for the United States during and after the Cold War. The Americans mainly maintain a network of strategic alliances with the regional States to protect their interests. Whether the goal was to limit the expansion of communism during the Cold War or to confront emerging security challenges, this network of alliances has always occupied an important place in the American regional security strategy. Historically, the United States has always had two primary interests: the security of Israel and free access to the region's tremendous energy reserves. These two main interests constitute the central nucleus that gravitates all the other regional interests of the United States in the Middle East. In other words, American policymakers perceive and/or define the nature of threats to their regional strategic interests primarily through the lens of Israeli and energy. Regarding Israel in particular, the security and survival of the Jewish State in a deleterious and bellicose regional environment has always been a top priority of the US since Israel's independence in 1948. According to several researchers, this America's attention vis-à-

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[443] **Israeli warships' use of Suez Canal causes a stir.** Accessed from the website https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2009-jul-24-fg-suez-warships24-story.html and **Egypt allows Iranian warships 'can use Suez Canal'** accessed from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-12493614 on the 30th of October 2020.

[444] **Surah Al Anfal Ayat 60**. Accessed from https://quran.com/8/60 on the 31st of October 2020. This verse even constitutes the motto of the IRG.

[445] MALONEY, Suzann, **The roots and evolution of Iran's regional strategy, *Op. Cit.,*** p.11

vis Israel is rooted firstly in the remorse of Americans and Westerners for their inability to prevent the Jewish holocaust during the Nazi era.[446]

Beyond this US emotion-driven foreign policy toward Israel, the "special partnership" between Washington and Tel Aviv can also be explained by three main factors, according to Eran Lerman. These include the commonality of interests, the affinity of values, and the impact of politics.[447] Common interests refer to regional adversaries who threatened American and Israeli interests. The main objective was initially to contain the spreading of communism and the Soviet support to leaders such as Nasser or even the Arab countries during the war of attrition between 1968 and 1970. Concerning the affinities of values, the United States share the same spiritual and biblical values generally transposed in the political life of each of these states. Unlike other states in the region, Israel is the only state in the Middle East with a homogeneity of spiritual values with the United States, such as the precepts of the Jewish faith. As Eran Lerman puts it, "today, this powerful aspect of affinity with Israel - sometimes translated into whole-hearted support for full control of the Jewish people's ancestral homeland - is a cornerstone of dispensational belief for many millions of Americans."[448]

The third root, the impact of politics, refers primarily to lobby groups' influence on US foreign policy. Among them, AIPAC is undoubtedly the most influential. Its lobby is mainly effective in the US Congress and the White House, especially during election campaigns. According to John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, *AIPAC's success is due in large part to its ability to reward legislators and congressional candidates who support its agenda and to punish those who do not, based mainly on its capacity to influence campaign contributions. Money is critical to U.S. elections, which have become increasingly expensive to win, and AIPAC makes sure that its friends get financial support so long as they do not stray from AIPAC's line*. [449]

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[446] SNOW M., Donald: **The Middle East, oil, and the U.S. national security policy: Intractable conflicts, impossible solutions,** Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016, p.133

[447] LERMAN, Eran: **The three roots of the special relationship: What makes U.S.-Israeli ties so strong?,** Sino- Israel Global Network and Academic Leadership (SIGNAL), 2017, p.1. Accessed from http://sino-israel.org/bb- roots-us-israel/ on the 14th of June 2020.

[448] LERMAN, Eran: **The three roots of the special relationship: What makes U.S.-Israeli ties so strong?, *Ibid,*** p.14

[449] MEARSHEIMER John and WALT Stephen: **The Israel lobby and US foreign policy,** London, Penguin Books, 2008, p.154. Janice Terry explained, for example, how pro-Israel interests groups lobbied many key US decision-makers to undermine the Arab-led boycott campaign against Jewish products after the establishment of the Jewish State in 1951. Read TERRY J., Janice: **U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. The Role of lobbies and special interest groups,** London, Pluto Press, 2005, p.93

The intensity of bilateral relations between the United States and Israel is visible at the political, economic, and military levels. Politically, the United States has always strongly supported the State of Israel, notably at the UN, where the US has never hesitated to veto any UN resolution hostile to the interests of the Jewish state. In addition, even during the Arab Israeli wars, the Americans always displayed a neutral position that hardly obscured their tacit support for Israel. This American ambivalence was an essential source of tension between the Gulf monarchies and the US. Toby Craig Jones confirms it in these terms, "historically, the United States struggled to balance its support for Israel with its support for the region's oil producers, who had long considered the Israel-friendly foreign policy of the United States as an irritant."[450] Economically, Israel has received significant financial support from the US government since the independence of the Jewish State. For example, Tel Aviv received substantial budgetary support from Washington, estimated at $5.5 billion between 1948 and 1980.[451] Even though American economic support to Israel has fluctuated over the decades, the Jewish state remains the first recipient of US international aid, estimated at $34,265,675 million between 1946 and 2016.[452] However, the bilateral relationship between the United States and Israel is more intense at the military level.

Israel's undeniable military superiority in the Middle East is mainly due to the assistance of the United States. US military assistance to Israel is threefold: financial, logistical, and intelligence. Regarding the financial aspect, it usually takes the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), where the US allocates a budgetary envelope to improve Israel's economic and defense capacities. The first American MoU in favor of Israel, worth $26.7 billion, including $21.3 billion for military spending, was signed during the presidency of Bill Clinton for a decade (1999-2008).[453] The two MoUs were signed during the presidencies of Bush and Obama for an amount estimated at $30 billion (2009-2018) and $38 billion (2019-2028).

Regarding logistics, Israel is the first recipient of the US military technological prowess, allowing it to maintain an unmatched strategic edge over its potential regional adversaries. In this regard, Israel could access state-of-the-art military equipment in supersonic aircraft or patriotic missiles.[454] However, the Israeli government receives

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[450] JONES C., Toby: **America, Oil, and War in the Middle East,** Oxford University Press, The Journal of American History, Vol. 99, No. 1, 2012, p.211

[451] TILLMAN P., Seth: **The United States in the Middle East. Interests and obstacles,** Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1982, p.53

[452] SHARP M., Jeremy: **U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel,** Congressional Research Service Report, April 10, 2018, p.1

[453] SHARP M., Jeremy: **U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel,** ***Ibid,*** p.5

[454] COHEN A., Stuart, ***Light and shadows in US-Israeli military ties, 1948–2010*** in FREEDMAN O., Robert (Ed): **Israel and the United States. Six decades of US-Israeli relations,** Colorado, Westview Press, 2012, p.145

not only entirely American-made equipment but also participates in manufacturing certain strategic weapons such as the F-35 aircraft or the Iron Dome defense military system. The second strategic interest of the US in the Middle East is free access to abundant regional energy resources, notably petroleum.

Although oil is present on the American continent, its strategic role increased considerably in international affairs after its discovery in the 19th century in the Persian Gulf. Long before the United States' interest in the Middle East, oil was the main contention between the major Powers at that time: the Russians and the British. Daniel Yergin describes this *Great Game* in these terms: "the rivalry between Britain and Russia turned Persia into a major issue in Great Power diplomacy. […] The two great powers wrangled for influence over Persia through (oil) concessions and loans and other tools of economic diplomacy."[455] According to Daniel Byman and Sara Moller, oil represents the second strategic interest of the United States in the Middle East and perhaps the most constant and the most important.[456] Indeed, the strategic rivalry with the Soviet adversary was not limited to the military plan with an arms race or military alliances like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or the Warsaw Pact. The economic sector also played a decisive role in the strategic competition between the former two giants. Hence, The US needed abundant and easily accessible energy resources. In this regard, Yakub Halab argues that "[The US] needed access to oil in friendly countries that could and were ready to increase their production within a short period. The US also understood that controlling these resources was a source of power through which it could claim world leadership."[457]

To guarantee privileged access to these energy resources, the US formed a network of "allies" constituted of the oil monarchies of the Persian Gulf. Initially, this network of "allies" revolved mainly around pre-1979 Iran and Saudi Arabia, which together formed the "twin pillars" of the American regional foreign policy at that time. Since the 1979 Iranian Revolution, South Arabia has been the United States' leading petro-monarchy partner. This status cannot be explained only by the fact that Riyadh remained the only pillar between the two previously mentioned, but also thanks to the McQuincy agreements signed on February 14, 1945, between then President Franklin D. Roosevelt and then King Abdelaziz ibn Saoud. Riyadh agreed to sell oil at a lower cost to the United States in return for Washington's protection of the Saud regime.

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[455] YERGIN, Daniel: **The Prize: The Epic quest for oil, money & power,** ***Op. Cit.,*** p.136
[456] BYMAN Daniel and MOLLER B. Sara, ***The United States and the Middle East: interests, risks, and costs*** in SURI Jeremi and VALENTINO Benjamin, **Sustainable security: Rethinking American national security Strategy,** The Tobin project, New York, The Oxford University Press, 2016, 34 pages.
[457] HALABI, Yakub: **US foreign policy in the Middle East: From crises to change,** Farnham, Ashgate, 2009, p.30

Both States have close relations in many areas, mainly in defense and security. In this regard, Saudi Arabia is the leading purchaser of American arms, with many contracts estimated at $112 billion between 2013 and 2017.[458] The United Arab Emirates is the second largest purchaser of American weapons among the Gulf's oil monarchies, with an import volume of American weapons estimated at 6.7% between 2014 and 2018.[459] In addition, the US also has an impressive number of military bases in the region, notably in Qatar (Al Udeid Air Base), Kuwait (Ali Al Salem Air Base) and even in Bahrain (Shaikh Isa Air Base). Paradoxically, the Americans do not have military bases in Saudi Arabia or Israel, which does not alter their commitment to protecting their regional allies, as evidenced by the military exercises frequently organized to counter any regional threats, mainly the Iranians.[460]

Post-1979 Iran poses a strategic threat to American interests in the Middle East. Western countries, mainly the US, were first worried about the Iranian authorities' desire to export the revolutionary ideals that brought down Shah Pahlavi. Farhad Rezai describes President Ronald Reagan's firmness towards the Iranian regime in these terms: "when Ronald Reagan came to power in 1981, he made it abundantly clear that Washington would not tolerate revolutionary adventurism against Saudi Arabia and other American allies in the Gulf. To increase the "cost of doing business" for the regime, the White House enacted a series of sanctions in Iran starting in 1979."[461] However, as we will see later, Iran did not have the means of its policy from economic and military perspectives. Nonetheless, Tehran also had credible leverages that could harm American interests in the region.

As previously noted, free and secured access to oil is a vital issue for the US, as President Carter pointed out in his State of the Union address in January 1980. Consequently, Tehran can impact the global oil flow trade by closing the Strait of Hormuz, through which 21% of world oil flows.[462] There is also the network of Iranian-funded "terrorist" militias in Iraq and Lebanon. The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East undoubtedly represents the greatest Iranian threat to American interests in the region.

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458 VITTORI, Jodi, **American weapons in the wrong hands,** Carnegie Endowment for international peace, 19 February, 2019. Accessed from https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/02/19/american-weapons-in-wrong-hands- pub-78408 on 12th of May 2020.

459 WEZEMAN D., Pieter et al: **Trends in international arms transfers–2018,** SIPRI, March 2019, p.2. Accessed from https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2019-03/fs_1903_at_2018.pdf on 12th of May 2020.

460 BLECHMAN Barry et al: **Engagement, coercion, and Iran's nuclear challenge**, Report of a Joint Study Group on US–Iran Policy, Washington, USIP, The Stimson Center, 2010, p.48

461 REZAI, Farhad: **Iran's nuclear program. A study in proliferation and rollback,** New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, p.17

462 Global oil flow through the Strait of Hormuz. **Data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration and ClipperData, Inc**. Accessed on the 12th of May 2020 from the link https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=39932.

Indeed, the ideological rivalry between Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shiite Iran could encourage several states, including Saudi Arabia, to acquire nuclear weapons. Ray Moseley shares this point when he argues that "members of the Saudi leadership, for example, have already suggested that they would pursue a nuclear capability should Iran acquire weapons."[463] Irrespective of the likelihood of their behavior, the reaction of the US and Iran is driven by their strategic culture as we will see later. But the following section will first analyze the characteristics of the Iranian political system.

4.3 SECTION III- THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE IRANIAN DECISION-MAKING SYSTEM.

Following the analysis of the importance and rationale of the nuclear program for the Iranian authorities and its implications for the region in general and the US in particular, we will dwell on the characteristics of the Iranian political system. This will help us to understand the power distribution within Iran's polity and identify the key stakeholders regarding the nuclear program, thus revealing the actors who could be subject to the coercive measures adopted by the US.

Considering its different philosophical identities inherited (Persian, Arab) throughout its history till today, Iran's political system and decision-making process are logically very complex. While the secular Persian institutions are still present in modern times, they are now coupled with post-revolution institutions, which not only play the same role but also have an overseeing function over them. For example, the Council of the Guardians is the Iranian post-revolution parliament whose primary function is to oversee the activities of the *Majles* (the Iranian secular parliament) and watch over the conformity of their decisions with the Islamic law and Constitution. Regarding the national defense sector, Iran has two armies: the regular army or *Artesh* and the Revolutionary Guard, whose primary function is to defend the Islamic Republic against internal and external existential threats. Consequently, there is always an overlap among those institutions, making it hard to unveil the interplay among them when analyzing the decision-making in Iran. It is essential to highlight that despite those non-democratic institutions, the Iran political system is very dynamic, with competing factions battling for control of key power centers in Iran.[464]

However, the Supreme Guide is undoubtedly the most prominent symbol of the Post-1979 Iranian political system. He is the ultimate decision-maker in Iran; no issue can be

[463] Ray Moseley, cited in REARDON J., Robert: **Containing Iran: Strategies for addressing the Iranian nuclear challenge,** California, RAND, 2012, p.4

[464] Read SEIFZADEH S., Hossein, **The landscape of factional politics and its future in Iran**, Middle East Journal, Winter 2003, Vol. 57, N.1, 19 pages.

discussed, or no strategic decisions made without his consent. Ariane Tabatabai argues that *the supreme leader's veto power grants him the ability to remove any item he does not wish to see executed from the deliberation's agenda*.[465] Yet, being the ultimate decision-maker does not make the Supreme Guide the sole decision-maker. The prominent role of the Supreme Guide has misled certain observers into thinking he was ruling the country autocratically, without any institutional constraint. This a view that Ariane Tabatabai challenges as she declares: "far from a top-down exercise by a single individual, Iran's decision-making process is, in fact, the outcome of intense feedback loops within and between different power centers."[466] Among those power centers are the *Majles*, Arm forces, the President and the Iranian Atomic Energy Organization (IAEO) and several other actors with more or less power in the process. As described in the table below, the inputs of those actors are channeled through the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC). Yet, irrespective of their perceptions regarding their divergent view regarding an issue, there is a consensus on Iran's core interests. After analyzing the features of the Iranian political system, we will focus on the coercive dynamics between Iran and the Great Powers. The previous information clearly demonstrate that Iran's political regime falls in the *compromise-hybrid* category (Etel Solingen). This means that one would expect the Iranian authorities to send mixed nuclear signals, navigating between proliferation and non-proliferation.

[465] TABATABAI, Ariane: **Nuclear decision-making in Iran: Implications for US non-proliferation efforts,**
Op. Cit., p.23
[466] TABATABAI, Ariane: **Nuclear decision-making in Iran: Implications for US non-proliferation efforts,**
Op. Cit., p.23

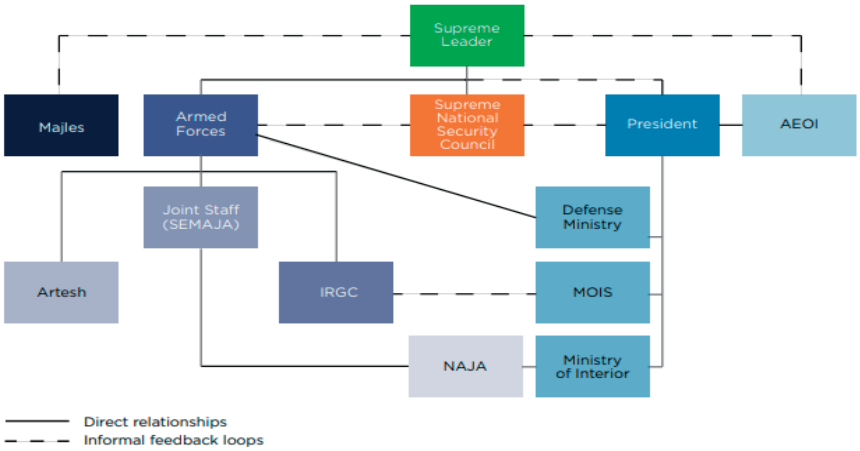

Figure 5: Structure of Iran's nuclear decision-making. [467]

[467] TABATABAI, Ariane: **Nuclear decision-making in Iran: Implications for US non-proliferation efforts,**
Ibid., p.24

4.4 SECTION IV- THE COERCIVE DYNAMICS BETWEEN THE US AND IRAN.

As previously mentioned, this section will deeply analyze the coercive dynamics between Washington and Tehran. This will be done against the backdrop of our hypotheses. In other words, when addressing the Iranian nuclear challenge, did the US coercive strategies exploit the Iran's weaknesses? Did the US demonstrate a motivation to have a sustained campaign to compel Iran to reverse its nuclear policy? Also, were these coercive strategies and threats credible, proportionate and reciprocal to the Iranian response? In essence, **how the Iran's decision to comply or resist the US request relates to the political and economic effects of the Washington's coercive diplomacy**. Additionally, the chapter shall examine **how Washington's escalation's tactics may have influenced Tehran's ultimate decision regarding the coercer's demands**.

Considering our theoretical lens (neoclassical realism), we will highlight the transmitting-belt role played by the intervening variables between the independent variable (systemic pressures/international demands) and the dependent variable (foreign policy). In other words, we will demonstrate how the perceptions of the Iranian leaders, the strategic culture of the country, the nature of the regime, and the configuration of the domestic institutions or domestic balance of power among the institutions and the State-society relations shaped the nature of the nuclear responses of Iran to the coercive demands of the US. This will enable us to emphasize the relevance of the four ingredients of an effective coercive strategy in the nuclear realm: the display by the coercer of strategic empathy towards its target, the formulation of clear and acceptable demands to the target, the display by the coercer of a higher resolve than the target to achieve his/her objective, and the offer of credible incentives to the target if the target complies.

Following our structured-focused comparative methodology approach, our research design will be based on the following questions: what were the objectives pursued by the US when implementing its coercive policies against Iran? Which coercive strategies were adopted to achieve these objectives? What were the expected outcomes of the US after implementing its coercive strategies? What were the actual results of the coercive dynamics, and why such outcomes? In the case of Iran, under the lead of the US, other Great Powers resorted to different coercive instruments to compel Iran to comply with their demand. Those coercive instruments encompassed economic, military and political instruments. This sub-section is divided into key time frames which characterized the (coercive) Iranian nuclear dynamics. This will enable us to highlight and account for the set of events which progressively led to the outcome of the coercive

nuclear dynamics between the US and Iran during the time scope we previously specified. However, it is essential to highlight that before those sanctions were imposed upon Iran, three European countries – France, Germany and Great Britain – unsuccessfully attempted to solve the Iranian nuclear issue through traditional diplomacy. But before dwelling on the nuclear diplomacy between Iran and the Europeans (A) and the E3+3 group[468] (B), we will first analyze the foreign policy of the US and the Iranian presidents, George Bush and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

4.4.1 George Bush's foreign policy: beliefs and actions.

George W. Bush was the 43rd US president, a position he assumed from the 20th of January 2001 till the 20th of January 2009. Though he had inherited a relatively stable international system from his predecessor Bill Clinton, George Bush's foreign policy tremendously impacted international affairs during and after his mandate. He differed not only from Bill Clinton's approach in his actions but also in his beliefs. But before stressing his actions at the international level, we will first analyze his views regarding the international system and America's role in global politics. George Bush had a superficial knowledge of the international system and the main factors shaping its dynamics. This ignorance of international affairs was not due only to his business affairs background but also to a personal disinterest in the topic. As Ronald E. Powaski put it, "he was surprisingly uninterested in the broader world around him. In college, he virtually ignored the war in Vietnam - until he realized that he could be drafted and sent there once his college deferment ended. Bush also admitted that he is disinclined to think about complex subjects."[469] Nevertheless, George Bush had precise and clear philosophical and political ideas about the role of the US in global affairs, outlined in his doctrine.

According to Robert Jervis, Georges Bush's doctrine was based on four key pillars: (first) a strong belief in the importance of a State's domestic regime in determining its foreign policy and the related judgment that this is an opportune time to transform international politics; (second), the perception of significant threats that can be defeated only by new and vigorous policies, most notably by preventive war; (third,) a willingness to act unilaterally when necessary (fourth) an overriding sense that peace and stability require the United States to exert its primacy in world politics.[470] While those principles were similar to Ronald Reagan's, the first years of George Bush's

[468] **The E3+3 group** refers to the three Europeans States (France, Germany and the UK) which together with China, Russia and the US negotiated with Iran on its controversial nuclear program.
[469] POWASKI E., Ronald: **Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy from George H. W. Bush to Donald Trump,** Cham, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, p.106
[470] JERVIS, Robert, **Understanding the Bush doctrine**, The Academy of Political Science, Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 118, N.3, 2003, p.365

foreign policy were mainly peaceful and stable, following the precepts of James Monroe's doctrine. Consequently, following his interpretation of "American internationalism," President Bush was interested in limiting as much as possible the US involvement in multilateral organizations and consolidating the international position of the US by deepening its relationship with its allies in key regions of the world.[471]

However, the 9/11 terrorist attack perpetrated by the Al-Qaida organization dramatically reshaped George Bush's perception of the international role of the US. Emboldened by the new Neo-conservative generation, George Bush embarked on a campaign to impose American values and thwart threats in the regions considered to be the breeding grounds of terrorism. Seyom Brown described it in these terms: "the shock of 9/11 provided just the opening the neoconservatives had been seeking - a responsiveness by the president and his professedly realist Vice President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and National Security Advisor to the assertive international agenda the neoconservatives had been urging on their bosses."[472]

Consequently, driven by the evangelical beliefs of the neoconservatives, the foreign policy of the Bush administration after the 9/11 events were based on the core opposition between American liberal values that needed to be exported and non-liberal values which George Bush considered to be the main threats to the international peace and security. Logically, George Bush progressively shared the opinion that the regime's nature played a strategic role in the State's foreign policy, especially those challenging the US-led international order. Hence, toppling the regimes that implemented a defiant foreign policy vis-à-vis the US and the liberal values, it stood for became the core precept to promote international peace and security in the White House. It is important to highlight that the influence of the neoconservative beliefs in shaping US foreign policy did not start with the Bush administration. For instance, the neoconservatives were very active during the Cold War era and played a strategic role in torpedoing several initiatives of rapprochement between the US and the USSR.[473] Yet, this Manichean approach to international relations started with clearly identifying the states that supported terrorism. Indeed, during his famous speech on the State of the Union in 2002, George Bush identified three States: Iran, Iraq and North Korea, as the

[471] MCCORMICK M., James, ***The foreign policy of the Bush administration: terrorism and the promotion of democracy*** in SCHIER E., Steven: **Ambition and division: legacies of the George W. Bush presidency,** Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009, p.242

[472] BROWN, Seyom: **Faces of power: constancy and change in United States foreign policy from Truman to Obama,** New York, Columbia University Press, 2015, p.610 (3rd ed.)

[473] BROWN, Seyom**: Faces of power: constancy and change in United States foreign policy from Truman to Obama, *Ibid.,*** p.611

members of the *axis of evil* that posed the greatest threat to the liberal world through their *terrorist* activities.[474]

Subsequently, the National Security Strategy (NSS) released a few months later was very informative regarding the means the US would rely upon to confront its new challenges. "We must be prepared to stop rogue states and their terrorist clients before they are able to threaten or use weapons of mass destruction against the United States and our allies and friends."[475] These words undeniably reflected the new international perception of George Bush, who had clearly expressed his readiness to respect its military tradition to act pre-emptively and for legitimate purposes only. He added that "the purpose of our actions will always be to eliminate a specific threat to the United States or our allies and friends. The reasons for our actions will be clear, the force measured, and the cause just."[476]

Despite those guarantees, many experts feared that there would be a shift in the US military doctrine, with the Americans striking preventively, as would be the case with Iraq later. Although he had personal reasons to target Saddam's Iraq first, George Bush was convinced by his close aid to start his *war on terror* with Afghanistan first. This choice can be explained mainly because the 9/11 attacks had been perpetrated by terrorist groups based in Afghanistan. After the Taliban-ruled government refused to hand over Al-Qaida members, Washington launched a war against Kabul, and three months later, the Taliban regime was toppled. The next target was Saddam Hussein, with whom George Bush had scores to settle.

The 9/11 events gave George Bush a windfall to physically get rid of Saddam Hussein and topple his regime. Indeed, Saddam Hussein fomented an assassination against George H. Bush (the father) during an official visit to Kuwait in 1993. Even though the Clinton administration had taken retaliatory measures for the plot against his predecessor, George Bush still had a grudge against the Iraqi leader. Ronald Powaski confirms it in these terms, "Bush believed the intelligence officials who told him afterwards that Hussein had planned to murder not just his father, but also his mother, his wife, and his two youngest brothers, Neil and Marvin. According to family intimates, the Bushes felt they were not safe as long as Hussein remained in power."[477] Saddam

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[474] **George Bush Address on the State of the Union** on January 29, 2002. Accessed on 9th of September 2020 from https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html.

[475] **The National Security Strategy of the United States of America**, 2002, p.14. Accessed from https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/63562.pdf on the 9th of September 2020.

[476] **The National Security Strategy of the United States of America**, 2002, ***Ibid.***, pp.14-16.

[477] POWASKI E., Ronald: **Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy from George H. W. Bush to Donald Trump, *Op. Cit.,*** pp.110-111

Hussein was also a source of concern for the United Nations (UN) and the Great Powers, especially the US.

Regarding the US, Iraq's troops invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990, to seize the tremendous oil resources of this wealthy emirate of the Arabian Peninsula. This invasion was as brisk as the reaction of the Great Powers. Indeed, the UNSC immediately ordered the withdrawal of Saddam Hussein's forces (Res. 660) and imposed worldwide economic (financial and trade sanctions) on Iraq. Saddam Hussein's refusal to comply with the demands of the SC led the latter to adopt additional Resolutions to compel him to retreat from the invaded territories. Resolution 661, for instance, called upon other States not "to import into their territories of all commodities and products originating in Iraq or Kuwait exported there from after the date of the present resolution and not to make available to the Government of Iraq, or to any commercial, industrial or public utility undertaking in Iraq or Kuwait, any funds or any other financial or economic resources."[478] Despite the negative impact of those economic sanctions from the humanitarian perspective, the US launched a military operation, *Desert Storm*, under UN Resolution 678, which called upon Member States to recourse to "all necessary means to uphold and implement Resolution 660 (1990) and all subsequent relevant resolutions, and to restore international peace and security in the region."[479]

Already facing enormous economic and military pressures, Saddam Hussein first agreed to a UN mission to monitor its controversial nuclear program concerning his alleged Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) program. However, after the end of the military intervention, with Iraq being freed from some of the devastating sanctions it faced, Saddam Hussein repelled the UN inspection team. These actions seriously increased the suspicions of the Great Powers and added an extra layer to Bush's argument about the necessity of toppling Saddam's regime.[480] However, despite Saddam Hussein's controversial actions, no clear and objective evidence of WMD had been found in Iraq. Indeed, considering the imminence of the US military invasion and the faith of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, Saddam backtracked and welcomed a UN inspection team again to assess the credibility of his alleged WMD program. Unlike George Bush's declaration, it was clearly established that there was "no evidence or plausible indication of the revival of a nuclear weapons program in Iraq."[481]

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[478] **UNSC Resolution 661** adopted on August 6, 1990. Accessed on the 13th of September 2020 from http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/661 .

[479] **UNSC Resolution 678** adopted on November 29, 1990. Accessed on the 13th of September 2020 from http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/678 .

[480] COLLINS J., Joseph: **Choosing war: the decision to invade Iraq and its aftermath,** Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University Press, Occasional Paper 5, April 2008, p.4

[481] KAUFMANN, Chaim, ***Threat inflation and the failure of the market place of ideas: the selling of the Iraq war,*** cited by RECORD, Jeffrey, **Why the Bush administration invaded Iraq: making strategy after 9/11,** Strategic Studies Quarterly, 2008, Vol. 2, N. 2, p.69

Nonetheless, George Bush's hankering to eliminate Saddam Hussein led him to bypass the UN recommendation and implement his agenda. Consequently, Operation *Iraqi Freedom* was launched on March 20, 2003, and less than two months later, Bagdad fell with Saddam's abscond. However, George Bush was not the only president driven by a neo-conservatism approach to foreign policy; Iran's sixth president, Ahmadinejad, also had a very ideologically driven understanding of Iran's international role.

4.4.2 Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's foreign policy: beliefs and actions.

The political and economic context in Iran in 2005 was characterized by widespread solid criticism of the ruling Mullahs, symbolized by the richness of former President Rafsanjani.[482] Emboldened by the Revolutionary's ideals of social justice and equity, Tehran's then Mayor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad capitalized on the political room offered by the aforementioned social context and was ultimately elected President. Conversely to the prediction of many observers, Ahmadinejad developed a very assertive foreign policy once in office. Maaike Waarnar maintains that *during Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's presidency, this ideological context was characterized by a revival of revolutionary discourse, with "change" as a central theme*.[483]

Ahmadinejad wanted a change in Iran's foreign policy both at the regional and the global level. Concerning the former, his main goal was to embellish Iran's neighbors' perception of the country, especially after its international reputation had been tarnished by concerns over Tehran's controversial nuclear program and its perceived negative role in critical regional issues like the Palestine-Israeli conflict. Consequently, Iran embarked on a soft power campaign which started with the visits in 2006 of high-ranked officials in neighboring countries: for example, then foreign affairs minister Manoucher Mokkati visited Bahrain, Oman and Qatar; in addition, president Ahmadinejad visited Kuwait while Ali Larijani travelled to Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Egypt.[484] However, all those diplomatic initiatives were unsuccessful, as many countries, including Saudi Arabia, remained very sceptical regarding Iran's true intentions.

Despite its neutral foreign policy principle of "neither East nor West," Iran's historical relationship with foreign powers is more intense with Eastern powers like Russia and China, compared to Western powers like Germany or France. Considering this historical trend, deepening Tehran's bilateral relationship with Moscow and Pekin was an

[482] REZAI, Farhad: **Iran's nuclear program. A study in proliferation and rollback, *Op. Cit.,*** p.119
[483] WAARNAR, Maaike: **Iranian foreign policy during Ahmadinejad: ideology and actions, *Op. Cit.,*** p.81
[484] WAARNAR, Maaike: **Iranian foreign policy during Ahmadinejad: ideology and actions, *Ibid.,*** p.115

essential goal of Ahmadinejad. Concerning Russia, a key driver behind Tehran-Moscow bilateral relationship is their shared animosity toward Washington. Russia and Iran being two of the most significant global natural energy producers, the new Iranian leadership attempted to create a Russian/Iranian version of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to counterbalance the US-led energy international order. But Russia had a more cautious approach to Iran's project. Mark Katz describes it in these terms: "Moscow's response, though, has been ambiguous -- calling for some form of coordination among gas producers on the one hand, but not to the extent that OPEC regulates its members on the other."[485]

As we will see later, Russia and Iran also had bones of contention in other issues like nuclear, especially regarding Moscow's support for UNSC Resolutions which imposed sanctions upon Iran. Concerning China, Ahmadinejad also deepened Tehran's bilateral relationship with Pekin, especially in the military area. According to Ehsan Razani and Nor Azizan Bin Idris, China exported *$470 million* in arms to Tehran between 2005 and 2012; that means an average of *$67.1 million/per year*.[486] However, if there was an area, President Ahmadinejad adamantly criticized and resented, it was the US-led global system.

According to Maaike Waarnar, "the worldview communicated by Iran's leaders during Ahmadinejad's presidency was one that draws on the historical experiences, primarily the experiences with what has been perceived as a meddling West, and the continuous attempts by Western powers to undermine the interest of the Iranian people."[487] This means that the Iranian president had a very sceptical perception of global politics, and it will be reflected in his answer to the US coercive nuclear demands, as we will analyze later. Consequently, based on the tumultuous history of Iran, combined with his revolutionary beliefs, Ahmadinejad's foreign policy was mainly rooted in a clear distinction between two conflicting camps which stood for two opposing visions of the world. Hossein Karimifard described it in these terms: "during Ahmadinejad's presidency, the desire to otherness, being different from others, was cumulatively increased. (...) Extreme otherness means to create and make two separate poles by drawing boundaries which oppose these poles."[488] The forces of the 'Good' were incarnated by the oppressed nations suffering under the yoke of the forces of the 'Evil'

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[485] KATZ, Mark, **Russian-Iranian relations in the Ahmadinejad era**, Middle East Journal, Spring, 2008, Vol. 62, N.2, p.208

[486] SIPRI data cited by RAZANI Ehsan and BIN IDRIS N., Azizan, **Iran's conventional military relations with China under Ahmadinejad (2005-2013),** International Journal of Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Science, Vol 3, Issue 1, 2014, p.4

[487] WAARNAR, Maaike: **Iranian foreign policy during Ahmadinejad: ideology and actions, *Op. Cit.,*** p.82

[488] KARIMIFARD, Hossein, **Iran's foreign policy approaches toward International Organizations,** Journal of World Socio-political Studies, Vol. 2, No. 1, January 2018, p. 49

incarnated by the arrogant Western Powers. In Ahmadinejad's view, just like within Iran, the international system was characterized by structural injustice, which he identified as one of the main threats to international peace. He criticized the UN system, especially the veto power that granted tremendous political power to a minority of countries, therefore undermining the democratic nature of the whole organization.[489]

However, Ahmadinejad did not only criticize the UN legal order but also blamed Western Powers for what, in his opinion, constituted a will to prevent developing powers from having access to cutting-edge technology. While in the past, the oppressors had denied developing nations their political rights (sovereignty), Ahmadinejad shared the opinion that technology denial was the new strategy used by Western powers to maintain third-world countries in poverty. "Can nations be deprived of scientific and technological progress through the threat of use of force and based on mere allegations of possibility of military diversion? (…) Such access cannot be restricted to a few, depriving most nations and, by establishing economic monopolies, use them as an instrument to expand their domination," Ahmadinejad asked during his UN Speech in 2005.[490] Concerning **Jacques Hyman's NIC** notion, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had a nationalist and exceptionalist vision of his country's international role and can be rightly considered as an **"oppositional nationalists."** The next part will analyze the diplomatic negotiations between the E3 (France, Germany, and the UK) and Iran.

The previous analysis clearly highlights the international perceptions of the two presidents. While both had an ideological and Manichean approach to the external world, the theme of injustice, oppression and imperialism is more present in Ahmadinejad's apprehension of the international system. To what extent did this sceptical perception shape his response to US coercive demands? The following pages will provide an insightful answer to the previous question. But before that, as we previously mentioned, we divided the analysis into time frames that reflect the evolution of the Iranian nuclear negotiations. Hence, the next sub-part will analyze the talks between the EU and Iran between 2002 and 2006.

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[489] KARIMIFARD, Hossein, **Iran's foreign policy approaches toward International Organizations, *Op. Cit.***
p.49

[490] **Address by H.E. Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad President of the Islamic Republic of Iran before the Sixtieth Session of the United Nations General Assembly New York - 17 September 2005.** Accessed from https://www.un.org/webcast/ga/60/statements/iran050917eng.pdf on the 06th of November 2020.

4.4.3 The nuclear negotiations between the EU and the Iranians (2002-2006).

Following the revelations of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) regarding the existence of a secret nuclear program in the city of Arak in 2002, three Europeans countries, namely France, Germany, and Great Britain (E3) decided to engage Iran over its controversial nuclear program. The causes of this diplomatic move were threefold: first, the Europeans wanted to avoid a second American military expedition after the Iraqi's as it could trigger a broader regional conflict. Second, they also wanted to avoid a regional proliferation dynamic as we previously analyzed. Third, the Iranian dossier was the first serious issue the EU managed as an international actor. Since Iran had been described as a member of the "axis of evil" by George Bush – a description perceived in Tehran as a betrayal after Iran's instrumental role in the US objective of toppling the Taliban in Afghanistan, – the revelations of the secret nuclear plant in Arak led the Iranians to think that they were the second in line after the Americans had toppled Saddam Hussein's regime.[491]

Consequently, the Iranian authorities proposed a Grand Bargain to the US through the Swiss ambassador to Iran; basically, Iran expressed its readiness to diplomatically address all the bones of contention with Washington, even those that were considered strategic to the country's regional position like Hezbollah. Trita Parsi describes it in these terms: "figuring that the regime's very existence could be at stake, the Iranians put everything on the table – Hezbollah; the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including Hamas and Islamic jihad; and Iran's nuclear program."[492] Unfortunately, George Bush's ideologically driven foreign policy led him to turn down this offer, a move that the Obama's administration bitterly regretted afterwards, as we will see later.

When the existence of the Iranian nuclear program was disclosed in 2002, the related international concerns were threefold: firstly, the controversies over Iran past nuclear activities, secondly the issues over the scope of nuclear enrichment and thirdly the possibilities of signing a long-term nuclear agreement with Iran. Consequently, when the E3 States engaged with Iran in 2002, their main goal was to lift as much as possible any doubt regarding the peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear program. This was not an easy task, since there was deep mistrust between the main protagonist (the US and Iran). Indeed, since the 1979 revolution, Iran has been suspecting and accusing the US of trying to topple the Islamic regime. From this perspective, isolating Iran at the

[491] It is also important to highlight that North Korea had announced its withdrawal from the NPT on January 11, 2003. Therefore, the international context at the time was characterized by a great proliferation risk.

[492] PARSI, Trita: **Losing an enemy: Obama, Iran, and the triumph of diplomacy**, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2017, p.48

international level was perceived as a steppingstone in achieving their alleged agenda. It is also important mention that when the negotiations between the Europeans and the Iranians started, Iran was already at the **second stage (nuclear program)** of Eleonora Mattiacci's and Benjamin Jones' model of nuclear reversal. Hence, the Western Powers could still confidently prevent Tehran from reaching a closer level to the nuclear threshold. However, as we will see later, they failed to offer credible incentives to Tehran.

On the other hand, Tehran's support of "terrorist" groups such as Hezbollah and pro-Shia militias in the region, combined with its nuclear program fueled the Bush's administration's suspicions of Iran trying to covertly achieve a nuclear capability, which could grant a credible deterrent leverage to Tehran. In order to achieve their confident-building based agenda, the E3 group proposed a bargain to Iran which Tehran accepted; basically, Iran agreed to provide answers to the questions of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regarding its previous nuclear activities and to sign the additional protocol of the NPT which allows the IAEA to conduct intrusive and improvised inspections. In exchange of Iran's nuclear cooperation, *the EU3 agreed to recognize Iran's right to develop peaceful nuclear energy and to assist in its development, along with the promise to enter a more general dialogue about regional security and stability.*[493] This agreement is called the Tehran agreement signed on October 21st, 2003.

Despite this first agreement, several key issues were still unsolved regarding Iran's nuclear program. In fact, the US government remained very cautious regarding the fate of the agreement the E3 States had just stroke with Iran, preferring to acquiesce the taste of the pudding only after having eaten it. As Scott McClellan, then White House Spokesperson declared in this regard, "we have been in close contact with the Europeans all along so we very much welcome the efforts by the British, German and French foreign ministers to obtain a commitment of full compliance by Iran with its IAEA and non-proliferation obligations; […] full compliance will now be essential."[494] Among the hot topics, if not the hottest that still existed between the Europeans and Iran was the issue over enrichment. In fact, the Europeans requested from Iran to completely suspend every enrichment activity, but the Iranian government objected. Mohamed ElBaradei, then Director of the IAEA overcame the stalemate by suggesting a minimal definition of suspension of enrichment which consisted of Iran not injecting

[493] MAZZUCELLI, Colette, **EU3-Iranian Nuclear Diplomacy: Implications for US policy in the Middle East,** EUMA, Vol. 4 N. 6, March 2007, p.5

[494] MACASKILL Ewen, DE LUCE Dan and BORGER Julian, **EU ministers strike Iran deal. Diplomatic coup on nuclear programme averts crisis,** The Guardian, October 22, 2003. Accessed online on July 5, 2020, from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/oct/22/iran.politics1

gas into the centrifuges;[495] this was known as the *Brussels agreement* signed on February 3, 2004. According to Michele Gaietta, the Brussels agreement allowed Iran to extend "the scope of the suspension of enrichment activities, including the manufacture of parts and assembly of centrifuges, as required by the IAEA and EU3 [...] and to provide new explanations on the nuclear activities that it had omitted in the declaration of October 2003."[496] In exchange, the Europeans pledged to assist Iran with issues related to its nuclear program and work for the removal of the Iranian dossier from the IAEA's table.

However, this agreement did not last long; indeed, its survival was threatened less than six months after its signature due to several factors. One of them is the ambiguity related to the interpretation of the scope of the Iranian suspension of enrichment between Tehran and the Europeans. In this regard, Oliver Meier argues that "while Iranian negotiators insisted that ElBaradei had explained to them that suspension was to be understood merely as not introducing nuclear material into centrifuges, the E3 interpreted this promise to mean that all enrichment-related activities were to stop, including the testing and construction of new centrifuges."[497] The issue of enrichment in the Iranian context was as sensitive as thanks to Reza Aghazadeh's letter to the IAEA in 2003, it was revealed that Iran had breached many of its obligations under the safeguards agreements it signed with the IAEA and carried-out more secret enrichment activities than it had reported. As Michele Gaietta put it, "although Aghazadeh's statements gave a fairly accurate picture of Iran's nuclear activities, it also increased the gravity and number of Iranian breaches of the Safeguards Agreement signed with the agency."[498]

All the previous information strengthened what many, especially the US had suspected from the very beginning: first that Iran was not actually looking for a long-term agreement with Great Powers, rather was engaged in a deceptive strategy aimed at buying time and enabling Tehran to increase the nuclear capabilities by installing advanced centrifuges. Second, the purpose of all the agreements Tehran had signed so far was to avoid a referral of the Iranian nuclear dossier to the UN Security Council. As Mohamed ElBaradei recalled after the IAEA had proven that nuclear material had been used in the non-declared facility of Kalaye Electric Company (KEC), "I realized early on that we were dealing with people who were willing to deceive to achieve their goals and

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[495] CRONBERG, Tarja: **Nuclear multilateralism and Iran: Inside EU negotiations,** New York, Routledge, 2017, p.18. Accessed online.
[496] GAIETTA, Michele: **The trajectory of Iran's nuclear program, *Op. Cit.,*** p.99
[497] MEIER, Olivier: **European efforts to solve the conflict over Iran's nuclear program: how has the European Union performed?**, EU Non-Proliferation Consortium, Non-Proliferation Papers, N.27, Feb 2013, p.6
[498] GAIETTA, Michele: **The trajectory of Iran's nuclear program, *Op. Cit.,*** p.96

that we should not accept any attestation without physical verification."[499] Another cause of the failure of the Brussels agreement is the evolution of Iranian domestic politics, characterized by the rise of the far right movement spearheaded by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, then newly elected mayor of Tehran.

Despite the previously mentioned factors, negotiations between Europeans and Iranians were not suspended. To lift the controversies related to the scope of the suspension of enrichment Tehran should commit to, both parties signed a new agreement on the November 15, 2004: *the Paris agreement*. The main goal of this new agreement was to fix the loophole of the two first agreements, notably the scope and the duration of suspension of the enrichment activities in Iran's nuclear program. The signature of this of the agreement was uncertain for at least two reasons: first the IAEA's concerns regarding Iran's nuclear activities in alleged non-declared sites; second the bargaining positions of both parties. Regarding the former, the IAEA and the Europeans wanted to avoid a repetition of the KEC's precedent with the Lavisan-Shian site which hosted a controversial research center[500] monitored by Iran's Ministry of Defense and Arms Forces Logistics (MODAFL). Regarding the latter, both parties had two divergent visions about the finality of the negotiations. While the Europeans perceived the negotiations as a primary step toward a broader agreement, the Iranians considered the agreement as a confidence-building gesture. in addition, the US pressure on the Europeans increased gradually, as they requested from them an "unlimited duration" of the suspension of the enrichment. Consequently, any agreement that was to emerge from these fierce negotiations would be influenced by all those issues.

Accordingly, the enrichment activities Iran voluntarily agreed to suspend under the Paris agreement included "the manufacture and import of gas centrifuges and their components; the assembly, installation, testing or operation of gas centrifuges; work to undertake any plutonium separation, or to construct or operate any plutonium separation installation; and all tests or production at any uranium conversion installation."[501] This was to avoid any repetition of the misinterpretation of the scope of the enrichment activities Iran should suspend; with regards to the "unlimited suspension", the Europeans accepted a trade-off by requesting from Iran to provide

[499] ELBARADEI, Mohamed: **The Age of deception: nuclear diplomacy in treacherous times,** New York, Metropolitan Books, 2011, p.118. (Accessed online.)
[500] The National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) had accused Iran of secretly building biological weapons at the Centre for Readiness and Defence Technology. Read GAIETTA, Michele: **The trajectory of Iran's nuclear program, *Op. Cit.,*** p.101
[501] IAEA-INFCIRC/637: **Communication dated 26 November 2004 received from the Permanent Representatives of France, Germany, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Kingdom concerning the agreement signed in Paris on 15 November 2004,** 26 November 2004. An information accessed on the 1st of August 2020 from the website https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/infcircs/2004/infcirc637.pdf.

"objective guarantees" regarding its nuclear program and this went through Iran's acceptance of the resuming the interim enforcement of the Additional Protocol. In exchange, the Europeans acknowledged Iran's right to a civilian nuclear program, pledged that the "Iranian dossier" will not be transferred to the UN Security Council but will stay on the IAEA's table.

In addition, the EU promised to support Iran's application for a membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and Iran's participation in the IAEA Experts Group of Multilateral Approaches (EGOMA) to the Nuclear Fuel Cycle (NFC). This would indirectly acknowledge Iran's nuclear rights and capabilities to master the fuel cycle.[502] Another major concession the Europeans made to Iran under the Paris agreement was to acknowledge Iran's role in fighting international terrorist groups notably Al Qaeda and more importantly the Mujahedin-e Khalq which is considered to be the armed wing of the NCRI. Nonetheless, the Paris agreement ultimately collapsed despite its merits.

Although the terms of the Paris agreement satisfied both parties, its implementation was another story. The main stumbling block was yet again the substance of the "objective guarantees" Iran had to provide regarding its peaceful nuclear program. While the Europeans viewed the complete suspension of enrichment activities as the only objective guarantee, the Iranians perceived the objective guarantees under the frame of a deeper compliance with the NPT. The firm position of the Europeans was due to the increasing pressure of the US who posed the principle of "watertight guarantees" as the *sine que non* condition for their approval of any deal the Europeans could reach with Iran. Washington even considered joining the Europeans first to acquiesce the positive reports of the IAEA regarding the suspension of enrichment by Iran, but also to torpedo the negotiations from within in order to blame the Iranians for the failure of the negotiations.[503]

European's reluctance to provide incentives deeply frustrated the Iranians who had hoped for concessions to alleviate the increasing domestic pressures Hassan Rouhani was facing. ElBaradei described it in these terms: "the negotiations were not making visible headway. Rouhani was under pressure from his government to show progress—in the form of concrete deliverables—for his cooperative approach."[504] The Europeans expected to have more concessions with the Khatami's administration after the elections, but the Supreme Guide ruled-out the perspective of any change regarding the

[502] GAIETTA, Michele: **The trajectory of Iran's nuclear program, *Op. Cit.,*** p.102
[503] CRONBERG, Tarja: **Nuclear multilateralism and Iran: Inside EU negotiations, *Op. Cit.,*** p.34. Accessed online.
[504] ELBARADEI, Mohamed: **The Age of deception: nuclear diplomacy in treacherous times, *Op. Cit.,*** p.143. Consulted online. Read also CRONBERG, Tarja: **Nuclear multilateralism and Iran: Inside EU negotiations, *Op. Cit.,*** p.35

Iranian nuclear stance irrespective of the outcome of the elections. In addition, Khatami had been defeated and Ahmadinejad elected to the great surprise and dismay of the Europeans.

Although they wanted to secure a long-term agreement with Iran before the new administration had officially taken office, the Europeans rejected the first proposal of the Iranians which focused mainly on the bilateral cooperation of both parties on regional issues like terrorism and WMD; rather, they requested from Iran to submit a clear proposal regarding the "objective guarantees" of the peaceful nature of its program. In lines with their original interpretation of the Paris agreement, the Iranians subsequently proposed a first package of actions they could undertake in relation with the NPT to demonstrate the exclusive peaceful nature of their nuclear program.

According to Michel Gaietta, the Iranians submitted a new package with three level of guarantees: the first one included "concrete limitations to the Iranian fuel cycle, such as a ban on reprocessing activities, qualitative and quantitative caps on the enrichment program that should not exceed the 3,000 centrifuges installed at Natanz", the second level insisted on "legislative and regulatory measures: the ratification of the Additional Protocol; the implementation of a law that would include a permanent ban on the development of nuclear weapons; and the strengthening of export controls" and the third one stressed on "enhanced monitoring measures that were to be implemented during the negotiations: the voluntary enforcement of the Additional Protocol; the continued presence of IAEA inspectors at the Natanz and Esfahan sites; and the possibility of EU3/EU experts joining them."[505] The Europeans did not come up directly with a counter-proposal, instead they requested additional time to examine the new Iranian proposal. Hassan Rohani agreed and delayed the resume of the enrichment for two months.

The Europeans ultimately rejected the Iranian proposal on the grounds that it contained provisions which allowed enrichment activities and came-up with a counter-proposal instead. They also proposed technical solutions which they thought would meet Tehran's expectations. In terms of incentives, the Europeans offered to supply light water reactors together with their nuclear fuel, to build a research reactor, bilateral cooperation on key regional issues like the stabilization of Afghanistan and Iraq, terrorism, drug trafficking and the strengthening economic cooperation in key sectors, including civil aviation.[506] In exchange, the Europeans requested "a commitment by Iran not to pursue fuel cycle technologies, reviewable after 10 years, a legally binding commitment by Iran not to withdraw from the NPT and Iran's adoption

[505] GAIETTA, Michele: **The trajectory of Iran's nuclear program, *Op. Cit.,*** p.104
[506] GAIETTA, Michele: **The trajectory of Iran's nuclear program, *Op. Cit.,*** p.106

of the Additional Protocol, arrangements for Iran to return spent nuclear fuel to supplier countries, to establish a buffer store of nuclear fuel located in a third country."[507] Iran vehemently rejected the Europeans proposal because it completely denied Tehran the possibility to domestically enrich the uranium which was an achievement of a great importance for the Iranians. "The Iranians tried to get the Europeans to consider the possibility of at least doing uranium conversion. Conversion would allow some face-saving with the Iranian public, a sign that the country had not altogether abandoned its nuclear achievements. […] But the Western countries were not willing to allow Iran even this concession" lamented El Baradei.[508] The negotiations between the two parties ultimately failed and Iran resumed the enrichment.

According to Tarja Cronberg, the negotiations between the Europeans and the Iranians failed due to two main reasons: first the European's lack of strategic empathy, precisely their inability to understand the strategic importance of the nuclear program in general, and the enrichment issue for Tehran. As previously analyzed, the nuclear program and the enrichment capabilities represented an issue of pride and prestige for Tehran, considering its tumultuous historical relations with the external world, Russia, and Western powers alike. Second, the absence of a united European front in dealing with Iran. Indeed, as Tarja Cronberg argues, "in the EU there was a divide, in 2005, between the diplomatic/administrative and the political level. The former saw US participation as unavoidable as the Iran nuclear issue was a "tête-a-tête" with Americans. The expectation was that without the Americans on board there would be no deal. On the political level there seems to have been a will to conclude a deal. Two foreign ministers, the UK's Jack Straw and Germany's Joschka Fisher, have claimed that the US intervention prevented the Europeans from succeeding."[509]

The failure of the nuclear talks combined with the discovery of "the alleged studies" which confirmed further breaches of Iran under the nuclear safeguards led the IAEA to adopt Resolution GOV/2005/77 on the 24th of September 2005 which resulted in the referral of the Iran to the Security Council under Art. XII.C of the safeguard agreements. Iran's referral to the Security Council inaugurated an era of great tensions between Tehran and Washington who finally joined the other Permanent Members of the Security Council plus Germany (E3+3) to address the Iranian nuclear challenge. Together they formed the E3+3 group or the P5+1 group which refers to the five

[507] Arms Control Association, **Official proposals on the Iranian nuclear issue, 2003-2013,** an information accessed from https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Iran_Nuclear_Proposal on 12th August 2020.
[508] EL BARADEI, Mohamed: **The Age of deception: nuclear diplomacy in treacherous times, *Op. Cit.,*** p.159
[509] CRONBERG, Tarja: **Nuclear multilateralism and Iran: Inside EU negotiations, *Op. Cit.,*** p.36. Accessed online.

permanent members of the UNSC plus Germany. It is important to highlight that the EU diplomatic attempt failed because their strategy lacked credible coercive threat and their incentive did not reciprocate the gestures of Iran, in terms of acknowledging its domestic enrichment right. The next sub part will analyze the coercive dynamics between the US, supported by the EU and UN on the one hand, and Iran on the other hand.

Regarding the nuclear reversal theories, the previous information demonstrate that the E3 group failed to capitalize the opportunity of the Iran's level of nuclear progress. This was a more wasted opportunity as the context back then was conducive for an agreement between the West and Iran that could serve as a credible economic incentive to Tehran. The E3 group will realize this strategic mistake with the arrival of Ahmadinejad at the Presidency.

4.4.4 The nuclear negotiations between US (E3+3 group) and Iran. (2006-2013).

The coercive dynamics between the US (supported by the other members of the SC plus Germany which formed the E3+3 group) and Iran began in a particular context. Regarding Iran on the one hand, the neoconservative wing incarnated by Ahmadinejad rose in 2006 as we have previously analyzed. With regard to the US on the other hand, there was a domestic consensus regarding the necessity to address the Iranian nuclear challenge through sanctions. Indeed, the Senate adopted a series of sanctions against Iran in 2006. The appeal for sanctions was also vivid in the White House. In fact, Iran's hitherto refusal to comply with the US and the E3 demands clearly illustrated the failure of the longstanding US defiant approach of the Iranian nuclear issue promoted by Dick Cheney. Consequently, George Bush opted for the diplomatic approach promoted by Condoleezza Rice.

Nonetheless, Georges Bush did not intend to rely on classic diplomacy; rather, he opted for a coercive approach, one that was mainly based on sanctions and threats. In fact, George Bush had only changed his approach toward the Iranian nuclear issue, and not his perception of Iran. As he declared in the 2006 National Security Strategy (NSS), "we may face no greater challenge from a single country than from Iran. For almost 20 years, the Iranian regime hid many of its key nuclear efforts from the international community."[510] In light of this approach, then Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice clearly stressed that Washington would negotiate with Tehran as soon as Iran fully and verifiably suspends its enrichment and reprocessing activities, (then only) the United

[510] **The National Security Strategy of the United States of America**, 2006, p.20 Accessed from the link https://www.comw.org/qdr/fulltext/nss2006.pdf on the 10th of September 2020.

States will come to the table with (its) EU-3 colleagues and meet with Iran's representatives.[511] Hence, the interactions between the US (E3+3) and Iran began against this backdrop in 2006. Yet, before resorting to a coercive approach aiming at compelling Iran to abandon its enrichment activities, the US-led E3+3 group initially adopted a conciliatory approach vis-à-vis Iran. Indeed, they first proposed a set of incentives to Iran: this was known as the *2006 package of incentives to Iran*.[512]

Under the 2006 package of incentives the P5+1 group basically acknowledged Iran's inalienable right to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with Articles I and II of the NPT and committed to actively support the building of new light water power reactors in Iran through international joint projects, (…) using state-of the art technology.[513] In addition, they also committed to a legally binding fuel supply to Iran via a Russia-based nuclear facility and offered international cooperation with Iran in a several sectors, including regional security issues, economic relations with foreign investment and deeper integration of Iran in international institutions like the WTO, telecommunications and civil aviation. In exchange, they expected Iran "to suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities to be verified by the IAEA, (…) and to resume implementation of the Additional Protocol of the IAEA."[514] As the UN nuclear watchdog, the IAEA's report on Iran's effective compliance with the terms of this proposal were strategic for the renewal and sustainability of the agreement. What was Iran's answer to this proposal?

The provision of the 2006 package of incentives seemed fair and balanced at glance, considering Iran's needs for nuclear energy. However, they failed to understand the scope of Iran's distrust vis-à-vis the external world, including both the West and the East, though to a lesser extent for the latter. As we previously analyzed, Iran's history is paved with several episodes of technology denial, and unfulfilled commitments from the external world during both the Shah and the Islamic regime. Consequently, Iranians have always sought to reduce their dependence on the world, and such strategic areas as nuclear energy was not an exception. Commenting on the importance of Iran's mastering nuclear enrichment, the Supreme Guide declared, "it represents our political independence and national self-confidence. We should not sell out this precious resource because of the enemies' threats and we should not be fooled by enemy

[511] **Statement by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice,** Washington, May 31, 2006. Accessed from the link https://2001-2009.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/67088.htm on the 15th of November 2020.
[512] **Elements of a proposal to Iran as approved on 1 June 2006 at the meeting in Vienna of China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, the Unites States of America and the European Union.** An information accessed on the 5th of November 2020 from https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/reports/90569.pdf.
[513] **Elements of a proposal to Iran as approved on 1 June 2006 at the meeting in Vienna, *Ibid.,*** p.1
[514] **Elements of a proposal to Iran as approved on 1 June 2006 at the meeting in Vienna, *Ibid.,*** p.1

bribes."[515] Therefore, though the idea of a permanent foreign supply of nuclear fuel is appealing in many regards, having to depend on the foreign powers to produce nuclear energy was not acceptable for Iranians. Logically, the Iranian authorities rejected the P5+1 group package of incentives. Iran's dismissal of the P5+1 group offer fueled international suspicions regarding its nuclear program, which led the P5+1 coalition under the US leadership, to explore tougher approaches to compel Iran to meet their demands.

This first round of negotiations confirms the veracity of the neoclassical assumption of the transmitting-belt effect of the intervening variable concerning a country's foreign policy in the context of international/systemic demands. In this case, the Iranian historical records of the West's inability to deliver what it had previously committed clearly shaped Iran's decision to reject the first offer from the US. More importantly, as we will see later in the sub-part, Washington's failure to acknowledge Iran's right to a domestic enrichment capability will continuously maintain Tehran's defiance of Washington's demands. This firm stance of the US also highlights the **lack of strategic empathy** in their strategy. There was no objective evidence that Iran was pursuing a nuclear weapons program.

However, its non-cooperative behavior with the IAEA casts severe doubts regarding the peaceful nature of its nuclear program. (This is a confirmation of the ***compromise-hybrid political regime*** of Iran as predicted by Etel Solingen; it also confirms that Iran could have halted its nuclear activities had credible incentives granted.) More precisely, according to George Bush, Iran's refusal to come into compliance with its international obligations by providing the IAEA access to nuclear sites and resolving troubling questions[516] was another proof of its desire to build nuclear weapons. This sceptical perception of President Bush illustrates the preponderant view of the neo-conservative wing of the Bush administration regarding the Iranian nuclear issue. Logically, addressing the Iranian nuclear challenge with "raw power" had become the primary goal of the US administration. However, the political room for such an initiative was relatively narrow, considering the Iraqi precedent and its related-failed military intervention from a political perspective.

Therefore, the UN sanctions appeared as the perfect stepping-stone toward this end. As Richard Nephew, former Director for Iran in the National Security Staff under the Obama administration, described during our interview, "the sense was not that

[515] **Iran's Supreme Leader: "Using nuclear weapons is un-Islamic"**, Deutsche Welle (DW), June 04, 2006. Accessed from https://www.dw.com/en/irans-supreme-leader-using-nuclear-weapons- is-un-islamic/a-2043328 on the 22nd of October 2020.
[516] **The National Security Strategy of the United States of America**, 2006, ***Op. Cit.***

sanctions were going to work. The sense was that they were going to fail, and in getting them to fail fast, you got then the ability to do what you wanted to do, which was to have a credible military threat."[517] This was the first escalation tactic of the US. Consequently, the actual goal of the US in pushing for the UN sanctions was not that much rooted in their willingness to address the Iranian nuclear challenge through a multilateral framework or to compel Iran to suspend its enrichment activities *per se*, but to use the expected failure of the UN sanctions to demonstrate that resorting to force was the last and only way to solve the Iranian nuclear issue effectively.

The UNSC subsequently adopted its first Resolution (Res.) under the US leadership after then Security Council President César Mayoral had called upon Iran to fully and sustainably suspend all its enrichment-related activities.[518] Resolution 1696 was adopted on the 31st of July 2006 under Art. 40 of Chapter VII of the UN charter.[519] It required from Iran two main actions: first "to take the steps required by the IAEA Board of Governors in its resolution GOV/2006/14, which are essential to build confidence in the exclusively peaceful purpose of its nuclear program and to resolve outstanding questions," [and to] "suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development, to be verified by the IAEA."[520] Despite the fact that those provision did not actually imposed economic sanction per se, rather was inviting Iran to a more cooperative behavior with the UN nuclear watchdog, Resolution 1696 nonetheless also contained coercive elements aimed at modifying Iran's nuclear behavior.

To achieve its goal of leading Iran to cooperate with the IAEA, Res. 1696 had recourse to several (tacit) threats. First, by requesting from the IAEA to submit a report about the suspension or not by Iran of its enrichment activities thirteen (30) days after the adoption of the Res. on the 31st of August 2006, the UNSC aimed at creating "a sense of urgency" as it had set a deadline for Iran to comply with its demand. Secondly, Art. 5 of Res. 1696 which invited other States "to exercise vigilance and prevent the transfer of any items, materials, goods and technology that could contribute to Iran's enrichment-related and reprocessing activities and ballistic missile programmed;" hinted at the future political isolation Iran would face. Furthermore, it clearly expressed its readiness to "adopt appropriate measures under Art. 41 of Chapter VII […] to persuade Iran to

[517] **Interview with Richard Nephew on the US coercive strategy with Iran.**
[518] The Statement was accessed on the 25th of November 2020 through the link https://www.un.org/press/en/2006/sc8679.doc.htm.
[519] **The provision of Art. 40** of the UN Charter is the following: "In order to prevent an aggravation of the situation, the Security Council may, before making the recommendations or deciding upon the measures provided for in Article 39, call upon the parties concerned to comply with such provisional measures as it deems necessary or desirable." Accessed from the **UN Charter**, ***Op. Cit***.
[520] **UNSC Resolution 1696** adopted on July 31st, 2006. Accessed on the 26th of November 2020 from the link http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1696

comply with this Resolution and the requirements."[521] Those measures usually imply any actions the SC deemed necessary for the implementation of its decision, except of military actions. By pointing out at the possibility to implement additional measures against Iran in case it did not comply with its demands, the UNSC implemented the "gradual turning of the screw" version of coercive diplomacy and relied on the risk-based strategy. Unfortunately, Iran under Ahmadinejad responded negatively to this first UNSC Resolution.

In line with his confrontational foreign policy toward the West, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad vehemently rejected the provision of Resolution 1696, claiming that it lacked legitimacy as nuclear energy was the sovereign right of Iran. As he declared in a television broadcasted speech, "if some think they can still speak with threatening language to the Iranian nation, they must know that they are badly mistaken. […] Our nation has made its decision. We have passed the difficult stages. Today, the Iranian nation has acquired the nuclear technology."[522] Although there was not a consensus on the relevance of adopting Res. 1696 under Chap VII of the UN charter,[523] reflecting on the political dynamism of the Iranian polity, certain political factions inside Iran criticized the choice of the words of President Ahmadinejad. Even though those critics seemed more driven by a political revenge agenda than an actual warning against the president's approach, they nevertheless illustrate the absence of consensus with respect to the nuclear strategy of the new Iranian administration. For example, then Secretary of the SNSC Hassan Rouhani invited Ahmadinejad to adopt a more cautious nuclear strategy, one that was based more on reason and less on emotions.[524] In addition, Khatami warned that confronting the international community could ultimately affect not only the Iranian economy but also Iran's very right to nuclear energy.[525]

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[521] **UNSC Resolution 1696, *Ibid.***

[522] The New York Times: **Iran rejects council's vote - Africa & Middle East - International Herald Tribune**, August 1, 2006. An information accessed on the 20th of October 2020 from https://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/01/world/africa/01iht-iran.2356714.html.

[523] According to Michele Gaietta, even El Baradei criticized the fact that the Resolution had been adopted under Chap VII of the UN charter. Read GAIETTA, Michele: **The trajectory of Iran's nuclear program, *Op. Cit.,*** p.121

[524] HERZOG, Michael: **Iranian public opinion on the nuclear program. A potential asset for the international community,** The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Focus N.56, June 2006, p.8

[525] SLACKMAN, Michael, ***In Iran, dissenting voices rise on its leaders' nuclear strategy,*** New York Times, March 15, 2006. An information accessed on 20th of October 2020 from https://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/15/world/middleeast/in-iran-dissenting-voices-riseon-its-leaders-nuclear.html. Cited by HERZOG, Michael: **Iranian public opinion on the nuclear program. A potential asset for the international community, *Ibid,*** p.8

Depending on his target, President Ahmadinejad adopted a twofold counter-attack strategy: with respect to the international audience, he basically ignored the demands of Res. 1696 and demonstrated Iran's defiance by inaugurating the Arak nuclear facility which could produce Plutonium, one of the chemical elements necessary to build nuclear weapons. ***(Oppositional nationalism)*** With respect to the domestic audience, President Ahmadinejad mainly criticized the former administration for having made too many concessions in return of no substantial incentives. The Iranian-American historian John Ghazvinian confirmed it during our interview as he declared: *when Ahmadinejad stepped in 2005, it was easy for him to tell "look, when you accede to their demands, they even increase the pressure; so, complying with the demands of the US did not serve our interests." The idea was simply that the reformist had been too weak, they had suspended the program and made the country weaker*.[526] However, several factors explain the behavior of President Ahmadinejad.



Figure 6: Arak nuclear complex. Source: Nuclear Threat Initiative: Arak nuclear complex. Source: Nuclear Threat Initiative.[527]

President Ahmadinejad's defiant policy was not empty grounded, rather it was driven by several assets. Among those is first and foremost the support of the Supreme Guide who strongly rejected the provisions of Res. 1696. As we have seen earlier, although Iran has a consensual decision-making, the Supreme Guide has the last word on every single key decision in the Islamic republic. Enjoying the political support of the Supreme Leader constituted an undeniable asset in Ahmadinejad's confrontational strategy against the West.[528] President Ahmadinejad's defiant nuclear policy also enjoyed

[526] **Interview with Dr John Ghazvinian on the US coercive strategy with Iran.**
[527] Accessed on November 29, 2020 from https://www.nti.org/education-center/facilities/arak-nuclear-complex/
[528] **Iran's Supreme Leader: "Using nuclear weapons is un-Islamic", *Op. Cit.***

widely public support. Also, as indicated in table 2 below, Iran at that time had good economic scores; citing data from the InterMedia Survey Institute, Judith Yaphe declares that "41% of Iranians interviewed strongly support the development of nuclear weapons. Among those supporters, 84% said they would be willing to face United Nations (UN) sanctions, and 75 percent would risk hostilities with the United States in order to develop them."[529] The country's GDP was 3.2% while the unemployment rate was 11.8%.

Regarding our theoretical choices, several factors shed light on the failure of the first UN resolution against Iran's nuclear program. From a neoclassical realist perspective, two intervening variables shaped Ahmadinejad's continuous defiance: the balance of power among the Iranian domestic institutions considering the support of the Supreme Guide and the State-society relation considering the public support for the defiant nuclear policy. The former two intervening variables explain the Iranian response to international demands. It is also worth noting that threats wielded in Res. 1696 were not proportional to the envisioned objective, thus not credible to affect the nuclear calculus of the Iranians. In fact, the UN wielded the threats in an implicit tone which did not send the expected signals to Tehran. Also, credible reciprocal incentives did not support the demands to stop the enrichment, explaining Iran's defiance. Consequently, after the IAEA's report in August 2006 confirmed Iran's failure to comply with the provisions of Res. 1696, the UNSC adopted a new Resolution to impose additional sanctions against Iran. From a nuclear reversal perspective, Ahmadinejad clearly displayed his oppositional nationalist style and enjoyed the support from the different factions in Iran (compromise hybrid), without forgetting the absence of credible incentives from the West (Rupal Mehta).

The UN Res. 1737 was adopted on the 23rd of December 2006 in response to Iran's refusal to comply with the provisions of Res. 1696. The demands were the same as in Res. 1696, but Res. 1737 took the nuclear issue a step further. In other words, with the adoption of Res. 1737, the UNSC aimed at backing their declarations with actions and signaling their resolve to the Iranian authorities. In this regard, the "gradual turning of the screw" version of coercive diplomacy took shape by the recourse to a coercive denial strategy. As we have seen previously, denial strategies aim at decreasing the appeal of resistance of the target; this is usually done by undermining his strategy or destroying key assets of its military defense through the bombing of military bases. In the specific context of Iran, the denial strategy transpired through the sanctions inflicted to the Iranian nuclear industry. For instance, Art. 3 of Res. 1737 called upon all States to take "the necessary measures to prevent the supply, sale or transfer directly

[529] YAPHE S., Judith: **Nuclear politics in Iran,** Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS), Washington, May 2010, p.27

or indirectly from their territories, (…) of all items, materials, equipment, goods and technology which could contribute to Iran's enrichment-related, reprocessing or heavy water-related activities, or to the development of nuclear weapon delivery systems."[530]

In addition, Res.1737 also called upon the other member States not to cooperate with Iran on nuclear enrichment-related activities such as nuclear trainings, sale or transfer of item involved in nuclear activities (Art. 6) and identified a list of companies and individuals involved in Iran's ballistic and nuclear program which whom the other States should not interact (Vertical escalation). Among the companies listed were for example the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), the Mesbah Energy Company (MEC), the KEC, and several Defense Industries Organization (DIO). Among the people sanctioned under Res. 1737 were Mohammad Qannadi, Vice President for Research & Development of the AEOI, Ali Hajinia Leilabadi, Director General of the MEC or Lt Gen Mohammad Mehdi Nejad Nouri, Rector of Malek Ashtar University of Defense Technology. Lastly, like Res. 1696, Res. 1737 also set a deadline (60 days) to Tehran to comply with its demands (Art. 23). It clearly shows that the "gradual turning of the screw" version of CD and the risk-based strategy remained at the core of the Great powers' strategy.

The adoption of Resolution 1737 was a surprise for the Iranian authorities who had expected Russia and China's veto against the Resolution. Supreme Leader Khamenei reflected his confidence with respect to the difficulty of sanctions being imposed on Iran as he declared "there is no consensus against Iran. It is only the Americans and some of their allies"[531] Abbas Milani, an American-Iranian historian argues that the Iranian authorities expected the increase of oil prices to be a credible deterrent argument to the West in the event of the imposition of sanctions against Iran. As he declared during our interview, *Ahmadinejad believed that the nuclear dossier would never come to the Security Council and if it comes, it will never pass because of two reasons: "China and Russia will veto it, they have promised us, and the West won't dare sanction us because if they sanction Iran's oil, the price of oil will go to $200" Ahmadinejad believed*. *But the elasticity of oil had changed, Iran could be discarded as Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Petro monarchies increased their oil production. In addition, China and Russia didn't veto the Resolution, so the Iranian bet was proved wrong*.[532]

[530] **UNSC Resolution 1737** adopted on December 23rd, 2006. Accessed on the 23rd of November 2020 from the link https://www.undocs.org/S/RES/1737%20(2006)
[531] **Iran's Khamenei rejects nuclear demands,** Taipei Times, 5 June 2006. Accessed on the 22nd of October 2020 from http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/world/archives/2006/06/05/2003311820
[532] **Interview with Abbas Milani on the US coercive strategy with Iran.**

However, the reception of the new set of sanctions in the Iranian political landscape was the same as it had been the case with Resolution 1696. The pragmatist conservative kept warning against Ahmadinejad's continuous defiant policy. For instance, then Chair of the Expediency Council and former president Rafsanjani disclosed a secret letter from the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran Ruhollah Khomeini, which (the letter) shed light on the circumstances under which the former Supreme Leader bitterly chose to end the war against Iraq, though military leaders had called for the continuation of the war. Rafsanjani's goal was to remind the new authorities about the pre-eminence of the national interests over ideological imperatives.[533] Former Iranian nuclear negotiator Seyed Hossein Mousavian also warned President Ahmadinejad against the risks of underestimating the importance of UNSC Resolutions and the unreliable nature of the diplomatic support of China and Russia to Iran. As he put it, "the Security Council is the highest global-level authority, and its resolutions cannot be appealed before any other body. (…) We have our own [Iranian] position, [but] we must understand the international laws as well... If we reject [the Security Council resolution], it will only deepen [the crisis]. Therefore... we must think rationally [about how to] put an immediate end [to the crisis]. China and Russia attach supreme importance to their relations with Iran, but if forced to choose, they will choose America. So, we must not bring them to [a situation] in which they are forced choose."[534]

There were also critics of Ahmadinejad's nuclear policy from Conservative circles. Daily Jomhuri-e-Eslami, a famous hard-line media owned by the Supreme Leader Khamenei denounced the pervasiveness of the nuclear issue in Ahmadinejad's speeches, something which connoted a certain amateurism from the President.[535] Certain religious leaders also criticized Ahmadinejad firm stance with respect to UN Resolution. Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri, one of the founders of the Islamic Republic who was once considered to be the successor of former Supreme Leader Khomeini, expressed his concerns in these terms: "one has to deal with the enemy with wisdom. We should not provoke the enemy, otherwise the country will be faced with problems. We should get our (irrefutable) right in a way that will not create other problems, and without giving others an excuse."[536] Considering the negative result from the recent Iranian

[533] NAFISI, Rasool, **The Khomeini letter - is Rafsanjani warning the hardliners?,** Oct 11, 2006. Accessed from http://www.payvand.com/news/06/oct/1114.html on the 30th of November 2020.
[534] MANSHAROF, Yossi, **Iranian domestic criticism of Iran's nuclear strategy,** Middle East Media Research Institute, Inquiry & Analysis Series, N.317, January 24, 2007**.** Accessed on the 1st of December 2020 from https://www.memri.org/reports/iranian-domestic-criticism-irans-nuclear-strategy
[535] DAREINI A., Ali, **Conservatives, reformers increasingly challenge Ahmadinejad's nuclear diplomacy tactics,** The Taiwan News, 13 January 2007. Accessed online on the 1st of December 2020 from the link https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/366269
[536] VAYNMAN, Jane, **Trouble for Ahmadinejad**, Arms Control Wonk, 24 Jan 2007. Accessed on the 3rd of December 2020 from the link https://www.armscontrolwonk.com/archive/601368/trouble-for-ahmadinejad/

legislative campaign, together with such domestic dissension regarding his nuclear policy, one would have expected President Ahmadinejad to a more conciliatory approach with respect to the nuclear issue; unfortunately, this was not the case.
President Ahmadinejad surprisingly rejected the new Resolution and, as an attempt to counter-escalate the coercive dynamics with the US (Great Powers), described it as "a piece of torn paper ... by which they aim to scare Iranians."[537] However, there were indications that he was secretly attentive to the effects of the new sanctions. During his campaign, President Ahmadinejad has always presented himself as the president of the destitute, unlike the former elites that he accused of serving their own interests. In this regard, he "democratized" many sensitive issues, including the nuclear'. Kayhan Barzegar confirms this as he declares: "the president's key innovation with respect to the nuclear issue was to bring the matter before the public. Unlike past Iranian governments when the issue remained largely confined to policy elites, Ahmadinejad has managed to build unprecedented public support for his nuclear policy."[538]

Therefore, Ahmadinejad paid a close attention to anything which could tarnish this perception in the public opinion. With respect to the consequences of the UN sanctions, he instructed mainstream media to frame the coming sanction policy as another attempt of the West to undermine the interest of Iran and deny it its sovereign rights. In fact, UN Res. 1737 inaugurated an era of victimization of the Iranian authorities. Emboldened by the economic stability and the support of Supreme Guide, President Ahmadinejad praised the Natanz new technological milestone and compared Iran's nuclear program "to a train without breaks."[539]

[537] Reuters, **Ahmadinejad says U.N. resolution a "piece of torn paper",** January 21, 2007. Accessed from https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-ahmadinejad-idUKHAF43083220061224 on the 1st of December 2020
[538] BARZEGAR, Kayhan, **The paradox of Iran's nuclear consensus,** World Policy Journal, Vol. 26, N.3, Fall, 2009, p.24
[539] Jerusalem Post, **Ahmadinejad: Iran's nuke program 'like a train without brakes',** February 25, 2007, Accessed online on the 2nd of December 2020 from https://www.jpost.com/iranian-threat/news/ahmadinejad-irans-nuke- program-like-a-train-without-brakes

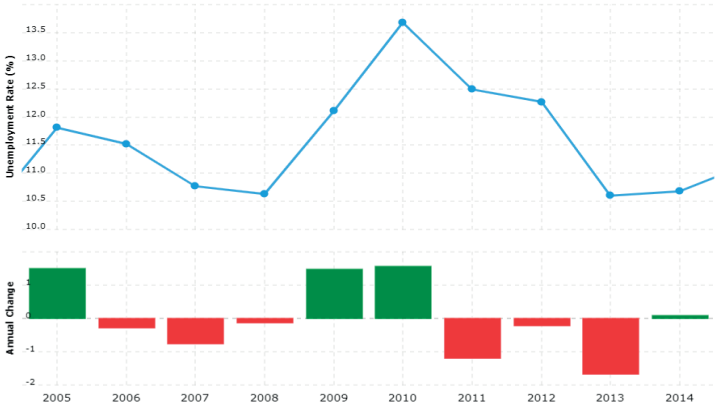

Table 3: Iran's unemployment rate. Source: Macrotrends -World Bank.[540]

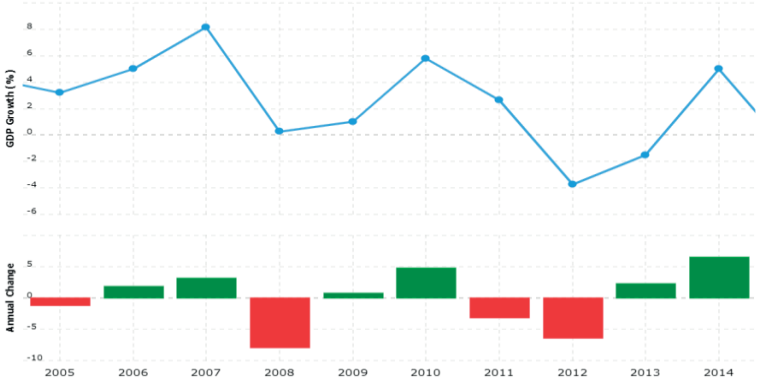

Table 4: Iran's GDP rate. Source: Macrotrends - World Bank.[541]

[540] **Iran's unemployment rate from 2005 to 2013**. Data accessed on the 2nd of December 2020 from https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/IRN/iran/unemployment-rate

[541] **Iran's GDP rate from 2005 to 2013**. Data accessed on the 2nd of December 2020, from the website https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/IRN/iran/gdp-growth-rate

Why did President Ahmadinejad maintain his nuclear defiant policy against the West despite the strained domestic context he was facing? Several factors provide insights to this question. From a domestic perspective, the Iranian authorities circumvented the sanctions by relying on procurement firms to continue the improvement of the country's nuclear facilities. This was the case with the Mesbat Energy Company (MEC) which was heavily implied in the construction of the Arak heavy water research reactor but was replaced by the Maro Sanat Company after it was sanctioned by UN Res. 1737.[542] In addition, his administration linked the demands of the suspension of the nuclear enrichment of the West with the long history of humiliation of Iran, especially by emphasizing on the Turkmenchai treaty, which is considered as one of the most humiliating chapter of Iran's history; Mousavi S. Rasoul, an Iranian diplomat, even described the West demands for Iran's nuclear suspension as a "a scientific Turkmenchai."[543] By nationalizing the nuclear issue, Ahmadinejad reminded the Iranians of the *coup d'état* instigated by the American and British secret services against former Iranian Prime Minister Mossadegh. ***(Oppositional nationalist)***. The political calculus was quite clear: creating a rally around the flag effect which would not only shield the expected political effects of the sanctions, but also shut any defiant voice from within, especially from the reformist and pragmatist conservatives.

According to Judith Yaphe, "Iran's political culture allows leaders to frame the nuclear issue in the language of nationalism. Past experiences and historical grievances are selectively employed against the West with the emphasis on Iran as victim and not as perpetrator of similar deeds."[544] In other words, Iran's painful past constitute a perfect breeding ground for opportunist nationalist leaders. Hence, the Mossadegh event was not only symptomatic of the long tradition of foreign interferences as we previously analyzed; combined with Iran's sense of grandeur, it nurtured Iran's sturdiness with respect to its independence and subsequently necessary resistance. Thanks to his discourse of resistance[545] Ahmadinejad could easily criticize the dissident voices for their non-patriotism, accusing them of being the domestic relays of the West attempts to deprive the country of its sovereign country. As he declared after the adoption of Res. 1737, "unfortunately, certain people at home are counterfeiting information to tarnish the great pride of the Iranian people. (…) They are just repeating the enemy's slogans to compromise, but this will be fruitless."[546] It is also noteworthy to highlight that the

[542] GAIETTA, Michele: **The trajectory of Iran's nuclear program, *Op. Cit.,*** p.83
[543] MOSHIRZADEH, Homeira, **Discursive foundations of Iran's nuclear policy,** Security Dialogue, SAGE Publications, Vol. 38, N.4, 2007, p.532
[544] YAPHE S., Judith: **Nuclear politics in Iran, *Op. Cit.,*** p.28
[545] MOSHIRZADEH, Homeira, **Discursive foundations of Iran's nuclear policy, *Ibid.,*** p.537
[546] **Ahmadinejad: Iran ready for threat over nuclear program,** China Internet Information Centre, January 19, 2007. An information accessed from http://www.china.org.cn/international/world/2007-01/19/content_1196642.htm on the 4th of December 2020.

US behavior was not conducive of a compliant attitude from the Iranian authorities. Indeed, Vice President Dick Cheney kept threatening Iran of a US military intervention by declaring that "all options are on the table" after the 60 days deadline had passed.[547] Considering the *hitherto* good economic performance, Ahmadinejad's nationalist discourse and the US threats, the Supreme Guide could only support Ahmadinejad's policy and rejected Res.1737.

From a theoretical view, the US did not wield a credible leverage to influence the nuclear decision-making of Iran, as evidenced by the choice of the denial strategy which only targeted supplying companies of nuclear components. But the Iranian easily overcame this strategy. Thereof, the coercive leverage was not also proportional to the envisioned objective and there was not a credible incentive submitted to Iran. Furthermore, the US demands to stop the enrichment was perceived as a maximalist and unacceptable demands by the Iranians. From a neoclassical realism perspective, several intervening variables shaped Ahmadinejad's defiant policy. Among them is the Iranian political and strategic culture, which were strategic as Ahmadinejad mobilized the previous painful and sorrowful experiences of Iran with the external world to extract the public support that he needed to oppose the US demands. In the same line, he framed his political opponents as traitors who were just echoing the imperialist demands of the US; this reflects the inputs of the State-society relations while the balance of power of domestic institutions was evidenced through the continuous support of the Supreme Guide. Iran's firmness led the US-led UNSC to increase its pressure by adopting a new set of sanctions encapsulated in Res. 1737.

After Iran's refusal to comply with the provision of Res. 1737, the UNSC adopted a new package of sanctions aimed at compelling Iran to stop its nuclear enrichment activities. This was the main goal of Res. 1747 which was adopted on the 24th of March 2007. The provisions of Resolution were almost the same as in Res.1737. Indeed, the goal was to compel Iran to suspend its nuclear enrichment activities and accept the incentives of the 2006 P5+1 proposal to Iran. The US led P5+1 coalition still relied on its denial coercive strategy as the Resolution imposed an arms embargo (horizontal escalation) upon Iran (Art. 5) and *called upon all States to exercise vigilance and restraint in the supply, sale or transfer directly or indirectly from their territories or by their nationals or using their flag vessels or aircraft of any battle tanks, armored combat vehicles, large caliber artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships, missiles or missile systems.*[548]

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[547] FARHI Farideh and LEAVER Erik, **Keeping all options on the table: A roadmap to negotiation or war?**, Institute for Policy Studies, March 5, 2007. An information accessed on the 4th of December 2020. from https://ips-dc.org/keeping_all_options_on_the_table_a_roadmap_to_negotiation_or_war/.

[548] Art. 6 of **UNSC Resolution 1747** adopted on March 24th, 2007. Accessed on the 23rd of November 2020 from the link https://www.undocs.org/S/RES/1747%20(2007)

Another major difference with Res. 1747 is that it "called upon States and financial institutions not to enter into new commitments for grants, financial assistance, and concessional loans, to the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, except for humanitarian and developmental purposes."[549] It also sanctioned the Bank Sepah and Bank Sepah International for their financial role in the controversial activities of the Shahid Hemmat Industrial Group (SHIG) and Shahid Bagheri Industrial Group (SBIG), which were already sanctioned by Res. 1737. Lastly, Res. 1747 aimed at creating a sense of urgency by setting a deadline of 60 days for Iran to comply with its provision and kept the door opened for additional sanctions shall Iran fail to comply. The EU also adopted a set of restrictive measures (sanctions) against Iran, especially financial (Art. 1.2b) and trade sanctions (Art. 2.2b) in the nuclear sector or Iran and individual sanctions. (Art. 4.1a and 1b).[550]

Just like with Res. 1737, President Ahmadinejad vehemently rejected the demands of Res. 1747, claiming that they won't have any effect and that Iran will not stop the enrichment activities "even for a second." Then Iranian Foreign Minister Manuchehr Mottaki described the Resolution as "illegal, useless, and unjustified" and considered the sanctions to be "too small" to comply and give-up "their rightful and legal demands."[551] Despite these statements, there were clear signs that President Ahmadinejad considered the effect of the new Resolution more than he had declared. For example, Iran counter-attacked by reducing its cooperation with the AEIA inspectors. From a domestic perspective, President Ahmadinejad had just faced his first serious political blow with the election of Rafsanjani to the Assembly of Expert[552] over Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi Mesbah Yazdi, Ahmadinejad's spiritual mentor. The election of Rafsanjani to the Assembly of Experts paved the way for his election as the Chair of this powerful political body of Iran, a position he assumed with his position as Chair of the Expediency Council.

Although the Iranian economy had not yet been seriously affected by the UN sanctions, Ahmadinejad found himself in a delicate domestic position as even members of his team disagreed with his nuclear policy. This was the case with top Iranian nuclear negotiator

[549] Art. 7 of **UNSC Resolution 1747, *Ibid.***

[550] **Council Common Position 2007/140/CFSP of 27 February 2007 concerning restrictive measures against Iran,** Official Journal of the European Union, 28 Feb 2020. Accessed from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal- content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32007E0140 on the 5th November 2020.

[551] VAHID, Sepehri, **Tehran outraged by latest UN Resolution**, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, March 28, 2007. Accessed from https://www.rferl.org/a/1347523.html on the 5th of December 2020.

[552] The Assembly of Experts is one of Iran's most powerful institutions in Iran's political system. It is constituted of 8-year mandate 88 elected members, and their main role is to appoint, oversee and potentially dismiss the Supreme Leader.

Ali Larijani who distanced himself with Ahmadinejad's nuclear policy and was consequently dismissed from his position of Secretary of the SNSC and replaced by Saeed Jalili. A move described by Said Amir Arjomand as one of Ahmadinejad's "boldest challenge to the (Supreme) Leader, who was forced to fall back on his more modest constitutional power and immediately appointed Larijani as one of his two representatives on the Supreme National Security Council."[553]

As the international pressure kept increasing on Ahmadinejad, external events paradoxically helped him to secure the popular support for his firm nuclear policy. The first one was the threats of tightened economic sanctions on the Iranian energy and financial sectors. Then UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown was very explicit in this regard as he declared: "we will lead in seeking tougher sanctions both at the U.N. and in the European Union, including on oil and gas investment and the financial sector."[554] The second main external factor which was capitalized by Ahmadinejad was the publication of the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE). The authors of the NIE estimated "with high confidence that in fall 2003, Tehran halted its nuclear weapons program."[555] According to Tytti Erästö, the NIE report did not substantially change the US policy vis-à-vis Iran; instead, "it just made it harder to justify a military attack against Iran (cause for war), especially against the backdrop of Iraq."[556] Nonetheless, Ahmadinejad capitalized on these two elements to accuse the West of using the nuclear issue as a pretext to implement its secret but actual goal which he thought, was to topple the Islamic regime in Iran.[557]

From a domestic perspective, he used those external elements not only to dismiss his internal critics, but even described them as "traitors" which clearly indicated that he explicitly identified them as the internal enemies to the Islamic revolution. It was in this context that he ordered the arrest of former Iran nuclear negotiator Mohammad Hossein Musavian, an ally of Rafsanjani, on the false basis of treason.[558] In such context, the Supreme Leader did not oppose Ahmadinejad's nuclear policy and rejected Res. 1747.

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[553] ARJOMAND A., Said: **After Khomeini: Iran under his successors,** Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, p.202. (1st ed.). Accessed online.
[554] WALKER, Sophie, **Britain threatens oil and gas sanctions against Iran,** Reuters, 12 Nov 2007. Accessed from https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-iran-brown/britain-threatens-oil-and-gas-sanctions-against-iran- idUSL1270031520071112 on the 5th of December 2020
[555] **National Intelligence Estimate (NIE). Iran: Nuclear intentions and capabilities,** National Intelligence Council, November 2007, p.6
[556] **Interview with Dr Tytti Erästö on the US coercive policy with Iran.**
[557] MOHSENI-CHERAGHLOU, Ebrahim: **When coercion backfires: the limits of coercive diplomacy in Iran, *Op. Cit.,*** p.130
[558] ARJOMAND A., Said: **After Khomeini: Iran under his successors, *Op. Cit.*** p.202

From a theoretical view, just like with Res. 1737 the US did not wield a credible threats to influence the nuclear decision-making of Iran, as evidenced by the comments of then Iranian Foreign Minister Manuchehr Mottaki was described "too small" to comply, without forgetting that the demands to stop the enrichment were still considered "unacceptable." Also, just like in the previous Resolutions, this coercive denial strategy did not exploit the weaknesses of Iran as it did not target the pillars of the country's economy. A shift to a punishment strategy was clearly needed. The release of the NIE report also undermined the credibility of the US strategy as it confirmed that the level of improvement of the Iranian nuclear program did not represent a vital threat to the US interests.

Thereof, the coercive leverage was not also proportional to the envisioned objective and there was not a credible incentive submitted to Iran. Furthermore, the US demands to stop the enrichment was perceived as a maximalist and unacceptable demands by the Iranians. From a neoclassical realism perspective, several intervening variables shaped Ahmadinejad's defiant policy. Ahmadinejad kept framed his political opponents as traitors who were just echoing the imperialist demands of the US. In addition, there was no major domestic upheaval in the Iranian political landscape despite the rise of the pragmatist camp led by Rafsandjani. This reflects the inputs of the balance of power of domestic institutions evidenced through the continuous support of the Supreme Guide irrespective of Ahmadinejad's challenges to the Supreme Guide. The State-society relations variable was highlighted by the continuous public support. Subsequently, the P5+1 group adopted a tougher package of sanctions against Iran: this was Resolution 1803.[559]

Resolution 1803 was adopted on the March 3, 2008. Its provision mainly broadened the scope of the sanctions imposed by Res. 1747. More specifically, it called upon other States "to exercise vigilance over the activities of financial institutions in their territories with all banks domiciled in Iran, in particular with Bank Melli and Bank Saderat, and their branches and subsidiaries abroad," (Art. 10), expanded prohibitions on trade in sensitive nuclear equipment and materials (Art. 8a), banned travel by sanctioned individuals and expanded list of sanctioned individuals and companies. (Art. 7).[560] The freeze of certain Iranian banks assets hinted at the punishment coercive strategy; however, the fact that the Banks were targeted by the P5+1 group because of their role in the development of the nuclear program clearly indicates that the great

[559] **UNSC Resolution 1803.** Accessed from https://www.undocs.org/S/RES/1803%20(2008) on the 10th of November 2020.
[560] SAMORE, Gary: **Sanctions against Iran: A guide to targets, terms, and timetables,** Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School, June 2015, p.7

powers still relied on the coercive denial strategy. The sense of urgency was still present as Res. 1803 granted only 60 days to Iran to comply with its provisions.

After Res. 1803 had been adopted, Tehran suggested a counter-proposal to the P5+1 group. Some of the major points in Tehran's proposal was "the establishment of enrichment and nuclear fuel production consortiums in different parts of the world-including Iran," improved IAEA supervision "in different states" and cooperation on nuclear safety and physical protection."[561] On the other hand, the P5+1 group offered an updated version of their 2006 proposal; after reaffirming their commitment to a legally binding nuclear supply facility, they also proposed the development of Iran's conventional energy infrastructure, an assistance with Iran's needs for the agricultural development.[562]

The P5+1 group rejected Iran's proposal during their meeting in Geneva in 2008, notably on the ground that it was not meaningful in terms of Iran's nuclear activities while Iran rejected Resolution 1803 because of its unacceptable demands. However, the domestic landscape in Iran was different when Res. 1804 was adopted. President Ahmadinejad was facing intense political criticism from different factions starting with the clergy. Indeed, President Ahmadinejad's ideological interpretation of Shia millenarianism and claims of direct contact with the hidden imam sparked harsh criticism from the clergy who accused him of political recuperation of religious precepts to divert the public opinion from his economic mismanagement.[563]

As the US also decided to impose unilateral economic (financial) sanctions and Res. 1835 being adopted, the economy of the country started to be impacted. For instance, the inflation rate of the country moved from 17.34% in 2007 to 25.41% in 2008 as illustrated in table 4 below. Hence, Ahmadinejad was also sharply criticized by the pragmatist who kept warning against his continuous defiant policy. But the most credible threat came from Ali Akbar Velayati, the foreign affairs advisor of the Supreme Leader who indicated that it would be in the interest of the country to accept the SC offer: "those who are agitating against our interests want us to reject the latest offer … it is in our interests to accept it" he maintained.[564] With such public critic from a close aid of the Supreme Leader, one would have expected Ahmadinejad to soften his stance and behave in a more conciliatory manner. Unfortunately, this was not the case.

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[561] Arms Control Association, **Official proposals on the Iranian nuclear issue, 2003-2013, *Op. Cit.***
[562] Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, **Updated P5+1 package,** Washington, June 16, 2008. Accessed from https://2001-2009.state.gov/t/isn/rls/fs/106217.htm on the 10th of December 2020.
[563] ALFONEH, Ali: **Ahmadinejad versus the clergy**, American Enterprise Institute, N. 5, August 2008, 13 pages.
[564] REZAI, Farhad: **Iran's nuclear program. A study in proliferation and rollback, *Op. Cit.,*** p.161

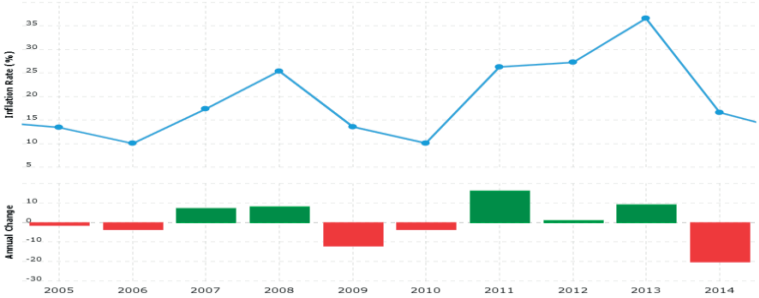

Table 5: Iran's inflation rate from 2006 to 2013.[565]

President Ahmadinejad's defiant policy toward the West can be explained by many factors among which the nature of the demands expressed in the UN Resolutions (this was an unacceptable demand formulated by the coercer and a lack of a strategic empathy from the US). As we have previously analyzed, the domestic enrichment constituted a red line for the Iranians, irrespective of the ideological beliefs of the political factions. Iran's collective memory is shaped by past episodes of undelivered promises which fostered the authorities' mistrust toward the external world (intervening variable of political/strategic culture). Then nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani shared this concern as he declared, "it is possible that other countries will one day decide to stop supplying nuclear fuel to Iran and we should therefore be capable of producing it ourselves as a manifestation of our national dignity and independence."[566] In addition, President Ahmadinejad relied on his framing strategy to dismiss the internal critics to his policy reminding them of the danger of trusting the West. But more importantly, he enjoyed the support of the Supreme Leader who called for unity against foreign threats (intervening variable of the configuration of domestic institutions). He declared for instance that pursuing an aggressive spirit toward world bullies is a manifestation of the government's loyalty to revolutionary slogans and discourse.[567]

Hence, the UNSC unanimously adopted Resolution 1835 which did not impose additional sanctions on Iran, rather called upon Iran upon Iran to comply fully and without delay with its obligations under the above-mentioned resolutions of the

[565] **Iran inflation rate from 2006 to 2013**. Data from Macrotrends **-** World Bank accessed on the 5th of December 2020 from the website https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/IRN/iran/inflation-rate-cpi

[566] YAPHE S., Judith: **Nuclear politics in Iran, *Op. Cit.,*** p.26

[567] DAREINI A., Ali: **Iran's supreme leader defends Ahmadinejad,** Taiwan News, 24 Aug 2008. Accessed from https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/724121 on the 13rd of November 2020.

Security Council, and to meet the requirements of the IAEA Board of Governors.[568] The following 2009 year was decisive in Iran in many regards. From a domestic perspective, Iran had presidential elections while from an international perspective, there was a new US President in the White House: Barack Obama. Before analyzing his approach toward the Iranian nuclear program, just like with President Bush, we will first dwell on his conception of the US foreign policy.

4.4.5 President Obama's foreign policy: actions and beliefs.

Born on the 4th of August 1961, Barack Hussein Obama officially took office as the 44th American president on the 20th of January 2009. Obama had a realist vision of the US foreign policy, one with the protection of the US interests as the cardinal value of each of his international decisions. In this regard, he shared similar goals with his predecessor George Bush in areas like terrorism, human rights and WMD. However, the main difference with George Bush was at the level of the means of his policy. Indeed, unlike Bush, President Obama did not share the idea of the relevance of American Messianism and hence did not consider the American power as a panacea for all the political issues around the world, especially when it came to regimes hostile to the US. According to Ronald Powalski, President Obama "just did not think it was America's responsibility to remove them (hostile foreign leader) from power or, as President John Quincy Adams once said, go around the world seeking "monsters to destroy."[569]

A second difference between Bush and Obama was the preference by the latter for multilateralism over unilateralism. In addition, unlike Bush and even Hilary Clinton, Obama preferred to engage his adversaries and not only confront them. Indeed, as we have previously analyzed, Bush did not want to interact with those he considered as devil[570] unlike Obama who had made the Iranian nuclear issue a top priority of his foreign policy. Barack Obama expressed his commitment to resolving the Iranian nuclear issue in the early days of his mandate. But unlike President Bush, not only did he signal his readiness to engage Iran rather that confront them, but also acknowledged Iran's right to peaceful nuclear energy under the NPT. As he declared during his speech in Prague, "my administration will seek engagement with Iran based on mutual interests and mutual respect. We believe in dialogue. (…) We want Iran to take its rightful place in the community of nations, politically and economically. We will support

[568] **Art 4 of Resolution 1835** adopted by the UNSC on 27 September 2008. Accessed on the 04th of January 2021 from http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1835
[569] POWASKI E., Ronald: **Ideals, interests, and U.S. foreign policy from George H. W. Bush to Donald Trump, *Op. Cit.,*** p. 161
[570] BROWN, Seyom: **Faces of power: constancy and change in United States foreign policy from Truman to Obama, *Op. Cit.,*** p.660

Iran's right to peaceful nuclear energy with rigorous inspections."[571] He reaffirmed his belief two months later during his speech in Cairo when he was addressing the Arab world, especially the Middle East as he said, "any nation -- including Iran -- should have the right to access peaceful nuclear power if it complies with its responsibilities under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty."[572] However, could those declarations of good intentions be enough to break the Iranian stalemate?

Despite the distrust against the US, Barack Obama's election was positively welcomed in Tehran, as it was proven by President Ahmadinejad's unprecedented congratulatory message[573] to President Obama after his election as the 44th US president. Beyond his declarations, President Obama made several bold moves aimed at materializing his intentions regarding the Iranian nuclear program. Among them was his best wishes message addressed to the Iranian people and leaders on the celebration of Nowruz (Persian New Year). He specifically stressed the commitment of his administration to diplomatically tackle the bones of contention between the US and Iran. Mindful of the failure of the former administration approach, he emphasized that the process could not be achieved by "threats, instead engagement that is honest and grounded in mutual respect."[574] He later wrote two letters directly to the Supreme Leaders emphasizing on the US administration desire to improve its cooperation with Iran on both bilateral and regional topic of interests.

Obama's actions were unprecedented, especially with regards to the tumultuous bilateral relations between Tehran and Washington. With respect to the formal aspects of the videotaped message, the fact that the US President had resorted to public diplomacy by sending a video message that could be accessed by millions of Iranians -- without any official censorship -- prevented the Iranian leaders from framing the debate regarding the intentions of the Americans. Regarding the content of the message, many experts agreed upon the strategic importance of Obama's choice of words, referring to the great achievements of the former Persian civilization and his will to approach Tehran on mutual respect basis. For instance, Martin S. Indyk, a former US ambassador to Israel maintains that Obama's "wording is designed to demonstrate

[571] The White House: **Remarks by President Barack Obama in Prague as delivered,** April 5, 2009. Accessed on the 5th of January 2021 from https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-barack-obama-prague-delivered

[572] The White House, **Remarks by the President at Cairo University,** 4 June 2009. Accessed on the 5th January 2021 from the link https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-cairo-university-6- 04-09

[573] GAIETTA, Michele: **The trajectory of Iran's nuclear program, *Op. Cit.,*** p.154

[574] The White House, **Videotaped Remarks by the President in celebration of Nowruz,** March 20, 2009. Accessed from the link https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/videotaped-remarks-president- celebration-nowruz on the 6th January 2021.

acceptance of the government of Iran,"[575] while Trita Parsi argues that "by rejecting the idea that the growing problems between the United States and Iran could be resolved through threats, Obama conveyed that the trigger-happy days of the Bush administration were over."[576] But what was the reaction of the Iranian leaders to these actions of President Obama?

Regarding the video-taped message, the Iranian leaders were surprised by Obama's message. Nonetheless, they provided a lukewarm answer to the US President's gestures of good will. On the one hand they welcomed the new administration shifting approach, but on the other hand remained skeptical about the sincerity of the words of the new President. In a mirror policy move, Supreme Leader Khamenei decided to respond to Obama's video-taped message during a speech from the city of Mashhad on the Nowruz celebration. At a glance, the speech seemed to be a complete dismissal of Obama's "extended hand" as the Supreme Leader first recalled all the historical grievances between the US and Iran, from the interference of Washington in Tehran's domestic affairs to his continuous support for Israel, through the US support to Saddam's war against Iran in 1980. "Before the Revolution, Iran was in the hands of the United States, its vital resources were in the hands of the United States. (…) They showed Saddam (late Iraqi president) a green light. This was another plan by the US Government to attack Iran," Khamenei argued.[577]

However, probably because of the hope the election of Obama had sparked at the international level, and more importantly to avoid being blamed by the Iranians people who had listened to President Obama's overture message, the Supreme Leader decided to give the benefits of doubt to the new President. As one Iranian official said, "if we can't make nice with Barack Hussein Obama, who is preaching mutual respect on a weekly basis and sending us Nowruz greetings, it's going to be pretty obvious that the problem lies in Tehran, not Washington."[578] Consequently, Ayatollah Khamenei conceded: "we do not have any experience with the new US President and Government. We shall see and judge."[579] Yet, he called for more actions than words regarding the change of policy promised by Obama to convince the Iranian leaders. "They tell us to negotiate, to start relations. They have the slogan of change. Where is the change? What

[575] COOPER Helene and SANGER E. David: **Obama's message to Iran is opening bid in diplomatic drive,** The New York Times, March 20, 2009. Accessed on the 6th of January 2021 from the website https://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/21/world/middleeast/21iran.html
[576] PARSI, Trita: **Losing an enemy, *Op. Cit.,*** p.71
[577] COLE, Juan: **OSC: Khamenei's speech replying to Obama,** 23rd of March 2009. Accessed on the 6th of January 2021 from https://www.juancole.com/2009/03/osc-khameneis-speech-replying-to-obama.html
[578] SADJADPOUR, Karim: **Reading Khamenei: The world view of Iran's most powerful leader**, Washington, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009, p.vi
[579] COLE, Juan: **OSC: Khamenei's speech replying to Obama, *Ibid*.**

has changed? Clarify this to us." he stressed.[580] He ended his speech by warning the US that Tehran would change provided Washington does first: "you (the US) change, and we shall change as well. If you do not change, our people became more and more experienced, stronger, and more patient in the past 30 years."[581] However, the presidential election of 2009 tempered these positive dynamics between the US and Iran.

Four years after the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the Iranians were called upon to choose again their leaders on the 12th of June 2009. Among President Ahmadinejad's challengers were Mohsen Rezaï a (Conservative) and Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi (Reformists). Considering the political tensions prior to 2009, there were high expectations with respects to the outcome of the elections as demonstrated by the voter turnout of 85, 21%.[582] A couple of hours after the elections polls had closed, the Ministry of Interior surprisingly announced the victory of President Ahmadinejad with 62.6%, while Mir Hossein Mousavi had officially obtained 33.8%, Moshen Rezai 1.7% and Mehdi Karroubi: 0.9%.[583] In addition, the Supreme Leader also congratulated Ahmadinejad, emphasizing that *the honorable president-elect is a president for all the Iranian people and everyone, including his opponents in the election, should unanimously support him after the election*.[584] Nonetheless, Hossein Mousavi also claimed the victory on the election. This was the beginning of the most unstable political situation in Iran since the 1979 Revolution, and the confirmation of Ahmadinejad's victory by the Guardian Council did not improve the already strained political tension.

Mir-Hussein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi who enjoyed the political support of reformist leaders like former presidents Rafsanjani and Khatami, led a coalition of political parties under the name "the Green Movement." Tara Nesvaderani defines it as *an informal movement that emerged spontaneously after the June 12, 2009, presidential poll over alleged vote-rigging. (…) Youth and women were critical in organizing the initial protests, sustaining public opposition for six months, and organizing a multifaceted civil disobedience campaign. Their activities included a boycott of consumer goods advertised on state-run media, anti-government graffiti on the national currency, and Web site campaigns to identify security forces involved in the crackdown.*[585] The unrest movements that followed seriously shook the pillars of the Islamic regime and span

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[580] COLE, Juan: **OSC: Khamenei's speech replying to Obama, *Op. Cit*.**
[581] COLE, Juan: **OSC: Khamenei's speech replying to Obama, *Ibid***
[582] Data accessed on the 6th of January 2020 from the link https://irandataportal.syr.edu/2009-presidential-election
[583] JONES, Stephen, **The Islamic Republic of Iran: An introduction,** Research Paper 09/92, House of Commons Library, 11 December 2009, p.33
[584] **Leader's message after Presidential vote,** June 13, 2009. Accessed on the 07th January 2020 from the website https://english.khamenei.ir/news/1133/Leader-s-Message-After-Presidential-Vote
[585] NESVADERANI, Tara: **Iran's youth: The protests are not over,** USIP, June 8, 2010, p.3

across all the segments of the society. Indeed, not only leaders of the Iranian civil society, but powerful political and religious leaders also echoed popular demands not only for what they perceived as the actual results of the presidential elections (the victory of Mir Hossein Mousavi) but also democratic reforms of the political system; some even called for the Supreme Guide to step down. This clearly illustrated the shallowness of the political chasm not only between the political establishment and the population, but also among the elites.[586]

As the Head of State and guarantor of the political stability of the country, the Supreme Leader attempted to restore peace in the country. Though he acknowledged deficiencies in the system, especially with respect to the accusations of corruption, he nevertheless praised what he considered to be the achievements of the regimes since its foundation thirty years ago. As he declared, "we do not claim that financial corruption does not exist in our system. Yes, it does. (…) But I want to say that the Islamic Republic system is one of the healthiest political and social systems in the world today."[587] He also dismissed accusations of votes-rigging by not only blaming foreign agents whom he accused of sowing the seeds of the popular demonstrations, but also downplaying the relevance of the accusations of frauds by wondering how millions of votes could be changed. *They (the enemy) kept repeating and drumming it in that the elections were going to be rigged. They were preparing the ground. (…) Sometimes the difference is 100,000, 500,000 or even 1 million. In that case, one could say that there might have been vote-rigging, but how can they rig 11 million votes?* he wondered.[588]

The Supreme Leader ended his speech by warning the Iranian leaders who did not accept the re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as he said, *those — from politicians, heads of parties and directors of political currents — who can exert some influence on the public and are listened to by some groups, should be very careful of their conduct. They should be very careful of what they say.*[589] This was a secret warning toward Ayatollah Rafsanjani who had called for the recognition of the victory of the Hossein Mussavi. But why did the Supreme Guide granted his support to Ahmadinejad who defied him on several occasions and called for democratic reforms? The Supreme Guide's choice to support Ahmadinejad could be surprising, considering the political tensions between the two leaders over several issues as we previously analyzed. In fact, another important constituency within the Iranian political system played an

[586] SUNDQUIST H., Victor, **Iranian Democratization Part I: A historical case study of the Iranian Green Movement**, Journal of Strategic Security, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2013, p.29
[587] COLE, Juan: **Supreme Leader Khamenei's Friday Address on the Presidential elections,** 19th June 2009. Accessed from https://www.juancole.com/2009/06/supreme-leader-khameneis-friday-address.html on the 07th January 2021.
[588] COLE, Juan: **Supreme Leader Khamenei's Friday Address on the Presidential elections, *Op. Cit.*.**
[589] COLE, Juan: **Supreme Leader Khamenei's Friday Address on the Presidential elections, *Ibid.***

instrumental role in the Supreme Guide's actions: the **Revolutionary Guards**. Historically the Revolutionary Guards Corps have been kept away from politics. Former Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini strictly limited their involvement in the political life of the country to basic activity of voting, as he wanted to ensure their loyalty to the new regime.[590]

However, the involvement of the IRGC in Iranian politics grew steadily even though then Presidents Khamenei and Rafsanjani attempted to walk across the lines of Ayatollah Khomeini. For instance, the Guards opposed the "dialogue among civilizations" foreign policy agenda promoted by former President Khatami. IRGC Gen. Yahya R. Safavi declared in this regard that: "can we withstand American threats and domineering attitude with a policy of détente? Can we foil dangers coming from [America] through dialogue between civilizations?"[591] Another visible action of the IRGC illustrating their increasing implications in Iran domestic politics was their closing down of Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport in May 2004, a move described by Anoush Ehteshami and Mahjoob Zweiri as the "greatest demonstration of the Revolutionary Guards' political influence."[592] However, their intervention in Iran's domestic affairs reached its climax with the election of Ahmadinejad. It's important to recall that Ahmadinejad has a revolutionary background though his actual role in battlefields during the Iran-Iraq war remains shady.

IRCG members have been enjoying economic advantages in Iran since the early days of the post-Revolution State. Indeed, they were involved in reconstruction of the country during the eight years' war against Iraq. While Revolutionary Guards-affiliated companies kept benefiting of public contracts, their rise as major actors in the economic life of the country became more visible with the election of Ahmadinejad. Thierry Coville confirms that when he argues that "after the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as president in 2005, (...) important public contracts were then allocated to this company without any tender. (…) In 2006, Khatam signed a $1.3-billion contract for the construction of a 900-kilometer pipeline aiming at delivering natural gas from Asaluyeh (Bushehr Province) and Bandar Abbas (Hormozgan Province), to Iranshahr (Sistan-Balutchestan)."[593]

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[590] WEHREY Frederic et al, ***The IRGC in Politics*** in WEHREY Frederic et al: **The rise of the Pasdaran. Assessing the domestic roles of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps**, California, Santa Monica, RAND Corporation, 2009, p.78

[591] RUBIN, Barry: **The tragedy of the Middle East,** Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p.127. Consulted online.

[592] EHTESHAMI Anoushiravan and ZWEIRI Mahjoob: **Iran and the rise of its neoconservatives: The politics of Tehran's silent revolution,** London, I.B.Tauris, 2007, p.83

[593] COVILLE, Thierry, **The Economic activities of the Pasdaran,** Revue internationale des études du développement, vol. 229, N. 1, 2017, p.94

With respect to the 2009 election, the economic interests of the Guards could have been threatened by the political ousting of Ahmadinejad. Indeed, Ahmadinejad's rivals from the Reformist camp clearly favored a more cooperative stance with the IAEA and the Great Powers regarding the nuclear program; even the Conservative candidate Mohsen Rezaei criticized Ahmadinejad's nuclear strategy: "continuing such nuclear policy will destroy all of our achievements. (…) if the current adventurous path continues, we will be heading towards a precipice."[594] But a shift in nuclear policy was not a mere change of foreign policy, it implied totally new incomers in economic areas which were under the Guards' control because of the sanctions. Eventually they took actions to strengthen Ahmadinejad and hence prevent the advancement of the Reformist's agenda.

The Revolutionary Guards relied on two strategies to prevent the return of the Reformist camp to the stage. First, they intervened directly in the electoral process. According to Farhad Rezaei, the Head of the political bureau of the IRGC Brigadier General Yadollah Jafari admitted that the Guards intervened in the ballot: "the election was going to go to the second round, and then it's not clear what would happen"[595] The second strategy consisted of emphasizing the negative role and threat the Reformist camp, especially their champion Rafsanjani had posed to the Conservative establishment. *Convincing* Ayatollah Khamenei to back Ahmadinejad was the next step, but one that was made easier because the memory of President Khatami was still fresh in conservative circles. Clearly, in spite of his erratic performance and an ailing economy, Ahmadinejad was seen as the lesser of two evils.[596]

As reward for their support in taming the streets riots, Ahmadinejad appointed several personalities with revolutionary backgrounds in key positions of his cabinet. For example, Mostafa Mohammad Najjar, the Interior Minister, was a long-term career Revolutionary Guards Officer and Masoud Mirkazemi the oil minister was a former Commandant in the Revolutionary Guards. Ali Alfoneh argues in this regard that "the strong cabinet presence of former IRGC officers who have a shorter acquaintance with Ahmadinejad (…) suggests that Ahmadinejad has had to reciprocate the IRGC's contribution to his re-election. Increased IRGC participation in the country's economic life and its seizure of publicly-owned economic enterprises is another price Ahmadinejad has had to pay to remain in office."[597] But what was the US reaction to the political turmoil in Iran?

[594] REZAI, Farhad: **Iran's nuclear program. A study in proliferation and rollback, *Op. Cit.,*** p.166
[595] REZAI, Farhad: **Iran's nuclear program. A study in proliferation and rollback, *Ibid.,*** p.169
[596] REZAI, Farhad: **Iran's nuclear program. A study in proliferation and rollback, *Ibid.,*** p.167
[597] ALFONEH, Ali, **All Ahmadinejad's men,** Middle East Quarterly, 2011, p.84

When the public riots triggered in Iran in the aftermath of the June 2009 elections, the Obama administration firstly adopted a surprising neutral position. However, facing increasing domestic and international criticism, he ultimately condemned the repression of the riots in Tehran a week later. "The United States and the international community have been appalled and outraged by the threats, beatings, and imprisonments of the last few days. I strongly condemn these unjust actions, and I join with the American people in mourning each and every innocent life that is lost," he stressed.[598] The cautious approach of the Obama administration in the early days of the repression was due his desire to avoid being accused by the authorities of intervening in Iran's domestic affairs. Nonetheless, his sharp criticism of the brutal repression of riots put a damper on the earlier appeased relations with Iran, as he acknowledged afterward. Even though he had been officially declared the winner of the election, President Ahmadinejad faced intense political criticism home. Unlike the previous years, the sanctions started to seriously impact the country, and Ahmadinejad found it more difficult to blame the Westerners for his economic mismanagement. In addition, the discovery of the hidden nuclear site in the city of Qom further complicated the nuclear issue.

Two months after the Iranian elections, together with President Sarkozy and Prime Minister Gordon Brown, President Obama revealed a hidden nuclear site in the city of Qom. According to President Obama, this was a clear sign of Iran's continuing unwillingness to meet its obligations under UN Security Council resolutions and IAEA requirements. Reflecting on the gravity of the issue, President Sarkozy clearly indicated that Iran would face sanctions if there was not an in-depth change by December 2009. In the same line, Prime Minister stressed that "the international community has no choice but to draw a line in the sand" and the UK "was prepared to implement further and more stringent sanctions."[599] The Iranian authorities rejected the accusations of nuclear weapon activities in that site, claiming that it was a backup plant considering the possibility of an external military attack against the other nuclear sites. However, as tensions were rising between Tehran and its counterparts, an unexpected event occurred: Tehran requested nuclear fuel from the IAEA for its reactor.

Iran officially requested the provision of nuclear fuel to produce medical isotopes in Tehran Research Reactor in June 2009. Then IAEA Director General El Baradei

[598] BORGER Julian and MACASKILL Ewen, **Barack Obama condemns 'unjust' crackdown on Iran protests,** The Guardian, June 23, 2009. An information accessed from on the 7th January 2021 https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jun/23/obama-condemns- crackdown-iran-protests

[599] The White House: **Statements by President Obama French President Sarkozy and British Prime Minister Brown on Iranian nuclear facility,** Sept 25, 2009. An information accessed from https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2009/09/25/statements-president-obama-french-president-sarkozy-and-british-prime-mi on the 7th of January 2021.

immediately seized this diplomatic window to break the deadlock and progress with the Iranian nuclear issue. Consequently, rather than providing directly the nuclear fuel requested by Iran, he informed the US and Russia about Iran's demand. The latter responded positively and proposed a bargain to the Iranians. Basically, Iran would agree to ship out 1.200 Kg of its Low Enriched Uranium (LEU) to third country (ideally Russia), which will be reprocessed up to 20% and returned to Iran in forms of nuclear pads: this bargain was officially described as the **Tehran Research Reactor (TRR) proposal**.[600]

The terms of the TRR proposal would have been beneficial for both sides: indeed, the US would be satisfied by Iran move to get rid of its enriched uranium which was the main bone of contention between both parties, while Iran would obtain the nuclear pad. Although they agreed upon the very logic of the "swap" mentioned in the proposal, they did not agree upon the technical aspects. While the Americans expected Iran to ship out 70% of its nuclear stockpile in Russia at once, the Iranian objected; instead, they wanted a simultaneous swap without having to wait for a couple of months and this should have taken place in Iran and not abroad. This was another illustration of the Iranian distrust toward its international counterpart and their unwillingness to lose their main bargaining asset. Just like the previous proposals of the P5+1 group, the TRR proposal sparked criticisms within the Iranian political landscape. In fact, many personalities warned Ahmadinejad about the risk of being fooled by the P5+1, as they might not fulfil their part of the bargain. But Ahmadinejad dismissed those criticism in these terms, "if we send our enriched uranium abroad and then they do not give us the 20% enriched fuel for our reactor, we are capable of producing it inside Iran."[601]

Ahmadinejad's dismissal of the critic against the TRR proposal hinted at his readiness to agree for the swap. Indeed, it seemed that the main objection lied with the technical aspects of the deal. In addition, considering the Iranian strained political landscape at the time, the proposal could have been of a great political help for Ahmadinejad who was subjected to sharp criticism from the Reformist camp. Surprisingly Turkey and Brazil struck a deal with Iran on the 17th of May 2010 concerning its controversial nuclear stockpile. Under this new Tehran Declaration, "the Islamic Republic of Iran agrees to deposit 1200 kg LEU in Turkey. While in Turkey, this LEU will continue to be the property of Iran."[602] But how did then Prime Minister Erdogan and President Lula

[600] Arms Control Association, **Official proposals on the Iranian nuclear issue, 2003-2013, *Op. Cit.***
[601] BBC: **Iran president Ahmadinejad accepts nuclear deal terms,** February 3, 2010. Accessed from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8494772.stm on the 7th of January 2021.
[602] **Art. 5** of **The Tehran Declaration of May 17, 2010**. Read BORGER, Julian: **Text of the Iran-Brazil-Turkey deal**, The Guardian, May 17, 2010. An information accessed on the 7th of January 2021 from https://www.theguardian.com/world/julian-borger-global-security-blog/2010/may/17/iran-brazil-turkey-nuclear.

Da Silva managed to conclude a diplomatic deal with Iran where President Obama and his P5+1 colleagues could not. This diplomatic breakthrough was possible partly because of the nature of the bilateral relation the aforementioned countries have with Iran and the fact that they both belong to the non-aligned movement undoubtedly played an incremental role in Iran's decision to sign the deal.

Surprisingly, President Obama rejected this agreement signed by Brazil, Iran, and Turkey. Trita Parsi maintains that Obama's rejection of the 2009 Tehran Declaration was mainly due to the domestic pressure he was facing from the Congress and the appeal of sanctions as a better steppingstone toward Iran's acceptance of substantial negotiations. "Between instituting sanctions and getting one bomb's worth of LEU out of Iran, Washington had chosen the former, and Congress had made that choice a reality," Trita Parsi argues.[603] Michele Gaietta challenges this point of view as he argued that, "although Iran had roughly accepted the demands made by the international negotiators for the TRR, any reference to the suspension of Iranian enrichment activities over and above 5 percent was completely absent from the agreement draft. This suspension was crucial to re-establish, ex-post, the substantive conditions to which the parties had agreed in October 2009."[604] Richard Nephew goes further and adds that not only did that Tehran Declaration not met all the expectation of the US and the remaining P5+1, but also "it wasn't presented as a proposal that we could work on. It was presented as a take or leave it America, which America didn't do. Also worth noting, worry was that China and Russia will stick on this at the Security Council and endorse it, Europeans as well. But within an hour after we had talked with the Russian and Chinese, they all agreed it was complete nonsense, a ridiculous attempt by Turkey, Iran, and Brazil to undermine what we were doing in New York," he emphasized.[605] After this failure, the UNSC adopted Res. 1929.

The UNSC adopted Resolution 1929 on the 9th of June, 2010, despite the opposition of certain countries like Brazil and Turkey. After recalling all the previous Resolutions and emphasizing Iran's failure to comply with its international obligations regarding its nuclear program, the SC decided to impose additional upon Iran. However, such a decision was not grounded on the failure of the TRR proposal; rather, to counter and add pressure on the P5+1 group, Iran unveiled new centrifuges capable of enriching

[603] PARSI, Trita: **Losing an enemy, *Op. Cit.,*** p.110

[604] GAIETTA, Michele: **The trajectory of Iran's nuclear program, *Op. Cit.,*** p.163. It is important to highlight that by 2009, Iran had already mastered the nuclear enrichment up to 20%, which seriously increased their nuclear weapon capabilities and lowered the "breakout" time to produce one nuclear warhead.

[605] **Interview with Richard Nephew on the US coercive strategy with Iran**

Uranium up to 20%, which posed a severe proliferation concern.[606] Indeed, a State can obtain a nuclear bomb through two chemical elements: either Uranium (235U) or plutonium (239Pu). For technical reasons, Iran opted for Uranium enrichment activities, and to get enough fissile material to produce one nuclear bomb with Uranium, a State needs Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) which can be obtained when the enrichment activities reach 20%; beyond 90%, we obtain weapon-grade HEU..[607]

In line with the previous Resolutions, the UNSC continued to rely on a coercive denial strategy as it decided that all "States shall prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer to Iran, (…) any battle tanks, armored combat vehicles, large caliber artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships, missiles or 5 missile systems as defined for the purpose of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. In addition, Iran shall not undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using ballistic missile technology."[608] Furthermore, Res. 1929 also called upon States to inspect all cargo to and from Iran, in their territory, including seaports and airports, *if the State concerned has information that provides reasonable grounds to believe the cargo contains items the supply, sale, transfer, or export of which is prohibited by paragraphs 3, 4 or 7*.[609] All those articles referred to nuclear-related activities.

Resolution 1929 also broadened the list of individuals and entities sanctioned due to their role in Iran nuclear activities; the new list included henceforth among others: individuals like then Head of the AEOI, Javad Rahiqi, entities like Defense Technology and Science Research Centre, the First East Export Bank, which is affiliated with Bank Mellat, the Ministry of Defense Logistics Export, the Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Headquarters.[610] By requesting from the IAEA to submit a report within 90 days on the compliance by Iran with the provisions of Res. 1929, the Security Council aimed at creating a "sense of urgency."

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[606] France 24, **Tehran unveils faster enrichment centrifuge,** April 9, 2010. Accessed on the 7th of January 2021 from https://www.france24.com/en/20100409-tehran-unveils-faster-enrichment-centrifuge.

[607] An information accessed from https://tutorials.nti.org/nuclear-101/uranium-enrichment/ on the 7th of January 2021. Also read IAEA, **Management of high enriched uranium for peaceful purposes: Status and trends,** June 2005, 58 pages. Accessed from the website https://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/Publications/PDF/te_1452_web.pdf on the 7th of January 2021.

[608] **Art 8 and 9 of UNSC Res. 1929**. An information accessed on the 8th of January 2021 from https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/unsc_res1929-2010.pdf.

[609] **Art 14 of UNSC Res. 1929, *Ibid.***

[610] **Annex I and II of UNSC Res. 1929, *Op. Cit.***

To strengthen Res. 1929, the EU decided to also adopt a new set of sanctions against Iran under Council Decision 2010/413/CFSP.[611] Relying on the coercive denial strategy as well, the EU imposed nuclear-related trade sanctions to Iran. For example, they prohibited the supply, sale, or transfer of "items, materials, equipment, goods and technology contained in the Nuclear Suppliers Group and Missile Technology Control Regime lists." In addition, "any additional items, materials, equipment, goods and technology, determined by the Security Council or the Committee, which could contribute to enrichment-related, reprocessing or heavy water-related activities, or to the development of nuclear weapon delivery systems were also prohibited under this Council Decision."[612]

Despite the fact that the EU imposed trade and financial sanctions to Iran under Art.4 and Art.5, considering the fact that they both targeted the nuclear activities of Iran, they fall under the coercive denial strategy. For instance, on the one hand, Art. 4.1 of the aforementioned Council Decision targeted the oil and natural gas sectors of Iran and prohibited the sale, supply or transfer of key equipment and technology which play a strategic role in the following activities: refining, liquefied natural gas, exploration and production. Art. 6 On the other hand prohibited "the granting of any financial loan or credit to enterprises in Iran that are engaged in the sectors of the Iranian oil and gas industry referred to in Article 4(1) or to Iranian- owned enterprises engaged in those sectors outside Iran."[613]

The P5+1 leaders unanimously welcomed the adoption of UN Res. 1929. According to Barack Obama, the last UN Resolution against Iran aimed at sending "an unmistakable message about the international community's commitment to stopping the spread of nuclear weapons and demonstrating the growing costs that will come with Iranian intransigence."[614] However, he emphasized that "these sanctions are not directed at the Iranian people," which clearly indicated that the Great Powers wanted to avoid civilian casualties. Although Tehran sharply criticized Russia for not having vetoed the Resolution, Moscow also stressed that "the sanctions would not be paralyzing, and therefore not affect ordinary people; the resolution would not contain permission to use force (and more importantly), Russia would be able to fully defend its economic interests allowing cooperation with Iran to continue in such areas as peaceful use of

[611] CFSP refers to the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy.
[612] **Art. 1a and 1b of Council Decision 2010/413/CFSP.** Accessed on the 7th of January 2021 from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32010D0413&from=EN
[613] **Art. 4.1 and Art 6 of Council Decision 2010/413/CFSP, *Ibid.***
[614] American Rhetoric, **Barack Obama. Address on UN Security Council sanctions against Iran,** 9th of June 2010. An information accessed on the 7th of January 2021 from the link https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/barackobama/barackobamairansanctions.htm.

nuclear energy and civil space research."[615] Then British Foreign Secretary William Hague added that *nothing in recent months has given confidence to the international community that Iran's nuclear program is for peaceful purposes. The world won't just walk away in the face of a refusal to negotiate... This is a major toughening of the sanctions on Iran.*[616]

Irrespective of the nuisance of those new sanctions, President Obama was perfectly aware that targeting only the nuclear establishment and the political elites did not represent a credible leverage to compel Iran to adopt a more conciliatory approach. However, there were two main obstacles to overcome in order to make sanctions more painful: on the one hand the political cost of getting the approval of Russia to vote for sanctions,[617] and on the second hand the reluctance of China and Russia to impose tougher sanctions which would have not only affected the civilians, but also undermined their economic relation with Iran. This is a clear illustration of the challenges related to multilateral coercion strategies as previously analyzed by Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman. Consequently, President Obama chose a unilateral policy and, together with the Congress, started to impose US sanctions.

The first set of nuclear-related unilateral sanctions that the United States imposed upon Iran were the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act (CISADA) voted by the Congress and signed on July 1, 2010, by President Obama. The CISADA mainly targeted the oil and bank sectors, especially companies which were involved in both the ballistic and nuclear program of Iran. Foreign financial institutions were prohibited to pursue several activities related the Iranian nuclear program under this legislation. Among them were for example the act of "engaging in money laundering, or facilitating efforts by the Central Bank of Iran or any other Iranian financial institution, to carry out either of the facilitating activities described above (by the previous UN Resolutions on Iran); or the act of "facilitating a significant transaction or transactions or providing significant financial services for: the IRGC or any of its agents or affiliates whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA)."[618] What made those

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[615] PIKAYEV A., Alexander, **Why Russia supported sanctions against Iran**, James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, June 23, 2010. Accessed from https://nonproliferation.org/why-russia-supported-sanctions-against-iran/ on the 7th of January 2021.

[616] BLACK Ian and MACASKILL Ewen: **UN imposes new sanctions on Iran,** The Guardian, June 9, 2010. Accessed from the link https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/jun/09/un-sanctions-iran-nuclear-ahmadinejad on the 7th of January 2021.

[617] BAKER Peter and SANGER E. David, **U.S. makes concessions to Russia for Iran sanctions,** New York Times, May 21, 2010. An information accessed on the 7th of January 2021 from https://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/22/world/22sanctions.html.

[618] The U.S. Treasury Department: **CISADA: The new U.S. sanctions on Iran**, 2010, p.2. Accessed on the 8th of January 2021 from https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/126/CISADA_english.pdf

sanctions binding at the international level and their extra-territoriality effective was the fine applicable to any infringer, estimated at "$250,000 or twice the transaction value, and criminal penalties for willful violations of up to $1 million and 20 years in prison."[619] (Vertical escalation). But what was Iran's reactions to those new sanctions?

By targeting the financial sector and limiting international trades with Iran, the adoption of the CISADA inaugurated the era of the **punishment coercive strategy** in the US coercive attempts to tame the Iranian nuclear challenge. The effects of its provisions were clearly visible. For instance, they substantially reduced the gasoline deliveries which Iran heavily depended upon that to produce its oil. As foreign partners were now reluctant to trade with Iran due to the sword of Damocles of sanctions, "gasoline deliveries to Iran dwindled from about 120,000 barrels per day before CISADA to about 30,000 barrels per day in the following months."[620] Nonetheless, Iran GDP was still above 5.7%, as clearly illustrated by the previous table 2.

Consequently, in line with their previous positions, the Iranian authorities rejected the new UN sanctions. "Nothing will change. The Islamic Republic of Iran will continue uranium enrichment activities" hammered Ali Asghar Soltanieh, then Iran's envoy to the IAEA.[621] Consequently, the Iranian government expanded the scope of its nuclear enrichment capabilities by installing new centrifuges. This was a clear **counter-denial strategy** crafted by Tehran, as the goal was to demonstrate to Washington the ineffectiveness of their sanction policy. A Senior Iranian official described it in these terms: "we escalated our nuclear activities to show what pressure would produce. Perhaps we really didn't need some of the nuclear facilities and activities we engaged in, but we deemed it necessary for breaking the mentality of the other side."[622] (Iran's counter vertical escalation). The intransigence of the belligerents greatly fueled tensions between both parties, especially as the specter of a military intervention loomed over the Iranian nuclear program.

As all the initiatives to solve the Iranian nuclear issue so far had not been successful, the Obama administration found itself in a very uncomfortable situation. Indeed, the nuclear deadlock was progressively leading the administration toward a dilemma between inaction and the recourse to military force, something President Obama wanted to avoid absolutely. Indeed, not only would this have meant a failure of one of his top foreign policy goals, but would have emboldened proponents of force against

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[619] The U.S. Treasury Department: **CISADA: The new U.S. sanctions on Iran**, ***Ibid.,*** p.5
[620] MACALUSO, Agnese: **The apparent success of Iran Sanctions Iran, Rouhani, and the nuclear deal,** The Hague Institute for Global Justice, Working Paper 2, August 2014, p.10
[621] BLACK Ian and MACASKILL Ewen: **UN imposes new sanctions on Iran, *Ibid.***
[622] PARSI, Trita: **Loosing an enemy, *Op. Cit.,*** p.118

Iran like PM Netanyahu. Fortunately, a middle-ground was found with the recourse to covert actions which included activities such as cyber-attacks. (Horizontal escalation).

Launching a cyber-attack was an attractive foreign policy in many regards. From a political perspective, it was less costly than launching military strikes with unpredictable consequences. From a technical perspective, it would seriously damage the nuclear infrastructure of Iran, which would satisfy Israel regarding Iran's growing nuclear capabilities. Consequently, together with the help of Israel, the US developed what Kim Zetter described the world's *first digital weapon* under the code name *Olympic Games*: the Stuxnet malware.[623] The malware was introduced in the nuclear infrastructures of Iran through a USB stick which infected computers that were connected to the centrifuges. Many experts agree that they destroyed around 1000 centrifuges which could be considered as a success, provided the original goal of the Stuxnet was to destroy a more limited number of centrifuges and set back Iran's progress in operating Fuel Enrichment Plant (FEP).[624] Irrespective of the fact that it was in the cyber domain, the Stuxnet was the very first attack against Iran.

The second type of covert actions which impacted the evolution of the Iranian nuclear program were the killing of top Iranian nuclear scientists. One of them was Majid Shahriari, described as a member of the engineering faculty at the Shahid Beheshti in Tehran and linked with the nuclear program was killed during an attack by unidentified men on motorbikes. Fereydoun Abbassi Davani, another senior Iranian nuclear physician, was also the target of a similar attack but survived and appointed Head of the AEOI by President Ahmadinejad. The attack against Abbassi Davani was special as he had been formally identified in UN Res. 1747 as a "Senior Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics (MODAFL) scientist with links to the Institute of Applied Physics."[625] Although there was no confirmation neither from the Israeli or the US government, many experts agreed that those attacks had been masterminded by the Mossad. The fact that Dr Mohsen Fakhrizadeh Mahabadi, a former IRGC Brigadier General and Head of the Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research was killed on November 27, 2020, after being mentioned by PM Netanyahu in a presentation of secret documents related to alleged purpose and goal of the Iranian nuclear program

[623] ZETTER, Kim: **Countdown to zero day: Stuxnet and the launch of the world's first digital weapon**, New York City, Crown, 2014, 448 pages. SCHERPENISSE, Wouter, **The Stuxnet Operation: Why it is not plausible that Dutch intelligence and security services acted independently,** Erasmus School of Law, Jan 12, 2024.
[624] ALBRIGHT David, BRANNAN Paul, and WALROND Christina: **Did Stuxnet take out 1,000 centrifuges at the Natanz enrichment plant?,** Institute for Science and International Security, Washington, 2010, p.1
[625] Annex I of **UNSC Res. 1747, *Op. Cit.***

confirms the modus operandi of the Israeli secret services.[626] But how did the Iranian authorities react to all these covert actions?

The Iranian authorities acknowledged the cyber-attacks, although they downplayed their impact on the nuclear program. For instance, President Ahmadinejad declared that "they (the US and Israel) succeeded in creating problems for a limited number of our centrifuges with the software they had installed in electronic parts. But the problem has been resolved."[627] Regarding the killing of key nuclear scientists, President Ahmadinejad immediately accused Israel and the US government who had "undoubtedly" played a strategic role in the killing of those scientists but insisted that it would not deter Iran from improving its nuclear program. Despite the consensus over the condemnation of the killing of members of the Iranian scientific community, there were still political rifts among key elites, especially between Ahmadinejad and Khamenei. Indeed, despite his endorsement by the Supreme Guide, Ahmadinejad was still lacking political from many elites. But why did those covert actions not lead Iran to a more cooperative behavior?

With respect to the cyber-attacks, as we previously analyses in the literature review, the social and political conditions play a strategic role regarding the effectiveness of cyber coercion and the Iran case provides an empirical evidence to Christopher Whyte's argument.[628] Indeed, while the Stuxnet undoubtedly halted the nuclear progress of Tehran, yet the nuclear program was not stopped; indeed, not only did the Iranians learned from their mistakes, but also installed more advanced centrifuges in other enrichment sites in a retaliatory move. Regarding the killings of top nuclear scientists, the authorities described them as *martyrs* which triggered increasing public support and ushered more vocations in the scientific areas related to the nuclear program. Indeed, the notion of martyrdom is one of the core identity marker in Shia religion and a great catalyst of political resistance. As Adel Hashemi confirms it, "for the Shia, the martyr's blood triumphed over the sword; it was a victory in defeat. The notion of martyrdom changed from being beneficial for the martyr in the afterlife to becoming a motivating factor in social and political movements. It turned out to be a vehicle of protest and a voice of discontent."[629] From a neoclassical realist perspective, the intervening variables of the political/strategic culture and the State-society relations

[626] BBC, **Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, Iran's top nuclear scientist, assassinated near Tehran**, November 27, 2020. Accessed from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-55105934 on the 8th of January 2021.
[627] HAFEZI, Parisa, **Iran admits cyber-attack on nuclear plants**, Reuters, Nov 29, 2010. Accessed on the 8th January 2021 from https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-idUSTRE6AS4MU20101129
[628] WHYTE, Christopher, **Ending cyber coercion: computer network attacks, exploitation and the case of North Korea**, ***Op. Cit***.
[629] HASHEMI Adel: **The making of Martyrdom in modern Twelver Shi'ism: From protesters and revolutionaries to shrine defenders**, London, I.B. Taurus, 2022, p.30 (consulted online)

helped the Iranian to alleviate the domestic effects of the systemic pressures (coercion) and maintain a defiant nuclear policy. Hence, this US strategy clearly failed to exploit the weaknesses of Iran; instead, it boosted their defiance by providing domestic drivers to their legitimacy and thus their resistance.

Nonetheless, Ahmadinejad was facing increasing critics, mainly due to the negative effects of the sanctions. Hence, the deal signed with Turkey and Brazil would have been a suitable way-out for Ahmadinejad to regain political legitimacy, as it could have reduced the economic pressure of the sanctions. However, the Supreme Guide's technical requirements prevented the success story Ahmadinejad had envisioned. In a way to strike back, he sacked then Foreign Affairs Minister Manouchehr Mottaki and appointed Ali Akbar Saheli in the spot. Baqer Moin, an Iranian journalist argued in this regard that, dismissing the Foreign Minister was "Ahmadinejad asserting his control over the foreign policy field. It is a challenge to Khamenei too because he would have expected to have been consulted. It is bound to increase tensions to a higher level. It is vintage Ahmadinejad – presenting others with a fait accompli."[630]

After the failure of the TTR proposal, the other major nuclear proposal aiming at building confidence between the belligerents and solving the Iranian nuclear stalemate was the step-by-step proposal suggested by Russia. Mainly based on the principle of reciprocity, the Russian proposal consisted of the US and Iran responding to each other gesture to break the nuclear stalemate. Basically, Iran would gradually address the IAEA's concerns regarding its nuclear program in exchange of the progressive lifting of the sanctions imposed on its economy. Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Serguei Lavrov described it in these terms: "the response to each specific step of Iran would be followed by some reciprocal step, like freezing some sanctions and shortening the volume of sanctions."[631] The Iranians responded positively to the broad terms of the Russian proposal but remained firm on the recognition of its "inalienable" right to nuclear enrichment. The US were no less sceptical about the outcome of the Russian proposal as then Secretary of States Hilary Clinton declared that "we are committed to our dual track of pressure and engagement and we want to explore with the Russians ways that we can perhaps pursue more effective engagement strategies."[632] Concretely, the US expressed its reservation regarding the absence of the construction of the heavy

[630] BLACK, Ian, **Mahmoud Ahmadinejad sacks foreign minister in bid to assert control,** The Guardian, Dec 13, 2010. An information accessed on the 8th January 2020 from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/dec/13/iran-president-ahmadinejad-fires-foreign-minister

[631] FAYAZMANESH, Sasan: **Containing Iran: Obama's policy of "tough diplomacy"**, Cambridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2013, p.293. Consulted online.

[632] FAYAZMANESH, Sasan: **Containing Iran: Obama's policy of "tough diplomacy"**, ***Ibid.,*** p.293

water reactor of Arak, or clear technical issues to be solved by Iran with the IAEA.[633] Beyond those criticism, President Obama's rejection of the Russian proposal was more politically rooted than technical.

As the time was going and no concrete solution looming on the horizon, the Congress increased its pressure on the Obama administration, calling for additional sanctions against Iran. In a letter sent to the President, 90 Senators expressed their anxiousness regarding the evolution of the Iranian nuclear program. "We remain seriously concerned that Iran continues to accelerate its uranium enrichment and ballistic missile programs. (…) We must do more to increase the economic pressure on the regime. In our view, the United States should embark on a comprehensive strategy to pressure Iran's financial system by imposing sanctions on the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), or Bank Markazi."[634] Considering Iran's gesture of good will regarding the Russian proposal, this was a clear sign that the US had skipped the diplomatic pattern and preferred the pressure track. Nonetheless, the increased pressure did not come only from the US, but also from Israel. Indeed, Israel had been contemplating the possibility of a nuclear strike against the Iranian nuclear infrastructure. "No option should be removed from the table," Ehud Barak, Israel's former Defense Minister declared in an interview with BBC.[635] Nonetheless, the Great Powers privileged more economic sanctions over the military option.

To compel Iran to meet with the demands of the IAEA, the EU adopted Council Decision 2012/35/CFSP of the 23rd of January 2012. This Decision was also a clear coercive **punishment strategy**. Indeed, it mainly imposed trade sanctions to Iran as it prohibited among others "the import, purchase or transport of Iranian crude oil and petroleum products" (Art. 3a). In addition, "the sale, supply or transfer of key equipment and technology for the petrochemical industry in Iran, or to Iranian or Iranian-owned enterprises engaged in that industry outside Iran" were prohibited under Art. 4a. The EU also focused on non-petroleum sectors like gold and precious metals which the sale of was prohibited.[636] The EU also imposed financial sanctions upon Iran: "the granting of any financial loan or credit to enterprises in Iran that are engaged in the Iranian petrochemical industry" (Art. 6a). But one of the strongest and most popular financial sanctions the EU had taken against Iran was probably the

[633] GAIETTA, Michele: **The trajectory of Iran's nuclear program, *Op. Cit.,*** p.173
[634] The Iran Primer, **90 Senators: Sanction Iran's Central Bank,** USIP, Aug 11, 2011. Accessed on the 9th of January 2021 from https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2011/aug/11/90-senators-sanction-irans-central-bank
[635] MARX Bettina, GOEBEL Nicole, **Iran warns West against military strike,** Deutsche Welle (DW), Nov 7, 2011. Accessed from https://www.dw.com/en/iran-warns-west-against-military-strike/a-15515091 on the 8th January 2021.
[636] The EU, **Council Decision 2012/35/CFSP**, Jan 23, 2012. Accessed on the 8th of January 2021 from https://eur- lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2012:019:0022:0030:EN:PDF

decision to ban Iran from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) system. In fact, the EU adopted Council Decision 2012/152/CFSP on the 15th of March 2012 which prohibited to supply specialized financial messaging services, which are used to exchange financial data, to the persons and entities referred to in paragraph 1 (Decision 2010/413/CFSP).[637] Combined with the Executive Orders[638] signed by President Obama at the same time, those sanctions had devastating effect in the Iranian domestic politics.

From an economic perspective, Iran was not able to export more than 1 million of barrels[639] of oil per day upon the imposition of the EU sanctions. Consequently, the inflation rate in Iran skyrocketed from 10.25% in 2005 when Ahmadinejad stepped in to more than 25% in 2012 during his final years in office. In addition, the GDP nosedived from 3.20% to -7.445% for the same period.[640] But the sanctions also affected the health and private sectors; regarding the former, then Head of the Society for Pharmacists of Iran, Rahbar Mozhdehi Azar, admitted that *"the majority of pharmacies are up for sale due" to a four-fold increase in taxation on pharmacies and serious delays in insurance payments*.[641] With respect to the private sector, due to US financial sanctions, many companies now refuse to sell auto parts to Iranian automobile companies. As a result, there has been a 36% decrease in car manufacturing, which will lead to widespread layoffs and could lead to serious labor unrest.[642] From a political perspective, President Ahmadinejad was subjected to sharp criticism both in the elite' circles and ordinary citizens. Indeed, hardliners and Reformist alike vehemently blamed him for the economic situation of the country. For instance, the hard-line Prayer leader of Mashhad, Ayatollah Alamhoda, went as far as to say that the "present conditions were warlike." Considering all those variables, one would have expected President Ahmadinejad to backtrack and adopt a more conciliatory approach. yet, he did not.

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[637] Art 1 of **Council Decision 2012/152/CFSP**, March 15th, 2012. Accessed on the 8th of January 2021 from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32012D0152&rid=1

[638] For example, Section 1 of **Executive Order 13599** signed by President Obama on Feb 5th, 2012, blocked "all property and interests in property of the Government of Iran, including the Central Bank of Iran, that are in the United States, (…) including any foreign branch." Accessed from https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/DCPD- 201200083/pdf/DCPD-201200083.pdf on the 8th of January 2021.

[639] International Energy Agency, ***Impact of sanctions on Crude Oil Exports***. Cited by SAMORE, Gary: **Sanctions against Iran: A Guide to targets, terms, and timetables,** Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School, June 2015, p.14

[640] **Iran GDP Growth Rate 2005-2013, *Op. Cit.* and Iran inflation rate from 2006 to 2013, *Op. Cit.***

[641] SADEGHI-BOROUJERDI, Eskandar: **Sanctioning Iran: implications and consequences,** Oxford Research Group, October 2012, p.13

[642] SADEGHI-BOROUJERDI, Eskandar: **Sanctioning Iran: implications and consequences, *Ibid.***

Despite the poor economic situation that the country was facing, President Ahmadinejad surprisingly maintained a firm and assertive nuclear policy. This can be explained by several factors. Among them was yet again the support of the Supreme Leader (intervening variable of the domestic balance of power among the institutions). Indeed, notwithstanding the chorus of criticism against his nuclear and hence economic policies, President Ahmadinejad was still enjoying the political support of key political figures and the IRGC. This situation created a deep political hostility among key elites and could have ended up in a **power-base erosion** (coercive mechanism). But to avoid such outcome which threatened the survival of the regime, Ayatollah called for political unity and support for the Presidents irrespective of one personal and political opinion.

Indeed, the Supreme Leader basically relied on the framing strategy and described the sanction policy as a strategy of the West to topple the regime, a threat all the Iranians should fight against. (Intervening variables of the political/strategic culture and the State-society relations) Oliver Borszik confirms it as he argues that "by declaring the sanctions an external attack against the revolution and the entire system, the supreme leader evoked a "rally around the flag" effect. In this way, Khamenei used the sanctions as an external stimulus to prompt the political elite to do away with the latent intra factional disputes."[643] This argument was politically useful as many international medias echoed Israel's plans to strike Iran's nuclear facilities, as illustrated in figure 7 below. Although it was never considered a credible threat by the Iranian authorities, the Israel military threat was a perfect political springboard to keep the country united.

Furthermore, President Ahmadinejad wanted to avoid bargaining with the US and the other Great Powers from a weak position. It is worth emphasizing that the diplomatic door had not been completely closed, irrespective of the aforementioned tensions between the US and Iran. In fact, the P5+1 and Iran attended several meetings in different regions of the world to break the nuclear deadlock. Among them was the meeting in Bagdad in May 2012. Basically, the P5+1 group proposal consisted of the following: Iran had to "stop uranium enrichment up to 20% U-235, ship out all of the 20% enriched uranium already produced, and close the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant;"[644] this was referred later as the 3S strategy: "stop, shut, ship." In exchange they made bare promises regarding the lifting of the crippling sanctions that were imposed upon the economy.

[643] BORSZIK, Oliver: **International Sanctions against Iran under President Ahmadinejad: Explaining regime persistence**, GIGA Research Paper, N. 260, November 2014, p.18

[644] **Iran nuclear overview**, Nuclear Treaty Initiative, June 25, 2020. Accessed on the 8th of January 2021 from https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/iran-nuclear/

The previous demands could not be accepted by Tehran and the American leaders were clearly aware of that. Why then engage in diplomacy if one knows the outcome in advance? Trita Parsi argues that "the more Iran asked for sanctions relief, the greater the West's confidence that sanctions would eventually force Iran to back down — as long as the pressure wasn't eased. With only one month left until the embargo was to come into effect, neither Washington nor Brussels was in the mood to compromise."[645] Nonetheless, Iranians proposed a 5 points counterproposal which included among others the acknowledgement by the West of its enrichment right, the cooperation with the IAEA, and bilateral cooperation on regional issues.[646] As each party considered its nuclear strategy to be useful and effective, and stood firmed on its position, the tensions continued. Consequently, Iran introduced additional centrifuges, while the US imposed more sanctions. What lessons should learn from the previous coercive nuclear negotiations?

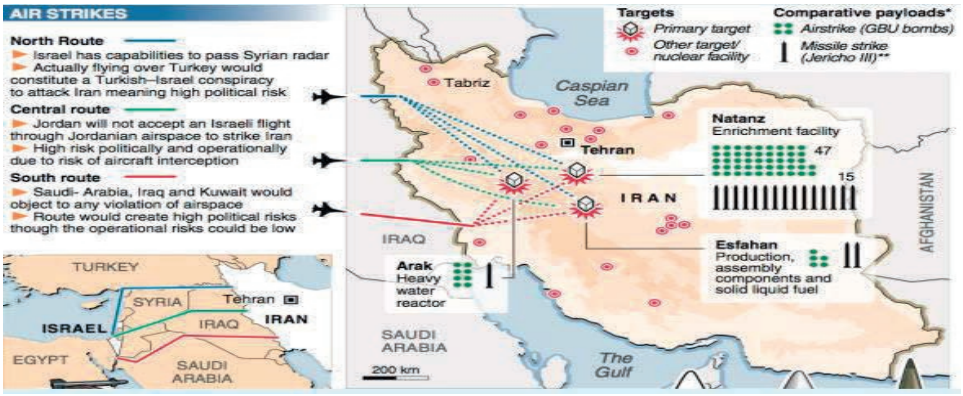

Figure 7: Israel's plans of attack against Iran's nuclear facilities.[647]

[645] PARSI, Trita: **Losing an enemy, *Op. Cit.,*** p.146
[646] Arms Control Association, **Official proposals on the Iranian nuclear issue, 2003-2013, *Op. Cit.***
[647] HUDSON, John, **The playbook for an Israeli airstrike on Iran's nuclear facilities,** The Atlantic, Feb 21, 2012. Accessed from on the 8th of January 2021 from the link https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/02/playbook-israeli-airstrike-irans-nuclear-facilities/331450/

4.5 SECTION V – THEORETICAL LESSONS FROM THE COERCIVE DYNAMICS BETWEEN THE US AND IRAN.

As previously highlighted, the main goal of this chapter was to answer to the main questions pertaining to our research design: **what were the objectives pursued by the US in implementing of coercive policies against Iran? What coercive strategies were adopted to achieve these objectives? What were the expected outcomes of the US in the aftermath of the implementation of their coercive strategies? What were the actual outcomes at the end of the process and why such outcomes?** But the analysis would be conducted against the backdrop of our hypotheses: the exploitation by the US coercive strategies of the weaknesses of Iran and the motivation displayed by the US to maintain a sustained coercive campaign aiming at compelling Iran to change its controversial nuclear policy. In essence, did Iran's response to US demands stem from coercive-related domestic changes or fear of heightened threats?

Also, we would consider whether or not the US coercive strategies and threats were credible, proportionate and reciprocal to the Iranian response? In light of our theoretical lens (neoclassical realism), we would also highlight the transmitting-belt role played by the intervening variables between the independent variable (systemic pressures/international demands) and the dependent variable (foreign policy). This research design would help us to confirm the relevance of the following four ingredients regarding the implementation of a successful coercive strategy in the nuclear realm: the display by the coercer of a strategic empathy towards its target, the formulation of clear and acceptable demands to the target, display by the coercer of a higher resolve than the target to achieve his/her objective, and the offer of credible incentives to the target if the target complies.

Regarding the goal pursued by the US in imposing coercive policies against Iran, both the Bush and the Obama administrations' goal was to prevent Iran from building nuclear weapons. However, while the later aimed at limiting the nuclear capabilities of Iran, the former implicitly explored the idea of toppling the regime. The empiric evidence which strengthens our conclusion are twofold: on the first hand the aggressive or confrontational approach adopted against Iran from the very discovery of the nuclear program in 2002 and on the second hand, the unrealistic demands formulated by the Bush administration which could be served as pretext to wage war against Iran considering their anticipated noncompliance with the US demands. Conversely, the Obama administration relied on a respectful and empathic approach with Iran, at least in the first hours of his mandate. This constituted a clear break with the Bush administration and sent signals to Iran with respect to the true intentions of the new administration.

Regarding the coercer's strategy, the two US administrations relied on similar but also different strategies, depending on the circumstances. Until 2006, the Bush administration relied essentially on coercive political isolation, notably by framing Iran as the representative of Devil the US (Good) does not exchange words with. After realizing the failure of this strategy, the Bush administration relied on the international power-based erosion by trying to distant Iran from its key partners (China and Russia). In addition, he adopted the denial coercive strategy by pushing for UN sanctions that would prevent Iran from improving its nuclear program. After realizing the limits of its engagement policy, President Obama, just like President Bush, first relied on the denial coercive strategy by targeting entities and individuals who played an instrumental role in the nuclear program of Iran. Considering the pitfall of such strategy, President Obama opted for a punitive coercive strategy. Instead of focusing on elites who could easily circumvent the sanctions, he decided to impose sanctions which will directly affect the population. All these strategies were implemented thanks to instruments like diplomatic isolation, economic sanctions (trade and financial), covert actions (cyber and probably nuclear assassination). The choice of one strategy or another depended on the expected mechanisms created by the coercive instruments.

Concerning the expected mechanism, we did not have substantial information regarding the expected mechanism of the Bush administration in relying on the international coercive political isolation. Yet, regarding the denial and punishment strategy, especially under the Obama administration, the expected mechanism were mainly the power-base erosion and unrest. Though these mechanisms could have effectively occurred, the reverse actually happened. Unlike what the Obama had envisioned, there were not major unrest in Iran, at least caused by his coercive nuclear strategy. Rather, Iranian citizens demonstrated a strong resilience, mostly during the first mandate of President Ahmadinejad, and this can be explained by the role played by the intervening variables we highlighted in our theoretical framework, the neoclassical realism theory.

The envisioned transmitting-belt effect the neoclassical realism theory clearly transpired in the coercive dynamics between Washington and Tehran. In fact, President Ahmadinejad had recourse to either the political/strategic culture of Iran, or the ability for the officials to mobilize public support to their nuclear policy (State-society relations). In addition, the balance of power among domestic institutions also played an instrumental role in Ahmadinejad's counter strategies, as he capitalized on the support of the Supreme Leader or the Revolutionary Guards to implement his defiant foreign policy regarding the demands of the US. And these intervening variables led to the creation of counter mechanisms that we identified thanks to the process-tracing method. These mechanisms set by the Iranians to counter the US nuclear strategy shed

an insightful light on the causes of the regime "persistence" regarding its nuclear program. The first mechanism was "**passive rationality**." We decided to add the adjective passive because, as interviews and the literature demonstrated, the Iranian authorities did not consider the US military threat credible, especially after the military intervention in Iraq in 2003. Due to their damaged international reputation after 2003, the US would not confidently engage in another war, unless the vital interests were at stake. Did the Iranian nuclear program represent a vital threat for the US interests? We humbly argue "NO." Despite the lack of transparency regarding its nuclear activities, no objective evidence of Iran's plan to build a warhead had been found. And the publication of the NIE even worsened the issue, especially for the proponents of the military option.

The second mechanism used by Ahmadinejad to counter the US nuclear strategy was the "**lesson-learning**." Indeed, by always reminding Iranians about their previous experience with the external world, especially Western powers, Ahmadinejad fostered Iran's nationalism and increased its legitimacy regarding his nuclear policy. Consequently, he could easily use the "**framing**" (third mechanism) not only to describe foreign powers as historical enemies of the Islamic Republic, but also marginalized dissent voices in the political landscape of Iran by describing them as domestic relays of the enemies of the country. The fourth mechanism, and probably the most important finding of our research is the "**the nature of the Iranian political system**." Conversely to the outlook, Iran's Supreme Leader is not a check and balance free actor in the system. His political power also has constitutional limitations, and Ahmadinejad capitalized on these narrow political rooms to advance his personal agenda. In addition, by siding with IRGC, Ahmadinejad could easily reduce the political leverage of the Supreme Leader and implement his agenda. However, he paid closer attention to the Iranian public opinion, which was also his major weakness.

The inability of a Great Power like the US to tame a minor one like Iran is described by Todd Sescher as the *Goliath's curse*.[648] What were the main loopholes of the US coercive strategy, especially in light of the coercive theoretical model (credibility, proportionality and reciprocity) of Christopher Whitock and Bruce Jentlesson? We humbly maintain that first, the US did not wield **credible** threats to Iran, as evidenced by the choice of denial and to some extent punishment strategies. But more importantly, the US didn't have the upper hand over escalation dominance. Indeed, as we previously noticed, Tehran never considered the US threats credible enough to put the very existence of the regime at stake. Even covert actions like the cyber-attacks and political assassinations did not send costly signals to Tehran who was perfectly aware of the red

[648] SECHSER S., Todd, **Goliath's curse: coercive threats and asymmetric power,** Cambridge University Press, Vol. 64, N. 4, 34 pages.

line Washington would not dare cross (launch war and the subsequent regional consequences).

Although the US coercive threats did impact the economic performances of Iran, Tehran's ability to circumvent them and secure public support undermined US expect power-base erosion. Hence, the balance of motivation was clearly in favor of Iran as the US didn't have edge over escalation dominance against Iran over its controversial nuclear program. Second and subsequently, Washington did not back its demands with **proportional** threats and formulated unrealistic demands to Tehran. Third, Washington did not display any strategic empathy when addressing the Iranian nuclear challenge and did not **reciprocate** to the Iran's positive gestures. Otherwise, the US leaders would have understood the strategic importance of the international statute for such an exceptionalist and messianic country as Iran, and the subsequence importance of approaching it in a more respectful way.

Martin Van Creveld asserts that "in any war, the readiness to suffer and die, as well as to kill, represents the single most important factor. Take it away, and even the most numerous, best organized, best trained, best equipped army in the world will turn out to be a brittle instrument."[649] The previous analysis of the coercive nuclear dynamics between the US and Iran demonstrated that Washington's coercive strategy against Tehran's nuclear program did not lift Iranians' "readiness to suffer and die" for their nuclear program and change their nuclear stance. Conversely, the American strategy fostered Tehran's defiance vis-à-vis Washington's demands. Furthermore, this coercive strategy's flaw transpired in the US's formal and substantial approach toward Iran. Regarding the formal aspect, Washington relied on an aggressive tone when formulating their demands. Considering Tehran's high sense of grandeur and pride, this approach was a strategic mistake. In this regard, Nader Entessar accurately described Iranian national pride during our interview in these words: "Iranians like to expound their views, but they don't like to be lectured to by the West."[650] Regarding the nuclear reversal theories, all the previous loopholes of the US coercive strategy also consistently illustrate the coercer's inability to identify the political profile of the leader (oppositional nationalist - Jacques Hymans), to offer incentives that would break the challenging domestic coalitions (Etel Solingen), and to wisely combine sticks and carrots (Rupal Mehta).

[649] VAN CREVELD, Martin: **The transformation of war**, New York, The Free Press, 1991, p.160. (Consulted online.)
[650] **Interview with Nader Entessar on the US coercive diplomacy with Iran.**

Regarding the substantial aspect, the US failed to submit incentives to alleviate Iran's security concerns and increase its regional position. Therefore, by acknowledging the enrichment right, Washington could have solved the nuclear issue sooner and quicker (incentive). Of course, that would have been (politically) costly, but not as if Tehran had entirely gone nuclear. The US seemed to have known itself and not its enemy. While it did not suffer a defeat in every battle it was engaged in, Washington nevertheless ran the risk of being dragged into a useless war. This finding is not new, for another PhD research carried out by Ebrahim Mohseni-Cheraghlou had already reached the same conclusion.[651] Hence, this case study has confirmed our theory of the four conducive conditions for a successful coercive strategy in the nuclear realm. The next chapter will analyze the coercive dynamics between the US and Libya over Tripoli's nuclear weapons program.

Before analyzing the coercive interactions between the US and Libya over Tripoli's nuclear program, we summarized the findings of the coercive nuclear dynamics between Washington and Tehran in the following table. Indeed, table 15 encapsulates the substance of the previously mentioned interactions by highlighting the main actors (sender and target), the driving factors of the target's controversial actions (the building of the nuclear program), the international context under which the interactions occurred, the issue at stakes between the protagonist over time, the goals of the sender, its coercive strategy, the instruments used to implement its strategy, the expected outcomes of its strategy, the actual outcomes after the implementation of the coercive strategy, the reasons and mechanisms behind the actual outcomes of the coercive dynamics between the protagonists, and lastly, the nature of the demands formulated by the sender or coercer.

[651] MOHSENI-CHERAGHLOU, Ebrahim: **When coercion backfires: the limits of coercive diplomacy in Iran, *Op. Cit.***

COERCER		TARGET		DRIVERS OF THE TARGET	INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT	ISSUE	OBJECTIVE	COERCIVE STRATEGY	COERCIVE INSTRUMENT	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	ACTUAL OUTCOMES	MECHANISMS	NATURE OF THE DEMAND
EU		Iran	M. Khatami (2002 – 2005)	Syndrome of grandeur. Regional prestige (via technological prowess)	Post - Iraq 2003	Controversies over past nuclear activities. Scope of nuclear enrichment;	Stopping of the uranium enrichment	Political isolation	Diplomatic pressure	Compliance with the goal.	Resistance - continuity of the uranium enrichment.	Unclear demands, Absence of incentives Absence of a credible coercive leverage. Domestic opposition	Unacceptable – Lack of credible incentives
USA (UN and the EU)	G. Bush (2006 – 2009)	Iran	M. Ahmadinejad (2006 – 2012)	Syndrome of grandeur. Regional prestige	Post - Iraq 2003 - 2005	Nuclear enrichment	Stopping of the uranium enrichment	Denial political isolation naming and shaming	Trade sanctions Diplomatic pressures	Compliance with the goal.	Resistance - continuity of the nuclear enrichment.	Deep distrust, Lesson learning Framing.	Unacceptable – Lack of credible incentives
	B. Obama (2009 - 2013)			Syndrome of grandeur. Regional prestige	Post - Iraq 2005 - 2013	Nuclear enrichment	Stopping of the uranium enrichment	Denial Punishment (political isolation, military threats)	Trade and financial sanctions. Diplomatic pressures Cyber attacks	Compliance with the goal. Power-base erosion, Unrest.	Resistance or continuity of the uranium enrichment.	Distrust Lesson learning Framing Passive rationality Iranian political system	Unacceptable – Lack of credible incentives

Table 16: Findings of the coercive dynamics between the US and Iran.

THE US AGAINST LIBYA

To win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill. — Sun Tzu, Chinese philosopher, and strategist.

5

Chapter 5

The main goal of this chapter is to analyze the coercive nuclear dynamics between the US and Libya. The time scope of the entire chapter spans from 1969, when Gadhafi toppled the regime of King Idris, till 2003 when Libya officially announced its decision to abandon its nuclear program and its WMD program in general. Just like the previous Iranian case study, we will analyze the coercive dynamics between Washington and Tripoli against the backdrop of our hypotheses.[652] Hence, we will always consider to what extent the US coercive strategy exploited the weaknesses of Libya and to what extent Washington demonstrated the motivation to have a sustained campaign to compel Tripoli. That is, In essence, **to what extent Libya's decision to comply or resist the US request relates to the political and economic effects of Washington's coercive diplomacy** Considering the propositions of our theoretical framework (proportionality, reciprocity, and credibility) and the choice of the structured-focused method, this chapter will also be divided into sub-sections which aim at answering the following questions: **what were the objectives pursued by the US after implementing coercive policies against the Libyan nuclear program? What were coercive strategies adopted to achieve these objectives? What were the expected outcomes of the US when implementing its coercive strategies against Libya's nuclear program? What were the actual results at the end of the process, and why such outcomes?**

The answer to these questions will help us to demonstrate the validity of the four essential elements regarding the effectiveness of a coercive strategy in the nuclear realm.[653] In this regard, the first section will analyze the history of foreign relations between Libya and the World, especially the US. This will help us understand the strategic importance of Libya for the US and the continuity or breaks of patterns in Libya's foreign policy. The second section will dwell on the drivers behind Libya's decision to obtain nuclear weapons. In contrast, the third section will emphasize Libya's political system, emphasizing nuclear decision-making during Gadhafi's era. The fourth section will analyze the coercive dynamics between the US and Libya, while the fifth section will stress the theoretical conclusions about our research goal.

Before stressing the theoretical answers to the previous questions, it is essential to emphasize that, unlike the Iranian case, we did not conduct interviews with experts or former officials related to the Libyan nuclear issue. This is because many of the actors

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[652] We hypothesized that coercive diplomacy could compel a State to abandon its nuclear (weapons) program under two conditions: if the coercer's strategy exploits the target's weaknesses and if the coercer demonstrates a motivation to have a sustained campaign to compel the target.

[653] The four core elements are the following**:** the display by the coercer of **strategic empathy towards its target**, the formulation of **clear and acceptable demands** to the target, then the display by the coercer of **a higher resolve than the target** to achieve his/her objective, and the offer of **credible incentives** to the target if the target complies.

involved had already passed away or were too old to answer our questions. Nevertheless, we had access to primary sources such as speeches and interviews of officials who were directly or indirectly involved in the negotiation process. This permitted us to identify the parameters they considered when making their decisions. In addition, we also read memoirs from former negotiators and scholars who interviewed the people involved in the process. Combined with indirect sources like articles from experts or scholars and statistical data, we were able to identify the pattern of behavior of the actors involved in the Libyan nuclear dynamics and the driving factors behind their decisions.

5.1 SECTION I – A SHORT HISTORY OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN LIBYA AND THE GREAT POWERS.

This section aims to understand the evolution of the relations between Libya and the Great Powers, notably the US and the UK. The merits of analyzing the foreign relations of Libya are twofold. First, it will enable us to understand the bargaining positions of the States mentioned above based on the geopolitical importance of Libya in their strategic calculus. Of course, we do not assume that the core elements shaping the UK and the US's Libyan foreign policy have been stable over time; yet, identifying the drivers of their foreign policy with Libya will provide an insightful light on the motivations of the UK and the US to handle the Libyan challenge the way they did. On the other hand, dwelling on the foreign relations of Libya will also help us to understand the international responses of the Libyan Leader Gadhafi, based upon his vision of the global role of Libya.

Just like Iran, Libya has been subject to foreign influences throughout history. As Saima Raza described it, "the history of the Libyan region has been characterized by a seemingly never-ending procession of foreign rulers who have attempted to subdue the restless network of tribes which have populated the hinterland."[654] In Antiquity, for example, the Libyan territory went under the domination of many Great Powers like the Phoenicians, the Greeks, and the Romans. Although the Arab presence in the Maghreb region dates to the 7th Century, Libya, as we know it today, has been primarily influenced by the Ottomans for almost four centuries, from 1551 to 1912.[655] During that period, Libya was under the international sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire through the country retained a margin of autonomy under the administrative rule of an appointee of the Sublime Porte (the name of the government of the Ottoman Empire).

[654] RAZA, Saima, **Italian colonisation & Libyan resistance to the Al-Sanusi of Cyrenaica (1911 – 1922),** Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies (in Asia), Vol.6, 2012, p.88
[655] SIEBENS James and CASE Benjamin: **The Libyan civil war: context and consequences,** THINK International and Human Security, August 2012, p.4

The country was divided into three central regions: Tripolitania in the North-West, Cyrenaica in the East and Fezzan in the South-West. The scramble for Africa began in the aftermath of the Berlin Conference (Nov. 1884 – Feb. 1885), and consequently, many European countries embarked on colonial conquests of African territories. Regarding North Africa, although France and the UK had already conquered most of the North African countries (France beat Algeria in 1830, Tunisia in 1881 and Morocco in 1912, while the UK conquered Egypt in 1882), they nevertheless also coveted Libya for commercial and territorial purposes.[656] However, no European country had set its sight on Libya more than Italy.[657]

Italy's interest in Libya stemmed from two main factors: on the first hand, the desire to possess colonies like its European rivals, and on the other hand, the historical defeat of the Italian troops during the war against Ethiopia (1895-1896). Regarding the former, possessing a colony by an Empire or Kingdom symbolized prestige and power in the European concert. Subsequently, the Kingdom of Italy couldn't afford to rule over an African territory and benefit from the resources available. Valentina Colafrancesco shares this view as she declares: "Italian interest in Libyan territories was first aroused in 1880, triggered by Italian government ambitions in extending and conquering new territories in North Africa, to become a colonial power on par with other European countries."[658] Regarding the latter, Italy underwent a stingy defeat against the Ethiopian troops of Emperor Menelik II. This was perceived in Italy and the rest of Europe as a humiliation that needed to be avenged. Consequently, "within fifteen years, a vigorous nationalist movement was proclaiming the need to create a virile, bellicose nation which would wipe out the shame at Adowa and force the plutocratic imperialist powers to give justice to Italy (Watson-Seton 169) - this came in the form of Libya."[659]

However, two main challenges precluded Italy from achieving its goal to colonize Libya: the appetite of its European rivals for Libya and the Ottoman challenge. Following the failure of its soft approach (the creation of economic corporations and a financial proposal), the Italians capitalized on the domestic weaknesses of the Ottoman Empire (financial challenges due to the different wars with the European States) and launched

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[656] Rachel Simon argues that European States 'interests in Libya lied mainly on the fact that Libya constituted a "transit region and a border district". Read SIMON, Rachel: **Libya between Ottomanism and nationalism. The Ottoman involvement in Libya during the War with Italy (1911-1919),** Berlin, Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1987, pp.44-45

[657] RAZA, Saima, **Italian colonisation & Libyan resistance to the Al-Sanusi of Cyrenaica (1911 – 1922),** ***Op. Cit.,*** pp.89-90.

[658] COLAFRANCESCO, Valentina, **A case of paradiplomacy?: Italian-Libyan diplomatic relations from the rise to power of Gaddafi till the beginning of the "Arab Spring",** Egmont Institute, Studia Diplomatica , Vol. 65, N.3, 2012, p.94

[659] RAZA, Saima, **Italian colonisation & Libyan resistance to the Al-Sanusi of Cyrenaica (1911 – 1922),** ***Ibid.,*** p.91

several assaults. Hence, the Ottomans did not resist the Italians' assaults long and grudgingly signed the Treaty of Lausanne (18th of October 1912), officially acknowledging the Italian sovereignty over Libya.[660] With the acquisition of Libya, the Italian Kingdom could comfortably claim the same international prestige as most of its European rivals. Just like the other colonial Powers, Italy's plans were twofold. First, they aimed to exploit Libya's resources and lands to solve domestic issues and, second, to promote Western values. Regarding the former, Italians intended to exploit the alleged resources of Libya to strengthen Italy's economy, especially the private actors who had invested in the different war campaigns. In addition, the Italian government was facing increasing pressure from its population in the South and urgently needed a safe place to settle them and provide them with job opportunities.[661]

Second, just like the other European colonial Powers, Italy's colonial campaign was also rooted in the belief in the *White Man's Burden*. In other words, Italians firmly thought that the greatest merit of their colonization of Libya was the "civilization" they would bring to the "savage" Libyans. Carlo Schanzer nicely described those two mindsets of Libya in these words: "Italy knows her duty as a colonizing power -- the duty of endeavoring to reconcile the supreme necessity of colonization with the vital needs of the indigenous populations. (…) The Italy of today wishes to develop her African possessions for the benefit not only of the homeland but also of the subject populations and of humanity as a whole."[662]

Consequently, the Italians thought that the conquest of Libya would be achieved with relative ease. Unfortunately, it was not the case. Libya remained an Italian colony from 1912 till 1947 (35 years), when the post-WWII Peace treaties were signed. Even though Italy continued to face strong resistance from several tribes like the Cyrenaica under the leadership of Sheikh Omar al-Mukhtar,[663] the influence of the other Great Powers played a strategic role in the dismemberment of the Italian Empire. As Dirk Vandewalle described, *Libya had passed from colonialism to independence at the behest of the Great Powers without a unifying ideology or a movement whose goals and aspirations were shared throughout the country*.[664]

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660 RAZA, Saima, **Italian colonisation & Libyan resistance to the Al-Sanusi of Cyrenaica (1911 – 1922), *Op. Cit.,*** p.104

661 M. E. P., **The Italian colonial Empire: a note on its rise and fall,** Bulletin of International News, 1944, Vol. 21, N. 6, p.211. (Published by Royal Institute of International Affairs)

662 SCHANZER, Carlo, **Italian colonial policy in Northern Africa,** Foreign Affairs, 1924, Vol. 2, N. 3, p.448. (Published by Council on Foreign Relations).

663 VANDEVALLE, Dirk: **A History of modern Libya**, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p.31

664 VANDEVALLE, Dirk: **A History of modern Libya, *Ibid.***, p.43

Among those Great Powers, the UK and the US played an incremental role in the independence of Libya. Their involvement was more visible during and after WW2, both from the military and political perspectives. Regarding the military view, Libya was one of the battlefields of WWII. Indeed, Italy, Germany, and other States formed the Axis powers, which fought against the Allies, which the UK, the US, and France mainly constituted. With the defeat of the Axis powers, Italy lost most of its colonial territories, including Libya, by signing the Paris peace treaties in 1947. Art. 23 of this treaty stated, "Italy renounces all rights and titles to the Italian territorial possessions in Africa, i.e., Libya, Eritrea and Italian Somaliland."[665] Two Western powers later replaced Italy in Libya's administration: the UK and France. Still, the US also watched it for strategic reasons, as we will see later.

Dario Cristiani describes British-Libyan bilateral relations as *historically troubled.*[666] This description can be explained by the ambivalent British foreign policy with Libya from the end of WW2 till the incremental role played by the UK in the toppling of the Khadafi regime. Concerning the period after 1945, British interests in Libya were related to its strategic positions in the Mediterranean region. As former British foreign minister Anthony Eden described it, "these Italian overseas possessions do not come under the control of potential enemy states, as they flank our sea and air communications through the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, and provide bases from which Egypt, the Sudan and Kenya could be attacked."[667] By referring to "enemy States", the British diplomat was surreptitiously referring to the Soviet Union, as the World on the eve of the Cold War. Consequently, the decisive role played by the UK and the US in the independence of Libya as a Kingdom in 1951 should also be understood by the determination of those Powers to keep such a strategic region from falling under the control of the Soviet influence.

The role of Libya in the UK Cold War strategy consisted mainly in hosting British military bases in exchange for financial aid; this bargain was formally acknowledged by the signing of the Anglo—Libyan treaty in 1953.[668] Consequently, the British established military bases in Libya, especially in the Eastern part of the country, like in El Adem – Tobruk, where military complexes were built. However, the relations between the two countries did not last for long as the coup d'état orchestrated by

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[665] The UNITED NATIONS, **Treaty Series - Treaties and international agreements registered or filed and recorded with the Secretariat of the United Nations,** 1950, Vol. 49, N.747, p.139. Accessed on from the link https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume%2049/v49.pdf the 20th of March 2021.

[666] CRISTIANI, Dario, **UK Libya: The consistency of being selective,** ISPI, Analysis N. 238, March 2014, p.3

[667] VAN GENUGTEN, Saskia: **Libya in Western foreign policies, 1911–2011, *Op. Cit.,*** p.47

[668] BLACKWELL, Stephen, **Saving the King: Anglo-American strategy and British counter-subversion operations in Libya, 1953-59**, Middle Eastern Studies, 2003, Vol. 39, N. 1, p. 2

Khadhafi put an end to the British presence in the country. The US is the second leading Western Power that played a decisive role in Libya after WW2. Initially, the relations were based on commercial interests, as Libya represented a decisive trade route. However, the potential attacks from pirates could seriously disrupt the economic activities of the US. In this regard, *the Bey of Tripoli and Joel Barlow, U.S. agent plenipotentiary, finally concluded a treaty of peace and friendship, guaranteed by the Dey of Algiers, on 4 November 1796. It promised protection and free passage for the naval vessels of both states and instituted a system of passports to ensure said protection*.[669] Nevertheless, both countries went to war a couple of times later. In some cases, war's origins lay in subjective and objective issues.

Regarding the subjective causes of war between Tripoli and Washington, the US misinterpreted the terms of the treaty of peace, especially the role-played Algiers in the implementation of the treaty. Regarding the objective reasons, leaders of Tripoli always complained about the two standards policy of the US in dealing with "Barbaric States" like Libya, Algeria or Tunisia. Consequently, to balance its relationship with the US and recalibrate its financial commitment toward Tripoli, like Algeria's, which was receiving $642,500[670] from the US, the Pasha of Tripoli Yusuf Karamanli attempted to sign a new agreement with the US who rejected the demand. Tripoli's leaders attacked the US Consulate in 1801, and Washington responded by sending naval forces. Ronald Bruce St John maintains that the deployment of those naval troops *marked the beginning of a United States naval presence in the Mediterranean.*[671] Despite those tensions, Libya became an essential asset in the geopolitical chessboard of the US after WWII. Unfortunately, this position fostered grievances from the population and certain military leaders, as we will see later. Just like Iran's relationship with the US under the Shah, many Libyans loathed the fact that their country was a puppet in the hands of the West. The following subpart will analyze the motivations behind Gadhafi's desire to obtain nuclear weapons and the US interests in the region.

669 ST JOHN, Ronald Bruce: **Libya and the United States, Two centuries of strife,** Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002, p.22
670 KITZEN, Michael, **Money bags or cannon balls: The origins of the Tripolitan War, 1795-1801,** Journal of the Early Republic, 1996, Vol. 16, N. 4, p.604
671 ST JOHN, Ronald Bruce: **Libya and the United States, Two centuries of strife, *Ibid.,*** p.24

5.2 SECTION II – THE EMERGENCE OF THE LIBYAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM: ORIGINS, RATIONALE, AND REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS.

After the previous analysis of the relations between Libya and the external world, especially the US, this section will dwell on the importance of a nuclear program for Libya. In other words, the main objective of this section is to answer the following questions: what were the drivers behind Khadafi's decision to seek nuclear weapons? In addition, what could have been the regional consequences of Libya's acquisition of nuclear weapons? Answering these questions will help us to understand the nuclear dynamics between the US and Libya, more importantly, the bargaining positions of Libya during the negotiations with the US over Tripoli's controversial nuclear program.

According to several experts, the drivers behind Libya's desire for nuclear weapons were threefold. Indeed, Tripoli's quest for a nuclear status can be explained by the desire for international prestige, security concerns and critical domestic stakeholders within the Libyan establishment. In this regard, Elena Geleskul argues that Libya's attempts to obtain a nuclear arsenal under Khadafi can be grouped into three periods that illustrate the drivers behind the country's motivations to become a nuclear State. Those three time periods are 1969-1971, 1971-1992, and 1995-2003.[672] But before dwelling on the strategic importance of nuclear weapons for Gadhafi's foreign policy, it is essential to understand the very context of the emergence of Gadhafi's rise to the highest leadership position in Libya. Libya officially became an independent State on the 24th of December 1951 as a federal monarchy under King Idris I.[673]

Until the discovery of oil in 1959, Libya relied exclusively on international aid and the money received from Western Powers (the US and the UK) for hosting military bases in the context of the Cold War. As Charles O. Cecil accurately described it, "up through the first decade of the Cold War, Libya and the other nations of North Africa were of great strategic importance to Europe, for they offered a potential land route which would allow Soviet ground forces to out-flank Western defenses in Western Europe in the event of a war. (…) The Libyan government was aware of the country's strategic importance to the West and did not hesitate to use this factor to support requests for increased aid and rents for military bases."[674] However, the improvement of the Western military defense capabilities and the discovery of oil had a tremendous impact on Libya's domestic and international politics.

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[672] GELESKUL, Elena, **The history of the Libyan nuclear program: The reasons for failure**, Security Index: A Russian Journal on International Security Vol. 15, N.2, 2009, p.140
[673] MORONE M., Antonio, **Idris' Libya and the role of Islam**, Oriente Moderno, N.1, 2017, p.112
[674] CECIL O., Charles, **The determinants of Libyan foreign policy**, Middle East Journal, Winter 1965, Vol. 19, N. 1, p.21

The improvement of the US military defense capabilities impacted the strategic role of Libya in the West's goal to deter the Soviet Union. Indeed, "as the range of aircraft increases, staging bases become less important. As the nature of war changes, North Africa as a flanking route to Europe for hostile land forces loses its attractiveness."[675] In other words, advanced technological warfare equipment negatively impacted the geopolitical importance of Libya in international affairs. Concerning the discovery of oil, this was probably the best revolution Libya would be going through for the next fifty years, at least. Charles Cecil described it in these terms: "a nation once a backwater in Northern Africa, whose greatest asset was probably its 1000-mile Mediterranean coastline, was suddenly confronted with the prospect of seemingly unlimited wealth. All previous predictions of Libya's future became obsolete overnight."[676]

Before the actual exploitation of oil, Libya had demonstrated massive potential in hydrocarbon deposits, sparked the interest of several countries like the UK, The Netherlands, France, and Germany, whose oil companies competed to obtain concessions of exploitation[677] just like in Iran during the Shah era. With oil production of more than 3 million barrels per day (b/d) in the late 60s,[678] Libya became one of the most significant oil producers in the world. However, oil's impact in Libya was visible in international affairs; Libya's domestic politics was also affected by the discovery of black gold. Not only did it foster irredentist financial claims in the regions where the primary oil deposits were found (as those regions claimed a large percentage of the gains from the exploitation of oil), but it also caused social unrest in the country, notably because of vast corruption and mismanagement policies in the young independent nation. "The good-news story was not all roses. Libya's new role as an oil exporter brought problems as well as benefits, not least of which was corruption," Alison Pargeter argues.[679] The combination of all these factors nurtured deep frustrations in many sections of the country, especially among a group of military officers led by Muammar Kadhafi.

Muammar Kadhafi emerged as the Libyan leader in a specific regional context. Indeed, several Arab leaders were preaching ideology of Arab unity as the solution for the prestige and glory of their countries and people. Among them, one Arab leader had a remarkable influence on Khadhafi's vision of the new Libya and the role it was supposed

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675 CECIL O., Charles, **The determinants of Libyan foreign policy**, ***Ibid,*** p.22
676 CECIL O., Charles, **The determinants of Libyan foreign policy**, ***Ibid.,*** p.23
677 CLARKE I., John, **Oil in Libya: Some implications**, Economic Geography, January 1963, Vol. 39, N. 1, p.42
678 US Energy Information Agency, **Country analysis brief: Libya,** November 19, 2015. Accessed from https://s3.amazonaws.com/rgi-documents/39ab0d06fabf10743a096d298d5c5ff0e10098c6.pdf on the 13th of May 2021.
679 PARGETER, Alison: **Libya – The rise and fall of Qaddafi**, London, Yale University Press, 2012, p.41. Consulted online.

to play not only in regional politics but also in international affairs: this was the Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser. Nasser was one of the most notorious promoters of pan-Arabism. However, many analysts share the opinion he capitalized on this ideology's political dividends to promote his country's interests. Fawaz Gerges argues in this regard that "[Nasser's] use of Arab nationalism or pan-Arabism (…) was never purely a matter of principle and sentiment. It was not conceived as just an idealist political project but rather as a product of realist calculations taken within the parameters of the particular set of circumstances in which he found himself."[680] Nevertheless, the young Muammar Kadhafi deeply admired him and shared his political vision. Consequently, galvanized by the political ideology of his mentor and deeply frustrated by the puppet statute of Libya in the hands of the Great Powers, Khadhafi led a bloodless coup d'état against King Idris in 1969 and became the Revolutionary leader of Libya.

After toppling the regime of King Idris, Khadhafi established a twelve members Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), the highest institutional organ in the new Revolutionary republic. George Joffé argues that a State's foreign policy can also be understood as "the external projection of the dominant ideological preconceptions that inform the domestic structure and dynamism of the state in question—a kind of political discourse that also affects, or even determines, the nature of relations with other states or their populations."[681] Regarding the new foreign policy of Libya in the early days of the Revolution, Khadhafi did not have a precise and autonomous set of beliefs regarding the international role Libya was set to have. Indeed, most of his thoughts and actions were based on the ideology of his model Gamal Nasser. Consequently, just like his mentor, Khadhafi championed anti-colonialism and anti-Zionism. In this regard, since Libya was perceived as a puppet in the hands of the Great Powers under King Idris I, one of Khadhafi's first international decisions was *to demand the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Wheelus Air Force Base near Tripoli*.[682] Khadhafi's ideological beliefs also shaped his quest for nuclear weapons.

With regards to Libya's nuclear goal, unlike many countries whose nuclear ambitions are usually primarily driven by security imperatives, Khadhafi was seeking a nuclear statute firstly for the international prestige conferred to Nuclear Weaponized States (NWS). As he declared in an address to the General People Congress, "in 1969 and early

680 GERGES A., Fawaz: **Making the Arab world: Nasser, Qutb, and the clash that shaped the Middle East,** New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2018, pp.187-188

681 JOFFÉ, George, ***Prodigal or pariah? Foreign policy in Libya,*** in VANDEWALLE, Dirk (Ed.): **Libya since 1969. Qadhafi's revolution revisited**, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p.191. (Consulted online)

682 BLACK R., Craig: **Deterring Libya. The strategic culture of Muammar Qaddafi**, The Counter-proliferation Papers, Future Warfare, Series No. 8, Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, 2000, p.7

1970s, we did not reflect on where or against whom we could use the nuclear bomb. Such issues were not considered. All that was important was to build the bomb."[683] Målfrid Braut-Hegghammer digs in as she stresses that "the Libyan regime's initial efforts to pursue a nuclear weapons capability were inspired in no small part by the notion that nuclear weapons could elevate Libya to a regional and international role matching the regime's ideological principles and ambitions."[684] In other words, Khadhafi initially considered acquiring a nuclear statute as the main criterion of international prestige at the regional and global levels. This belief is close to Jacque Hyman's notion of *oppositional nationalist*.[685] However, the security incentives quickly prevailed as the pillars of the new regime were still fragile.

After toppling former Kind Idris, the new Libyan authorities deeply feared a foreign intervention from the Western powers, notably the US. Ironically, Western Powers initially backed Khadhafi's coup. Brenda Lange declares, "the United States originally supported the regime change, primarily because of Qaddafi's Anti-Communist stance, and even provided CIA protection."[686] However, to the surprise of the West, Khadhafi's anti-imperialist beliefs distanced him from many European and American countries. Consequently, he integrated the possibility of being also toppled by a West-masterminded coup. Hence, he considered the possession of a nuclear arsenal as the only credible deterrent military instrument capable of protecting the new regime. Yet, Western Powers were not the only threat to the new regime's survival; Israel's nuclear arsenal was also perceived as a significant threat to the Revolutionary government.[687] Because Israel was already a nuclear State, Khadhafi logically concluded that only a nuclear arsenal could balance Israel's strategic advantage in the region. In addition, he was aware that the destruction of Israel – one of his Revolutionary goals, as he considered Israel to be the symbol of Western colonialism in the Middle East (Palestine) – could not be achieved without an overwhelming military capability. Consequently, nuclear weapons appeared to him as the only credible military instrument to help him achieve his goal. However, the new Libyan authorities were not only worried by foreign threats; the perspective of a domestic toppling of the new regime was also a significant source of concern for Khadafi.

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683 BRAUT-HEGGHAMMER, Målfrid, **Libya's nuclear intentions: Ambition and ambivalence**, Strategic Insights, 2009, Vol. 8, N.2, p.3

684 BRAUT-HEGGHAMMER, Målfrid, **Libya's nuclear intentions: Ambition and ambivalence**, ***Ibid,*** p.3

685 *Oppositional nationalists define their nation as being both naturally at odds with and naturally equal (if not superior) to a particular external other. As a result, when facing the external other, oppositional nationalist leaders are uniquely predisposed to experience two highly volatile emotions: fear and pride.* Read HYMANS E. C., Jacques: **The Psychology of nuclear proliferation: Identity, emotions and foreign policy**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.13.

686 LANGE, Brenda: **Muammar Qaddafi**, (Major World Leaders), Philadelphia, Chelsea House Publishers, 2005, p.42. CIA stands for Central Intelligence Agency.

687 BLACK R., Craig: **Deterring Libya. The Strategic culture of Muammar Qaddafi**, ***Op. Cit.,*** p.18

As previously highlighted, Khadafi orchestrated a bloodless military coup. Yet, the entire military establishment was not involved in the toppling of former King Idris. Consequently, the new Libyan authorities were worried about the absence of a complete commitment to the revolutionary ideals by the other military personnel. Therefore, obtaining a nuclear arsenal would have reduced the risk of military treason in a war against the West. Målfrid Braut-Hegghammer described it in these terms: "a nuclear deterrent appears to have been perceived as a technological "fix", requiring little manpower yet enabling the regime to protect Libya's vast territory from external threats. This carried the additional appeal of avoiding an over-reliance on the armed forces, which would have made the military a power repository that could give rise to challenges to the regime."[688] Driven by security concerns, Khadhafi's nuclear imperative was reflected in his different strategies to acquire nuclear fire, starting with a nuclear hastiness from 1969 till 1971.

The Libyan authorities resorted to several strategies to obtain a nuclear arsenal quickly. The first one was to purchase readymade nuclear warheads from nuclear powers. In this regard, the Libyan authorities turned to any potential supplier, irrespective of his ideological and strategic side. Consequently, one of the first countries targeted by Libya was China, but the Chinese declined the proposition based on their limited nuclear arsenal. As Elena Geleskul wondered, *how could China supply Libya with nuclear weapons if it had quite a limited arsenal itself?!*[689] Libya then turned to India with an offer of $15 billion in exchange for the supply of nuclear warheads. The Libyan authorities expected their Indian counterpart to accept the offer as it would have helped the latter to reimburse their foreign aid.[690] A similar proposal had been submitted to the Soviets ($10 billion) and sparked intense debates within the Soviet establishment.

However, the pro and cons Libyan deal considered its repercussions in the region first. The former argued that it could help balance Israel's strategic domination against the Arabs States, while the latter warned against the risks of a *domino effect* in the region. Finally, *it was decided to reject the Libyan offer and to assist the country in a different way. The Soviet Union helped in the establishment of the research center in Tajura and supplied Libya with a light water 10MW reactor that was using highly enriched uranium.*[691] It is worth noting that the Libyan government had also initiated nuclear cooperation with regional countries like Egypt, but they nevertheless failed to meet up

[688] BRAUT-HEGGHAMMER, Målfrid, **Libya's nuclear turnaround: Perspectives from Tripoli,** Middle East Journal, Winter 2008, Vol. 62, N. 1, p.60
[689] GELESKUL, Elena, **The History of the Libyan nuclear program: The reasons for failure**, ***Op. Cit.,*** p.141
[690] SOLINGEN, Etel: **Nuclear logics: Contrasting paths in East Asia and the Middle East, *Op. Cit.***, p.213
[691] GELESKUL, Elena, **The History of the Libyan nuclear program: The reasons for failure**, ***Ibid***

to their expectations. Consequently, Libya changed its strategy to obtain a nuclear arsenal.

The second significant period during which Libya actively sought to acquire nuclear weapons spans 1971-1992. During this period, the Libyan government's strategy evolved from an "off the shell" to an indigenous program. To put it in Hyman's words, *after that (previous) setback, Gaddafi decided to build the bomb in-house.*[692] The change in the nuclear strategy was not only driven by the failure of the initial strategy or attempts; indeed, many internal and external factors should be considered to explain Khadafi's new strategy. Among the internal factors, Khadafi initiated a Cultural Revolution five years after his rise to the country's highest leadership. We will dwell on the impact of the Cultural Revolution in the section dedicated to Libya's political system and decision-making. This Cultural Revolution also significantly impacted Khadhafi's quest for nuclear weapons. Indeed, it radically transformed Libya's State and its formal institutions and led Khadhafi to increase pressure on Libyan nuclear scientists to obtain nuclear weapons quickly. To put it another way, driven by revolutionary ideals, Khadhafi requested his scientific community to deliver tangible results regarding the prospects of Libya's weaponization.

However, just like in several other areas, Libya lacked nuclear experts who could manage and complete the nuclear project. As Målfrid Braut-Hegghammer described it, "the small nuclear establishment thus had to navigate carefully while the State was being transformed and fragmented. […] Scientists were in a particularly difficult position in the changing Libyan state where technocrats were primary targets of the regime's revolutionary zeal."[693] To overcome these technical challenges, the Libyan government first created Libya's Nuclear Energy Commission in 1973, then reportedly helped the Pakistani government obtain nuclear weapons in 1974.[694] However, Khadhafi refuted this information later to maintain good relations with rival India.

Regarding the external factors which drove Khadhafi's change of nuclear strategy, the 1973 oil crisis undoubtedly played a critical role in Libya's quest for nuclear capability. The previous oil crisis clearly had tremendous geopolitical impacts worldwide, and Libya was no exception. With an estimated oil production capacity of 3.400.000 million barrels per day in 1970 and 3.000.000 million barrels per day (BPD),[695] Libya largely

[692] HYMANS E. C., Jacques: **Achieving nuclear ambitions: scientists, politicians, and proliferation**, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p.241
[693] BRAUT-HEGGHAMMER, Målfrid: **Unclear physics: Why Iraq and Libya failed to build nuclear weapons,** New York, Cornell University Press, 2016, pp.151-152
[694] ASGHAR U., Muhammad, KHAN B., Muhammad and HUSSAIN Shahzad, **The case of Libya's WMD: analysis of key factors for nuclear turnaround,** Margalla Papers, Winter 2018, Vol. 22, N.1, p.92
[695] BARLTROP, Richard, **Oil and gas in a new Libyan era: conflict and continuity**, OIES paper: MEP 22, February 2019, p.9

benefited from the price of oil barrels during the oil crisis. Khadhafi logically invested the available money in his nuclear project. Just like then Iran's Shah, who signed several technical cooperation and training agreements with MIT, as we previously analyzed, Khadhafi also signed several technical and training agreements with several countries. For example, *Libya reportedly reached an agreement with India in 1977–8, under which the latter would have provided assistance for the peaceful application of nuclear technology in exchange for cheap oil.*[696]

Another driver of Libya's change of strategy was the Israeli threat in general and the Yom Kippur War between Israel and the Arab countries. In this regard, Målfrid Braut-Hegghammer argues that "disappointment over not having been consulted by the Arab war coalition in 1973 appears to have fueled the Libyan regime's desire to obtain nuclear weapons."[697] It is also important to mention that the ambivalent nuclear foreign policy of Khadhafi was twofold: on the one hand, Libya maintained good relations with countries which had bitter bilateral relations like India and Pakistan; on the other hand, the Libyan regime complied in theory with international nuclear norms by signing international treaties like the NPT while infringing them in practice by actively seeking a nuclear deterrent capability.[698]

The third period during which Libya sought nuclear weapons spanned from 1995 to 2003. The Libyan quest for nuclear weapons through illegal channels characterized this third period. Indeed, since Libya was under economic sanctions due to the terrorist actions it sponsored abroad, Khadafi finally resorted to the black market to obtain the components for its nuclear program. After an unsuccessful attempt in 1984, the Libyan authorities contacted the "father of the Pakistani bomb," Abdul Qadeer Khan. Abdul Q. Khan actively began its nuclear smuggling activities after granting the nuclear fire to his country Pakistan.[699] Hence, just like North Korea or Iran, Libya also did its "nuclear shopping" in Khan's illegal supermarket. Abdul Khan's services' significant advantage was delivering a nuclear package to its clients. Gordon Corera confirms it by saying, "Khan's great innovation had been to act as a broker, integrating a complex marketplace into something much simpler. A country such as Libya could cut a deal with Khan alone. […] Rather than purchase piecemeal, a country would be offered everything on a

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[696] BOWEN Q., Wyn: **Libya and nuclear proliferation: Stepping back from the brink,** London, Routledge, IISS, Adelphi Paper, 2006, p.28 (1st ed.)
[697] BRAUT-HEGGHAMMER, Målfrid, **Libya's nuclear turnaround: Perspectives from Tripoli, *Op. Cit.,*** p.62
[698] ASGHAR U., Muhammad, KHAN B., Muhammad and HUSSAIN Shahzad, **The case of Libya's WMD: analysis of key factors for nuclear turnaround,** Margalla Papers, 2018, pp.91-92
[699] CLARY, Christopher, **A.Q. Khan and the limits of the non-proliferation regime,** UNIDIR, Disarmament forum, 2004, N. 4, p.37

platter—but at a price."[700] Concerning Libya, Khan and the Khadafi regime agreed on the supply of critical components the Libyan nuclear was desperately lacking. Consequently, "by 1997 the first tranche of equipment arrived—twenty assembled P-1 centrifuges (the same type that was delivered to Iran) and parts for two hundred more, enough for the Libyans to begin research."[701]

Even though the Libyan nascent nuclear program was already operational, Khadhafi's desire for nuclear weapons led him to request more advanced centrifuges. Such centrifuges could enable him to obtain enough fissile material to produce a nuclear warhead quickly. Logically, the Libyan authorities ordered P2 centrifuges to increase the enrichment capabilities of the nuclear program. However, two main stumbling blocks precluded the achievement of this goal. On the one hand, the scope of the centrifuges that Libya requested. Indeed, "the Libyans wanted the works - an entire nuclear weapons capability from start to finish. [Therefore,] it presented new challenges in terms of sourcing the materials and producing the components."[702] Buhary Syed Abu Tahir, a Malaysian resident Sri Lankan and close aide of Abdul Q. Khan, played an incremental role in solving this problem. Though he declared that his role in the Libyan nuclear project was *to merely act as the coordinator between Dr Khan, the Libyans and the contractors,*[703] he was actually *the CEO, the man who got things done. He would organize transshipments of material and move the money around the world.*[704]

On the other hand, Libya's financial capabilities were seriously limited by UN terrorism-related sanctions. Indeed, the UN had imposed a total air and arms embargo on Libya (Art 4 and 5) through Resolution 748.[705] This obstacle ultimately prevented Libya from acquiring advanced centrifuges, which would have improved the enrichment capabilities of the embryonic nuclear program. However, the centrifuges originally destined for Libya were stocked in Dubai but finally sold to Iran.[706] As we will see in the chapter dedicated to the coercive dynamics between the US and Libya, the combination

[700] CORERA, Gordon: **Shopping for bombs. Nuclear proliferation, global insecurity, and the rise and fall of the A. Q. Khan network**, Oxford, Oxford University, 2009, p.108
[701] CORERA, Gordon: **Shopping for bombs. Nuclear proliferation, global insecurity, and the rise and fall of the A. Q. Khan network**, ***Ibid.***
[702] CORERA, Gordon: **Shopping for bombs. Nuclear proliferation, global insecurity, and the rise and fall of the A. Q. Khan network**, ***Op. Cit.,*** p.109
[703] **Extract from the statement of Sayed Abu Tahir Bin Bukhary,** Managing Director of SMB Group of Companies, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 7th of June 2006. Annexure "L", *Plea and Sentence Agreement, State vs. Geiges, Wisser, and Krisch Engineering*, September 2007, p.7
[704] CORERA, Gordon: **Shopping for bombs. Nuclear proliferation, global insecurity, and the rise and fall of the A. Q. Khan network**, ***Ibid.,*** p.110
[705] **UNSC Resolution 748** adopted on the 31st of March 1992. Accessed on the 22nd of May 2021 from the link https://www.undocs.org/S/RES/748(1992)
[706] ALBRIGHT, David: **Libya: A major sale at last,** ISIS Special Report, 2010, p.5. Accessed from https://isis-online.org/uploads/isisreports/documents/Libya_and_the_Khan_Network_1Dec2010.pdf on 22nd of May 2021.

of the terrorism-related sanctions and the mismanagement issues of the nuclear program mainly explain why Libya could not build a robust nuclear program. The following section will be dedicated to the Libyan political system.

5.3 SECTION III – THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LIBYAN POLITICAL SYSTEM.

This section will analyze the characteristics of the Libyan domestic political system. In this regard, the section will be divided into two main sub-parts. We will first examine the features of the Libyan polity. In other words, the first subpart will dwell on Libya's *system of social organization centered on the machinery of government.*[707] We will focus then on the characteristics of the foreign policymaking of Libya under Khadafi. Thus, the general goal of the section is to identify the key actors and their actual political weight in the decision-making of Libya's foreign policy.

5.3.1 The Characteristics of the Libyan polity.

When Khadhafi rose as the ultimate leader of Libya in 1969 after toppling the regime of former King Idris, the country's political system was based on modern Western institutions. Considering the political and cultural heterogeneity of the country, symbolized notably by the three autonomous regions of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan, the federal system appeared to be the best way to maintain the country united after its independence. John Wright confirms it in these words: "Britain, in effect, unilaterally decreed that if there was to be an independent Libyan state at all... it would take only the form that Idris, Britain and Britain's Western allies wanted: a federal monarchy under the Sanusi crown."[708] However, Libya moved from a federal kingdom to a unitary' in 1963 after the amendment of the constitution by Law N.1.[709]

Libya was still a parliamentary monarchy as the king still ruled the country. Under Art. 41 of the Constitution, the Parliament shared the Legislative power with the King.[710] Like in Liberal countries, two chambers constituted the Parliament: the Senate and the House of Representatives. Lastly, the Judiciary was represented by the Supreme Court

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[707] HEYWOOD, Andrew: **Politics,** London, Red Globe Press, 2019, p.37 (5th Ed.)
[708] WRIGHT, John: **Libya. A modern history,** The UK, Croom Helm, 1982, 304 pages. Cited by ABUN-NASR M., Jamil: **A History of the Maghreb in the Islamic period,** London, Cambridge University Press, 1987, p.406. Consulted online.
[709] **Libya's Constitution Promulgated by the "National Constituent Assembly" on 7 October 1951. Abolished by a Military Coup d'état on 1 September 1969.** Accessed online from the link https://constitutionnet.org/sites/default/files/1951 - libyan constitution english.pdf on the 24th of May 2021.
[710] **Libya's Constitution Promulgated by the "National Constituent Assembly" on 7 October 1951, *Ibid.***

and the courts. However, despite the formal democratic apparatus, the balance of power among the different branches of the government was not a reality. Indeed, the king always influenced the Parliament and restricted its actions whenever they hampered his political objectives. "For example, in 1964, opposition spokesmen were arrested to facilitate the electoral triumphs of pro-government candidates. In response, the opposition reconstituted itself from elected members of the Lower House. In response to this challenge, the king took the dramatic step of dissolving parliament."[711] However, Libya underwent a radical transformation of its political landscape after the advent of Khadhafi.

Less than five years after his ascension to the country's highest leadership, Khadafi initiated a Cultural Revolution called the Jamahiriya. The Jamahiriya mainly referred to the *State of the masses*. Most ideas related to the Jamahiriya were consigned in a significant ideological document called the "Green Book". Khadafi's vision of the form of the Libyan States and institutions was totally at odds with the Western and Eastern. In other words, he rejected both Capitalism and Communism (Marxism) and advocated for a "Third Universal Theory"[712] (TUT), which would transcend the ideals of the two previous philosophies. He asserts that the advent of the TUT would give back power to the people. Indeed, Khadafi was firmly convinced that the intermediary role of the Parliament prevented citizens from effectively exerting their sovereign rights to oversee events affecting their daily lives. As he declared in the *Green Book*, "a parliament is originally founded to represent the people, but this in itself is undemocratic as democracy means the authority of the people and not an authority acting on their behalf."[713] But then, how did Khadhafi intended to replace the former institutions? In other words, which institutions would replace those that existed before?

Khadafi considered direct democracy only as an effective democracy, as it would allow ordinary citizens to supervise the actions of their leaders. Consequently, *the formal system of direct democracy in Libya is thus based on three foundations: the local Basic People's Congresses, the local People's Committees, and Professional Organizations*.[714] The Basic People's Congress assumed a legislative role primarily and elected the members of the People's Committee for a mandate of three years. The People's Committee was the Executive branch at the local level. On top were the General People Congress, which elected the members of the General People Committee. Therefore, the

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711 OTMAN Waniss, KARLBERG Erling: **The Libyan economy. Economic diversification and international repositioning**, New York, Springer, 2007, p.16 (1st ed.)
712 VANDEVALLE, Dirk: **A History of modern Libya, *Op. Cit.***, p.96
713 AL-QADDAFI, Muammar: **The Green book,** Tripoli, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016, p.9 (Originally published in 1975).
714 MATTES, Hanspeter, ***Formal and informal authority in Libya since 1969*** in VANDEWALLE: Dirk, **Libya Since 1969: Qadhafi's revolution revisited**, New York, Palgrave Macmillan**,** 2008**,** p.58-59 (1st ed.)

Basic People's Congress was playing the role of a "local parliament" as *the decisions of the Basic People's Congresses concerning national issues usually provide the basis for the bills to be debated by the annual General People's Congress.*[715]

On the other hand, the General People Committee was playing the "council of ministers" role. Still, political activities were restricted to Basic People's Congresses, and foreign policy decisions were excluded from their competence.[716] The Professional Organizations were composed of citizens from different sectors (Universities, Labor Organizations, etc.) with representatives in the Basic People's Congress. Despite this form of direct democracy, it is worth noting that the political game was heavily locked by a non-popular institution: the Revolutionary Leadership. This was the highest political institution in Libya's political system. The Revolutionary Leadership "was neither elected nor could it be dismissed; [its member included] Qadhafi, his extended family and tribe and the members of the Revolutionary Command Council."[717]

Besides these formal institutions, Libya's political system also included several informal institutions that played a role in political life, irrespective of the scope. It is important to note that their informal characteristic was not due to their unconstitutional existence but rather to the fact that they were not officially known as the consultative organs within the Libyan establishment. The first informal institution created by Khadafi was the *Free Unionist Officer Movement (FUOM)*. According to Hanspeter Mattes, the FUOM was created in August 1964, and its member was recruited among Khadafi's military classmates during their training in the military academy of Benghazi.[718] One of their most outstanding achievements was the ousting of King Idris I in 1969. The FUOM changed their name later and became the Revolutionary Command Council, composed of twelve (12) members under the leadership of Khadafi. Concerning their role in the Libyan decision-making, "they remained a critical constituency for Qaddafi with whom he took care periodically to consult."[719]

Another important informal institution was the *Forum of the Companions of Qadhafi (FCQ).* Like the FUOM, the FCQ comprised Khadafi's relatives and school friends. Khadafi also relied on them when taking political decisions. Despite their consultative role in

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[715] MATTES, Hanspeter, ***Formal and informal authority in Libya since 1969*** in VANDEWALLE: Dirk, **Libya Since 1969: Qadhafi's revolution revisited**, ***Op. Cit.,*** p.59
[716] VANDEVALLE, Dirk: **A History of modern Libya, *Op. Cit.***, p.103
[717] ANDERSEN R., Louise (Ed.): **How the local matters. Democratization in Libya, Pakistan, Yemen and Palestine**, DIIS report, 2013, p.28. An information accessed on the 26th of May 2021 from the website https://pure.diis.dk/ws/files/52426/RP2013_01_How_the_local_matters_web.jpg.pdf
[718] MATTES, Hanspeter, ***Formal and informal authority in Libya since 1969*** in VANDEWALLE: Dirk, **Libya Since 1969: Qadhafi's revolution revisited**, ***Ibid.,*** p.63
[719] HINNEBUSCH A., Raymond, **Charisma, revolution, and State formation: Qaddafi and Libya,** Third World Quarterly, Jan., 1984, Vol. 6, N. 1, p.62

the country's political decision-making, Hanspeter Mattes argues that "when judging the stability of the regime in Libya, the Free Unionist Officers, the Forum of the Companions of Qadhafi, and the leading members of both organizations, deserve to be regarded intensively. Changes in the makeup of their personnel, and in their functions, enable us to draw conclusions concerning the potential stability or instability of the regime."[720] Concerning the nuclear reversal theories, the Libyan political regime in its early days can be categorized as an ***inward-looking regime*** (Etel Solingen). The previous configuration combined with Khadafi's vision of Libya's international role, partly explain Libya's first confrontational foreign policy. However, as we will see later, Khadafi adopted a more pragmatic stance progressively beyond his regime's formal insular configurations.

5.3.2 The Characteristics of the foreign policymaking of Libya under Qaddafi.

With specific aspects of Libya's foreign policy, the complex features of the Libyan political system could not allow an easy external analysis of the actors involved in the foreign policy decision-making process. Nonetheless, several variables should be considered when analyzing the factors affecting Libya's foreign policy formulation under Muammar Qaddafi. The first variable is the primary decision-maker. Unlike Iran, where the foreign policy was the result of the back-and-forth of the members of the Supreme National Security Council, in the case of Libya, there is not substantial information regarding the type of actors and their interactions during the foreign policy-making of the country. Yet, many observers agree that Qaddafi's vision of Libya's international actions and reactions to external threats prevailed. For instance, Margaret Hermann and Charles Herman maintain that "Libya's Qadhafi and Cuba's Castro are examples of predominant leaders whose orientations appear to predispose them to be relatively insensitive to information that does not conform to what they want to do."[721] Although they do not detail the different actors or institutions that intervened during the decision-making of Libya's foreign policy, George Joffé and Emanuela Paoletti nevertheless acknowledge that "although Colonel Qadhafi has long played a dominant role in policy formulation, both domestic and external, he also operates within a structured environment which has its effects on the development and articulation of foreign policy."[722]

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[720] MATTES, Hanspeter, ***Formal and informal authority in Libya since 1969*** in VANDEWALLE: Dirk, **Libya Since 1969: Qadhafi's revolution revisited**, ***Ibid.,*** p.65

[721] HERMANN G., Margaret and HERMANN F., Charles, **Who makes foreign policy decisions and how: An empirical inquiry**, International Studies Quarterly, Dec. 1989, Vol. 33, N. 4 pp. 365- 366

[722] JOFFÉ, George and PAOLETTI, Emanuela, **The foreign policy process in Libya**, The Journal of North African Studies, June 2011, p.3

The country's permanent security interests are the second primary variable when analyzing Libya's foreign policy-making. According to George Joffé, Libya has always been concerned with three main elements regarding its security, irrespective of the nature of the political regime. Those three main elements are related first to the country's independence, particularly regarding the risk of invasion of its Egyptian neighbor after Nasser's death. In this regard, Libya and Algeria signed a mutual defense agreement – the Hassi Messaoud agreement – in 1975.[723] The second core security interest was the issue related to external borders, especially in the South with the Sahara. Indeed, the Libyan authorities have always considered being the Achilles heel of the country and tried to secure this vast region either through incitement (ideological means) or coercion, as was the case with the short war against Chad in 1987. The imperative of energy security (the third permanent security interest) is closely related to this second core interest. Indeed, "Libya, unlike most states which must ensure that they have untrammeled access to energy supplies, is more concerned about its access to oil services and to the international oil market, for, without this, it cannot gain the economic rent on which its economy, society, and polity depend."[724]

The third primary variable to consider regarding the formulation of the Libyan foreign policy is the set of informal actors that played a role either as advisors or in the implementation process of the foreign policy. One of the leading advisory organs in foreign policy-making was the "men of the tent." The men of the tent referred to *the colonel's old associates, many from the Union of Free Officers — which planned and executed the revolution in 1969.*[725] Another vital organ which played an incremental role in Libya's foreign policy-making was the *al-Qadhafi Charitable Foundation*; besides these informal organs and institutions, a cluster of close aids – diplomats, military, and intelligence officials – also influenced the formulation of the foreign policy of Libya. These were senior diplomats like Dr Abdulati al-Obeidi and Mohammed Siala. Dr al-Obeidi, Bashir Saleh Bashir, Mohamed al-Barrani, Abouzeid Omar Dourda; Senior Military and Intelligence officials like Moussa Koussa and Abdallah Sanusi. However, as Joffé George and Paoletti Emanuela emphasized, "the actual decision-making process, of course, remains utterly opaque, although its personalized nature and the fact that senior officials are constantly being reshuffled without warning means that it can often be very slow to respond to external circumstance."[726] The following section will analyze the nuclear dynamics between the US and Libya.

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[723] BISSELL E., Richard and RADU S., Michael: **Africa in the post-decolonization era**, New Jersey, Transaction Publishers, 1984, p.154. (Consulted online)
[724] JOFFÉ, George, ***Prodigal or pariah? Foreign policy in Libya,*** in VANDEWALLE, Dirk (Ed.): **Libya since 1969. Qadhafi's revolution revisited**, ***Op. Cit.,*** p.195. (Consulted online)
[725] JOFFÉ George and PAOLETTI Emanuela: **Libya's foreign policy: drivers and objectives,** The GMF Series, Mediterranean Paper Series, 2010, p.17
[726] JOFFÉ George and PAOLETTI Emanuela: **Libya's foreign policy: drivers and objectives, *Ibid,*** p.18

5.4 SECTION IV – THE COERCIVE DYNAMICS BETWEEN THE US AND LIBYA.

The main goal of this section is to analyze the coercive dynamics between the US and Libya. As we previously mentioned, this part will deeply analyze the coercive dynamics between the US and Libya. This will be done against the backdrop of our hypotheses. In other words, when addressing the Libyan nuclear challenge, did Washington's coercive strategies exploit Tripoli's weakness? Did the US demonstrate a motivation to have a sustained campaign to compel Libya to reverse its controversial nuclear policy? In essence, did Tripoli's response to Washington demands stem from coercive-related domestic changes or fear of heightened threats? Also, were these coercive strategies and threats credible, proportionate and reciprocal to the Libyan response?

Considering our theoretical lens (neoclassical realism), we will also highlight the transmitting-belt role played by the intervening variables between the independent variable (systemic pressures/international demands) and the dependent variable (foreign policy). In other words, we will demonstrate how the perceptions of the Libyan leaders, the strategic culture of the country, the nature of the regime, and the configuration of the domestic institutions or domestic balance of power among the institutions and the State-society relations shaped the nature of the nuclear responses of Tripoli to the coercive demands of Washington. This will enable us to emphasize the relevance of the four ingredients of an effective coercive strategy in the nuclear realm: the display by the coercer of strategic empathy towards its target, the formulation of clear and acceptable demands to the target, the display by the coercer of a higher resolve than the target to achieve his/her objective, and the offer of credible incentives to the target if the target complies.

Following our structured-focused comparative methodology approach, just like the previous Iranian chapter, our research design will also be based on the following questions: **what were the objectives pursued by the US when implementing his coercive policies against Libya? Which coercive strategies were adopted to achieve these objectives? What were the expected outcomes of the US after implementing his coercive strategies? What were the actual outcomes of the coercive dynamics, and why such outcomes?** However, it is worth noting that the coercive dynamics between the US and Libya share commonalities and differences with Iran's. Regarding the former, the issue over the effectiveness of the US coercive strategy concerning Libya's renunciation of its nuclear program has been at the center of intense

debate in both the political[727] and the academic milieu.[728] Concerning the latter, unlike the Iranian case, the sanctions adopted against Libya were not nuclear-related; instead, they were based upon Libya's controversial foreign policy (support for terrorism and chemical program).

Consequently, establishing a direct connection between the coercive strategy of the US and the outcome of the Libyan nuclear program could be problematic. Yet, as the quest for nuclear weapons would have served the foreign agenda of Kadhafi, analyzing the reaction of Libya against the international pressure could shed light on Tripoli's response to (potential) direct nuclear-related sanctions. In other words, nuclear weapons are considered a foreign policy instrument in a broad list of assets in a State's chessboard (soft power etc.). Of course, a nuclear status in global politics is an international prestige of its league, compared to chemical weapons and other WMD as previously described with Nah Liang.[729] Indeed, one should remember that nuclear weapons have a different strategic importance for States than chemical or bacteriological weapons. This is evidenced, among others, by their financial cost and the international interest sparked by this issue.

Therefore, Libya could have reacted differently had it possessed a credible nuclear weapons arsenal. However, as we will analyze later in the section, Libya did not possess a full-fledged nuclear program, to begin with. Therefore, analyzing Libya's nuclear-related reaction to foreign pressure in the package of its international behavior would be more convenient regarding our research goal. In addition, the availability of information related to the coercive nuclear dynamics between the US and Libya also explains our analytical strategy. Subsequently, we will analyze the coercive between Libya and the Great Powers (the US), considering the three significant periods during which Tripoli sought nuclear capability. Those are 1969-1971, 1971-1992, and 1995-2003.[730] But before dwelling on the insights of these periods, we will first analyze Khadafi's vision of Libya's role in international politics.

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[727] See JOSEPH G., Robert: **Countering WMD. The Libyan experience,** Virginia, National Institute Press, 2009, 150 pages. See also INDYK S., Martin, **The Iraq war did not force Gadaffi's hand**, ***Op. Cit.***

[728] On the one hand for example, Bruce Jentlesson and Christopher Whytock argued that Libya was driven toward nuclear disarmament through coercive diplomacy. See JENTLESON W., Bruce and WHYTOCK A., Christopher, ***Who "won" Libya? The force-diplomacy debate and its implications for theory and policy, Op. Cit.*** On the other hand, scholars like St John Bruce Ronald take a different view and argue that Libya was driven toward nuclear reversal through traditional instruments like negotiations. See ST JOHN B., Ronald, **"Libya is not Iraq": Pre-emptive strikes, WMD and diplomacy**, Middle East Journal, Summer, 2004, Vol. 58, N. 3, pp. 386-402

[729] TUANG L., Nah: **Security, economics and nuclear non-proliferation morality: keeping or surrendering the Bomb, *Op. Cit.*, p.1**

[730] GELESKUL, Elena, **The history of the Libyan nuclear program: The reasons for failure**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.140

5.4.1 Muammar Khadafi's foreign policy: ideas and beliefs.

Understanding Khadafi's vision of international politics will provide substantial answers to the "how and why" Libya adopted a specific reaction pattern against global pressures. George Joffé and Emanuela Paoletti argue that Khadafi's foreign policy was based upon three main pillars: "opportunistic constancy, national self-interest and ideological commitment."[731] We will start with the third pillar, as "the ideology of the Libyan state is, officially, very much the personal creation of its leader, Qadhafi, a feature that will have profound implications for the way in which policy is formulated and articulated in Libya."[732] Therefore, analyzing Khadafi's ideology regarding Libya's foreign policy will help us to understand Libya's international actions.

The core ideology of Qaddafi's foreign policy can be summarized in two words: unity and anti-imperialism. Indeed, his childhood has been filled with stories and images of foreign powers exploiting and looting his country's resources. This experience has deeply influenced his perception of international politics.[733] Consequently, Khadafi developed a solid Manichean understanding of international politics. Indeed, he thought that Western Powers championed imperialism and hegemony over weak countries, and it was the historical duty of Arab countries to undermine their spiteful and oppressive ambitions. In this regard, Nasser's nationalist Egypt naturally appeared as the leader of the coming liberation campaign against Imperialist countries like Israel. Unsurprisingly, Libya's primary role in this campaign was to dedicate its resources to achieving this objective. As Qaddafi declared in the early days of the 1969 Revolution, "tell President Nasser we made this revolution for him. He can take everything of ours and add it to the rest of the Arab world's resources to be used for the battle against Israel and for Arab Unity."[734]

It is important to note that Khadafi's use of Islam was not only for his Arab unity project instead, but Islam also helped him to appease identity-based social tensions in the country. In other words, Islam and the Arab unity agenda created a "rally 'round the flag effect" in the country, thus shutting any social tensions in the young post-revolutionary 1969. Ronald Bruce St John confirms it: "Qaddafi also viewed the promotion of Arab nationalism as one means to overcome the regional, tribal and clan divisions which plagued Libyan society."[735] Yet, he did not provide an expansive political room to the religious authorities as they could undermine the implementation of the Revolutionary

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[731] JOFFÉ, George and PAOLETTI, Emanuela, **The foreign policy process in Libya**, ***Op. Cit.,*** p.1
[732] JOFFÉ, George, ***Prodigal or pariah? Foreign policy in Libya,*** in VANDEWALLE, Dirk (Ed.): **Libya since 1969. Qadhafi's revolution revisited**, ***Op. Cit.,*** p.196. (Consulted online)
[733] LANGE, Brenda: **Muammar Qaddafi**, ***Op. Cit.,*** p.63
[734] OYENIYI A., Bukola: **The history of Libya**, California, Greenwood, 2019, p.106. Consulted online.
[735] ST. JOHN B., Ronald: **Qaddafi's world design: Libyan foreign policy, 1969-1987**, London, Saqi Books, 2001, p.26

ideals. However, Qaddafi's plans were hampered by Nasser's death in 1970; indeed, not only did he lose his role model, but also the champion of the Pan Arabism project. He was so affected that he even fainted twice during Nasser's burial.[736] Nonetheless, with Nasser's departure, Khadafi felt bestowed with the mission to carry-on Nasser's will and therefore began to export the Revolution ideals by all means available, including diplomacy or force (**NIC of oppositional nationalists**). Still, irrespective of the scope of his revolutionary zeal, he was limited by the power capabilities of his country. Subsequently, he adjusted his foreign policy whenever needed and seized every opportunity to pursue his goals. This leads us to the second pillar of Qaddafi's foreign policy: "opportunistic constancy."

Despite the central role played by ideology in Libya's foreign policy, Khadafi also adopted a pragmatic stance when facing specific challenges. Those challenges were multifold, but security and economics stood among the biggest. Geoffrey Simons maintains that "he (Khadafi) is no doubt equally conscious that Libya has not managed to achieve the desired levels of self-sufficiency, that the nation remains painfully dependent upon foreign workers, foreign technical expertise and foreign markets."[737] Consequently, he would not hesitate to bargain with the *devil* whenever Libya's interests were at stake. For instance, this is why Tripoli maintained a meaningful level of (oil and food) trade with Tel Aviv despite the thorny bilateral relations with Israel.[738] **(Actions from a compromise hybrid regime – Etel Solingen).** Libya's retreat after its defeat against Chad in (1978-1987) is another bold example of the Libyan choice of pragmatism over ideology. Indeed, motivated by the desire to export the Jamahiriya, Khadafi launched several military interventions aimed at toppling any pro-Western government, starting with then France-backed Chadian President François Tombalbaye, then Hissène Habré, when the latter renewed military cooperation with France and the US. After his defeat in 1987, Khadafi did not initiate another military campaign against his neighbor. Indeed, such an initiative could have driven the US into another military conflict against Libya after its military raid against the cities of Tripoli and Benghazi during "Operation El Dorado Canyon" in 1986.[739] Those two examples clearly show the limits of Khadafi's ideological commitment whenever the country's national interests were at stake.

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[736] BURLEIGH, Michael: **Small wars, far away places. The genesis of the modern world: 1945-65,** London, Macmillan, 2013, p.511

[737] SIMONS L., Geoffrey: **Libya: the struggle for survival**, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 1993, p.264. (1st ed. - Consulted online.)

[738] ABADI, Jacob, **Pragmatism and rhetoric in Libya's policy toward Israel,** Journal of Conflict Studies, 2000, Vol. 20, N. 2, p.13. An information accessed on the 30th May 2021 from the link https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/JCS/article/view/4313.

[739] JOFFÉ, George and PAOLETTI, Emanuela, **The foreign policy process in Libya**, ***Op. Cit.,*** pp.19-20

Concerning the third pillar of Libya's foreign policy -- *national self-interest,* -- as we previously mentioned, the country's core national interests were broadly threefold. Those were the independence of the country, border and energy security. However, just like in any other nation, the stability of the Revolutionary regime was the paramount priority of Muammar Khadafi. Hence, he would not hesitate to thwart any domestic or external threat to the stability of his regime. But in the end, concerning Libyan's foreign policy making, "it is in the intense personalization of the policy process that the answer to the conundrum of Libyan foreign policy really lies, for it is here that the balance between pragmatism and ideology is struck and where the less rational aspects of Libya's ideology can be manifested. One of the most striking aspects of this is the way in which, usually, pragmatic opportunism can tone down the ideological content of policy if that serves the national interest."[740]

5.4.2 The coercive nuclear dynamics between the US and Libya.

Describing Qaddafi's ambitions, Alison Pargeter argues that "Libya was always going to be too small for Qaddafi; he considered himself a revolutionary of international proportions, and Qaddafism was not about to be confined to the domestic sphere."[741] (**Oppositional nationalism**). In other words, Khadafi was convinced that Libya should not be the sole beneficiary of the revolutionary ideals of 1969. On the contrary, it was imperious to export the values of the revolution to free other peoples, especially the Arabs, from Western servitude. Consequently, he embarked on a foreign campaign to convince or compel others worldwide to adhere to his anti-imperialism project; his first target was the Arab world. Khadafi's main goal was to usher regional support to his anti-Western project. In this regard, he associated religious principles and concepts with political projects. Ronald Bruce St John described it in these terms: "Qaddafi also revived Islam as a key component of Arab nationalism, [for he] believed the Arab and Islamic identities were inextricably linked; therefore, he felt the Arab revolution must also be an Islamic one."[742]

Unfortunately, his message did not always receive a favorable echo within Libya and abroad in the Arab world. Regarding the latter, though many Arab leaders barely shared the Arab unity project, they nevertheless distanced themselves from Khadafi's approach and methods. For instance, they turned down the Libyan leader's desire to build an Arab military coalition to erase Israel from the region's map early in the 1969 revolution. Regarding the former (domestic reception of the Revolutionary ideals), although the Revolutionary institutions strove to implement the revolutionary ideals in the post-1969 Libyan society, many segments of the society, especially the younger

[740] JOFFÉ, George and PAOLETTI, Emanuela, **The foreign policy process in Libya**, ***Op. Cit.,*** p.10
[741] PARGETER, Alison: **Libya. The Rise and fall of Qaddafi, *Op. Cit.,*** p.118
[742] ST. JOHN B., Ronald: **Qaddafi's world design: Libyan foreign policy, 1969-1987, *Op. Cit.,*** p.33

generation, did not blindly adhere to Khadafi's principles. For example, *one Islamist-leaning student told the Colonel after one of his speeches to the medical college in Benghazi in May 1972: 'Brother Muammar, there is no call for nationalism in the Qur'an. The Qu'ran didn't say, "oh Arabs", not even once, and the mention of the Ummah [nation] in the Qu'ran is the Islamic one.' A shocked Qaddafi did not take kindly to the challenge; he shouted at the student: 'No, no, you are sick! I blame this college … you are sick, and you have to be treated … and we must put you in a clinic. The young student was arrested and, two days later, appeared on television meekly repenting.*[743]

Considering the reluctance of the Arab leaders to support Libya's assertive foreign policy, Gaddafi decided to launch a solitary campaign against Western countries or the regional allies; this marked the beginning of Gaddafi's *foreign adventurism*. He supported any subversive group, irrespective of the country, which allegedly acted against any form of "anti-imperialism." Mark Kosnik argues in this regard that, *throughout the 1970s, Qaddafi sponsored terrorists as diverse as the infamous "Carlos," the Red Brigades of Italy, the Red Army in Germany, Direct Action in France, FP-25 in Portugal, neo-Nazi activists in Spain, and right-wing terrorists in Italy and Germany*.[744] However, consistent with his ideological beliefs, there was not a more prominent political issue in Qaddafi's eye than the Palestinian issue; in fact, *the Colonel not only wanted to champion the cause; he wanted to be the cause*.[745] Qaddafi logically dedicated important support (finance, logistics, or training) to any military group which targeted Israel. One of the most privileged groups in this regard was the Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), which perpetrated the Attack on the El-Al airliner at Rome airport on September 5, 1973, thanks to missiles provided by the Libyan government.[746] Libya was directly or indirectly involved in several other terrorist actions like the attack of Pan-Am Flight 110 airliner on Rome runway on December 17, 1973, or the assassination attempts of several foreign leaders like former Chadian president Felix Malloum or former Sudanese president Gaafar Nimeiry.[747] But how did the US respond to these actions?

Libya's controversial actions did not go unnoticed and unpunished. In fact, the US government, notably the Carter administration, imposed economic sanctions against

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[743] PARGETER, Alison: **Libya. The Rise and fall of Qaddafi, *Op. Cit.,*** p.121
[744] KOSNIK E., Mark, **The military response to terrorism,** Naval War College Review, 2000, Vol. 53, N. 2, p.14
[745] PARGETER, Alison: **Libya. The rise and fall of Qaddafi, *Ibid.,*** p.125.
[746] ZOLI Corri, AZAR Sahar, and ROSS Shani**, Patterns of conduct. Libyan regime support for and involvement in acts of terrorism,** Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism, Syracuse University, 2012, p.6
[747] BURR J., Millard and COLLINS O., Robert: **Darfur: The long road to disaster,** Princeton, Markus Wiener Publishing, 2008, p.152. (2nd ed.). Cited by ZOLI Corri, AZAR Sahar, and ROSS Shani**, Patterns of conduct. Libyan regime support for and involvement in acts of terrorism, *Ibid,*** p.7

Libya in 1978. More precisely, under the Arms Export Control Act (AECA) provisions, President Carter aimed to prevent Libya from importing military equipment.[748] The AECA refers to *the basic U.S. law providing the authority and general rules for the conduct of foreign military sales and commercial sales of defense articles, defense services, and training.*[749] President Carter detailed the objective of the previously-mentioned sanctions against Libya the following year (1979) in a letter to the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate. More precisely, he recalled first Libya's nuisance role in the region, especially in neighbouring countries with "Libyan troops have been directly involved in three countries in the past year (Chad, Uganda, and the Central African Republic) and are on a high state of alert along the border with Egypt. […] Therefore, discontinuation of the controls would be seen by other friendly countries as a United States contribution to strengthening Libyan capability to mount hostile actions along its borders."[750] What was the impact of these actions on the Libyan military capabilities?

Since the previous restrictive measures aimed at precluding Tripoli from accessing military equipment necessary to implement its foreign policy agenda, the AECA restrictive measures can be described as a **coercive denial strategy**. But their impact on Gaddafi's military capabilities was relatively minor. Indeed, the military equipment – the large tractors – used by Libya and targeted by the US's AECA was *available from foreign suppliers in adequate quantities to serve the Libyan market.* Therefore, *there are very few alternative means available to the United States. [As] Libya has no need for U.S. economic or military assistance*.[751] In addition, the 70s constituted a blessed period for Libya. Not only did Tripoli benefit from the 1973 oil crisis, but it also secured a 9% GDP by the end of the decade.[752] With such economic performance and financial capabilities, Qaddafi could enjoy domestic legitimacy and sustain its controversial foreign policy. Hence, in the absence of credible leverage, the first US attempt to change Libya's foreign policy was clearly a failure as it could not seriously hurt Libya. On the contrary, it backfired, as Qaddafi took his aggressive foreign policy a step further by supporting terrorist organizations which master-minded and perpetrated terrorist actions against

[748] COOKE F., John, **The United States' 1986 emergency economic sanctions against Libya - Have they worked?,** Maryland Journal of International Law, Vol. 14, Issue 2, 1990, p.202

[749] Defence Security Cooperation Agency, **United States Code, Title 22 – Foreign Relations and Intercourse**, 2010 edition. Accessed from https://samm.dsca.mil/glossary/arms-export-control-act-aeca on the 30th May 2021.

[750] CARTER, Jimmy, **Export controls for foreign policy purposes. Letter to the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate,** the American Presidency Project, December 29, 1979. Accessed from https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/export-controls-for-foreign-policy-purposes-letter-the-speaker-the-house-and-the-president on the 30th May 2021.

[751] CARTER, Jimmy, **Export controls for foreign policy purposes. Letter to the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate,** ***Ibid.***

[752] **Libya GDP - Gross Domestic Product.** Accessed on the 1st of June 2021 from the link https://countryeconomy.com/gdp/libya?year=2005

civilians and military personnel from several nationalities, including the US. One of these well-known terrorist organizations was the Abu Nidal Organization (ANO).

The ANO, also called the Fatah Revolutionary Council or the Revolutionary Council, or the Revolutionary Council of Fatah, was founded in 1974 in Bagdad by Sabri al-Banna, famously known through his warrior's name Abu Nidal "father of struggles."[753] He was a Palestinian dissident and terrorist leader who founded his organization following significant disagreements with Yasser Arafat's Fatah. The roots of the relations between the ANO and Libya are shady; however, he landed in Syria, then in Libya after his ousting by Saddam Hussein in 1983 during the Iran-Iraq war. Although the ANO was not yet based in Libya, the Libyan government was involved in the simultaneous attack of Rome and Vienna airports in 1985 perpetrated by the ANO. ZOLI Corri argues that *Libya provided passports to the ANO for the attack, as well as funding and support. Qadhafi praises the assaults as —heroic operations carried out by the sons of the martyrs of Sabra and Shatila.*[754] But how did the US government react to this series of challenges?

Libya-sponsored terrorist actions represented a bold challenge to the US government, particularly the newly elected president Ronald Reagan. Indeed, the inability of the Carter administration to respond effectively to international terrorism led the next administration not only to consider the fight against terrorism as its paramount foreign policy priority but also and consequently, to adopt a new doctrine to address the terrorist threat. From that moment onward, *affronts to the United States would be addressed by direct reaction.*[755] Subsequently, the 40th US President needed to react boldly to Qaddafi's controversial actions. However, there was no consensus on the nature of the actions within the US government.

Indeed, some officials strongly supported the idea of a military action under the code "Flower." The *Flower* operation was divided into two sub-operation: first, "Tulip," which referred to a CIA covert action aimed at supporting dissent groups living abroad whose goal was to topple Gaddafi and second, "Rose", which referred to US-backed air strikes operation carried out by a third country (Egypt).[756] Unlike the proponents of the first option, officials from the State Department and the Pentagon objected to the plan respectively because of the risk of Soviet intervention and a potential ground intervention shall the air strikes stall. Finally, Reagan first chose the "gradual turning of

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[753] The Mackenzie Institute, **Abu Nidal Organization (ANO),** Terrorism Profiles. Accessed on the 1st June 2021 from https://mackenzieinstitute.com/terrorism-profile-abu-nidal-organization-ano/ .
[754] ZOLI Corri, AZAR Sahar, and ROSS Shani**, Patterns of conduct. Libyan regime support for and involvement in acts of terrorism, *Op. Cit.,*** p.9
[755] JOFFÉ, George, ***Prodigal or pariah? Foreign policy in Libya,*** in VANDEWALLE, Dirk (Ed.): **Libya since 1969. Qadhafi's revolution revisited**, ***Op. Cit.,*** p.202. (Consulted online)
[756]STANIK T., Joseph: **El Dorado Canyon: Reagan's undeclared war with Qaddafi,** Annapolis, Naval Institute Press, 2002, p.135. (Consulted online)

the screw" variant of coercion, which spanned economic sanctions to military actions. Regarding the 1985 bombing of the Rome and Vienna airports, Ronald Reagan opted for a coercive denial strategy as he signed Executive Order 12543.[757] After concluding that *the policies and actions of the Government of Libya constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to* the US, *[he declared] a national emergency to deal with that threat*.[758]

More precisely, President Reagan prohibited, among others, "the import into the United States of any goods or services of Libyan origin, other than publications and materials imported for news publications or news broadcast dissemination" (Section 1. a), "the performance by any United States person of any contract in support of an industrial or other commercial or governmental project in Libya;" (Section 1. e) or "the grant or extension of credits or loans by any United States person to the Government of Libya, its instrumentalities and controlled entities." (Section 1. f) Although those coercive measures targeted mainly the trade and industrial sector, we did not consider them punitive, coercive measures as President purposely avoided imposing sanctions that would hurt the population. Indeed, Section 1b prohibits "the export to Libya of any goods, technology (including technical data or other information) or services from the United States, **except publications and donations of articles intended to relieve human suffering,** such as food, clothing, medicine and medical supplies intended strictly for medical purposes."[759]

Notwithstanding the previous coercive measures, the Reagan administration was under increasing domestic pressure and consequently increased the American pressure against Gaddafi. As Mark Kosnik argues, "the American people were becoming increasingly convinced that Qaddafi was responsible, and many voices demanded a response."[760] However, the US needed to overcome a significant obstacle: **the potential opposition of the European allies**; in fact, several European firms had signed several oil exploitation contracts with Libya, while Tripoli had also invested in different European oil companies like Tamoil.[761] Consequently, the US officials attempted a coercive isolation strategy against Libya by convincing their European partners to

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[757] Executive Orders - **Executive Order (EO) 12543--Prohibiting trade and certain transactions involving Libya.** Accessed from https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/12543.html on the 1st of June 2021. This EO prohibited among others the import into the US of "goods and services of Libyan origin." (Section 1a)

[758] Executive Orders - **Executive Order 12543--Prohibiting trade and certain transactions involving Libya, *Ibid***.

[759] Executive Orders - **Executive Order 12543--Prohibiting trade and certain transactions involving Libya, *Op. Cit.*.**

[760] KOSNIK E., Mark, **The military response to terrorism**, ***Ibid.,*** p.16

[761] ST JOHN B., Ronald: **The changing Libyan economy: causes and consequences,** Middle East Journal, 2008, Vol. 62, N. 1, p.86

substantially reduce the share of Libyan oil in their import needs; unfortunately, it was a failure. Consequently, trapped between the domestic pressures over the need to take action and the necessity to avoid undermining the European interests in Libya, Reagan opted for a middle-ground solution.

Therefore, rather than going for an open military confrontation against Gaddafi's Libya, Ronald Reagan created a "sense of urgency" to deter Libya from pursuing its subversive and defiant policy. The US credibility was demonstrated through symbolic actions like the mobilization of military aircraft. "In March 1986, the aircraft carrier USS America (CV 66) was sent to join the carriers USS Saratoga (CV 60) and USS Coral Sea (CV 43) in the Mediterranean. The three carriers, with twenty-seven other warships, were ordered to operate north of Libya to intimidate Qaddafi and demonstrate U.S. resolve," Mark Kosnik argues.[762] What was Libya's response to this demonstration of force?

Muammar Gaddafi was not impressed by the US acts of intimidation; on the contrary, he escalated the tensions with Washington. More precisely, he instructed the "*People's Bureaus" (Libyan embassies) in East Berlin, Paris, Rome, Madrid, and other European capitals to undertake terrorist acts against American targets.*[763] These political actions of Gaddafi constitute the backdrop against which the subsequent aggressive actions of Libya occurred, notably the bombing of a discotheque in Berlin. Indeed, the Libyan government was also involved in the bombing of a discotheque in Berlin a year later (1986), where at least one US military personnel was killed, and 200 persons were wounded.[764] However, the tensions between the US and Libya reached their nadir after the 1988 bombing of Pan American Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, with almost three hundred people killed. But before analyzing the reaction of the US to the Berlin events and dwelling on the international response to the Lockerbie events, it's crucial to analyze the driving factors behind Libya's defiance.

Several factors, including the nature of the coercive strategy, can explain Libya's defiance. Indeed, both the going Carter' and the coming Reagan administrations relied on coercive denial strategies. As we previously analyzed in the literature review, this strategy aims at lowering the advantages of the defiant policy of the target by focusing on its military or civilian (economic) infrastructures. However, suppose the target succeeds in deviating from or circumventing the harmful effects of the sanction policy.

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762 KOSNIK E., Mark, **The military response to terrorism**, ***Op. Cit.,*** p.16

763 MARTIN C., David and WALCOTT John: **Best laid plans: The inside story of America's war on terrorism,** New York, Touchstone Books, 1988, p.xx. Cited by KOSNIK E., Mark, **The military response to terrorism**, ***Ibid.,*** p.17

764 TAGLIABUE, John, **2 killed, 155 hurt in bomb explosion at club in Berlin,** the New York Times, 6th April, 1986. Accessed from https://www.nytimes.com/1986/04/06/world/2-killed-155-hurt-in-bomb-explosion-at-club-in-berlin.html on the 1st June 2021.

In that case, the coercive denial strategy will not send the necessary *costly signals* to bend the target's will. Even when Reagan resorted to a coercive, punitive strategy, the Americans carefully avoided imposing sanctions that would impact the lives of the civilians, which also undermined the credibility of their threats and the level of their resolve.

Concerning our analytical model (credibility, proportionality and reciprocity), the US threats were **not credible** enough to signal Washington's higher resolve to compel Libya. Indeed, not only were the two countries not economically interdependent, but Libya could easily access the military materials denied by the US military sanctions. In addition, the nature of the threats wielded by Washington was **not proportional** to the nature of his demands on Iran. One should also consider the economic performance of Libya, which had a 9% GDP, as we previously analyzed. Concerning the transmitting-belt effect of neoclassical realism, the good economic statistics of Libya at that time allowed their leader to increase their domestic legitimacy and extract public support for their policy (**State-society relations**). One should also consider the lack of international support for the US coercive policy. Bounded by their economic ties with Libya, several European countries resisted the call to join Washington to coerce Libya effectively. Based on the previous information, Washington's first coercive attempts to compel Tripoli undoubtedly **failed to exploit the weakness** of his target. But Libya's *alleged* involvement in Berlin (1986) and Lockerbie (1988) progressively shifted the nature of the US response to Libya's defiance.

The response of the Reagan administration to the Berlin attacks was very different from those of the previous episodes. While President Reagan first opted for economic sanctions and symbolic demonstration of forces against Libya, he now chose to respond to Libya's challenge by launching military air strikes against Tripoli and Benghazi (Horizontal escalation); the code name of this military operation was "Operation El Dorado Canyon." The choice of air strikes was made against the backdrop of the National Security Decision Directive 279, which identified terrorism as acts of war. President Reagan declared that "terrorists are waging a war against, not only the United States, but all civilized society in which innocent civilians are intentional victims, and our servicemen are specific targets."[765]

Operation *El Dorado Canyon* had both political and military objectives. In Reagan's words, the main political goal was to "diminish Colonel Qaddafi's capacity to export terror" (and) "provide him with incentives and reasons to alter his criminal

[765] History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, **NSDD-179: Task Force on Combatting Terrorism,** National Security Council, 20th July 1985. An information accessed on the 2nd of June 2021 from the link https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/230136 .

behavior."[766] "Reagan made his wishes clear (regarding the military goal): if any military operation went forward, it had to destroy critical elements of Qaddafi's terrorist infrastructure while minimizing both American losses and Libyan civilian casualties."[767] However, it is essential to mention that many analysts agree that the undeclared purpose of Operation El Dorado Canyon was actually to get rid of Gaddafi.[768] From a theoretical perspective, if the objective of President Reagan was actually to assassinate Gaddafi, then the US administration had chosen to rely on a **decapitation strategy** and expected a **decapitation mechanism** which could either convince Gaddafi to reconsider his policy or lead to the emergence of a new leadership in Libya, had the operation been a success. But since Operation El Dorado Canyon was officially set to change Qaddafi's policy, we will analyze the coercive strategies based upon the official declarations of the US leaders.

Consequently, the US military operation falls under both "type A" and "type B" coercive defensive diplomacy. It is important to recall that "type A" coercive defensive diplomacy aims at stopping a target short of its goal, while "type B" aims at compelling a target to undo an action. Regarding "type A", several Intelligence reports assessed that Libya intended to carry out additional attacks against US diplomats or civilians. From this perspective, an implicit goal of Operation El Dorado Canyon was to deter Gaddafi from pursuing his controversial foreign policy. Concerning "type B", President Reagan wanted to "convince" Gaddafi to stop and undo his terrorist plans or actions. In addition, the US president relied on a "denial" strategy to compel his Libyan counterpart to abandon the terrorist pattern, as he insisted on the necessity to strike only military targets. But why did President Reagan rely on force this time, unlike during the previous incidents with Libya?

The US government's choice of force in response to the Lockerbie challenge stems from several factors. The first was the determination of the US authorities to set the red line Libya had crossed. Aside from the sponsored-terrorist activities, Libya-US relations were also affected by skirmishes. For instance, in March 1986, the US aircraft sunk Libyan vessels over the Tripoli-claimed Gulf of Sidra. Hence, the Lockerbie incidents

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[766] HOSMER, Stephen: **Operations against Enemy leaders**, California, RAND Corporation, 2001, p.27. Accessed online.
[767] STANIK T., Joseph: **El Dorado Canyon: Reagan's undeclared war with Qaddafi,** ***Op. Cit.,*** p.204
[768] PLUCHINSKY A., Dennis: **Anti-American terrorism: From Eisenhower to Trump - A Chronicle of the threat and response: The Eisenhower through Carter Administrations**, London, World Scientific Publ., 2020, p.130 (Vol. I). Read also HERSH M., Seymour, **Target Qaddafi,** The New York Times, February 22, 1987. Accessed from https://www.nytimes.com/1987/02/22/magazine/target-qaddafi.html on the 2nd of June 2021. See also CANALES, Pedro, **"Operation El Dorado Canyon": Spain in the Libyan hornet's nest,** Atalyar, 22nd of June 2020. Accessed on the 2nd of June 2021 from https://atalayar.com/en/blog/operation-el-dorado-canyon-spain-libyan-hornets-nest.

must have constituted the straw that broke the camel's back. Therefore, then Secretary of State George P. Schultz bitterly declared later that "we have taken enough punishment and beating. We have to act."[769] In the same line, Joseph Stanik argues that from a political perspective, Operation El Dorado Canyon *would send a clear message to those who support or sponsor terrorism that they could not do so without paying a very heavy price.*[770]

The second reason the US chose military force over economic sanctions was the reluctance of the European partners to decrease their import of Libyan crude oil. As Mark Kosnik declared in this regard, *having been unable to generate the European support necessary to implement meaningful economic or political sanctions, President Reagan turned to what he deemed his only remaining option - unilateral military action.*[771] The last factor that explained President Reagan's choice of force was the existence of "incontrovertible evidence"[772] of Libya's leadership implication in the 1986 bombing. Such evidence would certainly prevent any reaction from the Soviet bloc. How did Libya respond to the US military strikes?

Before dwelling on the Libyan response to the 1986 US bombing of the cities of Tripoli and Benghazi, it is important to analyze the nuclear proliferation activities of Libya during that period. A 1985 CIA report assessed that "the serious program deficiencies make it highly unlikely the Libyans will achieve a nuclear weapon capability within at least the next 10 years."[773] In other words, Libya's nuclear program was still at the **phase 1** (Eleonora Mattiacci and Benjamin Jones) when being engaged by the US. But why was the Libyan nuclear program underdeveloped, considering its importance for the country's authorities? External and domestic factors provide substantial answers to the previous question. Concerning the former, aside from the reluctance of many international partners to trade with Libya in the nuclear field, Tripoli was also subject to political pressure from its key partners, who seriously pushed for compliance with nuclear-related international norms. Regarding the latter, as previously analyzed, from early 70s till the mid of the 90s, the Libyan nuclear strategy moved from an "off the shell" to domestic nuclear infrastructure. Unfortunately, the ideals of the Cultural Revolution seriously hampered the achievement of nuclear objectives of Gaddafi. In his

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769 TAILLON D. J., Paul: **Hijacking and hostages: Government responses to terrorism,** Connecticut, Praeger, 2002, p.33 (1st ed.) Consulted online.
770 STANIK T., Joseph: **El Dorado Canyon: Reagan's undeclared war with Qaddafi, *Ibid.,*** pp.203-204
771 KOSNIK E., Mark, **The military response to terrorism**, ***Op. Cit.,*** p.17
772 McCREDIE A., Jeffrey, **The April 14, 1986 Bombing of Libya: Act of self-defense or reprisal**, Vol. 19, Issue 2, Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law, 1987, p.216.
773 Directorate of Intelligence, **'The Libyan nuclear program: a technical perspective',** Central Intelligence Agency, February, 1985, p.29. Accessed online the 3rd June 2021. From the website https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116906.pdf?v=f2006499c8db362ad293652987e164f6

attempt to transform the country, Gaddafi mistakenly muzzled and restricted the room of maneuverability of two central bodies which had an incremental role in the development of the Libyan nuclear infrastructure; those were the scientific community and the diplomats. In fact, they were *both crucial for the development of a nuclear program through a combination of indigenous human resources and foreign technology.*[774]

Consequently, all the Libyan initiatives (in terms of international cooperation) aiming at building a sustainable nuclear (weapons) program had mixed results. For instance, one of the most significant and rarest nuclear milestones that Libya had reached was the construction of *a 10-megawatt nuclear research reactor at Tajoura.*[775] Libya obtained and later developed the Tajoura Nuclear Research Center (TNRC) thanks to the previous achievement. Importantly, Libya had already secured more than 2,000 tons of lightly processed uranium from Niger for its nuclear enrichment plans.[776] Yet, the Soviet leaders carefully maintained their nuclear cooperation with the Libyans to a strict minimum to prevent them from getting closer to the nuclear threshold. Bruce St John shares this point of view by declaring that "while the supply of Soviet arms to Libya has increased, the economic and political relationship has been much slower to develop. […] With the exception of the nuclear program, the Soviet Union has been largely unable to offer the material and the know-how the Libyans require to accomplish their development goals."[777]

[774] BRAUT-HEGGHAMMER, Målfrid: **Unclear physics: Why Iraq and Libya failed to build nuclear weapons, *Op. Cit.,*** p.151
[775] DAVENPORT, Kelsey, **Chronology of Libya's disarmament and relations with the United States,** Arms Control Association, 2018. An information accessed on the 3rd June 2021 from the link https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/LibyaChronology.
[776] DAVENPORT, Kelsey, **Chronology of Libya's disarmament and relations with the United States, *Op. Cit.***
[777] BRUCE ST JOHN, Ronald, **The Soviet penetration of Libya,** The World Today, 1982, Vol. 38, N. 4, p.137



Figure 8; The Tajoura Nuclear Research Centre.[778]

The Soviet Union's reluctance to deepen their relationship with Libya can be explained, among others, by ideological divergences, Libya's controversial foreign policy, geopolitical issues, as Qaddafi opposed the project of a Soviet naval base in the Mediterranean Sea, and, more importantly, Soviet proliferation concerns regarding the true Libyan intentions. Concerning the IAEA, the early days of nuclear cooperation with Libya started on medical grounds. Indeed, *with the assistance of the IAEA, the Faculty of Science (of the University of Tripoli) ordered equipment for a new radioisotope laboratory to enable students to carry out research experiments*.[779] However, the Libyan authorities requested additional support from the IAEA in terms of materials (nuclear reactors). Still, the UN nuclear watchdog chose to temporize its implication in developing the Libyan nuclear program. The main reason for the IAEA's cautiousness was the suspicions over the actual nuclear ambitions of Libya, although Tripoli had signed the safeguard agreements.

In addition to the lack of expertise and limited external support, the Libyan nuclear program was sorely plagued by mismanagement issues.[780] Several officials were reluctant to objectively or accurately assess the program's evolution while requesting additional public funds. A third factor which hampered the achievement of the nuclear goal was the paradoxical absence of a centralized monitoring organ in charge of the

[778] **The Tajoura Nuclear Research Centre**, Virtualglobetrotting. Accessed on the 3rd of June 2021 from https://virtualglobetrotting.com/map/tajoura-nuclear-research-centre/view/google/.
[779] BRAUT-HEGGHAMMER, Målfrid: **Unclear physics: Why Iraq and Libya failed to build nuclear weapons, *Op. Cit.,*** p.153
[780] COHEN S., William: **Proliferation: Threat and Response,** Department of Defense, November 1997, p.53

evolution of the nuclear program. Qaddafi delegated the nuclear progress monitoring to Abdessalam Jalloud, his deputy in the RCC. Combined with the heavy presence of low-skilled foreign experts in its technical leadership, the supervision of a sensitive infrastructure such as the nuclear program by ideology-driven leaders seriously undermined the prospects of achieving the Libyan objectives. Consequently, critical steps in the building of the nuclear program were leapfrogged. As the US intelligence community accurately estimated, one of the Libyans' biggest technical nuclear challenges was *the absence of coherent planning*.[781] Based on the previous information, the Libyan nuclear program was embryonic from the 70s until the early 90s. It was not yet a significant source of international concern, unlike its terrorist actions. What was the impact of operation El Dorado Canyon in Libya?

The 1986 US air strike of the cities of Tripoli and Benghazi had mixed results. They were considered a "success" from a military perspective. Indeed, as the report of the US Department of Defense on the Bombing of Libya concluded, *the results of the strike met the established objectives [as] all targets were hit and all targets received very appreciable damage.*[782] However, certain observers tend to temper the enthusiasm of the US authorities. While the strikes effectively hit many "aim points," the momentum of the strikes (during the night) and technical issues (equipment and navigation) hampered the effectiveness of the strikes in a city like Tripoli. However, the *results at Benghazi were only slightly better. (…) The Jamahiriya barracks were heavily damaged, and many of the targets at the Benina Airfield were damaged.*[783] Concerning the physical impact on Libya's leaders, *Qaddafi reportedly was wounded in the April 1986 bombings and, for a time thereafter, appeared extremely disoriented.*[784] Irrespective of the accuracy of the strikes, Operation El Dorado Canyon, sent a univocal message to the Libyans regarding the US readiness to confront any future Libya-sponsored attack against the US interests or citizens. Unfortunately, to the dismay of the US leaders, the Libyan authorities did not shiver. Rather, they promised to respond in kind proportionately to their power capabilities.

From a political perspective, Operation El Dorado Canyon failed and even backfired. There was a domestic consensus in Libya over the necessity not to falter in front of what was described as another *act of arrogance* from the US. For instance, the people's Committee of the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison (the equivalent of the Ministry of

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781 Directorate of Intelligence, **'The Libyan nuclear program: a technical perspective', *Op. Cit.,*** p.32
782 Report of the U.S. Department of Defense on the Bombing of Libya, 8 May 1986, cited in JENTLESON W., Bruce, **The Reagan administration and coercive diplomacy: Restraining more than remaking governments,** Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 106, N. 1, 1991, p.72
783 KOSNIK E., Mark, **The military response to terrorism**, ***Op. Cit.,*** p.18
784 JENTLESON W., Bruce and WHYTOCK A., Christopher, **Who "won" Libya? The Force-Diplomacy Debate and Its Implications for Theory and Policy, *Op. Cit.,*** p.59

foreign affairs under the new regime) first denied the implication of Libya in the Berlin incidents. They contended that "the attack on US targets in Germany is not new; there have been incidents and attacks against US targets in German territory carried out by Germans on the basis of their opposition to US presence on their territory."[785] But more importantly, they called upon the Libyan authorities not to shiver in front of the US attacks instead of maintaining the same policy until their primary objective of toppling imperialism was achieved. As they emphasized, "Libya is a small revolutionary State that does not possess nuclear weapons; however, its means of repelling aggression is the revolutionary force throughout the world, and it will fight with this force until official terrorism comes to an end and the aggressors pay a dear price."[786] Reference to expressions like 'revolutionary force throughout the world" and "pay a dear price" clearly hinted at proxy organizations Libya relied on to conduct its controversial foreign policy.

In line with the position of the people's Committee of the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison, Qaddafi condemned the air strikes and promised to maintain his foreign policy. "We will not stop inciting popular revolution whatever raids they carry out; we will not stop. We are responsible for the revolution, and they cannot make us abandon it. (…) Whether the raids increase or not, we will not retreat. We will not retreat in the face of raids," the Leader maintained.[787] Though he had officially promised not to retaliate, Libya was yet again reportedly involved in another terrorist attack: the 1988 bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie in Scotland. Jonathan B. Schwartz argues *that the 1986 air strikes on Tripoli and Benghazi evidently had failed to deter further Libyan acts of terrorism and, indeed, may have even provoked the Pan Am 103 bombing.*[788] But before dwelling on the Pan Am flight 103 events, what factors explain the Libyan reaction to the US bombing? Both domestic and external factors can explain the continued Libyan defiance of the US. Regarding domestic factors, the air strikes created a rally-round-the-flag effect (neoclassical realism's **intervening variable of the State-society relations**), and Qaddafi, who had been physically injured in the attacks, could be regarded as a national hero; without forgetting that those air strikes also *led to his lionization in the developing world*.[789]

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[785] **Statement by People's Committee of the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison, Libya 13 April 1986.** Accessed from Survival, **Global Politics and Strategy,** Vol. 28, Issue 5, 1986, p.453.
[786] **Statement by People's Committee of the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison, Libya 13 April 1986.** Accessed from Survival, **Global Politics and Strategy, *Op. Cit.***
[787] **Speech by Colonel Muammar Gaddafi 16 April 1986.** Accessed from Survival, **Global Politics and Strategy, *Op. Cit.,*** p.455.
[788] SCHWARTZ B., Jonathan, **Dealing with a "rogue State": the Libya precedent,** American Journal of International Law, Vol. 101, Issue 3, July 2007, p.556.
[789] TAKEYH, Ray, **The Rogue who came in from the cold,** Foreign Affairs, 2001, Vol. 80, N.3, p.64

There was no international consensus over the condemnation of the US air strikes, concerning the external factors. On the first hand, many State members of the Non-Aligned Movement condemned the strikes. They also helped to the adoption of a UNGA Resolution which clearly "condemned the military attack perpetrated against the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya on the 15 April 1986 (and) called upon the government of the United States in this regard to refrain from the threat or use of force in the settlement of disputes and differences with the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya…."[790] On the other hand, many Western Powers, including France, the UK and the US, vetoed a proposed UNSC Resolution aimed at condemning the US bombings. As we previously analyzed, Libya was reportedly involved in the 1988 Pan Am 103 flight bombing.

Those who had expected an end or at least a break to the terrorist attacks after the 1986 events must have been disillusioned when, two years later, a bomb exploded on a flight from London to New York in Scotland. As the incident was called later, the Lockerbie attacks cost 270 human lives, among which 190 Americans and 11 residents in the town of Lockerbie.[791] The attention of the US investigators was first turned toward the Iranian Revolutionary Guards since the new authorities in Iran had been bogged down by their Iraqi enemies since the beginning of the war in 1980. Western Powers heavily supported Saddam Hussein, so Tehran might have retaliated by targeting US civilians via the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.[792] However, after three years of investigation, two Libyan Intelligence officers – Abdelbaset Ali Mohmed Al Megrahi and Al Amin Khalifa Fhimah (Lamin) – were allegedly identified as the perpetrators of the Lockerbie attacks. How did the US government react to these attacks?

Logically, the US could have reacted the same way as they did during the 1986 Berlin Discotheque events; after all, not only had so many US citizens been killed in this terrorist attack, but Libya was once again involved in a terrorist event targeting the US interests or citizens. Surprisingly, the US government chose a different pattern of behavior. Rather than showering the Libyan cities with bombs again, the US authorities decided to address the issue via legal means. What are the drivers of this decision? The political failure of the 1986 air strikes first drove the legal choice over the military. As we previously analyzed, the bombings of the cities of Tripoli and Benghazi did not deter the Libyan authorities from challenging the US, without forgetting that there was consensual international support of the US unilateral initiative.

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[790] **Art.1 and 2 of the A/RES/41/38** adopted on the 20th of November 1986. Accessed on the 3rd of June 2021 from https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/41/38

[791] FBI, **New Charges in Pan Am Flight 103 Bombing,** 20th Dec. 2020. Accessed on the 3rd June 2021 from https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/new-charges-in-pan-am-flight-103-bombing-122120

[792] ENGELBERG, Stephen, **Suspects Iran Unit in the Pan Am Bombing,** the New York Times, 25th Feb. 1989. Accessed from https://www.nytimes.com/1989/02/25/world/us-suspects-iran-unit-in-the-pan-am-bombing.html on the 3rd of June 2021.

Therefore, conducting another military operation would have increased the antagonism of the Third-World countries. Secondly, "the United States may have believed that placing the case before the international community — and the courts — rather than responding unilaterally would help ensure that the policies of Libya would receive sustained scrutiny, possibly deterring it from further acts of terrorism."[793] Another essential element to consider is the election of President George H. Bush (the father) as the 41st US President. President George H. Bush considered multilateralism and international sovereignty as the pillars of the post-Soviet global system.[794] Therefore, it is unsurprising that he chose to handle the Libyan issue via legal terms instead of force. However, was the US gamble a success?

The US goal to obtain a consensual international condemnation of the Libya-perpetrated bombing of the pan Am 103 flight was a success. In fact, the Security Council (SC) had unanimously adopted Res. 731 against the backdrop of Res. 635, which *condemned all acts of unlawful interference against the security of civil aviation* (art.1) and *called upon all States to cooperate in devising and implementing measures to prevent all acts of terrorism. (art.2)*[795] This Resolution invited Libya to extradite the two Libyan suspects. More specifically, Res. 731 "condemned the destruction of Pan Am flight 103, and Union de transports aériens flight 772 and the resultant loss of hundreds of lives (art.1), strongly deplored the fact that the Libyan Government has not yet responded effectively to the above requests to cooperate fully in establishing responsibility for the terrorist acts referred to above against Pan Am flight 103, and Union de transports aériens flight 772 (art.2) (and) urged the Libyan Government immediately to provide a full and effective response to those requests to contribute to the elimination of international terrorism (art.3)."[796] From a theoretical perspective, Res.731 did not contain **any credible threatening measure** as confirmed by the tone used by the SC members. They **"urged"** and not **"called upon"** *all States individually and collectively to encourage the Libyan Government to respond fully and effectively to those requests.* (Art.5)[797] Nonetheless, the fact that the African States and other member States of the SC had greenlighted the adoption of the Resolution hinted at increasing the isolation of Libya. But how did the US manage to obtain such an international consensus?

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[793] SCHWARTZ B., Jonathan, **Dealing with a "rogue State": the Libya precedent, *Op. Cit.,*** pp.556-557
[794] ENGEL A., Jeffrey, **A better world... but don't get carried away: The foreign policy of George H. W. Bush twenty years on,** Diplomatic History, 2010, Vol. 34, N. 1 p. 29
[795] **UNSC Res. 635** adopted on the 14th of June 1989. Accessed on the 3rd of June 2021 from http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/635.
[796] **UNSC Res. 731** adopted on the 21st of January 1992. Accessed on the 3rd of June 2021 from http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/731.
[797] **UNSC Res.731, *Ibid.***

The unanimous adoption of Res.731 results from the combination of several factors. First is the interest convergence between Western Great Powers, including the US, UK and France. Indeed, the Lockerbie attacks happened before the Utah flight 772 incidents, during which an aircraft from the French company Union de Transports Aériens exploded in the Ténéré desert in Niger on the 19th of September 1989. The French investigators found later that Libya secret service agents were also involved in the attack; among them was Qaddafi's brother-in-law Abdullah Senoussi.[798] Concerning the UK, London had grievances against Tripoli regarding the shooting of the British officer Yvonne Fletcher in 1984[799] during the protest of Libyan students against the regime policy in front of the Libyan embassy. The second main factor that explains the success of the American initiative was the choice of multilateralism over unilateralism, which legitimized the initiatives carried out by Washington later. But how did Libya react to the adoption of Res.731?

The Libyan government rejected the UN demands to extradite the two suspects of the Lockerbie incidents because any extradition would "violate the rights of [Libyan] citizens protected by law."[800] Instead, Libya decided to submit the issue to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) because Res. 731 was not binding and was adopted under Chapter VI of the UN Charter. Consequently, according to the Libyan authorities, the case should be addressed against the backdrop of the 1971 Montreal Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation (MCSUASCA). Under this Convention, "the Contracting State in the territory of which the alleged offender is found shall, if it does not extradite him, be obliged, without exception whatsoever and whether or not the offence was committed in its territory, to submit the case to its competent authorities for the purpose of prosecution…."[801]

By invoking the previous Convention, the Libyan authorities obviously wanted to avoid the implementation of the UN Security Council decisions, which they argued was a mere instrument in the hand of the imperialist States, notably the US. But the choice of Libya's legal counterattack could have also been motivated by the will to shield the political isolation Libya was subjected to. After all, "the United States managed to convince even

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[798] BBC News, **Libyans sentenced for French bombing,** March 10, 1999. Accessed on the 3rd of June 2021 from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/294306.stm

[799] RONEN, Yehudit, **Libya's conflict with Britain: Analysis of a diplomatic rupture**, Middle Eastern Studies, 2006, Vol. 42, N. 2, p. 274.

[800] **Letter from the Secretary of the People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and international Cooperation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya addressed to the Secretary-General**, (delivered March 2, 1992). Quoted by JOYNER C., Christopher and ROTHBAUM P., Wayne, **Libya and the aerial incident at Lockerbie: What lessons for international extradition law?**, Michigan Journal of International Law, Vol. 14, Issue 2, 1993, pp.227-228

[801] **Art.7** of the 1971 Convention of Montreal for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation. An information accessed on the 3rd of June 2021 from the link https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%20974/volume-974-I-14118-english.pdf.

States with close economic ties to Libya, such as Italy and Germany, to support the sanctions as a way to force Qaddafi to hand over the bombing suspects."[802] As Christopher Joyner and Wyne Rothbaump put it, "the Court, however, dismissed this claim by stating that it does not have the authority to challenge Security Council decisions."[803] Considering Libya's refusal to surrender the two suspects, the UNSC imposed additional sanctions.

Libya's refusal to comply with the previous demands of the UNSC led the latter to adopt a new Resolution (738) aiming at compelling Tripoli to comply with its earlier demands in Res.731. Both Resolutions differed in many regards, both in the form and the substance. Concerning the formal aspects, the SC members' tone was more assertive in Res.748 as they now "called upon States" and not just "urged them" as they did in Res.731, which clearly connotes their irritation with Libya's behavior. Concerning the substance, the SC opted for the **"classic ultimatum"** variant of coercion and hoped to create a **"sense of urgency"** as they set a time after which the member States could implement the measures mentioned above. Indeed, the SC decided that on the 15th of April 1992 (that is two weeks after the adoption of the Resolution), "all States shall adopt the measures set out below, which shall apply until the Security Council decides that the Libyan Government has complied (with its demands.)."[804]

The SC also relied on a **coercive denial strategy** as most of the sanctions targeted sectors or areas that could help the Libyan authorities to maintain their defiant foreign policy. For instance, the SC decided that all States should "prohibit any provision to Libya by their nationals or from their territory of arms and related materials of all types, including the sale or transfer of weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment…"[805] Furthermore, the SC decided that all States shall "deny permission to any aircraft to take off from, land in or overfly their territory if it is destined to land in or has taken or has taken off from the territory of Libya unless the particular flight has been approved on the grounds of significant humanitarian need by the Security Council."[806] Lastly, another main goal of the SC was to isolate Libya by imposing diplomatic sanctions like reducing personnel in foreign representations in Libya. (Art. 6-a of Res.738). How did Libya react to this first set of UN sanctions? The building of an international consensus against Libya affected Tripoli. However, rather than fully complying with the demands of the UN, *Libya proposed that the suspects be tried in a*

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802 TAKEYH, Ray, **The Rogue who came in from the cold, *Op. Cit.,*** p.64
803 JOYNER C., Christopher and ROTHBAUM P., Wayne, **Libya and the Aerial Incident at Lockerbie: What lessons for international extradition law?**, ***Ibid.,*** p.250
804 **Art. 3 of the UNSC Res. 738**. Accessed from https://www.undocs.org/S/RES/748(1992) on the 3rd of June 2021.
805 **Art. 5a of the UNSC Res. 738**, ***Ibid***
806 **Art. 4a of the UNSC Res. 738**, ***Ibid.***

neutral court, monitored by either the Arab League or the UN; (but) the US and the UK regarded this as buying time and adopted SCR 883 expanding the sanctions.[807]

UNSC Res.883 was adopted on the 11th of November 1993 with an overall objective to compel Libya to comply with the demand to extradite the two suspects of the Lockerbie events. However, in line with the "gradual turning of the screw" variant of coercion, the SC members maintained their denial-based coercive strategy. This was done mainly through adopting economic sanctions, notably **financial and trade sanctions**. Concerning financial sanctions, the SC demanded *all States in which there are funds or other financial resources (including funds derived or generated from property) owned or controlled, directly or indirectly the Government or public authorities of Libya, (a) or any Libyan undertaking (b), shall freeze such funds and financial resources and ensure that neither they nor any other funds and financial resources are made available, by their nationals or by any persons within their territory, directly or indirectly, to or for the benefit of the Government or public authorities of Libya*.[808] However, the SC carefully avoided any measure that could hurt the civilians as *the measures imposed by paragraph 3 above do not apply to funds or other financial resources derived from the sale or supply of any petroleum or petroleum products, including natural gas and natural gas products, or agricultural products or commodities, originating in Libya*.[809]

Regarding the trade sanctions, the SC restricted its coercive measures to the **commercial activities of the Libyan aircraft company**. Indeed, Art.6-a of the Res.883 required from the other State members *the immediate and complete closure of all Libyan Arab Airlines offices within their territories,* while Art.6-b *prohibited any commercial transactions with Libyan Arab Airlines by their nationals or from their territory, including the honoring or endorsement of any tickets or other documents issued by that airline*.[810] However, the SC also prohibited States from manufacturing or delivering several critical components of the Libyan oil infrastructures like pumps of medium or large capacity, loading buoys or single point moorings (Annex I and II of Res.883). Considering their strategic importance for any oil industry, the fact that the SC had prevented the Libyan government from accessing the previously mentioned items hinted at the potential adoption of a **coercive punishment strategy**. Indeed, Libya, unable to renew critical components of its oil infrastructure, would have failed to

[807] POPOVSKI, Vesselin, **Fighting the Colonel: UN Security Council sanctions on Libya,** United Nations University, 10th of May 2011. Accessed from https://unu.edu/publications/articles/fighting-the-colonel.html#info on the 3rd of June 2021.
[808] **Art. 3 of the UNSC Res. 883**. Accessed from http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/883 on the 3rd of June 2021.
[809] **Art. 4 of the UNSC Res. 883**, ***Ibid.***
[810] **Art. 6a and 6b of the UNSC Res. 883**, ***Ibid.***

produce and sell oil in the short or medium term; there is no worse catastrophic scenario for a rentier State like Libya.

In addition to those first multilateral sanctions, the US government also contemplated possibly imposing several unilateral sanctions against Libya concerning the Lockerbie incidents. In this regard, on the 30th March 1993, the US Senate adopted S. RES. 68 "urging the President of the United States to seek an international oil embargo through the United Nations against Libya because it refused to comply with United Nations Security Council Resolutions 731 and 748 concerning the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103."[811] More precisely, the US Senate urged the President to "immediately seek an international oil embargo through the United Nations against Libya for its refusal to comply with United Nations Security Council Resolutions 731 and 748 concerning the bombings of Pan Am Flight 7 103 and UTA 772."[812] How did Libya react to these sanctions?

Libya's reaction to the previous UN demands was unchanged. Indeed, Libya refused to hand over the two suspects in the Lockerbie events. But what can explain that continued defiant behavior toward the UN? First, although Libya was already considered a *Pariah State* due to its controversial behavior, several International Capitals maintained their trade relations with Tripoli. Vesselin Popovski confirms it in these terms: "interestingly, an oil embargo was never imposed given that some States were heavily dependent upon Libyan oil. The sanctions had a narrow goal to bring the two Libyan suspects to trial and a broader goal to deter Libya from future terrorist acts."[813] Second and consequently, the Libyan economy was not seriously impacted by the previous reprisal measures. For instance, as the following table confirms, the Libyan GDP in 1992 and 1993 were respectively -2.7% and -3.9%.[814] It is worth highlighting that those poor economic performances were not caused by external pressures but by the country's mismanagement policies and corruption.

[811] US Senate, **S. Res. 68,** 103D Congress 1st Session, Calendar N. 52, 1993, p.1. Accessed from https://www.congress.gov/117/bills/sres68/BILLS-117sres68is.pdf on the 3rd of June 2021
[812] Art. 1 in US Senate, **S. Res. 68,** ***Ibid.***
[813] POPOVSKI, Vesselin, **Fighting the Colonel: UN Security Council sanctions on Libya,** ***Op. Cit.***
[814] Data accessed on the 4th of June 2021 from **Country Economy.** Consulted on https://countryeconomy.com/gdp/libya?year=2004.

Evolution: Annual GDP Libya		
Date	Annual GDP	GDP Growth (%)
2004	32,996M.$	4.5%
2003	26,186M.$	13.0%
2002	20,471M.$	-1.0%
2001	34,112M.$	-1.8%
2000	38,271M.$	3.7%
1999	35,975M.$	0.5%
1998	29,960M.$	-0.4%
1997	36,531M.$	-0.6%
1996	35,683M.$	2.6%
1995	32,690M.$	-12.4%
1994	28,796M.$	1.9%
1993	30,921M.$	-3.8%
1992	34,358M.$	-2.7%
1991	33,908M.$	15.7%
1990	30,644M.$	3.7%

Table 6: Evolution of Libya's annual GDP.[815]

As the Libyan authorities remained firm in their position, the US Congress decided to increase its coercive pressure on Tripoli to compel Libya to surrender the two suspects in the Lockerbie issue. Considering the growing concerns of the US government over Iran's controversial nuclear activities, Congress decided to sanction both countries, as their activities (sponsoring international terrorism and attempts to acquire WMD) constituted a serious threat to international peace and security. This new sanction policy was adopted on the 5th of August 1996 and referred to as "the Iran Libya Sanction Act – ILSA." Regarding specifically Libya, the Congress authorized the President to sanction any individual that had "exported, transferred, or otherwise provided to Libya any goods, services, technology, or other items the provision of which is prohibited under paragraph 4(b) or 5 of Resolution 748 of the Security Council […] or under paragraph 5 or 6 of Resolution 883 of the Security Council of the United Nations"[816] One of the toughest sanctions was the impossibility for a government or entity to have access to the US market if dealing with a sanctioned person. In addition, US banks or

[815] Data accessed from https://countryeconomy.com/gdp/libya?year=1990 on the 4th of June 2021
[816] Section 5 of the ILSA, **Public Law 104–172, 104th Congress**, 5th of August 1996. Accessed on the 4th of June 2021 from https://www.congress.gov/104/plaws/publ172/PLAW-104publ172.pdf

financial institutions were prevented *from making loans or providing credits to any sanctioned person*.[817] How did Tripoli react to the ILSA?

The ILSA did not significantly impact Libya's decision to hand over the two suspects of the Lockerbie attacks. Surprisingly, the biggest threat to the Libyan came not from outside but from within. Indeed, the Qaddafi regime faced several economic and military challenges. Regarding the military, Qaddafi faced many attempted military coups throughout the 80s[818] and the 90s. Ray Takeyh and Gideon Rose argue that: "at least a dozen coup attempts, most recently in November 1996, attest to the unreliability of the Libyan army. In a 1993 coup attempt led by the army, Qaddafi had to call in the air force to suppress the ground forces."[819] This clearly shows that internal divisions existed within the Libyan political establishment. But dissent factions from the regular army did not constitute the only military challenge to the Qaddafi regime; in fact, several Islamist factions also shook the pillars of the Qaddafi regime during the 90s.

Concerning the economic challenge, while the UN and the US sanctions undoubtedly impacted the Libyan economy, they nevertheless *exacerbated* or worsened an already catastrophic financial situation caused by *the weight of corruption and a disorganized distribution system*.[820] Consequently, as the following table 5 clearly indicates, between 1993 and 1996, the unemployment rate in Libya oscillated between 20% and 19.83%.[821] Thus, when the US Congress imposed the ILSA, the Libyan authorities **framed those sanctions as instruments of Western imperialism (neoclassical realist's intervening variable of the nature of the regime)**. Lisa Anderson argues that "at the outset, the sanctions were probably a boon for the regime, serving to distract popular attention from the mismanagement that was responsible for many of the country's economic and social woes."[822]

[817] Section 6, art.3 of the ILSA, **Public Law 104–172, 104th Congress*, Ibid.***
[818] ANDERSON, Lisa, **Libya's Qaddafi: still in command?,** Current History, Vol. 86, N.517, The Middle East, 1987, p.65
[819] TAKEYH, Ray and ROSE, Gideon, **Qaddafi, Lockerbie, and prospects for Libya,** Policy Analysis/Policy Watch, 1998, Vol. 342, p.2
[820] ST JOHN R., Bruce, **The Changing Libyan economy: causes and consequences,** Middle East Journal, 2008, Vol. 62, N. 1, p.78
[821] **Libya's unemployment rate 1992-2004.** An information from the World Bank accessed on the 4th of June 2021 from the link https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/LBY/libya/unemployment-rate
[822] ANDERSON, Lisa, **Rogue Libya's long road,** Middle East Report, 2006, N. 241, p.44

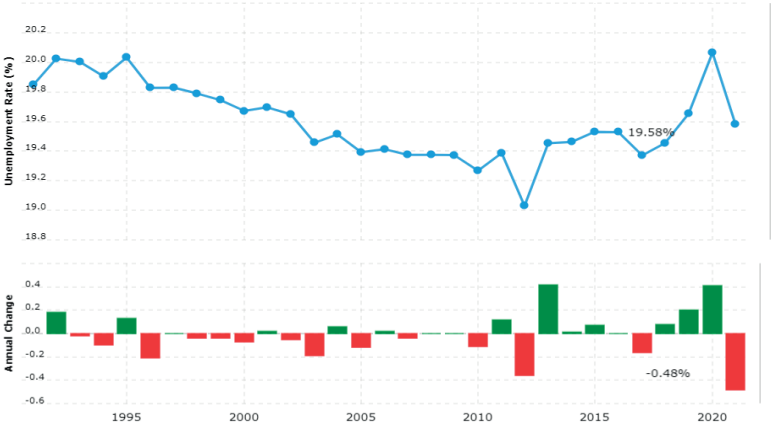

Table 7: Libya unemployment rate 1992-2004, Macrotrends - World Bank.[823]

By the middle of the 90s, two main issues drew international concerns regarding Libya: the handing over of the two suspects of the Lockerbie attacks and the WMD, notably Libya's embryonic nuclear program. Those two issues also reflected Qaddafi's dilemma regarding his country's (new) foreign policy. Will he comply or continue to defy the US? Either choice would have had both domestic and international impacts on Tripoli. Indeed, although Libya had been sanctioned mainly because of its alleged involvement in the Lockerbie attacks, its overall image was seriously tarnished, and the country was increasingly isolated. Logically, several countries severed their commercial relations with Tripoli. Consequently, Libya could no longer have access to international assets to either relieve its crumbling economy or sponsor its foreign policy adventurism (**International power-base erosion mechanism.**) Finally, Qaddafi chose to comply or defy the US and the other Great Powers based on the sensitiveness of the issue. Therefore, as the Libyan nuclear program was still embryonic, Qaddafi intensified Libya's quest for a nuclear deterrent capability.

As previously analyzed, Libya's nuclear strategy during the 90s consisted in acquiring nuclear components through illegal channels. As Libya could already not trade with its counterparts, acquiring nuclear devices for its nuclear could be possible only via the black market. In this regard, Abdel Q. Khan's smuggling network was the best option to achieve the abovementioned goal. In line with his firm nuclear stance, Qaddafi acknowledged for the first time that Libya could and should build or seek any credible deterrent against US potential future aggressions. More precisely, he described his wish

[823] **Libya's unemployment rate 1992-2004,** ***Op. Cit.***

to obtain a deterrent capability in these terms: "if we had possessed a deterrent — missiles that could reach New York— we would have hit it at the same moment. Consequently, we should build this force so that they and others will no longer think about an attack. Whether regarding Libya or the Arab homeland, in the coming twenty years, this revolution should achieve a unified Arab nation… This should be one homeland, the whole of it, possessing missiles and even nuclear bombs. Regarding reciprocal treatment, the world has a nuclear bomb, we should have a nuclear bomb."[824] Yet, despite those bold and aggressive declarations and actions, the Libyan nuclear program did not progress substantially.

However, if Libya remained firm on the nuclear issue from a technical perspective, its position from the international legal point slightly progressed. Indeed, Tripoli signed the Treaty of Pelindaba in April 1996.[825] But this move should be analyzed as a consistently deceiving Libyan strategy which consisted of fighting nuclear proliferation in theory while seeking nukes in practice. In addition, Libya progressively adopted a conciliatory stance on the Lockerbie case. Nevertheless, the alteration in policy underwent an intricate evolution within the Libyan establishment. Until 1998, for instance, Libyan not only sustained its defiant policy regarding the US but also violated core provisions of the UN Resolutions. This was the case when "on 16 April 1996, a Libyan-registered aircraft flew from Tripoli, Libya, to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The Security Council considers this clear violation of Council resolution 748 (1992) of 31 March 1992 as totally unacceptable and calls on Libya to refrain from any further such violations."[826] This behavior reflected the upper hand of the hardliners who did not want to compromise with the demands of the UN. On the other hand, reformers criticized this approach and called for an urgent policy change. Consequently, "an extraordinary dispute broke out in the higher echelons of the regime. The pragmatists in the bureaucracy (…) stressed the need for structural economic reforms and international investments to ensure Libya's long-term economic vitality and political stability. (But) the hard-liners, (…) wanted to continue defying the West, for they saw Libya's past radicalism as the basis of the regime's legitimacy."[827] However, Libya finally

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[824] SPECTOR S., Leonard and SMITH R., Jacqueline: **Nuclear ambitions: The spread of nuclear weapons 1989-1990,** New York, Routledge, 2020, p.183. Consulted online

[825] The Pelindaba Treaty is the nuclear legal framework which establishes Africa as a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone. It was adopted on the 11th of April 1996 but entered into force on the 15th of July 2009. See **African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone (ANWFZ) Treaty (Pelindaba Treaty),** Nuclear Treaty Initiative, 23rd September 2020. Accessed from https://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/african-nuclear-weapon-free-zone-anwfz-treaty-pelindaba-treaty/ on the 4th June 2021.

[826] **Statement by the President of the Security Council [on "Letters dated 20 and 23 December 1991, from France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America (S/23306, S/23307, S/23308, S/23309 and S/23317"]**, S/PRST/1996/18 of the 18th of April 1996. Accessed on the 4th of June 2020 from the link https://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f14220.html

[827] TAKEYH, Ray, **The Rogue who came in from the cold, *Op. Cit.,*** pp.65-66

handed over the two suspects later, showing that Gaddafi had sided with the reformist camp. What can explain this sea change of policy?

Libya's policy change can be explained by several factors, starting with domestic drivers. Indeed, Qaddafi experienced unprecedented domestic challenges. The economic situation was reaching alarming levels, sparking unrest and riots throughout the country, without mentioning the mistrust Qaddafi had towards the army, considering the attempted failed putsch previously mentioned. All the previous elements led him to redefine his priorities regarding international and domestic politics seriously. Lisa Anderson confirms it when she declares that *the growth of opposition means that the government's now limited resources will be needed at home. The imperatives of political survival dictate expenditures on domestic consumption and, more important, on the domestic intelligence and repressive apparatus that maintain Qaddafi in power.*[828]

Qaddafi was also aware that his troubles would be over shall he accede to the international demands. But greenlighting the handing-over of the two suspects could have domestic repercussions, notably in terms of legitimacy. Therefore, he could have afforded such risks provided he was proposing attractive incentives. In this regard, the SC adopted a Resolution (1192) under which it pledged to lift the sanctions as soon as Libya complied with their demands. More specifically, the SC *decided that the aforementioned measures shall be suspended immediately if the Secretary-General reports to the Council that the two accused have arrived in the Netherlands for the purpose of trial before the court described in paragraph 2 or have appeared for trial before an appropriate court in the United Kingdom or the United States and that the Libyan Government has satisfied the French judicial authorities with regard to the bombing of UTA 772*.[829]

More than an economic incentive, this SC commitment actually constituted a survival guarantee to Qaddafi's regime under these circumstances. Another important factor that motivated Libya's decision to comply was the flexibility of the US government. Indeed, once the investigations had clearly established the responsibility of Libyan agents in the Lockerbie attacks, the US and the UK insisted on the necessity to try them before a US court; Qaddafi objected and suggested a trial instead in a third and neutral country. The US first rejected the proposal and considered it "a bluff." However, the emergence of a "sanction fatigue" combined with increasing critics from the Lockerbie

[828] ANDERSON, Lisa, **Libya's Qaddafi: still in command?, *Op. Cit.,*** p.87
[829] Art.8 of **UNSC Res. 1192**. Accessed from http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1192 on the 5th of June 2020

victims' family members ultimately convinced Washington to accede to the Libyan demands.[830]

It is also important to highlight the strategic role played by third actors, which were trusted by both antagonistic camps. In this regard, Prince Saud and Nelson Mandela played an incremental role in reducing Libyan distrust toward the Western Powers (UK and US). Both leaders agreed to address the Lockerbie stalemate through a secret channel which two trusted diplomats of both countries would chair: then Saudi Arabia ambassador to the US, Prince Bandar bin Sultan and Jakes Gerwel. This move led to the existence of two channels or tracks. The second track of diplomacy set into motion was between the United States, the *United Kingdom, and the international community. The two powers were thrown on the defensive by Mandela's dramatic entry into the fray*.[831] The informal track served mainly as a transmitting belt between the leaders of all the countries involved in the Lockerbie case. Still, the moral statute of Nelson Mandela undoubtedly granted him an informal referee role.

Subsequently, Mandela paid closer attention to the demands of each party and raised their concerns whenever needed, like when Qaddafi requested a clarification between the "lifting and suspension" of sanctions. In this regard, *Blair assured Mandela that the United Kingdom would not be uncooperative on these matters; the United Kingdom had no "hidden agendas" or "undisclosed demands."*[832] Nevertheless, it was mutual respect and high consideration that Mandela and Qaddafi had for each other that played a decisive role in the diplomatic solution of the first bone of contention related to the Lockerbie issue. Mark Kersten confirms it in these words: *at the time of the Lockerbie deal, the South African President intimated that his personal relationship with Gaddafi had produced a political breakthrough and, more importantly, that diplomacy and negotiation must always remain an option*.[833]

Consequently, Al Amin Khalifa Fhimah and Abdelbaset Ali Mohmed Al Megrahi – the two suspects in the Lockerbie attacks – were tried in the Netherlands under Scottish law. After one year trial, the first suspect was released while the second was sentenced

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[830] ANDREWS R., David, **A thorn on the tulip - A Scottish trial in the Netherlands: The story behind the Lockerbie trial,** Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law 307, 2004, Vol. 36, Issue 2, p.311 and p.314

[831] BOYD-JUDSON, Lyn, **Strategic moral diplomacy: Mandela, Qaddafi, and the Lockerbie negotiations**, Foreign Policy Analysis, 2005, Vol. 1, N. 1, pp. 81-89

[832] BOYD-JUDSON, Lyn, **Strategic moral diplomacy: Mandela, Qaddafi, and the Lockerbie negotiations, *Op. Cit.,*** p.88

[833] KERSTEN, Mark, **What Mandela teaches us: negotiating between Good and Evil,** Justice in Conflict, 6th of December 2013. An information accessed on the 6th of June 2021 from https://justiceinconflict.org/2013/12/06/what-mandela-teaches-us-negotiating-good-and-evil/.

to lifetime jail, which was commuted to a 27-year sentence later.[834] The decision of the ICJ intervened in a specific international context: President George Bush had just been elected as the 44th US President. With particular respect to Libya, President Bush first adopted a soft tone at the beginning of his mandate, pledging to compel Qaddafi to accept to pay compensation to the families of the Lockerbie victims and expressing concerns about the resolve of certain States like Libya to acquire WMD.[835] However, like the previous Iranian case, President Bush took a tougher stance after 9/11.

The 9/11 events constituted a watershed moment in global politics. After being challenged in several regions like the Middle East (Iran) and Africa (Somalia, Libya), the US was attacked within their borders, and such slight could not be left unpunished. Madeleine Albright, US Secretary of State under Clinton, argued that the 9/11 events informed President Bush about the necessity *to depart, in fundamental ways, from the approach that has characterized U.S. foreign policy for more than half a century*.[836] Logically, the US government chose to address the threats to its core security interests in a pre-emptive way: "to launch an attack against an attack that one has incontrovertible evidence is either actually underway or has been ordered."[837] Surprisingly, Gaddafi condemned the *horrifying* attacks against the twin towers and sent a message of solidarity to the US. That the leader of the alleged greatest supportive State of international terrorism had condemned an action against its sworn enemy was surprising, if not shocking.

The desire of Libya to distance itself from its international rogue statute can explain this move. In addition, an exhausted Qaddafi seemed to have realized the unproductiveness of his hitherto foreign policy. As he declared, *I supported all liberation movements fighting imperialism, but I believe that is over now.*[838] (Jacques Hymans - Progressive transition from an **oppositional nationalist** to a **sportsmanlike subaltern** which leaders that "would lack either the motivation or the certitude required to take such a dramatic step as building the bomb."[839] However, confident analysts doubt the sincerity

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[834] MCFADDEN D., Robert, Megrahi, **Convicted in 1988 Lockerbie bombing, dies at 60**, New York Times, May 20, 2012. Accessed from https://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/21/world/africa/abdel-basset-ali-al-megrahi-lockerbie-bomber-dies-at-60.html on the 6th of June 2021. Also read The Guardian, **Lockerbie bomber is innocent, says acquitted suspect**, Friday 24th of August 2001. Consulted on the 6th of June 2021 from https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2001/aug/24/lockerbie.

[835] ZOUBIR H., Yahia, **Libya in US foreign policy: From rogue State to good fellow?,** Third World Quarterly, 2002, Vol. 23, N. 1, p.47

[836] MORGAN J., Matthew (Ed): **The impact of 9/11 on Politics and War. The day that changed everything?**, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p.2

[837] GRAY S., Colin, **The implications of preemptive and preventive war doctrines: A reconsideration**, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2007, p.9

[838] ANDERSON, Lisa, **Rogue Libya's long road, *Op. Cit.,*** p.45

[839] HYMANS E. C., Jacques: ***The Psychology of nuclear proliferation: Identity, emotions and foreign policy, Op. Cit.,*** p.14

of Qaddafi in breaking with its old defiant posture. For instance, "in March 2001, he praised Osama Bin Laden for being able to terrify the United States."[840]

Nevertheless, the appeal of international integration seemed to have prevailed though "the regime still possessed the resources to ensure survival against domestic threats and develop a weapons program, most notably after 1999 when oil prices and energy investments in Libya increased."[841] (**Moving from an inward-looking regime to an outward looking regime – Etel Solingen**). Evidence of Libya's strong desire to join the concert of nations was its participation in the fight against Al-Qaeda, notably by sharing information on the terrorist with the US.[842] As we previously analyzed, this ambivalence seems to have been a distinctive feature of Qaddafi, as he had already engaged simultaneously with two foes (Pakistan and India). But how did the 9/11 events impact the Libyan nuclear dynamics? Before dwelling on the impact of the 9/11 events on the Libyan nuclear dynamics, it is important to emphasize the US approach regarding the WMD challenge after the Al-Qaida-led terrorist attacks. In this respect, Robert G. Joseph argues that President's Bush new approach to fighting against WMD went through the "putting in place (of) a comprehensive strategy involving proactive diplomacy, actions to counter proliferation directly, and better means for organizing and equipping the United States and its friends and allies to respond to the use of such weapons."[843]

Concretely, from a political perspective, George Bush released the National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (NSCWMD). This strategy was based on three main pillars: counter-proliferation to combat WMD use (mainly via deterrence and interdiction), non-proliferation with *a strengthened non-proliferation to combat WMD Proliferation* (via international cooperation and legal instruments), and a subsequent management to respond to WMD use (through the improvement of defense instruments against the actual use of WMD.)[844] George Bush also created the "Proliferation Security Initiative" (PSI), an informal multilateral framework to share intelligence regarding proliferation-related activities. However, the trauma of the victims of the terrorist attacks led President Bush to address the terrorist challenge with military force.

[840] STEVENS A., Christopher, **The Libyan debate: coercive diplomacy reconsidered**, Diplomacy & Statecraft, 2017, Vol. 28, N.2, p.323
[841] STEVENS A., Christopher, **The Libyan debate: coercive diplomacy reconsidered**, ***Op. Cit.,*** p.322
[842] PAEK, Sunwoo, **Discouraging the bomb: U.S. counter proliferation success against Libya,** The Korean Journal of International Studies, 2020, Vol.18, N.3, p.210
[843] JOSEPH G., Robert: **Countering WMD. The Libyan experience, *Op. Cit.,*** pp.1-2
[844] President Bush, **National strategy to combat Weapons of Mass Destruction,** Arms Control Association, 17th of December 2002. Accessed from https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2003_01-02/document_janfeb03 on the 7th of June 2021

Considering the US new military strategy, which preconized a pre-emptive war, George Bush waged a global "war on terror", and his first target was the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Emboldened by a Congress Resolution (S.J.Res. 23 - Authorization for use of military force), the US launched a military campaign against the Taliban a month after the 9/11 events. This military campaign began with air strikes, and several Western Powers like the British, France, Australia, and Germany joined the US in their military efforts. The Taliban were defeated three months after the beginning of the military campaign, and the leader of Al-Qaida, Osama Ben Laden, fled.[845] As previously analyzed, George Bush delivered his State of the Union address in January 2002, three months after the 9/11 attacks. This was a landmark speech regarding the new US foreign policy, as President Bush identified three countries – Iraq, Iran, and North Korea – as the members of the "axis of evil."[846] Based on the previous incidents between Tripoli and Washington, one would have expected Libya to be mentioned in the axis evil.

Surprisingly, Libya was not listed among those "rogue States" that challenged the US-led global system. Peter Viggo Jakobsen maintains that Bush's omission of Libya in the axis of evil rhetoric was a goodwill gesture. "To keep the **negotiations** on track, the United Kingdom persuaded National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of State Colin Powell to keep Libya out of Bush's 'axis of evil' speech," he argued.[847] Wait! Negotiations? Yes! Indeed, Libya had already entered informal talks with the UK and the US to solve the remaining issues related to the Lockerbie case. As we previously analyzed, the handing over of the two suspects of the Lockerbie attacks was just one demand in a broader list set by the UK and the US. The other demands included the official acknowledgement by Libya of its responsibility for the attacks, the payment of compensation to the family members of the victims and Libya's cooperation in a criminal investigation.[848] George Bush was perfectly aware that any move toward a comprehensive agreement with Libya was impossible unless the Lockerbie case was fully cleared. Indeed, the US Congress echoed the dissatisfaction of family members of the Lockerbie attacks, who felt that justice had been partly served with the trial of the suspects.

However, accessing the remaining demands of the US did not go without political risk for Qaddafi in Libya's domestic landscape. In a country where the leader enjoyed almost a God status, acknowledging the responsibility of a terrorist attack would have

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[845] Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), **The U.S. war in Afghanistan, 1999 – 2021**. Accessed on the 7th of June 2021 from https://www.cfr.org/timeline/us-war-afghanistan

[846] **George Bush Address on the State of the Union on January 2002, 29**, ***Op. Cit.***

[847] JAKOBSEN V., Peter, **Reinterpreting Libya's WMD turnaround – Bridging the carrot-coercion divide,** Journal of Strategic Studies, August 2012, Vol. 35, N.4, p.503

[848] BOYD-JUDSON, Lyn, **Strategic moral diplomacy: Mandela, Qaddafi, and the Lockerbie negotiations**, ***Op. Cit.,*** pp. 81-89

undermined his credibility and legitimacy. Therefore, Libya was first opposed and frustrated when the Americans and the British formulated the demand. Back then, Mandela even considered the demand "unacceptable." At the same time, then Libyan Minister of Foreign Affairs Omar Al-Muntasser warned that "the Libyan people will blame Qaddafi."[849] Concerning the compensation issue, the Libyans criticized the West's unfairness as they did not request any compensation from the Saudi government after the 9/11 events, which were perpetrated by Saudis nationals. Considering those issues, the solution lay in the formulation of the text, which needed to avoid any personal implication of the leader and shaming of the country.

Hence, when the Libyans officially acknowledged their responsibility in the Lockerbie attacks, they framed it as an exemplary act of respect for international law. More precisely, they emphasized that "out of respect for international law and pursuant to the Security Council resolutions, Libya as a sovereign State: has facilitated the bringing to justice of the two suspects charged with the bombing of Pan Am 103 and accepts responsibility for the actions of its officials; has cooperated with the Scottish investigating authorities before and during the trial and pledges to cooperate in good faith with any further requests for information in connection with the Pan Am 103 investigation (and) has arranged for the payment of appropriate compensation. "To that end, a special fund has been established, and instructions have already been issued to transmit the necessary sums to an agreed escrow account within a matter of days."[850] With all the conditions met, the UN adopted Resolution 1506 on the 12th of September 2003, lifted the Pan Am 103-related sanctions against Libya, and removed the Lockerbie issue from the SC agenda.[851] However, as terrorism had built the international agenda at the moment, Libya could easily **deflect** international attention from the WMD issue. In other words, the fact that the terrorism issue was the main priority of global leaders helped Libya escape, at least temporarily, from the international scrutiny of its WMD program. This strategy constituted another behavior pattern in Libya, which we will analyze later.

In a clear demonstration of his determination, President Bush waged "Operation Iraqi Freedom" in March 2003, and Saddam Hussein's downfall happened less than three months later. Those two military campaigns of the US had an impact on Libya's nuclear ambitions. That two foes which incarnated the most significant security challenges

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[849] BOYD-JUDSON, Lyn, **Strategic moral diplomacy: Mandela, Qaddafi, and the Lockerbie negotiations**, ***Ibid.,*** p.89

[850] **Letter dated 15 August 2003 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council.** Accessed from https://undocs.org/S/2003/818 on the 7th of June 2021.

[851] **Art. 1 and 3** of the UNSC Res. 1506. Accessed from https://www.undocs.org/S/RES/1506(2003) on the 7th of June 2021.

(terrorism and WMD) to the US interests had been defeated within three months did not go unnoticed in Tripoli. In fact, a panicking Qaddafi called then-Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and reportedly declared: "I will do whatever the Americans want because I saw what happened in Iraq, and I was afraid."[852] (**Credible threats from the coercer – Rupal Mehta**) Consequently, then Head of Libya's secret services, Musa Kusa, reached out to his British counterpart to express Libya's readiness *to initiate talks with Britain and the United States regarding its WMD programs*.[853] But before dwelling on the US response to the Libyan move, it is important to highlight two main lessons from the previous developments.

The fact that Libya had signaled its willingness to discuss its WMD-related activities after the US military campaign in Iraq clearly demonstrates the incremental role played by this **indirect military coercion** in Tripoli's calculus. (Horizontal escalation) Yet, Qaddafi's overture was not unprecedented. Indeed, Libya had already indirectly reached the Bush (father) administration in the early 90s via Gary Hart, a Democrat Senator who had just retired. The Libyan Intelligence community officials clearly expressed the desire to enter into direct contact with the US administration, but the latter dismissed the proposal. "We will have no discussions with the Libyans until they turn over the Pan Am bombers," responded the US officials.[854] Even when the Libyans acceded to the US demands against the lifting of the sanctions, or when Abdul Salaam Jalloud (the second highest figure in Libya's leadership) proposed to put "everything on the table", including the WMD, Washington remained firm in its position not to interact with Tripoli. Gary Hart does not provide a clear answer to the US sticky position, but, most likely, the US administration did not want any interaction with Libya at that time. The same scenario happened on the eve of the 2000s when Libya offered to give up its chemical weapons program *in exchange for an easing of the sanctions imposed because of its alleged support for terrorism.* Still, *the U.S. refused (once more), telling the Libyans that taking responsibility for the downing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988 was a much higher priority*.[855]

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[852] SOLINGEN, Etel: **Sanctions, statecraft, and nuclear proliferation,** New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp.272-273. (Consulted online)

[853] BAHGAT, Gawdat, **Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction: The case of Libya**, International Relations, 2008, Vol.22, N.1, pp.105-106

[854] HART, Gary, **My secret talks with Libya, and why they went nowhere,** The Washington Post, 18th January 2004. Accessed from https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2004/01/18/my-secret-talks-with-libya-and-why-they-went-nowhere/d144215b-f781-4c18-978e-33c483850a7b/ on the 8th June 2021.

[855] FRANTZ Douglas and MEYER Josh, **The deal to disarm Kadafi**, Los Angeles Times, 13th March 2005. Accessed from https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2005-mar-13-fg-libya13-story.html on the 7th June 2021.

The second main lesson from Qaddafi's sudden overture relates to Libya's domestic politics or decision-making. As we previously analyzed, Libya's decision-making was characterized by two opposing camps: the hard-liners who advocated for a continuous hard stance on the nuclear program and the pragmatists who encouraged domestic reforms and a conciliatory approach on the nuclear issue. (**Domestic coalitions and mixed signals – Hybrid compromise, Etel Solingen**). As previously analyzed, if the Libyans had been conciliatory on the Lockerbie issue as they handed over the two suspects as required by the UN, Tripoli would nevertheless pursue its nuclear activities. For example, *by October 2000, they had set up and successfully run a single P-1 centrifuge model provided by the Khan network. Later that year, they began to install three P-1 centrifuge cascades at Al-Hashan. (But) this work was interrupted in April 2002 when the centrifuges were disassembled and placed in storage at another site in Tripoli, Al-Fallah, due to security concerns*.[856]

Libya might have considered the Latin principle of *in dubio pro reo* – which means "when in doubt, in favor of the defendant" – when sustaining their controversial nuclear activities. In other words, as one is innocent until proven guilty, the Libyan authorities might have decided to keep their **denial and deceptive nuclear strategy** until proven guilty of proliferation activities. Målfrid Braut-Hegghammer argues that Libya's ambivalent behavior *was not unusual in the Gaddafi regime. […] By encouraging separate and apparently contradictory policy tracks, Gaddafi could permit both options to develop further, delaying his final decision while balancing the different regime factions*.[857] Nonetheless, the Iraq events in 2002 compelled Kadhafi to take a position finally.

The direct consequence of the 2003 Iraqi events in Libya's decision-making was the rise of the pragmatist faction. Proponents of a moderate Libyan foreign policy like Gaddafi's son Saif Al-Islam or Mohamed A. Zwai, a former ambassador to the UK, had the wind in their sails.[858] The fact that two hostile regimes had been toppled was already threatening enough for the stability of Gaddafi's regime. Still, the capture of Saddam Hussein sent an unambiguous message to the leader of the Jamahiriya Revolution about his fate if he did not change his policy. (Robert) Joseph, a leading American negotiator, argued that "Saddam's capture weighed heavily on the minds of Libyan representatives."[859] One could also assume that Libya's desire to discuss its WMD activities, notably the nuclear program, was driven by the Lockerbie experience, which

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[856] BRAUT-HEGGHAMMER, Målfrid: **Unclear physics: Why Iraq and Libya failed to build nuclear weapons, *Op. Cit.,*** p.207
[857] BRAUT-HEGGHAMMER, Målfrid: **Unclear physics: Why Iraq and Libya failed to build nuclear weapons, *Ibid.,*** p.198
[858] JAKOBSEN V., Peter, **Reinterpreting Libya's WMD turnaround – Bridging the carrot-coercion divide, *Op. Cit.*,** p.501
[859] STEVENS A., Christopher, **The Libyan debate: coercive diplomacy reconsidered**, ***Op. Cit.,*** p.336

set a precedent of confidence between Libya and the UK. Regarding Libya's nuclear program, then Prime Minister Tony Blair recalled that Tripoli approached London with the hopes that "it could resolve its WMD issue in a similarly cooperative manner," [860] as was the case with the Lockerbie issue. Against this backdrop, the Libyans reached the British "to clear the air" regarding the WMD and ease the thorny relations with the US. Soon after the Libyan initiative, the British informed the Bush administration about Tripoli's intentions.

Unlike the previous administrations, George Bush agreed to discuss with the Libyans regarding its WMD. The Western Powers did not consider this Libyan initiative to be a bluff as "the direct involvement of Saef al-Islam – widely regarded as a representative of his father and potential heir – in this approach was taken as a sign that Gadhafi himself was ready to negotiate."[861] However, considering the issue's sensitivity for the countries involved, the trilateral negotiations between Libya, the UK and the US took place secretly. Consequently, the negotiating teams were composed of members of the intelligence community and led respectively by Musa Kusa (head of the Libyan secret services), Stephen Kappes (deputy director of operation in the CIA) and Sir Mark Allen (director of the counter-terrorism in the MI6). It is important to note that the Libyan negotiating team was under Saef al-Islam's leadership and composed of two moderates (Ambassador Abdellati Obaidi and Ambassador Mohamed Zwai) which signaled a more conciliatory approach during the coming negotiations.

However, in line with Tripoli's traditional ambivalent, if not contradictory, policy, the Libyan diplomats sent contradictory messages. While they officially expressed their readiness to discuss and seriously solve the WMD issue with the West, they did not clearly indicate which aspects of the WMD program should be addressed. Robert Joseph, a US negotiator and former senior director for counter-proliferation strategy in the National Security Council staff, captured the contradictions in these terms: *the March 2003 request to "clear the air" on WMD was more likely an attempt to hedge against what Tripoli saw as potential liability to the regime than a signal of intent to abandon WMD programs.*[862] Nevertheless, each party clearly expressed its demands which can be listed in two main groups: the rehabilitation of Tripoli in the concert of the nations and the total lifting of the US unilateral sanctions from the Libyans. At the same time, the US requested the dismantling of the nuclear program and the long-range missiles. However, just like with the Iranian case, political and technical stumbling blocks stood in the way of the normalization of Libya/US relations.

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[860] ANDERSON, Lisa, **Rogue Libya's long road, *Op. Cit.,*** p.46
[861] BOWEN Q., Wyn: **Libya and nuclear proliferation: stepping back from the brink**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.62 (1st ed. - Consulted online.)
[862] JOSEPH G., Robert: **Countering WMD. The Libyan experience, *Op. Cit.,*** p.35

The political obstacles were twofold: first, the deep mistrust between the two States (the US and Libya) and second, the nature of the demands of the US. The distrust constituted a significant obstacle to resolving the Libyan nuclear issue, as thirty years of enmity could not be easily erased within months. In addition, by requesting Libya to give up its WMD and long-range missiles, the West demanded to forgo strategic assets of the country's foreign policy. Qaddafi was so wary that he even *"suspected an ambush" by the West (aiming at) getting him to give up his only deterrent*.[863] (**Intervening variable of the leader's perception**) Therefore, Libya's top leadership needed assurances regarding the true intentions of the West. In a political regime where the leader embodied the entire decision-making system, credible appeasing words could only come from people in the inner circle. Who else than the leader's son to fulfil this role? Saef al-Islam Kadhafi, the leading Libyan negotiator, would alleviate his dad's concerns whenever they were raised. *When Gaddafi grew nervous, Seif al Islam says he reassured his father about the West's intentions, telling him, "Trust me."*[864] The second main assurance to Libya's leader regarding the West was the frame under which the negotiations were set: "U.S. and UK participants were conscious from the beginning of the need to structure the outcome on a win-win basis: a non-proliferation victory for the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as a political and a national security victory for Libya," Robert Joseph emphasized.[865] (**Strategic empathy**)

Concerning the technical perspective, the Western Powers requested a total dismantling of all the WMD components, especially the nuclear' ones. This specific demand was formulated against the backdrop of the Iranian case. Indeed, the Americans wanted to avoid repeating the hide-seek game with the Iranians, who "cynically manipulated the provisions of the NPT to acquire sensitive technologies for weapons purposes under the guise of a peaceful program," the Americans argued.[866] However, as we will see, this demand fostered deep regrets in the Libyan camp later. Closely related to this demand was the need for an intrusive inspection of the Libyan nuclear program by experts from the US, the UK, and the IAEA. At first glance, this seemed extremely difficult, as Libyans were first opposed to such intrusive inspections, raising sovereignty imperatives and even denying the nuclear program's very existence at some point.

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[863] MACLEOD, Scott, **Behind Gaddafi's diplomatic turnaround,** Time, 18th May 2006. Accessed on the 7th of June 2021 from http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1195852,00.html.
[864] MACLEOD, Scott, **Behind Gaddafi's diplomatic turnaround, *Ibid*.** See also BECKETT Francis, HENCKE David and KOCHAN Nick: **Blair. The power, the money, the scandals,** London, John Blake, 2016, 288 pages.
[865] JOSEPH G., Robert: **Countering WMD. The Libyan experience, *Op. Cit.,*** p.17
[866] JOSEPH G., Robert: **Countering WMD. The Libyan experience, *Ibid.,*** p.9

Consequently, between April and September 2003, the trilateral nuclear negotiations did not make substantial progress. Qaddafi developed a **buying-time strategy** as the Libyans kept delaying the perspective of foreign inspections of its controversial nuclear program, arguing that they constituted a breach of Libya's sovereignty.[867] One would have expected the Bush administration to adopt more coercive measures to compel Libya to respond to its demands. But such a move could have failed or backfired, considering the mistrust of Qaddafi. This does not mean that there were no pressures on the Libyan government; in fact, Georges Bush decided to extend the ILSA for another five years in 2002, signaling that the US had not forgone the economic pressure pattern. In addition, even though solving the Lockerbie issue had helped the US administration keep the domestic pressure in check, George Bush allowed some hawks in his administration to blame Libya for its misbehavior in the international system. For instance, then Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John Bolton described Libya as a "rogue State" which should be included in the axis of evil.[868] But more importantly, the Iraqi specter still loomed on the horizon, as US officials maintained that "all options are on the table." Therefore, George balanced the (indirect) threats with incentives by blowing hot and cold. (**Combination of sanctions and incentives – Rupal Mehta.**)

The breakthrough regarding the inspection of the Libyan nuclear facilities happened when the BBC China, a Malaysian ship destined to deliver nuclear components, was seized by the Italian thanks to US intelligence. According to many experts, this achievement resulted from international cooperation under the aforementioned PSI framework. Concerning the Libyan nuclear goal, not only did the seizure of the BBC China constitute blatant proof of Tripoli's illicit nuclear activities, but it was also a major success of the **denial strategy** of the West. Consequently, the BBC events seriously impacted Qaddafi's nuclear calculus. In this regard, Scott MacLeod argues that "the discovery provided the public with smoking gun proof of Libya's covert nuclear program. (…) The seizure added pressure on Libya to come clean."[869] Dafna Hochman digs in as she argues that *the (BBC) seizure in early October likely sealed his decision to dismantle his nuclear weapons program. Being caught red-handed seemed to have expedited Qadhafi's willingness to disarm*.[870]

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867 TOBEY, William, **A message from Tripoli: How Libya gave up its WMD**, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 3rd of December 2014. Accessed from https://thebulletin.org/2014/12/a-message-from-tripoli-how-libya-gave-up-its-wmd/ on the 7th of June 2021.

868 BOLTON, R., John: **Beyond the axis of evil: Additional threats from Weapons of Mass Destruction',** The Heritage Foundation, Washington, May 6, 2002. Accessed online on the 7th of June 2021 from the website http://www.acronym.org.uk/old/archive/docs/0205/doc01.htm

869 MACLEOD, Scott, **Behind Gaddafi's diplomatic turnaround, *Op. Cit.***

870 HOCHMAN R., Dafna, **Rehabilitating a rogue: Libya's WMD reversal and lessons for US policy**, The US Army War College Quarterly, 2006, Vol.36, N.1, pp.76-77

How did the US react to the BBC China events? The Bush administration could have capitalized on the BBC China events to publicly blame the Libyans for their continuous controversial nuclear activities, especially considering the increased domestic and international pressure related to the absence of evidence related to the Iraqi case. Instead, Robert Joseph wisely *urged that the seizures be kept secret to maximize American leverage on Qaddafi (…), and Hadley agreed that the seizure could best be used to jolt the Libyans into more dramatic concessions, a decision that was promptly approved by President Bush*. [871] This was another vivid display of **strategic empathy** from the Americans. And they were right in their gamble, as *Seif al Islam admits, but the lack of bullying by MI6 and the CIA reassured Gaddafi. "We realized that we were dealing with friends and sincere people,"* he said.[872]

Consequently, the US and UK experts were allowed the conduct inspections in the Libyan nuclear facilities, and their conclusions were subject to controversies. Before dwelling on the findings of those national experts, it is important to highlight that the IAEA, the UN nuclear watchdog, was almost excluded from the technical part of the disarmament process of Libya. In this regard, Geoffrey E. Forden recalls that *the U.S. and U.K. were less than enthusiastic partners with the IAEA during the denuclearization of Libya. If it had not been for the Gaddafi-regime instance that the IAEA play a lead role in the verification process, the denuclearization might well have taken place without multi-international involvement*.[873] But the Libyan request was not the only explaining factor of the presence of an international actor in Libya's nuclear disarmament. Indeed, then Director General of the Agency also threatened the Western Powers to report what he considered an obstruction to his mandate under the NPT.[874] Consequently, the US and the UK finally agreed to allow the IAEA to be associated with the dismantling process, but the IAEA, which was kept in the dark regarding the existence of the Libyan nuclear-related negotiations in the first place did not agree with the US estimates of the Libyan nuclear program.

The first series of US/UK expert inspections took place in October 2003, while the second occurred in December. Those two missions concluded that Libya had embarked on an enrichment path as the inspectors discovered several centrifuges and hexafluoride equipment.[875] In addition, the US/UK inspectors also found nuclear

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871 TOBEY, William, **A message from Tripoli: How Libya gave up its WMD**, ***Op. Cit.***
872 MACLEOD, Scott, **Behind Gaddafi's diplomatic turnaround, *Op. Cit.***
873 FORDEN E., Geoffrey, **Lessons from past nuclear disarmament: What worked, what did not**, Sandia Report, Global Security Research and Analysis, 2018, p.26
874 EL BARADEI, Mohamed: **The Age of deception: nuclear diplomacy in treacherous times, *Op. Cit.,*** p.155. Consulted online.
875 BOURESTON, Jack and FELDMAN, Yana, **Verifying Libya's nuclear disarmament,** The Verification Research, Training and Information Center (VERTIC), 2004, Issue N. 112, p.2

weapons design documents handed to the IAEA inspectors.[876] The main divergence between the IAEA and the US/UK experts lay in the description of the full scale of the Libyan nuclear program. The choice of the words was important as it would have had implications regarding both Libya – in terms of legitimacy – and the US in terms of credibility. Robert Joseph stresses that "while it would have taken substantial time and effort for Libya to produce a nuclear weapon, the revised intelligence assessment was that Libya was well on its way to developing a nuclear weapons capability."[877]

On the contrary, El Baradei described the Libyan nuclear program as "nascent", arguing that "the pilot plant had very small capacity and no ability to produce uranium hexafluoride gas, the feedstock for uranium enrichment. Even on a laboratory scale, Libyan scientists had never produced UF6 domestically. (…) Their enrichment capacity, as I have noted, was limited to a small number of centrifuges with no production or even testing of nuclear material."[878] Irrespective of the size and enrichment capacity, the very existence of the Libyan nuclear program constituted a violation of Tripoli's engagement under the NPT and the Pelindaba Treaty. Hence, Libya urgently needed to renounce it and amend it publicly. (**The Libyan nuclear program was still at the phase 1 - Eleonora Mattiacci and Benjamin Jones**)

While the discovery of the Libyan nuclear program left Qaddafi without any counterargument regarding its proliferation activities, acknowledging them publicly proved to be more difficult. Indeed, the Libyans would have lost more international credibility in the eyes of their remaining supporters, like the Egyptian President, who was "incensed that the Libyans had not told them about their WMD programs, nor about their negotiations with the Americans and the British."[879] Yet that was the US/UK's main goal from the beginning of the negotiations. But two main obstacles precluded the achievement of such a goal: first, the strategic importance of the nuclear program for Libya and second, the country's reputation at the international level. As previously analyzed, even though the program was still at a rudimentary stage, the Libyan perceived it as a valuable deterrent asset; consequently, Libya needed credible security incentives to comply with the US demands. Concerning the country's reputation, Qaddafi desired to regain respectability at the international level and acknowledging recalcitrant behavior could have undermined that goal. Addressing those two issues was fundamental for Libya's compliance.

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[876] SQUASSONI A., Sharon and FEICKERT Andrew: **Disarming Libya: Weapons of Mass Destruction**, Washington, Library of Congress Washington, Congressional Research Service, 2004, p.4
[877] JOSEPH G., Robert: **Countering WMD. The Libyan experience, *Op. Cit.,*** p.51
[878] EL BARADEI, Mohamed: **The Age of deception: nuclear diplomacy in treacherous times, *Op. Cit.,*** pp.154-155. Consulted online.
[879] EL BARADEI, Mohamed: **The Age of deception: nuclear diplomacy in treacherous times, *Op. Cit.,*** pp.157-158. Consulted online.

Regarding security concerns, the Western Powers guaranteed that Libya would not be subject to a regime change after relinquishing its nuclear program and defense missiles (**credible incentives and confidence-building measures**). *The Libyan leader asked for assurances that the US would forgo efforts at regime change, lift sanctions and provide economic and military assistance; (and) the British delivered a personal letter from Blair formally agreeing to Qaddafi's conditions*.[880] Furthermore, Saif al Islam even revealed that "as part of the agreement by Libya to renounce its nuclear weapons program, the United States "has committed itself to defend us." (He) also expected that "agreements on military and security cooperation" would follow."[881] The importance of the international reputation of Libya concerning the nuclear program transpired in the first draft of the nuclear declaration. Indeed, the Libyan authorities purposely avoided any reference to their nuclear program. Instead, they just called for a nuclear weapons-free world. Such a declaration was obviously rejected by the Western Powers, who requested an explicit acknowledgement by Libya of its WMD – notably the nuclear-related – and a firm commitment to destroy them.

Unexpectedly, the issue over the formulation appeared to be a greater challenging issue than expected. Both the US and UK administrations raised their concerns about the likelihood of Libyan compliance with the demands mentioned above. Then British Prime Minister Tony Blair directly contacted Qaddafi to convince him to accede to their demands. "Please, we are in a hurry. It is a big success for all of us," said an impatient Blair to Qaddafi.[882] Robert Joseph argues that "Qaddafi reportedly was concerned about: (1) the appearance of the Libyan decision being portrayed as caving into pressure, and (2) the prospect that Libya would be attacked because it had now admitted that it possessed WMD programs."[883] (**Intervening variable of the leader's perceptions**). Those Libyan fears clearly show that the Iraqi symptom was still ticking in the minds of Qaddafi, who needed credible assurances regarding his personal and political survival. Finally, Libya responded by submitting two drafts highlighting the context of its nuclear program's emergence and dismantling. Unsurprisingly, both versions referred to Libya's decision to develop a nuclear program in a defensive posture and its decision to relinquish it was done "on its own free will" and because "an arms race does not serve its security nor the security of the region."[884]

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[880] ANDERSON, Lisa, **Rogue Libya's long road, *Op. Cit.,*** p.46
[881] CIGAR, Norman: **Libya's nuclear disarmament: Lessons and implications for nuclear proliferation**, ***Op. Cit.,*** p.4
[882] MACLEOD, Scott, **Behind Gaddafi's diplomatic turnaround, *Op. Cit.***
[883] JOSEPH G., Robert: **Countering WMD. The Libyan experience, *Op. Cit.,*** p.63
[884] JOSEPH G., Robert: **Countering WMD. The Libyan experience, *Op. Cit.,*** pp.64-65

The Western Powers were not completely satisfied by the draft but, as a **reciprocal** gesture to Gaddafi's flexibility, acknowledged Libya's effort to meet their demands. Finally, a compromised version was reached among the three parties and contained specific details regarding the components of the nuclear program and the scud missiles, the timeline of the dismantling and the commitment not to embark again on such a path. However, the negotiations were hitherto conducted by diplomats and had not yet received the blessing of the ultimate decision-maker in Libya: Muammar Qaddafi. This was a significant source of anxiety both in Washington and London, as described by a senior British official: "we were worrying that it was all going to get called off, (…) it got later and later."[885] Finally, Libya's decision to abandon its WMD-related components was publicly announced by Mohammed A. Chalgam, then Libyan Minister of Foreign Affairs, on the 19th of December 2003, and Qaddafi appeared briefly to deliver his public blessing, calling it a "wise decision and a courageous step."[886]

George Bush immediately reacted to the Libyan announcement in these words: "as the Libyan government takes these essential steps and demonstrates its seriousness, its good faith will be returned. Libya can regain a secure and respected place among the nations, and over time, achieve far better relations with the United States." However, George Bush emphasized the *trust but verify* strategy as he declared that "because Libya has a troubled history with America and Britain, we will be vigilant in ensuring its government lives up to all its responsibilities; [but happily stressed] that old hostilities do not need to go on forever"[887] Tony Blair made similar remarks, describing Libya's nuclear decision as "historic," which "entitled it to rejoin the international community." He called on other States like North Korea to follow the Libyan example, which *demonstrated that countries can abandon programmed voluntarily and peacefully*. [888] Based upon the reports of the IAEA and Paula DeSutter, then US Secretary of State for Verification and Compliance, President George Bush lifted all the remaining sanctions against Libya.[889] What lessons can be learned from the previous coercive nuclear dynamics between the US and Libya?

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[885] FRANTZ Douglas and MEYER Josh, **The deal to disarm Kadafi**, ***Op. Cit.***
[886] FRANTZ Douglas and MEYER Josh, **The deal to disarm Kadafi**, ***Ibid.***
[887] Remarks by the President, **President Bush: Libya Pledges to Dismantle WMD Programs,** Office of the Press Secretary, 19th of December 2003. An information accessed on the 10th of June 2021 from the link https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/12/20031219-9.html
[888] **Full transcript: Blair's Libya statement,** BBC News, 19th of December 2003. Accessed on the 10th of June 2021 from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/3336073.stm
[889] KERR, Paul, **U.S. lifts remaining economic sanctions against Libya**, Arms Control Association, 2004. Accessed on the 10th of June 2021 from https://dev.armscontrol.org/act/2004-10/us-lifts-remaining-economic-sanctions-against-libya

5.5 SECTION V – LESSONS FROM THE COERCIVE NUCLEAR DYNAMICS BETWEEN THE US AND LIBYA.

As previously highlighted, the main goal of this chapter was to answer the main questions related to our research design: what were the objectives pursued by the US when they implemented their coercive policies against Libya? What were coercive strategies adopted to achieve these objectives? What were the expected outcomes of the US after implementing its coercive strategies against Libya? What were the actual outcomes at the end of the process, and why such outcomes? But we analyzed these coercive nuclear dynamics against the backdrop of our hypotheses: the exploitation by the US coercive strategies of the weaknesses of Libya and the demonstration by the US of a motivation to have a sustained campaign to compel the Libya to abandon its nuclear weapons program. Also, we would consider whether or not the US coercive strategies and threats were credible, proportionate and reciprocal to the Libyan response. Considering our theoretical lens (neoclassical realism), we would also highlight the transmitting-belt role played by the intervening variables between the independent variable (systemic pressures or international demands) and the dependent variable (foreign policy). This research design would help us to confirm the relevance of the following four ingredients regarding the implementation of a successful coercive strategy in the nuclear realm: the display by the coercer of strategic empathy towards its target, the formulation of clear and acceptable demands to the target, the display by the coercer of a higher resolve than the target to achieve his/her objective, and the offer of credible incentives to the target if he complies.

Regarding the coercive goal, unlike the Iranian case, where the US had a fixed goal since the 1979 Revolution, the US objectives related to Libya evolved over time. Indeed, as we previously analyzed, the Libyan nuclear challenge became a severe source of concern in the middle of the 90s. Until then, Libya's controversial international actions were mainly related to its terrorist activities. This can be explained by several factors, including ideology-driven global behavior (Arab unity, anti-imperialism) and political, technical, and logistical obstacles regarding the nuclear program. Consequently, from the 1969 revolution till the middle of the 90s, the main coercive goal of the US was to compel Libya to abandon its financial support for terrorist organizations (Abu Nidal) or violent political movements (IRA). During the second half of the 90s decade, the US coercive goals progressively moved from a strict terrorism perspective to a WMD. This was mainly explained by the improvement of intelligence methods of investigation (Khan illicit nuclear network) and the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Just like the coercive goals, the US coercive strategies also progressed, considering the nature of the threats to thwart.

Concerning the US coercive strategies, the US adapted its response to the nature of the challenges posed by Gaddafi's actions and their impact on the domestic landscape. Concerning the terrorist challenge, the US government (Reagan) first adopted a denial strategy to prevent Libya from accessing (financial and logistical) incremental resources for its foreign agenda. In adopting such a coercive strategy, the US expected a power-base erosion mechanism as the sanctions would affect key stakeholders in the country's decision-making. However, Libya counter-attacked with **defiance and framing** strategies as they framed the US as the leader of Western imperialism, which helped to portray Qaddafi as the spearhead of the victims of hegemony. Considering the increase in terrorist attacks, which clearly demonstrated the failure of the denial strategy, the Reagan administration finally resorted to a punishment and even decapitation coercive strategy by launching air strikes against critical military infrastructures and the Leader's residence. It is worth emphasizing that those decisions were made in line with the increasing domestic pressure in the US and the necessity to demonstrate credibility at the international level.

The US expected unrest and assassination mechanisms by adopting a punishment and assassination coercive strategy, respectively. Concerning the former, the impossibility of the Libyans to import key components of their oil refineries would have precluded them from selling their main economic asset abroad, thus leading to increased prices and unrest movements in the society. Concerning the latter, by (allegedly) killing Qaddafi, the Libyans would have permitted the emergence of a new and more conciliatory leadership. However, Qaddafi could deflect the effect of the previous coercive measures by **portraying** himself as a personal target of the external enemies' assaults. This would then create a rally-round-the-flag impact in society. In addition, Libya benefitted from the **international support of several countries**, especially from the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Consequently, the US adjusted their coercive strategy by relying on unilateral initiatives and multilateral responses. The timing was perfect as the Cold War had just ended, and many States supported the new counter-terrorism approach of the US. Logically, the multilateral strategy of the US impacted Libya's behavior.

Before dwelling on the impact of the international support to the US approach against Libya's controversial behavior, it is important to highlight the mechanism envisioned by the US. By having recourse to international support to address the Libyan terrorist challenge, the US relied on a coercive diplomatic isolation strategy which deprived Libya of its foreign political support **(International power-base erosion mechanism)**. In addition, the US-led UN sanctions against Libya highlight the adoption of a **coercive shaming strategy** as Tripoli was now labelled as a "Pariah State' which sponsored terrorism. Combined with the domestic challenges (economic mismanagement, failed military coups) and the absence of an international godfather

(the Soviet Union), the international isolation of Libya led its authorities to seek a solution to its exclusion from the concert of the nation. Unfortunately, trapped in ideological considerations (George Bush father) and concerned with solving the Lockerbie issue, the US administration (Bill Clinton) declined the offer.

Nonetheless, while the Libyans seemed ready to change their policy concerning terrorist groups, they actively tried to improve the rudimentary nuclear program by recoursing to the black market. **This dissimulation or ambivalent** policy was the first mechanism adopted by the Libyans to escape from the international scrutiny of their controversial nuclear activities. However, the 9/11 terrorist attacks negatively affected Libyan plans. Indeed, George Bush, who had just been elected as the 43rd US president, put both terrorism and WMD issues in the same basket and consequently launched military campaigns against targets (Taliban in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein in Iraq) which were deemed as the biggest sponsors of the aforementioned security threats. With the rapid defeats of Afghanistan and Iraq, Qaddafi felt increasingly unsecured and initiated a rapprochement with the US via the UK. Yet, he could also deny the existence of a WMD program and delay his answer to the Western powers' demands. This clearly showed that Qaddafi retained room for maneuverability when dealing with the US and UK.

As previously stressed, the Libyan case is usually described as one of the biggest but most controversial successive coercive models. Scholars and politicians usually do not agree on the real driving factors behind Gaddafi's decision to comply with the US/UK demand to forgo his nuclear program. While some authors argue that diplomacy and incentives pushed Qaddafi toward nuclear disarmament,[890] others argue that the fate of Saddam Hussein played an incremental role in Qaddafi's decision to comply.[891] Some former Libyan officials share this argument, like Abd al-Rahman Shalgam, who argued that George Bush's unambiguous threats in terms of "either you get rid of your weapons of mass destruction or he will personally destroy them and destroy everything with no discussion"[892] created **a sense of urgency** which hastened Libya's nuclear rollback decision. Nevertheless, based on the previous information, Libya decided to comply with the US demands not because incentives or threats were separately applied but because they were simultaneously and wisely used during the entire nine months of negotiations with Libya. Furthermore, there is both empirical and historical evidence which supports our argument or finding.

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[890] MÜLLER-FÄRBER, Thomas: **How the Qaddafi regime was driven into nuclear disarmament**, ***Op. Cit.***

[891] JENTLESON W., Bruce and WHYTOCK A., Christopher, ***Who "won" Libya? The force-diplomacy debate and its implications for theory and policy, Op. Cit.***

[892] CIGAR, Norman: **Libya's nuclear disarmament: Lessons and implications for nuclear proliferation, *Op. Cit.,*** p.2

Unlike previous research, which concluded that Libya was led toward nuclear disarmament either through incentives[893] or threats,[894] we humbly suggest that choosing between carrots and sticks or between bullets and silver when assessing Libya's motivation to relinquish its nuclear program is simplistic and partial. Indeed, such an approach does not fully grasp the interactions between the two parties. Henceforth, this research aligns with Peter Viggo Jakobsen's assertion[895] that Libya has successfully disarmed thanks to the wise and simultaneous application of (indirect) threats and incentives. Indeed, there is no doubt regarding the usefulness of the security threats in leading Libya to disarm. This was demonstrated by Qaddafi's frequent concerns regarding his personal security and that of his regime. However, the fact that Libya had suggested discussing his WMD activities twice before the US military campaign against Saddam Hussein lessens the absolute relevance of the military coercion school of thought.

Thereof, "the Iraq war ***only*** did not force Gaddafi"[896] to abandon his nuclear-weapons program. Another set of factors also paved the way for the successful outcome of the Libyan nuclear issue. One of them was undoubtedly the incremental role played by positive incentives in terms of a more prestigious international status and, more importantly, the security guarantees provided by the US/UK. Saif Al-Islam confirms it in these terms: *(the) regime insecurity informed Libya's decision: "we told them: listen, do you have ambitions in the Gulf of Sirte? They said, no. We asked them: do you have any desire to interfere in our internal affairs? They said no. do you want to threaten the Libyan regime? No. Do you? No. No."*[897]

A third factor to consider in Libya's nuclear reversal decision is the broad strategy of the US/UK when discussing with Qaddafi. Firstly, President Bush wisely alternated *veiled threats* with incentives by sometimes allowing hawkish officials to play the role of "circuit breakers" while reassuring Qaddafi about its true intentions. Secondly, the Western Powers also treated their adversary with respect and consideration, as demonstrated by the personal diplomacy of then-British Prime Minister Blair, who referred to Qaddafi as "brother leader." Even when the US had leverage to bully the Libyans, as was the case with the seizure of the BBC-China, they refrained from shaming the country and its leader. Such confidence-building behavior was decisive as *it served*

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893 MÜLLER-FÄRBER, Thomas: **How the Qaddafi regime was driven into nuclear disarmament**, ***Op. Cit.***

894 AHMED YUSEF, B. Aessa: **Libyan foreign policy: a study of policy shifts in Libya's nuclear programme**, PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2014, 303 pages.

895 JAKOBSEN V., Peter, ***Coercive diplomacy, Op. Cit.***, p.247

896 INDYK S., Martin, **The Iraq war did not force Gadaffi's hand, *Op. Cit.***

897 STEVENS A., Christopher, **The Libyan debate: coercive diplomacy reconsidered**, ***Op. Cit.,*** p.336

to assure the adversary that compliance will not result in new demands and that promises of compensation will be kept.[898]

It is also important to emphasize the strategic role played by pragmatist actors like Saif Al-Islam Kadhafi, who adopted a balanced approach between the strategic demands of both camps. As a transmitting belt between his father and the Western Powers, he helped to alleviate the risk of misperception between the conflicting parties.[899] Finally, George Bush's approach to Libya is worth praising as, unlike in the previous Iranian case, he clearly understood his enemy and behaved accordingly. But this was possible only because he had *uncharacteristically sidelined the administration's neoconservative wing — which strongly opposes any offer of carrots to State sponsors of terrorism, even when carrots could help end such problematic behavior — when crucial decisions were made*.[900]

The envisioned transmitting-belt effect of the neoclassical realism theory also transpired in the coercive dynamics between Washington and Tripoli. Though intervening variables like the balance of power among institutions or the strategic/political culture did not occur during the coercive dynamics between Washington and Tripoli, other intervening variables like the perceptions of the leader and the State-society relations (in terms of extracting public support, the victimization of the leader) played an incremental role in shaping the nature of Libya's response to the US demands. As the previous analysis has demonstrated, Gaddafi's security perceptions were omnipresent during the interactions with the US. Also, Gaddafi capitalized on the US bombings against Libya to extract public support (State-society relations) to sustain his defiant nuclear and terrorism policies. These intervening variables led to the creation of counter mechanisms we identified thanks to the process-tracing method.

The Libyan authorities also crafted counter-coercion strategies like the deception strategy, as they relied on the black market to obtain sensitive nuclear components. However, these strategies were not successful, as the US undermined them by wielding indirect but credible security threats to Gaddafi's regime. In addition, they formulated acceptable demands to the Libyans, provided credible incentives in terms of security guarantees, and reciprocated to the Libyans' goodwill gestures. In this case, the US subdued their enemy without fighting, as the combination of all the previous elements

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898 JAKOBSEN V., Peter, **Reinterpreting Libya's WMD turnaround – Bridging the carrot-coercion divide, *Op. Cit.*,** p.495

899 METTER, Nils, **A case for clandestine diplomacy: The secret UK-US-Libyan talks**, Working Paper, 2014, p.26

900 LEVERETT L., Flynt, **Why Libya gave up on the bomb,** Brookings, 23rd January 2004. Accessed on the 10th of June 2021 from https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/why-libya-gave-up-on-the-bomb/

convinced Gaddafi to change his international behavior in general, and his nuclear policy in general. Although unwillingly, the US coercive strategy against Libya confirmed Sun Tzu's precept that "to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill."[901] Thereof, the previous information supports the relevance of Christopher Whytock and Bruce Jentlesson's coercion model (credibility, proportionality and reciprocity). This case study also confirms the relevance of our four ingredients regarding implementing a coercive strategy.[902] Lastly, considering Jakobsen's typology of success, the US engagement with Libya can be considered as a "cheap success," given the minimal level of threats needed to compel Gaddafi to acquiesce to Washington's demands.

While ending the chapter on a sad note would tarnish the insightful and beautiful picture of the previous coercive dynamics, it is nevertheless important to highlight the impact of the negative end of Qaddafi on future coercive nuclear negotiations. Just like many countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, which experienced the Arab Spring in 2011, Libya's domestic landscape also went under turmoil. Rebels demanded Qaddafi's demission after 42 years of rule and were backed by foreign actors, notably NATO. This intervention ultimately led to the downfall of the former leader of the Libyan Jamahiriya. Without dwelling on the merits or limits of humanitarian interventions, the fact that a regime willingly relinquished its WMD and was toppled less than 8 years later sent a negative message to recalcitrant proliferators. In fact, it strengthened the proponents of the nuclear deterrence theory as the ultimate guarantee of a regime's survival. This was evidenced by North Korea's criticism of Libya's referred to as a model of nuclear disarmament by then US National Security advisor John Bolton.[903]

But then Libyan leaders had already started regretting their strategic decision before Bolton's reckless analogy: "we have been told that President Bush is a man that honors his own words, we are not so sure of that anymore. Libya has not been rewarded for the good service it did to world peace," admitted a disappointed Qaddafi during an interview in 2005.[904] His elder son Saif Al Islam Qaddafi, goes further as he grudgingly warns: "nowadays everyone is afraid to even touch North Korea. If there were an atomic bomb, no one would be attacking us. (…) It's a good lesson for anybody ... for us and for

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[901] MCNEILLY, Mark: **Sun Tzu and the art of modern warfare**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.15

[902] The display by the coercer of **a strategic empathy towards its target**, the formulation of **clear and acceptable demands** to the target, display by the coercer of **a higher resolve than the target** to achieve his/her objective, and the offer of **credible incentives** to the target if the target complies.

[903] BAKER, Peter, **Libya as a model for disarmament? North Korea may see it very differently,** New York Times, 29th of April 2018. Accessed on the 10th of June 2021 from the link https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/29/us/politics/bolton-libya-north-korea-trump.html.

[904] CNN: **2005 interview, Gadhafi on ending nuclear program.** Accessed on the 10th of June 2021 from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=98qnaR-0Z14

others ... it means this is a message to everybody, that you have to be strong, you [can] never trust them [i.e., NATO], and you have to be always on alert."[905] While studies on the conducive conditions of implementing coercive diplomacy usually focus on the procedural aspects of the interactions between the coercer and the coerce, the distributive aspects should not be neglected. In other words, the coercer should also consider the benefits of the target in the long run when accessing his demand; this will undoubtedly discourage recalcitrant proliferators from resisting future demands of the coercer. The following chapter will focus on the South African nuclear issue.

Like in the Iranian chapter, before the analysis of the coercive interactions between the US and South Africa over Pretoria's nuclear program, we summarized the findings of the coercive nuclear dynamics between Washington and Pretoria in the following table. Indeed, table 16 encapsulates the substance of the previously mentioned interactions by highlighting the main actors (sender and target), the driving factors of the target's controversial actions (the building of the nuclear program), the international context under which the interactions occurred, the issue at stakes between the protagonist overtime, the goals of the sender, its coercive strategy, the instruments used to implement its strategy, the expected outcomes of its strategy, the actual outcomes after the implementation of the coercive strategy, the reasons and mechanisms behind the actual outcomes of the coercive dynamics between the protagonists, and lastly, the nature of the demands formulated by the sender or coercer

[905] CIGAR, Norman: **Libya's nuclear disarmament: Lessons and implications for nuclear proliferation, *Op. Cit.,*** p.5

COERCER	TARGET	ISSUE	DRIVERS OF THE TARGET	OBJECTIVES	INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT	COERCIVE STRATEGY	COERCIVE INSTRUMENT	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	ACTUAL OUTCOMES	MECHANISMS	NATURE OF THE DEMANDS
USA	LIBYA	Libya's support for terrorism	Ideology (pan Arabism and anti-imperialism)	Stopping Libya's support for terrorism	Cold War	Denial, punishment, and decapitation	Trade sanctions, logistical embargos. Financial sanctions, and air strikes	Unrest, power-base erosion. Assassination, change of leadership	Defiance and continuation of terrorism support. Intensification of nuclear seeking activities	Victimisation and self-portrayal, Rally round the flag and international support	Unacceptable – No offer of incentives.
			Ideology (pan Arabism and anti-imperialism)	Stopping Libya's support for terrorism	Post-Cold War (1990-1997)	Diplomatic isolation and naming and shaming	Political pressures, continuity of previous trade and financial sanctions. Multilateral sanctions (UN Res. 731, 748, 883). Unilateral sanctions (ILSA)	International power-base erosion	Libya's offer to settle the terrorism issue and nuclear concerns.	Economic instability and failed military coups.	Unacceptable – No offer of incentives.
USA	LIBYA	Libya's Attempts to acquire nuclear weapons	Ideology (pan Arabism and anti-imperialism)	Undermine Libya's attempts to acquire nuclear weapons	Prior to 9/11 events	Denial	ILSA	Compliance with UN Res. 731, 748, 883. Ending of terrorism and attempts to acquire nuclear weapons.	Continuation of international terrorism and intensification of nuclear seeking activities.	Dissimulation or ambivalent nuclear policy, framing.	Unacceptable – No offer of incentives
			Ideology (pan Arabism and anti-imperialism)	Stopping Libya's attempts to acquire nuclear weapons	Post 9/11 events	Indirect decapitation Denial	Military threats / Risk of changing the regime via a military invasion. military trade embargo (BBC-China cargo)	Risk of decapitation and incapacitation.	Full transparency on nuclear activities.	Perceived security threat to the regime, economic instability, failure of the terrorism and nuclear objectives and incentives	Acceptable and offer of incentives (regime security guarantees. economic prosperity)

Table 17: Findings of the coercive dynamics between the US and Libya.

THE US AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA

Coercive diplomacy is more likely to be successful if the side employing it is more highly motivated by what is at stake in the crisis than its opponent. — Alexander George, American political scientist.

Deterrent threats are a matter of resolve, impetuosity, plain obstinacy, or, as the anarchist put it, sheer character. — Thomas Schelling, American strategist.

6

The main goal of this chapter is to analyze the coercive nuclear dynamics between South Africa (S.A.) and the US. The time scope covered by the analysis spans from 1967 to 1989, when Pretoria respectively started and ended its nuclear weapons program. Just like the previous Iranian case study, we will analyze the coercive dynamics between Washington and Pretoria against the backdrop of our hypotheses.[906] Hence, we will always consider to what extent the US coercive strategy exploited the weaknesses of South Africa and to what extent Washington demonstrated a motivation to maintain a sustained campaign to compel Pretoria. In essence, to what extent did Pretoria's response to Washington's demands stem from coercive-related domestic changes and fear of heightened threats?

Considering the propositions of our theoretical framework (proportionality, reciprocity, and credibility) and the choice of the structured-focused method, this chapter will also be divided into sub-sections which aim at answering the following questions: **what were the objectives pursued by the US after implementing coercive policies against the South African nuclear program? What were coercive strategies adopted to achieve these objectives? What were the expected outcomes of the US when implementing its coercive strategies against Libya's nuclear program? What were the actual results at the end of the process, and why such outcomes?**

The answer to these questions will help us to demonstrate the validity of the four essential elements regarding the effectiveness of a coercive strategy in the nuclear realm.[907] In this regard, the first section will analyze the history of foreign relations between South Africa and the World, especially the US. This will help us understand the strategic importance of Pretoria for the US and the continuity or breaks of patterns in South Africa's foreign policy. The second section will dwell on the drivers behind South Africa's decision to obtain nuclear weapons. In contrast, the third section will delve into Pretoria's political system, emphasizing nuclear decision-making among all the South African leaders during the Apartheid era. The fourth section will analyze the coercive dynamics between Pretoria and Washington, while the fifth section will stress the theoretical conclusions about our research goal.

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[906] We hypothesized that coercive diplomacy could compel a State to abandon its nuclear (weapons) program under two conditions: if the coercer's strategy exploits the weaknesses of the target and if the coercer demonstrates a motivation to have a sustained campaign to compel the target.

[907] The four core elements are the following**:** the display by the coercer of **strategic empathy towards its target**, the formulation of **clear and acceptable demands** to the target, the display by the coercer of **a higher resolve than the target** to achieve his/her objective, and the offer of **credible incentives** to the target if the target complies.

Before stressing the theoretical answers to the previous questions, it is essential to emphasize that, like the Libyan case, we did not conduct interviews with experts or former officials related to the Libyan nuclear issue. This is because many of the actors involved had already passed away or were too old to answer our questions. Nevertheless, we had access to primary sources such as speeches and interviews of officials who were directly or indirectly involved in the negotiation process. This permitted us to identify the parameters they considered when making their decisions. In addition, we also read memoirs from former negotiators and scholars who interviewed the people involved in the process. Combined with indirect sources like articles from experts or scholars and statistical data, we were able to identify the pattern of behavior of the actors involved in the Libyan nuclear dynamics and the driving factors behind their decisions.

6.1 SECTION I – A SHORT HISTORY OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE GREAT POWERS.

This section aims to understand the evolution of the relations between South Africa and foreign powers, especially those who played an incremental role in its decision to end its nuclear weapons program; those are the UK but mainly the US. This does not mean that only the States mentioned above interacted with South Africa during the lifespan of its controversial nuclear program. Instead, their role in *South Africa's nuclear decision* has been decisive for historical or structural reasons. Just like the previous Libyan case, the advantage of analyzing the foreign relations of South Africa is twofold. First, it will enable us to understand the international/bargaining positions of the States mentioned above based on the geopolitical importance of South Africa in their strategic calculus. Hence, identifying the drivers of their foreign policy with South Africa will help us to understand the bargaining approach of the US to the South African nuclear challenge. On the other hand, dwelling on the foreign relations of South Africa will also help us to understand the international responses of South Africa to foreign demands based both on international and domestic parameters.

With an area of 1,220,813 km^2, a coastline of 3 000 km[908] and bordered by four countries (Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Eswatini), South Africa is usually described as "the southernmost country of the African continent."[909] These geographical specificities made South Africa a strategic location for international trade (seaports). This asset has been known in European countries since the discovery of the

[908] An information from **South African Government. Let's grow South Africa together**. Accessed from https://www.gov.za/about-sa/geography-and-climate on the 28th of September 2021.
[909] The Commonwealth, **South Africa**. Accessed on the 28th of September 2021 from the website https://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries/south-africa .

Cap of good hope (previously known as the Cape of Storms) in 1488 by Bartolomeu Dias, a Portuguese explorer.[910] In a geopolitical context of rivalry over the control of seas and a geo-economical context of rivalry over the supply of spice from India, the control of the Cape and its seaports undoubtedly constituted a major pillar of the Iberian Union (Portugal and Spain Kingdom) at the end of the 16th Century. However, in a broader context of political independence from Spain, the Dutch challenged the Portuguese over the control of the Cap.[911] Yet, the Dutch finally and formally established an economic presence in the Cape via the Dutch East-Indian Company (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie – VOC) in 1652. Genevieve Klein confirms it as she declares: *the connection between the two countries dates back to 1652 when the Dutch company- the Verenigde OostIndische Compagnie (VOC)- set up a refreshment post in the Cape*.[912] But the VOC was more than an economic (trading) company. Indeed, it also assumed political roles.

Unlike the trading companies of rival powers like the UK or France, which operated under one similar and increasingly dated system (…), the new Dutch establishments set out to change the antiquated system, breathing "semi-permanent life" into their companies.[913] But this technical ability was not the only comparative asset of the new Dutch trading giant. In fact, the VOC also enjoyed unprecedented economic and political powers under the new Chart granted by the Dutch government. Indeed, the charter granted the VOC a twenty-one-year monopoly over all trade east of the Cape of Good Hope [914] and "the government had granted an official charter providing the new company with extensive powers. (…) Some sovereign rights were also transferred. The VOC was authorized to make treaties with rulers and states in Asia, to build fortifications, and to undertake military operations, but they could not operate completely independently from the Dutch government."[915]

Galvanized by the aforementioned political authority, the VOC could confidently set the administrative system of the land it had conquered. Concerning South Africa, the Dutch East India Company adopted a plantation colony policy in the areas under its control.

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[910] PEARSE E., Geoffrey: **The Cape of Good Hope 1652-1833. An Account of its buildings and the life of its people,** Pretoria, J.L. van Schaik, 1956, p.13. Consulted online.
[911] NIERSTRASZ, Chris: **Rivalry for trade in tea and textiles. The English and Dutch East India Companies (1700–1800),** London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, p.5
[912] KLEIN, Genevieve, **Nederland tegen apartheid? Government and anti-apartheid movements**, South Africa History Online (SAHO), 2012, p.2.
[913] CHARLES RIVER EDITORS: **The Dutch East India Company: The History of the world's first multinational corporation,** CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2017, p.21
[914] GERSTELL, Daniel, **Administrative adaptability: The Dutch East India Company and its rise to power**, Journal of Political Economy 99, 1991, N. 6, p.51
[915] PARTHESIUS, Robert: **Dutch ships in tropical waters. The development of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) shipping network in Asia 1595-1660**, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2010, p.35

Still, these campaigns did not go without conflicts as the Dutch settlers or Boers went to war against indigenous people several times, and these frictions are usually referred to as the Xhosa wars.[916] It is important to mention that the Dutch were not the only Europeans who migrated from their country to settle in South Africa, people from France and Germany and the British also settled in South Africa, and they all constituted the Afrikaners. But the biggest challenge to the Dutch presence in South Africa did not come from indigenous people but from abroad. Indeed, the British also coveted the territories under the control of the Dutch company.

According to John Brewer, "Britain had been without doubt the paramount external power in the area, with only minor competition from France and Portugal."[917] The British interest in South Africa harks back to the end of the 18th Century with the occupation of the Cap province by the British soldiers in 1795 after the war against France in 1793. Although the British had granted back the political administration of the Cape to the Dutch government Netherlands – then the Bavarian republic – through the Treaty of Amiens in 1802, the UK took back the administration of the territory in 1806.[918] Just like the Dutch before them, the British crown coveted South Africa (The Cap) for its strategic role in the supply of spice from India; considering the rise of the UK as the global power at the time, securing free access to the Cap constituted a strategic asset for the British Empire. However, it is essential to mention that the defeat of the Boers did not mean the end of the Dutch presence in the country. Instead, the Boers conquered additional lands in the hinterland and finally constituted their independent State (Transvaal and the Orange Free State). At the same time, the indigenous people kept their independent State (Natal). Though it seemed from the outlook that this confederation setting was the best compromise for relative peace among the parties living in the country, the discovery of diamonds and gold completely changed the country's political landscape.

"The discovery of diamonds in the Northern Cape in the late 1860s began South Africa's mineral revolution that had a profound impact on the region," Timothy Stapleton argues.[919] More concretely, Martin Meredith describes the abundance of diamonds in the region in these words: "a day's work for those in luck could provide them with as many as ten or twenty diamonds. Some made their fortunes before breakfast. A

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916 STAPLETON J., Timothy: **A military history of South Africa. From the Dutch-Khoi wars to the end of Apartheid**, California, Praeger, 2010, p.4
917 BREWER D., John (ed): **Can South Africa survive? Five minutes to midnight**, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 1989, p.9
918 BERGER, Iris: **South Africa in world history**, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, p.40
919 STAPLETON J., Timothy: **A military history of South Africa. From the Dutch-Khoi wars to the end of Apartheid**, ***Op. Cit.,*** p.52

penniless Englishman uncovered a 175-carat stone valued at £33,000."[920] Concerning the regional and global impact of the discovery of diamonds and gold resources, South Africa or, more precisely, the regions where those tremendous resources were discovered would play an incremental role in the global economy, considering the rise of the Gold Standard in international exchange. Consequently, the British quickly came to two conclusions: first, the necessity to control the abundant resources in the remaining regions of South Africa, especially since the controlled region of the Cap was relatively poor. And second, the danger of letting the Boers maintain an independent status on their territories under their control.[921] Unsurprisingly, frictions between the British and the Boers eventually led to two wars between the two parties: the Anglo-Boers wars.

The Anglo-Boers wars usually refer to the Boers' resistance to the British military campaigns to annex the Boers-controlled republics (Transvaal and the Orange Free States). This was an explicit negation of the 1852 Sand River and the 1854 Bloemfontein Conventions, during which the British officially acknowledged the existence of the two republics mentioned above. The first Anglo-Boers wars occurred from 1880 to 1881 and were sparked by the British imposition of taxation on the Transvaal Boers, who had never paid tax before. In late 1880 British attempts to hunt down tax evaders in the Potchefstroom District led to an armed standoff in which a Boer was wounded. Across the Transvaal, the infuriated Boers mobilized 7,000 mounted men for military action."[922] Despite the clear unbalance of the forces, the Boers won this first battle mainly thanks to their *blitzkrieg* strategy, as their *essential tactics were speed in concentration and attack, and a readiness to withdraw to a more favorable position in case the fire-fight was going against them*.[923] Consequently, the British recognized the Transvaal's independence during the Pretoria Convention of the 3rd of August 1881. But the British took their revenge eight years later during the second Anglo-Boers war or the "South African War."

The second Anglo-Boers spanned from 1899 to 1902. Like the previously mentioned first Anglo-Boer war, the second was caused by the British territory expansionist ambitions related to the tremendous natural resources of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. In this regard, the British first attempt to annex the two independent States

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[920] MEREDITH, Martin: **Diamonds, gold, and war: The British, the Boers, and the making of South Africa,** New York, PublicAffairs, 2008, p.13

[921] MEREDITH, Martin: **Diamonds, gold, and war: The British, the Boers, and the making of South Africa, *Ibid*.,** p.24

[922] STAPLETON J., Timothy: **A military history of South Africa. From the Dutch-Khoi wars to the end of Apartheid**, ***Ibid.,*** p.52

[923] PRETORIUS, Fransjohan, **The Boer wars,** BBC, History, 29 March 2011. Accessed from https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/boer_wars_01.shtml on the 28th of September 2021.

occurred via the Jameson's Raid when, *in December 1895, Rhodes and his co-conspirators in the mining industry attempted to use Uitlander resentment to ignite a rebellion, but the forces of his lieutenant, Jameson, were easily defeated by the Boers*.[924] The two wars differed in many respects: first, in their scope, as all four territories of the future South African Republic were involved. Second, the duration of the hostilities as the "South African War" lasted three years, and lastly, the dynamics of the conflict. Indeed, the numerical and logistical disparities between the two parties led the Boers to rely on guerrilla warfare strategies. Nevertheless, the British ultimately won the war, and the Boers bitterly recognized the annexation of their republic through the Treaty of Vereeniging signed on the 31st of May 1902.[925] About ten years later (1910), the Union of South Africa (Orange Free State, Cape colony and the Transvaal) was officially created as a British dominion with an autonomous government.[926] Still, South Africa became an independent State in 1931. The US also played an incremental role in the evolution of the South African nuclear weapons program.

Richard Goldstone argues that the relationship between South Africa (as represented by the majority of South Africans) and the United States has a complex history.[927] Several factors, including the tensions between American idealism and the imperatives of the interests of the project, can explain the complexity of these relations. In addition, "any discussion of American interests in southern Africa - and many other regions, for that matter - is bedeviled by two problems: the obvious lack of consensus on the question within recent administrations; and the common confusion in secondary analysis between historical accounts of what those interests are and prescriptive statements concerning what they should be."[928] Consequently, the US strategy in the region and the country, in particular, was shaped by the factors mentioned above.

Following the end of WWII, the US interest abroad was focused on the European continent and the Middle East. Consequently, the African continent, which experienced decolonization processes in several countries, was a foremost priority for the US authorities. Nevertheless, certain countries proved to be instrumental for protecting and promoting US interests in the region, and South Africa was one of them. The bilateral relations between the US and South Africa hark back to the early 19th C.,

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924 SURRIDGE T., Keith: **Managing the South African war, 1899-1902: Politicians V. Generals,** New York, Royal Historical Society**,** 1998, p.16 (Consulted online)
925 SURRIDGE T., Keith: **Managing the South African war, 1899-1902: Politicians V. Generals, *Ibid,*** p.155. (Consulted online)
926 PAXTON, John (Ed): **The Statesman's yearbook historical companion**, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 1988, p.232
927 GOLDSTONE, Richard, **Ambiguity and America: South Africa and US foreign policy** in MACK, Arien (Ed.): **Their America: The US in the eyes of the rest of the world**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.811
928 BERRIDGE G., R., ***The Role of the Superpowers*** in BREWER D., John (ed): **Can South Africa survive? Five minutes to midnight, *Op. Cit.*,** p.9

precisely to 1799, with the creation of a Consulate in Cape Town. [929] However, the political and economic relations between the two countries intensified in the 20th C when the US opened an Embassy in Pretoria in 1929 following the country's independence.

The US's soft interests in South Africa were driven by the desire of the US to spread liberal values (human rights, democracy) in the region. In contrast, two pillars essentially drove the *hard* interests: on the first hand, the ideological confrontation with the USSR during the Cold War and the economic interests, especially oil supplies via the Cape. Alex Thomson confirms it by arguing, "although always on the periphery of Washington DC's global strategic calculations, South Africa proved a useful ally during the Cold War. From 1945 through to the 1980s, the government in Pretoria proved to be a secure enemy of communism."[930]

Consequently, the US foreign policy toward South Africa was greatly influenced by the Pretoria's role in its anti-communism war. With specific respect to the Apartheid issue, the US reaction, both in terms of tone and action, was apathetic, at least at the beginning of the 50s. For example, *during the Eisenhower years, the United States never agreed to wording in the United Nations resolutions "condemning" apartheid. Before 1960, "regret and concern" was as far as the United States would go*.[931] The US soft stance regarding the Apartheid regime would evolve progressively to a firmer posture based upon the international criticism of the Apartheid's brutal repressions of the communities. For instance, this was the case with the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, which led to worldwide condemnation and the adoption of March 20 as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.[932] However, the US's *hard* interests prevailed as the US maintained good economic relations with South Africa's Apartheid regime, just as the following table illustrates perfectly.

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[929] The National Museum of American Diplomacy: **U.S. Embassy Pretoria, South Africa**. Accessed from https://diplomacy.state.gov/places/u-s-embassy-pretoria-south-africa/ on the 29th of September 2021.

[930] THOMSON, Alex: **U.S. foreign policy towards Apartheid South Africa, 1948–1994**, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p.6

[931] HOUSER, George, **Relations between the United States and South Africa**, The Black Scholar, Nov/Dec 1984, Vol. 15, N. 6, p.34

[932] REDDY S., Enuga, **The struggle against Apartheid: Lessons for today's world**, UN Chronicle. Accessed from https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/struggle-against-apartheid-lessons-todays-world on the 29th of Sept 2021. Also read LODGE, Tom: **Sharpeville: An Apartheid massacre and its consequences**, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011, 256 pages. (1st ed.)

Year	Total U.S. exports to South Africa (US$ millions)	Total U.S. imports from South Africa (US$ millions)	U.S. total direct investment in South Africa (US$ millions)	Return on U.S. total direct investment in South Africa (percentage)
1950	126	142	140	9.29
1955	268	96	257	14.79
1960	288	108	286	11.89
1965	438	226	528	14.58
1970	536	290	868	16.60
1975	1,302	840	1,582	4.49
1980	2,463	3,321	2,350	28.30
1985	1,205	2,071	1,394	2.51
1990	1,732	1,698	775	21.03

Table 8: US economic relations with South Africa (exports, imports, and direct investment), 1950–1990.[933]

Regarding military cooperation, South Africa benefitted from the US logistical and human support to meet its security concerns, including the Communist threats. Indeed, *South Africa made its ports and airfields available to U.S. forces, supplied personnel to fight against communist forces worldwide, and provided vital minerals to the U.S. armaments industry. In return, the Union received military equipment and training*.[934] In 1951 the country even received military support under the 1949 Mutual Defense Assistance Act, which was normally entitled to NATO members.[935] This was a clear illustration of the strategic importance of South Africa in the US Cold War strategy. Unfortunately, as George Houser regrets it, "the United States' obsession with East-West relationships and the refusal to recognize "on the ground" reality have prevented policymakers carving out a more creative policy."[936] Nevertheless, as we will analyze later regarding the US role in South Africa's nuclear achievements, *whether it be in terms of military collaboration or nuclear cooperation, Pretoria and Washington DC developed significant bonds during the early Cold War era*.[937] What lessons can be learned from the previous analysis?

The previous analysis of the foreign relations of South Africa clearly highlights the constant interference of Great Powers in the country's domestic affairs. In addition, and consequently, South Africa had assumed only a passive role in global affairs, notably in the economic'. Indeed, the British conquest and subsequent imperialist policies in South

[933] Source from U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. ***Historical statistics of the United States colonial times to 1957.*** Washington DC: U.S. GPO, 1960. Accessed from THOMSON, Alex: **U.S. foreign policy towards Apartheid South Africa, 1948–1994**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.11
[934] THOMSON, Alex: **U.S. foreign policy towards Apartheid South Africa, 1948–1994**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.18
[935] Department of State, **Foreign relations of the United States, 1951,** The Near East and Africa, Volume V, 5th of February 1951. Accessed on the 29th of September 2021 from the link https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1951v05/d787.
[936] HOUSER, George, **Relations between the United States and South Africa, *Op. Cit.,*** p.35
[937] THOMSON, Alex: **U.S. foreign policy towards Apartheid South Africa, 1948–1994**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.21

Africa fostered a *siege mentality*[938] syndrome in the psyche of its leaders. In other words, South African leaders, most of whom were descendants of the Boers, developed a perception of assault and occupation from the British invaders who tried to deprive their fathers of their God-granted land. Subsequently, the fact that the US and UK's relations with South Africa were mainly based on the supply of strategic resources nurtured a perception of inferiority in Pretoria. It also developed the imperative of a Status conquest in the South African leaders' mentalities. How did these two **international security and status issues shape Pretoria's nuclear calculus**? The next section, which dwells on the emergence of the South African nuclear program, will provide a meaningful beginning answer to the previous question.

6.2 SECTION II – THE EMERGENCE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM: ORIGINS, RATIONALE, AND REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS.

In Stephen Burgess's view, "to understand why and how South Africa covertly pursued the development of nuclear weapons, one needs to appreciate three characteristics usually associated with crime: motive, opportunity, and means."[939]After the previous analysis of the relations between South Africa and the external world, especially the UK and the US, this section will dwell on the importance of a nuclear weapons program for South Africa. In other words, this section aims to answer the following questions: what were the drivers behind Pretoria's decision to seek nuclear weapons? In addition, what could have been the regional consequences of South Africa's acquisition of nuclear weapons? Answering these questions will help us understand the nuclear dynamics between the US and South Africa, and, more importantly, the bargaining positions of South Africa during the negotiations with the US over its controversial nuclear program.

What were the main drivers behind South Africa's decision to build a nuclear weapons program? Several factors, including security concerns,[940] domestic features and bureaucratic configurations[941] or nationalist leadership style,[942] are usually highlighted

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[938] FAWCETT, Liz., ***Under siege: A brief history of Afrikaners and Ulster Presbyterians*** in CAMPLING, Jo (Ed.): **Religion, ethnicity and social change**, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2000, pp.15-46

[939] BURGESS F., Stephen, **South Africa's nuclear weapons policies**, Nonproliferation Review, 2006, Vol. 13, N.3, p.519

[940] CHARI, P. R., **South Africa's nuclear option**, India International Centre Quarterly, October 1976, Vol. 3, N. 4, p.222

[941] ASUELIME E., Lucky and ADEKOYE A., Raquel: **Nuclear proliferation in South Africa. History and politics**, Switzerland, Springer, 2016, p.125. And LIBERMAN, Peter, **The rise and fall of the South African bomb**, Quarterly Journal: International Security, Fall 2001, Vol. 26, N.2, pp.45-86

[942] ASUELIME Lucky and FRANCIS Suzanne, **Drivers of nuclear proliferation: South Africa's incentives and constraints**, Journal for Contemporary History, 2014, Vol. 29, p.56

as the sources of South Africa's decision to go nuclear. But before dwelling on these factors, it is important to understand the very context of the emergence of nuclear energy in the country. As previously analyzed, South Africa was endowed with several abundant natural resources, and Uranium is no exception. Indeed, the country's teeming Uranium resources were discovered in mid-1940, after *Great Britain requested South Africa's Prime Minister Jan Smuts to investigate reported deposits of uranium in South Africa and South West Africa (now called Namibia)*.[943] After discovering its tremendous Uranium resources, South Africa built its nuclear research program by the end of the 60s.

Until the full running of its nuclear program, South Africa mainly assumed an energy supplier role for the UK and US nuclear weapons. This was the *quid pro quo* for the "extensive US and British aid" in developing the South African nuclear extraction plants.[944] Yet, its abundant Uranium resources made South Africa a founding member of the AIEA and secured him a seat on the board of governors. It is worth emphasizing that Pretoria had already set the conditions for an autonomous nuclear program as the South African Atomic Energy Board (AEB) was created in 1948. In addition, just like Iran's Shah, South Africa also benefitted from US nuclear support after signing a *20-year agreement under the "Atoms for Peace" program*.[945] From a nuclear reversal perspective, South Africa was an **outward looking (Etel Soligen)** regime although the country had **not yet built a nuclear program** (Eleonora Mattiacci and Benjamin Jones).

Consequently, Pretoria received logistical support from Washington for its early nuclear achievements. More precisely, "the USA agreed to supply South Africa with a light-water research reactor. The country's first research reactor was Safari-I, which began operating at Pelindaba in 1965 with a capacity of 20 MW."[946] Concerning the Apartheid issue, even though racial incidents like the Sharpeville massacre mentioned above sparked worldwide criticism, the US maintained its nuclear cooperation with South Africa. This can be explained by several factors, including the US leadership and the strategic importance of Pretoria's Uranium for the US nuclear arsenal. Regarding the former, then-US President *Eisenhower himself was not comfortable discussing racial issues or meeting with non-Europeans*, *(while his) Secretary of State John Foster Dulles*

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[943] ALBRIGHT H., David and STRICKER, Andrea: **Revisiting South Africa's nuclear weapons program: Its history, dismantlement, and lessons for today**, Washington, Institute for Science and International Security, 2016, p.1

[944] ALBRIGHT H., David and STRICKER, Andrea: **Revisiting South Africa's nuclear weapons program: Its history, dismantlement, and lessons for today, *Ibid.***

[945] ASUELIME E., Lucky and ADEKOYE A., Raquel: **Nuclear proliferation in South Africa. History and politics**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.88. Read also LAVOY R., Peter, **The enduring effects of Atoms for Peace**, Arms Control Today, 2003, Vol. 33, N.10, p.28

[946] ASUELIME E., Lucky and ADEKOYE A., Raquel: **Nuclear proliferation in South Africa. History and politics, *Ibid.***, p.89

exhibited little interest in racial issues and even demonstrated a certain insensitivity to such issues.[947] Regarding the latter, *a 1955 National Security Council staff report listed receiving "uranium from abroad" as essential "to maintain[ing] the growth and effectiveness of our atomic strength."* Javan Frazier argues that *this statement described and explained the uranium ore purchasing relationship the United States had with South Africa under the Eisenhower administration*.[948] However, the international scrutiny over South Africa's nuclear intentions was caused by its leaders' actions and declarations.

The fact that the US administration had deliberately ignored the racial issue in South Africa prevented the country from experiencing severe international pressure, at least temporarily. But its controversial nuclear behavior drew international attention to the country. Indeed, notwithstanding the country's good nuclear behavior through its strategic role in the creation of the AEIA, South Africa's leaders made comments which clearly hinted at the actual nuclear goal of the country. For instance, then PM Hendrik F. Verwoerd declared in 1965 that "the South African government had a duty to consider the military uses of nuclear technology."[949] Furthermore, Pretoria refused to join the NPT in 1970; instead, its leaders adopted *a policy of deliberate nuclear opacity [which] refers to a situation where the existence of a nuclear weapons programmed 'has not been acknowledged by a state's leaders, but where the evidence for the existence of such a program is enough to influence of [sic] other nation's perceptions and actions.'* [950] South Africa's refusal to join the NPT constituted the prominent bone of contention with the US, as we will see later in the chapter.

However, when the new South African Prime Minister B. J. Vorster embarked the country on an enrichment pattern, several governments urged the AIEA to conduct on-site visits to Pretoria's nuclear infrastructure. The international suspicions over South Africa's nuclear intentions were not empty-grounded. Indeed, the country had already secretly,[951] but unsuccessfully explored the feasibility of constructing an indigenous Uranium enrichment plant in 1967. Unfortunately, Pretoria rejected the request for inspections from the IAEA and consequently faced its first nuclear-related international

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[947] FRAZIER D., Javan: **Atomic Apartheid: United States-South African nuclear relations from Truman to Reagan, 1945-1989**, PhD thesis, Auburn University, 2006, p.60. Read also STUMPF, Waldo, **South Africa's nuclear weapons program: from deterrence to dismantlement**, Arms Control Today, Dec. 1995/Jan. 1996, Vol. 25, N. 10, p.3

[948] FRAZIER D., Javan: **Atomic Apartheid: United States-South African nuclear relations from Truman to Reagan, 1945-1989, *Ibid*,** p.63-64

[949] ASUELIME Lucky and FRANCIS Suzanne, **Drivers of nuclear proliferation: South Africa's incentives and constraints**, ***Op. Cit***., p.59

[950] VAN WYK, Jo-Ansie and VAN WYK, Anna-Mart, **From the nuclear laager to the Non-Proliferation club: South Africa and the NPT**, South African Historical Journal, 2015, Vol. 67, N. 1, p.33

[951] COCHRAN B., Thomas, **Highly Enriched Uranium production for South African nuclear weapons**, Science & Global Security, 1994, Vol. 4, N. 2, p.162

pressure as *the Group of 77 removed South Africa from the African seat at the IAEA in 1979*.[952]

Nevertheless, South Africa maintained its objectives as the AEB carried out a top-secret Uranium enrichment project called "Gas Cooling Project", divided into three components named "the XYZ project."[953] This South African stubbornness can also be explained by the increasingly strategic importance of nuclear enrichment right in the country. As Anna-Mart van Wyk and Jo-Ansie van Wyk described it, when pressurized by the IAEA in 1970 over its reluctance to ratify the NPT, *Pretoria explained that the country was reluctant to 'surrender, almost irrevocably, long-held sovereign rights without having precise details of all the implications*.[954] But the successful progress made during this project resulted from the expertise of South African scientists trained in the US and the experience gained thanks to the Safari-I project.

The decision by the South African authorities to build a covert enrichment program happened within a specific domestic and international context. The social and racial contest between the Black people and the Boers government characterized the domestic context. In contrast, the international context was shaped by the rise of pro-Communist regimes in the neighborhood of Pretoria. Concerning the former, the new South African authorities were experiencing demonstrations and attacks from black communities in response to the segregationist policies of the Apartheid regime. Indeed, it is important to mention that about forty years (1948) after their independence from the UK, the South African authorities instituted a segregationist and discriminatory policy named "apartheid." From its Afrikaans roots, 'apartness' or 'apart-hood' which means 'separateness,' Apartheid can be defined as a policy of separating people by race, with regard to where they lived, where they went to school, where they worked, and where they died; (its philosophy is rooted) on the idea of separating physically all races within South Africa in a hierarchy of power with whites at the top and Africans at the bottom.[955] The term was first used as a way of expressing the importance of Afrikaners maintaining a cultural identity separate from that of English-speaking Europeans in South Africa.[956] However, the electoral political dynamics granted new momentum to the concept.

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[952] ZONDI, Masiza, **A chronology of South Africa's nuclear program**, The Nonproliferation Review, 1993, Vol. 1, N.1, p.35

[953] MOORE L., J.D.: **South Africa and nuclear proliferation: South Africa's nuclear capabilities and intentions in the context of international Non-Proliferation policies**, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 1987, p.84. (Consulted online)

[954] VAN WYK, Jo-Ansie and VAN WYK, Anna-Mart, **From the nuclear laager to the Non-Proliferation club: South Africa and the NPT**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.38

[955] CLARK L., Nancy and WORGER H., William: **South Africa: The rise and fall of Apartheid**, New York, Routledge, 2011, pp.1-10.

[956] CLARK L., Nancy and WORGER H., William: **South Africa: The rise and fall of Apartheid, *Ibid.*,** p.4

The notion of Apartheid was used as an election slogan by White nationalists during the 1948 election. The term "apartheid," defined as a racial rallying cry, did not spark political enthusiasm initially. However, two social conditions gave this concept new momentum: first, the inferiority complex nurtured by the Afrikaans concerning the English speakers and the boom in the Black population. Consequently, when *the National Party's official election campaign offered the country a choice between 'integration and national suicide' on the one hand and apartheid and the 'protection of the pure white race' on the other*,[957] there was a racial rally around the flag of White supremacism. Even though the Apartheid system was firstly rooted in racial discrimination, the notion of White supremacism was not the only pillar in the discriminatory policy that was grounded.

The institution of the Apartheid regime can be explained by several other factors, among which is nationalism. Indeed, the Boers' leaders were also driven by a strong sense of nationalism as *they believed that their identity was 'God-given.' They feared that the Afrikaner's very existence was threatened by the mass of Africans that confronted them in South Africa*.[958] There was also the social-history argument which explained the institutionalization of Apartheid, like the logical outcome of the dialectic between the poor people who fought against unjust laws on the one hand and the government, which imposed tighter rules and policies to control the population on the other hand.[959] But the Apartheid system was not unfamiliar to the Boers leaders. On the contrary, "the Boer people have themselves gone through the crucible of imperialist and capitalist domination and exploitation. They still show the wounds and the bruises of it all. (…) They know what it means to see their own destroyed," Robert Harvey argues.[960] From this perspective, Apartheid can be perceived as the continuation of the discriminatory policies implemented by the Dutch and the British.[961]

However, establishing the Apartheid regime was not a trouble-free adventure for the Afrikaners government. Indeed, the Black communities contested the establishment of the new segregationist regime during its early days. As Nancy Clark and William Worger confirm, "African opposition to segregation legislation began with the drafting of the Natives' Land Bill in 1911 and led directly to the formation in 1912 of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC, renamed the African National Congress, ANC, in

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957 DUBOW, Saul: **Apartheid, 1948-1994**, New York, Oxford University Press, 2014, p.9
958 APARTHEID MUSEUM: **Understanding Apartheid. Learner's book**, Cape Town, Oxford University Press Southern Africa, 2008, p.11 (3rd ed.)
959 APARTHEID MUSEUM: **Understanding Apartheid. Learner's book**, ***Ibid***., p.13
960 HARVEY, Robert: **The fall of Apartheid. The inside story from Smuts to Mbeki**, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2001, p.49
961 CLARK L., Nancy and WORGER H., William: **South Africa: The rise and fall of Apartheid, *Op. Cit.*,** p.4

1923)." [962] But what happened in 1960 to spark racial fears among South African authorities? As we previously analyzed, the 60s witnessed the Sharpeville massacre, leading to worldwide condemnation. The Sharpeville massacre was caused by peaceful Black demonstrations against the *Pass Law,* which required the Blacks to possess identity documents always called *dompass* (originally dumbed pass) *everywhere and every time.* Under the 1952 Pass Law Act, "government officials possessed the power to expel the worker from the area by adverse endorsement in the passbook."[963] Surrounded by defiant yet peaceful Black demonstrators, the police officers brutally responded to the challenge by aimlessly shooting the crowd. Consequently, 69 people were killed and 180 injured.[964]

Increasingly isolated in the international arena after the Sharpeville events, the South African authorities tightened the screw on the Black community. Iris Berger confirms it in these terms: "from many perspectives, the 1960s looked bleak indeed for black South Africans. The apartheid state had succeeded in destroying the overt resistance movement within the country, imprisoning many key leaders for life, and forcing others into exile."[965] As the previous analysis demonstrates, the South African siege mentality mentioned above transpired in the authorities' response to the political actions of the Black community. But the regional security dynamics, especially the Soviet support for liberation movements in neighbouring countries, exacerbated Pretoria's security over-cautiousness.

South African leaders developed a sheer terror for the Soviet Union; indeed, "onslaught" is the commonly used term to describe the security perception of Pretoria's leaders regarding the Soviet presence in their neighborhood.[966] To understand South Africa's fear, one must consider the regional dynamics prevailing at the time. Until 1974, Pretoria was surrounded by White minority-governed countries, including Mozambique and Angola (Namibia was still part of South Africa). This political configuration is important to consider as the presence of the previously mentioned regime made South Africa a sanctuary, as a segregationist regime governed the country.

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[962] CLARK L., Nancy and WORGER H., William: **South Africa: The rise and fall of Apartheid**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.20

[963] **Key legislation in the formation of Apartheid**, accessed on the 30th of September 2021 from the link https://www.cortland.edu/cgis/suzman/index.html. Also read SAVAGE, Michael, **The imposition of pass laws on the African population in South Africa 1916-1984**, African Affairs, April 1986, Vol. 85, N. 339, pp. 181-205

[964] BBC, **1960: Scores die in Sharpeville shoot-out**, 21 March 1960. An information accessed from http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/march/21/newsid_2653000/2653405.stm on the 30rd of September 2021.

[965] BERGER, Iris: **South Africa in world history**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.135.

[966] ASUELIME E., Lucky and ADEKOYE A., Raquel: **Nuclear proliferation in South Africa. History and politics, *Op. Cit.***, p.93. Also read BURGESS F., Stephen, **South Africa's nuclear weapons policies**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.119

However, Pretoria's peacefulness began to fade when the Soviet authorities *aggressively portrayed the USSR as the defender of the cause of international justice*.[967] This move signaled a growing Soviet interest in the Southern African region in general and the countries hosting national liberation movements in particular. Matching words with action, the Soviet, together with their Cuban allies, backed liberation movements in Southern Africa.

While there has never been an open confrontation (Cold War) between the two post-WWII Great Powers, indirect or proxy wars (hot wars) effectively happened between them in several regions of the world, like in Congo (ex-Zaire) and Angola. Concerning the latter, Luanda was a Portuguese colony until 1974, and thus part of the South African *buffer zone or a "cordon sanitaire" of white-ruled states to permanently hold back the "tide" of black majority rule that had already swept the rest of the continent*.[968] However, the (25th of April) 1974 Carnation Revolution, which toppled the Dictatorial *Estado Novo* regime in Portugal, impacted the regional dynamics in Southern Africa. Indeed, following the departure of the Portuguese colonial power, three Angolan independent military groups – the FNLA, the UNITA and the MPLA[969] – fought for the ruling of the future independent country. The US supported the two former military groups,[970] while the Soviet Union backed the last. Yet, as the balance of power on the battlefield clearly favored the Soviet-backed MPLA, South Africa decided to intervene. Stephen Ellis confirms it in these terms: "in 1975, responding to the imminent independence of Angola, the SADF launched its first major operation since the Second World War, penetrating deep into Angola in an effort to prevent a Soviet-allied government from coming to power in Luanda."[971] But this military intervention was a clear failure, though it had received the US blessing.

South Africa's military intervention failed to achieve its political and military objectives and even backfired. In fact, Pretoria's most feared scenario – a Soviet-back foreign intervention – finally happened. As Michael Lerner corroborates, *South Africa's 1975 invasion of Angola was a disaster that not only failed to install a pro-Western government there, but actually provoked the countering intervention of a Cuban military force over*

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[967] MASSIE, Robert: **Loosing the bonds: The United States and South Africa in the Apartheid years,** New York, Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 1997, p.116. (Consulted online)
[968] LERNER S., Michael, **A convenient excuse: Apartheid South Africa and the "Soviet Menace" during the Cold War**, Journal of Political Inquiry at New York University, 2012, Vol.5, N.5, p.2
[969] The **FNLA** or *Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola* which means National Front for the Liberation of Angola while the **UNITA** (*União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola*) refers to the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola. The **MPLA** or *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* refers to the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola.
[970] GUIMARAES A., Fernando: **The Origins of the Angolan civil war: Foreign intervention and domestic political conflict, 1961-76,** London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2001, p.101. (Consulted online)
[971] ELLIS, Stephen, **The historical significance of South Africa's third force**, Journal of Southern African Studies, Jun 1998, Vol. 24, N.2, p.270

11,000 strong, plus much more substantial Soviet support and direct involvement. [972] Concerning South Africa's nuclear proliferation incentives, the Cuban intervention and the ousting of the SADF from Angola fostered the security concerns of Pretoria and the need for a credible deterrent capability on the verge of a perceived potential Soviet invasion of the country. "The build-up of the Cuban forces in Angola reinforced the perception that a deterrent was necessary—as did South Africa's relative international isolation and the fact that it could not rely on outside assistance, should it be attacked," Peter Liberman argues.[973]

Consequently, in response to Pretoria's perceived external "total onslaught" mentioned above, the South African authorities developed a "total strategy" which *consisted of mobilizing South Africa's political, human, industrial, and financial resources against a "total onslaught" that South Africa's white government believed it faced from regional liberation movements and Soviet inspired Marxist governments in the early 1970*. [974] This strategy aimed at addressing both domestic and external threats the Apartheid regime was facing. Subsequently, it was rooted in several pillars or "characteristics." Among them was *a combination of tactical flexibility and intensity,* which required the use of *nearly all means of implementation are deemed acceptable, including pre-emptive cross-border strikes, assassinations, and sabotage*.[975] Concerning proliferation issues, the nuclear input of the "total strategy" was composed of a *three-phased nuclear deterrent strategy* which led to the production of the country's first nuclear weapon in 1978. Anna-Mart van Wyk and Jo-Ansie van Wyk describe the previously mentioned three-phased nuclear deterrent strategy in the following table.

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[972] LERNER S., Michael, **A convenient excuse: Apartheid South Africa and the "Soviet Menace" during the Cold War**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.3
[973] LIBERMAN, Peter, **The rise and fall of the South African bomb**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.59
[974] CRAWFORD C., Neta, **South Africa's new foreign and military policy: opportunities and constraints**, in Africa Today, 1st Qtr. - 2nd Qtr., 1995, Vol.42, N. 1/2, p.92
[975] METZ, Steven, **Pretoria's "total strategy" and low-intensity warfare in Southern Africa**, Comparative Strategy, 1987, Vol. 6, N.4, pp.441

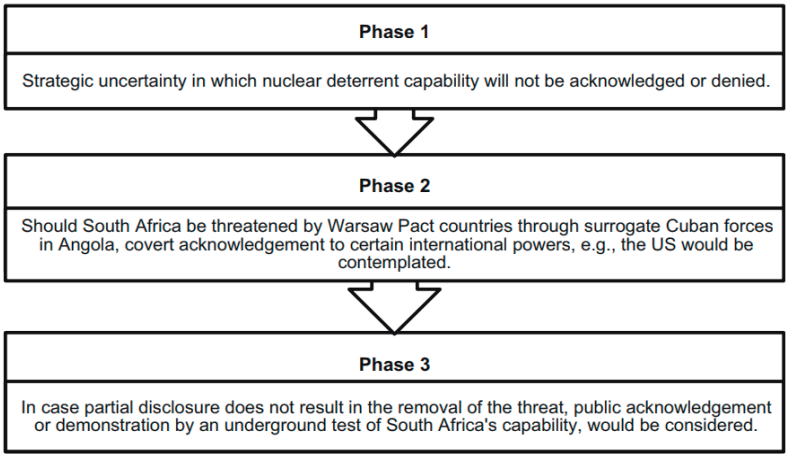

Table 9: South Africa's three-phased nuclear deterrent strategy.[976]

However, it is important to highlight that there is no consensus regarding the veracity and effectiveness of the Soviet invasion of South Africa. For instance, senior military officials questioned the feasibility of an actual Soviet threat against South Africa. "I don't think we ever thought it was feasible for anyone to attack us from the north. (…) The Communist bogey was set up at every stage – but we had no one in the military who read, spoke or studied Russian. (It was) silly to set the Soviets up as the force behind the total onslaught," Lt. Gen. Hein du Toit, a former South African Chief of Staff Intelligence, recalls.[977] Then South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha goes further as he admitted that Pretoria "did not have a clinical, sober analysis of what the Soviet Union could do in Africa."[978] Consequently, besides nationalism and security concerns, there was a third driving factor behind South Africa's proliferation initiatives. In this regard, Peter Liberman maintains that *organizational politics* should not be neglected when assessing the driving factors behind Pretoria's nuclear objectives. In other words, key actors like then Defense Minister P.W. Botha, who was "singularly fixated on getting nuclear weapons,"[979] also played an incremental role in South Africa's decision to go nuclear.

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[976] VAN WYK, Jo-Ansie and VAN WYK, Anna-Mart, **From the nuclear laager to the Non-Proliferation club: South Africa and the NPT, *Op. Cit.*,** p.39

[977] REISS, Mitchell: **Bridled ambition: Why countries constrain their nuclear capabilities**, Washington, Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1995, p.28 (consulted online)

[978] LIBERMAN, Peter, **The rise and fall of the South African bomb**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.59-60.

[979] HIBBS, Mark, **South Africa's secret nuclear program: from a PNE to a deterrent**, NuclearFuel, May 10, 1993, p. 5. Cited by LIBERMAN, Peter, **The rise and fall of the South African bomb**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.64

From the previous analysis, three main factors should be considered in analyzing the causes of South Africa's decision to build nuclear weapons. First, the nationalist approach of its leaders; second, the security threats posed by internal and regional politics; and third, the key stakeholders' role in the country's nuclear bureaucratic settling. Although there is no consensus regarding the actual role of each of the previous factors,[980] they nevertheless played an incremental role in shaping Pretoria's nuclear decisions. To what extent can each of them explain South Africa's compliance or defiance concerning the US demands regarding its controversial nuclear weapons program? The section on the coercive nuclear dynamics between the US and South Africa would attempt to answer the previous question. But before that, the next section will dwell on South Africa's foreign policy decision-making characteristics.

6.3 SECTION III – THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM.

This section will analyze the characteristics of the South African domestic political system in general and the country's foreign policymaking in particular. Consequently, this section is divided into two main sub-parts. We will first analyze the features of the South African political system under the Apartheid regime. Then our focus will be on the characteristics of the foreign policy-making of South Africa before its disarmament in 1989. The general goal of the section is to identify the key actors and their actual political weight in the decision-making of South Africa's foreign policy.

6.3.1 The features of the South African political system under the Apartheid regime.

The South African polity during the Apartheid regime was mainly based on the British Westminster system. The *Westminster model,* as it is usually referred to in comparative politics studies, can be defined as a *form of democracy based on the supreme authority of Parliament and the accountability of its elected representatives*.[981] Without dwelling on its core doctrines, we will only highlight the fundamental principles underpinning this political system. Among the principal features of this political we have: first, "a parliamentary system, with the head of state having only a ceremonial role, the

[980] In this regard, Peter Liberman challenges the psychological input of the country's nuclear decision defended by Helen E. Purkitt, Stephen F. Burgess. He refutes this argument on the basis that there is a clear distinction between the psychology or the personal vision of the country's leaders and the political culture or identity of the country – the Afrikaner nationalism. Read PURKITT E., Helen, BURGESS F., Stephen and LIBERMAN, Peter, **South Africa's nuclear decisions**, International Security, Summer 2002, Vol. 27, N. 1, p.193

[981] KESSELMAN, Mark, KRIEGER, Joel and JOSEPH A., William (Ed.): **Introduction to comparative politics. Political challenges and changing agendas**, Boston, Cengage Learning, 2015, p.47 (7th ed.) Accessed online.

concentration of political power in the executive of the central government, which experiences minimal or no checks and balances, with the executive or cabinet dominating the legislature and the prime minister, thus, a powerful political figure; *lastly* two-party system based on a Single-Member Plurality (SMP) electoral system—or at least a single-member electoral system—with this electoral system's bias in favor of larger parties."[982]

With specific respect to South Africa, the Head of State was the Governor-General, who served as the Representative of the British Crown in the country. This can be explained by the fact that although South Africa obtained its independence from the UK in 1910, as we previously analyzed, from an international legal perspective, Pretoria remained a British dominion. This status also impacted the shaping of its foreign policy, as we will see later. Formally established on the 15th of November 1926, the Balfour Imperial Conference defined "dominions" as *autonomous Communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations*.[983] Consequently, as the South African Constitution – formally known as the South African Act (SAA) of 1909 – stipulated in its Art. 8, *the Executive Government of the Union is vested in the King, and shall be administered by His Majesty in person or by a governor-general as His representative*.[984] The members of the Executive Council or the government were *chosen and summoned by the Governor General and sworn as executive councilors, and shall hold office during his pleasure*.[985] This meant that the Governor General still had an essential role in the country's political game, despite its ceremonial constitutional prerogatives.

However, the political weight of the British Crown in Pretoria's domestic affairs progressively diminished. Indeed, after the adoption of the 1931 Statute of Westminster, which granted more autonomy to the British dominions, Pretoria's parliament adopted the 1934 Statute of the Union Act, which stipulated, among others, that *the Parliament of the (South African) Union shall be the sovereign legislative power in and over the Union, and notwithstanding anything in any other law contained, no Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland passed after the eleventh day of December 1931, shall extend, or be deemed to extend, to the Union as part of the*

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[982] SIAROFF, Alan: **Comparing political regimes. A thematic introduction to comparative politics**, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2013, p.204. (3rd ed.) Consulted online.

[983] **Imperial Conference 1926**, Inter-Imperial Relations Committee Report, Proceedings and Memoranda E (I.R./26) Series, p.3. An information accessed on the 1st of October 2021 from the link https://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/resources/transcripts/cth11_doc_1926.pdf .

[984] **Art. 8 of South Africa Act, 1909.** Accessed on the 1st October 2021 from the link https://media.law.wisc.edu/s/c_8/jzhy2/cbsa1.pdf.

[985] **Art. 12 of South Africa Act, 1909, *Ibid.***

law of the Union, unless extended thereto by an Act of the Parliament of the Union.[986] These Constitutional reforms only paved the way for the advent of the Republican political system in 1961. Indeed, after the 1958 general elections, the National Party ruling government organized a referendum in 1960 over the issue of the Republican nature of the political system of the country, and 52.3%[987] of the electorate voted "yes."

Consequently, South Africa officially became a republic in May 1961. Nonetheless, the Westminster specter still loomed in the country's political landscape as the President merely replaced the Governor General. At the same time, the Prime Minister remained the most powerful political actor as the Head of government. Logically, South Africa adopted a more assertive and independent foreign policy after the advent of the Republican State. It is, therefore, interesting to emphasize the characteristics of Pretoria's foreign policy before and after 1960. In other words, what were the differences in South Africa's foreign policy-making between the dominion status and the republican State?

6.3.2 The characteristics of South African foreign policymaking.

The dominion status of South Africa before the advent of the Republican State impacted its foreign policy. Indeed, although Boers were authorized to administrate their daily domestic affairs, the British Empire still handled foreign policy issues (BE). Deon Geldenhuys accurately describes this impact in these terms: "in practice, this meant that the British Foreign Office, via the Department of the Union Prime Minister and the governor-general, served as the channel for South Africa's diplomatic activity."[988] As the PM was constitutionally the Head of government, he was also the highest foreign policy decision-maker in principle. Yet, Pretoria's response to international challenges was channeled through the Governor General. Hence, combined with the global status of the country, the leading foreign issue of the country at the time precluded the creation of a formal diplomatic bureaucratic settling with specialized departments or offices.

In fact, the very creation of the South African Foreign Ministry (South African Department of External Affairs - DEA) happened in 1927,[989] with Dr HDJ Bodenstein being the first Foreign Minister of the country or Secretary of the DEA. that is twenty years after the independence of the country. Due to the omnipresence of the UK in its

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[986] W. P. M. K., **Status of South Africa**, The University of Toronto Law Journal, 1935, Vol. 1, N.1, p.150
[987] STULTZ M., Newell and BUTLER Jeffrey, **The South African general election of 1961**, Political Science Quarterly, March 1963, Vol. 78, N. 1, p.87
[988] GELDENHUYS, Deon: **The Diplomacy of isolation: South African foreign policy making,** Johannesburg, Palgrave Macmillan, 1984, p.2. (1st ed.)
[989] MULLER, Marie, ***South Africa. The Ministry of foreign affairs: from isolation to integration to coherency*** in HOCKING, Brian (Ed.): **Foreign ministries: change and adaptation**, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 1999, p.188. (Consulted online)

diplomacy, Pretoria's main international focus was oriented towards its bilateral relation with London and its goal to emancipate from the British diplomatic tutelage. At this stage, the main *formulators* of South Africa's foreign policy were the Governor General, who represented the Crown, the Prime Minister (Jan Smuts at that time) and the Secretary of the DEA. However, South Africa's foreign policy changed progressively after WWII. Bhekithemba R. Mngomezulu confirms it in these terms: *it was only after the Second World War that South Africa consciously and assiduously developed an independent foreign policy*.[990] This change was done against the backdrop of the values and norms set by the winning Powers of WWII.

In fact, with the downfall of the Axes powers, the post-War international system witnessed the rise of what Deon Geldenhuys described in terms of the *new international morality* based upon the respect of human rights. Since Pretoria was already implementing its institutionalized discriminatory policy against its Black community, Prime Minister Smuts unhappily found himself *in the dock of world opinion*.[991] The subsequent internationalization of the Apartheid-related issues led the South African leaders to progressively adopt a more aggressive foreign policy stance, as we will see later. Regarding the setting of the foreign policy, unfortunately, the opacity of the Apartheid system does not allow easy access to the organigram of the foreign policy-making of the country. Yet, several authors who investigated the making of South Africa's foreign policy during the Apartheid era agree on the central role played by the Prime Minister, who was, until the 1984 Constitutional reform, the Head of the Executive.

In addition, key ministers also provided inputs in the country's foreign policy making. This was the case especially for the Minister of Defense and the Minister of Economy, probably because of the external threats and sanctions the country would face due to its racial policy. However, except for John Siko's work,[992] which *provided a good discussion of how the DFA –Department of Foreign Affairs – was sidelined by the Department of Defense from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980*, the literature does not provide substantial insights into the interactions between these ministries and the PM when addressing specific issues. Another interesting feature of South African foreign policy-making was the non-interference of public opinion-related groups in international affairs. In other words, interest groups like civil society organizations

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990 MNGOMEZULU R., Bhekithemba: **Foreign policy posture in post-Apartheid South Africa,** Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020, p.24. Consulted online

991 GELDENHUYS, Deon: **The Diplomacy of isolation: South African foreign policy making, *Op. Cit.,*** p.6

992 SAUNDERS, Chris, **Inside South Africa's foreign policy. Diplomacy in Africa from Smuts to Mbeki**, South African Journal of International Affairs, 2015, Vol. 22, N.1, p.138. This is a review of SIKO, John: **Inside South Africa's foreign policy: diplomacy in Africa from Smuts to Mbeki**, London, I.B. Tauris, 2016, 352 pages.

were not associated with or considered in making the country's foreign policy. Peter Vale argues in this regard that *foreign policy was the preserve of dictatorial figures - Hendrik Verwoerd on the Republican decision and PW Botha on the country's destabilization of the region. [...] The policy process in South Africa was entirely cut off from the domestic public. Organized public interest in foreign policy and international relations - such as there was - supported, rather than challenged, exclusivity around the making of foreign policy*.[993]

Nonetheless, interest groups like the South African Defense Force (SADF) also played an incremental role in formulating the country's foreign policy. Neta C. Crawford shares this point of view as she argues that the SADF had a tradition of involvement in politics. For example, under de Klerk's predecessor, P. W. Botha, the SADF was integral to high-level decision-making in both domestic and foreign policy issue areas. But as the following table illustrate, the DFA went under substantial bureaucratic transformations in the 1980s, probably because of the previously mentioned Constitutional reform and the external pressure the regime was facing. The following section will dwell on the coercive dynamics between South Africa and the Great Powers, notably the US

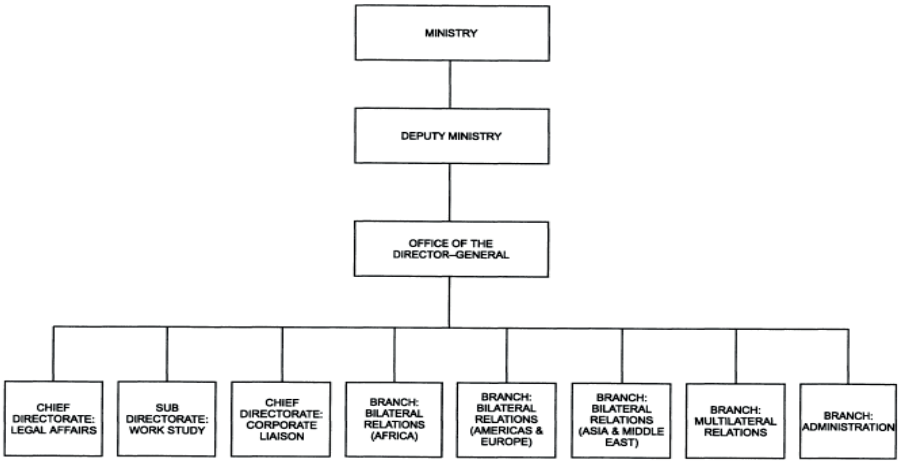

Table 8: Structure of the Department of Foreign Affairs.[994]

[993] VALE, Peter, **Continuity rather than change: South Africa's 'new' foreign policy**, Indicator SA, Vol. 12, N.3, pp.79-84

[994] MULLER, Marie, ***South Africa. The Ministry of foreign affairs: from isolation to integration to coherency, Op. Cit.,*** p.190

6.4 SECTION IV – THE COERCIVE DYNAMICS BETWEEN THE US AND SOUTH AFRICA.

The main goal of this section is to analyze the coercive dynamics between the US and South Africa. As we previously mentioned, this part will deeply analyze South Africa's and the US's coercive dynamics. This will be done against the backdrop of our hypotheses. In other words, when addressing the South African nuclear challenge, did the US coercive strategies exploit the weaknesses of South Africa? Did the US demonstrate the motivation to have a sustained campaign to compel South Africa to abandon its nuclear weapons program? Also, were these coercive strategies and threats credible, proportionate and reciprocal to the South African response? Considering our theoretical lens (neoclassical realism), we will also highlight the transmitting-belt role played by the intervening variables between the independent variable (systemic pressures/international demands) and the dependent variable (foreign policy). In other words, we will demonstrate how the perceptions of the South African leaders, the strategic culture of the country, the nature of the regime, and the configuration of the domestic institutions or domestic balance of power among the institutions and the State-society relations shaped the nature of the nuclear responses of Pretoria to the coercive demands of Washington. This will enable us to emphasize the relevance of the four ingredients of an effective coercive strategy in the nuclear realm: the display by the coercer of strategic empathy towards its target, the formulation of clear and acceptable demands to the target, the display by the coercer of a higher resolve than the target to achieve his/her objective, and the offer of credible incentives to the target if the target complies.

Following our structured-focused comparative methodology approach, just like the previous Iranian and Libyan chapters, our research design will also be based on the following questions: **what were the objectives pursued by the US when implementing his coercive policies against South Africa? Which coercive strategies were adopted to achieve these objectives? What were the expected outcomes of the US after implementing his coercive strategies? What were the actual outcomes of the coercive dynamics, and why such outcomes?** Concerning the differences between Libya and South Africa, conversely to Libya, South Africa successfully built nuclear weapons[995] and dismantled them later. Considering the strategic importance of nuclear weapons (both politically and militarily), dismantling its nuclear arsenal must be the outcome of the long process we will try to describe. In addition, unlike Libya, which was under the leadership of a single authority during the entire coercive process, several leaders – Prime Ministers – conducted the country's

[995] VENTER, AI. J. and BANDENHORST, N.P: **How South Africa built six atom bombs and then abandoned its nuclear weapons program**, New York, Ashanti, 2008, 233 pages.

foreign policy during the coercive dynamics against Foreign Powers. Hence, it is important first to analyze these leaders' ideas and beliefs, which will shed insightful light on the reasons for their response to external pressure. Consequently, the section will be divided into four main sub-sections, which correspond to the mandates of the four leaders who exerted power before the country's denuclearization. The first leader was Hendrick Verwoerd, PM, from 1958 to 1966.

6.4.1 During the Mandate of Hendrick Verwoerd.

6.4.1.1 Hendrick Verwoerd's foreign policy: ideas and beliefs.

Born on the 8th of September 1901, Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd was the 6th Prime Minister of South Africa. Despite having a background in psychology, he followed a professional political pattern and had firm racial beliefs. Indeed, he had zealous conviction regarding the merits of communitarian-based separatist ideologies like Nazi's, and his *anti-Semitism was matched by his anti-British outlook*.[996] With specific respect to South African politics, his political ascension to the top leadership of the National Party first and the country later happened in the context of a political crisis as *it had become increasingly urgent to find an answer to the question "what is Apartheid?", the Government had come to the crossroads: only Dr Verwoerd stood out as the man who claimed to know the answer. […] It was just someone like this that the Nationalist Party wanted—someone who would face the future with absolute confidence and banish the gnawing anxiety over the fate of apartheid*.[997] Hence, it is not surprising that PM Verwoerd was described as the architect of Apartheid.

Regarding foreign policy, Hendrick Verwoerd's vision can be summarized in the following sentence: "our motto is to maintain white supremacy for all time to come over our own people and our own country, by force if necessary."[998] Donald Sole goes further as he argues that Verwoerd's foreign policy *was shaped accordingly and was based on the assumption that South Africa would increasingly be exposed to international sanctions in one form or another - an accurate assumption, more particularly after the Sharpeville uprising*.[999] From a strictly personal perspective, several analysts agree that Verwoerd had a sturdy character, and his leadership style, even in foreign policy, could easily be described as authoritarian. John Siko confirms that in these terms: "Verwoerd had an almost superhuman certainty in his decision-making, with even his wife acknowledging that he would not make concessions once he had made a decision, which he tended to

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[996] UYS, Stanley, ***Dr Hendrick Frensch Verwoed, Prime Minister of South Africa*** in SEGAL M., Ronald (ed): **Africa South**, Jan-March 1959, Vol.3, N.2, p.4

[997] UYS, Stanley, ***Dr Hendrick Frensch Verwoed, Prime Minister of South Africa, Ibid,*** p.7

[998] BARBER, James and BARRATT, John: **South Africa's foreign policy: the search for status and security, 1945-1998**, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p.2

[999] SOLE, Donald, **South African foreign policy assumptions and objectives from Hertzog to De Klerk**, South African Journal of International Affairs, 1994, Vol.2, N.1, p.108

do quickly. [He] would tolerate opposition neither from supporter nor critic."[1000] With all the previous elements in the backdrop, one would expect South Africa not to bend in front of external pressure.

6.4.1.2 The coercive dynamics between South Africa and the Great Powers under Hendrick Verwoerd. (1958-1966).

As previously noted, the sanctions imposed by the US against South Africa were firstly Apartheid-related and not nuclear-related. Thereof, the first coercive measures imposed by the US through the UN were related to the Sharpeville massacre in 1961. In this regard, the first serious Resolution adopted by the SC concerning Apartheid was Res. 181 on the 7th of August 1963, after the adoption of Res. 134 on the 1st of April 1960. Indeed, in the latter Resolution, which was submitted to the SC by twenty-nine Member States,[1001] and which focused on Apartheid, the UN *deplored that the recent disturbances in the Union of South Africa should have led to the loss of life of so many Africans and extends to the families of the victims its deepest sympathies* (and) *deplores the policies and actions of the Government of the Union of South Africa which have given rise to the present situation* (**Art.2** and **Art.3 of Res. 134**).[1002] Consequently, the SC *called upon the Government of the Union of South Africa to initiate measures aimed at bringing about racial harmony based on equality in order to ensure that the present situation does not continue or recur, and to abandon its policies of apartheid and racial discrimination*.[1003] However, the South African disregarded this first resolution as the brutal and racial repressions of the Black community reached their peak with the 1961 Sharpeville massacre.

Following the Sharpeville massacre, the UNSC adopted Res. 181, which mainly called upon the Government of South Africa to abandon the policies of apartheid and discrimination, as called for in Security Council resolution 134 (1960) and to liberate all persons imprisoned, interned or subjected to other restrictions for having opposed the policy of Apartheid. (Art.2) In addition, it solemnly called upon States to cease forthwith the sale and shipments of arms, ammunition of all types and military vehicles to South Africa. (Art.3).[1004] Although the tone seemed similar to that of Res. 134, the SC

[1000] SIKO, John: **Inside South Africa's foreign policy: diplomacy in Africa from Smuts to Mbeki, *Op. Cit.*,** p.236. (Consulted online)

[1001] **S/4279**, 25th March 1960. Accessed from https://undocs.org/en/S/4279 on the 2nd of October 2021

[1002] **Security Council Resolution 134 (1960) [Question relating to the situation in the Union of South Africa].** Accessed from https://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f1893c.html on the 2nd of October 2021.

[1003] Art.4 of Res.134, **Security Council resolution 134 (1960) [Question relating to the situation in the Union of South Africa], *Ibid.***

[1004] **UNSC Res. 181** of 7th August 1963. Accessed on the 2nd of October 2021 from the link https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/S/RES/181(1963) .

expressed its willingness to take the Apartheid issue a step further and adopted a **coercive denial strategy** as it solemnly called upon all States to cease forthwith the sale and shipment of arms, ammunition of all types and military vehicles to South Africa.[1005] What was the impact of these first UN coercive measures against Pretoria?

The first international coercive measures against the Apartheid regime did not significantly impact South Africa; instead, Pretoria blatantly ignored the UN's request to undo its racial policy. In a letter addressed to the UN Secretary-General on the 11th of October 1963, then South African foreign affairs Minister Eric H. Louw replied that *the South African Government has never recognized the right of the United Nations to discuss or consider a matter which falls solely within the jurisdiction of a Member State*; *[In addition,] since nothing done by the South African Government in its own territory or elsewhere is a threat to the peace, it is impossible to see how the resolution adopted by the Security Council on 7 August 1963, can be reconciled with the provisions of the Charter*.[1006] In other words, South Africa did not plan to comply with the UN demands as it considered the Apartheid issue as a domestic affair. Considering Pretoria's deafness, the UN adopted another series of Resolutions to compel Pretoria to stop implementing the Apartheid policy. Furthermore, *the government of South Africa reacted with two strategies against the first (voluntary) arms embargo of 1963. As a result of Government decisions, the composition of the suppliers changed, and instead of importing finished weapon systems, the Government systematically tried to establish an arms industrial base, relying more on the import of the relevant technologies*.[1007]

The UN subsequently adopted Resolutions 182 and 191, which "solemnly called upon all States to cease forthwith the sale and shipment of equipment and materials for the manufacture and maintenance of arms and ammunition in South Africa."[1008] (Art.5 of Res.182) In addition, the UN "requested all Member States to take such steps as they deem appropriate to persuade the Government of the Republic of South Africa to comply with present resolution." (Art.13 of Res.191)[1009] Yet, Pretoria refused again to comply with the international demands regarding its Apartheid policy. But what factors can explain this persistent defiant policy of the South African leaders?

[1005] **Art. 3 of UNSC Res. 181, *Op. Cit.***

[1006] **Report by the Secretary-General in pursuance of the Resolution adopted by the Security Council at its 1056th meeting on 7th of August 1963 (S/5386)**. Accessed from https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/614957 on the 2nd of October 2021.

[1007] ANTHONY, Ian (Ed.): **Arms export regulations**, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991, p.242. (Consulted online)

[1008] **UNSC Resolution 182**. Accessed from http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/182 on the 2nd of October 2021.

[1009] **UNSC Resolution 191** adopted on 18th June 1964. Accessed on the 2nd of October 2021from http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/191.

Several internal and external factors can explain the South African defiant policy towards the first UN demands. Among the UN-related internal factors is the soft tone or approach used by the UN. Indeed, as we previously analyzed, the UN merely ***deplored the policies*** *and actions of the Government of the Union of South Africa, which have given rise to the present situation* (Art.2 of Res. 181) and ***called upon States*** *to cease forthwith the sale and shipments of arms, ammunition of all types and military vehicles to South Africa*. (Art.3 of Res.181). The choice of these words indicates that States were not obliged to implement the UN Resolutions mentioned above; in other words, this was a *non-mandatory UN arms embargo on South Africa*.[1010] Concerning the external factors, one should note the controversial behaviors of certain Great Powers who had substantial economic/military interests in South Africa. Deon Geldenhuys confirms it by arguing, "like the Americans, the British decided that existing contracts with South Africa for arms, parts and maintenance would be exempted from the embargo. [However,] the British and Americans withdrawal from the South African arms market created new openings for other States that chose to ignore the Security Council's voluntary arms embargo. France and Italy emerged as the two principal suppliers in the period 1963 to 1977; their respective shares of reported arms transfers to South Africa between 1970 and 1976 were 51% and 19%."[1011]

In addition, one should also consider the determination of the South African authorities to assume their new international status officially and assertively as a fully sovereign State. This means that the South African leaders expected from their foreign counterparts the same respect as any other leader of a Great Power. L. Butler and S. Stockwell illustrate this mindset in these words: *the tone of the private discussion between Macmillan and Verwoerd was rather more hard-edged than was the case in Ghana or Nigeria, where Macmillan naturally fell into a more avuncular – or paternalistic – mode as he proffered advice on matters such as the workings of Westminster-style democracy. South Africa, it should be remembered, was fully into its post-colonial moment, whereas other African States visited by Macmillan were only achieving their statehood*.[1012]

Hence, it's not surprising to witness the South African authorities not complying with the UN demand. Instead, the *high priest of apartheid, Hendrik Verwoerd,* [1013] firmly maintained the Apartheid policy. He took the racial issue a step further by calling for a

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[1010] SIPRI**, Non-mandatory UN arms embargo on South Africa.** Last updated on 29th October 2012. Consulted online from https://www.sipri.org/databases/embargoes/un_arms_embargoes/south-africa-non-mandatory/non-mandatory-un-arms-embargo-on-south-africa?fbclid=IwAR3h-r6TlTmYE-GIkHkZRs1U6ijrHbekjcNwF-RylfqkSb0Q2kroBMc8TWI on the 3rd October 2021

[1011] GELDENHUYS, Deon: **Isolated States: A comparative analysis**, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011, p.504 (Consulted online)

[1012] BUTLER Larry and STOCKWELL Sarah: **The Wind of change: Harold Macmillan and British decolonization,** New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p.41. (Consulted online)

[1013] HARVEY, Robert: **The fall of Apartheid. The inside story from Smuts to Mbeki**, ***Op. Cit.,*** p.7

national **rally-round - the flag (neoclassical realism intervening variable of the State-society relations)** regarding the necessity to protect the White identity and values. Michael T. Schieber maintains that this decision "represented a significant shift away from Afrikaner nationalism toward white nationalism, a move which took advantage of the fact that many English-speaking South Africans resented the external threats and hostile criticism."[1014] Worse, PM Verwoerd even challenged and threatened the Great Powers in these terms: "I want to echo through the world, right into the forums of the United Nations Organization and right into the government bodies of the mightiest nations in the world, namely, that they will have to deal with a united South Africa should they try to force us off our course."[1015] But PM Verwoerd was assassinated later by Dimitri Tsafendas, a Parliament service officer, on the 6th of September 1966.[1016] Yet, his successor, John Vorster, continued to carry the flame of the Apartheid high.

6.4.2 During the Mandate of John Vorster.

6.4.2.1 John Vorster's foreign policy: ideas and beliefs.

Balthazar Johannes Vorster, commonly called John Vorster, was the South African PM for twelve years (1966-1978). Although the Parliament had consensually elected him, his rise at the highest decision-making level of the country was almost surprising since his predecessor Hendrick Verwoerd had nurtured then Minister of Defense Botha to be his successor. David Dal canton maintains that the unexpected election of John Vorster can be explained by the fact that *as the Minister of Justice, he had acquired the reputation of being the most unyielding defender of white South Africa in the cabinet next to the Prime Minister himself. His anti- liberalism campaign in the early 1960s and his sponsorship of increasingly authoritarian legislation had indicated to many Nationalists that Vorster offered the best hope of overcoming the Republic's enemies*.[1017] Yet, he significantly differed from his predecessor regarding international visions and leadership style.

Concerning his vision of South Africa's foreign policy, John Vorster's international ideas sharply contrasted with that of his predecessor. Though a firm proponent of the Apartheid principles, John Vorster could make concessions when addressing the

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[1014] SCHIEBER T., Michael, **Apartheid under pressure: South Africa's military strength in a changing political context**, Africa Today, 1976, Vol. 23, N. 1, p.28

[1015] SCHIEBER T., Michael, **Apartheid under pressure: South Africa's military strength in a changing political context, *Ibid***.

[1016] **SA Prime Minister H. F. Verwoerd stabbed to death,** South Africa History Online, 6 September 1966. Last updated on the 4th September 2021. Consulted from https://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/sa-prime-minister-h-f-verwoerd-stabbed-death on the 3rd of October 2021.

[1017] DALCANTON C., David, **Vorster and the politics of confidence 1966-1974**, African Affairs, Apr. 1976, Vol. 75, N.299, p.163

Apartheid issue abroad. In fact, his conciliatory foreign policy was consecrated in his "Outward Policy," which was "based explicitly on the proposition that South Africa's future 'lay in Africa and nowhere else included economic aid offers and low-key diplomatic overtures."[1018] Consequently, his limited openness regarding diplomatic relations with certain African States should be analyzed against the backdrop of this *outward policy*. This was illustrated, for example, by symbolic diplomatic actions such as his State visits to countries like Ivory Coast or Liberia. South Africa even opened its first diplomatic mission under his leadership in a Black country – Malawi.[1019]

From a leadership style perspective, unlike his predecessor, John Vorster adopted a democratic or participatory leadership style. John Biko confirms it by arguing, "whereas Verwoerd was a micromanager, Vorster saw his role as more of a 'chairman of the board,' making decisions when necessary but generally allowing his ministers to run their own portfolios, seeking consensus wherever possible."[1020] Deon Geldenhuys digs in as he argues that "Prime Minister Vorster, to many people's amazement, soon displayed a remarkable degree of political flexibility compared with Verwoerd's typical "granite" stance. While undoubtedly subscribing to the basic tenets of separate development, Vorster did not display the same unmerciful consistency as Verwoerd in rigorously applying apartheid to virtually all facets of human interaction in South Africa."[1021] However, did PM John Vorster's conciliatory foreign policy beliefs change Pretoria's stance on the Apartheid system and its nuclear weapons program?

6.4.2.2 The coercive dynamics between South Africa and the Great Powers under John Vorster. (1966-1978).

Despite the flexibility of PM John Vorster, the Apartheid regime maintained the noose tightened on the Black population and the colored minorities in the country. Worse, PM John Vorster progressively radicalized some of its policies. For instance, "he extended the already far-reaching carapace of security legislation to suppress 'communism' and was responsible for creating the Bureau of State Security (BOSS) in 1969, headed by the notorious police chief H. J. van den Bergh. Operating beyond parliamentary scrutiny and with a special budget, this secretive and fearsome body accrued wide powers to act against anyone deemed to be a traitor, Communist, or terrorist."[1022] In addition, during

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[1018] JASTER S., Robert: **The Defence of White power: South African foreign policy under pressure**, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 1989, p.11

[1019] JASTER S., Robert: **The Defence of White power: South African foreign policy under pressure, *Ibid*.,** p.11

[1020] SIKO, John: **Inside South Africa's foreign policy: diplomacy in Africa from Smuts to Mbeki, *Op. Cit*.,** p.236. (Consulted online)

[1021] GELDENHUYS, Deon: **The Diplomacy of isolation: South African foreign policy making, *Op. Cit.,*** p.33

[1022] DUBOW, Saul: **Apartheid, 1948–1994**, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014, p.153

his mandate, the 1976 brutal repression of Black children protesting against the adoption of a new policy imposing Afrikaans as the mandatory teaching language. Stanley Tookie Williams recalls these events in these terms, "on the morning of June 16, 1976, the black students of Soweto decided to leave school and protest, peacefully, the Apartheid-era conditions they faced – overcrowded school rooms, high dropout rates (…) and the fact that they were being forced to learn Afrikaans, the language of their oppressors. (…) The children were fed up and, (and) in large number that day, decided to march down a main road with signs of protest. But as they marched, these defenseless children were shot down and killed – a total of 172 – by South African police."[1023]

However, the regional dynamics in the country's neighborhood impacted the PM's foreign policy. Indeed, several countries around South Africa surprisingly obtained their independence from their former Western colonial Powers. Among these countries, there's Mozambique, for example, which became an independent State on the 25th of June 1975, following the previously mentioned Carnation Revolution in Portugal. In addition, the Portuguese also withdrew from Angola in November of the same year. These two withdrawals greatly impacted the regional balance, particularly Pretoria's security and international status. This is because the successors of the White-led governments in these countries were hostile to the Apartheid regime. Robert Jaster argues in this regard that, *Mozambique gained its independence under the guerrilla leader, Samora Machel, a self-declared Marxist who immediately allowed Rhodesian guerrillas sanctuary from which they could open the fateful second front against the Smith regime*.[1024] Feeling increasingly insecure after the collapse of two central pillars of its previously mentioned *buffer zone or cordon sanitaire*, the South African leaders were compelled to launch a military intervention in Angola.

As previously analyzed, the hasty departure of the Portuguese colonial authorities led to a power vacuum in Angola. Consequently, several rival military groups fought for the country's leadership: the FNLA, the UNITA and the MPLA. The two first military groups were ideologically close to the West, while the last was clearly Marxist, hence closer to the Soviet ideology. Consequently, thanks to the foreign support (notably from the US and South Africa) they benefitted, the two former military groups first achieved several victories. Indeed, the FNLA and the UNITA received substantial logistical and financial support from the US and South Africa.[1025] However, the MPLA, who had lost many

[1023] WILLIAMS T., Stanley: **Blue rage, Black redemption: A Memoir**, New York, Touchstone, 2007, p.352. (Consulted online.)
[1024] JASTER S., Robert: **The Defence of White power: South African foreign policy under pressure, *Op. Cit.*,** p.xv
[1025] COX, Courtland, **The U.S. involvement in Angola**, New Directions, 1976, Vol. 3, Issue 2, Art. 4, pp.39-40

battles to its rivals at the beginning of the crisis, progressively reversed the balance of power on the battlefield and defeated its rival groups on several fronts. These military victories were caused mainly by the logistical and human support provided by the Soviet Union and Cuba.[1026] The South African authorities did not witness the progress of the MPLA passively. Indeed, the SADF intervened and repelled the soldiers of the MPLA. But an unexpected third party intervened and changed the outcome of the South African military expedition: the Cuban soldiers.

The clash between the Cuban and the SADF in the Angolan theatre is another illustration of the indirect or "hot" wars between the Soviet Union and the US. Regarding the Angolan war of independence, Christabel Gurney stresses that *the biggest provocation to the US and other Western powers was the arrival of Cuban troops in Angola in November 1975 to defend the MPLA government against South African attack*.[1027] Nonetheless, the Cuban intervention helped to prevent the defeat of the MPLA. But this intervention alone does not explain the rout of the SADF in Angola. Another decisive factor was the withdrawal of US support to the SADF.[1028] Consequently, the US adopted a new regional strategy following the defeat of the SADF. The Carter administration's regional strategy goal was *to head off further revolutions in the region by installing pro-Western black majority governments in Namibia and Zimbabwe that would maintain the economic and political status quo. With the victory of Jimmy Carter in the 1976 US presidential election, there was a change in the tone, but not the substance, of US Southern Africa*.[1029]

Concerning South Africa, the defeat of the SADF in the Angolan theatre greatly impacted Pretoria's security and political calculus. *With hostile neighbors and increasing internal unrest, the South African government in 1977 announced a 'Total Strategy' to overcome this 'Total Onslaught,'* Nancy Clark and William Worger argue.[1030] Anna-Mart van Wyk digs in as she argues that "the communist involvement in Angola convinced Pretoria once more that South Africa's security was in serious jeopardy and that they needed nuclear weapons not only as a deterrent but also as a strategy for securing the survival of apartheid. (…) Consequently, Vorster, aided by a few high-ranking officers of the Atomic Energy Board and the Minister of Defense, P. W. Botha, approved the

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[1026] STEVENS, Christopher, **The Soviet Union and Angola**, African Affairs, Apr. 1976, Vol. 75, N. 299, p.144

[1027] GURNEY, Christabel, **The 1970s: The Anti-Apartheid Movement's difficult decade**, Journal of Southern African Studies, Jun. 2009, Vol. 35, N. 2, p.484.

[1028] NOER J., Thomas, **International credibility and political survival: The Ford Administration's intervention in Angola**, Presidential Studies Quarterly, Fall, 1993, Vol. 23, N 4, pp. 779-780

[1029] GURNEY, Christabel, **The 1970s: The Anti-Apartheid Movement's difficult decade**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.483

[1030] CLARK L., Nancy and WORGER H., William: **South Africa: The rise and fall of Apartheid, *Op. Cit.*,** p.87

development of a single Peaceful Nuclear Explosive (PNE). This step followed the successful testing in 1974 of a gun-type nuclear scale model with a projectile containing non-nuclear material. Vorster also authorized funding for an underground test site in the Kalahari Desert."[1031] However, if PM Vorster sowed the seeds of Pretoria's nuclear weapons, the actual manufacture of the South African ultimate weapon happened under PM Botha. But before dwelling on the coercive dynamics between the US and South Africa, we will first analyze the international reaction to the previous Apartheid and nuclear activities of Pretoria.

The 1976 brutal repression of the children's demonstrations in Soweto added another layer to the increasing pressure the South African Apartheid regime faced. Indeed, Pretoria had been progressively excluded from several international organizations of several domains (political, sport). For example, Pretoria was excluded from the Commonwealth in 1961[1032] and the Olympic games three years later (1964). Furthermore, the country was even banned from the UN General Assembly in 1974 after *a recorded vote of 72 in favor to 37 against, with 13 abstentions, rejecting the credential of the South African government*.[1033] But one of the boldest international reactions to the 1976 massacre was the adoption by the UN of Res. 392 on the 19th of June 1976. Through this Resolution, the UN *strongly* ***condemned*** *the South African Government for its resort to massive violence against and killings of the African people, including schoolchildren and students, and others opposing racial discrimination,* (Art.1) and *recognized the legitimacy of the struggle of the South African people for the elimination of apartheid and racial discrimination*, (Art.4) and ***called upon the South African Government urgently*** *to end violence against the African people and to take urgent steps to eliminate apartheid and racial discrimination*. (Art.5)[1034] How did Pretoria react to this Resolution?

South Africa maintained its defiant policy toward the UN Resolutions, and Resolution 392 was no exception. However, unlike the previous cases, Pretoria avoided an open clash and a blatant challenge to this Resolution. Instead, the South African authorities carefully circumvented this external pressure by helping the US to achieve its strategic goal of securing like-minded Black regimes in the new African independent countries. As we previously noted, the defeat of the SADF in the Angolan military theatre led the

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[1031] VAN WYK, Anna-Mart, **South Africa's nuclear programme and the Cold War**, History Compass, 2010, Vol. 8, N.7, pp. 563-564

[1032] HAYES, Frank, **South Africa's departure from the Commonwealth, 1960-1961**, The International History Review, Jul. 1980, Vol. 2, N. 3, pp. 453- 484

[1033] SUTTNER, Raymond, **Has South Africa been illegally excluded from the United Nations General Assembly?**, The Comparative and international law journal of Southern Africa, November 1984, Vol. 17, N. 3, p. 281

[1034] **UNSC Resolution 392** adopted on the 16th of June 1976. Accessed on the 5th of October 2021 from https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/93718.

US to reassess its African regional policy. This paradoxical foreign policy behaviors of Pretoria can be explained by the US choice to condemn the brutal repression of the Apartheid regime. As Alex Thomson described it, "Washington DC had joined the rest of the U.N. in "strongly" condemning "the South African Government for its resort to massive violence. Under these circumstances, Pretoria calculated that comprehensive punitive economic sanctions might not be too far away."[1035] In other words, Washington's actions signaled to Pretoria the potential risk of losing a key actor who had hitherto shielded most of the effect of the sanctions Pretoria should have logically faced due to its controversial Apartheid policy.

Concerning the US regional policy, after emphasizing security-based policies in the Black Continent (Cold War), Washington decided to add economic incentives to its strategy to secure the ideological allegiance of the new African independent States. In this regard, then Secretary of States Henri Kissinger emphasized that "the United States stands ready to work with the nations of southern Africa to help them achieve the economic progress which will give meaning to their political independence and dignity to their struggle for equality."[1036] With regards to the Apartheid policy, Kissinger considered the Apartheid issue to be "a different phenomenon" from the type of minority rule practiced in Namibia and Rhodesia. Consequently, "conditions in South Africa are more complicated and require a much longer timespan for their evolution."[1037] This was a clear message that Washington was not yet eager to substantially increase the economic pressure needed to compel Pretoria to undo its controversial racial policies.

In addition, during this 1976 Address in Lusaka, Kissinger emphasized that "our policy toward South Africa is based upon the premise that within a reasonable time we shall see a clear evolution toward equality of opportunity and basic human rights for all South Africans. (…) In the immediate future, the Republic of South Africa can show its dedication to Africa and its potential contribution to Africa by using its influence in Salisbury to promote a rapid negotiated settlement for majority rule in Rhodesia."[1038] Consequently, the new US-African regional policy provided a golden opportunity for the South African leaders to align their interests with those of the US, thus escaping from the coming external pressure. Alex Thomson confirms it by arguing that "the (South African) Republic, therefore, saw the Kissinger initiative as a way of diverting attention

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[1035] THOMSON, Alex: **U.S. foreign policy towards Apartheid South Africa, 1948–1994**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.86
[1036] The New York Times, **Text of Kissinzer's Address in Zambia on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa,**
April 28, 1976. Accessed from https://www.nytimes.com/1976/04/28/archives/text-of-kissingers-address-in-zambia-on-us-policy-toward-southern.html on the 7th of October 2021.
[1037] THOMPSON, Alex: **U.S. foreign policy towards Apartheid South Africa, 1948–1994**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.85
[1038] WALTON J., Hanes et al: **The African foreign policy of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger: A documentary analysis,** Plymouth, Lexington Books, 2010, p.127. (Consulted online)

from its domestic troubles, and a chance of regaining favor with the international community. What better way to do this than by partaking in international diplomacy with Dr Kissinger himself ?"[1039] Hence, Pretoria relied on **strategic opportunism** to circumvent the effects of the coercive strategy of the UN. However, the "total onslaught" counter-strategy which was progressively implemented paradoxically provided a golden opportunity to the US to impose more restrictive sanctions on Pretoria.

As previously analyzed, the regional (defeat of the SADF in Angola and the independence of Mozambique) and internal dynamics (anti-Apartheid demonstrations) led the South African authorities to design a counter strategy to what they (mis)perceived as a Soviet-led "total onslaught" strategy. A central pillar of this strategy was the building of an invincible weapon which will deter any potential Soviet intervention: nuclear weapons. It's important to mention that certain scholars discard this theory of the South African nuclear strategy and argue that Pretoria built a nuclear weapon program to compel *an ambivalent ally, the United States,* to intervene militarily in the region.[1040] In the same logic, Lucky Asuelime and Raquel Adekoye argue that "the objective of the Kalahari nuclear test preparations was a bargaining chip to win important concessions from the proliferation-sensitive US Carter administration. By threatening to employ nuclear weapons or by promising to refrain from their use, South Africa could attempt to secure its various political, economic, or security interests in political bargaining with the West."[1041] This idea is similar to Tristan Volpe's theory of **nuclear latency as a target's bargaining card** to extract political and security concessions from the nuclear gatekeeper.[1042]

Irrespective of the rationale of South Africa's nuclear strategy, "in August, the Soviet Union reported that its satellites had discovered nuclear testing facilities on the Southern edge of the Kalahari Desert, in the northern marches of the Cape Province. (…) The governments of the United States, France, Britain, and West Germany demanded explanations and reassurances; in response, Prime Minister B. Johannes Vorster denied that a test site existed. He said that South Africa had not been about to explode a nuclear weapon."[1043] Furthermore, relying on the **framing strategy**, he considered the Soviet accusation as the new avatar of the external world agenda to marginalize Pretoria and topple the Apartheid regime. As he declared during the Congress of the National Party of Cape Province, "you will remember that, when I announced to the world (…) that our

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[1039] THOMSON, Alex: **U.S. foreign policy towards Apartheid South Africa, 1948–1994**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.86
[1040] GOODSON L. R., Donald, **Catalytic deterrence? Apartheid South Africa's nuclear weapons strategy**, Politikon, 2012, Vol. 39, N.2, pp. 209-230.
[1041] ASUELIME E., Lucky and ADEKOYE A., Raquel: **Nuclear proliferation in South Africa. History and politics**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.94
[1042] VOLPE A., Tristan, **Atomic Leverage: compellence with nuclear latency**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.518.
[1043] ROTBERG I., Robert: **Suffer the future – Policy choices in Southern Africa**, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1980, p.155. (Consulted online)

scientists could enrich uranium, and that they had developed a process for doing so in the most indigenous way possible, the world laugh at us. (…) Now this "backward" nation is being accused because she suddenly wants to explode a nuclear bomb. (…) I ask the world by what rights are they pressurizing South Africa (…) when there are so many other countries and even 13 who are sitting on the (AIEA) Board itself, why must South Africa again be singled out."[1044] This illustrates the strategic role of neoclassical realism intervening variable of the **leaders' perceptions**. Yet, unconvinced by the South African response to their request, the Western Powers decided to tighten their grip on South Africa by adopting Resolution 418.

Resolution 418 was unanimously adopted on the 4th of November 1977 by the UNSC members. After recalling the previous Resolutions condemning the Apartheid policy, the UNSC members, for the first time, acted under the Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Indeed, they *recognized that the military build-up by South Africa and its persistent acts of aggression against the neighbouring States seriously disturb the security of those States*. They also *recognized that the existing arms embargo must be strengthened and universally applied (…) in order to prevent a further aggravation of the grave situation in South Africa*.[1045] Subsequently, the UNSC decided that "all States shall cease forthwith any provision to South Africa of arms and related materiel of all types, including the sale or transfer of weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary police equipment, and spare parts for the aforementioned."[1046] (Political escalation). In addition, the SC "called upon all States to review (…) all existing contractual arrangements with and licenses granted to South Africa relating to the manufacture and maintenance of arms, (…) with a view to terminating them. (Art.3). The SC also decided that "all States shall refrain from any co-operation with South Africa in the manufacture and development of nuclear weapons." (Art. 4)[1047] What was the coercive goal of the UNSC with the adoption of Res. 418?

With the adoption of Resolution 418, the SC opted for the **"gradual turning of the screw"** version of coercion. As previously analyzed, this was the first time that a UN Resolution on South Africa was adopted under the Chapter VII of the UN. It's worth noting that the UN Security Council is *vested with broad competences as any other organ of the UN, and its empowerment with the responsibility to restore and maintain peace and security by using all necessary available means allowed it to have the "last say" in many*

[1044] **Extract from speech by the South African Prime Minister at Congress of the National Party of Cape Province**, 24th August 1977. Accessed on the 7th of October 2021 from the website https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116617
[1045] **UNSC Res. 418.** Accessed from http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/418 on the 7th of October 2021.
[1046] Art. 1 of **UNSC Res. 418**, ***Ibid.***
[1047] **UNSC Res. 418, *Op. Cit.***

conflicts and situations.[1048] The Security Council can preserve international peace and security by imposing economic sanctions (Art. 41 of the UN Charter) or relying on the threat or actual use of force (Art. 42 of the UN Charter). Consequently, the subtle message the US and the other Great Powers were sending to South Africa was that they could consider using force as a credible option to compel its authorities to stop implementing the Apartheid policy. Sufyan Droubi confirms it in these words: "Resolution 418 (…) is of great historical importance as it constitutes the first SC resolution to explicitly adopt a mandatory embargo under Chapter VII against a UN Member. The Council highlighted its grave concern that South Africa was 'at the threshold of producing nuclear weapons' (…) and considered government policies and practices "fraught with danger to international peace and security."[1049]

With specific respect to the coercive strategy, the SC adopted a **coercive denial strategy** which aimed at depriving Pretoria of the military assets or instruments of its racial policy. Aware of the potential loopholes of this strategy, the SC tried to associate almost all the international actors in implementing their new measures. This is why they "called upon all States, including States non-members of the United Nations, to act strictly in accordance with the provisions of the present resolution."[1050] Nonetheless, what impact did the adoption of Resolution 418 have on South Africa? As the primary goal of this Resolution was to prevent South Africa from having access to (advanced or not) military equipment, the logical direct impact of this Resolution on South Africa was the cancellation of several military contracts with world-known manufacturing States. (Vertical escalation) This was the case with the cancellation by France of the *delivery of two submarines and two corvettes under construction for South Africa*.[1051] How did South Africa react to this first credible list of sanctions?

South Africa's vehemently rejected Resolution 418 on the ground that it was illegitimate. But more importantly, the adoption of Resolution 418 comforted the South African leaders in their belief that they could not rely on a godfather, not even the US, to guarantee the survival of their regime. **(Intervening variable of the leader's perception)** This is because Resolution 418 was adopted in a specific context: the international pressure on Pretoria to grant independence to Namibia, an increasing animosity from Washington and the country's exclusion from many international

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[1048] BOCAJ, Alma: **Discuss how Chapter VII of the U.N Charter is structured and meant to operate. Point to potential systematic weakness/strong points while suggesting improvements**, Munich, GRIN Verlag, 2013, p.3

[1049] DROUBI, Sufyan: **Resisting United Nations Security Council Resolutions**, Abingdon, Routledge, 2014, p.60. (Consulted online)

[1050] **Art. 5 of UNSC Res. 418**, ***Op. Cit.***

[1051] KANDELL, Jonathan, **French cancel sales to South Africa navy**, New York Times, 9th November 1977. Accessed from https://www.nytimes.com/1977/11/09/archives/french-cancel-sales-to-south-africa-navy-rule-out-delivery-of-4.html on the 7th October 2021.

organizations etc. Terence McNamee and Greg Mills rightly described the mindset of the South African authorities in these words: *fearful and isolated, the regime considered its options. The lure of nuclear weapons proved irresistible. South Africa had, after all, been a significant player in the nuclear age from its beginning by virtue of its large uranium reserves and mining-oriented economy*.[1052]

Pretoria needed absolutely an autonomous defense system capable of convincing any external intruder not to attack the country. Consequently, one can logically conclude that 1977 was a watershed year for South Africa's nuclear goals; indeed, the South African leaders intensively sought to obtain nuclear weapons at all costs this year. In other words, just like we previously analyzed with the Iranian and Libyan cases, the South African leaders also embarked on smuggling activities to obtain nuclear weapons. And their efforts were fruitful as the country finally built several nuclear weapons in the second half of the 80s. But this achievement happened under the leadership of a new Prime Minister: Pieter Botha. Indeed, PM Vorster was forced to resign after the Mulder gate.[1053]

6.4.3 During the Mandate of Pieter Botha.

6.4.3.1 Botha's foreign policy: ideas and beliefs.

Pieter Willem Botha succeeded PM Vorster as South Africa's third Prime Minister and assumed this position from 1978 to 1984. He crisply differed from his predecessor regarding his foreign policy and leadership style. Robert Jaster argues that *Pieter W. Botha's accession to the premiership in September 1978 brought dramatic changes in personality, style and substance to the policy-making process*.[1054] Concerning the leadership style, Pieter Botha seemed to be a reincarnation of former PM Hendrick Verwoerd. Indeed, just like his predecessor, he opted for an authoritarian leadership style. Certainly, "where Vorster had been a sloppy and often indecisive leader, Botha, in the words of one veteran observer, was "a manager, an organizational virtuoso, a leader who relies on expert advice, planning, preparation, structure and follow-through." And where Vorster eschewed log-term planning, developing policies reactively only when

[1052] MCNAMEE Terence and MILLS Greg, **Denuclearizing a regime: what South Africa's nuclear rollback might tell us about Iran**, Defence and Security Analysis, 2006, Vol. 22, N.3, p.331

[1053] Named after Connie Mulder, then South African Minister of Information, the Muldergate (1977) refers to a political scandal related to South Africa's government's attempts to counter international propaganda war against the country by bribing international newspapers to polish South Africa's reputation abroad.

[1054] JASTER S., Robert: **The Defence of White power: South African foreign policy under pressure, *Op. Cit.*,** p.28

crises necessitated new responses, Botha, guided by the "Total Strategy," showed himself to be an aggressive initiator of action right from the outset."[1055]

Another distinctive feature of Pieter Botha's leadership approach was his belief in the efficiency of centralization and hierarchy concerning policy and decision-making. In this regard, he completely reformed the country's administration and established a formal top-down structure, enabling a smoother and more linear decision-making chain. Robert Jaster confirms it by arguing that "in contrast to Vorster's personalized, haphazard, secretive style of leadership, Botha immediately introduced *a* system to the decision-making process and opened it up to broader policy input. (…) He created for the first time an office of the Prime Minister, with a sizeable staff and a formal role in the policy process. (…) And he set up five permanent Cabinet committees to replace the 20 ad hoc committees established (and frequently ignored) by his predecessor."[1056] Yet, one of these reforms' most prominent and visible aspects was the transformation of the State Security Council (SSC – see table below). While the SSC had been almost a consultative body under PM Vorster, it became a formal and binding institution under PM Botha. The SSC's "decisions, formulated at regular closed session meetings, always have been accepted by the full cabinet with little or no discussion. The secret, central role of the SSC has given Botha the capability to conduct the kind of secret diplomacy and covert military operations that have become his trademark."[1057]

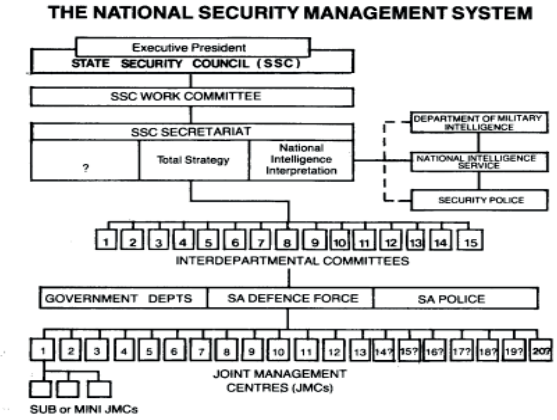

Table 10: South Africa's National Security Management under PM Botha.[1058]

[1055] SHEPARD B., ROBERT and GOLDMAN H., Christopher, **P. W. Botha's foreign policy**, The National Interest, Spring, 1989, N.15, p.71
[1056] JASTER S., Robert: **The Defence of White power: South African foreign policy under pressure, *Op. Cit.*,** p.29
[1057] SHEPARD B., Robert and GOLDMAN H., Christopher, **P. W. Botha's foreign policy**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.70
[1058] CAWTHRA, Gavin: **Brutal force: Apartheid war machine**, London, International Defence & Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 1986, p.35. (Consulted online.)

Regarding his vision of South Africa's foreign policy, Robert Shepard and Christopher Goldman argue that under Botha's tenure, every aspect of South African foreign policy has undergone a sweeping transformation. He has redefined radically the criteria for South Africa's security as well as the means by which his country deals with both southern Africa and the international community.[1059] PM Botha's approach to South Africa's foreign policy aimed at implementing a main strategic doctrine which is that the Republic will have to be practical in helping to counter foreign intervention and especially communism far north of its present borders.[1060] Therefore, security can be rightly considered to be not only the main criterion of his foreign policy but also an obsession for Pieter Botha. His preferences for military-based solutions to foreign policy challenges quickly earned him the nickname of "Piet Wapen", which means Piet the Weapon.[1061] And a clear sign of this assertive foreign policy was the increasing role of the military in his decision-making. **(From a nuclear reversal theory perspective, he was an oppositional nationalist – Jacques Hymans)**.

"The 1970s witnessed a rapid and accelerating militarization. (...) With P. W. Botha as Head of Government, the military gradually became more and more involved in political decision-making and civil law enforcement," Tjoenneland Elling argues. [1062] Neta Crawford digs in by arguing that "the SADF had a tradition of involvement in politics. For example, under de Klerk's predecessor, P. W. Botha, the SADF was integral to high level decision-making in both domestic and foreign policy issue areas."[1063] Two factors can explain this central role of the military in PW Botha's foreign policy: first, his background as the former Minister of Defense, which justified why his closest colleagues had military experience, like Magnus Malan, who was the Chief of Staff of former PM Vorster; second his deep mistrust toward the external world and the US in particular, especially after the withdrawal of Washington's military support to the SADF under the Reagan administration as we will see later. This is the reason why he dedicated substantial budget resources to the Defense sector. For instance, *South Africa's annual military budgets ran from 2 to 4.5 billion rand, or between 4 and 5 percent of gross national product, from the late 1970s through the 1980s*.[1064] Considering all the previous information regarding PM Botha's foreign policy vision, one can only expect

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[1059] SHEPARD B., Robert and GOLDMAN H., Christopher, **P. W. Botha's foreign policy**, ***Ibid.***, p.68

[1060] GELDENHUYS, Deon, **Some foreign policy implications of South Africa's "total national strategy" with particular reference to the "12-point plan",** South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), 1981, p.31

[1061] ALLEN, John: Rabble-Rouser for Peace: The authorized biography of Desmond Tutu, The US, Rider, 2006, p.177. Consulted online.

[1062] ELLING N., Tjoenneland, **Militaristic Apartheid**, Taylor & Francis, Ltd Third World Quarterly, Vol. 9, N. 2, 1987, p.725

[1063] CRAWFORD C., Neta, **South Africa's new foreign and military policy: opportunities and constraints**, Africa Today, 1st Qtr. - 2nd Qtr., 1995, Vol. 42, N. 1/2, p.90

[1064] LIBERMAN, Peter, **The rise and fall of the South African bomb**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.55

South Africa to adopt a recalcitrant behaviors toward the demands of the US and the other Great Powers.

6.4.3.2 The coercive dynamics between South Africa and the Great Powers under P. W. Botha (1978-1989).

As previously analyzed, 1977 was a strategic year for South Africa for at least two reasons: on the first hand, the first mandatory arms embargo was imposed on Pretoria through the adoption of Resolution 418; on the other hand, South Africa experienced a leadership transition with the election of P. W. Botha as the new PM. These two events had a great impact on the country's foreign policy. With a hawkish leader like Pieter Botha, Pretoria adopted a firmer stance regarding its international behaviors. **(From a nuclear reversal theory perspective, he was an oppositional nationalist – Jacques Hymans)**. While Resolution 418 doubtlessly impacted Pretoria's room of maneuverability as we previously analyzed, nevertheless, the South African leaders adopted several **circumventing strategies**. Gavin Cawthra identified three main strategies developed by South Africa to escape from the burden of the UN embargo, with most of them related to the dual use of the sensitive components Pretoria was importing. "Firstly, covert deals have been conducted, usually arranged through third parties, and involving false shipping papers, bribes and the establishment of front companies. Secondly, the South African regime has acquired military equipment such as computers, radar, and aircraft on the grounds that they could also be considered as civilian items. Thirdly, components, technology and industrial assembly lines have been transferred to South Africa, often disguised as civilian materials, enabling the regime to establish new military manufacturing facilities."[1065]

Paradoxically, firms from key States that played an incremental role in implementing the UN embargo also helped South Africa escape the effects of the sanctions. For example, SADF signed a $155 million with a US/Canadian firm to deliver a 155 mm artillery system in 1970. "Through a highly complicated series of transactions, in which a number of front companies were established, and millions of dollars changed hands, at least four of the 155mm guns, 60,000 shells, and a number of accessories were provided to Armscor."[1066] But one of the most important actors who played a decisive role in South Africa's circumvention strategy is Israel. Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi maintains that *any portrayal of the Israel-South Africa alliance is bound to be partial and limited, because the scope of this alliance is so broad, and the relationship so multifaceted*.[1067]

[1065] CAWTHRA, Gavin: **Brutal force: Apartheid war machine, *Op. Cit.*,** p.94
[1066] CAWTHRA, Gavin: **Brutal force: Apartheid war machine, *Op. Cit.*,** p.94
[1067] BEIT-HALLAHMI, Benjamin: **The Israeli connection: Whom Israel arms and why**, New York, Pantheon Books, 1987, pp.108-109.

Before dwelling on Israel's (potential) role in South Africa's nuclear developments, it's important to emphasize that the US non-proliferation policy towards Tel Aviv, Islamabad and even Pretoria is subject to controversies. Indeed, concerning Islamabad, certain authors like Adrian Levy and Catherine Scott-Clark argue that "Pakistan was a necessary buffer against Communism, Carter was advised and needed to be wooed. In return for resisting Soviet advances, Washington was willing to turn a blind eye to General Zia's nuclear aspirations."[1068] On the contrary, Or Rabinowitz and Nicholas L. Miller refute the previous argument as they argue that "successive U.S. administrations did not believe that an Israeli bomb was in the national interests of the United States; they were not indifferent to the South African nuclear program; and US opposition to the Pakistani program never fully receded, even during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan."[1069] Just like the US, Israel's incremental role in the South African nuclear developments has also been subject to controversies.

What was Israel's fundamental role in South Africa's nuclear improvement? It is difficult to accurately answer the previous question, considering the sensibility of the topic and hence the unavailability of objective data on this issue. Nevertheless, certain authors maintain that Tel Aviv assisted Pretoria in developing its nuclear program. Concerning their bilateral nuclear relationship, previous CIA reports acknowledge the importance of Tel Aviv in Pretoria's nuclear improvement. However, they could not assess precisely the scope of the cooperation between the two countries. For instance, in a 1983 report, CIA agents admitted that they had "little confirmed information about South Africa-Israeli nuclear cooperation, despite numerous reports and/or rumors linking the two States."[1070] It is important to note that this previous information contradicts a previous 1979 CIA report which established that "Israelis… participated in certain South African nuclear research activities over the last few years."[1071] These contradictions confirm the difficulty of accessing precise and accurate information regarding Israel and South Africa's nuclear cooperation. Nevertheless, a former Senior Official of the State Department acknowledged the awareness of the US officials of Israel and South Africa's nuclear cooperation during secret Congressional hearings.

[1068] LEVY, Adrian and SCOTT-CLARK, Catherine: **Deception: Pakistan, the United States, and the secret trade in nuclear weapons**, New York, Walker & Co, 2007, p.4. Consulted online

[1069] RABINIOWITZ Or and MILLER L., Nicholas, **Keeping the bombs in the basement: U.S. Nonproliferation policy toward Israel, South Africa and Pakistan**, International Security, 2015, Vol. 40, N.1, p.50.

[1070] **CIA Report, 'New Information on South Africa's Nuclear Program and South African-Israeli Nuclear and Military Cooperation' (redacted),"** March 30, 1983, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, FOIA request, National Security Archive, p.3. Obtained and contributed by Sasha Polakow, Suransky.

[1071] LIBERMAN, Peter, **Israel and the South African bomb**, The Nonproliferation Review, Summer 2004, Vol.11, N.2, p.8

Indeed, Herman J. Cohen, then Africa Director in the National Security Council from 1987 to 1988, remembers that: "when I was asked about Israeli cooperation with the (South African) nuclear program, I answered that we had received good intelligence that it was taking place."[1072] In addition, Tyler Drumheller, formerly Chief of CIA covert operations in Europe, dwells further as he declared in an interview with Derek Leebaert that by 1980 the CIA "had 11 cases officers in South Africa, four of them with deep cover. (…) We were regularly able to obtain swipe samples from its enrichment facilities."[1073] Derek Leebaert argues that the previously mentioned South African Project Circle *was already within reach of perfecting a usable, deliverable atomic bomb.* Furthermore, Tyler Drumheller described how Israel had helped South Africa to circumvent US and international embargoes by providing key nuclear materials like the VAX computers, which were necessary for the completion of Pretoria's nuclear program. "Project Circle needed that VAX, (and) it came via the Israelis and TamCo," he added.[1074]

As we will see later, Tel Aviv also provided missiles which were instrumental to South African-designed nuclear weapons. Consequently, Martha van Wyk rightly described the intensity of the bilateral relationship between Pretoria and Tel Aviv in these terms: "as far as South Africa was concerned, Carter's non-proliferation efforts came too late. In addition to its own unique uranium enrichment process, South Africa in 1977 and 1978 started carrying through a secret nuclear trade agreement that had been reached in April 1976 between Vorster and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin."[1075] Why, then, did the US not effectively hamper the nuclear progress of the Apartheid regime, considering the previous information? The beginning of the answer is that Israel/South Africa relations were not limited to strategic areas like the military in general, and nuclear in special. In fact, the two countries also had good economic relations.

Regarding economic relations, Israel and South Africa maintained intensive trade relations irrespective of the sanctions imposed on the Apartheid regime. For example, in 1970, *Israeli exports to South Africa amounted to $10.7 million, while imports amounted to $10.2 million. (…) Israel imported from South Africa nearly half as much as it imported from the rest of the continent as a whole*.[1076] Japan is another country which played an incremental role in South Africa's economic life. Tokyo and Pretoria's

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[1072] LIBERMAN, Peter, **Israel and the South African bomb, *Ibid*.,** p.9

[1073] LEEBAERT, Derek, **How Israel helped a rogue State go nuclear**, The Globalist. Rethinking globalization, April5, 2013. Accessed from https://www.theglobalist.com/how-israel-helped-a-then-rogue-state-go-nuclear/ on October 10, 2021.

[1074] LEEBAERT, Derek, **How Israel helped a rogue State go nuclear, *Ibid.*** TamCo was then a front company used by the Mossad to escape from the international restrictions on specific military activities.

[1075] WYK VAN S., Martha, **Ally or critic? The United States' response to South African nuclear development, 1949–1980**, Cold War History, Vol. 7, N. 2, May 2007, p.213

[1076] Journal of Palestine Studies, **South Africa and Israel**, Autumn, 1973, Vol. 3, N. 1, p.179

economic relations hark back to the beginning of the 20th Century. Indeed, *Japan's exports to South Africa, valued at 454,000 yen in 1912, increased to 18,343,000 yen in 1918, while its imports, which were practically non-existent in 1912, jumped to 29,449,000 yen by 1918*.[1077] But the economic relations between the two countries skyrocketed between the 60s and the 80s as *between 1962 and 1968, the value of Japanese-South African trade rose from about $ 178,974,000 to $551,591,000, and by 1980 the figure stood at $3,593,738,000, twenty times what it was in 1960*.[1078]

6.4.4 The EU's actions against the Apartheid regime.

Concerning the EU (then European Community), most of the European countries were still healing the wounds of WWII; consequently, the Apartheid policy was not yet a major source of concern for the Europeans at the beginning of the 60s. However, with the growing international consensus against Apartheid, several European countries started raising their voice against Pretoria. One of the first European countries which publicly criticize Pretoria was the UK, with PM Harold McMillan denouncing the segregationist policies of South Africa's regime. Other States like Spain and Austria tightened administrative procedures (visa restrictions) for South African citizens.[1079]

But one of the boldest European political actions against Apartheid was the adoption of the Code of Conduct for EC companies in South Africa on November 23, 1977. "Between 1977 and 1984, the Code represented the EC's sole foreign policy instrument framed within the procedure of EPC designed to bring about the Community's stated objective of removing apartheid. (…) Firms were encouraged 'to abolish any practice of segregation, notably at the workplace and in canteens, sports activities, education and training'. Although the *Code* did not impose any legal obligations, the European based parent companies were requested to report annually on the progress made in applying the Code's provisions."[1080] Yet all these efforts could not be efficient as the US-South Africa's bilateral economic relations shielded all the potential impact of all the economic sanctions imposed on Pretoria. For instance, *(US) exports to South Africa rose from US$131 million in 1945 to US$2,463 million by 1980. Imports from South Africa to the United States followed a similar pattern, registering US$104 million at the end of the war,*

[1077] PAYNE J., Richard, **Japan's South Africa policy: Political rhetoric and economic realities**, African Affairs, April 1987, Vol. 86, N.343, p. 168

[1078] PAYNE J., Richard, **Japan's South Africa policy: Political rhetoric and economic realities, *Ibid.*,** p.168

[1079] KONSTANTINOS, Margaritis, **An outline of the Europe – South Africa relations during and post the Apartheid era**, 2012, CES Working Papers, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi, Centre for European Studies, Iasi, Vol. 4, Issue 4, p.761

[1080] HOLLAND, Martin, **Disinvestment, sanctions and the European Community's code of conduct in South Africa**, African Affairs, Oct. 1989, Vol. 88, N.353, p.534

and US$3,321 million by 1980.[1081] The following table provides a more accurate on the impact and the evolution of the US input on the South African economy.

Year	*Total U.S. exports to South Africa (US$ millions)*	*Total U.S. imports from South Africa (US$ millions)*	*U.S. total direct investment in South Africa (US$ millions)*	*Return on U.S. total direct investment in South Africa (percentage)*
1950	126	142	140	9.29
1955	268	96	257	14.79
1960	288	108	286	11.89
1965	438	226	528	14.58
1970	536	290	868	16.60
1975	1,302	840	1,582	4.49
1980	2,463	3,321	2,350	28.30
1985	1,205	2,071	1,394	2.51
1990	1,732	1,698	775	21.03

Table 11: U.S. economic relations with South Africa (exports, imports, and direct investment), 1950–1990.[1082]

Considering the previous elements – the vision of the new leader of South Africa and the economic support of the US, – one can easily understand South Africa's defiance toward UN Resolution 418. However, external factors only do not explain Pretoria's challenge toward international demands. Indeed, internal elements also shed insightful light on the weakness of Resolution 418, and, consequently, South Africa's recalcitrant behaviors. Among those internal elements stood the wide room of interpretation granted to States regarding the nature of the notion of the "arms" that were supposed to be banned from the South African market. Gavin Cawthra confirms it in these words: *(Resolution 418) merely called for the review of existing licensing arrangements; it left it up to member countries to decide what exactly constituted arms and related material*. In addition, *it did not call for a total ban on nuclear collaboration and the committee set up to monitor and enforce the embargo had limited powers*.[1083] Nevertheless, irrespective of the loophole of Resolution 418, the very fact that there had been an international

[1081] THOMSON, Alex: **U.S. foreign policy towards Apartheid South Africa, 1948–1994**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.11
[1082] U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. Historical statistics of the United States colonial times to 1957, Washington DC, U.S., GPO, 1960. Accessed from THOMSON, Alex: **U.S. foreign policy towards Apartheid South Africa, 1948–1994**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.11
[1083] CAWTHRA, Gavin: **Brutal force: Apartheid war machine, *Op. Cit.*,** pp.93-94

consensus on South Africa's controversial social, political, and nuclear policy sent an undoubtful political and security message to Pretoria. These events can explain the radicalization of South Africa's domestic and regional policies under P. W. Botha. (**South Africa moved from an outward looking to a hybrid compromise regime under Botha** – Etel Solingen).

Concerning domestic politics, PM Botha was a reform-driven leader, though many analysts maintain that his reforms aimed at strengthening the pillars of the Apartheid regime. After all, he was a major figure of the National Party which officially advocated for White Supremacy and the Segregationist policy of Apartheid. In this regard, he emphasized that his government policies aimed at *maintaining orderly government and stability while striving to move along an evolutionary and constitutional road. This presupposes a responsible key role for white South Africa, which must retain the initiative through strong but amicable leadership*.[1084] But in a speech during a National Party Congress, he also stressed that "whilst he did not agree with the idea of a permanent and total separation of the races with legally defined white supremacy, he continued to see ethnicity as a central factor in South African political life, demanding recognition in the form of a measure of social and political separation."[1085] Consequently, PM Botha proposed Constitutional reforms in 1982, which were implemented in 1983.

The Constitutional reforms proposed by PM Botha did not have a major impact on the South African political landscape. While they allowed Indians and minority-Colored citizens to enjoy certain political rights thanks to the creation of a separate Chamber in the Parliament, yet they did not address the fundamental issues of Apartheid, as the Blacks were still not integrated into the country's political life. Subsequently, those reforms were criticized and described *"as totally inadequate" by most Black leaders who hoped that after further negotiations, the government will make more concessions*.[1086] Another important reform proposed by PM Botha was the creation of the Position of the President of the Republic with more political powers, and he became the "first" President of the new Republic of South Africa in 1984. But Botha's intransigence led to demonstrations and riots from the Black communities.

[1084] SPICER, Michael, **Change in South Africa? Mr P. W. Botha's strategy and policies**, The World Today, January 1980, Vol. 36, N. 1, p.35

[1085] SPICER, Michael, **Change in South Africa? Mr P. W. Botha's strategy and policies, *Ibid*,** p.34

[1086] STUCKS, Kevin, **Botha Regime facing a test in South Africa. Parliament elections should indicate if White support broadened voting rights,** The Wall Street Journal, October 29, 1982. Accessed from **AF Press Clips**, Washington DC, July 1982, Vol. 17, N.26, p.11. Consulted online.

The government's inflexibility regarding the demands for more social and political justice and equity from the Black communities sparked demonstrations and riots in Soweto and even abroad, like in the US. As the following tables illustrate, there had been about twenty (20) anti-Apartheid annual demonstrations in the US in 1985 and around three hundred (300) in South Africa. Regarding the segregationist social and political policies in South Africa in the 80s, Spencer Tucker argues that *under Botha's leadership, Apartheid entered the most brutal phase both at home and abroad. Units in the security forces carried out assassinations, torture was rampant, and neighboring States were destabilized*.[1087] Hence, faithful to his conflict management style, Botha brutally repelled the manifestations. For instance, "in 1984, the South African Defense Force was deployed, for the first time, in the black townships alongside the South African police to quell revolutionary activity. Later, as "unrest" intensified, the Botha government declared the first state of emergency in 1985."[1088]

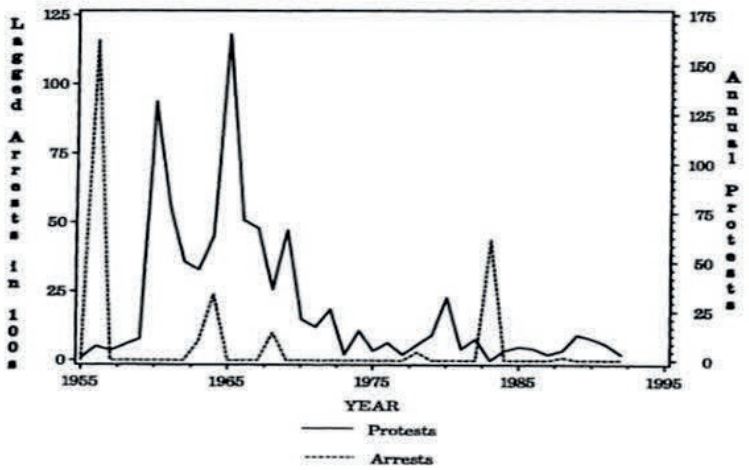

Table 12: Arrests and protests in the US, 1955-1992.[1089]

[1087] TUCKER C., Spencer: **The Cold War: The Definitive encyclopedia and document collection,** California, Greenwood Press, 2020, p.197. Consulted online.
[1088] CRAWFORD C., Neta and KLOTZ Audie (Eds): **How sanctions work: lessons from South Africa**, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 1999, p.9
[1089] OLZAK Susan and OLIVIER L., Johan, **Racial conflict and protest in South Africa and the United States,** European Sociological Review, September 1998, Vol. 14, N.3, p.266



Table 13: Detentions and protests in the US, 1970-1986.[1090]

Concerning South Africa's nuclear development, as we previously analyzed, Pretoria attempted to proceed to a nuclear test in the Kalahari Desert. But due to the Soviet alert and the subsequent Western reactions, South Africa's leaders were forced to reconsider their plans. Consequently, the nuclear ambitions in general, and the nuclear test were postponed but not cancelled. Indeed, two years later, Pretoria was again involved in another controversial nuclear weapons activity when *on 22 September 1979, a US surveillance satellite detected a brief but intense double flash of light emanating from an area over the South Atlantic, near the Cape*.[1091] As the Mulder gate forced PM Vorster to resign, he could not orchestrate and witness the nuclear developments of the country. Yet almost a decade before his stepping down, he took several steps which paved the way for his successor. Among them was the reform of the Atomic Energy Board in 1970, which was divided into two specific organs: the Atomic Energy Corporation (AEC) and the Uranium Enrichment Corporation (UEC). *The former would continue with*

[1090] OLZAK Susan and OLIVIER L., Johan, **Racial conflict and protest in South Africa and the United States, *Op. Cit.,*** p.267

[1091] ALBRIGHT David and GAY Corey, **A flash from the past; South Africa – nuclear proliferation**, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, November/December 1997, Vol. 53, N. 6, p.15. Cited in HORTON III E., Roy, **Out of (South) Africa: Pretoria's nuclear weapons experience**, INSS Occasional Paper 27, Counterproliferation Series, August 1999, p.7. See also SPENCE J., E., **South Africa: The nuclear option**, African Affairs, 1981, Vol. 80, N. 321, p.442

fundamental research at Pelindaba, while (the latter) would construct the country's first enrichment facility at the Valindaba site adjacent to Pelindaba.[1092]

The bureaucratic reforms of the nuclear program organization continued under President Botha with the transfer of the management of the nuclear program from the AEC to the Armaments Corporation of South Africa Ltd (Armscor).[1093] This decision was not without consequences. In fact, by granting the responsibility of the nuclear project to Armscor, the South African leaders officially greenlighted the weaponization of the nuclear program as the military establishment – the securocrats – became involved in the nuclear program; "positioning themselves against the international regime, they promised the politicians that they could deliver security."[1094] Nevertheless, Armscor alone could not provide all the elements needed to complete the nuclear weapons program successfully. Finally, three entities worked toward the achievement of the nuclear goal: "Armscor would make the deliverable nuclear devices, focusing initially on the development and production of a number of deliverable gun-type devices. The Atomic Energy Board would provide the nuclear explosive materials health physics support, and theoretical studies, and contribute to the development of more advanced nuclear weapons technologies. The South African Defense Force was responsible for providing the delivery vehicles, logistical arrangements, communications, and the deployment of nuclear weapons. In practice, this task went to the Air Force, which was developing a television-guided long-range glide bomb, called the h3 and later the Raptor, which would become the delivery system for the nuclear device."[1095]

With their specific roles clearly defined, each of the previously mentioned organs actively began to play their role in achieving their common goal. Concerning the delivery means for the nuclear weapons, by the 80s, Pretoria could confidently rely on its autonomous missile system based on the experience of the Jericho missile it had acquired from Israel. Indeed, Tel Aviv offered to supply Pretoria with its nuclear-capable Jericho missiles. *On April 3, 1975, Peres and Botha signed a security and secrecy agreement governing all aspects of the new defense relationship. The agreement, known by its abbreviation SECM NT, even provided for denial of its own existence. (…) Israel's*

[1092] FIG, David, **Political fission: South Africa's nuclear programme**, Energy & Environment, Special issue: Energy policy and nuclear power - 20 Years after the Chernobyl disaster, 2006, Vol. 17, N.3, p.461.
[1093] Armscor is South Africa's State-owned arms and munition company. It *was established to meet South Africa's needs for armaments and related products and services. The Corporation has roots going back to 1948 and dates from 1977, when the South African Armaments Board and the Armaments Development Corporation were amalgamated*. **ARMSCOR - Armaments Corporation of South Africa.** An information accessed from https://nuke.fas.org/guide/rsa/agency/armscor.htm on October 10, 2021.
[1094] ASUELIME E., Lucky and ADEKOYE A., Raquel: **Nuclear proliferation in South Africa. History and politics**, ***Op. Cit***., p.125
[1095] ALBRIGHT H., David and STRICKER, Andrea: **Revisiting South Africa's nuclear weapons program: Its history, dismantlement, and lessons for today, *Op. Cit.,*** pp.85-86

offer of nuclear missiles, code-named "Chalet," came up again two months later, on June 4, when Peres and Botha held a second meeting in Zurich. (…) *Minutes from the June meeting reveal that Botha expressed interest in buying the Jerichos if they came with "the correct payload," and that "Minister Peres said that the correct payload was available in three sizes."*[1096] Although both countries never actually signed the agreement, South Africa's interests in the Israeli offer constituted a *"smoking gun" evidence that Israel had at least offered to sell off-the-shelf Jericho missiles to South Africa by early 1975*, Peter Lieberman argues.[1097] Of course, Israeli leaders have always denied the veracity of the previous information regarding Israel/South Africa's military and nuclear cooperation.[1098]

Regarding the logistical components of its nuclear weapons program, Pretoria's defiance towards the external world led the South African authorities to opt for an indigenous delivery system. However, in the absence of enough local expertise and facing international sanctions, South Africa – just like Libya – could only rely on the black market and partners who shared the same global "pariah" status and the *siege mentality*. Regarding the former, André Buys, a leading scientist involved in the country's secret nuclear program, recalls that "[when] such equipment arrived, I'd say 'thanks.' I didn't ask how it got there … Sanctions busting was a big business back then. (…) In the 1980's Wisser's firm, Krisch Engineering, was a "key supplier of equipment" to the South African Atomic Energy Corporation, according to Wisser's plea agreement filed with South African prosecutors."[1099] Michael Montgomery dwells on this as he argues that "estimates for the total cost of the South African nuclear bomb program range from $500 million to $1 billion (in early 1980s valuation). Part of the money, according to Buys, went to an international network of smugglers for technology and know-how not available on the domestic market."[1100]

Regarding the foreign partners who shared the international "pariah status" and the *siege mentality* as South Africa, Israel stood among the first, if not the only country which secretly supplied the country with elements necessary for the completion of the nuclear program. *"We couldn't buy any damn aircraft," says Hannes Steyn, Armscor's R&D director in the 1980s." Israel, therefore, became a vital source for the South African Air Force, and it was heavily involved in Pretoria's quest to maintain air supremacy in Angola,*

[1096] POLAKOW-SURANSKY, Sasha: **The Unspoken alliance: Israel's secret relationship with Apartheid South Africa**, New York, Pantheon Books, 2010, p.82. Consulted online
[1097] LIBERMAN, Peter, **Israel and the South African bomb**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.20
[1098] BBC, **Israel's Peres denies South Africa nuclear weapons deal**, 24 May 2010. Accessed on the 15th of October 2021 from https://www.bbc.com/news/10146075
[1099] SCHAPIRO, Mark, **South Africa's nuclear underground**, Reveal, April 10, 2008. Accessed on the 15th of October 2021 from https://revealnews.org/article/south-africas-nuclear-underground/.
[1100] MONTGOMERY, Michael, **Building the South African bomb**, Reveal, April 10, 2008. Accessed on the 16th of October 2021 from https://revealnews.org/article/building-the-south-african-bomb/

modernizing the aging mirage III fleet that Pretoria had acquired from France in the 1960s.[1101] But South Africa also largely capitalized on the foreign assistance it received from partnerships for its alleged peaceful nuclear program. For example, in 1976, France supplied two light-water reactors to South Africa destined to be operational at the Koeberg nuclear power plant in 1982 and 1983.[1102]



Figure 9: Koeberg pressurized water nuclear reactor.[1103]

[1101] POLAKOW-SURANSKY, Sasha: **The Unspoken alliance: Israel's secret relationship with Apartheid South Africa, *Op. Cit.,*** p.151

[1102] BETTS K., Richard, **A diplomatic bomb for South Africa?**, International Security, Fall, 1979, Vol. 4, N. 2, p. 92

[1103] JORDAN, Bobby, **Leaky Koeberg steam generator to be repaired, says Eskom. Power utility says the leak poses no danger,** Times Lives, 04th of January 2021. Accessed on the 15th October 2021 from the link https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2021-01-04-leaky-koeberg-steam-generator-to-be-repaired-says-eskom/.



Figure 10: RSA-3 -- South Africa missile.[1104]

Concerning his foreign and regional policy, PW Botha developed a bellicose policy towards its neighbors. The main targets of the SADF were logically Angola and Mozambique, considering the previous military defeats of South Africa. Security imperatives were the main drivers of their neighborhood's South African raids and military campaigns. Indeed, those countries served as sanctuary to the ANC military groups whose main objective was to topple the Apartheid regime. One of the first military campaigns of South Africa under Pieter Botha was *Operation Protea*, "in which more than 5000 South African troops occupied all the main towns in Cunene for several weeks. (But) Angolans troops by then were much better trained and equipped than they had been when they faced the South African invasion in 1975, so they were able to stop the African advance at Cahama."[1105] Two years later, Pretoria launched *Operation Askari* against the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO). It's important to highlight that unlike the military interventions in Angola or Mozambique, which were carried out of survival imperatives – as the MPLA and the FRELIMO[1106] who aimed at overthrowing the Apartheid regime – the SWAPO's goals, were different, despite also being driven by Marxism. Therefore, *the war in Namibia, objectively speaking, never became a question of survival for the South Africans, although a SWAPO take-over there,*

[1104] WEINTZ, Steve, **How South Africa built nuclear weapons (And then gave them up). A nuclear program that is not well understood—until now**, The National Interest, July 29, 2018. Accessed on the 15th of October 2021from https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/how-south-africa-built-nuclear-weapons-and-then-gave-them-27066.

[1105] HANLON, Joseph: **Beggar your neighbours: Apartheid power in Southern Africa**, London, Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1986, p.159. (Consulted online.)

[1106] FRELIMO refers to the Liberation Front of Mozambique.

in the minds of some South Africans, would indeed increase the pressure on their core base.[1107]

Pretoria launched several other military operations in the region, like *Operation Plecksy* or the Raid on Gaborone in Botswana (1985) or the simultaneous raids in Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe in 1986. Besides those overt military campaigns, South African military and intelligence forces also conducted covert operations, like the bomb attack in Harare in 1982.[1108] Nevertheless, these military campaigns undoubtedly impacted the behaviors of countries which hosted or sympathized with ANC members. For example, *Operation Skerwe* in Mozambique in 1983 led to a tightened control of ANC fighters in Swaziland, as *the police began to raid the homes of ANC members to search for weapons. (Furthermore,) Lesotho announced that South African military and economic pressure had forced it to expel 3000 South African refugees*.[1109] But the consequences of the SADF raids and covert actions did not only impact the neighbouring countries; *by 1984, the raids had resulted in a drastic shrinkage of the ANC's sanctuaries. Its military planners were forced to move to Zambia, which was too distant from South Africa's borders, to enable them to plan and oversee the execution of sophisticated sabotage attacks. ANC leaders acknowledged that a new strategy was required*.[1110] But how did the world react to South Africa's aggressive regional policy?

The 80s can also be considered as a watershed decade for Pretoria, as several factors – political, economic and security – shaped its security interests and led the latter to consider the nuclear option seriously. Concerning the (international) political factors, Pretoria's regional policy was widely condemned internationally, and Pretoria was increasingly isolated. For example, *a study by the UN Secretary-General released in 1980 concluded that the NP's policy of apartheid posed the 'greatest threat' to peace in Southern Africa. The report*[1111] *concluded that "the greatest threat to peace in the region stems from a racist regime's denial of basic rights to the overwhelming majority of the population and its willingness to use strong repressive means, both internally and*

[1107] SCHOLTZ, Leopold, **The Namibian Border War: An Appraisal of the South African Strategy**, Scientia Militaria - South African Journal of Military Studies, 2011, Vol. 34, p.20

[1108] LELYVELD, Joseph, **Bombs kill three in South Africa and Swaziland,** New York Times, June 5, 1982. Accessed on October 12, 2021, from https://www.nytimes.com/1982/06/05/world/bombs-kill-three-in-south-africa-and-swaziland.html

[1109] JASTER S., Robert: **The Defence of White power: South African foreign policy under pressure, *Op. Cit.*,** p.121

[1110] JASTER S., Robert: **The Defence of White power: South African foreign policy under pressure, *Op. Cit.*,** p.121

[1111] United Nations, Department for Disarmament Affairs, **South Africa's nuclear-tipped ballistic missile capability: A report of the Secretary General**, New York, 1991, A/45/571. Accessed on October 13, 2021, from the link https://fdocuments.in/document/south-africas-nuclear-tipped-ballistic-missilecapability.html?page=1

externally, to preserve its interests and privileges."[1112] From a (domestic) political perspective, as we previously analyzed, PM Botha imposed a state of emergency in the country in 1985; yet this was not only the consequence of the riots caused by the minor reforms he introduced in the South African domestic landscape. Instead, SADF destabilization activities in the region led the ANC military leaders to reshape their military strategy as they opted for guerrilla warfare to achieve their political objectives. Stephen Davis described this new approach as the ANC's *underground resistance and counter insurgency/repression strategy*.[1113]

Regarding the economic factor, South Africa experienced a debt crisis in 1985. Although it was rooted in the country's poor economic performance at that time (with a GDP of -1,21% - see the table below), the debt crisis was also rooted in political factors. Indeed, *in 1985 the debt crisis emerged not because of an immediate shortage of export earnings with which to service the debt, as with many other economies, but because of foreign creditors' reactions to the State of Emergency declared in July 1985*, Laurence Harris argues.[1114] But this situation appeared to the Europeans as the golden opportunity to impose further economic sanctions on Pretoria and hopefully compel it to abandon its segregationist policy. Consequently, except for the UK opposition, the other members of the European Community imposed trade sanctions (ban on oil), and military sanctions (military equipment and halt in nuclear cooperation). Leo Tindeman, then Belgian Foreign Affairs Minister, emphasized that the Europeans were ready to impose additional sanctions shall Pretoria not undo its Apartheid policy. *"If things don't change, we will do more," he said at the conclusion of nearly 10 hours of deliberations by foreign ministers of the 10 Common Market nations*.[1115]

It's worth noting that the Reagan administration *exceptionally* imposed sanctions against the Apartheid regime. President Reagan signed Executive Order 12532 after *finding that the policies and actions of the Government of South Africa constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy and economy of the United*

[1112] United Nations, **South Africa's nuclear-tipped ballistic missile capability: A report of the Secretary General**, ***Ibid***. Cited by VAN WYK, Jo-Ansie and VAN WYK Anna-Mart, **The African National Congress and Apartheid South Africa's nuclear weapons program**, NPIHP Working Paper, November 2020, N.16, p.24

[1113] DAVIS R., Stephen: **The ANC's war against Apartheid. Umkhonto we Sizwe and the liberation of South Africa,** Indiana, Indiana University Press, 2018, p.132

[1114] HARRIS, Laurence, **South Africa's external debt crisis**, Third World Quarterly, July 1986, Vol. 8, No. 3, p.794

[1115] L.A. Times Archives, **European Community approves sanctions on S. Africa**, Los Angeles Times, September 11, 1985. Accessed from https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1985-09-11-mn-7171-story.html on October 12, 2021.

States.[1116] Reagan's coercive measures included, among others, the prohibition of *the making or approval of any loans by financial institutions in the United States to the Government of South Africa or to entities owned or controlled by that Government*. (Section 1-a) In addition, he banned the export of computers and computer software destined for the military, the police, or the prison system. (Section 1-b). President Reagan also prohibited *the import into the United States of any arms, ammunition, or military vehicles produced in South Africa or of any manufacturing data for such articles*. (Section 1-d). However, those coercive measures did not significantly impact the South African economy and sparked criticism from several members of Congress.

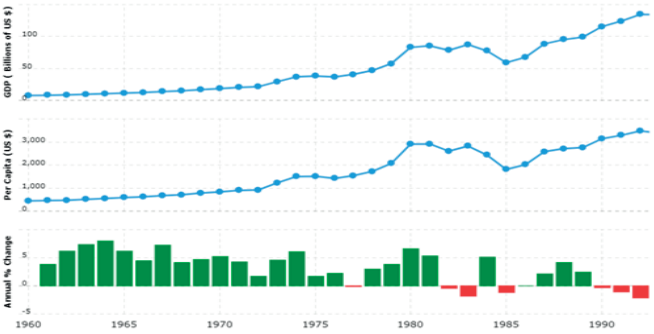

Table 14: South Africa's GDP from 1960 till 1990.[1117]

As previously noted, President Reagan *exceptionally* imposed sanctions on South Africa. This is because he had always apprehended Pretoria against the backdrop of his worldview in general and the Cold War in particular. According to Robert Fatton, Reagan's worldview was characterized by several factors: first, *the belief that any radical disruption of the international status quo is masterminded by the Soviet Union and, therefore, that any revolutionary movement of national liberation constitutes a Soviet surrogate*.[1118] Reagan was also of the opinion that progressive social changes and not abrupt social transformations or revolutions; the third factor was a clear distinction between "authoritarian" and "totalitarian" regimes. Making a difference between these

[1116] Office of the Federal Register, **Executive Order 12532--Prohibiting trade and certain other transactions involving South Africa,** 9th September 1985. Accessed on October 15, 2021, from the website https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/12532.html

[1117] **South Africa's GDP from 1960 to 1990**. Source from World Bank accessed on the October 15, 2021, from the website https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/ZAF/south-africa/gdp-gross-domestic-product

[1118] FATTON, Robert, **The Reagan Foreign policy toward South Africa: The ideology of the new Cold War**, African Studies review, Mars 1984, Vol. 27, N. 1, p.57

two political regimes could shed an insightful light on the US behavior toward each specific regime it was confronting. When addressing an authoritarian regime, the US could adopt *a benign opposition* as he argued that *these regimes are allegedly capable of democratic transformations*. On the contrary, the US should have an *unbending antagonism* when confronted with totalitarian regimes as they are *supposedly unchangeable tyrannies destroyable only through war*.[1119]

Considering the previous elements, it is no surprise that the Reagan administration opted for a "constructive engagement." At the same time, several countries expected the US to adopt a stricter stance against South Africa. Certain experts even argue that Reagan's ideology-driven foreign policy constituted a *laissez-passer* or blessing to Pretoria's aggressive and bellicose behavior in the region. In this regard, Joseph Hanlon argues that *the Carter administration in the United States seems to have served as a restraining hand on the South African military. With the election of Ronald Reagan, that was removed, and the SADF quickly lashed out in both Mozambique and Angola*.[1120] But scholars were not the only ones to regret and denounce President Reagan's softness toward the Apartheid regime.

Frustrated by President Reagan's sluggishness toward Pretoria, several members proposed and successfully imposed tougher sanctions against South Africa by adopting the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986, notwithstanding President Reagan's veto.[1121] Indeed, President Reagan attempted not only to prevent the adoption of the CAAA, but when he realized that his veto would be overridden, he tried to lessen the toughness of the Congress' sanctions. For instance, "in his letter to Dole and House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill Jr., D-Mass., sent hours before the House vote, Reagan condemned South Africa's racial policies and urged the House and Senate to join him in a united foreign policy. He offered to impose new sanctions and measures by executive order. (…) The new steps would expand a list of sanctions Reagan issued last year but would fall short of the harsh measures called for in legislation passed by the House and Senate - measures which would carry the United States close to outright and total disinvestment from South Africa."[1122]

[1119] FATTON, Robert, **The Reagan Foreign policy toward South Africa: The ideology of the new Cold War, *Op. Cit.,*** p.58

[1120] HANLON, Joseph: **Beggar your neighbours: Apartheid Power in Southern Africa, *Op. Cit.*,** p.159

[1121] GLASS, Andrew, **House overrides Reagan apartheid veto, Sept. 29, 1986**, Politico, September 29, 2017. Accessed from https://www.politico.com/story/2017/09/29/house-overrides-reagan-apartheid-veto-sept-29-1986-243169 on October 17, 2021.

[1122] KNUTSON L., Lawrence, **House votes to override Reagan veto on South Africa sanctions**, AP News, September 30, 1986. An information accessed on the 17th of October 2021 from https://apnews.com/article/ea34db543dfe6ee8ddff3fcadd51026b.

In response to the Congress's move, President Reagan declared that: "(the Congress vote) underscores that America — and that means all of us — opposes apartheid, a malevolent and archaic system totally alien to our ideals. The debate … was not whether or not to oppose apartheid but, instead, how best to oppose it and how best to bring freedom to that troubled country. (…) Punitive sanctions, I believe, are not the best course of action; they hurt the very people they are intended to help. My hope is that these punitive sanctions do not lead to more violence and more repression."[1123] Before dwelling on the provisions and the efficacity of the *Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 (CAAA),* it's worth emphasizing that human-rights imperatives have not always driven the US Congress's behavior toward South Africa. Indeed, economic factors, notably oil exploitation, have shaped its reaction toward Pretoria. This was the case when *in July 1985, the US Congress repealed the Clark Amendment, allowing US federal support for UNITA to resume*.[1124] This move from the US Congress mainly targeted Chevron-Gulf, which was deemed to be one of the biggest fund providers of the Soviet/Cuban-backed MPLA in Angola. Yet, the CAAA was an unprecedented political action from the US regarding its provisions and effects.

Voted in the House by 313 against 83 and by 78 against 21 in the Senate,[1125] the CAAA was adopted by the US Congress on October 2, 1986. Its main goal was *to set forth a comprehensive and complete framework to guide the efforts of the United States in helping to bring an end to apartheid in South Africa and lead to the establishment of a non-racial, democratic form of government*.[1126] In this regard, the US lawmakers adopted several measures to undermine the SA government's actions or assist the victims of Apartheid. Concerning the assistance to the victims of the Apartheid regime, one of the most decisive decisions of the US Congress was "to furnish direct financial assistance to those whose non-violent activities had led to their arrest or detention by the South African authorities and to the families of those killed by terrorist acts such as "necklacing's." (Section 103-b.4 of the CAAA) Concerning the US policy toward the neighbouring countries in the region, the Congress committed, among others, the US government "to help to secure the independence of Namibia and the establishment of Namibia as a non-racial democracy in accordance with appropriate United Nations Security Council resolutions." (Section 104-b.1 of the CAAA**)**

[1123] GLASS, Andrew, **House overrides Reagan apartheid veto, Sept. 29, 1986, *Op. Cit*.**
[1124] ANGEL, Austin, **Cabinda and the company: Chevron-Gulf, the CIA, and the Angolan civil war**, History, CLA Journal, 2018, Vol. 6, p.80. See also SCOTT M., James, ***Angola: Dissensus, competing agendas, and the struggle over constructive engagement*** in: **Deciding to intervene: The Reagan doctrine and American foreign policy,** Durham, Duke University Press Books, 1996, 352 pages
[1125] KLOTZ, Audie: **Norms in International Relations: The struggle against Apartheid**, New York, Cornell University Press, 1999, p.109. Consulted online
[1126] Section 4 of **the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act,** Public Law 99-440—Oct. 2, 1986. Accessed from https://www.congress.gov/99/statute/STATUTE-100/STATUTE-100-Pg1086.pdf on the 17th of October 2021.

Concerning the measures aiming at undermining Apartheid, the US lawmakers decided, among others, that no person, including a bank, may import into the United States any South African krugerrand or any other gold coin minted in South Africa or offered for sale by the Government of South Africa. (In addition,) no arms, ammunition, or military vehicles produced in South Africa or any manufacturing data for such articles may be imported into the United States.[1127] Several other measures were also adopted by the US Congress, including the prohibition on the importation of products from parastatal organizations (Section 303 of the CAAA) or the bans on nuclear trade with south Africa (Section 307 of the CAAA).

Concerning the financial sanctions, Congress decided that "a United States depository institution may not accept, receive, or hold a deposit account from the Government of South Africa or from any agency or entity owned or controlled by the Government of South Africa except for such accounts which may be authorized by the President for diplomatic or consular purposes." (Section 308 of the CAAA) In addition, *no national of the United States may, directly or through another person, make any new investment in South Africa*. (Section 310-a of the CAAA). Lastly, regarding trade sanctions, US lawmakers prohibited the importation of South Africa's uranium and coal. (Section 310-a of the CAAA). How did Pretoria react to the adoption of the CAAA, and what was its political and economic impact on the country?

Unfortunately, the CAAA did not significantly impact the South African economy. While the imposed economic sanctions undoubtedly limited the capacity of the country to borrow money in the international market, it failed to achieve its goal of crippling Pretoria's economy. This is because South Africa crafted effective **circumventing strategies** to escape the sanctions burden. As Philippe Levy argues confirms it, *South Africa developed extensive measures to circumvent the sanctions, although these (measures) sometimes involved costly import-substitution. South Africans also were able to transship through countries that were not participating in the embargoes. In sum, from 1985 to 1989, export volumes rose by 26 percent, although terms of trade suffered*. *One estimate of the marginal cost to South Africa of the mid-1980s trade sanctions was $354 million annually, or 0.5 percent of GNP.*[1128]

Hence, it's not surprising to see the South African authorities denouncing the adoption of the CAAA as a **blatant interference of the Western Powers in the country's domestic affairs**. Instead of complying, the regime defied the US and the other Global

[1127] Section 301 and 302 of **the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, *Ibid***
[1128] LEVY I., Philip, **Sanctions on South Africa: what did they do?**, Yale University, Center Discussion paper N.796, February 1999, p.7

Powers by tightening the grip on human rights (freedom of press restrictions).[1129] Furthermore, the South African leaders attempted to **deviate** the international attention from the human rights issues it faced by **framing** the ANC activists as the avatars of communism. In this regard, President Botha declared that *the struggle in South Africa is not one between Blacks and Whites. It is an ideological struggle between supporters of genuine freedom and stability, and those who wish to force a socialist dictatorship of a small clique on South Africa with the support of international terrorism*.[1130] But South Africa was not only subject to US sanctions; the UN added an extra layer to the sanctions burden Pretoria faced.

South Africa's continuous deafness to the international calls for the end of the Apartheid regime led the UN to adopt several other Resolutions. Among them was Resolution 473, adopted on June 13, 1980, following the killings of the students who criticized the Apartheid regime. Just like the previous Resolutions (417 or 418), the *UNSC strongly condemned the racist regime of South Africa for further aggravating the situation and its massive repression against all opponents of apartheid, for killings of peaceful demonstrators and political detainees and for its defiance of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 417 (1977)*.[1131] But the major innovation of Resolution 973 was its description of Apartheid as *a crime against the conscience and dignity of mankind and is incompatible with the rights and dignity of man, the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and seriously disturbs international peace and security*. (Art. 3)

Regarding the Constitutional reforms introduced by then PM Botha, the SC adopted Resolution 554 on August 17, 1984. This Resolution, among others, declared that *the so-called "new constitution" is contrary to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, that the results of the referendum of 2 November 1983 are of no validity whatsoever* (Art. 1); in addition, *the UNSC strongly rejected and declares as null and 1·oid the so-called "new constitution" and the "elections" to be organized in the current month of August for the "colored" people and people of Asian origin as well as all insidious manoeuvres by the racist minority regime of South Africa further to entrench white minority rule and apartheid*.[1132] While the tone used by the UNSC members differed and signaled the gravity of the issue for the international system, more restrictive and practical actions were needed to push the Apartheid regime toward more human

[1129] BRANAMAN M., Brenda: **South Africa: U.S. policy after sanctions**, Congressional Research Service, Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division, May 1, 1987, p.6
[1130] NAGAN P., Winston, **An appraisal of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986**, Journal of Law and Religion, 1987, Vol. 5, No. 2, p.335.
[1131] Art. 1 of **UNSC Res. 473**. Accessed from http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/473 on the 17th of October 2021.
[1132] **Art. 1 and Art. 2 of UNSC Res. 554**. Accessed from http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/554 on the 17th of October 2021

rights-based policies, and the adoption of Resolution 591 was a positive signal in this regard. But before dwelling on the provisions of Resolution 591, the UNSC adopted Resolution 558.

Resolution 558 was adopted by the UNSC on December 13, 1984. After acknowledging South Africa's intensified efforts to manufacture armaments, the SC requested all States to refrain from importing arms, ammunition of all types and military vehicles produced in South Africa. [1133] In addition, the SC requested all States, including States not Members of the United Nations, to act strictly in accordance with the provisions of the present resolution.[1134] Based upon the previous provisions, Resolution 558 was obviously a reminder to all the States to comply with the previous Apartheid-related sanctions. Indeed, as we previously analyzed with Resolution 418, there were several loopholes in the very notion of arms and munitions.

But in the 80s, the spectacular military progress of the South African military industry (Armscor) and its affiliates clearly highlighted the incapacity of the UN to effectively hamper Pretoria's capacity to buy or sell critical elements of its military and security forces. For example, *Mohawk Data Systems equipment is used by Kentron, the ARMSCOR subsidiary that makes guided missiles*. (…) *Advanced computers licensed for sale by the U.S. government have played a key role in Pretoria's ability to manage the African, "colored,"; Asian, and Indian populations*.[1135] Thomas Conrad stresses that "one of the most troubling weak spots in implementing the embargo is the licensing process, which involves the Departments of State and Commerce. Most sales to South Africa are licensed by the Commerce Department, which is responsible for overseeing commercial exports of general commodities as well as dual-use equipment that is on the "Commodity Control List!"[1136]

Based on the previous elements, the UNSC adopted Resolution 591 on November 28, 1986, to fix the loopholes of both Resolutions 418 and 558. This Resolution filled the definition vacuum of "arms and related materials." Indeed, in Article 4, Resolution 591 clearly emphasizes that the term "arms and related materiel" referred to in resolution 418 (1977) shall include, in addition to all nuclear, strategic and conventional weapons, all military, paramilitary police vehicles and equipment, as well as weapons and ammunitions, spare parts and supplies for the aforementioned and the sale or transfer

[1133] **Art. 2** of UNSC Resolution 558. Accessed from http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/558 on the 18th of October 2021.
[1134] **Art. 3** of UNSC Resolution 558, ***Ibid.***
[1135] CONRAD, Thomas, **South Africa circumvents embargo**, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 1986, Vol. 42, N.3, p.9
[1136] CONRAD, Thomas, **South Africa circumvents embargo, *Op. Cit.*,** p.11

thereof."[1137] In addition, UNSC Res. 591 *requested all States to implement strictly its resolution 418 (1977) and to refrain from any co-operation in the nuclear field with South Africa, which will contribute to the manufacture and development by South Africa of nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices*.[1138] (Vertical escalation) How did South Africa react to Resolution 591?

South Africa's reaction vis-à-vis Res. 591 remained the same as the previous Resolutions adopted by the Security Council. Rather than complying with the international demands, Pretoria chose to maintain its course of action regarding domestic (Apartheid) and international politics (nuclear issue). Regarding the former, "although these sanctions were in place, the repression of the black majority continued and at times intensified. In early 1988, for example, the government banned all major non-white opposition groups and prohibited political activity by trade unions."[1139] Regarding the latter (nuclear behavior), Pretoria took steps that could allow the country to achieve its nuclear ambitions quickly. Among those steps is the increase of the defense budget. Indeed, as the table below clearly illustrates, South Africa's military budget kept increasing during the 80s. For instance, the defense budget increased from 2.66 billion to 3.60 billion from 1980 to 1987, one year after the CAAA and Resolution 591 were adopted.

In addition, while there have been doubts regarding the actual role of Israel in South Africa's increasing military capabilities in the late 70s, Tel Aviv's implication in Pretoria's defense capabilities became more visible in the late 80s. "One of the best-publicized exchanges between Israel and South Africa involved rocket technology and tests. South Africa granted Israel access to the De Hoop missile test site and supplies of uranium in exchange for help building indigenous South African missiles with greater range," Helen Purkite and Stephen Burgess argue.[1140] All these elements explain how Pretoria built up to six nuclear warheads by the end of the 80s.[1141] (**Regarding the nuclear reversal theory**, **South Africa had reached the third phase – weaponization of the nuclear program - Eleonora Mattiacci and Benjamin Jones**). Yet, due to health issues, President Botha was forced to resign in 1989, and South Africa elected a new President: Frederick De Klerk.

[1137] **Art. 4 of UNSC Res. 591**. Accessed from http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/591 on October 25, 2021.
[1138] Art. 5 **of UNSC Res. 591, *Ibid.,***
[1139] LEVY L., Philip, **Sanctions on South Africa: what did they do?**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.8
[1140] PURKITT E., Helen and BURGESS F., Stephen: **South Africa's Weapons of Mass Destruction,** Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2005, p.76. Consulted online.
[1141] VENTER Al., J and BADENHORST N., P: **How South Africa built six Atom bombs and then abandoned its nuclear weapons program**, ***Op. Cit.***

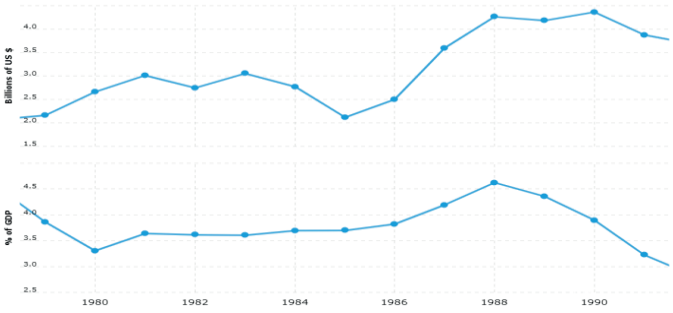

Table 15: South Africa's military spending/defense budget.[1142]



Figure 11: South Africa nuclear weapons.[1143]

[1142] **South Africa's military spending/defence budget.** Data from World Bank, accessed from https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/ZAF/south-africa/military-spending-defense-budget on November 10, 2021

[1143] Atomic Heritage Foundation, **South African nuclear program**, August 15, 2018. Accessed on November 10, 2021from https://www.atomicheritage.org/history/south-african-nuclear-program.

6.4.5 During the Mandate of Frederick De Klerk.

6.4.5.1 Frederick De Klerk's foreign and domestic policy: ideas and beliefs.

Frederick Willem de Klerk was South Africa's President from September 20, 1989, till May 9, 1994. As previously analyzed, his ascendance as South Africa's second post-1984 Constitution President happened after President Botha's health issues. According to many observers, he was also a hard-liner in the beginning; but due to political reasons, he progressively reoriented his beliefs to be elected. Dickson Mungazi confirms it in these terms: "De Klerk, twenty years younger than Botha, was at first considered a hard-liner, the Richard M. Nixon of South Africa. But as de Klerk played a role in creating the political tragedy unfolding for Botha, he was forced to change positions and adopt a more liberal stance, very much like Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union."[1144] Little information was available regarding his vision of South Africa's foreign policy. Nevertheless, as he successfully moved Pretoria from its international pariah status, one could conclude that he considered peaceful relations with its neighbors and the other members of the international system to be the guarantee of South Africa's security and economic interests.

Regarding domestic politics, De Klerk was considered to be a reformist. However, he first appeared as a hard-liner to secure his election as the President of South Africa and a politically favorable parliament. After achieving those two goals, *De Klerk now revealed himself, rather surprisingly, as a dynamic reformer. He drew on his political capital as a conservative in order to persuade reactionaries in his own cabinet to follow his lead or at least not to block him*.[1145] In other words, President De Klerk was a pragmatist who did not completely adhere to the core ideology of Apartheid; he *acknowledged the hard reality that no country can build itself and become a happy society unless its institutional structures are based on justice and equality. This was the first time in the history of South Africa that a national leader had ever acknowledged this*.[1146] But David de La Testa, Florence Lemoine and John Strickland argue that President De Klerk's reformist actions were not only driven by his beliefs in *improved and equitable Black-White relationships*. *De Klerk moved to eliminate Apartheid in South Africa (also) because of the economically crippling international embargo on South Africa goods, a growing threat of guerrilla warfare over Apartheid emanating from Namibia*.[1147]

[1144] MUNGAZI A., Dickson**: The last defenders of the laager: Ian D. Smith and F. W. de Klerk,** London, Praeger, 1998, p.99. (Consulted online).
[1145] DUBOW, Saul: **Apartheid, 1948-1994, *Op. Cit.,*** p.263
[1146] MUNGAZI A., Dickson**: The last defenders of the laager: Ian D. Smith and F. W. de Klerk, *Ibid.*,** p.184
[1147] DE LA Testa David, LEMOINE Florence and STRICKLAND John: **Government leaders, military rulers, and political activists. An encyclopedia of people who changed the world**, Connecticut, The Oryx Press, 2001, p.53. (Consulted online)

Irrespective of his actual motives, De Klerk's actions influenced international behavior toward South Africa under his leadership.

6.4.5.2 The International dynamics between the Great Powers and South Africa under Frederick W. De Klerk (1989-1994).

As previously noted, President De Klerk's conciliatory approach toward the segregationist policies of the Apartheid regime and the country's nuclear policy led to a different reaction from the international system. This is why this sub-part, unlike the previous ones, is not entitled "the coercive dynamics between the US and South Africa." Regarding the Apartheid regime, upon entering office, President De Klerk immediately pursued the negotiations with the US despite that they had actually started under his predecessor between 1987 and 1989. President De Klerk could not be luckier: his main rival - Botha - suffered from a stroke and his firmness to social reforms precluded him from playing a significant role in the country's political landscape. In addition, as the end of the Cold War was tiptoeing closer, the ANC leaders could no longer enjoy the political and financial support of the Soviet Union. Hence, President De Klerk could confidently negotiate with the ANC and obtain concessions that his predecessor could not achieve.[1148] Consequently, he adopted anti-Apartheid measures which were compatible with both international demands and social demands.

Concerning the international demands, President De Klerk announced the liberation of Nelson Mandela after 27 years in jail, as requested by the Security Council in several Resolutions.[1149] In addition, President De Klerk also unbanned many political organizations formerly excluded from the country's political landscape. These groups were naturally the ANC, the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), the Black Conscious Movement or the United Democratic Front.[1150] Concerning domestic policies, President De Klerk repealed many segregationist laws, including discriminatory laws on housing or land property. "The South African statute book will be devoid, within months, of the remnants of racially discriminatory legislation which have become known as the cornerstones of apartheid," De Klerk said in a speech opening South Africa's Parliament.[1151] All these gestures were praised by the Great Powers, especially the US. Indeed, Margaret Tutwiler, then spokeswoman of the State Department,

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[1148] LOUW P., Eric: **The Rise, fall, and legacy of Apartheid**, London, Praeger, 2004, p.74. (Consulted online)

[1149] **Art. 4 of Resolution 569**. Accessed from https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/87856?ln=fr on November 14, 2021.

[1150] GUMEDE, Vusi: **Political economy of Post-Apartheid South Africa**, Dakar, CODESRIA, 2015, p.137 (Consulted online)

[1151] KRAFT, Scott, **De Klerk calls for end to all Apartheid laws: South Africa: His proposal includes the abolition of segregated housing, curbs on black ownership of land**, Los Angeles Times, February 2, 1991. Accessed on the 17th of November 2021 from https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1991-02-02-mn-319-story.html.

declared that "we welcome President De Klerk's historic announcement that his government will introduce legislation to repeal the Group Areas Act, the Lands Act and the Population Registration Act."[1152]

Regarding the nuclear program, President De Klerk acknowledged that South Africa had built six nuclear warheads during a session in Parliament in 1993.[1153] This was already a bold move from a South African leader, considering the nuclear ambiguity strategy of the country. Yet, confirming the existence of the nuclear program was one thing; providing details regarding the dismantlement of the nuclear program was another. As David Albright and Andrea Sticker put it, *South Africa's initial position on transparency was not adequate*.[1154] In fact, the South African leaders wanted to keep the information related to the acquisition and production of the components of their nuclear weapons as secret as possible. *However, in reaction to calls for more transparency, fortunately, the government agreed. The evolution of President de Klerk's thinking from 1991 to 1993 was especially important.*[1155] Consequently, IAEA's inspectors were finally allowed to visit sensitive nuclear infrastructures of the country. *Through this process, the declared inventory was found to be consistent with the declared production and usage data, but the calculated isotopic balance indicated "apparent discrepancies" with respect to the highly enriched uranium (HEU) produced by the defunct pilot enrichment plant (called the Y-plant) and with respect to the low-enriched uranium (LEU) produced by the semi-commercial enrichment plant (called the Z-plant)*.[1156] What were the drivers behind De Klerk's decisions?

Just like the two previous analytical cases (Iran and Libya), the issues related to the actual motivations behind Pretoria's nuclear and Apartheid decisions are subject to tense debates. Confident analysts argue that sanctions played an incremental role in leading Pretoria toward abrogating the Apartheid policies, hence toward nuclear disarmament.[1157] On the contrary, other analysts argue that the regional dynamics lifted

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[1152] KRAFT, Scott, **De Klerk Calls for end to all Apartheid laws: South Africa: His proposal includes the abolition of segregated housing, curbs on black ownership of land, *Ibid*.**

[1153] **Speech by South African President F.W. De Klerk to a Joint Session of Parliament on Accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty**, March 24, 1993, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive. With a contribution of Jo-Ansie van Wyk. An information accessed from https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116789.pdf?v=18e596b5c687bf689edc48a01ddcf64b on the 17th of November 2021.

[1154] ALBRIGHT H., David and STRICKER, Andrea: **Revisiting South Africa's nuclear weapons program: Its history, dismantlement, and lessons for today, *Op. Cit.,*** p.281

[1155] ALBRIGHT H., David and STRICKER, Andrea: **Revisiting South Africa's nuclear weapons program: Its history, dismantlement, and lessons for today, *Ibid.***

[1156] BAECKMANN VON Adolf, DILLON Gary and PERRICOS Demetrius, **Nuclear verification in South Africa. Verifying South Africa's declared nuclear inventory, and the termination of its weapons programme, was a complex task**, IAEA Bulletin, 1994, Vol. 37, N.1, p.43

[1157] MILLER L., Nicholas, **The Secret success of Nonproliferation sanctions**, International Organization, 2014, N.68, pp.913-944

the security threats Pretoria faced. "The timing of the decision shows how regional changes can powerfully influence national choices in the nuclear realm. The tripartite agreement between South Africa, Angola, and Cuba in December 1988 for a phased withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola, South Africa's granting of independence to Namibia in 1989, and the end of the Cold War contributed to the decision," T. V. Paul argues.[1158]

But according to President De Klerk himself, South Africa's nuclear reversal decision was the outcome of a set of factors, including his personal beliefs regarding the utility of nuclear weapons, the evolution of the regional dynamics, and the desire to end the international isolation of the country. During an interview with Uri Friedman, he outlined these reasons: "I felt that it's meaningless to use such a bomb in what was essentially a bush war. (…) With the coming down of the Berlin Wall, and the breakup of the U.S.S.R., the threat of Soviet communist expansionism fell away. (…) It was a combination of everything, but I can add to that that I wanted to end the isolation even before we finalized agreements through the constitutional negotiations. (…) All those factors brought us to the point where, even if you were a supporter of having nuclear weapons, the rationale for that fell away and the nature of [the] threats changed fundamentally."[1159] As South Africa complied with all the international demands related to its controversial Apartheid policy and the related-nuclear program, it progressively regained its legitimate position in the international system. The election of Nelson Mandela as the country's first Black President was evidence that it had closed the Apartheid chapter of its history. Consequently, the US lifted the sanctions imposed on Pretoria[1160] while the UN lifted all the arms embargos and removed the South African case from the SC table by adopting Resolution 919. What lessons can be learned from the South African nuclear issue?

[1158] PAUL T., V: **Power versus prudence: Why nations forgo nuclear weapons,** Ithaca, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000, p.116. (Consulted online)

[1159] FRIEDMAN, Uri, **Why one President gave up his country's nukes?, *Op. Cit.***

[1160] KEMPSTER, Norman, **Bush lifts economic sanctions on S. Africa: Apartheid: He sees 'irreversible' progress by Pretoria. Opponents in Congress plan no effort to undo the move**, The Los Angeles Times, July 11, 1991. Accessed on November 22, 2021 from https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1991-07-11-mn-2867-story.html

6.5 SECTION V – THEORETICAL LESSONS FROM THE COERCIVE NUCLEAR DYNAMICS BETWEEN THE US AND SOUTH AFRICA.

As previously highlighted, the main goal of this chapter was to answer the main questions related to our research design: what were the objectives pursued by the US when they implemented their coercive policies against South Africa? What were coercive strategies adopted to achieve these objectives? What were the expected outcomes of the US after implementing its coercive strategies against South Africa? What were the actual outcomes at the end of the process, and why such outcomes? The analysis was conducted against the backdrop of our hypotheses: the exploitation by the US coercive strategies of the weaknesses of South Africa and the demonstration by Washington of a motivation to have a sustained campaign to compel Pretoria. Also, we would consider whether or not the US coercive strategies and threats were credible, proportionate and reciprocal to the South African response. Considering our theoretical lens (neoclassical realism), we would also highlight the transmitting-belt role played by the intervening variables between the independent variable (systemic pressures or international demands) and the dependent variable (foreign policy). This research design would help us to confirm the relevance of the following four ingredients regarding the implementation of a successful coercive strategy in the nuclear realm: the display by the coercer of strategic empathy towards its target, the formulation of clear and acceptable demands to the target, the display by the coercer of a higher resolve than the target to achieve his/her objective, and the offer of credible incentives to the target if he complies.

Regarding the coercive goals, the primary objective of the US was to compel Apartheid South Africa to undo its segregationist policy. However, shaped by the Cold War imperatives and the strategic role South Africa played in shielding the expansion of the Soviet Union in the Southern Africa region, the US did not adopt tough sanctions against the Apartheid regime as it did with the other Pariah States in the international system. Yet Pretoria did not only shine at the international level through its controversial race-based social and political policies. Indeed, thanks to its tremendous natural resource in Uranium, South Africa also played an incremental role in the emergence of the international nuclear regime. However, just like with Iran, Pretoria's alleged peaceful nuclear relied on components or devices with dual-use capabilities. Consequently, the second main goal of the US was to prevent South Africa from going nuclear. In short, the US had faced two core issues of its traditional foreign policy goals when interacting with South Africa: human rights and non-proliferation.

Concerning to the coercive strategies, together with other Great Powers, Washington opted essentially for a coercive denial strategy. Indeed, most of the multilateral sanctions adopted by the UNSC aimed first at depriving Pretoria of the logistical means

of its repressive policy toward minorities (Colored people) and Black people. Even unilateral sanctions like CAAA also followed a denial strategy pattern as it prevented the US companies from conducting business or even investing in sectors where the labor/working conditions did not respect certain human rights standards. Though this strategy targeted corporations involved directly or indirectly in the implementation of one of the two controversial issues mentioned above, they nevertheless failed to achieve their objectives.

And the causes of this failure are at least twofold: on the first hand, dictated by strategic imperatives, (economic, energy or geopolitical), the US adopted a contradictory behavior: while officially condemning the racial policies or the nuclear progress, it watered the initiatives taken by other actors in order to compel Pretoria to comply with the international demands, as it was the case with Reagan's attempt to soften the Congress stance regarding the adoption of the CAAA. But Reagan's behavior was not unprecedented; indeed, "as part of this policy, the Nixon administration relaxed the arms embargo and, while ostensibly criticizing apartheid in the media, abstained from key UN votes on anti-apartheid measures yet extended trade between the United States and South Africa."[1161] The second main cause of the failure of the US strategy is the crafting by Pretoria of counter-coercive strategies, which consisted mainly of circumventing the effects of the sanctions adopted by the UN or the US. Among those **circumventing** strategies stood **strategic opportunism**, which consisted of deviating away from the international attention on the country by presenting its incremental role in the management of strategic stakes. Other circumventing strategies consisted of **signing covert deals, capitalizing on the dual use of sensitive components, or dissimulating the actual nature/origins of the imported items**

Regarding the expected mechanisms, by adopting the coercive sanctions, the US expected South Africa to experience a **power-base erosion**. Indeed, the calculus was that the more sanctions were imposed, the more the leader will suffer from the criticism of its core supports both in the bureaucratic establishment and in public opinion. But the contrary actually happened, as South African leaders could capitalize on the sanctions to foster White nationalism in the governing group of the population and other affiliated national companies. As André Wessels and Lauren Marx put it, "the growth of the domestic arms industry was cited by the government as evidence of the "failure" of the sanctions campaign, and thus, by implication, of any further sanctions efforts. Indeed, the government claimed that the "creative response" of South African talent and industry had been such that the actual effect of the arms embargo had been the reverse of what had originally been intended – and that the embargo had thus been

[1161] GOLDSTONE, Richard, **Ambiguity and America: South Africa and US Foreign Policy**, in MACK, Arien (Ed.): **Their America: The US in the eyes of the rest of the world**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.815

undermined."[1162] This counter-coercive strategy illustrates the strategic role of **State-society relations**, one of the two main intervening variables of our theoretical model (neoclassical realism) in this chapter. The importance of the previously mentioned intervening variable explains why Armscor could develop an underground smuggling network which could help it to acquire sensitive devices from the black market without forgetting the strategic role played by countries like Israel.

Another coercive counter-strategy developed by South African leaders like P. W. Botha is the **framing strategy** which consisted of picturing the Black social revendication's as echoes of the Soviet propaganda. This mechanism undoubtedly achieved its intended goal in a country with a deeply rooted laager mentality. This framing strategy is closely related to the **leaders' perceptions**, the second intervening variable of the neoclassical realism that transpired in the coercive dynamics between the two main protagonists in this chapter. Indeed, South African leaders' security perceptions profoundly shaped the nature of their answers to the US demands regarding Apartheid and nuclear policies. However, the risks of a Soviet invasion were not the only security driver of the South African leaders' perceptions. Pretoria was also aware of the US reluctance to impose crippling sanctions against its economy or take military initiatives that could threaten the regime's security. This awareness mainly explains their persistent defiant policy toward the US demands. Hence, one can conclude with Thomas Schelling that "deterrent threats are a matter of resolve, impetuosity, plain obstinacy, or, as the anarchist put it, sheer character."[1163] In other words, as Alexander George described it: "coercive diplomacy is more likely to be successful if the side employing it is more highly motivated by what is at stake in the crisis than its opponent."[1164]

As this chapter has demonstrated, the importance of the leader's perceptions as mentioned above support the relevance of our choice of Whytock and Jentlesson's analytical model of the success of coercive diplomacy (credibility, proportionality and reciprocity). For, Washington's actions or inactions towards Apartheid South Africa explain Pretoria's continuous defiant policy. Did Washington wield **credible** threats to address the Apartheid and nuclear policy? No! As the previous analysis has demonstrated, the economic sanctions adopted by Washington did not substantially impact South Africa's decisions. The arms embargo, the only military leverage wielded by Washington, was easily circumvented by South Africa. The strategic imperative of the Cold War largely explains Washington's softness toward Pretoria. Indeed, South Africa was a decisive ally of the US in its strategic battle against the Soviet Union. This

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[1162] WESSELS André and MARX Lauren, **The 1977 United Nations mandatory arms embargo against South Africa: a historical perspective after 30 years**, ***Op. Cit.***, pp.75-76
[1163] SCHELLING, Thomas: **Arms and influence, *Op. Cit.,*** p.42
[1164] GEORGE L., Alexander: **Forceful persuasion: coercive diplomacy as an alternative to war, *Op. Cit***, p.77

was evidenced by President Reagan's reluctance to impose tougher sanctions against Pretoria. Conscious of this strategic role of their country, South African leaders confidently defied the US demands to undo their controversial policies (Apartheid and nuclear proliferation). Logically, Washington did not back its demands towards Pretoria with **proportional** threats, as demonstrated by the nature of the coercive instruments wielded by Washington. Regarding the last variable (reciprocity), Washington's reciprocal actions to Pretoria's goodwill gestures happened after South Africa's decision to acknowledge the existence and destruction of the nuclear weapons and the abolition of the Apartheid regime; but all these actions were driven by specific factors.

Regarding the causes of the reversal of South Africa's nuclear program, contradicting schools of thought shared their point of view. While the sanctions undoubtedly played a role in shaping the calculus of the leaders, they did not play a major role in the decision to roll back the nuclear weapons program. The empirical evidence of our argument is that the more sanctions were imposed, the more the defense budget increased, and the more South Africa developed its nuclear warheads. This means that the decision to disarm was the result of a combination of several factors. Yet, as President De Klerk argued, two main variables played a decisive role in that decision: first was the regional dynamics which are related to one of the main causes of the beginning of the nuclear program, second is the role of the leadership. Indeed, as we previously analyzed, though achieving a nuclear capability was a shared goal among all the predecessors of President De Klerk, each of them had a single approach to coping with external pressure or conducting the country's foreign policy. . Also noteworthy is the fact that unlike his predecessors who were oppositional nationalists, President De Klerk can be considered as a *sportsmanlike subaltern* leader.[1165] This conclusion confirms also Rupal Mehta's argument of the instrumental role of new leaders' preferences in the achievement of a nuclear reversal objective. [1166]

In the case of President De Klerk, the role of the leadership was even more visible since he did not perceive either the military or the political utility of nuclear weapons in the beginning. Therefore, the other variables like economic incentives or bureaucratic considerations were only added values in his original vision. This case study also demonstrated the relevance of our four ingredients regarding the implementation of a successful coercive strategy. In this case, the coercer did not display either a **higher resolve** than its target or **strategic empathy**, as the US did understand the importance of the perceived security threat posed by the Soviet Union; closely related is the role of

[1165] Sportsmanlike subaltern usually *would lack either the motivation or the certitude required to take such a dramatic step as building the bomb*. See HYMANS E. C., Jacques: ***The Psychology of nuclear proliferation: Identity, emotions and foreign policy, Op. Cit,*** p.14
[1166] MEHTA N., Rupal: **Delaying doomsday: The politics of nuclear reversal**, ***Op. Cit.***, p.27

this perceived threat in fostering the Apartheid regime's legitimacy and its nuclear behavior, which made the US **demands unacceptable**. Hence, only the **credible incentives** variable transpired explicitly, though the timing was perfect with the election of President De Klerk, who had different perceptions compared to his predecessors. Providing credible security incentives, such as the US nuclear umbrella, could have nullified the relevance of the Soviet argument in South Africa's domestic politics. Based on the previous elements, one could therefore conclude that providing incentives to the leader not to pursue his/her nuclear pattern is one of the best ways to prevent nuclear proliferation. As Frederick De Klerk observed, "inner conviction weighs heavier on the scale than international pressure."[1167]

Like in the Libyan chapter, before the concluding chapter of the thesis, we summarized the findings of the coercive nuclear dynamics between Washington and Pretoria in the following table. Indeed, table 17 encapsulates the substance of the previously mentioned interactions by highlighting the main actors (sender and target), the driving factors behind the target's controversial actions (the building of the nuclear program), the international context under which the interactions occurred, the issue at stakes between the protagonist overtime, the goals of the sender, its coercive strategy, the instruments used to implement its strategy, the expected outcomes of its strategy, the actual outcomes after the implementation of the coercive strategy, the reasons and mechanisms behind the actual outcomes of the coercive dynamics between the protagonists, and lastly, the nature of the demands formulated by the sender or coercer.

[1167] FRIEDMAN, Uri, **Why one President gave up his country's nukes?**, ***Op. Cit.***

COERCER	TARGET	ISSUE	DRIVERS OF THE TARGET	OBJECTIVES	INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT	STRATEGY	INSTRUMENT	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	ACTUAL OUTCOMES	MECHANISMS	NATURE OF THE DEMANDS
USA (EU, UN)	South Africa (1948-1990)	South Africa's Apartheid Policy. (1948-1990)	Security threat (White minority vs Black majority)	Undoing the Apartheid policy	Cold War	Denial	Unilateral trade sanctions (CAAA), military sanctions	Undoing of the Apartheid policy thanks to power-base erosion.	Continuation of the Apartheid policy.	US sending mixed signals and clear lack of resolve. Instrumentalization of sanctions to foster White nationalism. Arms smuggling and role of circuit breakers like Israel. The shielding effect of the economic relation between the US and South Africa.	Weak and unacceptable. No offer of incentives.
			Security threat (White minority vs Black majority)			Denial	European public condemnation. Legal instruments (Visa bans and the adoption of the Code of conduct of EC companies in South Africa.) Adoption of trade sanctions (oil ban), military sanctions.	Undoing of the Apartheid policy	Continuation of the Apartheid policy.	The shielding effect of the economic relation between the US and South Africa.	Weak and unacceptable. No offer of incentives.

	South Africa (1948-1990)	Apartheid Policy. (1948-1990)	Security threat (White minority vs Black majority)	Undoing the Apartheid policy	Cold War		Multilateral trade sanctions (UNSC Resolutions)	Undoing of the Apartheid policy thanks to power-base erosion.	Minor domestic reforms but overall continuation of the Apartheid policy.	Framing strategy, instrumentalization of dual use technology, dissimulation strategies. Development of an indigenous arms industry. The shielding effect of the economic relation between the US and South Africa.	Weak and unacceptable. No offer of incentives.
		Nuclear Weapons (1977-1990)	Security threat (siege mentality with the Soviet led hostile neighbourhood)	Preventing South Africa from acquiring nuclear weapons		Denial	Limited political pressures (political condemnations). Arms embargo	Halting the improvement of South Africa's nuclear weapons program.	Continuation of the country's nuclear weapons program	Lack of a firm resolve from the US to compel South Africa. Circumventing strategies (covert deals, acquisition of dual-use sensitive equipment, dissimulation of the actual nature of the imported or transferred equipment or computers or technology. Infringement of arms embargos by Western companies.	Acceptable and presence of incentive (security guarantee with the end of the Cold War in 1990)

Table 18: Findings of the coercive dynamics between the US and South Africa.

CONCLUSION

7

6.6 SECTION I- THEORETICAL ANSWERS TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION.

This chapter's aim is to present and discuss the results and findings of our thesis. This will be done based on the previous empirical analysis of the coercive dynamics between the US and Iran, Libya, and South Africa. The main stake here is to demonstrate the consistency between the assumptions of our theoretical framework, our methodological stances, and the results we reached. In other words, the main goal of this chapter is to answer our research question and elaborate on the validity of our hypotheses. But more importantly, as we will demonstrate later, our theoretical findings reflect the relevance of our theoretical expectations (neoclassical realism) and methodological stance, notably process-tracing. In other words, the outcomes of the coercive dynamics between the US and each case study reflect the interplay between the external demands and the domestic configurations over time, through the international structure or context during which the coercive dynamics took place.

6.6.1 Presentation of the results of the empirical investigation.

"**What are the conditions under which coercive diplomacy can compel a State to abandon its nuclear weapons program?**" This thesis aimed at substantially answering the previous (research) question. That is, we aimed at identifying the conducive conditions of a coercive nuclear strategy based on the US interactions with three States: Iran, Libya, and South Africa. In this regard, we formulated the hypotheses that coercive diplomacy could compel a State to abandon its nuclear weapons on two conditions: first if the coercer's strategy exploits the weakness of the target's weakness and, second, if the coercer demonstrates a motivation to have a sustained campaign to compel the target. Based on of the data from our empirical investigation, the previous analysis confirmed our argument that coercive diplomacy can compel a State to abandon its nuclear (weapons) programs provided four essential factors are gathered: the display by the coercer of strategic empathy towards its target, the formulation of clear and acceptable demands to the target, the display by the coercer of a higher resolve than the target to achieve his/her objective, and the offer of credible incentives to the target if the target complies.

More specifically, regarding the first criterion, – the display by the coercer of strategic empathy towards its target – the coercer's strategy should be crafted based on the drivers behind the target's motivation to build a nuclear program. Concerning the second criterion, the formulation by the coercer of clear and acceptable demands by the target must be done based on a decisive element: the importance of the nuclear program for the target. With respect to the third criterion, the coercer should display a

greater or higher motivation and/or resolve to achieve his goals than his target. In other words, to successfully compel its target, the coercer should effectively rely on all its raw power capabilities, including the political, economic, and military – via the deployment of ground boots. The fourth criterion the credible incentives, – refers to the coercer's ability to offer a credible exit gate to the target in the advent of compliance; and these incentives must alleviate the political costs of the compliance of the target both at the domestic and international level.

Furthermore, the previous analysis helped confirm our two hypotheses' veracity. Regarding the first – if the coercer's strategy exploits the weakness of the target – as we will discuss later, the coercer's (in this case, the US) strategies' failure or success depended on its leaders' ability to accurately identify and decisively exploit the weaknesses of the target State. Moreover, these weaknesses did not appear only in terms of political and economic settings but also in terms of the aspirations and drivers of the target. While the level of advancement of the nuclear (weapons) programs of the targets never presented a vital threat to the coercer's (US) strategic interests, our three cases clearly demonstrated the instrumental role of the coercer's coercive signals in influencing the nuclear calculus of the target. In other words, the display by the coercer of a higher motivation than the target played a decisive role in shaping its decisions. This finding confirms our second hypothesis' relevance related to the needs for the coercer to demonstrate the motivation to carry a sustain campaign to compel the target. However, motivation alone is not enough to bend the target's will, as the Iranian case demonstrated though it (the resolve) lacked in the US coercive strategy against South Africa. Hence, the coercer must not only demonstrate a higher motivation than the target but also craft his/her coercive strategy depending on the characteristics (economic configurations and political systems) of the target. However, we could reach these conclusions thanks to the decisive role of neoclassical realism and process tracing.

It's also noteworthy to mention the essential role of the nuclear reversal theories we analyzed in the literature review. Indeed, each of the approaches developed by each scholar also shed insightful on the outcome of the coercive dynamics. For instance, Jacques Hyman's NIC helped us identifying the recalcitrant leaders' political profile while Etel Solingen's political regimes types also provided input on the likelihood of the coercer's strategy to succeed. Regarding the NIC, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and most of the South African leaders were oppositional nationalists; this profile rendered the US coercive strategy almost ineffective as these leaders had very prestigious perceptions of their country's role and status. Eleonora Mattiacci and Benjamin Jones's theory of the level of progress of the nuclear program was also relevant in the Libyan case as the improvement of the enrichment and reprocessing capabilities of the country partly explained the firmer stance of President Ahmadinejad.

The NIC's input was even more visible in the Libyan case as Khadafi's profile evolved from an oppositional nationalist to a sportsmanlike subaltern. The evolution of these profiles reflected also the relevance of Etel Solingen's theory as the Libyan leader's oppositional nationalism matched with the inward looking of his regime and the sportsmanlike subaltern profile matched with the outward looking of his regime. Finally, the mixed signals he sent to the West matched with hybrid compromise profile and enlighten of the weak points of the regime in terms of the coalition building to support the contradicting patterns he had chosen (non-proliferation and violation of the NPT). Rupal Mehta's theory of a simultaneous application of sticks and carrots transpired also in the Libyan case. Her argument of the impact of a new leadership in a country's nuclear posture was more visible in the South African case, with the arrival of President De Klerk.

6.6.2 Unfolding the coercive causal mechanisms and describing the causal process: the strategic role of neoclassical realism and process tracing.

As previously noted, beyond the main research goal of identifying the conducive conditions of coercive diplomacy in the context of nuclear proliferation, this thesis also aims at identifying the causal link between the coercer's demands and the receiver's answer. Thus, the core stake is to unfold the causal mechanism underlying the coercive dynamics between the sender (the US) and its targets (Iran, Libya, and South Africa). To achieve this objective, we opted for the neoclassical realist approach of foreign policy and the process tracing method. The neoclassical realism's analytical model provided a clearer pattern of understanding of the drivers behind a State's reaction to systemic pressures. And the process tracing helped us to analyze the interactions between the main protagonists and reveal the empirical evidence of the causal mechanisms underlying the outcomes of the analyzed coercive dynamics. Our theoretical gamble was right as each case demonstrated the decisive role played by the domestic settings or factors and the international context in shaping the target's responses to the coercer's demands on the first hand, and the unfolding of unexpected mechanisms on the second hand.

6.6.2.1 Discussion of the findings: a theoretical perspective of coercive diplomacy.

6.6.2.1.1 What did we learn from our case studies?

The analysis of US interactions with Iran, Libya, and South Africa underscores the critical importance of assessing the resolve and understanding of the target's political and economic strengths or vulnerabilities. This assessment of resolve necessitates a careful examination of the interests of an actor seeking to influence or deter another's nuclear program, along with their willingness to escalate or de-escalate tensions, leveraging their available power capabilities. For instance, the Iranian case underscores the imperative for the coercing party to exhibit superior determination relative to its target, not only through the presentation of credible threats but also through the strategic empathy employed in devising its coercive strategy. This approach serves to erode the pro-nuclear discourse within the target's domestic landscape, demonstrating a profound grasp of the drivers behind their nuclear pursuits. In this context, when addressing a controversial nuclear program, Washington must formulate clear and mutually acceptable demands that consider both its concerns and those of the target.

Concerning the Libyan case, the main finding of our investigation is the need for the coercer to exploit the target's weaknesses, notably by raising the stakes that jeopardize the survival of the regime of the target and provide credible incentives to the target. Finally, the main lesson of the South African case is the need for the coercer to demonstrate a stronger resolve than the target. This should be done by effectively having recourse to all power capabilities available and a clear mastery of escalation dominance in the crisis. Based on these three case studies, our investigation logically led us to argue that coercive diplomacy can compel a State to abandon its nuclear (weapons) provided the coercer:

- **displays strategic empathy towards its target.**
- **formulates clear and acceptable demands for the target.**
- **displays a higher resolution than the target to achieve his/her objective.**
- **offers credible incentives to the target in the advent of compliance.**

6.6.2.1.2 From the theoretical and practical perspective, why do the lessons from our case studies matter for a substantial understanding of a nuclear-oriented coercive diplomacy strategy?

The interactions between the US and each of the previously mentioned targets provided insightful findings about improving coercion from theoretical and practical perspectives. Concerning the motivations of a State to acquire nuclear weapons, Scott Sagan suggested three models which explain the drivers behind a State's decision to go nuclear. These models are the following: the security model, the domestic politics model, and the norms model.[1168] Regarding the first model, Sagan argues that the necessity to address the military threat posed by a rival State with a matching military capability is the first driver of a State's desire to acquire a credible deterrent capability. As he puts it, "because of the enormous destructive power of nuclear weapons, any state that seeks to maintain its national security must balance against any rival state that develops nuclear weapons by gaining access to a nuclear deterrent itself."[1169] From this perspective, the coercer must consider the security concerns of the target when formulating his/her demands.

The second model highlights the instrumental role of domestic constituencies in fostering the State's willingness to follow a military nuclear pattern. Indeed, private actors – such as "the state's nuclear energy establishment, important units within the professional military, and politicians in states in which individual parties or the mass public strongly favor nuclear weapons acquisition"[1170] – with *parochial* interests can lead the main decision-maker (the Head of State or government) to build nuclear (weapons) programs because of the economic advantages they can obtain from those programs. From this perspective, the coercive strategy of the sender must not exacerbate the pro-nuclear faction within the target State.

Lastly, a State might choose to go nuclear if its leaders perceive the possession of a nuclear arsenal as an essential element of the envisioned prominent statute of his/her country. In other words, a nuclear arsenal is considered in this case not only as a symbol of prestige but become a core element of the identity of the State (third model).[1171] From this perspective, the coercer should demonstrate to the target the irrelevance and triviality of his/her controversial nuclear policy. In this regard, the coercer could either increase the cost of resistance or decrease the cost of compliance.

[1168] SAGAN D., Scott, **Why do States build nuclear weapons?: Three models in search of a bomb**, International Security, Vol. 21, N. 3, 1996, 33 pages.
[1169] SAGAN, Scott, **Why do States build nuclear weapons?, *Ibid,*** p.57
[1170] SAGAN, Scott, **Why do States build nuclear weapons?, *Ibid,*** pp.63-64
[1171] SAGAN, Scott, **Why do States build nuclear weapons?, *Op. Cit.,*** p.73

Before dwelling on the coercer's (the US) determination to compel the targets (Iran, Libya, and South Africa) subjected to his coercive strategy, it is also worth stressing the domestic theoretical aspects of neoclassical realism in the coercive dynamics between the protagonists. All the previous four intervening variables (Leader image, strategic culture, State-Society relations, domestic institutions) transpired in our different case studies. Obviously, some were more instrumental in all the three cases, while others were more relevant within a specific one. For example, the leader's perception variable was visible in all the three cases: the Iranian leadership's (both the Supreme Guide and the President) sceptical perception of the international system played an important role in shaping the response of Tehran to the US demands. This was also the case in Libya where Gadhafi's vision of the international system predominated in Libya's foreign decision-making as we will see later.

In South Africa, almost all the successive leaders of the Apartheid regime shared the vision of a hostile region Pretoria interacted in. The strategic culture variable was visible in Iran and Libya but not in South Africa. The Iranian strategic culture framed Tehran's response from 1979 till 2002, but the 2003 Iraqi syndrome convinced Iran to radically shift its policy and suggest a grand bargain to the US. The Libyan strategic culture was essentially rooted in Gaddafi's belief of the Messianic role Libya had to play in the implementation of Pan Arabism. Yet, the 9/11 events and the US-led 2003 Iraqi intervention partially convinced Gaddafi to change the course of its regional policy.

Regarding State-society relations, the Iranian authorities capitalized on the acrimonious historical relations between Tehran and Washington to mobilize popular support for their defiant policies vis-à-vis the US. In addition, thanks to the support of the Revolutionary Guards and the Constitutional powers granted to the Iranian President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad challenged the Supreme Guide, implemented his nationalist and populist agenda against the US, and defied its nuclear reversal demands. The South African leaders also stressed the siege mentality and the (perceived) imminent invasion of the Soviet Union and the neighboring, Black-led regimes to maintain their racist and controversial nuclear policies. Concerning the last variable, the institution's relations were also more visible in Iran and South Africa but not in Libya. Although Iran adopted an authoritarian regime after the 1979 Revolution, Tehran has always been characterized by a dynamic political landscape.

The Iranian political dynamism was visible through the intense factionalism the country experienced, which transpired through the different and contradicting visions of the country's nuclear policy. In South Africa, despite the domestic consensus on the hostile environment, political actors had different views regarding the firmness of the Apartheid regime. Nevertheless, this is entirely different in Libya, as the Jamahiriya

regime did not permit official debates on the country's foreign policy. Indeed, foreign policy was the exclusivity of the top leadership. In sum, each intervening variable played an incremental role in our specific cases, which explains the different outcomes in terms of foreign policy (dependent variable) in their coercive dynamics with the US and provides more insightful responses regarding the conducive conditions of coercive nuclear diplomacy.

Regarding the determination of a State to compel another one to forgo its nuclear weapons, Peter Feaver and Emerson Niou argue that when addressing a controversial nuclear program, the coercer in general, and the US in particular, should consider certain variables: *the U.S. preferences on proliferation, whether purist or pragmatist;*[1172] *the proliferator's type, which can vary by size, affinity, and risk tolerance; and the phase in the proliferation process to which the proliferator has advanced: pre-weaponization, after weaponization but before deployment, the deployment phase, and, finally, full deployment*. [1173] Regarding the motivations of the (potential) proliferators, except for South Africa, where security imperatives were more visible than Iran and Libya, the two other target States were driven by status (prestige or norms) and bureaucratic imperatives. Indeed, they did not face a vital threat to the survival of their regimes; instead, they perceived the international system as the avatar of Western imperialism in general, particularly that of the US hegemony. Their tumultuous historical relations with the US, which mingled in their domestic affairs for decades and shaped their history, fostered their sceptical perception of the US-led international system.

Another important element to consider is the identity of the State. Having been manipulated by the US, the Iranians sought to take their revenge against history (Persian empire and the rivalry with Saudi Arabia) and any technological progress was considered as a milestone step in achieving their objective. In the case of Libya, though the country had also experienced Western imperialism, Gadhafi embarked on a nuclear pattern mainly for ideological reasons (pan Arabism) and a regional status seeking. Yet, regarding South Africa, the country assumed a passive position as a uranium supplier, it's leaders (mis) perceived the likelihood of a Soviet invasion as the main threat to their political survival. Hence the nuclear deterrent appeared as the ultimate shield against any potential invasion. But political survival undoubtedly shaped their reaction toward the West. Thereof, any coercive strategy against the target States should have primarily considered the previous drivers of the nuclear patterns of these States.

[1172] The purist approach refers to the US absolute commitment to reverse the nuclear pattern of an actor while the pragmatist pattern refers to the scenario where the US decides to tolerate or accept a nuclear proliferation pattern for strategic purposes. See FEAVER D., Peter and NIOU M. S., Emerson, **Managing nuclear proliferation: condemn, strike, or assist?, *Op. Cit.***, p.211

[1173] FEAVER D., Peter and NIOU M. S., Emerson, **Managing nuclear proliferation: condemn, strike, or assist?, *Op. Cit.*,** p.209

Regarding the US approach when confronting the nuclear challenge of the three States mentioned above, Washington relied on a purist approach regarding Iran and Libya and a pragmatist approach regarding South Africa. However, the purist approach is unfit for the target specificities in the Iranian case. Indeed, the US leaders (until the Obama administration) decided to rely on ideology-driven strategies, as they addressed Iran only through the prism of their acrimonious history (the hostage crisis). Consequently, this Manichean approach influenced the outcome of the US strategy negatively. Indeed, it precluded Washington from identifying the critical domestic constituencies which played an incremental role in the continuity of the nuclear program and the core drivers behind Iran's nuclear behavior. Of course, Iran did not possess nuclear weapons, although the progress of its nuclear program granted a virtual nuclear deterrent capability to the country *had its leaders decided to go nuclear*. Consequently, the external demands for stopping nuclear enrichment were deemed unacceptable by the Iranian establishment, and Tehran had a greater motivation to achieve its objective than Washington. This outcome confirms Alexander George's warning that "the strength of the opponent's motivation not to comply is highly dependent on what is demanded of him."[1174] One should also consider the tarnished reputation of the US following the 2003 Iraqi military campaign, together with the lack of a credible military threat and credible incentives.

On the contrary, Washington's coercive approach with Tripoli was more realistic, although Libya had challenged the US more violently than Iran (terrorist attacks). This contrast sheds light on the strategic role of the US leader's beliefs when addressing a nuclear proliferator. The US's indirect threat to the survival of Gaddafi's regime partly triggered the Libyan's decision to comply with the US demands. Nevertheless, this partial driver happened against the backdrop of the failure of Libya's second central foreign policy: challenging the US-led system through the support to terrorist groups, without forgetting the domestic challenges the regime faced with economic mismanagement and failed attempted *coups d'états*. Nevertheless, the Iraqi military precedent sent an indirect yet unambiguous message to Gaddafi about his personal and political fate shall he not comply with the US demands. The previous information clearly shows that the US demonstrated an unwilling higher resolve than Libya to achieve its objective. The offer of incentives in terms of security guarantees for the Libyan leadership and its regime appeared as the only rational choice or good decision Gaddafi could make. We can thus conclude with James Fearon that "a threat may be rendered credible when the act of sending it incurs or creates some cost that the sender would

[1174] GEORGE L., Alexander: **Forceful persuasion: coercive diplomacy as an alternative to war, *Op. Cit.*,** p.12

be disinclined to incur or create if he or she were in fact not willing to carry out the threat."[1175]

The South African case was the trickiest among the three. In fact, the US relied on a pragmatist approach and the coercive strategy its leaders (Jimmy Carter – Ronald Reagan) adopted clearly reflects the geopolitical and strategic constraints the country faced (Cold War). This reality logically refrained Washington from picking the right tool in dealing with Pretoria. Indeed, facing two security existential threats from both the Black community and a (mis) perceived Soviet invasion, the Apartheid leaders demonstrated a higher resolve than their US counterparts to achieve their objectives to obtain a nuclear deterrent capability. Furthermore, the *symbolic* coercive measures taken by the US implicitly hinted at Washington's readiness to accommodate a South African nuclear status than losing a strategic partner in its battle against the Soviet rival.

However, we are not arguing that imposing more crippling sanctions was the only best alternative; the US could have demonstrated strategic empathy as it should have been with Iran. Suggesting a nuclear umbrella to Pretoria in exchange for domestic reforms could have been a good solution in this regard, as it would have undermined South Africa's security rationale for its nuclear objective. Nevertheless, the South African case was even trickier because Pretoria had successfully managed to build nukes though they had not yet been deployed. The regional dynamics and the advent of a new leadership confirm the relevance of our previous information. Therefore, the previous information suggests that coercive diplomacy can effectively compel a State to abandon its nuclear provided four essential elements are gathered:

- **the crafting of a strategic empathy-based coercive strategy.**
- **the formulation of acceptable demands by the coercer.**
- **the demonstration of a higher resolve than the target to achieve one's objective.**
- **the offer of credible incentives to the target in the advent of compliance.**

While none of the three nuclear programs of the target posed a vital threat to the strategic interests of the sender (in this case, the US), coercive diplomacy proved to be successful only in the case (Libya) where the coercer clearly and accurately identified the weakness of the target and crafted its strategy accordingly and demonstrated a higher resolve than the target to achieve his/her objective. In addition, the inability of the coercer to identify and exploit the weaknesses of the target due to either ideological or strategic factors in the two other cases supports the relevance of our hypotheses.

[1175] FEARON D., James, **Signaling foreign policy interests: tying hands versus sinking costs**, SAGE, The Journal of Conflict Resolution, 1997, Vol. 41, N. 1, p.69.

This thesis shares similar and different findings with previous PhD thesis on the coercive nuclear issue.

Concerning the former, we reached similar findings with Ebrahim Mohseni-Cheraghlou, who identified the US lack of strategic empathy and inability to understand the domestic dynamics and drivers behind Iran's continuation of its controversial nuclear program.[1176] Regarding the latter, unlike Aessa Ahmed Yusef's PhD thesis[1177] which concluded that Libya's decision to dismantle its nuclear program was rooted only in the threats posed by the potential US military invasion, we argue that Libya has successfully disarmed thanks to the wise and simultaneous application of (indirect) threats and incentives. This divergence in findings can be explained by the fact that Aessa Yusef stressed the nature of the Libyan regime, which was characterized by the extreme personalization of the institutions. He logically argued that "the threat of using military force can also be considered as a useful tool, especially when used with a combination of other measures such as economic sanctions and political isolation, as was the case with Libya."[1178]

6.6.2.2 Limitations of thesis.

This thesis contains certain shortcomings that should be alleviated by future research on coercive studies for a better understanding and mastery of the conducive conditions of coercion in general, and particularly that of coercive diplomacy. One of these drawbacks is the issue related to case sampling. Indeed, identifying the conducive conditions of the implementation of a coercive strategy requires a larger number of case studies. As we previously emphasized, each case study is unique and provides equally unique results which need to be added to the broader set of coercive case studies. Paraphrasing Paul Hanly Furfey, Steward Harrison noted in this regard that the *sampling problem (…) is associated with selecting a sample that is adequate for a given research problem*.[1179] As the general research problem of this thesis is the paradoxical inability of a stronger actor (the US in this case) to compel weaker States (Iran, Libya, South Africa) to comply with its demands, future research on this topic should include more case studies.

[1176] MOHSENI-CHERAGHLOU, Ebrahim: **When coercion backfires: the limits of coercive diplomacy in Iran, *Op. Cit.***

[1177] AHMED YUSEF, B. Aessa: **Libyan foreign policy: a study of policy shifts in Libya's nuclear programme**, PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2014, 303 pages.

[1178] AHMED YUSEF, B. Aessa: **Libyan foreign policy: a study of policy shifts in Libya's nuclear programme, *Ibid*.,** 276

[1179] OPPONG H., Steward, **The problem of sampling in qualitative research**, Asian journal of Management Sciences and Education, April 2013, Vol. 2. N.2, p.204

Another shortcoming of this thesis pertains to the data collection technique. Although we managed to conduct interviews with various important figures (such as diplomats, policymakers, and experts) regarding the Iranian case, we regrettably did not pursue interviews for the Libyan and South African cases. This limitation arose because the experts we attempted to reach had either passed away or were too elderly to participate in our inquiries. Consequently, we relied on secondary sources and mainly on primary sources like memoirs published by key figures involved in the negotiation process during that period.

Despite these drawbacks, our research project still yields significant insights into the evolution of studies on coercive diplomacy. Notably, the triangulation method enabled us to mitigate the weaknesses inherent in each method. It facilitated the comparison of various perspectives or information provided by each source with empirical data obtained from the official stances of both the coercer and the target. In doing so, this approach bolstered the internal validity of our findings.

6.7 SECTION II- CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE THESIS.

This section has two main objectives: providing an overview of the thesis and suggesting policy recommendations regarding the applicability of coercive diplomacy as a counter-proliferation foreign policy instrument. With respect to the former, we will remind the research objectives of the thesis, our main findings, and the contribution of the research to coercion studies. Regarding the latter, we will highlight potential research avenues for future research on this topic and provide key practical tips and ideas to policymakers when addressing future challengers to the current nuclear order.

The research goal of this PhD thesis was to identify the conducive conditions of coercive diplomacy in the context of nuclear proliferation. More specifically, we chose the US coercive strategy with Iran, Libya, and South Africa as the case model for our analysis. This decision is primarily driven by two factors: first the fact that the US is the only Superpower with unprecedented and unrivalled power capabilities (political, economic, and military). Second, our case studies gather two theoretical interesting factors: two countries with anti-US driven foreign policy and one ally of the US on the one hand. On the second hand, we also chose countries with different level of nuclear advancement.

Our investigation led us to conclude that coercive diplomacy can compel a State to abandon its nuclear program provided the coercer's strategy exploits the weaknesses of the target. In other words, the coercer should lift the nuclear appeal or attractiveness in the target's calculus by threatening what the target treasures (Schelling). From a

practical perspective, our investigation led us to the finding that to succeed, the coercer's strategy must include the four following elements: **a strategic empathy-based coercive strategy, the formulation by the coercer of acceptable demands by the target, the display by the coercer of a higher resolve to achieve its objective and the offer of credible incentives to the target**. We could reach these conclusions thanks to the strategic and insightful role of our theoretical framework and methodological choices.

With respect to the theoretical framework, we expected the neoclassical realism to help us digging in the coercive dynamics between the main proliferators by demonstrating our systemic pressures were translated or filtered through key domestic variables (the strategic culture, the leaders' perceptions etc.) within the target State. The objective was to unfold the domestic drivers behind a State's nuclear decision. With respect to the methodological choices, the process tracing also played an incremental role in the reaching of our findings. In fact, thanks to its unique explanatory or describing power to unfold the mechanisms behind a causal process, we could dwell on the dynamics of the decision-making process of the target. Thereof, we accurately identified the priorities of a government when responding to an external demand, thus revealing the weaknesses of the target. More importantly, the previous findings derive from the coercion model of Christopher Whytock and Bruce Jentleson, thus improving the study of coercive diplomacy in general, and particularly in the non-proliferation realm.

6.7.1 Theoretical and methodological contributions of the thesis to coercion studies.

The theoretical added-value of a research involves the contribution of its findings to the to the improvement of the phenomenon studied, ideally from a theoretical point of view. But the methodological added-value stresses on the contribution of the findings to a better use of a specific or set or set of method. We will first analyze the theoretical contributions of the thesis, then it's methodological added-value.

6.7.1.1 The theoretical contribution of the study.

As previously mentioned, this research has four findings concerning the conducive conditions of coercive diplomacy: the display by the coercer of **a strategic empathy towards its target**, the formulation of **clear and acceptable demands** to the target, display by the coercer of **a higher resolve than the target** to achieve his/her objective, and the offer of **credible incentives** to the target if the target complies. The theoretical contribution of these findings is twofold: first they provide practical tools that can be applied to other coercive nuclear cases with similar or different characteristics than those of our case studies. Indeed, as we previously highlighted, one of the greatest

added-value of our research is the choice of our empirical cases with common and contrasting features. This permitted us to reach stronger and duplicable findings.

The level of advancement of a State's nuclear program plays a crucial role in determining its readiness to comply or defy the demands formulated by a coercer. Indeed, technological prowess influences the dynamics of coercive diplomacy and the State's response to external pressure. As a State progresses along the nuclear development continuum, its perception of its own security and strategic interests evolves, shaping its response to external pressure. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for policymakers and diplomats when formulating effective strategies for dealing with states possessing varying degrees of nuclear capability. In the initial stages of nuclear program development, a State may be more susceptible to coercion as demonstrated by the Libyan case. The lack of a mature nuclear capability could mean that the state has limited capacity to withstand the coercer's pressure. But the more advanced nuclear capabilities less inclined it will be to comply with the coercer's demands (Iran); indeed, considering the (political and economic) cost to acquire its technological prowess and its related-strategic asset make a State less receptive to the coercer's demands, unless its core security concerns are addressed (South Africa).

The nature of bilateral relations between the coercer and the target state is a critical factor that deeply influences the target's readiness to comply or defy the demands formulated by the coercer. The quality of these relations can either facilitate cooperation or exacerbate resistance, making it an essential aspect of coercive diplomacy. the nature of bilateral relations between the coercer and the target is a multifaceted and dynamic factor that significantly shapes a state's readiness to comply or defy coercive demands. A nuanced understanding of these relations, combined with a careful assessment of other contextual factors, is essential for effective coercive diplomacy and nuclear reversal.

Indeed, in case of **friendly relations**, characterized by trust, cooperation, and shared interests, the target is more likely to be receptive to the coercer's demands. In such cases, the target may view the demands as reasonable and in line with the overall positive relationship, making compliance a more attractive option. In case of **alliance or security partnerships**, the target may feel obligated to consider the coercer's demands more seriously. The depth of the alliance can vary, but the existence of security commitments may pressure the target into complying to maintain the alliance's integrity. Finally, in case of **acrimonious relations**, situations where bilateral relations are strained or characterized by historical grievances, mistrust, or disputes, the target state may be more inclined to defy the coercer's demands. The contentious history may lead the target to view the demands as unjust or driven by ulterior motives,

making it less likely to acquiesce. Our findings also contribute to the theory as they reflect the inputs of both the sender and the receiver. Thereof, they draw the researcher's attention on the features (strengths and weaknesses) of the sender and the receiver, thus enabling him or her to accurately understand the outcome of the coercive dynamics he/she studies. But it is essential to note that this dualist approach is the main asset of Whytock and Jentleson's coercion model.

6.7.1.1.1 The merits of Christopher Whytock and Bruce Jentleson's theoretical model.

As previously mentioned at the end of the literature chapter, we relied on the Whytock and Jentleson's model of coercion[1180] to analyze the coercive interactions between the US and Iran, Libya and South Africa. Hence, we will emphasize on the decisive role of this model in helping us to reach our findings. But it is essential to first recall the theoretical propositions of this model. Christopher Whytock and Bruce Jentleson's theoretical model identified five critical elements for the success of a coercive diplomacy strategy; these include: first, the set made of **proportionality, reciprocity, and credibility**, second **limited objectives from the coercer**, third **a strong multilateral support** for the coercive diplomacy; fourth the consideration of the **target weaknesses or vulnerability** and five the offer of **positive inducements**.

Our findings support Christopher Whytock and Bruce Jentleson's theory of coercive diplomacy, as evidenced by the following factors. First, a thorough analysis of their model demonstrate that the first three elements focus on the coercer, while the remaining two dwell on the target. Hence, this model considers the inputs of both the sender and the receiver, and this is a major added-value of this model. Indeed, unlike the coercion models of Alexander George and Peter Viggo Jakobsen which emphasize only on the sender, their model stresses on the necessity for the coercer to have an optimal knowledge of the enemy's strengths and weaknesses. In this regard, like our findings, this theoretical model also confirms the relevance of Sun Tsu's advise that "he who knows the enemy and himself will never in a hundred battles be at risk."[1181] Yet all the five elements can be encompassed in the first three elements (proportionality, reciprocity and credibility).

Second, like our findings, their propositions can be applied in other cases and the relevance of their five propositions transpired in our thesis. Indeed, the presence or the absence of all the elements demonstrate the relevance of Whytock and Jentleson's

[1180] JENTLESON W., Bruce and WHYTOCK A., Christopher, **Who "won" Libya? The force-diplomacy debate and its implications for theory and policy, *Op. Cit***.
[1181] AMES T., Roger: **Sun Tzu: the art of warfare, *Op. Cit.,*** p.80

model. Thereof, as previously analyzed, only the Libyan case gathered all the five conditions and logically explain the positive outcome of the coercer's strategy. In the other cases, either the coercer did not display proportional and credible threats to increase the cost of non-compliance as it was the case with South Africa and Iran, or he failed to offer credible positive incentives and formulated unacceptable demands to the target, especially in the Iranian case. This clearly demonstrated that the sender did not substantially know, accurately identify, and effectively exploit the target's weaknesses.

However, Christopher Whytock and Bruce Jentleson's theory of coercive diplomacy also contains certain flaws. For example, their model emphasizes state-centric variables like force, *deft diplomacy*, or the target's economic structures. Thus, adding psychological variables like a State's strategic and political culture or the leader's perceptions would improve this model's relevance. In addition, their model falls under the binary model of win/lose, which does not always provide concrete answers regarding the international behavior of States. As this thesis has demonstrated, a common error made by coercers is often framing their strategy with a "winner takes all" mentality. Instead, coercers should focus on offering credible incentives to the target, aiming to either decrease the cost of compliance or increase the benefits of compliance. This approach significantly enhances the likelihood of success for the coercer's strategy.

6.7.1.2 The methodological contribution of the thesis.

Another important contribution of this thesis to coercion studies is its methodological stance. In fact, thanks to the neoclassical realist approach of foreign policy, we shifted from the classic unitary perspective of the State, we had a more accurate understanding of the decision-making related to coercive nuclear reversal dynamics. Indeed, this research strategy helped us to unveil the hidden but strategic drivers behind a State's compliance or defiance to external demands. It also helped to expose to weaknesses of the target (Iran, Libya, and South Africa) and the potential flaws of the coercer's (US) coercive strategy. In addition, by combining the strength of our inquiry methods (process tracing method, structured-focused comparative method, triangulation) we could unfold the mechanism, thus the causal link between the sender's demands and the receivers' responses. Such approach helped us to capitalize on the strengths of each method while lessening its weaknesses.

The eclectic approach's major explanatory power lies in its ability to offer insights into why and how coercive diplomacy can succeed in reversing a State's nuclear course. By considering a State's emotional and historical context, alongside structural and regional factors, this approach unveils the intricate web of motivations, calculations, and perceptions that drive a State to change its nuclear policies in response to external pressure. It provides a nuanced understanding of the conditions under which coercion

can effectively alter a State's strategic trajectory, contributing significantly to the field of international relations and security studies.

The inclusion of constructivist elements, such as emotions, leader's perceptions, and historical context, adds a unique dimension to the analysis. By considering the emotional and historical backdrop of a state's decision-making process, this approach recognizes that the subjective experiences and collective memory of a nation play a crucial role in shaping its response to coercion in general and particularly coercive diplomacy. Understanding the nuances of how emotions and historical narratives influence policy choices is pivotal in comprehending the success or failure of coercive strategies. Neorealism's contributions to the framework, which encompass concepts like the balance of power, security dilemmas, threat perceptions, and regional dynamics, offer a solid foundation grounded in realpolitik.

This perspective acknowledges the systemic factors that influence international relations, emphasizing the importance of power dynamics, security concerns, and the regional context within which states operate. Recognizing the significance of threats and the complex interplay of power dynamics at both the global and regional levels enrich the analysis of coercion's efficacy. Furthermore, the incorporation of domestic politics, including the nature of the regime and decision-making processes, introduces a crucial dimension to the framework. It acknowledges that a State's internal politics and governance structure have a profound impact on its response to external pressure. Understanding how decisions are made within a State, the role of various actors, and the nature of the regime in place, provides valuable insights into the feasibility of successful diplomatic coercion.

6.7.2 Potential avenues for further research.

This thesis, despite its acknowledged limitations, offers valuable contributions. Firstly, it employs neoclassical realism and process tracing to gain a nuanced understanding of why targets comply with coercive demands. It shifts away from the traditional state-centric view, providing insights into the decision-making processes of states facing external pressures to alter their nuclear policies. Further research projects could apply this research method and our theoretical model (4 key elements of a successful coercive diplomacy) to large N qualitative studies; this will certainly provide strengthen the external validity of their findings.

Secondly, the inclusion of diverse case studies underscores the context-dependent nature of coercive diplomacy, akin to gastronomy—an art that demands creativity and adaptability. Future research in this area should employ a symbiotic approach, embracing non-unitary perspectives to enhance explanatory power. Researchers must

select cases judiciously, focusing on objective criteria that enrich coercive theory rather than opting only for quantity, for less is more sometimes.

6.7.3 Policy recommendations for decision-makers.

As this thesis has demonstrated, compelling an actor to adopt a specific action pattern is sometimes more difficult than expected. While a clear edge in power capabilities should guarantee the success of a coercive strategy in theory, the reality demonstrates the contrary, unfortunately. Indeed, to successfully compel a target to stop or change its controversial policy, the coercer must craft a good strategy. This strategy implies **first** an understanding of the characteristics (strategic culture) of the targets on the first hand, and the imperative to understand the target's motivations, thus the interests of the target in adopting the controversial behavior on the second hand. Such an approach is worthy in two regards: first, it helps the coercer assess the importance or stakes related to the contested policy; **second** and consequently, it sheds insightful light on the nature of the demands the coercer should submit to the target. Indeed, those demands must be politically acceptable to the target and should meet its legitimate aspirations; failing to adopt this strategic empathy will lead to a misinterpretation by the target of the coercer's true intentions. This failure to understand the target explains, for example, the paradoxical failure of the US to bend Iran's will to pursue nuclear enrichment.

Third, the coercer should send a clear message to his target about its readiness to effectively resort to military power to achieve its objectives. These *costly signals* will undoubtedly create a sense of urgency in the target's establishment and trigger a swift response to avoid a risky or suicidal escalation of tensions between the two parties. For example, the 2003 Iraqi events sent an unambiguous message to Tripoli and Tehran about the US resolve to eliminate any credible adversary to its interests. This survival backdrop partially explains why Gaddafi quickly contacted the West to "clear the air" regarding its WMD. In the Iranian case, after witnessing the rapid downfall of an adversary they could not defeat over eight years, Tehran offered a grand bargain to the US through the Ambassador of Switzerland. Unfortunately, trapped in ideological considerations, the US administration missed this golden opportunity to recalibrate Iran's growing regional influence. The absence of a credible threat also explains South Africa's defiant policy toward the US, considering its strategic role during the Cold War. It also means that the denial strategy needs to be carefully capitalized as it does not always send the expected signals to the target.

Fourth, the coercer must also be ready to offer incentives proportional to the nature of the demands it submits to the target. Indeed, complying with external demands, especially in a sensitive area such as nuclear weapons, implies domestic and

international political costs for the target. Therefore, the coercer must be eager to offer inducements that will either alleviate the cost of compliance or decrease the advantage of defiance from the target. In the Libyan case, for instance, the US offer of security guarantees and economic stability partially convinced Gaddafi about the advantage of complying with the external demands. Along the same line, offering a security umbrella to the Apartheid regime could have convinced its leaders to stop their nuclear quest. The offer of incentives must be made based on the motivations of the target to engage in a controversial pattern (in this case, nuclear proliferation) and also inform on the coercer's eagerness to pay the price of its expected concessions from the target. In a nutshell, for coercive diplomacy to reverse a target's nuclear program, the coercer must be realistic in his demands and incentives and pragmatic in his strategy and instruments.

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM

1. What does the nuclear program represent for Iran?
2. Russia suggested converting uranium in a Russian-based facility to satisfy Tehran's isotope needs, but Iran rejected this proposal. Why was the domestic enrichment issue so important for Iran?
3. For a long time, Iran's main goal was to avoid a referral to the UNSC; however, a couple of months after Ahmadinejad took office, the Iranian dossier was transferred to the UNSC. What impact did the referral have on Tehran's nuclear strategy/decision-making?
4. What is the role of the Supreme Guide, the President, the Secretary of SNSC and the guards in Iran's nuclear decision-making?
5. What role did the regional security dynamics play in Iran's decision to comply or defy UNSC Resolutions?
6. Why did Iran refuse to comply with UNSC Resolution even though they were undermining the interests of critical actors related to the nuclear program?
7. What effects did the covert actions (killing of nuclear-related scientists and cyber-attacks have on Iran's nuclear policy?
8. Was the possibility of a military attack from Israel or the US a credible threat to Tehran's leadership?
9. The financial and commercial sanctions imposed by the US (Executive Orders, Senate) and the EU seriously impacted the elites and the population. However, surprisingly, President Ahmadinejad increased the number of centrifuges, a primary source of tension with the US. What were the drivers of these actions, in your opinion?
10. In general, will you argue that coercion failed with Iran because of the lack of credible incentives or credible threats?

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SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF JEAN YVES NDZANA NDZANA

I was born in Yaoundé in 1993 and I obtained my Bachelor's Degree (2014) and Master 1 (2015) in Peace and Development Studies from the Protestant University of Central Africa (PUCA), Faculty of Social Sciences and International Relations (FSSRI) in Cameroon, where I delved into the intricate interplay between peacebuilding and global development. I was later awarded a scholarship from the Centre International de Formation Européenne (CIFE) in France, and I pursued a 1-year Master's program in Advanced European and International Studies (2016). Here, my research culminated in a thesis exploring the contribution of third actors to the diplomatic resolution of the Iranian nuclear crisis, with a specific focus on China and Russia's pivotal role to the 2015 Iranian nuclear agreement (JCPOA). Further honing my expertise, I was admitted to and graduated from the European Academy of Diplomacy in Warsaw (2017), specializing in NATO's deterrence policy, a critical component of Western security infrastructure.

As a dedicated PhD candidate at the Institute of Security and Global Affairs (ISGA) at Leiden University, my research interests primarily revolve around coercive diplomacy, nuclear weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). My academic pursuits have extended beyond the confines of traditional education. Indeed, I actively participated in esteemed seminars and research initiatives, including the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard Kennedy School's research project "Africa and the Atom," and the 2023 SIPRI Summer School among others. Furthermore, I have authored several articles on nuclear proliferation issues, shedding light on the nuanced intricacies of this complex area of research. Additionally, I contributed a chapter to a book on "Dynamics of the Changing Global Security Order: Emerging Trends and Key Issues in Asia." (2023)

Proficient in French and English, with basic knowledge of Dutch and Spanish, my academic journey thus far has been driven by an unwavering commitment to understanding and addressing the pressing challenges facing our world today. Armed with a diverse skill set, a wealth of knowledge, and an insatiable curiosity, I am poised to make meaningful contributions humbly but confidently to the fields of global security and diplomacy, advocating for a safer and more peaceful world for generations to come.