



Diplomacy and Its Role in Strengthening International Security

Mohammad Zia Masroor^{1*}, Zmaryalai Hemat², Saifullah Helmand³, Ghulam Husain Khpalwak²,
Mohammad Fahim Mohammadi²

¹Law and Political Science Faculty, Wadie Helmand Higher Education Institute, Lashkargah, Helmand Province, Afghanistan

²Wadie Helmand Higher Education Institute, Lashkargah, Helmand Province, Afghanistan

³Faculty of Islamic Law, Wadie Helmand Higher Education Institute, Lashkargah, Helmand Province, Afghanistan

Email: *ziamasroor8@gmail.com

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Abstract

In today's world, interaction is inevitable, and diplomacy is one of the most important tools for achieving it. The aim of this article is to examine the role of diplomacy in strengthening international security, explain the distinctive features and indicators of the JCPOA (nuclear) diplomacy in comparison with other diplomatic approaches, and assess the outcomes and achievements of JCPOA diplomacy in the development and establishment of international security. This article seeks to answer the question: What role and impact does diplomacy have in reinforcing international security? The JCPOA diplomacy eliminated the threat of a major armed conflict in the region and thus contributed to strengthening regional and international stability and security. During the long negotiations, the prevailing perspective became that the most suitable way out of the crisis was through cooperation with Iran. The JCPOA holds significant military and political importance because it averted a potential conflict with international dimensions. Using a descriptive-analytical method, this article concludes that the Islamic Republic of Iran, by accepting the JCPOA, was able to gain the trust of major powers and the confirmation of the International Atomic Energy Agency regarding the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program. This contributed to enhancing regional and international security and combating ISIS and terrorism.

Subject Areas

Politics

Keywords

JCPOA, Diplomacy, International Security, Terrorism, Interaction

1. Introduction

States maintain relationships with each other through their representatives. In ancient times, when there were no unified nations, interactions between tribes and peoples were conducted through intermediaries who understood the languages of both parties—a method referred to as “*resolmlom*.” The success or failure of such diplomatic relations often depended on the wisdom, insight, and political acumen of the ruling authority and the individual negotiator. As recorded in the 1229 Treaty of Jaffa, Emperor Frederick II, through smart diplomacy and without bloodshed, was able to reclaim Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth from Sultan al-Kamil, the King of Egypt. Throughout history, the successes and failures of nations have often been due to the insight and prudence of their leaders at critical moments in time. In the past, diplomacy between countries was mainly focused on personal or dynastic relations between monarchs, or matters of war and peace. However, in today’s world, diplomatic discussions also center on trade relations, cultural and scientific exchanges, and cooperation with international organizations. Public diplomacy refers to diplomatic efforts directed at the general public of another country. Public diplomacy aims to achieve long-term goals and has become an increasingly popular concept among policymakers, academics, and media professionals—especially during and after the Cold War. Diplomacy, in general, is a peaceful and strategic method or tool for achieving goals in foreign relations, relying on negotiation and dialogue rather than conflict. Nuclear diplomacy, therefore, refers to the use of peaceful and innovative diplomatic tools in international relations to preserve, protect, and advance a nation’s nuclear objectives. Iran’s nuclear issue is undoubtedly one of the most important and strategic international matters. Whether resolved or complicated further, it has significant implications not only for the Iranian people but also for the region and the global community at large. The nuclear issue has internal, regional, and international consequences—one of the most important being the strengthening of international security. International security refers to the collective measures, agreements, and institutions designed to prevent conflict, maintain peace, and ensure the sovereignty and stability of states within the international system. Security has always been a fundamental concern for humanity. People have made countless efforts and sacrifices to ensure its protection. Only in a secure environment can individuals work peacefully and turn their thoughts into action. Security is the foundation for innovation and invention. Under its protection, societies have been able to flourish in cultural, social, political, economic, industrial, military, and other fields [1].

Therefore, the importance of this issue becomes even more evident: strengthening international security through the Islamic Republic of Iran’s diplomacy is undoubtedly one of the most crucial mechanisms. By offering practical solutions and building trust, Iran can play a significant role on the international diplomatic stage. Neighboring countries, the development of security, the creation of effective regional convergence, and the neutralization of enemy movements aimed at

undermining security, along with the enhancement of regional security cooperation and the strengthening of international security institutions, can prove beneficial and fruitful. Therefore, one important dimension that must be clarified is: What role does diplomacy play in strengthening international security? This article also examines JCPOA diplomacy, defined as the multilateral negotiations and strategic diplomatic efforts that led to the 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and the P5 + 1 powers (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Germany), aimed at curbing Iran's nuclear activities in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions [2].

This case presents a critical example of preventive diplomacy and trust-building in the context of global non-proliferation and security cooperation. The JCPOA was selected as the focal case study in this research due to its unique significance as one of the most high-profile and complex diplomatic agreements in recent decades. Unlike many bilateral treaties, the JCPOA involved multiple global powers and addressed a highly sensitive issue—nuclear non-proliferation—in a volatile regional context. Its success in temporarily defusing a potential military conflict and establishing a framework for verification and trust-building makes it an exemplary model for analyzing how diplomacy can contribute to strengthening international security. Furthermore, the JCPOA's multilateral nature and its emphasis on verification mechanisms and sanctions relief provide insights that can be generalized to other international diplomatic efforts involving security, conflict prevention, and crisis management. By studying the JCPOA, this research aims to extract lessons that are applicable beyond the Middle East, offering practical implications for diplomacy in similarly complex geopolitical scenarios worldwide [2].

The other questions this article seeks to answer include:

- 1) How can the capacities of JCPOA diplomacy be used to enhance and strengthen international security?
- 2) Can JCPOA diplomacy be considered to have a role in establishing international security?

2. Methodology

This study is applied in terms of purpose and descriptive-analytical in terms of nature and method. The research adopts a qualitative approach and is based on content analysis of textual data. The core framework of the study is a case study of the JCPOA diplomacy as a prominent example of international diplomatic engagement.

3. Data Collection Method

The data for this study were collected through documentary and library research methods. Sources include: Official documents and reports related to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) Statements and political analyses from international institutions and organizations (especially the International Atomic

Energy Agency, the United Nations, the European Union, etc.) Scholarly articles, books, and previous research in the fields of diplomacy, international security, and international relations.

4. Data Analysis Method

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The analytical process involved:

Identifying and categorizing the key components of JCPOA diplomacy.

Extracting the outcomes and implications of the agreement on regional and global security.

Applying a comparative approach to distinguish JCPOA diplomacy from other diplomatic approaches in similar international crises.

5. Theoretical Framework

The analysis draws on several major theories in the field of international relations, including:

Liberalism, to explain the role of cooperation and international institutions in fostering peace
Realism, to analyze the considerations of power and national interest among states
Constructivism, to examine how discourse, perceptions, and social interactions shape diplomatic decisions
Using this framework, the study aims to address the key research question: What role does diplomacy—particularly the JCPOA—play in reducing international tensions and enhancing regional and global security? [3]

Theoretical Concepts:

Diplomacy is a key concept in global politics. It refers to the process of communication and negotiation between states and other international actors. Since the 15th century, diplomacy has evolved from a sporadic practice to a permanent, structured, and rule-based process, with a comprehensive set of regulations, protocols, rights, privileges, and immunities established for diplomats and diplomatic activities.

Although diplomacy began in ancient times, it underwent significant modernization after the 15th century with the establishment of permanent embassies [1].

Diplomacy is a profession, an activity, or a skill in international relations, typically carried out by representatives of a country abroad. Today, it has developed productive tools to draw attention to social awareness and legal norms. It is a true art, serving the goals of individuals and their nations.

6. The Role of Diplomacy in Strengthening International Security

This section addresses the first research question: How can the capacities of JCPOA diplomacy be used to enhance and strengthen international security? It explores the mechanisms and diplomatic tools employed within the JCPOA framework that contribute to conflict prevention, trust-building, and stability in

the region and beyond.

The primary function of diplomacy is to ensure peaceful relations and establish security in interactions between countries. This may involve negotiating trade agreements, addressing mutual concerns, implementing new policies, and resolving disputes. The consequences of not establishing diplomatic relations can be extremely serious—conflict, violence, insecurity, and even war. On the other hand, the absence of diplomatic dialogue and negotiation may lead to catastrophic outcomes, such as the destruction of the planet, if world leaders fail to find solutions to pressing global issues [4].

7. Public Diplomacy and the Shift in Global Power

Public diplomacy is not merely a public relations campaign. It also requires the creation of long-term relationships that foster an environment conducive to government policies. The government's direct communication plays a role in long-term cultural relations through three different dimensions or stages of public diplomacy, and all three are significant.

The first and most immediate dimension is daily communication, which involves explaining the context of domestic decisions and foreign policy. This also includes being prepared to respond to crises. If there is an information vacuum after an event, others will rush to fill it [5].

The second dimension is strategic communication, which involves developing a set of simple messages, similar to a political or advertising campaign. While the first dimension is measured in hours and days, the second unfolds over weeks, months, or even years. The third dimension of public diplomacy is the development of lasting relationships with key individuals over many years or even decades, through scholarships, exchanges, education, seminars, conferences, and access to media channels. These programs foster what American journalist Edward R. Murrow once called “the last three feet”, face-to-face communication, enhanced by the credibility created through personal interaction [6].

Looking at the foundations of political science and the formation of international relations literature, it becomes clear that the West is the origin of political knowledge and has institutionalized this knowledge both theoretically and practically. Predominantly, the ideas and thinkers of Western civilization have dominated the intellectual space of political scholars and global policymakers. From mythical eras and fatalism to the Sophists, Ancient Greece, the Roman Empire, the rule of the Church, the Renaissance, and the industrial, intellectual, and political revolutions, all of these were developed within this framework. As a result of these transformative revolutions, especially the Enlightenment, industrial, and political revolutions, the Western order was able to be implemented both theoretically and practically through colonization [7].

In light of new developments in recent decades of the 20th and 21st centuries, Asia is no longer a colonized and impoverished continent whose resources allow the West to develop unilaterally. Rather, Asia has emerged as a serious competitor

to other global centers of wealth and power. This rise has introduced a new narrative about the transfer of power, alongside the diffusion of power, a process that is inherently crisis-prone, especially in the East. Many scholars have warned the West about this shift and have proposed strategies to manage it. Beyond the Western perspective and its strategies for managing the East, Asian countries, based on their own power elements, have begun to construct and refine new elements of power. Given these developments, one might ask:

Will a non-Western political consciousness, based on local civilizational geographies of the East, emerge?

Will the rise of power in the East lead to the development of a uniquely Eastern body of knowledge in international relations?

According to Michel Foucault's theory on the relationship between power and knowledge, the dominance of Western knowledge in politics and international relations has been contingent upon the West's historical possession of contemporary power [4].

8. The Emergence and Strengthening of Eastern International Relations Knowledge

We are witnessing the potential for the emergence and strengthening of Eastern international relations knowledge. Islamic countries, India, and China each possess new civilizational elements within their own contexts, and the internal coherence within these discourses increasingly directs them toward new models of international relations management.

Among these civilizational areas:

Islam, due to the plurality and divergence of perspectives within its discourse and the influence of modernism, experiences less convergence. The Indian subcontinent, due to colonialism and its alignment with Western approaches, has moved closer to global values despite also possessing unique new elements. As we understand, diplomacy is a crucial part of international relations. While mostly used to serve the interests of countries or states, its ultimate result is a more peaceful and secure international community. Diplomatic activities maximize the positions and power of different countries without risk or severe consequences, making it the safest way to manage trade and international relations. Although diplomacy does not always promise friendship between countries, it at least generally guarantees neutrality in the face of hostility. One of the outcomes of public diplomacy is the reduction of conflicts, which is a key function of foreign policy [7].

If countries can generate the necessary information to influence their regions and organize this information within a framework of soft security, it naturally becomes possible to affect the political culture and social groups of rival countries. Public diplomacy symbolizes opposition to institutions that are perceived as threats to the interests of major powers. It can play a role in the process of political and security norm-setting. Strategists from the US Democratic Party are trying to create a new form of security through maximizing international communications

and linkages [8].

9. JCPOA Diplomacy

Iran's nuclear diplomacy has a history and background spanning 19 years. Looking at this diplomacy, we find that each government has taken a different approach. Iran's nuclear program was originally established in the 1950s by the United States of America, which is currently the main opponent of Iran's nuclear activities. The Tehran Nuclear Research Center was created and equipped by the U.S. in 1960. These activities were pursued more seriously starting in 1974 with the establishment of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran and the signing of the contract to build the Bushehr nuclear power plant. After the 1979 revolution in Iran, the program was halted for over twenty years. However, international suspicions and concerns regarding Iran's nuclear activities intensified significantly over the past two decades. The Iranian government, in 2003, following the Saadabad declaration signed with France, Germany, and Britain, undertook certain activities [9].

Iran suspended some of its nuclear activities, including uranium enrichment, following agreements like the Saadabad declaration. However, in 2005, due to the failure of Western governments to fulfill their commitments, Iran resumed these activities. Although the Iranian government repeatedly stated that its nuclear program was peaceful and that it would not pursue nuclear weapons—and the Supreme Leader issued a religious decree (fatwa) on February 9, 2010 [10], declaring possession of nuclear weapons as religiously forbidden—American and European governments imposed the harshest financial, oil, pharmaceutical, human rights, and other sanctions against Iran and its people.

They also employed alternative measures such as the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientists and cyber warfare to combat Iran's nuclear program. Meanwhile, the international community and nuclear-armed states did not respond equivalently to the nuclear activities of other countries. For example, Saudi officials announced plans to build more than one nuclear power plant by 2014 and signed contracts in 2015 with the Russian company Rosatom and in 2016 with China. Egypt also signed a contract with Russia in 2015 to build four nuclear reactors. The course of Iran's nuclear dossier changed fundamentally with the election of President Hassan Rouhani. The case was transferred from the Supreme National Security Council to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the composition of the nuclear negotiation team was changed. The new government's diplomatic effort started in New York at the United Nations, where the president attended the UN General Assembly, marking the beginning of the nuclear diplomacy. Immediately in February 2013, the first round of negotiations, known as the Vienna talks, began. After eight years and nine rounds of intensive negotiation, on July 14, 2015 [3], the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was finalized the product of the eleventh government's nuclear diplomacy. At the end of these talks, the 159-page JCPOA document was published. The JCPOA can be considered the

most important agreement of the last two decades, resulting from international multilateralism and moving beyond American unilateralism and exceptionalism. The agreement united not only major powers but also the world around diplomacy. The JCPOA negotiations created a win-win situation, or in other words, established a shared understanding, balance in commitments, and tangible guarantees from all parties. Following the agreement, the UN Security Council, as the only official authority, endorsed the JCPOA, incorporating it into international law and making its implementation legally binding.

10. The Role of the JCPOA Diplomacy in International Security

The second question, “Can JCPOA diplomacy be considered to have a role in establishing international security?”, is explored in this part. We assess JCPOA’s effectiveness as a diplomatic instrument in reinforcing peace and security frameworks.

The nuclear agreement known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), signed on July 14, 2015, by the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council plus Germany on one side, and the Islamic Republic of Iran on the other, marked a turning point in the history of modern public diplomacy. During this process, global public opinion was significantly influenced, and the distinction between domestic and international public opinions became less pronounced. This achievement was the result of utilizing modern diplomatic tools throughout the nuclear negotiations and taking advantage of emerging diplomatic opportunities [10].

Since the establishment of the United Nations, the preservation of international peace and security and the prevention of the unlawful use or threat of force have been primary concerns of the international community. The actions of some countries involving illegal use or threat of force violate peremptory international norms and the UN Charter, thereby undermining the legitimacy of the United Nations. The JCPOA represents an example of patient diplomacy that can serve as a model for successful negotiation and the strengthening of international security. USA is currently seeking to pursue a new form of diplomatic engagement that leads to bilateral and multilateral agreements among the actors involved. Iran’s reduction of its JCPOA commitments cannot be considered the end of nuclear diplomacy. The violation of commitments by the United States during the Trump administration can be seen as one of the destabilizing factors for Iran’s nuclear diplomacy. The experiences during Trump’s era are important for Biden and the U.S. foreign policy team because limiting Iran’s power through coercive policies does not succeed. Just as Iran is committed to verification by the IAEA and major powers regarding its obligations, other actors must also be subjected to verification. The European Union’s foreign policy apparatus, as the coordinator of the JCPOA and the negotiations for its revival, remains committed to doing everything possible to return this agreement to its normal process [8]. Giving

opportunity to JCPOA diplomacy is important. The only practical way to address Iran's nuclear program is through the revival of the JCPOA. "The European Union, as the coordinator of the JCPOA revival negotiations," is more eager than the "Iranian government" to see the JCPOA "revived" as soon as possible. The revival of the JCPOA is more important for Europe in terms of security and economic concerns than it is for the United States. The Iranian government is fully aware of this, and for this reason, the mediation role of the European Union and the three European signatory countries of the JCPOA, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom, in the coming weeks will be doubly important for reaching an agreement on the U.S. return to the JCPOA and keeping this agreement alive to strengthen international security. The JCPOA is not merely a political treaty; it is a historic turning point that will bring economy, dignity, and security into effect within fair relations between Iran and the international system [2].

11. Conclusions

Since the main topic of this research—diplomacy and its role in strengthening international security—is a relatively new subject and has not yet been extensively studied in the form of a master's or doctoral thesis, most of the content in this article is completely novel and innovative. Additionally, the JCPOA diplomacy is specifically considered in this article. Emphasizing the diplomatic skills of statesmen rather than the ideas of the military, the social need of nations for each other during various crises, shared global responsibilities in biological and security fields, and the desire and necessity to maintain systemic balance in the international arena will bring nations closer together and expand the overlap of their interests. This, in turn, will minimize any vulnerability of countries at the hands of others to the lowest possible level. In the best scenario, a set of different strategies toward various states can provide reassurance against vulnerability from others. This set is employed to maintain balance among nations and collective interests so that the path of development, progress, and security can be formed within an international society—not limited to a few specific countries—in such a way that any harm affects all countries. Transparent diplomacy may be the most vital tool for preventing conflict and keeping states balanced in adopting balanced foreign policies. It is clear that in the age of advanced information and communication technologies, governments' information and policies cannot be kept hidden from others or expect others to refrain from reacting based on their interests. However, to avoid any misunderstandings, governments must prevent the breakdown of their relations through transparency and various communications and deter the adoption of many destructive and widespread policies against themselves. This requires avoiding prejudice and non-diplomatic behaviors in foreign relations by reducing the role of the military. The existence of various relations and the expansion of foreign trade among countries are among the effective factors in spreading peace and development. At the same time, these countries will be less prone to disputes or conflicts that may lead to military confrontation, isolation, or insecurity.

Therefore, JCPOA diplomacy also has consequences and effects, one of which is strengthening security at the international level. Any diplomacy in the field of international politics is directly connected to security. A balanced perspective is important and achievable for countries like Iran when it can utilize diplomatic mechanisms alongside, Iran and other countries involved in the JCPOA nuclear diplomacy are aware that any agreement inevitably allows for destabilizing actions by rival actors. From Iran's perspective, Trump's policies created very risky challenges for international and regional security. For example, the behavioral patterns of Israel and Saudi Arabia—as regional allies of Trump—played an effective role in increasing pressure from the U.S. government and in causing insecurity for Iran both regionally and internationally, and even insecurity on a global scale.

Just as Iran has based its defense policy on the experiences of the Sacred Defense (Iran-Iraq War), it is also aware in the JCPOA nuclear diplomacy that it must rely on guarantee mechanisms. The lack of guarantees in international relations and the pattern of reciprocal behavior among actors always create new challenges for countries.

In conclusion, this study has examined the multifaceted role of JCPOA diplomacy in strengthening international security. First, it demonstrated how the capacities embedded within JCPOA mechanisms serve to enhance regional and global stability. Second, the analysis highlighted the significant consequences and achievements stemming from the agreement, including increased trust and reduced risks of conflict escalation. Third, evidence supports the assertion that JCPOA diplomacy plays a substantive role in establishing international security frameworks. Fourth, the distinctive features of JCPOA—such as its multilateral structure, rigorous verification processes, and sanction-relief linkage—set it apart from other diplomatic endeavors. Finally, the research confirmed that Iran's diplomacy has shown notable dynamism and flexibility, aligning effectively with evolving geopolitical realities. Together, these findings underscore the critical importance of diplomacy, exemplified by JCPOA, in managing complex international security challenges.

In today's complex geopolitical environment, diplomacy remains one of the most effective mechanisms for promoting peace and preventing conflict. This study examined the multifaceted role of JCPOA diplomacy in strengthening international security by analyzing its capacities, consequences, distinctive features, and Iran's diplomatic adaptability. First, the JCPOA demonstrated how multilateral diplomacy can directly contribute to regional and global stability. The agreement imposed strict limitations on Iran's nuclear activities, including enrichment levels, centrifuge numbers, and uranium stockpiles. These restrictions were verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which in over 15 consecutive quarterly reports between 2015 and 2018 confirmed Iran's compliance with the deal's technical provisions [3]. Second, the diplomatic achievement of the JCPOA reduced the risk of military confrontation in the Persian Gulf. Prior to the agreement, tensions between Iran and the United States (along with regional

actors like Israel and Saudi Arabia) were escalating, raising the prospect of armed conflict. Following the implementation of the deal in January 2016, there was a notable de-escalation, as recognized by UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorsed the JCPOA and lifted multiple sanctions, promoting peaceful engagement over coercive isolation. Third, the JCPOA played a substantive role in reinforcing the international non-proliferation regime and global security frameworks. By embedding rigorous verification mechanisms and fostering cooperation between Iran and global powers, the deal enhanced institutional trust. According to a RAND Corporation study (2019), the JCPOA significantly delayed Iran's "breakout time" to develop a nuclear weapon from a few months to over a year, a key metric in non-proliferation security assessments. Fourth, the JCPOA exhibited distinctive diplomatic features not commonly found in similar negotiations. These include the structured sequencing of sanctions relief, a multilateral verification framework under the IAEA, and detailed dispute resolution mechanisms. The deal's unique architecture served as a model for preventive diplomacy and crisis management, particularly in managing high-stakes issues involving regional mistrust and global polarization.

Finally, Iran's diplomacy under the JCPOA process revealed a level of pragmatism, adaptability, and engagement with international norms rarely acknowledged in traditional narratives. Despite strong domestic political pressures and external opposition, Iran demonstrated strategic flexibility, cooperating with global powers in a diplomatic framework over multiple years. This approach aligned with evolving geopolitical conditions and created space for constructive dialogue, even amid broader tensions [3].

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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