

# Understanding U.S. Foreign Policy in Iran and the Middle East: A General Review Study

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**Abstract**— The complex fabric of United States foreign policy towards Iran and the Middle East region in general is shaped by an intermingling of historical occurrences, cultural factors, and geopolitical interests that are not easily comprehensible. With incessant conflicts and the shifting dynamics of power towards a given center of gravity for stability, understanding American motives is increasingly more important. This post attempts to analyze the historical context of U.S. foreign policy on Iran and the Middle East, scope of relations, strategic interests involved, and problems in policy formulation and implementation in an area characterized by stress and apprehension. With a myriad of U.S. foreign policy choices in the Middle East, the effects on the daily lives of ordinary citizens in that region is indeed a juxtaposition of monumental proportions. This review endeavors to scrutinize the overlap between the U.S.'s policies and the real existing paradigms concerning it defining this crucial field of international politics.

**Keywords**— FPA, Security Studies, Border Control, Regional Conflicts, Iran & U.S Relations

## INTRODUCTION

### A\_1) U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East

The Middle East has long been a focal point of U.S. foreign policy, shaped by a complex interplay of historical events, geopolitical interests, and cultural dynamics. From the post-World War II era to the present day, American engagement in the region has evolved in response to shifting power structures, emerging threats, and the pursuit of stability and peace. Understanding this multifaceted landscape requires an appreciation of both the historical context and the strategic imperatives that drive U.S. actions<sup>1</sup>.

At the heart of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East is a desire to maintain stability in a region often characterized by conflict and volatility. The discovery of vast oil reserves in countries like Saudi Arabia transformed U.S. interests from mere diplomatic relations to critical economic partnerships, positioning the U.S. as a key player in global energy markets. Moreover, the Cold War era saw the U.S. engage with various regimes across the Middle East to

counter Soviet influence, leading to a web of alliances and enmities that would define future interactions<sup>2</sup>.

In recent decades, the events of September 11, 2001, and subsequent military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq have further complicated U.S. foreign policy in the region. The rise of extremist groups, the proliferation of weapons, and the challenges of nation-building have prompted a reevaluation of strategies and objectives. As tensions with Iran, the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the Syrian civil war continue to shape the geopolitical landscape, the U.S. finds itself navigating a labyrinth of diplomatic challenges and humanitarian crises.

This introduction sets the stage for a deeper exploration of U.S. foreign policy in Iran and the broader Middle East, highlighting the historical underpinnings, current dynamics, and potential future trajectories as the region grapples with its complexities. By unpacking these elements, we can better understand the implications of American actions and

<sup>1</sup> Dehnavi, E. A., & Jamal, M. A. (2020a). From containment to Americanism. ResearchGate.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381002365\\_From\\_Containment\\_to\\_Americanism](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381002365_From_Containment_to_Americanism)

<sup>2</sup> Dehnavi, E. A., Niafar, M. M., & Ahmadzade, K. (2024). An Overview Regarding the U.S domestic Economic Strategies: Role of Think Tanks. Journal of Humanities and Education Development, 6(5), 82–92. <https://doi.org/10.22161/jhed.6.5.12>

decisions, not only for the nations directly involved but also for global peace and security<sup>3</sup>

## A\_2) Historical Context: U.S.-Iran Relations over the Decade<sup>4</sup>

The origins of U.S.-Iran relations go as far back as the 20th century, when some American oil enterprises first made their way to Iran, opening opportunities for economic relations. An important development was the 1953 CIA-sponsored coup which removed Iran's elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh. This intervention was meant to protect Western interests from Soviet expansion by guaranteeing access to Iranian oil, yet it sowed the schism of suspicion which would fester for years.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is a product of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, which marked an important turning point in U.S.-Iran relations by cutting off any diplomatic relations. Enmity was furthered during the prolonged hostage crisis which lasted for 444 days and involved fifty-two American citizens and diplomats. This set the stage for American policies towards Iran which were hostile for years. The consequences of this period were sanctions, limited diplomatic contact, and military activity in the region.

The Iraq War's commencement in 2003 and the Arab Spring which followed in 2011 created new power complications and raised tensions in the Middle East. In tandem with these events, Iran's nuclear program gained prominence within US politics which resulted in negotiations culminating towards the historic JCPOA in 2015. This agreement placed restrictions on Iran's nuclear program in exchange for easing crippling sanctions. However, diplomatic ties were strained with the U.S.'s retaliatory move of pulling out of the agreement in 2018 during the Trump administration<sup>5</sup>.

Understanding this historical context is crucial for interpreting current events and anticipating future developments in U.S.-Iran relations. As both nations

navigate a complex web of alliances, rivalries, and domestic pressures, the lessons of the past continue to resonate, influencing policy decisions and shaping the landscape of the Middle East.<sup>6</sup>

## B) The Impact of Regional Conflicts on U.S. Strategy<sup>7</sup>

The geopolitical landscape of the Middle East is a tapestry woven from centuries of history, culture, and conflict, and it has profound implications for U.S. foreign policy. Regional conflicts, such as the Syrian civil war, the ongoing tensions between Israel and Palestine, and the strife in Yemen, significantly shape America's strategic approach in the region. Each of these conflicts is not just a standalone issue but is intricately connected to a wider network of alliances, rivalries, and historical grievances.

For instance, the U.S. has often found itself in a delicate balancing act between its longstanding ally Israel and its relationships with Arab nations, particularly in light of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This balancing act influences military aid, diplomatic negotiations, and even trade agreements, as the U.S. seeks to maintain stability while promoting peace. Moreover, the rise of non-state actors and extremist groups, exacerbated by the chaos of regional wars, poses a direct threat to U.S. interests and allies, compelling Washington to respond with a mix of military intervention and diplomatic engagement<sup>8</sup>.

In addition, conflicts in the region often have spillover effects that impact neighboring countries, leading to refugee crises and destabilization that reverberate far beyond the Middle East. For instance, the Syrian civil war has resulted in millions of displaced persons, affecting countries like Turkey and Lebanon and prompting a humanitarian response from the U.S. and other Western nations. This complexity requires the U.S. to adopt a multifaceted strategy that not only addresses immediate threats but also considers the long-term implications of its actions in a

<sup>3</sup> Dehnavi, E. A. (2024a). An Analytical Examination of Iran-USA Relations Post-Islamic Revolution: Extended Scientific review. *Journal of Humanities and Education Development*, 6(5), 23–25. <https://doi.org/10.22161/jhed.6.5.4>

<sup>4</sup> Dehnavi, E. A. (2020b). Sorry, how can I get to Washington? ResearchGate. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381096520\\_Sorry\\_how\\_can\\_I\\_get\\_to\\_Washington](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381096520_Sorry_how_can_I_get_to_Washington)

<sup>5</sup> Firoozabadi, S. J. D., Dehnavi, E. A., & Rahiminezhad, M. A. (2023). Modeling the Factors Affecting the Nuclear Negotiations of Iran in 5+1 with the Fuzzy Approach: Structural. . . ResearchGate. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368645640\\_Modeling\\_the\\_Factors\\_Affecting\\_the\\_Nuclear\\_Negotiations\\_of\\_Iran\\_in\\_5\\_1\\_with\\_the\\_Fuzzy\\_Approach\\_Structural\\_Equations](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368645640_Modeling_the_Factors_Affecting_the_Nuclear_Negotiations_of_Iran_in_5_1_with_the_Fuzzy_Approach_Structural_Equations)

<sup>6</sup> Dehnavi, E. A., & Nourmohammadi, M. (2023). Factors of the prevalence of authoritarianism and the push on democratization in the Middle East. ResearchGate. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368297277\\_Factors\\_of\\_the\\_Prevalence\\_of\\_Authoritarianism\\_and\\_the\\_Push\\_on\\_Democratization\\_in\\_the\\_Middle\\_East](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368297277_Factors_of_the_Prevalence_of_Authoritarianism_and_the_Push_on_Democratization_in_the_Middle_East)

<sup>7</sup> Dehnavi, E. A., & Daheshiar, H. (2020). Changes and indicators of trump's new immigration policy plan. ResearchGate. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362014916\\_Changes\\_and\\_indicators\\_of\\_trump's\\_new\\_immigration\\_policy\\_plan](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362014916_Changes_and_indicators_of_trump's_new_immigration_policy_plan)

<sup>8</sup> Dehnavi, E. A., & Tabatabaei, S. M. (2021). Principles and positions of US foreign policy against terrorism. ResearchGate. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/356423964\\_Principles\\_and\\_positions\\_of\\_US\\_foreign\\_policy\\_against\\_terrorism?sg%5B0%5D=AdOFEC9XN1vmmIBRsz4gyq8rMbj3U5\\_Y9q9M\\_E1W4U0xiUgtqmwxPGjFkTmKkc\\_DE5RqhOuVrLzROITu\\_ajuVCBqP3ca--Y3hS9\\_rIR.-oqxSkNiSWqEI5UO-IT3Rd7cy9j30YMbOIk\\_fFSzedWLO5xGUuqQiAPZUx6HgiQhmOC8ckmp3zlUoKkvdX32Q&\\_tp=eyJjb250ZXh0Ijp7ImZpcnNOUGFnZSI6ImxvZ2lulwiwGFnZSI6InByb2ZpbGUlLCJwb3NpdGlvbil6InBhZ2VDb250ZW50In19](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/356423964_Principles_and_positions_of_US_foreign_policy_against_terrorism?sg%5B0%5D=AdOFEC9XN1vmmIBRsz4gyq8rMbj3U5_Y9q9M_E1W4U0xiUgtqmwxPGjFkTmKkc_DE5RqhOuVrLzROITu_ajuVCBqP3ca--Y3hS9_rIR.-oqxSkNiSWqEI5UO-IT3Rd7cy9j30YMbOIk_fFSzedWLO5xGUuqQiAPZUx6HgiQhmOC8ckmp3zlUoKkvdX32Q&_tp=eyJjb250ZXh0Ijp7ImZpcnNOUGFnZSI6ImxvZ2lulwiwGFnZSI6InByb2ZpbGUlLCJwb3NpdGlvbil6InBhZ2VDb250ZW50In19)

region fraught with historical tensions and rivalries. Ultimately, understanding the impact of these regional conflicts is crucial for comprehending the broader U.S. strategy in Iran and the Middle East. As America navigates this intricate web of alliances and enmities, its actions will continue to reflect a delicate interplay between national security interests, humanitarian considerations, and the pursuit of lasting peace in a region marked by volatility and uncertainty.

### **B\_1) The Nuclear Agreement: What Happened and Why It Matters**

The nuclear agreement, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), stands as one of the most significant diplomatic efforts in recent history, aimed at curbing Iran's nuclear ambitions while easing tensions in the Middle East. Initially reached in July 2015 between Iran and a group of world powers, including the United States, the European Union, and China, this landmark deal sought to limit Iran's nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions that had crippled its economy.

At the heart of the agreement was a framework designed to restrict Iran's uranium enrichment capabilities, reduce its stockpile of enriched uranium, and impose rigorous inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The rationale was clear: by preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, the hope was to stabilize a region marked by conflict and reduce the existential threat perceived by neighboring countries, particularly Israel and Saudi Arabia.

However, the JCPOA was not without its controversies. Critics argued that the agreement did not address Iran's ballistic missile program or its role in regional conflicts, such as its support for proxy groups in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen. Skeptics feared that the sunset clauses—provisions that would eventually lift restrictions on Iran's nuclear activities—could lead to an eventual arms race in the region.

In 2018, the landscape shifted dramatically when the Trump administration unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA, reinstating harsh sanctions on Iran and igniting a cascade of tensions. This withdrawal not only strained U.S. relations with European allies who remained committed to the agreement but also emboldened hardliners within Iran, ultimately leading to increased uranium enrichment and heightened regional instability.

Understanding the implications of the nuclear agreement is crucial for grasping the complexities of U.S. foreign policy

in Iran and the broader Middle East. The JCPOA serves as a touchstone for debates over diplomacy versus confrontation, the efficacy of sanctions, and the balance of power in a volatile region. As current negotiations to revive the agreement continue to unfold, the stakes remain high, underscoring the importance of international cooperation and dialogue in addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by Iran's nuclear ambitions and its broader geopolitical maneuvers.

### **B\_2) Sanctions: Tools of Diplomacy or Economic Warfare?<sup>9</sup>**

Sanctions have long been a contentious tool in the arsenal of U.S. foreign policy, particularly regarding Iran and the broader Middle East. On one hand, proponents argue that sanctions serve as a vital mechanism for enforcing international norms and promoting diplomatic resolutions to conflicts without resorting to military intervention. By imposing economic restrictions on nations perceived as threats, the U.S. aims to compel compliance with international agreements, curb nuclear proliferation, and push for human rights improvements. In this view, sanctions are seen as a means of exerting pressure while still allowing for dialogue and negotiation.

However, critics often view these same sanctions as economic warfare, inflicting significant hardship on the civilian population rather than just the targeted government. In Iran, for instance, sanctions have dramatically affected everyday life, leading to skyrocketing inflation, unemployment, and a decline in essential services. Detractors argue that such measures can entrench authoritarian regimes, rallying nationalistic sentiments against perceived external aggressors, and making diplomatic resolutions increasingly elusive. Instead of fostering a conducive environment for dialogue, these economic pressures can deepen resentment and fuel tensions, complicating the already intricate political landscape of the region.

This duality of sanctions as both a diplomatic tool and a form of economic warfare highlights the complexities of U.S. foreign policy in Iran and the Middle East. As policymakers grapple with the implications of their decisions, the challenge lies in striking a balance—using sanctions strategically to influence behavior while mitigating unintended humanitarian consequences. Understanding this delicate interplay is essential for anyone

<sup>9</sup> Fiedler, R., & Dehnavi, E. A. (2024a). Navigating Engagement with Iran: Exploring US Strategies and Options: A Futuristic Scenario and Review. *International Journal of English Literature*

and Social Sciences, 9(2), 109–113.  
<https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.92.18>

seeking to navigate the intricate web of international relations in this pivotal region.<sup>10</sup>

### C) The Influence of Domestic Politics on Foreign Policy

Domestic politics play a crucial role in shaping U.S. foreign policy, particularly in relation to Iran and the broader Middle East. The intersection of domestic agendas, public opinion, and political maneuvering often dictates the direction and intensity of U.S. engagement in the region. For instance, the American political landscape is characterized by a diverse array of viewpoints on foreign policy, with partisan divides frequently influencing decision-making processes.<sup>11</sup>

Republican and Democratic administrations have historically approached Iran and the Middle East with differing strategies, reflecting their respective party ideologies. The Republican Party has often favored a more hardline stance, emphasizing national security and military readiness, whereas the Democratic Party has leaned towards diplomacy and multilateral engagement. This divergence can create significant shifts in policy with each election cycle, leading to uncertainty and unpredictability in U.S.-Iran relations.

Moreover, domestic events—such as economic issues, social movements, and international crises—can compel politicians to adopt certain foreign policy positions to rally public support or distract from domestic problems. For example, during times of economic distress, leaders may focus on foreign threats to unify public sentiment and divert attention from internal challenges. Likewise, grassroots movements advocating for human rights, anti-war sentiments, or support for specific groups in the Middle East can pressure elected officials to reshape their foreign policy stances.

The influence of lobbying groups and think tanks cannot be underestimated, either. Organizations with vested interests often mobilize resources to sway public opinion and advocate for policies that align with their goals. This dynamic can lead to a foreign policy that reflects the interests of a few rather than the wider population.

In conclusion, the interplay between domestic politics and foreign policy in the context of Iran and the Middle East is complex and multifaceted. Understanding this relationship is essential for deciphering the motivations behind U.S.

actions in the region and anticipating future developments. As domestic issues continue to evolve, so too will the strategies employed by U.S. leaders, further complicating the already intricate landscape of international relations.

### D) Human Rights Issues and U.S. Policy

Human rights issues are a significant factor in shaping U.S. foreign policy in Iran and the broader Middle East. The United States has long positioned itself as a champion of human rights on the global stage, often using its influence to advocate for democratic reforms and the protection of individual freedoms. However, this commitment to human rights becomes particularly complex in a region marked by diverse political landscapes, authoritarian regimes, and ongoing civil conflicts.

In the case of Iran, human rights violations, including the suppression of free speech, the persecution of dissenters, and the treatment of ethnic and religious minorities, have been focal points of U.S. criticism. The U.S. government has consistently condemned the actions of the Iranian regime, particularly in the wake of widespread protests and crackdowns on civil liberties. Sanctions targeting Iranian officials and entities involved in human rights abuses have been implemented as part of a broader strategy to pressure Tehran into respecting the rights of its citizens.

However, this stance raises questions about the consistency and effectiveness of U.S. policy. Critics argue that the U.S. has sometimes prioritized strategic interests—such as countering terrorism or maintaining alliances—over a steadfast commitment to human rights. For example, when dealing with other Middle Eastern nations, such as Saudi Arabia or Egypt, the U.S. often finds itself balancing human rights advocacy with the need to maintain key partnerships that serve national security interests. The interplay between human rights and foreign policy in the Middle East invites ongoing debate. Advocates for human rights urge the U.S. to adopt a more principled approach, arguing that real change in the region can only occur with sustained international pressure and support for civil society movements. Meanwhile, others caution that overly aggressive human rights rhetoric could destabilize already fragile regimes, potentially leading to further unrest.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Fiedler, R., & Dehnavi, E. A. (2024b). Unraveling the Enigmas: Deciphering the Causes of Discord in the Middle East: A review. *Journal of Humanities and Education Development*, 6(1), 51–56. <https://doi.org/10.22161/jhed.6.1.7>

<sup>11</sup> Ellias Aghili Dehnavi et al (2024), Policy Recommendations by U.S. Think Tanks: Sanctions vs. Diplomacy *An Educational analysis of differing strategies proposed by leading think tanks*

*on Iran, Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(11) 896 - 901, Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v30i11.8886

<sup>12</sup> Fiedler, R. A., & Dehnavi, E. A. (2024c). Weaknesses of policy making in Iran to reduce the rate of departure of elites from the country. *ResearchGate*. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/380375144\\_Weaknesses\\_of\\_policy\\_making\\_in\\_Iran\\_to\\_reduce\\_the\\_rate\\_of\\_departure\\_of\\_elites\\_from\\_the\\_country](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/380375144_Weaknesses_of_policy_making_in_Iran_to_reduce_the_rate_of_departure_of_elites_from_the_country)

As the U.S. continues to navigate the complexities of its foreign policy in Iran and the Middle East, the challenge remains: how to effectively advocate for human rights while addressing the multifaceted realities of geopolitics. This balancing act will undoubtedly shape not only the future of U.S. relations with Iran but also the broader trajectory of human rights in an ever-evolving region.

### **E) Alternative Strategies: Diplomacy vs. Military Action**

The delicate dance of U.S. foreign policy in Iran and the broader Middle East often hinges on a critical question: should the United States prioritize diplomacy or military action when addressing complex regional issues? This dichotomy reflects not only a strategic choice but also a philosophical divide that has shaped American engagement in the region for decades.

On one side lies diplomacy, a channel that emphasizes negotiation, dialogue, and collaboration over confrontation. Proponents argue that diplomacy fosters long-term stability, as it encourages mutual understanding and addresses underlying grievances. This approach can be seen in past negotiations surrounding Iran's nuclear program, where the U.S. engaged in multilateral talks, ultimately resulting in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2015. Such diplomatic efforts aim to build trust and create frameworks for cooperation, reducing the likelihood of conflict and promoting peaceful resolutions to disputes.

Conversely, military action, often viewed as a more immediate and forceful response, carries its own set of complexities and consequences. While some advocate for military intervention as a necessary tool to counter threats or assert power, history has shown that such actions can lead to unintended escalation and prolonged instability. The aftermath of the Iraq War serves as a stark reminder of how military interventions can disrupt regional dynamics, galvanize extremist groups, and create deep-seated animosities that linger for generations.

The challenge for policymakers lies in finding a balance between these two strategies. In some instances, a hybrid approach may be necessary—utilizing military presence to deter aggression while simultaneously pursuing diplomatic avenues to address the root causes of conflict. The situation in Syria illustrates this complexity, where the U.S. has navigated a multifaceted conflict involving various state and non-state actors, often oscillating between military engagement and diplomatic negotiations. Ultimately, the choice between diplomacy and military action in U.S. foreign policy toward Iran and the Middle

East requires careful consideration of both immediate objectives and long-term implications. As the region continues to evolve, so too must the strategies employed, demanding a nuanced understanding of the intricate web of relationships, histories, and aspirations that define this pivotal part of the world.

### **E-1) Public Opinion and Its Impact on Policy Decisions**

One of the most important aspects of American foreign policy determination relates to public attitudes, and perhaps nowhere else do these attitudes become more pronounced than in matters relating to Iran and the Middle East. Enormous spectrum of American sentiment towards foreign policy is shaped by a number of elements which include, but are not limited to, historical happenings, how people tell stories, and the news. As global scenarios change, it is only natural that the American public's view shifts, creating a political landscape that is tenuous at best for decision makers.

Americans have become exceedingly more polarized in recent years around issues such as the Iran nuclear deal, the Syrian conflicts, terrorism, and other extremist phenomena. From the available data, the electorate seems to be sharply split between supporting engagement and diplomacy versus those who want to fight fire with fire. This new reality is quite complicated for the leaders of the United States as they try to juggle between the needs of their constituents and the wider national strategic concerns.

The media also plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions. Coverage tends to oscillate between highlighting humanitarian crises and focusing on national security threats, often leading to a fragmented understanding of the complexities involved. For instance, while some Americans may be sympathetic to the plight of civilians in war-torn regions, others may prioritize concerns about terrorism and regional stability<sup>13</sup>.

Moreover, the impact of grassroots movements and advocacy groups cannot be overlooked. Organizations dedicated to peace and diplomacy, as well as those pushing for tougher sanctions or military interventions, actively mobilize public support and influence policymakers. This grassroots activism can sway congressional votes and shape the narrative surrounding U.S. involvement in the Middle East, compelling leaders to reconsider or reinforce their strategies based on popular sentiment. Ultimately, public opinion acts as both a compass and a constraint for U.S. foreign policy in Iran and the Middle East. As leaders strive to articulate coherent strategies in this complex landscape, they must remain attuned to the

<sup>13</sup> Dehnavi, E. A. (2024b). The Trump Doctrine: Redefining U.S. Foreign Policy through Immigration, Security, and Diplomacy.

Journal of Humanities and Education Development, 6(5), 26–28.  
<https://doi.org/10.22161/jhed.6.5.5>

evolving views of the public—a challenging endeavor in a world where perceptions can shift rapidly and dramatically. Understanding this interplay between public sentiment and policy decisions is crucial for grasping the multifaceted nature of U.S. foreign relations in this pivotal region.<sup>14</sup>

### CONCLUSION: NAVIGATING THE PATH FORWARD IN THE MIDDLE EAST

As we conclude our exploration of U.S. foreign policy in Iran and the broader Middle East, it becomes clear that the path forward is fraught with complexity and uncertainty. The region has been shaped by centuries of history, deep-seated cultural dynamics, and intricate geopolitical relationships. The U.S. has long been a key player in this landscape, but the challenges it faces today require a nuanced understanding of not just the political, but also the social and economic dimensions that influence the region.

Moving forward, it is essential for policymakers to prioritize diplomacy and engagement over isolationism, recognizing that sustainable solutions arise from dialogue rather than confrontation. The U.S. must also consider the implications of its actions on local populations, striving to support grassroots movements that promote stability and resilience within communities.

Moreover, the increasing influence of non-state actors and regional powers complicates the scenario further. Cooperation with allies, particularly in addressing common threats such as terrorism, while being mindful of the historical grievances that fuel conflicts, is critical.

In essence, the future of U.S. foreign policy in Iran and the Middle East hinges on a commitment to understanding the intricacies of the region and a willingness to approach it with humility and respect. By doing so, the U.S. can contribute to a more stable, prosperous future for all involved, one that honors the aspirations of the people in this dynamic region.<sup>15</sup>

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