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American use of Coercive Diplomacy in Libya and Iran – Can the Combination of Coercion, Carrots and Confidence-Building be a Key for Success?

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Abstract

Libya's dismantling its weapons of mass destruction in 2003 and Iran's nuclear agreement of 2015 are two rare examples whereby the US successfully utilized coercive diplomacy. Both states make interesting and relevant comparative case studies, for, despite shared similarities, accomplishments in the Libyan case can be seen as comprehensive and lasting whereas those in the Iranian case may only be considered as limited. This paper evaluates the merits of Jakobsen's (2012) 3C framework – namely, the combination of coercion, carrots, and confidence-building measures – in attaining success in Libya and Iran. The key and novel finding of this research suggests that while the combination of the 3C components is necessary for reaching the positive outcomes across both cases, the implementation thereof leaves room for further analysis. Employing the 3Cs in Libya revealed a complementary relationship amongst and across the three measures; with respect to Iran, the three measures frequently undercut one another, which in turn diminished their combined long-term effectiveness. This comparative study of the two cases contributes to the existing literature on coercive diplomacy, identifies avenues for future research, and offers some recommendations for policy-makers in designing coercive diplomacy strategies.

Introduction

Coercive diplomacy (CD) is a political strategy which, in theory, seems appealing for policy-makers to apply against an adversary to whose actions they strongly object. CD combines diplomacy with coercion and represents a more aggressive approach than conventional diplomacy in isolation and is also less costly than waging a war (Ganguly & Kraig, 2005). CD can be regarded as successful where and whenever an adversary desists from or otherwise modulates the actions in question. Libya, in 2003, alongside the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran, in 2015, comprise two rare cases in which the United States (US) has been able to convince adversaries to alter their policies. In the eyes of those who orchestrated these agreements, each one was deemed successful. President G.W. Bush (2003) proclaimed that the US and its allies had successfully "sent an unmistakable message to regimes that seek or possess weapons of mass destruction… [to] make the wise and responsible choice… [and] renounce terror and weapons of mass destruction, as Colonel [Qaddafi] has now done." Similarly, President Barak Obama (2015) praised the JCPOA as "a good deal, a deal that meets our core objectives."

The factors that led to these successful outcomes remain a matter of conjecture. The Libyan case has been heralded as an outstanding example of a successful CD and has received extensive academic attention, but there is still little consensus as to which strategic CD tools were crucial to bring about the outcome. The discussion over the Iranian case offers little in this respect as it has largely revolved around the question of whether to perceive the JCPOA as a success or failure, focusing on the outcome rather than evaluating the means employed. This paper offers an explanation of the arguably varying degrees of successful CD by means of a comparative case study designed to identify the instrumental elements. In addition to analyzing the processes and strategic tools used, the study provides the first comparison between Libya's dismantling its WMD programmes and Iran's nuclear deal. Moreover, the paper sets out to test Jakobsen's (2012) 3C framework theory – the combination of coercion, carrots and confidence-building – and by so doing provide a structure to evaluate the various strategic tools. The research question is thus – *can the combination of coercion, carrots and confidence-building constitute a key for a successful coercive diplomacy strategy?*

The first chapter presents a literature review on the topic of CD and demonstrates the limited capacity of the available literature to deliver an empirically-based theory of the necessary components for a successful CD strategy. Chapter two lays out the theory used in this research, namely the 3C framework, and explains in the methods section why Libya and Iran are suited for this comparative case study. Chapter three focuses on Libya, providing background on American-Libyan relations, followed by an analysis of the 3Cs that led to Libya's dismantling its WMD programmes. The penultimate chapter pursues a similar model, focusing on Iran and the JCPOA. The final chapter of the research paper concludes with a discussion and comparison of the findings, including observations of what made the Libyan case a *comprehensive* and *lasting* success whilst the Iranian case only a *limited* accomplishment.

Literature Review

In his book, *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, George (1994) defines CD as a defensive strategy used to persuade an adversary to stop or reverse an action with threatened – and if necessary – limited use of force. He differentiates CD from other strategies, such as Schelling's (1960) *compellance* theory which does not distinguish between defensive and offensive use of coercion. CD is considered different also from *deterrence* as the former strategy is initiated after an adversary has *already* started actions in opposition to the wishes of the coercing state, and it is, therefore, not concerned with persuading an adversary to refrain from initiating certain actions. Acknowledging that CD remains only an abstract theory thus far, George underlines the need to develop an empirically sound theory based on historical and contemporary cases in order to create a more generic and relevant corpus of knowledge. With this in mind, the literature review below is divided into five main sections focusing on: distinguishing and defining, exploring the merits of specific strategic tools, examining the combination of carrots and coercion, assessing failure and success, and finally suggesting operative recommendations for future CD strategies.

In a number of articles, scholars primarily focus on *distinguishing and defining*. For instance, Baldwin (1971) distinguishes between negative and positive sanctions, and Dorussen (2001) discusses the differences between sanctions and incentives. Focusing on coercion, Bratton (2005, p.99) provides a broad definition relating to coercion as "the use of threats to influence another's behaviour". Centering on the individual uses of carrots, Drezner (1999) defines carrots as the transfer of benefits from the 'sender' to the 'receiver' with a clear *quid pro quo* in return for the required concessions. He suggests several hypotheses, citing favorable conditions under which carrots are most likely to succeed. Nincic (2010) also focuses on positive inducements and suggests exchange and catalytic models to achieve distinctly different objectives. The former offers an adversary a *quid pro quo*, while the latter seeks to accomplish the more ambitious task of trying to alter an adversary's basic priorities. Nincic evaluates these models against three 'renegade regimes', namely Libya, Iran and North Korea, and concludes by stating that in none of these cases has coercion produced the desired results. Positive inducements were significantly more efficient, albeit to varying degrees due to other factors such as the domestic situation in the adversary's state.

Gregor (2012) views the use of no-fly zones as a new limited force tool and argues there is value in appraising single CD instruments. As these researchers are exclusively focusing on *distinguishing and defining* and looking at *specific strategic tools*, they contribute little to an empirically-based theory of CD.

Writers such as Greffenius and Gill (1992), Filmus (2015), and Zagare (2020) explore the *combination of carrots and sticks* in a CD strategy. Greffenius and Gill (1992) provide the notion of carrots and sticks as comparatively more effective than pure coercion. A synergic use of carrots and sticks is geared to incorporate both fear and goodwill, whereby a more solid basis is laid for success. Accordingly, using coercion alone, it is believed, has the risk of unintentionally maneuvering a stubborn 'opponent' into war. Similarly contending that carrots and sticks combined are more efficient than sticks alone, Filmus (2015) cites two primary notions – calculus and counterbalancing effects. As calculus effects include carrots, the cost of noncompliance is raised from that of mere punishment, which consequently motivates the 'target' to conform further. Relating to counterbalancing effects, Filmus opposes various counter arguments for excluding carrots over fears this may lead to appeasement or promote concerns regarding the financial costs to the 'manipulator'. She therefore rejects the concerns in favour of the benefits to be gained in using carrots in conjunction with sticks for a successful CD strategy. Zagare (2020) examines a carrot-and-stick game model of CD and underlines that threats and promises used in isolation are likely to be inadequate to convince the 'target' to comply. Instead, Zagare claims that when these two components are used in tandem, the 'manipulator' is much more likely to succeed. However, though these articles justify the *combination* of carrots and sticks as more efficient than a discrete use of either, they nevertheless fall short of developing a successful CD strategy.

The next category of researchers considers CD with respect to *success and failure*. Tarzi (1999) for instance draws a comparison between the success of CD in the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, and its later failure to preempt the Persian Gulf War between 1990 and 1991. Ganguly and Kraig (2005) argue that while CD is an attractive strategy for states to pursue – as, in theory, it offers stronger incentives than 'pure' diplomacy and is less costly than resorting to an armed conflict – it hardly ever ends in anything but failure. To illustrate why CD is prone to failure, Ganguly and Kraig

(2005) refer to India resorting to CD in the 2001-2002 Indo-Pakistan crisis where India accomplished little of its stipulated objectives. In a similar vein, Jakobsen (2007) demonstrates how inadequately CD has been translated from theory into practice, credited with only *five* lasting successes out of 37 attempts made by Western states between 1990 and 2005. Jakobsen purports that the bare minimum for a successful strategy has to include relieving potent and credible threats as well as offering credible assurances. Notably, he distinguishes between different types of successes, such as temporary, cheap and costly successes. These articles underscore the need to develop a more thorough strategy for CD, which seems to have the potential to deliver, yet often fails to do so.

Jentleson (2006; 2010) offers a number of criteria and *recommendations* via which the 'coercer' state can improve its chances of success. The first criterion is proportionality, which involves balancing the objectives the coercing state desires to achieve from its adversary with sufficient leverage. The second is reciprocity, which either implicitly or explicitly assures the terms of *quid pro quo* are clearly, or at least to some extent, understood, by both parties. The third is credibility, which ultimately amounts to establishing that the adversary realizes the coercing state's threats or conditions are not mere words and will carry serious consequences if the adversary does not comply (Jentleson, 2006). Jentleson (2010) also adds a number of useful policy recommendations to enhance the chances of a successful CD strategy, including imposing economic sanctions, which are most effective when enforced multilaterally and sustained over time. Thus, Jentleson provides both conditions for success and introduces a number of policy recommendations for a CD strategy. As these five sections highlight, an empirically-based CD strategy still pends formulation and development.

Theory and Method

Theory

George's (1994) desire to formulate an empirically sound CD theory relates to a genuine need. The strategic components necessary for a successful CD, based on historical and contemporary cases, are still lacking. Jakobsen's (2012) 3C framework offers a tangible and amenable basis for an empirical research on CD. This research, therefore, applies Jakobsen's 3C framework vis-a-vis the Libyan and Iranian cases, adding *intra alia* both theoretical and empirical knowledge to the literature. In his research, Jakobsen argues that the combined implementation of coercion, carrots and confidence-building, namely the 3C framework, though not *sufficient* per se, constitutes the *necessary* mix of components for a successful CD strategy. Accordingly, coercion increases the elements of fear and urgency for an adversary to change his ways; complementarily, carrots increase the benefits of cooperation and make compliance more attractive and acceptable to the adversary; while confidence-building measures assure the adversary that compliance will be respected and will not prompt new demands. These three components also provide the basis for evaluation in the Libyan and Iranian cases with the expectation that both reflect a successful implementation of the 3C framework.

Method

This research paper employs a qualitative comparative case study design between two cases centering on scholarly articles and relevant American presidential speeches. A comparative case study is suited for this research question as a single case study would be limited in its capacity to facilitate broader generalizations and conclusions (Collier, 1993; Martin, 2013). As this study is interested in exploring whether the 3C framework is indeed key for a successful CD strategy, the chosen research design is appropriate. Iran and Libya are well-matched for this research paper owing to the shared similarities in their independent variables. Both countries have experienced – albeit to varying degrees – coercion, carrots and confidence-building; both countries also share the dependent variable – success, evidenced in the fact that the US managed to reach an acceptable agreement vis-a-vis these adversaries.

Additionally, other shared similarities between Libya and Iran assist in controlling for other variables. The US has had similar demands for policy changes in both countries throughout the years – to stop their nuclear weapons or WMD programmes, as well as their outright support and sponsorship of terrorism and even to consider regime change. Negotiations with Libya and Iran have involved a third party, notably the United Kingdom in the former, and the United Kingdom, Russia, China, France and Germany in the latter. Lastly, both states experienced American unilateral as well as multilateral sanctions; ergo, the nature of sanctions imposed has been more controlled. Nonetheless, whilst Libya and Iran share manifold similarities and can be regarded as successes, they vary in the degrees of achieved successes. Libya can be thought of as a *comprehensive* and *lasting* success whereas Iran can arguably be considered only as a *limited* success.

Case I: Libya

American-Libyan relations

The onset of American-Libyan hostile relations can be traced back to the 1969 coup, when Muammar Qaddafi seized power from King Idris (Hochman, 2006). In his quest to gain prestige and earn the respect within the Arab world, Qaddafi supported international terrorist groups and sought to develop WMD. Qaddafi's regime provided financial aid for several terrorist groups including the Palestinian Liberation Organisation and the Irish Republican Army (Barnum & Fearey, 2016). During the 1970s Qaddafi attempted to gain WMD, in particular nuclear weapons. These efforts reportedly included approaching numerous nuclear suppliers, such as China, Pakistan, France, India, the Soviet Union and even the black market (Palkki & Smith, 2012). As early attempts proved unsuccessful, Qaddafi ratified the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1975, demonstrating to the world Libya only sought nuclear technologies for civilian programmes. That same year, the Soviet Union provided Libya with the Tajoura Nuclear Research Center, which included a 10MW light-water reactor (Barnum & Fearey, 2016).

Diplomatic disengagement in American-Libyan relations began in 1972 as the US withdrew its ambassador from Tripoli, and, following a mob attack in 1979, the American embassy was shut down (Haun, 2015). The US added Libya to the list of state-sponsors of terrorism and imposed unilateral sanctions upon it (Newnham, 2009). During the 1980s, the American administration made concerted efforts to stop Qaddafi sponsoring terrorism and even pushed for a regime change. In 1981 President Ronald Reagan entered office with the promise of restoring American military power and prestige (Haun, 2015). Fighting terrorism was key to his administration. In his Presidential Inaugural Address, Reagan (1981) mentioned the threat terrorism poses, the first American president ever to do so (Rosenau, 2014). The 1980s saw continuous terrorist operations supported by Qaddafi and subsequent US retaliations. In 1982 Qaddafi established the Anti-Imperialist Center, Al Mathaba, a center for Libyan support of international terrorism (Barnum & Fearey, 2016). Between 1981 and 1986, the Libyan regime was believed to have been involved in executing numerous terrorist attacks including the murder of a US defense attaché in Paris in 1981 (Jakobsen, 2012), the bombing of the La Belle discotheque in Berlin in 1985 (Jentleson &

Whytock, 2005) and the attacks at the airports of Rome and Vienna in 1986 (Barnum & Fearey, 2016).

During this period Reagan imposed sanctions and threatened to resort to military force in an attempt to deter and weaken Qaddafi's regime and coerce it to shift its policies. In 1982 a unilateral embargo on importation of Libyan crude oil was imposed; in 1986 all US commercial contracts with Libya were banned and Libyan assets in the US were frozen (Barnum & Fearey, 2016). The Reagan administration additionally resorted to military force, as evidenced in a series of skirmishes in the Gulf of Sidra (Jentleson & Whytock, 2005). In view of the ineffectiveness of these measures, and the increasing terrorist attacks, the US launched direct strikes on Qaddafi's headquarters and Libyan military installations in Tripoli and Benghazi (Haun, 2015). Seventy people were reportedly killed, including Qaddafi's daughter, and Qaddafi himself was wounded (Lewis, 2001). Libya, thereafter, shifted its policy from openly planning and executing attacks to covertly supporting atrocities on even a greater scale, as evidenced predominantly in the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 on the 21st of December 1988 and the French UTA Flight 772 on the 19th of September 1989. The former exploded over Lockerbie in Scotland, killing a total of 270 including some people on the ground, and the latter killing 171 (Hochman, 2006).

Several factors may explain the failure of Reagan's strategy. Firstly, the unilateral sanctions the US imposed failed to sufficiently pressure the Libyan economy. Libya managed to find alternative economic avenues, for instance by increasing Italy's share in Libyan oil imports by 14 percent between 1980 and 1987 (Jentleson & Whytock, 2005). Secondly, Reagan's policies lacked comprehensive international and European backing. Whilst the European Community may have *supported* Reagan's counter-terrorism actions to some extent, it did not *fully endorse* them. Counter effectively, the US strikes on Libya were condemned in a UN General Assembly resolution and the NATO alliance refrained from issuing its support for the US actions (Jentleson, 1991). However, the European Community did step up its anti-terrorism policies, including reducing the number of Libyan contracts and imposing an embargo on the sales of arms to Libya. It is also possible to claim, retrospectively, that Reagan failed to draw a link between American limited force and 'smoking-gun' evidence that would implicate Libya in terrorist attacks (Haun, 2015). Following the attacks, Qaddafi shifted into covert support of terrorism, and it was no longer as easy to find 'smoking-

gun' evidence. In addition, it can also be argued that the Reagan administration strategy was not equipoised, for it chiefly consisted of threats and limited use of force rather than diplomacy and use of positive inducements. Moreover, according to Jentleson and Whytock (p.60), it is quite possible that Reagan may have been overambitious as "policy change was the pronounced objective, but regime change the underlying one."

President G.H.W. Bush was inaugurated in January 1989, and in November 1991, the US and Britain obtained forensic evidence linking the Pan Am bombing directly to Libya (Haun, 2015). They demanded Libya to take responsibility and hand over the two Libyan agents implicated in the attack to stand trial in either the US or Britain. These demands received international support, including a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 731 in January 1992; accordingly, Libya was required to accept responsibility and extradite the two agents (Barnum & Fearey, 2016). Qaddafi ignored the resolution, although in March 1992 he did offer a compromise suggesting to have the two agents tried by a specially appointed international court (Jentleson & Whytock, 2005). Subsequent to Qaddafi's refusal to comply, the UNSC adopted Resolution 748, banning arms sale and air travel to and from Libya, and, in November 1993, Resolution 883, preventing the transfer of oil technologies to Libya as well as freezing some of Libyan assets abroad (Hurd, 2005). In addition, whilst stopping Libya's support for terrorism remained a high priority, the Bush administration grew increasingly concerned with Libya's WMD development. In 1990, reports were received on a facility manufacturing mustard gas and the highly toxic nerve agent, Sarin, in Rabta, Libya (St John, 2013). As a result, Bush refused to rule out American military intervention against Libya if Qaddafi continued its efforts (St John, 2004). Thus, Bush's strategy consisted mainly of gaining multilateral support, imposing sanctions and keeping the use of force as a viable option. Moreover, in a departure from his predecessor, Bush did not pursue Libyan regime change (Jentleson & Whytock, 2005).

President Bill Clinton followed a similar strategy to that of President Bush, leveraging pressure primarily through sanctions. In February 1993, US intelligence reported Libya was building a chemical weapons plant capable of producing and storing poisoned gas (St John, 2013). Of all the unilateral sanctions the US placed on Libya, the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA), which entered into force in August 1996, was

the only one explicitly linked to Libya's developing WMD (Barnum & Fearey, 2016). The ILSA was originally conceived to tighten sanctions on Iran and was only later applied to Libya as well. It enforced new sanctions, notably on foreign companies which invested more than 40 million dollars in Libya's oil sector, thereby making a concerted effort to discourage companies from tying themselves to Libya (Katzman, 2003). UNSC Resolutions 748 and 883 did not include any restrictions on Libyan oil sales, therefore the Clinton Administration repeatedly tried to add it to the list of multilateral sanctions (St John, 2013), especially in view of the fact that Libya's oil industry represented over 90% of its economy (Palkki & Smith, 2012). However, as several European states, notably Germany and Italy, were dependent on Libyan oil, Clinton failed to secure this expansion (Hurd, 2005).

Despite this shortcoming, the US, United Kingdom and France were able to slowly isolate Libya diplomatically and impact its economy (Jakobsen, 2012). In parallel, Libyan domestic economy was increasingly stagnating as well. Growing international pressure led to Qaddafi's greater concession regarding the Lockerbie trial in 1998. Marking a major turning point in his position, Qaddafi was now willing to hand over the two Libyan agents to be tried by British judges under British laws in The Hague (Newnham, 2009) in exchange for suspending the UN sanctions (St John, 2004). Qaddafi's terms were accepted. In April 1999 the two agents were remanded and the UN sanctions suspended, allowing Qaddafi to save face on the Libyan domestic front (Haun, 2015). These developments opened a channel for direct secret negotiations mid-1999 between the Clinton administration and Libya. Maintaining the unilateral pressure as well as the threat of UN sanctions was essential for the US until Libya discontinued its support for terrorism, accepted responsibility and compensated the families of the victims of the Pan Am flight (St John, 2004).

Notwithstanding the efforts, the secret negotiations between the US, United Kingdom and Libya in 1999 were not free of setbacks and delays. They were first suspended by the US during its 2000 presidential campaign and the newly elected President, G.W. Bush, was reluctant to continue Clinton's approach (Jentleson & Whytock, 2005). Consequently, the ILSA was renewed in August 2001, and the Congress agreed to a five-year extension and a tightening of sanctions by limiting the operative level of corporate investment to 20 million dollars maximum before triggering sanctions (St John, 2004). The events of 9/11 brought the two parties back to the negotiation table.

Qaddafi was quick to condemn Al Qaeda and the terror attacks and even offered to support the US through intelligence and other means in its fight against terrorism (Haun, 2015). Nonetheless, negotiations were halted again over Qaddafi's unwillingness to take full responsibility for the Pan Am bombing, compensate the Pan Am victims' families or agree to discuss its WMD programmes (Haun, 2015). The aftermath of the 9/11 attacks demonstrated that the US was more than inclined to use force to counter terrorism and attack countries that were seeking to develop WMD. The American invasion of Iraq in March 2003 clearly communicated it would resort to military force if Libya continued in its refusal to return to the negotiation table and show a greater willingness to cooperate with the remaining American demands. Although by January 2001 The Hague high court had announced its verdict on the two agents accused of orchestrating the Pan Am bombing, it was only in August 2003 that Libya finally confirmed its responsibility and offered compensations (Barnum & Fearey, 2016). Regardless, agreements concerning Libya's WMD programmes were not reached until Qaddafi was caught red-handed. In October 2003, the cargo ship BBC China was intercepted en route to Libya, carrying a shipment of uranium enrichment centrifuges (Palkki & Smith, 2012). This interception finally pushed Qaddafi to take the deal offered while it was still on the negotiating table. Consequently, on the 19th of December 2003, Libya announced that it would voluntarily dismantle all its WMD programmes, abide by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and open its doors to international inspectors.

Libya and the 3C Framework

Timing is the key factor in understanding how the successful outcome transpired in December 2003. It was not Reagan's limited use of force, neither the sanctions imposed by both G.H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, nor the threat of replicating the forceful invasion of Iraq alone that led Libya to dismantle its WMD programmes, but rather the cumulative impact thereof. In the decade leading up to the dismantlement, American strategy consisted of coercion in the form of sanctions, threatened and limited use of force, carrots and confidence building. Although many of these measures were placed to encourage Libya to stop its support for terrorism, they were nonetheless instrumental in getting Qaddafi to the negotiating table and ultimately shaped his willingness to abandon his WMD programmes.

The use of *sanctions* as a means of coercion proved to be most effective when imposed multilaterally. Despite the American failure to obstruct Libya's energy sector – its biggest economic resource – the sanctions did succeed in limiting Libya's ability to find and attract alternative trading partners. The sanctions also managed to highlight and deepen the already existing domestic problems within Libya (Collins, 2004; Barnum & Fearey, 2016). Although the unilateral sanctions imposed by Reagan's, G.H.W. Bush's and Clinton's respective administrations had certain impact, some lacked international legitimacy, the ILSA for example was considered by American allies as disproportionate to the threat posed by Libya (Katzman, 2003) whilst also proving to be ineffective as foreign companies were able to receive waivers from the ILSA (Barnum & Fearey, 2016). Ergo, it is safe to stipulate that multilateral sanctions are likely to carry more weight and have better chances to lead to an effective outcome.

The use of *limited force* as a means of coercion against Libya was not exercised after the strikes in 1986 (Hochman, 2006). However, the *threat* of American military action was kept on the table in both G.H.W. Bush's and Bill Clinton's respective terms of office. The terror attacks of 9/11 and the American invasion of Iraq increased the threat level and created a sense of urgency as well as the risk of further escalation. This scenario was particularly relevant in the case of Libya on account of its WMD programmes. The American use of force in Afghanistan and predominantly the invasion of Iraq created *implied* military threats for Libya (Stevens, 2017). This suggests that George's CD theory should be expanded to include *indirect military threat* as this case clearly demonstrates.

The *carrots* offered to Libya were chiefly comprised of lifting sanctions, and allowing Libya to anticipate a resumption of the *status quo ante* (Newnham, 2009). Libya's economic situation was in decline on account of Qaddafi's continued mismanagement of the economy (Jentleson & Whytock, 2005), worldwide oil price slumps, increasing population growth, and reduced employment opportunities (Jakobsen, 2012). The Libyan perception was that once the sanctions were removed, domestic economy would strengthen (Barnum & Fearey, 2016). Ergo, for Qaddafi, the promise of normalized relations with the west and the much-needed economic respite thereafter were key for Libya's future development and stability. Following Libya's acceptance of responsibility and its cooperation with the Pan Am investigations, Resolutions 748

and 883 were first suspended in April 1999 (Palkki & Smith, 2012), and in September 2003 the Security Council voted to remove them altogether. Thus, after April 1999, it was clear to Libya that the carrots came with a caveat; if it did not continue to cooperate and concede further in addition to handing over the two agents, the multilateral sanctions could be resumed (Newnham, 2009).

In addition to offering these benefits, the US employed measures of *confidence-building* mostly in the form of reassurances to Qaddafi that the US was not interested in regime change but rather in Libya's gradual re-entry into the international community. Throughout the negotiations Qaddafi demanded security guarantees for his regime's survival until the WMD dismantling agreement was signed (Jakobsen, 2012). Interestingly, though former American presidents had publicly linked Libya with terrorism and the development of nuclear weapons, in President Bush's famous "Axis of Evil" speech in 2002, Libya was not listed alongside Iraq, Iran and North Korea. This may have been meant to signal an initial measure of confidence-building on the part of the US. The US also intimated its support of Libya's re-entry into the international community by choosing, in 2000, not to block Libya's first participation in an UN international peacekeeping force to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (St John, 2013). Another important confidence-building measure was exercised through the presence of a third party in the negotiations. The United Kingdom played a key role by ensuring Libya that its agreements with the US would be kept and by encouraging Libya to initiate informal WMD dismantlement talks in 2002.

Ergo, it is safe to credit the successful achievements in the Libyan case to the impact of the 3C framework. Coercion increased the cost of noncompliance, carrots motivated Qaddafi to make greater concessions, and confidence-building was essential for Qaddafi to agree to the terms of the deal. The *combination* of these measures culminated in creating a suitable matrix for success, hence explaining the timing of Libya's dismantling its WMD programmes.

Case II: Iran

American-Iranian Relations

Between 1953 and 1979 relations between Iran and the US were friendly and normative. With its 16% share, the US was the second largest exporter to Iran (Torbat, 2005). When Shah Pahlavi expressed interest in developing a nuclear programme, he received western support, with four nuclear power plant reactor contracts signed in the 1970s (Quillen, 2002). Hard on the heels of the Iranian revolution however, Iran quickly transformed from an American ally to an adversary (Dobbins, 2011). In an attempt to pressure the US to hand over the Shah, revolutionary college students seized the American embassy in Teheran and kept 52 diplomats and citizens hostage (Albarasneh & Khatib, 2019). In retaliation to the hostage crisis, President Carter prohibited oil imports, froze Iranian assets in the US, estimated at 12 billion dollars' worth, and banned travel between the two countries (Noi, 2005). These coercive measures lacked significant multilateral support even from the US closest allies. During the 444 day crisis, in fear of jeopardizing their economic interests in Iran, the European Union (EU) and Japan, imposed only the mildest of sanctions and even these were not immediate (Takeyh & Maloney, 2011).

The sanctions were initially lifted under President Reagan following the release of the hostages, but they were soon re-imposed and tightened in view of Iran's support of terrorism and nuclear programme development. In 1983, two truck bombs struck US barracks in Beirut, killing 241 American marines (Takeyh & Maloney, 2011) and by 1984 Iran's involvement became evident in addition to its ongoing support of Hezbollah. The US State Department subsequently considered Iran as the world's most active state-sponsor of international terrorism (Nincic, 2010). Reagan expanded US sanctions, and launched an aggressive campaign to prevent Iran from acquiring weapons (Takeyh & Maloney, 2011). This was crucial for Iran as the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) was still being fought at this time. The hostility was exacerbated due to Reagan administration's support of arms sales to Iraq (Jentleson, 1991). Notwithstanding, during the Iranian arms embargo, 100 American-made TOW antitank missiles were secretly sold to Iran by the Reagan administration, which resulted in the infamous Iran-Contra scandal (Albarasneh & Khatib, 2019). Not only did this undermine the sanctions, but it also pointed towards American efforts at

regime change by trying to tip the internal balance of power in favour of Iranian moderates against Ayatollah Khomeini (Takeyh & Maloney, 2011). Towards the end of Reagan's second term of office additional sanctions were imposed in 1987 with further restrictions over trade, including the prohibition over Iranian oil imports to the US (Noi, 2005; Clawson, 2010).

President G.H.W. Bush's term between 1989 and 1993 experienced a share of engagement and positive inducements. During the Lebanese civil war, 104 foreigners, mostly American and European, were kidnapped by Hezbollah and kept hostage from 1982 to 1992. Bush publicly announced his willingness to engage with Iran to secure the release of the hostages. Although the degree of Iranian affiliation with and its influence on Hezbollah were uncertain, it was deemed worth trying (Takeyh & Maloney, 2011). Engagement with Iran also increased after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. Bush requested that Iran enforce the UN sanctions against Iraq as well as remain neutral during the ensuing war, thus assisting in containing Iraq. As an inducement, the US lifted its unilateral oil sanctions and supported Iran's World Bank loan request of 250 million dollars (Rome, 2019). Nonetheless, even after the successful release of the hostages and despite Iran's neutrality during the Gulf War, Iran's continued development of its nuclear programme and its ongoing support of terrorism remained major points of concern. In response, the US imposed the Iran-Iraq Non-Proliferation Act in 1992 which placed sanctions on foreign entities supplying WMD technology or any other 'dual' type technology to Iran (Katzman, 2011). Here too, however, the US was acting once again alone as its allies were less concerned with Iran's WMD programmes. The European Council in the meantime issued in 1992 the Edinburgh Declaration, the so-called Critical Dialogue, intending it as the EU's official policy towards Iran (Noi, 2005). In reality the Edinburgh Declaration facilitated an opportunity to criticize Iran's regime policies – primarily concerning human rights and terrorism – whilst still maintaining economic and diplomatic relations (Torbat, 2005).

The first half of President Clinton's term in office was characterized by a *dual containment* policy against Iran and Iraq, which meant restricting both these countries through economic sanctions. In 1995, Clinton tightened the sanctions on Iran not only by issuing an executive order to cut off all American investments and trade with Iran (Noi, 2005), but also by imposing a year later the ILSA, specifically targeting Iran's

oil revenues. These rigorous sanctions were imposed following Iran's signing a contract with Russia in January 1995 to construct a nuclear power reactor worth 800 million dollars in Bushehr (Katzman, 2003; Mousavian & Mousavian, 2018). In March 1995, Conoco, a US oil company, concluded three-year-long negotiations with Iran for a contract worth 1 billion dollars to develop oil and gas fields in the Persian Gulf (Clawson, 2010). The new sanctions restricted companies to 20 million dollars in annual expenditure in developing Iran's energy sector and thus the Conoco-Iran contract was inevitably forfeit. As before, Clinton struggled to garner European support, and even received some backlash after introducing the ILSA. The EU saw it as an "extraterritorial application of [US] law" (Katzman, 2003, p.4). Moreover, the EU – and primarily Germany, Italy and France – had higher trade volumes with Iran comparatively to the US and were not planning to discontinue their economic partnerships (Torbat, 2005). In 1997, following the Iranian presidential election of the moderate Mohammad Khatami, Clinton reassessed his policies towards Iran. Khatami expressed regret for the embassy hostage crisis and hinted at a possible reconciliation between the two countries – the closest to better relations since the 1979 revolution (Nincic, 2010). As a sign of goodwill, Clinton lifted restrictions over the sales of food, pharmaceuticals and the sale of airline spare parts (Takeyh & Maloney, 2011) and the US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright expressed in a public speech the US's regret for its involvement in the 1953 coup in Iran (Dobbins, 2011). Notwithstanding these positive developments, there were no significant changes in Iran's nuclear developments.

Similarly to his predecessors, G.W. Bush's term started with a focus on coercion through economic sanctions. In 2001 the ILSA was renewed for another five years (Katzman, 2003) and the 9/11 terror attacks heightened the perceived threat from terrorism, nuclear weapons, and the potential links between them. President Khatami condemned the terrorist attacks (Nincic, 2010) and following the US military action in Afghanistan against the Taliban regime and its defeat, played an important role in helping to establish a new Afghan central government (Dobbins, 2011; Watson et al, 2012). Notwithstanding these possible indications of good will towards the US and a step away from terrorism, Bush's speech of Axis of Evil, aligning Iran with Iraq and North Korea, escalated the tension between the two states. The invasion of Iraq – as in the case of Libya – could be interpreted as an *indirect military threat* towards Iran

itself as one of the Axis of Evil countries. Following the invasion of Iraq in 2003, experts speculated that the next target could well be Iran (Noi, 2005; Torbat, 2005). The hostility between the nations increased after Iran's covert nuclear programme was revealed, including Iran's enrichment capabilities (Mousavian & Mousavian, 2018). Iran claimed it was only interested in a civilian nuclear enrichment programme and Russia also stated that its involvement in Bushehr remained within the limits outlined by the IAEA. The IAEA itself verified these statements; however, none of this alleviated American concerns (Noi, 2005).

Whilst the US tried to pressure Iran to change its behaviour and stop its nuclear development, its European allies continued to engage with Iran. Starting in October 2003, the United Kingdom, France and Germany (EU3) began negotiations with Iran to try and solve the nuclear crisis diplomatically. They signed the Tehran Declaration, and between 2003 and 2005, Khatami's regime demonstrated flexibility and cooperation (Nincic, 2010; Dobbins, 2011; Mousavian & Mousavian, 2018). For nine months Iran suspended its uranium enrichment and allowed the IAEA to inspect some of its facilities (Nincic, 2010). The purpose of the Tehran Declaration was to recognize Iran's right for a civilian nuclear programme as allowed under the NPT while ensuring the programme could not be rerouted into a nuclear weapons programme. In return Iran was offered a number of positive inducements, such as broader political and economic cooperation with the EU. In spite of these efforts, the Declaration ultimately collapsed in January 2005 in view of President Bush's rejection and unwillingness to rule out military intervention against Iran (Mousavian & Mousavian, 2018).

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's election in August 2005 drastically diminished Iran's willingness to continue to engage in talks or to constrain its nuclear programme. The US's positive inducement – offered conjointly with the rest of the Security Council countries plus Germany (P5+1) – permitting Russia to enrich uranium for Iran on Russian territory was rejected (Nincic, 2010). Uranium conversion facilities within Iran restarted their production, and by September 2005 the IAEA found Iran in noncompliance with the 1974 safeguard agreement (Paulraj, 2016) and in breach of its understanding with the EU3 (Jentleson & Whytock, 2005). Moreover, Iran took a more active role in supporting terrorism and militia groups targeting American soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq (Dobbins, 2011). The US unilaterally imposed more

sanctions, including freezing assets of firms and apprehending individuals who were suspected of involvement in either Iran's nuclear programme or its terrorist activities (Clawson, 2010). Additionally, and possibly more importantly, due to the breakdown of negotiations between Iran and the EU3, Bush was able to secure multilateral support for his efforts. In July 2006, the UNSC demanded that Iran suspend all its enrichment activities; furthermore, when Iran continuously failed to comply, the UNSC adopted four resolutions between 2006 and 2008. At the same time, P5+1 also offered various economic incentives for Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment (Katzman, 2011). Thus, from 2006, the US was able – for the first time – to put multilateral pressure on Iran with the support of its allies and even countries which supported Iran's nuclear programme.

A significant shift was anticipated in US-Iran relations with Barak Obama's election to presidency in January 2009. Obama campaigned for the need of direct negotiations without preconditions (Takeyh & Maloney, 2011). The Iranian elections in June 2009 and the violent repression of the popular uprising against the re-election of Ahmadinejad, however, forced the Obama administration to reconsider its strategy (Maloney, 2010). Obama was concerned not only over issues of human rights, but also over the revelation in September 2009 about an underground enrichment facility in Fordow (Sterio, 2016), which provided yet another proof of Iran's consistent noncompliance. Obama subsequently reverted to additional sanctions with the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act (CISADA) of 2010, restricting Iran's ability to import gasoline (Katzman, 2011). Additionally, Obama tried to increase the pressure through multilateral means. He succeeded in securing the adoption of UNSC Resolution 1929 in June 2010, which strengthened previous resolutions, but steered clear from other issues, notably international investments in Iran's energy sector (Katzman, 2011). Nonetheless, by late 2010, Europe joined American efforts to contain Iran beyond the requirements of UNSC resolutions and therefore sanctioned the import of oil (Van de Graaf, 2013). Consequently, major multinational firms, which had not been affected by the previous American sanctions such as Caterpillar and GE, decided to pull out of Iran as its market no longer seemed sufficiently lucrative (Clawson, 2010). Two attempts at negotiation with the P5+1 in December 2010 and in January 2011 failed over Iran's continued refusal to curb its uranium enrichment (Katzman, 2011).

An opportunity to reach a diplomatic solution with Iran presented itself during Obama's second term of office with the election of the moderate Hassan Rouhani in 2013. The political climate within Iran created the conditions for possible policy changes, and Obama tried to leverage this moment and re-engage with Iran. Soon after Rohani's election, the two presidents conversed on the phone; this was the first direct presidential contact between the two countries since the 1979 revolution (Albarasneh & Khatib, 2019). In September 2013 Obama confirmed that they had exchanged letters underlying the US's desire to resolve the nuclear issue diplomatically and that the US was not seeking to pursue *regime change* within Iran (Albarasneh & Khatib, 2019). In November that year, the P5+1 and Iran reached an interim agreement; accordingly, Iran agreed to roll back parts of its nuclear programme and in return some sanctions were lifted. Finally, in July 2015, the JCPOA was signed, restricting Iran's nuclear programme while, in parallel, lifting the UNSC sanctions, EU energy and banking sanctions as well as parts of the American sanctions.

Iran and the 3C Framework

Coercion, carrots and confidence-building measures were employed in American efforts to dissuade Iran's nuclear programme. *Sanctions* were used as a means of coercion already from 1979 as a primary means of pressuring Iran, progressively intensifying under each president (Clawson, 2010). From 1996, the US targeted Iran's energy sector, as evidenced by the ILSA. The ILSA, on its own however, ultimately proved ineffective. Whilst it may have taken Iran some time to replace its old trading partners with alternative ones, in the long-run it was able to offset its losses (Torbat, 2005). Efforts to secure multilateral backing against Iran for over two decades proved challenging. Though American allies shared sympathies and may have placed some weak restrictions, their economic interests in Iran made them reluctant to risk losing their trade partnerships (Takeyh & Maloney, 2011). Garnering multilateral backing with the UNSC sanctions from 2006 proved to carry the most devastating impact on Iran's economy (Katzman, 2011), yet – as evidenced in the failing attempts at negotiation between Iran and the P5+1 between 2010 and 2012 – the sanctions proved insufficient to persuade Iran to alter its policies.

Coercion through *limited military force* was mostly expressed through the *threat* of resorting to force. The military option against Iran was continuously discussed across American administrations (Nader, 2012; Jervis, 2013; Albarasneh & Khatib, 2019) and maintained to varying degrees for over three decades. Moreover, the invasion of Iraq may be considered an *indirect military threat*, especially in the context of the Axis of Evil and in view of President G.W. Bush's unwillingness to negotiate with Iran. However, there may be two main factors which undercut the *credibility* of the threat throughout. It could be argued that Iran received mixed messages from American administrations veering from engagement to being militarily threatened. Furthermore, in light of the fact that American administration policies have kept the threat of resorting to force on the table while avoiding actually resorting to force may have numbed the Iranian regime to any sense of *urgency* to American verbal threats and subsequent repercussions.

The *carrots* Iran was offered were mostly in the form of lifting sanctions and the prospect of engagement with the US. It is important to note that, contrary to Libya, Iran experienced a heavy carrots-based approach from the EU. Iran was offered various incentives through the Critical Dialogue and later the Comprehensive Dialogue though these did not directly concern Iran's nuclear programme. Among these incentives were offers of better trade relations vis-a-vis the EU and a World Trade Organization membership (Noi, 2005). The promise of engagement with the US as a positive incentive, however, was hampered due to shifting domestic conditions within the US and Iran and further efforts were needed before Obama and Rouhani were eventually better poised to broker a plan of action with the P5+1. Carrots in exchange for the JCPOA included lifting most of the UNSC resolutions, European restrictions on trade as well as some of the American sanctions.

Given the continuous shifts in discourse within both the US and Iran, reciprocal *confidence-building* may well have been the hardest to establish between the two. In the US, discourse over Iran continues to evolve – as can be evidenced in Trump's unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA, the assassination of Qasem Soleimani, and President Biden's recent efforts to recreate the JCPOA – and it continues to send mixed messages. On its part, Iran seemed to display a cat-and-mouse diplomacy, agreeing to talks, but ultimately pulling out or showing reluctance to try and reach compromises (Bowen & Moran, 2014). Moreover, Iran repeatedly proved to be an

untrustworthy partner as both the IAEA and US reports related to concealed and covert nuclear developments in Iran. Obama was able to provide confidence-building measures sufficient for making a deal, notably by underlining that the US would not push for a regime change and asserting his desire for direct negotiations without preconditions. In addition, signing the deal under the framework of the P5+1 worked as an encouragement and further reassurance to Iran that the terms would be respected.

Ergo, the achievements vis-a-vis Iran, albeit limited, can be clearly attributed to the 3C framework. Though the combination of the 3C measures culminated in the JCPOA, the measures did not tend to complement one another but rather undermine their overall effectiveness and deflect their inter-related purpose. Thus, rather than increasing the costs of non-compliance via coercion, raising the benefits of compliance through carrots and creating a tangible window for a positive exchange with confidence-building, the strategic configuration of the tools employed in Iran could only help secure a limited success. Finally, the political changes that occurred in the US and especially in Iran challenged the creation of stable reciprocity.

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

The comparison of the Libyan and Iranian cases offers several pertinent insights into CD in general and into the strategic tools at its disposal in particular. Although limited or threatened use of force is a distinguishing element of CD, military coercion alone is unlikely to prove sufficient to pressure adversaries to halt and change their policies. This is evident in Reagan's targeted strikes in Libya and in the indirect military threat Iran experienced following the US intervention in Iraq. Moreover, CD is unlikely to succeed with sanctions alone either. Both Libya and Iran were exposed to American sanctions for decades with no immediate successes. The American unilateral sanctions proved ineffective whilst multilateral sanctions seemed to be more conducive yet still insufficient on their own. Both Libya and Iran were able to find alternative markets for their oil trade, thereby diminishing the intended detrimental effects of the unilateral American sanctions. Though American administrations failed to secure UNSC resolutions to impose the desired sanctions on Libyan and Iranian energy sectors, UNSC sanctions were nonetheless the most damaging and provided international legitimacy for American concerns.

Returning to the *status quo ante*, especially following multilateral sanctions, proved to be an effective incentive in encouraging Libyan and Iranian cooperation. Ergo, the best carrots offered to adversaries came mostly in the form of lifting sanctions. Third party presence was key element for confidence-building measures, bridging the confidence gaps and reassuring the adversary that promises would be kept. Contrary to Jakobsen's (2012) theory, however, beyond reassuring that compliance would be respected, the US had also disavowed intentions to instigate a regime change. The US had to continuously reassure the ruling regimes in Libya and Iran that it was not interested in pursuing regime change. As indicated in the theoretical framework chapter of this paper, Jakobsen (2012) recognizes that the 3Cs are *necessary* for success but are not *sufficient* to ensure it. This assertion is perhaps further illustrated by the finding that CD is more likely to succeed with an adversary that is willing to compromise. Both General Qaddafi and President Rouhani demonstrated a certain degree of willingness to come to the negotiating table.

Despite shared similarities, noteworthy are the differing levels of achieved success. The deal reached with Libya can be considered as a *comprehensive* and *lasting* success while that in Iran can only be regarded as *limited*. Two main reasons can account for the limited success of the JCPOA in this context. First, President Trump withdrew from the JCPOA in 2018 and Iran's nuclear development remains a key concern to the US. Second, as several Republican politicians in the US have argued, the JCPOA is inadequate by definition as it does not completely block Iran's pathway to building a nuclear weapon in the future. When considering Libya's dismantling its WMD programmes and the variances present in the 3C analyses, it becomes evident that the success of the 3C strategy in Iran's case is significantly overshadowed by the accomplishments achieved in Libya's case. G.W. Bush's CD strategy in Libya's case was layered upon the policies of previous administrations which served as long-term incentives and created the means for a long-term success. In this case, the combination of the 3Cs worked *complementarily* to each other. The strategic configuration of the tools previous administrations employed in Iran's case, however, undermined and contradicted rather than supplemented each other, thus diminishing any long-term incentives. Ergo, while Obama was able to reach a successful outcome, it was, inevitably, limited. Moreover, there was a *lack of urgency* in the Iranian case. Part of the general appeal of resorting to a CD strategy derives from its cumulative urgency over conventional diplomacy in isolation. With Libya, the invasion of Iraq and the interception of the BBC China ship cargo served as strong impetuses for Libya to take the deal while it was still being offered. Iran, however, experienced no such inducement. Hence, the absence of consistency, threat credibility and urgency might have harmed the overall implementation of CD in Iran's case.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine whether, had the 3Cs been applied consistently and in concert, President Obama could have forged a stronger deal that may have also been more palatable. The paper does however identify areas for future research, such as how the policies of previous administrations may still influence current CD strategies as well as the varying tactics within strategies that may cumulatively determine whether outcomes are comprehensive and lasting or only limited. Moreover, the effects of elites and leadership styles could be further analysed in relation to CD successes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Libyan and Iranian cases have demonstrated that the implementation of policies that conform to the 3C framework were key for a successful CD. The combination of coercion, carrots and confidence-building measures ultimately yielded the relative achievements in each case. By examining the two cases and confirming the merits of Jakobsen's (2012) theory, this research adds to the general CD literature and makes several empirically-based observations on a range of strategic tools to improve George's (1994) abstract CD theory. The observations allow for the formulation of several pertinent recommendations for future policy-makers. These include maintaining the credibility of military threat over time, opting for multilateral sanctions, which can later turn into powerful carrots when lifted, and, lastly, as part of the confidence-building measures, finding ways to reassure the adversary that policy change, rather than regime change, is the goal. Finally, this paper has shown that the 3C framework is still incomplete and needs to be further elaborated into a fully-fledged and comprehensive strategy, thereby making it not only more appealing, but also viably operative for future policy-making.

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