

An Analysis of French and Iranian Political Cartoons on Trump's Withdrawal from the JCPOA

Zeinab Ghasemi Tari*

Assistant Professor, Faculty of World Studies, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran

Hadi Dolatabadi**

Corresponding Author, Assistant Professor, Faculty of World Studies,
University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran

Abstract

The present study was conducted to investigate how Trump's unilateral withdrawal from Iran's nuclear deal on May 8, 2018 has been framed in political cartoons published in French and Iranian media. In this paper, a thematic analysis of published cartoons available on Google images from May 8, 2018 to June 8, 2018 was conducted in both French and Farsi. Five categories of news frames identified by Semetko and Valkenburg (2002) were applied on selected cartoons to observe how these frames are used on political cartoons in French and Iranian news outlets. Findings of the study showed that withdrawal of Trump from Iran's nuclear deal has been framed mostly as a threat for France and has been considered in a bilateral perspective between USA and France. For the Iranian press the withdrawal is mostly considered as a result of Trump's mental instability and P5+1 inaction.

Keywords: *Political Cartoons, JCPOA, France, Iran, Donald Trump, Framing*

Received: 2020-12-03

Review: 2021-01-04

Accepted: 2021-01-09

Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs, Vol. 11, No. 1, Winter- Spring 2020, pp. 33-58

* Email: ghasemitari@ut.ac.ir

** Email: hadi.dolatabadi@ut.ac.ir

Introduction

While scholarly attention has been paid mostly to investigate textual or verbal discourse, visual news discourse is still a relatively under-studied realm of political discourse. As the quip goes, “A picture is worth a thousand words,” newspaper editorialist cartoons use this medium to communicate complicated political and social messages. Edwards & Winkler (1987) define political cartoon as a “graphic presentation typically designed in a one-panel, non-continuing format to make an independent statement or observation on political events or social policy” (p. 360). As a form of visual discourse, political cartoons typically combine humor, satire, hyperbole, and artistic skills to highlight and accentuate political and social events. Purpose of a cartoon is informing, sensitizing, educating, persuading, or passing a message via a drawing, often accompanied by text in order to impress the public. Meaning production in political cartoons is commonly achieved through, “humorous pictorial representation and political butt or critical stance expressed in the cartoon” (Marín-Arrese, 2015, p. 1). Thus, it serves to reinforce or reshape readers’ minds regarding their beliefs or points of view on specific sociopolitical issues, as well as their social and cultural attitudes (Schilperoord & Maes, 2009).

Joan L. Connors suggests that political cartoons “do need not to follow principles of objectivity we expect in news stories; rather, they are expressing opinions in parallel with newspaper editorials and opinion columns” (2005, p. 480). They have different functions and are used in different contexts to obtain a certain goal. According to Kelley-Romano and Westgate, political

cartoons “can function in a multiplicity of ways as commentary, critique, memorial, and criticism” (2007, p. 755). Thus, the cartoonists use various tools to serve these purposes- including employing symbolic elements, colors, or body positions, and applying exaggeration of one or more characteristics of personages present in the cartoon. Medhurst and DeSousa argue that political cartoons convey meaning and message by “the use of line and form, exaggeration of physiognomical features, placement within the frame, relative size of objects, relation of text to visual imagery, and rhythmic montage” (1983, p. 236). Connors maintains that, “political cartoons provide humorous commentary, often using exaggeration of events or individual characteristics, on contemporary issues and events” (2010, p. 300).

Then, political cartoons aimed at impressing their audience serve as a stimulus for public opinion. As Josh Greenberg put it, “Political cartoons are both informative and persuasive. Cartoons render normative judgments about social issues by employing a variety of journalistic conventions such as figures of speech, metaphors, and irony” (2002, p. 185). In fact, they are representative of striking periods and events and contribute to social and political debates.

The present paper is concerned with the ways in which political cartoonists of French media have framed Trump’s withdrawal from Iran’s nuclear deal (known as Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action). Thus, all cartoons affiliated with French media and available in Google images from May 8, 2018 (the date announced by Trump as US withdrawal) to June 8, 2018 were analyzed to study themes and patterns of framing. The researchers were concerned with French political cartoons, as France was an active member in the P5+1 vs. Iran negotiations in relation to Iran’s nuclear deal in 2015 and new French president, Emmanuel Macron, tried to play an active role more than other members of the P5+1, to conserve the US in the deal, indeed by taking to account French interests in reestablishing economic

relations with Iran.

By conducting a case study on political cartoons about Trump's withdrawal from Iran's nuclear deal in French media, this paper attempts to answer the following questions:

RQ1-What types of news frames (according to Semetko and Valkenburg, 2002) have been chosen in these political cartoons?

RQ 2-How French critical position vis à vis Trump's decision to withdraw from Iran's nuclear deal has been reflected in French cartoons?

I. Theoretical Framework

A frame is a central organizing idea for making sense of events suggesting what is at issue, "framing is often considered as a necessary tool for reducing complexity of an issue, given constraints of their respective media related to news holes and airtime" (Scheufele, D. A., & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 12). Entman defines framing as selecting "some aspects of a perceived reality" to enhance their salience "so as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (Entman, 1993, p. 53). Todd Gitlin explains framing as "principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation" created to profile "what matters" (1980, p. 6). Frames set parameters "in which citizens discuss public events" (Tuchman, 1978, p. IV) through "persistent selection, emphasis, and exclusion" (Gitlin, 1980, p. 7). Dorman and Farhang state that frames "are simply constructions of social reality" selecting specific information such as who is quoted in the article, what details are emphasized, and so on (1987, p. 8). They believe that facts are not often of prime significance, "but rather kind of interpretation that facts receive" (1987, p. 44), and the context given to a series of events. "In journalism, context and emphasis are everything, for they transform literal truths into reassuring and legitimate acts in one instance or threatening and illegitimate behavior in another" (p. 44). Framing occurs when the press chooses "what to present and what not to present in media

coverage” (Dimitrova, 2006, p. 79). In addition, selection, and exclusion of information in “news framing can occur [...] through emphasis and elaboration” (p. 79).

The present study was conducted to investigate how Trump’s unilateral withdrawal from Iran’s nuclear deal (JCPOA) on May 8, 2018 has been framed in political cartoons published in French media. In this paper, five categories of news frames identified by Semetko and Valkenburg (2002), about nature of news in the U.S and Europe were applied including conflict, human interest, responsibility, economic consequences, and morality frames.

In their analysis of news frames, Semetko and Valkenburg (2002) argued that a deductive approach toward news involves predefining certain frames as content analytic variables to verify the extent to which these frames occur in the news (p. 94). Thus, the researcher is provided with types of frames and the frames that are not defined a priori may not be overlooked (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2002, p. 95). This approach has its own advantages, “it can be replicated easily, coping with large samples, and easily detecting differences in framing between media (e.g., television vs. press) and within media (e.g., highbrow news programs or newspapers vs. tabloid-style media)” (p. 95).

Accordingly, Semetko and Valkenburg investigated the following five news frames as identified in earlier studies:

In *Conflict frame*, attention of the audience is captured via portrayal of conflict between individuals, groups, or institutions as a means of capturing audience interest (Neuman, Just & Crigler, 1992, pp. 61–62). Semetko and Valkenburg argue that political elites often tend to reduce complex political debates to excessively simplistic conflicts. As a result, the news media have been criticized for inducing public cynicism and mistrust of political leaders (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997).

Human interest frame attempts to humanize and add an emotional aspect to the issue, event or problem (Neuman et al., 1992) to produce a product capturing and retaining audience interest (Bennett, 1995).

Economic consequences frame reports an event, problem, or issue in terms of its economic consequences on an individual, group, institution, region, or country (Neuman et al. 1992). Extensive effect of an event has an important news value, and economic consequences are often considerable (Graber, 1993).

Morality frame puts the event, problem, or issue in context of moral/religious prescriptions. This is often referred to indirectly—through quotation or inference—with someone else raising the question (Neuman et al., 1992). Such a story may include moral messages or offer specific social prescriptions about how to behave.

Responsibility frame presents an issue or problem so as to attribute the responsibility for its cause or solution either to government or to an individual or a group (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2002).

Thus, in the present paper, this deductive framework is used on the current case study to detect differences in framing between media in order to answer to the research questions.

Political cartoons of the present research, a case study of Trump's withdrawal from Iran's nuclear deal as depicted in French news media were collected through the following process: The first selection of cartoons was made by searching a combination of keywords "caricature Iran-États-Unis accord nucléaire" (French equivalent of "cartoons related to Iran-US nuclear deal") in Google images accessed from May 8, 2018 (the date announced by Trump as US withdrawal) to June 8, 2018. This period was chosen to provide an up-to-date corpus of cartoons illustrating perspective of French news outlets on the issue as the media began to cover Iran's nuclear deal, Trump's withdrawal extensively and relevant data started to appear in media during this particular period.

To conduct a thematic analysis, this study focused on cartoons concerned with Iran's nuclear issue: thus, all cartoons affiliated with French media were selected and those belonging to unaffiliated sources or non-French cartoons (e.g. Russian news

website “Sputnik” in French, which had numerous cartoons in relation to this subject) were removed from selection process. Also, those cartoons appeared on Google images search but did not fall in the research time duration were removed. Totally, 8 French cartoons were obtained, which were categorized thematically.

Background of Contemporary Relation of Iran and France

Technical and Nuclear Relations: With the formation of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran in 1974, Iran signed a contract with France in 1975 in which France was supposed to build five nuclear power plants, to provide Iran with enriched uranium to fuel them, and to establish a nuclear research center. This collaboration lasted until 1978. Iran, besides, has provided a \$ 1 billion loan to invest in building Eurodif nuclear facility. Iran and France established SOFIDIS (a 60% stake in France and a 40% stake in Iran), which owned a 25% stake in Eurodiff, along with Belgium, Spain, and Sweden. Since Iran owned 10% of its shares, it should have owned 10% of the enriched uranium produced by this center. The contract for the construction of two nuclear power plants in Darkhovin near Ahvaz in South-West, with a payment of two billion dollars to the companies Framatome, Espy-Batinoul, and Alstom Atlantique, was signed between Tehran and Paris after two years and the contract determined that 350 Iranian experts should be sent to France for training. With the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Iran suspended its contract with Eurodif demanding repayment of an Iranian \$ 1 billion loan to the company while cutting off its payments to the company for uranium enrichment. Eurodif sued Iran, and the court ruled in favor of confiscating Iranian assets from the company. On the other hand, the French company Faramatome suspended its activities in Iran on October 4 under the pretext of non-compliance with its financial obligations by Iran, and Iran subsequently canceled the contract for the construction of nuclear reactors. On the other hand, François Mitterrand stated in one of his speeches in 1995 that despite Iran's

shareholding, France would not deliver any enriched uranium to Iran and refuse to return \$ 1 billion. (Marini et al., 2014)

Iran-Iraq War and France's Non-Neutrality: After the establishment of the Republic Islamic of Iran, bilateral relations between Tehran and Paris began to deteriorate. The reception of several Iranian figures who have come into opposition with the new Iranian regime in France, such as the last prime minister of Shah Shapour Bakhtiar and the first president of the Islamic Republic Abolhassan Bani Sadr, also soured relations. (Piron, 2019)

For Adam Tarock “A particular bone of contention between the two countries was France's supply of arms to Baghdad that continued throughout the eight-year old war between Iran and Iraq” (1999:46) In fact, with Iraq attacking Iran in the wake of Saddam's hegemonic ambitions in the Middle East, the Arab and European countries, which were worried about the new revolutionary and ideological regime in Iran, generally sided with Iraq and continued to supply Iraqi military items despite UN sanctions. Iraq spent \$ 40 billion on purchasing weapons from 22 countries. Among European countries, France and Germany provided the most aid to Baghdad. In 1980, with the start of the war, France stayed beside Iraq, which was France's arms industry's main customer and the country's second-largest oil exporter, and did not pay attention to the UN arms sanctions. It thus broke the Soviet monopoly on arms sales to Iraq by adhering to contracts signed in 1977 and 1979 for the sale of 60 Mirage F1s and 53 others, which were added in 1985. French arms sales to Iraq continued in the same way: In 1981-82, worth 28 billion francs, 150 Alphajet aircraft assembled in Iraq, Crotal, Roland, Exhaust, AXA tanks, and the leasing of supersonic aircraft. With the provision of pilots to the Iraqi army, the French army has been one of the most important military collaborators against Iran and alongside Iraq. (Boudier, 1987: 410) Abuzai, one of Saddam's generals, revealed that Iraqi pilots had spent a month in France training to fly the planes. (Woods, 2011: 209) France thus became

the first supplier of Iraqi weapons to the West. (Krause, 1991) French aids to Iraq did not go unanswered, and the Ba'athist regime paid \$ 1 billion to the French Socialist Party in 1988. (Barnett & Martin, 2004) One of the consequences of France's support for Iraq was the problem faced by French troops and diplomats in Lebanon in the 1980s, who were targeted and harmed by Iranian supporters in Lebanon. (Ashton & Gibson, 2013: 224-225)

Thus, the Iran-Iraq war became a period of divergence between Iran and France. In France, however, the delivery of 450,000 bombs between 1983 and 1985 to Iraq, with the knowledge of the French Ministry of Defense and the French presidency, led to the Luchaire scandal. On the other hand, during these years, the French National Gunpowder and Explosives Company (SNPE) delivered 250 tons of gunpowder to Iran. Matra Company sold radar systems to Iran. Thomson-CSF delivered 200 night-vision cameras to the Iranian Air Force (Ashton, Gibson, 2013: 223)

Economic obstacles in this period were mostly related to Iran's request to close the economic development department of the French embassy and Air France offices, as well as the repayment of the \$ 1 billion loan that Mohammad Reza Shah had lent to France to build the Eurodif nuclear enrichment plant.

The End of the War: The Closeness Period: With the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in June 1989 and the election of Ayatollah Khamenei as the leader and Hashemi Rafsanjani as president, the ambassadors of two countries that had withdrawn following a decade of tensions, gradually returned to the embassies and a new chapter of relations opened between Tehran and Paris. At this time, the talks between the representatives of the two countries, which had begun on the Eurodif case and the French debt to Iran, were tied to other issues as the two countries became more acquainted with each other's view points on international issues. In December 1991, Paris-Tehran nuclear talks were concluded and Iran's right as a shareholder in Eurodif was recognized. Between

1995 and 1999, Total signed and operated four contracts for the investment and operation of Iran's oil fields worth \$ 4 billion. (Marini et al., 2014) With the meeting of President Mohammad Khatami in Paris, the level of Iran-France relations strengthened and the volume of trade reached an unprecedented level. (Izadi, 2009)

Following the Iranian nuclear issue, France, Britain and Germany formed the European Troika in 2004 to negotiate with Iran on nuclear enrichment. After several rounds, the talks ultimately failed. Besides, with the coming to power of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in June 2006 and following the problems in the nuclear issue due to his anti-Israel positions, the relations between the two countries worsened. (Izadi, 2012:49-50) This gap widened as a result of the election of Sarkozy as President of France and the presence of Bernard Kouchner as French Minister of Foreign Affairs who were close to the US position. The second term of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's presidency was accompanied by the intensification of the nationalist discourse on nuclear energy, and Iran's approaches to the issue of nuclear enrichment took Iran's case to the Security Council.

The Era of Sanctions: In the late 2000s and early 2010s, three levels of sanctions were imposed on Iran to force Tehran to abandon its nuclear program suspected of pursuing military purposes: United Nations Security Council, European Union, US extraterritorial sanctions

As a result of these sanctions, Iran's economic activities with many countries around the world, including France, were affected. (Farrar-Wellman, 2010) The overseas activities of Sepah and Melli banks (with branches in France) were stopped and restrictions on the export of LC to Iran were formed. Following the 2010 sanctions, sanctions were imposed on oil and gas equipment (loans and investments), investment insurance, Iran Shipping Company, and Iranians banks such Saderat (with branches in France), Post Bank, Mellat, Refah, Sina. Additionally, a ban on helping to manage Iran's public debt was

imposed. France shared in the pressure, and the EIH, the joint bank of Iran and Germany, was closed at France's request.

Following the 2012 sanctions, Iran's oil industry was completely sanctioned. Iranian tanker insurance was suspended. The sale of crude metals and alloys, petrochemicals, gold, and precious metals to Iran was banned. Tejarat Bank (with a branch in France) was closed at the request of Germany and the assets of the Central Bank of Iran in Europe were blocked. With the extraterritorial sanctions on Iran, which came into force on July 1, 2013, the Iranian automobile sector, along with companies supplying and exporting parts, parent companies, and credit institutions, were sanctioned by the United States, giving foreign companies a one-month deadline to leave Iran. The French company PSA, which signed a contract with General Motors in 2012, left Iran despite extensive cooperation and high sales. The result of this exit was that at the time of the embargo, Iranian car factories that assembled French cars turned to Chinese parts, and thus, despite the construction of French-branded cars in Iran, in this period, income did not go to the French mother factories. This became important when one knows that 35 to 40% of cars made in Iran are French. It should also be noted that before 2013, the automobile sector accounted for more than 60% of French exports to Iran. (Marini et al., 2014)

Iran's Nuclear Deal: Trump's decision to pull the US out of nuclear deal with Iran and re-impose sanctions significantly hit a number of French businesses working in Iran. French companies which had triumphantly returned to Iranian market then found Trump's decision a difficult episode in their relation with the United States.

French president repeatedly expressed his regret about Trump's policy toward Iran's nuclear deal, as French companies had to stop their business with Iran, which in long run will bring about significant losses for French industry. These departures cost a lot on French economics. For instance, Airbus had to cancel its \$ 25 billion contract (Lawder, 2018) as Renault did the same with

its \$780-million agreement (Nussbaum, 2018) or PSA which canceled \$818-million investment (Rosemain, 2018). Total left the giant South Pars gas field for which it had signed a project worth \$4.8 billion (Selby-Green, 2018).

However, mismatch between economic power of the United States and Iran explains France desperate abandonment of Iranian market: with the US GDP, approximately thirty times higher than that of Iran (Nation Master), and the EU economy more or less comparable to that of the US, the multinationals are not really reluctant to choose between the access to Iran vis-à-vis US markets. The US dollar is also the world's dominant currency reserve and main medium for international trade. As a result, any prospects for even minor sanctions are unbearable for US allies (Rosenberg, 2018).

Trump's Presidency: Since his presidential campaign, Donald Trump was harshly critical toward Iran's nuclear deal expected to be lifted "all UN Security Council sanctions as well as multilateral and national sanctions related to Iran's nuclear program including steps on access in areas of trade, technology, finance, and energy" (the JCPOA preamble and Provisions, Article V).

During his campaign, Trump had promised renegotiation of the deal as one of his main issues in his foreign policy (Jacobson, 2017), stating, "This deal, if I win, will be a totally different deal" (Trump, 2015).

Since Donald Trump took office, he began his efforts to dismantle the deal, which he had repeatedly called as "terrible", or "one of the worst deals" in history; eventually on May 8, 2018, the United States officially withdrew from the deal and issued new round of sanctions against Iran.

New measures labeled by Trump as the "toughest ever" are believed to be the strongest sanctions regime imposed by Washington against a country. A few months after Trump's withdrawal, the US has not only reinstated all sanctions lifted by 2015 deal, but it has also blacklisted 300 Iranian individuals and

entities, and sanctioned crucial oil, banking, and transportation sectors (U.S. Department of the Treasury).

While withdrawal caused admiration and cheer by the United States conservatives, various European countries that were among signatories of the deal including UK, France, and Germany, as well as China and Russia expressed concern and remorse at the decision.

During the period Trump suspended his decision to withdraw for a while, French president, Emmanuel Macron, tried hard to convince Trump to stay in the nuclear deal with Iran, not only because of the French interests which were expected to be obtained by French companies after the JCPOA, but also to avoid desperate issue for a multilateral approach used in this deal in an international context where Americans are unique superpower. Obviously, he did not succeed and Trump acted upon what he has promised to do since his presidential campaigns.

Findings

Trump's decision for withdrawal was blamed not just by politicians but also in the media. Papers and editorial notes were published and many cartoonists mark their opinions about the event all over the world. The following offers a thematic analysis of published Iranian and French political cartoons available in Google images from May 8, 2018 (the date announced by Trump for US withdrawal) to June 8, 2018, which were selected as explained in Introduction Section to make corpus of the analysis.

II. Iranian Political Cartoons on Trump's Withdrawal

Trump Lacks Mental Stability: In several cartoons published by the Iranian newspapers, Trump is depicted as mentally instable man or an incontrollable infant. The cartoon in Figure 1 shows Trump as an infant in his diaper (implying a lack of self-control). Playing with the match and burning a paper with the title "US polishes the JCPOA's spirit" shows Trump's impulse to start fires deliberately, a metaphor for warmongering.



Figure 1. [US Polishes the JCPOA's Spirit], Shargh News Agency, June, 2, 2018

Another similar cartoon, figure 2, depicts Trump running uncontrollably toward a sign holder with the JCPOA and IAEA written on that, with TNT around his waist and ready to explode himself. An unknown figure is shouting, “bring his pills...he has gone crazy again”.



Figure 2. [Trump's Terrorist Attack on the JCPOA], Fars News Agency, May 24, 2018

Cartoons published by other Iranian newspapers portray similar themes that depict Trump as the one who is responsible for the failure of the JCPOA with his childlike, irrational and impulsive

behavior.

US Shot Itself in the Foot: Another major framing of Trump's unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA in Iranian newspapers, is representing Trump and by an extension the United States as the party that has deprived itself from the benefits of the JCPOA. The cartoon depicts Trump's podium on the verge of collapse and the US flag (as a symbol of American integrity and identity) being shattered. Similar cartons in Fars, Mashregh, Khorasannews and donya-e-eghtesad are published on the Americans as the major loser of Iran deal withdrawal.



Figure 3. [Abandoning the JCPOA: A Historical Regret for the United States], Tasnim News Agency, May 8, 2018

Trump Disappointing Allies: Many cartoons refer to Trump alienating US partners, Figure 5 shows “European allies” and other members of the p5+1 countries all one side of a teeter-totter and Trump who apparently sitting on the other side of the broad had decided to leave the game and his partners look disappointed probably referring the expectations of several parties that economic and political ties with Iran would be expanded after the JCPOA. The cartoon is also reflective the inaction and powerlessness other signatories of the Iran nuclear deal.



Figure 4. [A Spoiled Politian Spoils the Game], Nishkhand, 13 May, 2018.

III. French Political Cartoons on Trump's Withdrawal

Frustration of French President: Among caricatures spotted, theme of the French's frustration, represented by French president has an important place. Frustrated and deprived of advantages acquired by France, French president finds himself in a weak position, facing a person like Trump who ignores him and does what suits himself. In drawings, Trump is presented as bold and blunt, indifferent to his entourage, without taking into account considerations of "his allies": closed eyes seen in the character representing Trump in several drawings clearly testify this impression. But as thoughtless as Trump's decision appears, he knows how to draw benefits from it.

In a cartoon spotted in French news site *present.fr*, cartoonist Chard portrays three characters: Macron, Trump and a woman that could be designated as personification of France insofar as she has worn the Phrygian cap, worn by French revolutionaries and today is a symbol of Marianne on official emblem of France. She also wears a tricolor skirt in colors of French flag. Behind her, Trump, standing tall, eyes closed is tearing the nuclear agreement in total composure; the woman challenges the character of Emanuel Macron by reproaching this result. "I thought he listens to you" she says an affirmation showing that the woman,

representing French nation and therefore , interests of France, relied on vigilance of Macron and his conviction to avoid this “disaster”. With his legs and hands tight, showing his discomfort and frustration, Macron replies that Trump only listens to himself when he says “the same thing” that Trump says.

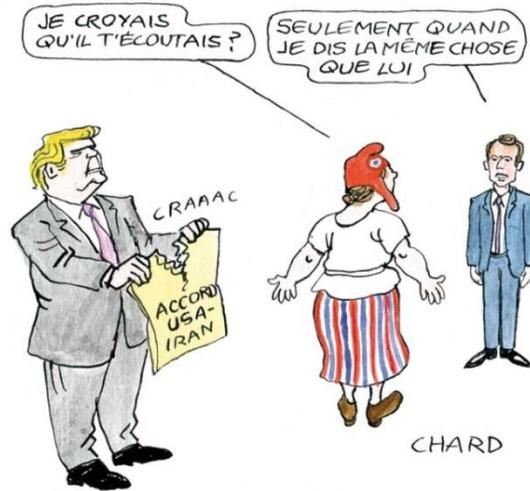


Figure 5. Christian Daisug, “Trump torpille l’accord sur le nucléaire iranien” [Trump torpedoes Iran's nuclear deal], *Present.fr*, May 9, 2018.

Denunciation of American Unilateralism: Cartoons identified in French corpus clearly denounce American unilateralism. The *Echo* cartoonist resorted to animalization metaphor by presenting Trump as a shark with blond hair, still with his eyes closed moves forward at full speed while biting with fine teeth, gripping its prey, which here is Iranian flag. A small fish trying to catch the shark represents France with a head likened to the face of Macron and carrying a French flag saying, “important thing is that he heard the voice of France.” However, despite France having made efforts to prevent Trump from taking a decision endangering the French interests, the Trump-Shark does not hesitate to follow his own intuition of attacking Iran.



**Figure 6. Placide, “Trump déchire l'accord sur le nucléaire iranien”
[Trump tears up Iran's nuclear deal], I-Echo.fr, May 9, 2018.**

This unilateralism is also visible in drawings where the cartoonists portray the nuclear agreement as “USA-Iran agreement”, which is contrary to multilateral nature of the agreement between Iran and the P5 + 1. In this regard, *Charlie Hebdo*'s cartoonist did not hesitate to take title of “Iran rejected by Trump” on occasion of the American withdrawal from the JCPOA. This drawing depicts an Iran turned into a country trying to mimic America's policies to “please” Trump. From his verbal signs “slogan of *Make Iran great again*” to his appearance (Trump's haircut followed by the Pasdarans),¹ through his obsessions (excessive use of Tweeter), this drawing not only includes features related to Trump, but also American culture (Mc Do, Hollywood) or other famous American personalities (Spielberg, Harvey Weinstein). According to the cartoon, Iran may well assimilate to the American life style and conform to Trump's obsessions, this staging promoted by a “mullah” in middle of the drawing failed to prevent Trump from “rejecting” Iran. The latter then takes the United States as its main interlocutor and exit of Trump is considered as an American rejection vis-à-vis Iran; meanwhile France is absent in all these

1. Assistant Professor of American Studies, n the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)

transformations.

Trump's Bellicose: The French vision of Trump's bellicosity has been reflected in cartoons attributing warlike characteristics to the current US president. On cover of the *Courrier International*, Trump's face, sketched by a drawing, recognizable by blond hair, is masked in the middle by a bomb thrown; which seems to be by an airplane. Arrangement of the bomb gives a particular effect to drawing with an upper part of the bomb having two "wings" conform to places where the eyes should always be, and are closed to lower part of this bomb constituting nose of the character. A big nose staged by a bomb recalls famous story of Pinocchio and his nose which becomes long when he indulges in lies. This arrangement of the bomb on this face also gives an impression of a clown face, involving a virulent criticism towards Trump who is designated as a dynamiter [le dynamiteur] by the title.

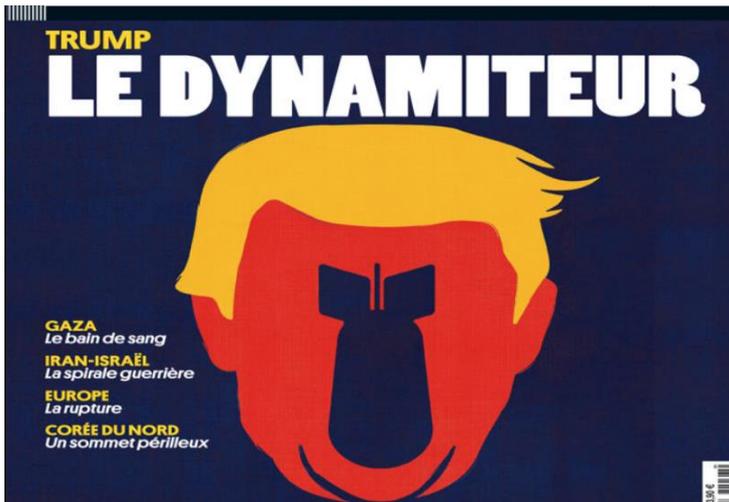


Figure 7. "Trump Le Dynamiteur" [Trump the Dynamiter], *Courrier international*, May 17, 2018.

Another drawing spotted at *tvlibertes.fr* illustrates Trump and Macron standing side by side. Trump positions himself as a cowboy and shoots with his hand gesture to the front with an open

mouth shouting “Bâââm” thus targeting Iran’s nuclear deal. Trump’s body posture, yelling and frowning, as well as fear found in the character representing Macron who does not dare to look ahead, hiding his eyes with his hands, shows danger regarding withdrawal from the nuclear agreement for world peace in general. Moreover, expression on Trump’s face also shows that he feels no pity while shooting and thus, occurrence of a war is predictable.



Figure 8. Ignace, “Far West au Proche-Orient” [Far West in Middle East], *Tvlibertes.com*, May 9, 2018.

Conclusion

In analyzed cartoons, Trump’s decision to withdraw from the JCPOA was perceived differently by Iranian and French cartoonist. However, similarities can be found in the ways in which French and Iranian cartoonists depict the withdrawal. French cartoons considered it as an act against the French interest requiring a reaction from French politicians who appear powerless in relation to this matter. However, an analysis of Iranian cartoons shows that Iranian cartoonists consider Trump’s decision as major blow to his own image and the United States. Also Iranian cartoonists were critical of other P5+1 countries’ inaction.

It can be argued that, the JCPOA, negotiated by the P5+1

countries was framed mostly in French media as a Franco-American interaction, in this regard reaction of French president vis-à-vis Trump's withdrawal is required. This shows how American unilateralism is a matter of concern for French media and US-France conflict of interest is a keyword in Franco-American relations, particularly in Trump's era. Thus, a multilateral agreement between the P5+1 dismantled by Trump's unilateral withdrawal has been framed in analyzed cartoons from a bilateral perspective. On one hand, this shows somehow anti-American policy in French vision and on the other hand importance of recognizing the France as a great power in international relations. For the Iranian cartoonist the blame of the Trump's withdrawal is also shared by the European Union.

Absence of human interest frame and morality frame in both Iranian and French cartons is of significance. Both French and Iranian cartoonist are focused on the political aspect of the withdrawal and repercussions on Iranian population is ignored. French cartoonists have framed this act in a perspective of bilateral relations between France and US and somehow ignored its effect on main stakeholders of this agreement, namely Iran. For the Iranian cartoonist the political aspect is the major area of concern.

References

- Antony Barnett & Martin Bright (2004), *France's Saddam deals revealed*, 10 oct 2004 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/oct/10/france.iraq>
- Ariel Farrar-Wellman, (2010) *France-Iran Foreign Relations*, July 06, 2010 <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/france-iran-foreign-relations>
- Azizi, M (June, 2, 2018). سوهان آمريکا بر روح برجام! [US Polishes the JCPOA's Spirit], Shargh News Agency: Retrieved from <https://www.sarpoosh.com/images/political-picture/donaldtrump-game-barjam960329-cartoon.html>
- Bennett, W. Lance (2016) *News: the politics of illusion*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Benoit, William, Andrew KLYUKOVSKI, John McHALE, and David AIRNE (2001) 'A fantasy theme analysis of political cartoons on the Clinton-Lewinsky-Starr affair'. *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 18 (4): 377-394.
- Bormann, Ernest G., Jolene Koester, and Janet Bennett (1978) 'Political cartoons and salient rhetorical fantasies: An empirical analysis of the '76 presidential campaign''. *Communication Monographs*. 45 (4): 317-329.
- Boudier Christian (1987) « Les ventes d'armes ». In: *Politique étrangère*, n°2 - 52^e année 1987. pp. 410-414.
- Calogero, Rachel M., and Brian Mullen (2008) 'About face: Facial prominence of George W. Bush in political cartoons as a function of war'. *The Leadership Quarterly* 19 (1): 107-116.
- Cappella, Joseph N., and Kathleen Hall Jamieson (2010) *Spiral of cynicism: the press and the public good*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Connors, Joan L. (2005) 'Visual Representations of the 2004 Presidential Campaign : Political Cartoons and Popular Culture References'. *American Behavioral Scientist* 49 (3): 479-487.
- Connors, Joan L. (2010) 'Barack Versus Hillary: Race, Gender, and Political Cartoon Imagery of the 2008 Presidential Primaries'. *American Behavioral Scientist* 54 (3): 298-312.
- Connors, Joan L. (2014). "'Binders of Bayonets for Big Bird": Analysis of Political Cartoon Images of the 2012 Presidential Debates'. *American*

- renegotiate-iran-deal/
- Jonathan Piron (2019) *Les relations France-Iran, entre ouvertures et tensions*, March 21, 2019, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/fr/decryptages/les-relations-france-iran-entre-ouvertures-et-tensions>
- Keith Krause, (1991) « Transferts d'armement et gestion des conflits: le cas de la guerre Iran-Irak (Partie 1) », *Cultures & Conflits* [on line], 04 | Winter 1991.
- Kelley-Romano, Stephanie, and Victoria Westgate (2007) 'BLAMING BUSH An analysis of political cartoons following Hurricane Katrina'. *Journalism Studies* 8 (5): 755-773.
- King, E. (2018, August 12) *Politico: Trump uses Yellow Jackets to attack Paris climate deal*. Retrieved from <https://www.politico.eu/article/donald-trump-climate-paris-yellow-jackets-emmanuel-macron/>
- Koetzle, Wm. and Thomas L. Brunell (1996) 'Lip-Reading, Draft-Dodging, and Perot-Noia : Presidential Campaigns in Editorial Cartoons'. *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*. 1 (4): 94-115.
- Lamb, C., & Burns, J. (1996, March). What's wrong with this picture? The anti-incumbent bias of cartoon during the '92 campaign. Paper presented to the Newspaper Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Southeast Colloquium, Roanoke, VA.
- Lawder, D. (2018, May 8), *Reuters: U.S. Treasury's Mnuchin: Revoking Boeing, Airbus licenses to sell jets to Iran*. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-boeing/u-s-treasurys-mnuchin-revoking-boeing-airbus-licenses-to-sell-jets-to-iran-idUSKBN1I92Q6>
- Le, Elisabeth (2006) *The spiral of "anti-other rhetoric": discourses of identity and the international media echo*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins B.V.
- Lepri C. (2010) 'Le paradoxe américain du président Sarkozy'. *Revue Internationale Et Stratégique* 77 (1): 121-127.
- Marín-Arrese, J. I. (2015). "Political Cartoon Discourse" in *The International Encyclopedia of Language and Social Interaction* (eds K. Tracy, T. Sandel and C. Ilie).
- Mazid. Bahaa-Eddin M. (2008) "Cowboy and misanthrope: a critical (discourse) analysis of Bush and bin Laden cartoons". *Discourse & Communication*. 2 (4): 433-457.
- Nation Master (n.d.), *Economy Stats: compare key data on Iran & United States*. Retrieved from <https://www.nationmaster.com/country-info/compare/Iran/United-States/Economy>
- Neuman, W. Russell, Marion R. Just, and Ann N. Crigler (1992) *Common Knowledge News and the Construction of Political Meaning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Nigel Ashton, Bryan Gibson (2013), *The Iran-Iraq War New International*

- Perspectives*, Routledge, 250 p.
- Nussbaum, A. (2018, July 27) *Bloomberg: Renault Likely to Pull out of Iran Because of U.S. Sanctions*. Retrieved from <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-07-27/renault-likely-to-pull-out-of-iran-because-of-u-s-sanctions>
- Ourdan, R. (2010, Novembre 30) *Le Monde: WikiLeaks : Nicolas Sarkozy, "l'Américain"*. Retrieved from https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2010/11/30/wikileaks-nicolas-sarkozy-l-americaain_1447153_3210.html
- Philippe Marini, Michèle André, Jean-Claude Frécon, Aymeri de Montesquiou, Philippe Dallier & Gérard Miquel (2014), *La France et l'Iran : des relations économiques et financières à reconstruire*, https://www.senat.fr/rap/r13-605/r13-605_mono.html#toc5
- Pirooz Izadi (2012) *French- Iranian Relations: A New Realistic Perspective*, *Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Spring 2012, pp. 37-56
- Pirooz Izadi, *Iran and France: Shattered Dreams*, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/iran-and-france-shattered-dreams>, 29.01.2009.
- Rosemain, M. (2018, June 4) *Reuters: France's PSA suspends joint ventures in Iran to avoid U.S. sanctions*. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-peugeot/frances-psa-begins-to-suspend-its-joint-ventures-in-iran-idUSKCN1J026R>
- Rosenberg, E. (2018, October 10) *Foreign Affairs: The EU Can't Avoid U.S. Sanctions on Iran*. Retrieved from <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/europe/2018-10-10/eu-cant-avoid-us-sanctions-iran>
- Scheufele, Dietram A., and David Tewksbury (2007) 'Framing, agenda setting, and priming: the evolution of three media effects models'. *Journal of Communication* 57 (1), 9-20.
- Schilperoord, J., and A. Maes (2009) 'Visual metaphoric conceptualization in editorial cartoons'. *Applications Of Cognitive Linguistics* 11: 213-242.
- Selby-Green, M. (2018, August 21) *Business Insider: French oil giant Total pulls out of \$4.8 billion Iran deal under US pressure*. Retrieved from <https://www.businessinsider.com/total-pulls-out-of-48-billion-iranian-oil-project-under-us-pressure-2018-8>.
- Semetko, H.A., and P.M. Valkenburg (2000) "Framing European politics: A content analysis of press and television news". *Journal of Communication* 50: 93-109.
- Sewell, E. H. (1998) "'Torture-by-tedium" or editorial cartoons during the 1996 presidential campaign' in R. E. Denton (Ed.), *The 1996 presidential campaign: A communication perspective* pp. 161-177. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Shabani, T (May 24, 2018). *حمله تروریستی ترامپ به برجام* [Trump's terrorist attack on the JCPOA], Fars News Agency, May 24, 2018. Retrieved from:

- <https://www.farsnews.ir/photo/13960703001359/>!برجام-به-ترامپ-تروریستی-حمله
- Tasnim (May 8, 2018). خروج از برجام پشیمانی تاریخی برای آمریکا [Abandoning the JCPOA: A Historical Regret for the United States], Tasnim News Agency, Retrieved from: <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1397/02/19/1721221/>تصاویر-برجامی-ترامپی-کاریکاتورهای
- Tork Ladani, S. (2018). *L'histoire des relations entre l'Iran et la France: Du Moyen Âge à nos jours*. Paris : L'Harmattan.
- Trump, Donald (2015, September 9) *CNN Newsroom Transcriptions: Iran Nuclear Deal Opposition Rally; Apple Unveils New Products*. Retrieved from <http://edition.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1509/09/cnr.05.html>
- Tuchman, Gaye (1978) *Making news: a study in the construction of reality*. New York: Free Press.
- U.S. Department Of The Treasury. Resource Center: Iran Sanctions*. Retrieved from <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/programs/pages/iran.aspx>
- US Department of State. *Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action* (2015) <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/245317.pdf>.