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## REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL STRUGGLE AROUND NUCLEAR ISSUE: U.S. AND RUSSIA POSITIONS ON THE NUCLEAR PROGRAM OF IRAN

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Iran's nuclear program has caused a great deal of political and legal controversy. An examination of the international legal framework behind Iran's program, and an assessment of Iran's compliance with the NPT and its IAEA Safeguards Agreement, leads to a stark conclusion: Iran is in breach of its international legal obligations.

Diplomacy has been described as the application of "intelligence and tact to the conduct of foreign relations" and as a "method of influencing the decisions and behavior of foreign governments and peoples through dialogue, negotiation, and other measures short of war or violence".

*Key words:* nuclear program, threat of nuclear proliferation, United Nations, international struggle.

**Introduction.** It can be reasonably argued that one of the most immediate threats facing the international community today is the spread of nuclear weapons. To date there are eight declared nuclear countries: Britain, China, France, India, Pakistan, Russia, North Korea, and the United States. Israel has nuclear weapons but they have yet to openly admit it to the international community. In addition, Iran may be currently pursuing a nuclear weapons program, however they deny this accusation.

**Statement of the task.** The aim of our work is to determine how the other states should develop its foreign policy in regards to Iran's nuclear program and whether or not they, working in conjunction with the United Nations, should act to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

**Results of the study.** A diplomatic solution to Iran's uranium enrichment program requires serious diplomatic engagement based on principle, good-will, and identifying common ground by isolating areas of conflict in order to formulate an a workable compromise. Neither coercive diplomacy nor empty threats of force have generated concrete offers by either the U.S. or the EU that are even remotely satisfactory. The U.S. must take "regime change" off the table and replace it with a more conciliatory framework that addresses Iranian concerns about national sovereignty. By examining the underlying root causes of the conflict more closely and moving the focus from Iran's nuclear program to the promotion of regional security, a broader range of stakeholders become involved in the problem-solving equation.

**Analysis of research and publications.** A comparative analysis of regional and international struggle around nuclear issues on the nuclear program in U.S. and Russia was studied by scientists: Katzman K. "U.S.-Iranian Relations: An Analytic Compendium of U.S. Policies, Laws, and Regulations", Pollack K.M. "The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict Between Iran and America", Herzig E.A. "Iran and the former Soviet South".

Official Tehran has repeatedly declared that its nuclear program is exclusively for peaceful purposes. However, a number of statements made by senior Iranians contradict this thesis. As it is known, the main suspicion is now a research center in Natanz, the existence of which the IAEA became aware only in 2002. USA and Russia have many divergences, rather than areas of convergence interests. USA insists on particular means for solving nuclear problem, while Russia promotes cooperation with Iran.

For nearly ten years the development of Iran's nuclear program continues attract the attention of the world community; the beginning of 2012 accompanied by strengthening of international political and economic pressure on Iran [5, p. 150].

Since 2006, the "Iranian nuclear issue" was referred to the Security Council of United Nations; however, despite a series of restrictive resolutions, Tehran did not slow down the pace of development of national nuclear program. Such an intransigence of the state is largely explained by an understanding of the current situation by its leadership, which is characterized by raging disagreements between Russia and the United States on how to settle the Iranian nuclear problem. Despite the fact that Washington and Moscow are considered the founders of the nuclear nonproliferation regime, and both are determined to protect and preserve this regime, their views on Iran situation is paradoxically different. While Washington prefers act by hard pressure on Iran, Moscow sees the possibility of achieving results through appeasement of the Islamic Republic and its involvement in the process of cooperation [2, p. 194].

It appears that these differences between the political methods and the interests of the United States and Russia behind them can play a critical role in the further fate of the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime. The main objective of the analytical report is the analysis of the three components of the problem:

- commonality and controversies in the positions of the United States and The Russian Federation regarding the Iranian nuclear program, their principal causes;
- The possibility of the two states to develop a common compromise on "Iranian nuclear issue" for the sake of effective resolution of the problem;
- The consequences that will have the appearance of a nuclear Iran for interests of Moscow and Washington (in the case of both strategies on retaining Tehran outside of the nuclear club will fail) [7, p. 148].

Regarding the first question, it should be noted, that the Middle East is the subject of geopolitical dispute between Moscow and Washington since "Cold War." At the same time, the change of epochs associated with the collapse of the Soviet Union was accompanied by a sharp drop in Russian capabilities in the region by the growing influence of the United States.

Determining the current US strategy in the Middle East, it is necessary to note the two main strategic objectives of Washington's policy:

- preservation global flows of oil transportation (33% of which pass through Strait of Hormuz),
- ensuring the security of its allies in the region. Iran's nuclear program could be an obstacle for both purposes [10, p. 216].

On the one hand the strong nuclear Iran is able to dictate its policy in the region, including controlling the Strait of Hormuz, in the case of increase of conflict may affect the stability of the global flows transportation of oil, and therefore inflict considerable damage to US strategic interests. On the other hand, both of Washington's allies – Israel and Saudi Arabia, consider Iran's nuclear program one of the most serious threats to regional balance of power, as well as for the security of Israel.

The well-known slogan of Iranian leaders to "wipe Israel off the map" is often interpreted in Tel Aviv as an existential threat to the Jewish state that makes a nuclear Iran to the number

one threat to Israel. Saudi Arabia, in turn, sees Iran as the main rival for hegemony in the Muslim world, as well as, regional opponent, that often drives Saudi royals to radical statements that nuclear choice of Iran is able to push Riyadh in the same direction. In this way, limitation of Iran's nuclear program may be considered as one of the strategic priorities for the United States, the implementation of which is possible by the use of a wide variety of tactics, from economic pressure (sanctions) to cyber sabotage (according to experts, Stuxnet virus in 2010 was able to delay the development of Iran's nuclear program from a period of 18 months to 2 years), or the threat of military action [1, p. 194].

Russia has lost much of its Middle Eastern customers immediately after the collapse of the USSR. The remnants of former influence preserved only partly due to a rather sporadic economic cooperation with such countries as Syria, Libya and Iran. Latest eventually acquires a special importance in the region for being the largest importer of Russian weapons as well as Russian services in the field of development of peaceful nuclear energy. Importance of Iran to Russia's Middle East policy increased also for the reason of the full or temporary loss of other customers, in particular, the fall of the regime Gaddafi in Libya and the growth of domestic and international tensions around the Assad regime in Syria.

In this context, Iranian nuclear program (which partially supports cooperation with Russia) is regarded by Moscow not only as a symbol of its presence in the Middle East, but also as a means of demonstrating the strong position of Russia in the UN Security Council. Thus, while the strategic goal of Russia in the Middle East is to secure its fading influence, main task of Russian management becomes patronage over development of Iran's nuclear program. And Russia's tactic in this case is the pacification Iranian leadership by blocking the most radical UN Security Council sanctions, which gives Moscow erroneous illusion of control over Iranian nuclear development. In addition, "the Iranian nuclear issue" is considered by Russia as possible manipulation tool in negotiations with Washington.

Is it possible to find a common ground? This question brings us to the second point of discussion, namely the analysis of possibilities of rapprochement between Russia and the US on finding joint solutions on Iranian problem. Opportunities exist; in particular, precedent was established in 2009, when, after coming to power, Obama administration seriously hinted Moscow at the possibility of a compromise on European missile defense system in exchange for Russian cooperation on Iranian issue. Moreover, the deal seems proved effective because Russia suspended its deliveries of S-300 to Islamic Republic supporting another UN Security Council resolution against a number of Iranian companies. At the same time, the new administration's plans on the deployment of the European missile defense founded temporary character of Russian-US deal on "Iranian nuclear issue", which in turn has encouraged Iran on further opportunities for the development of its nuclear program [8, p. 312].

The current situation seems even less optimistic, given the current state of the dialogue on European missile defense, the Syrian problem, as well as a complete clarification of the positions of both parties on their vision for the future of Iran's nuclear program. Washington insists on unacceptability of procedures of uranium enrichment, however, Russia admits the last in the case of complete cooperation with the IAEA. This contradiction in the position of the key players almost nullifies the development of a common constructive position of the UN Security Council in regard to the universal pressure on Iran, including drastic sanctions such as gas or oil embargo. Moreover, these differences do not give the same development opportunities to Moscow plans regarding Iran's involvement on global cooperation which should be based on the guarantees to Islamic Republic that it will not be subject to external aggression or economic pressure from the West. In this way, not being able to combine all of its members under the banner of unified strategy, the UN Security

Council cannot resolve the situation that has developed Iran's nuclear program, which gives Iran a dangerous belief that while the dogs bark, the caravan could move forward. In this case the absence of constructive position can lead to a hypothetical situation [9, p. 201].

This scenario implies the emergence of a nuclear Iran in the region, and put the United States and Russia in a very uncomfortable situation. Washington will have to become a part of multi-polar hierarchical containment system, on the one hand holding Israel from attacking Iran, and on the other, from the frightening Iran of provocation towards Israel. This task can be daunting, considering the fact that in this case both sides (Iran and Israel) will be gravitate toward a first strike against each other: Iran due to the small number of nuclear warheads capable of perish if a preemptive strike of Israel will occur; Israel is due to the fact that the low strategic depth of the state and high sensitivity to human losses make any nuclear strike on the territory of the state unacceptable in terms of inflicted damage. Thus, the lack of security guarantees for Israel or incorrectness calculations from Iran (which rarely differs with foresight) can lead to a nuclear catastrophe in the region [10].

In this situation, the role of Russia seems critical. In front of Moscow stands double choice of scenarios of possible behavior. The first way -constructive, according to which Russia, remaining on NPT guard mode and concerned with the advent of a new nuclear neighbor in the region, will resort to deter Iran, thereby supporting the strategy of the United States. Given scenario seems to be a stabilizing factor for regional security, because Tehran pent up by two nuclear superpowers, expected will be more accommodating and predictable in its actions, while Israel will be relatively calm security guarantees in the event of conflict with Iran. The emergence of a nuclear Iran will push the Russian Federation and the United States towards the resolution of conflicts on the European missile defense system, the presence of which would be entirely justified [12].

Another option, which can be called destructive, can lead Russia on the way forward to defend their geopolitical ambitions in the region, playing the role of China to the DPRK, and having a trump card up his sleeve as nuclear Iran. This will give Moscow an unjustified illusion of control over Iran, Iran to the same illusion that the presence of a powerful ally leaves him unpunished in the event of any provocation. Protected the idea of the impossibility of global nuclear war, Tehran could make a number of risky regional shares against Israel and Saudi Arabia, which will lead to military escalation in the spirit of the "paradox of stability / instability" that in the context of possession nuclear weapons by all parties threatens the transition from conventional conflict to nuclear conflict. The U.S. and the West should concede that Iran has the right to peacefully develop nuclear technology as stated in Article IV of the NPT, and their economic justifications are valid. Without nuclear power, Iran is staring at an economic meltdown of epic proportions over the coming decade. But Iran must realize that their continued ambivalence toward the West will win them no allies, and reestablishing ties with the West will open their energy sector to unhindered investment [4, p. 102].

The policies and strategies that have been undertaken by U.S. administrations over the past three decades display what could likely be considered the most ineffective attempts at foreign policy in U.S. history. Why these policies were chosen certainly was never my intention to discuss, but it is likely that somewhere along the way some policy analysts convinced senior leaders that particular policies and strategies would achieve the desired effect. Unfortunately, unless they intended for the U.S. to be faced with a nuclear Iran today, their recommendations were faulty to say the least. What I propose is a comprehensive roadmap which I contend comprises of the most pressing issues surrounding the current impasse between the United States and Iran. I argue that without seriously addressing these issues there will be little chance for progress between the U.S. and Iran on the nuclear issue.

First and foremost, the U.S. must begin an effort to resume normal diplomatic relations with Iran. This may simply begin with a U.S. interests section in Iran, but it must evolve into a full functioning U.S. Embassy in Tehran. It has been more than thirty years since the U.S. Embassy hostage crisis; we no longer need to harbor animosity over this. Iranian leaders, specifically President Khatami, have conceded that the hostage taking was probably a mistake. Restarting diplomatic relations is certainly not so simple, and it will not immediately tear down the walls of mistrust that exist between the two states. However, it will immediately open direct channels of communication between the administrations on the nuclear issue among others, and it would also open the door to increased security cooperation on a number of other regional concerns such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and drug trafficking, all of which the U.S. and Iran generally agree upon [7, p. 131].

This would likely be such a significant step that it would reduce Iran's hostility to candidly discussing their nuclear program.<sup>286</sup> The U.S. must make a concerted effort so shake off this perception of being the "bogyman." Along with efforts to reestablish diplomatic relations and serious negotiations regarding the Iranian nuclear program, there must be a halt to the conditional nature of talks with Iran. Iran has made numerous gestures of goodwill over the years by halting uranium enrichment while awaiting the West to craft genuine incentive laden proposals to ensure Iran does not have an indigenous full nuclear cycle. We must not forget that it is within Iran's right in accordance with Article IV of the NPT to research and develop a peaceful nuclear program; their uranium enrichment programs and other nuclear facilities have not been found in violation by IAEA inspectors to this date.

Certainly there have been some irregularities with the Iranian program as discussed earlier, but the IAEA has found no "smoking gun" that would indicate a current violation of the NPT let alone pursuit of nuclear weapons. For U.S. leaders to continue asserting that Iran must relinquish their rights granted to them as one of the original signatories to the NPT could be considered arrogant at best and possibly even foolish. Throwing out the conditions that have prevented serious discussions would be a step in the right direction, but this is where difficulties will arise [3, p. 114].

In addition to the first two measures, the U.S. must begin to scale back, if not completely eliminate the sanctions that have targeted Iran and other countries doing business with the Iranian nuclear establishment. The bottom line up front on the sanctions which are meant to force Iran to the negotiating table is that they will have the opposite effect; sanctions will impact ordinary Iranians whose distrust of the U.S. and West will be intensified thus strengthening the Iranian regime's ability to refuse to submit to the sanctions. These measures have not significantly impacted the Iranian regime's ability to further their nuclear program. The majority of the pain caused by these sanctions has been exacted on the very citizens the United States seeks to court in an effort to overthrow the hard-line regime. Additionally, the record high prices for oil over the past three to five years have filled the Iranian coffers with funds to further their nuclear efforts and blunt the impact of sanctions.

Unfortunately, the sanctions have also become a convenient excuse for the regime for why progress is not being made; they consider it a cost of maintaining their Iranian independence. The sanctions have simply played into the hands of the leadership and reduced the moderates' positions to bystanders scratching their heads at U.S. efforts. Sanctions only permit the Iranian regime to place the blame for their internal problems squarely upon the shoulders of the United States thereby making us, as I have stated before, the bogyman.

Additionally, sanctions have been circumvented by those states that we should consider critical in this negotiation process, Russia and China. While a number of sanctions resolutions



have passed through the United Nations, each time the measures become watered down and reduced to nearly meaningless attempts to constrain the Iranians while permitting Russia and China to carry out business as usual there.

As already mentioned earlier, Russia has supported the Bushehr reactor, and China has most recently come under scrutiny for several of its energy companies such as China oil and Sinopec, violating U.S. sanctions while doing business in Iran. In addition to Russia and China striking multi-billion dollar deals with Iran, India also reached a \$40 billion deal to develop Iranian oil fields. Thus, the emergence of a nuclear Iran might become critical challenge to international security, as well as for a Russian-American dialogue [6, p. 129].

Summing up, I would like to note the following:

1. The Problem of the Iranian nuclear crisis lies in the fundamental difference between the positions of the key members of the UN Security Council, in particularly, the United States and Russia. The main reasons for these differences lie in the differently oriented strategic interests of the US and Russia in the Middle East. These interests determine the different approaches of the two states to Iran's nuclear program by blocking the possibility of resolving the problem by applying a common tactic to Iran. This situation creates a paradox in which states tactical approaches to the solution of common problems exclude the possibility of resolution due to the lack of compromise, and here threaten the collapse of the NPT regime.

2. Opportunity for Russia and the US to develop a common approach to the "Iranian nuclear issue" today is quite illusory due to the growing number of contradictions in the dialogue between the two countries. At the same time, some progress could be achieved if Russia was able to get a compromise on some key issues for her, such as, European missile defense system, for example. This situation cannot be completely excluded, especially, after the US presidential election, in that case if Obama administration remains in power.

3. Worst case scenario involves consequences of the lack of compromise between Moscow and Washington over Iran's nuclear program, which could provoke a nuclear Iran. This situation destabilizes not only the NPT regime, but also can be very dangerous for a global nuclear stability with Tehran as a catalyst for nuclear confrontation in the Middle East. In any case, Russian role in this situation also appears to be critical for the further development of security both at the regional and global levels [11, p. 514].

The current U.S. strategy of only agreeing to engage with Iran in face-to face talks if it agrees to the precondition of suspending its uranium enrichment program is inflexible in the diplomatic sense.<sup>118</sup> In essence, the U.S. is demanding that Iran relinquish its most significant bargaining chip before even sitting at the table and this formula makes it almost impossible for either party to reach a mutually acceptable outcome. This U.S. approach has proven to be disastrous and has only served to heighten the rhetoric as well as the tensions on both sides. On the other hand, the E.U.- led negotiations, which many have characterized as coercive diplomacy, have had mixed results. Finally, Iran's concerns for secure and reliable energy development need to be addressed in a manner that factors in the underlying sources of the conflict.

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## **РЕГІОНАЛЬНА І МІЖНАРОДНА БОРОТЬБА НАВКОЛО ЯДЕРНОГО ПИТАННЯ: ПОЗИЦІЇ США ТА РОСІЇ З ЯДЕРНОЇ ПРОГРАМИ ІРАНУ**

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Іранська ядерна програма спричинила багато політичних і юридичних суперечок. Розгляд міжнародно-правової бази програми Ірану і оцінка дотримання Іраном ДНЯЗ і його Угоди про гарантії МАГАТЕ призводить до однозначного висновку: Іран порушує свої міжнародно-правові зобов'язання.

Дипломатія була описана як застосування «інтелекту і такту для проведення зовнішніх відносин» і як «метод впливу на рішення і поведінку іноземних урядів і народів за допомогою діалогу, переговорів та інших заходів, не пов'язаних з війною або насильством».

*Ключові слова:* ядерна програма, загроза поширення ядерної зброї, Організація Об'єднаних Націй, міжнародна боротьба.