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## THE AMERICAN APPROACH TO THE SOLUTION OF IRANIAN NUCLEAR POTENTIAL PROBLEM

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The possible vectors of cooperation with Iran concerning its nuclear weapons accumulation is analyzed in this article. The author considers the main scenarios of the international relations under conditions of sanctions and other coercive measures ineffectiveness in stopping Iran's nuclear program. The study examines the foreign policy of Barack Obama according to the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) and American experts' main approaches to settle escalating nuclear capability of IRI problem.

**Keywords:** nuclear proliferation, Iran, USA, uranium enrichment, economic sanctions, negotiations within the P5+1 and Iran.

## АМЕРИКАНСКИЙ ПОДХОД К РЕШЕНИЮ ПРОБЛЕМЫ НАРАЩИВАНИЯ ЯДЕРНОГО ПОТЕНЦИАЛА ИРАНА

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В статье анализируются возможные векторы сотрудничества с Ираном в рамках его ядерного вооружения. Автор выделяет основные сценарии развития международных отношений в условиях неэффективности санкций и других принудительных мер относительно прекращения иранской ядерной программы. В исследовании рассматривается внешняя политика Б. Обамы в отношении Исламской Республики Иран (ИРИ) и анализируются основные подходы американских экспертных кругов к решению проблемы наращивания ядерного потенциала ИРИ.

**Ключевые слова:** распространение ядерного оружия, Иран, США, обогащение урана, экономические санкции, переговоры в рамках P5+1 и Ирана.

The international community has been concerned for Iran's nuclear program for many years, what has become a serious problem in international relations early

20th century. Iran signed Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1968 and constantly states the peaceful nature of its efforts in the nuclear field. In September 2005, the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) concluded that Iran is non-compliance with its NPT safeguards agreement, and in February 2006, referred the case to the UN Security Council. Since 2010, the U.S. together with international partners started to increase sanctions according to new reports, which informed about a progressive increase of Iran nuclear potential. In November 2011, it became clear that the problem of nuclear proliferation around the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) has moved to a new level. The catalyst of this process was the conclusion of the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency, November 8, 2011: Iran until 2003 effectuated the work aimed at creating nuclear weapons and accomplished the other research and experimental programs in this area. In addition, the report contains data on the development of IRI delivery vehicles, such as warheads for missiles [8].

The U.S. immediately launched against Iran an unprecedented package of unilateral sanctions. They hit Iranian petrochemical and energy sectors, as well as all natural and legal persons who provide assistance to Iran in the exploration and production of energy. The European Union imposed an embargo on imports of Iranian oil 23 January 2012 [6], forbidding enter into new contracts and agreed to freeze the assets of Iran's Central Bank within the EU. These actions followed the new U.S. sanctions on January 1, which imposed on the oil and financial sector of IRI. EU, which covers 20% of Iran's oil exports, and the U.S. also tried to force the key Asian importers of Iranian oil – China, Japan, India and South Korea - to reduce their cooperation with Iran in this field. The purpose of these efforts was the pressure on Iran to halt its controversial nuclear program.

Obviously, the United States and the European Union believe that Iran is expanding its nuclear capability to make weapons of mass destruction, while Tehran denies it constantly. Last cycle of sanctions aimed Iran return to negotiations to finally stop its program of uranium enrichment. The U.S. administration hopes that discriminatory restrictions cause enough economic damage to force Tehran to go for

diplomatic negotiations. Relevance of the chosen research theme is intensified by the fact that after many months of growing tension Iran expressed willingness to resume negotiations with the so-called “Six” countries (five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany). The lack of systemic Ukrainian investigations concerning the search of solutions to the problem of Iran's nuclear potential and settlement of the U.S., EU and the Middle East interrelation actualizes this study.

The aim of this study was to examine the possible vectors of cooperation with Iran concerning its nuclear weapons accumulation during the 2003-2012 years. The works of Kaspruk [1] A. Alexandrov are worth to give prominence to among domestic investigations of this problem. Such foreign researchers as G. Sick [15] D. Albright [3] M. Fitzpatrick [6] R. Haass, K. Katsman, J. Badzhoria, R. Takhey elucidate their look at the question from all angles.

After unilateral U.S. sanctions in November 2011, Vice President of IRI M. Reza Rahim said that if other countries will intervene in Iran's oil sector, the Islamic Republic will block Strait of Hormuz [10] - a narrow, strategically important strait connecting the Gulf of Oman and Persian Gulf in the Arabian Sea and is currently the only sea route that allows to export Arab oil and gas to third countries, including the United States. Iranian officials have repeated threats after EU sanctions too [9], as far as the international community economic discriminatory measures in 2012 are the most unprofitable the Islamic Republic has been ever sanctioned. In addition, with the beginning of the rhetoric about closing the Strait of Hormuz, oil prices increased by 15%. If Iran loses half of its annual national income, in fact, it can occur because of the actions of sanctions, Iran will consider this as an economic war against him.

Certainly, the United States are of great interest to achieve the negotiations on issues of the Islamic Republic growing nuclear capability. The White House understands that sanctions and other coercive measures do not succeed in stopping Iran's nuclear program, stabilizing relations or regime change – and alternative diplomacy is too risky and costly.

In this context, often is referred applying preventive strike on Iran's nuclear facilities. This may postpone Iranian program, but no more than a few years. Furthermore, destroyed objects will be restored taking into consideration future assaults. The attack also will induce Muslims to revenge and will start a chain reaction of events that would lead to massive loss of lives and significant oil prices increase.

Another alternative – is the ability of the international community to coexist and cooperate under certain conditions with nuclear Iran. In this case, the greatest fear is not that IRI will “destroy” Israel, as it has repeatedly declared the president of the Islamic Republic M. Ahmadinejad [10], and that no one can exclude the possibility that nuclear materials will be in the hands of terrorist groups supported by Tehran (such as Hezbollah). In addition, Iran with nuclear weapons can be even more aggressive in its aspiration for becoming a regional leader. This may incite its Arab neighbors (Egypt, Saudi Arabia) also start to cultivate nuclear weapons.

Such scenarios are being actively discussed at the debate on the eve of presidential elections in the United States. Namely this vector of U.S. foreign policy was the biggest object of manipulation and abuse during the campaign in 2012. According to presidential candidates – hitherto, American policy have maneuvered between an attack on Iran and the reluctant agreement of its nuclear program in the background of inaccurate estimates and imperfect actions. Among the Republican presidential candidates R. Santorum was the most radical and advocated military solution of the Iranian issue. Completely contrary in his statements was another candidate, R. Paul [16], who opposed any use of force, and during the debate in Arizona affirmed that there is no evidence relating to the nuclear weapon producing by Iran. M. Romney [14] and N. Hinrich [7] in their positions were in the middle, that was considered unacceptable that IRI has nuclear capability, but allowed the use of military force in the last resort.

However, in our opinion, the administration of President George W. Bush and Barack Obama carried consistent foreign policy towards building nuclear capability in Iran, as evidenced by the following:

- declaration of “unacceptability” of a nuclear Iran;
- applying the method of “punishment and reward”: sanctions and nuclear fuel supply for industrial purposes IRI in exchange for refusing to produce weapon;
- implementation of international inspections and scrutiny;
- refusal to exclude military activities completely;
- restrain Israel against unilateral military action in Iran;
- suppression of intentions to change regime in IRI on more amenable to the West.

Furthermore, B. Obama’s foreign policy in reality may be even tougher than G. Bush’s. Assuming the presidency, B. Obama began with the proposal of direct negotiations but Iran hastily rejected it. Now the U.S. has substantial support of the **international community to enable measures inflicting great harm – a boycott of Iranian oil**. The U.S. administration and the EU, along with Saudi Arabia is actively working to make the main buyers of Iranian oil Japan and Korea to abandon deliveries. Iran took the threat seriously enough its economy to begin a naval confrontation in the Strait of Hormuz. Therefore, in our opinion, it is possible that a possible war with Iran begins not with the bombing of its nuclear facilities.

However, counting the possible loss of economic sanctions, the Islamic republic responded to the offer of the international community regarding the negotiations on nuclear topics involving the UN. February 15, 2012 Iran sent a letter K. Ashton, Vice-President of the European Commission, which represents the five permanent Security Council members plus Germany (P5 +1) and reported that the leadership of IRI ready for talks, but made it clear that negotiations held without preconditions, that is unacceptable agenda, which determined that the result will be a complete rejection of IRI on its nuclear potential [5]. The first round of negotiations in the P5 +1 was held April 14, 2012 and both sides expressed their satisfaction with the result of negotiations. K. Ashton noted that participants move to consolidate the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program and agreed to held the next stage of negotiations in summer 2012 in the capital of Iraq – Baghdad [2]. Washington prepared a proposal whereby Iran agrees to stop enriching uranium to 20% and will

roll out its existing stocks in exchange for a waiver of the new UN Security Council sanctions [12]. However, the next round of negotiations, which lasted until March 2013 did not bring the desired results.

American experts believe that the objective of the negotiations should be a framework agreement, which would stipulate stage of cooperation, each phase of which would include concessions from the Iranian side and relevant initiatives by the P5+1 [6]. Negotiations should focus on creating conditions for long-term cooperation, since the resolution of this problem will take several years. Some measures have priority in negotiations. Firstly, it is Iran's decision to stay on only 5% enriched uranium and freeze extra centrifuges at the plant in Qom (Iran). And also provide information about military developments of previous volumes of nuclear fuel.

Furthermore, according to the director of the Institute for Science and International Security D. Albright, the U.S. and its allies should be prepared to give Iran an appropriate stimulus, including providing fuel for the 19.75% enriched uranium for the Tehran research reactor, supplies low enriched uranium facilities for producing medical isotopes in this reactor, as well as the obligation not to impose new sanctions certain period of time [3]. At the same time, the United States and its allies must minimize any attempts to sell Islamic republic temporary measures to reduce sanctions. During preliminary negotiations Iran sought to consolidate the uncontrolled right to enrich uranium. However, P5+1 would hardly agree with that without the belief that IRI's nuclear program is not contrary to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Institute for Science and International Security has developed a possible framework agreement with Iran, which consists of five consecutive points:

1. Renewed certified agreement “termination penalties for terminating nuclear capacity”;
2. Iran renounces its activities related to nuclear weapons and gets relief sanitation regime and security guarantees;

3. Thorough examination of the IAEA, suspension secretive nuclear programs IRI and pre-termination sanctions the UN Security Council;

4. Confirmation IAEA no hidden nuclear materials and equipment, restoring Iran's nuclear program, providing comprehensive support and promotion, termination of U.S. sanctions;

5. The development of peaceful nuclear programs of Iran and permanent end to other sanctions [13].

Executive Director of the Association of arms control D. Kimbal, believes that high-level meeting with intent attention, but will not bring long-term results. Progress in relations requires a long serious high-level dialogue with the involvement of technical meetings on bilateral and multilateral levels [11].

However, according to G. Sick, principal adviser to the White House on foreign relations with Iran during the hostage crisis of 1979-1981 years – when in Tehran was seized U.S. embassy and diplomats held hostage for more than a year – the presence of the United States at the table of negotiations with Iran is excluded. They should not be bilateral, but the U.S. must take part in any decision, discussed in each position. G. Sick offers U.S. and Iran contact method, which decided in those days hostage crisis to reduce tensions controversial nuclear program of IRI. Then negotiations were conducted through the so-called arbitrator, that was Algeria. Expert recommends that two countries should use mediation to discuss the nuclear issue. G. Sick believes that Turkish government is very suitable for the role of a mediator [15].

Leaders of the leading countries understand that sanctions have won time and increased the importance of the negotiations, but they will not force the leaders of Iran to stop nuclear weapons [4]. It is clear that military intervention would be ineffective and lead to opposite results. Bombing by air Iranian facilities rejects Iran's program not more than a few years but will lead to adverse economic and security implications not only in the region but also globally.

Moreover, the demonstrative desire to resume talks with the permanent members of the Security Council and Germany may only be the aspect of the Iranian

strategy to distract the international community under the guise of loud diplomatic statements. It is important for Iranians that accumulation of nuclear weapons was always accompanied by negotiations. The renewed diplomatic meetings, though rare, can provide Tehran the umbrella under which he will freely develop its nuclear program. In our opinion, there is no random that Iranian diplomatic letter of 15 February 2012 to the UN coincides in time with the intensification of its nuclear activities. Threatening to cut off the world's supply lines of fuel, Iran could affect global actors, Russia and China, to be more concessive to avoid oil crisis. Every concession that Iran will do at negotiation table will be double-faced and symbolic.

Effectuating pressure on the world community through the political statements, IRI limits its time in increasing revenue gains from its nuclear program. Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was always looking for opportunities to expand Iran's nuclear capabilities systematically and carefully. Tehran wants to acclimate the international community to their consistent actions in the nuclear field. Considering this, Iran gradually and consistently enriches uranium, a statement which is largely considered unacceptable in 2005. IRI permanently expands its enrichment capabilities and carries their secret technology to the objects that will better oppose a military attack, near the city Qom. The Islamic republic is working on new advanced centrifuges, which are faster and more efficiently. A limited number of such equipment can enrich a large number of uranium. Iran can start to keep its nuclear facilities in small buildings, making it impossible to detect them. Gradually and continued increasing their capabilities, IRI has crossed the "red line", avoiding punishment, which could immediately put under threat both its nuclear program, and the stability of the political system in general.

Thus, the permanent containment of Iran's nuclear program does not look realistic on the background of the existing processing capacity of IRI and the strong support of Iranian political elite. The long-term goal of the negotiations within the P5+ 1 must combine: restrictions of uranium enrichment to a level of reactor fuel, complying the enrichment capacity to actual needs of Iranian energy and establishment of more tough system of checks. Furthermore, there is no guarantee

that diplomacy and pressure will be a convincing argument for the present and future leaders of Iran that abandoning nuclear weapons, they will receive more benefits than the decision to produce it. However, in our opinion, the best way to join the coalition – to emphasize that Iran’s activities will be beyond the law as long as Tehran continues to enrich uranium in defiance of UN resolutions and endangers peaceful sea freight. Any action that diverts attention from the illegal actions of Iran will only hamper attempts to disarm the Islamic republic.

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