

Russian Non-Proliferation Policy: Strategic and Economic Considerations in Iran's Nuclear Crisis (2002-2010)

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Significance of the research

In contemporary international relations the Russian Federation is considered to be one of the key powers without which it is almost impossible to decide any essential issues from global security to environmental pollution. The Russian Federation possesses the greatest territory in the world, lying in two parts of it, Europe and Asia. The country is rich with mineral resources and one of the leading suppliers of hydrocarbons (gas and oil), minerals (aluminum), and wood to the global market. The other export article is machinery and equipment for both industrial and military use.¹

Russian political influence in global arena remains undeniable. Political influence is supported by military power – Russia is a member of nuclear club and has one of the greatest nuclear arsenals in the world. It is an active participant and one of the top powers in outer space exploration. Russia is a permanent member of the UN Security Council with veto power and member of G-8.

Iran is the biggest state of the Middle East, a region of global economic and strategic importance. The Islamic Republic of Iran today due to its economic potential, human and natural resources plays the key role in the region. The country's population is over 75 million people and

¹ Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation. *External Economic Relations of Russian Federation in 2009*. (Ministry of Economic Development: Moscow, 2009) http://www.budgetrf.ru/Publications/mert_new/2009/MERT_NEW200903251842/MERT_NEW200903251842_p_010.htm (accessed February 27, 2012)

average age of it around 26 years old. Till 2007 Iran's economic development was rather rapid, GDP's growth was estimated by 7% annually. Since 2008 due to sanctions regime and global economic crisis the growth has dramatically slowed down (2,5% and 1.5% in 2008 and 2009 respectively). Iran is very rich in natural resources, namely, hydrocarbons (third place in the world by proved oil reserves and second place in the world by natural gas).²

However, today the political line of Iranian leaders is differently estimated by observers and media. In many cases Iran is shown as a state that constitutes a threat to regional or even global security in its ambition to develop nuclear energy and possess nuclear weapons. Moreover, radical statements, made by its president in regard of Israel or the United States, support this reversed image. The Iranian Nuclear Dossier has been being on the agenda of international community almost 10 years and discussed in the UN Security Council for almost six years (2006-2011). Five Resolutions on the issue have been passed by the Council since that time. The case is under careful attention of the international community. In many aspects the fate of Iran depends on the decisions and consensus of the following players: the United States, France, Great Britain, Russia and China.

The opinion of these major players over the issue is not homogeneous. While the United States and the European Union follow the hard line in negotiations and support the idea of severe sanctions, Russia and China try to be more "flexible" in actions against Iran. During the period of conflict development Russia has been considered as "eminence grey", whether it supports Iran or not.

² Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook. Iran* (Central Intelligence Agency: Washington, 2012), <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html> (accessed February 27, 2012)

Conducting foreign policy a state is more likely to follow its national interests rather than the interests of its counterparts. Russian policy toward the Iranian nuclear issue is not unpredictable. It is determined by a combination of strategic and economic considerations in terms of national security. For better understanding of Russian behavior during the Iranian nuclear crisis it is worth to estimate the place of Iran in the contemporary foreign policy of the Russian Federation. What is Iran for Russia? And what is Russia for Iran?

Russia has long history of diplomatic relations with Iran; geographically the countries are close to each other, share common border through the Caspian Sea. The policy of Russia toward Iran traditionally was very active. Now Russian interests in the region are not less than at the days of the Russian Empire or Soviet times. The evidence of active foreign policy and close relationships are clear:

- the frequency of diplomatic contacts;
- a common vision of the contemporary international relations and their main concerns (cooperation within Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) framework);
- the development of economic relationships (cooperation in energy sphere: the idea to create a gas-OPEC, projects on construction of gas and oil pipelines; Iranian market is rather attractive for Russian oil and gas companies);
- military and technical cooperation (Russia is the first arms supplier to the Iranian market);
- cooperation in nuclear energy (power plant in Buser, Russia is the only state that officially cooperates with Iran in the nuclear dimension);

- outer space development (satellite launch).

In numbers, the bilateral trade reached 3.7 billion dollars in 2008, that is 5 times more, comparing to the volume of trade in 2000. It's not too much and 3.3 billion in this amount refers to Russian exports to Iran.³ Russia is the fourth largest trade partner for Iran (after China, OAE and Germany). However, the Iranian part in international trade of Russia is rather miserable. In the overall trade balance of the Russian Federation Iran occupies just 0.6% (January-August 2010).⁴ Here is more important to pay attention to other sphere of cooperation such as energy, military and technical cooperation, where Russian interests are on the agenda.

The development of the Iranian nuclear crisis and the unpredictable behavior of Iranian leaders raised questions in the Russian-Iranian “friendship”.

The topic is on the agenda of the Russian expert community. Nina Mamedova, a director of the Iran Section of Asia Studies Institute in the Russian Academia of Science, in her interview to the “*Vzglyad*” newspaper supposed that Russia logically supported sanctions, because Iran hasn't done any significant actions to follow the previous decisions of the international community. The Russian position on the issue according to Mamedova is “say – yes – to

³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, *О торгово-экономическом сотрудничестве с Исламской Республикой Иран: справочная информация* (On Trade and Economic Relations with Islamic Republic of Iran) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation: Moscow, 2009), <http://www.mid.ru/ns!rasia.nsf/1083b7937ae580ae432569e7004199c2/f59eef21d4cb660043256a54002a62ae?OpenDocument> (accessed February 27, 2012)

⁴ “Export and Import of Russia by countries in 2010 (January-August)”. *Rusimpex Agency. Economy and Statistics of External Trade*. <http://www.rusimpex.ru/index1.htm?varurl=Content/Economics/> (accessed February 27, 2012)

*sanctions, but as mild as possible. Russia was interested in sanctions that wouldn't paralyze the entire Iranian economy.”*⁵

Another expert, Vadim Kozyulin, who is a research fellow of *The Russian Center for Political Science*, considered the main factors behind Russian position toward sanctions. He came to the conclusion that Iran is a neighbor state. Russia successfully develops economic relations with Iran. So, the main reason to avoid hard sanctions is the economic interests that Russia has in the region, just as China does. Moreover, these interests lay in nuclear cooperation.

1.2 The research goal, objectives and methodology

The goal for this master thesis is to estimate the effectiveness of Russian non-proliferation policy during the nuclear crisis of Iran and explore the main factors (economic or strategic), that influence Russian policy in this dimension.

To comply with the research goal we should reply to the following research questions:

- Provide the assessment of the Iranian nuclear crisis within the contemporary non-proliferation regime;
- Describe the basic principles and components of Russian non-proliferation policy.
- Determine the main participants in Russian non-proliferation policy making (actors and interests);

⁵ Nina Mamedova Interview: “Don't Get 500 million USD”, *Vzglyad*, June 11, 2010, <http://vz.ru/politics/2010/6/11/409911.html> (accessed February 27, 2012)

- Estimate the role of Russia in the development of the Iranian nuclear program through analysis of Russian-Iranian cooperation in nuclear energy;
- Analyze the development of Russian policy during the nuclear crisis of Iran;

So far, the topic of the research is identified as “Russian Non-Proliferation Policy: Economic and Strategic Considerations in Nuclear Crisis of Iran”. Russian non-proliferation policy is considered through the perspective of Iran’s nuclear crisis. This research follows the development of Russian policy during the Iranian nuclear crisis and explores the main factors that influence this policy: strategic or economic.

The research is chronologically limited from 2002 to 2010. The time framework is chosen due to the development of the crisis. The topic attracted attention of the international community in 2002 when information on Iran’s secret nuclear activities was released by the “National Council of Iranian Opposition” headquartered in Iraq.

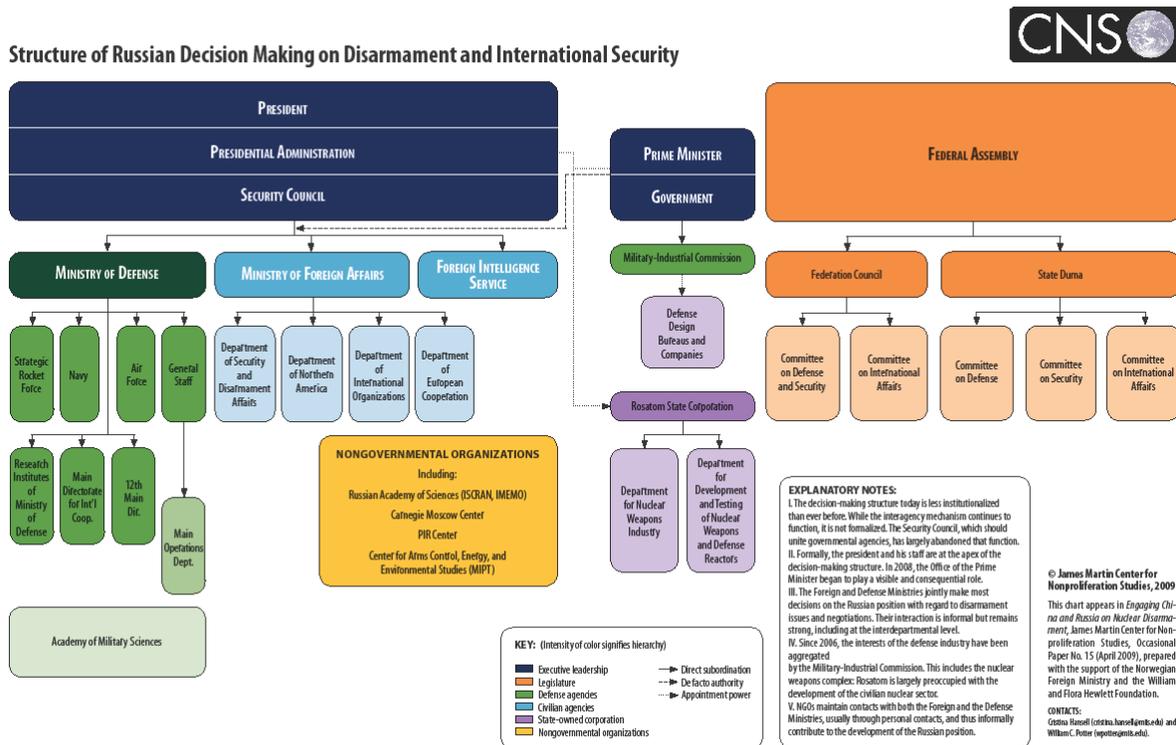
From Russian perspective the research chronology refers to Putin’s and Medvedev’s presidency. Since Putin came to power, Russian foreign policy became more institutionalized and legalized and Russia began to create the image of a well-organized, reliable state. The Non-proliferation policy of Russia was either affected by those changes.

In this research *Non-proliferation policy* is defined as a part of Russian foreign policy, it certainly performed in conjunction with basic principles of foreign and security policy of the Russian Federation. The International concept of *Non-proliferation* includes two dimensions: vertical and horizontal. The former relates to the modernization of nuclear arsenals and technologies by nuclear power states, while the latter results in the increase in the number of nuclear states.

The analysis is conducted in three levels:

- 1) Iranian Nuclear Crisis. The Iranian Crisis is considered as unchangeable variable and provides facts on the development of the Iranian nuclear program and the nuclear crisis itself. In this level the research focuses more on historical background analyses the roots of the crisis and the stages of development.
- 2) Non-proliferation policy of Russian Federation. The analysis is focused on Russian position. It considers Russian actions toward Iran. The policy is not a homogeneous variable. On that level we analyze the components of Russian non-proliferation policy, its main actors and their interests in decision-making process. It helps to identify the dominant elements between strategy and economy in Russian political actions. (Chart 1)

Chart 1. Structure of Russian decision-making on foreign, security and nuclear policy⁶



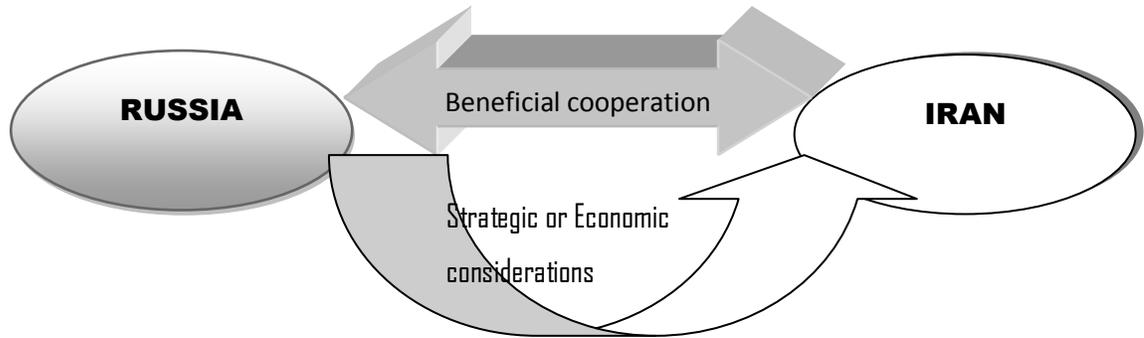
⁶ “Engaging China and Russia on Nuclear Disarmament”, ed. Christina Hansell and William Potter (Monterey: CNS, 2008): 22-23

3) Russian-Iranian relations. What is the nature of the relationships between these two actors? Russia and Iran are regional partners. Their cooperation is mutually beneficial regarding the given circumstances. There is no strategic alliance between them, as if both of them conduct independent lines in their foreign policies and there is no any agreement on long-term political commitments between them. According to the “Agreement on Basic Principles of Relationships between Russia and Iran” signed by Presidents Putin and Khatami in 2001 “countries intend to develop mutual beneficial cooperation in different spheres (economy, trade, energy, culture and science) and conduct the political dialogue on essential issues of modern international relations”.⁷

As for today’s practical political actions, Russia tries not to support the Iranian policy openly, especially when it comes to the nuclear dossier or radical rhetoric provided by Iranian leaders in international forums (ex. Ahmadinejad’s speeches in the UN General Assembly).

⁷ Договор об основах взаимоотношений и принципах сотрудничества между Исламской Республикой Иран и Российской Федерацией. (Agreement on Basic Principles of Relationships between Russia and Iran) (Moscow, 2001), <http://iran.ru/rus/dogovorobosnovnixvzaimootnosheniiax.php> (accessed February 27, 2012)

Figure 1. Russian-Iranian Relations



Empirically, Russian-Iranian cooperation can be assessed by different number of factors: the level of bilateral trade, the variety of cooperation dimensions and diplomatic actions (visit exchanges). This study focuses on the nuclear energy dimension of the Russian-Iranian cooperation and practical diplomatic steps made by Russia during the nuclear crisis of Iran.

1.3 Literature and materials review

1.3.1 Official Documents

The research is based on documents analysis. The basic principles Russian non-proliferation policy are written in main conceptual documents complemented the background of the Russian foreign policy. There are three pillars of Russian foreign policy: *The Concept of National Security, the Military Doctrine, and the Concept of Foreign Policy*. All the documents were adopted in 2000 and refer to Putin's presidency. Dmitry Medvedev, incumbent president of Russia, revised *the Military Doctrine and the Concept of Foreign Policy*. New editions were published in February 2010 and July 2008 respectively.

In 2005 the Russian government issued the range of documents devoted to the problem of non-proliferation. One of them is “Principles of State Policy in the Field of Nonproliferation of WMD and their Means of Delivery” adopted in 2005 by president Putin’s administration.

The “Principles of State Policy” was the first document in Russia devoted to the problem of non-proliferation. The document contains the comprehensive state approach to non-proliferation; it underlines the power authorities of all governmental bodies, including the president and government of the Russian Federation; and provides the definition of “non-proliferation of WMD.”

In June 2006, the Russian Ministry of Defense published its White Book: “Russian Federation and the Situation in Non-proliferation of WMD: Threats, Estimations, Objectives and Ways of Implementation”. The document declares the Russian position and practical approaches in non-proliferation. It defines the main threats to Russian security and the means of their neutralization.

The content analysis of official comments and statements from the Presidential Administration and the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, speeches made by politicians, diplomats and government representatives are essential as they provide the empirical evidence for this research in part of practical political actions.

Referring to the issues of Russian-Iranian cooperation in the nuclear field we cannot ignore legal documents regulating such cooperation issued by the Russian President’s Office or the Russian Government: the law “On Export Control” (1999); “The Agreement on Use of Nuclear Energy for Peaceful Purposes” (1992); etc.

Other set of documents refers to official documents of international organizations such as UN Resolutions, Reports and Resolutions of the IAEA Board of Governors. This group of documents also includes the materials from international organizations and research institutes, which prepare official reports, statistics and estimations on development of international trade, national economic developments and the global situation in the nuclear field. These documents help to get information on factors that influence the negotiation process in the Iranian nuclear crisis and cooperation of Russia with Iran in nuclear energy.

1.3.2 Scholars Research

Russian-Iranian relations, Russian policy in Iran, the Middle East itself and Iran have always been important subjects of research for Russian scholars. There are a lot of works devoted to these topics. However, there is a lack of complete studies on Russian nonproliferation policy and its implications. The existing researches are devoted to Russian-Iranian relations; most of them pay attention to cooperation in the military-technology field. There are papers referred to Russian-Iranian cooperation in the nuclear field and its influence on Russian-U.S. relations. Other group of studies focuses more on Russian non-proliferation policy and its place within international non-proliferation regime. So, before the problem of development of Russian non-proliferation policy in the context of the Iranian nuclear crisis was not considered by Russian scholars. They write more on the subject of Russian-Iranian relations and cooperation in military-technology field.

Foreign scholars also pay attention to Russian cooperation with Iran in the military, scientific and technological fields, but their perspective is turned to estimation of the Russian influence in Iran.

All existing studies can be divided into several groups. The first group is dedicated to the development of the Iranian nuclear program; its history, roots, perspectives and Iran's participation in the non-proliferation regime, and relations with IAEA. Here we can refer to such scholars as Anton Khlopkov, Ivan Safranchuk, Kulagina, Vladimir Sazhin, Evseef, Paul Kerr, David Albright, etc.

The next research topic is the non-proliferation problem, its contemporary development, assessment of threats and status of nuclear and non-nuclear states. The works of the following scholars are dedicated to this issue: Bates Gill, James Goodby, Shannon N.Kile, William Potter, Sergio Duarte, Roland Timerbaev, Vladimir Orlov, Vladimir Dvorkin, Nikolay Sokov, V.Novikov, A.Arbatov. The problem of non-proliferation in the Middle East is raised in the articles by R.Timerbaev, V.Naumkin, A.Ahtamzyan, A.Arbatov, etc.

The third group of publications is presented by works of Nina Mamedova, V. Fedchenko, Ivan Safranchuk, Sevak Saruhanyan, Viktor Mizin, Robert Freedman, Mark Katz, etc. All these scholars provide the assessments of Russian-Iranian cooperation, their efficiency in political, economic, military and technological perspectives. The study of Russian-Iranian nuclear cooperation and its development during Iranian nuclear crisis is conducted by Vladimir Lata, Vladimir Orlov, Anton Hlopkov, Viktor Mizin and Robert Freedman.

The next issue that is discussed in the literature is the influence of Iran on Russian-American relations. This group also refers to the problem of Russian security due to the situation in Iran and U.S. policy of sanctions: Anton Hlopkov, Robert Freedman, S.Zadonskiy, Vladimir Orlov.

The last big group of publications is dedicated to the theoretical background of Russian foreign policy and conceptualization of Russian non-proliferation policy: Dmitry Trenin, Sergey Kortunov, Pavel and Andrew Tzigankov, Alexey Bogaturov, Marina Lebedeva and Tatyana Alexeeva, A Arbatov and A. Torkunov.

The variety of books and articles related to Iranian nuclear crisis is quite large. So, we focus more on the studies submitted by research institutes, centers and organizations, Russian and international, specialized in nuclear non-proliferation and policy of Russia in the Middle East. Primarily we refer to:

- Center for Political Studies (PIR-Center) – the most influential Russian research center specialized in non-proliferation and global security issues. “Nuclear Control” (since 2006 “Security Index”) journal and “Scientific Remarks” are published by the Center and cover nuclear policy with non-proliferation issues. Very often the journal contains interviews with remarkable persons, policy-makers, members of Russian non-proliferation community. Moreover, these publications indicate recent trends within contemporary non-proliferation. Articles of PIR-Center’s research fellows, Vladimir Orlov, Roland Timerbaev, Anton Hlopkov, V. Latta, Ivan Safranchuk and I.Ahtamzyan, have a special value for this study.
- Institute for the Middle East Studies in Russian Academia of Science is represented by following scholars: Nina Mamedova, Vladimir Sazhin, Aronova, Zadonskiy, Gadzhiev. Their articles are primarily focused on Middle East studies, Iran policy (foreign and national) and development (political and economic), Russian-Iranian relations, development of Iranian nuclear program and crisis.

- Carnegie Endowment in Moscow has its own value for this master thesis research. Its authors dedicate their papers mostly to Russian non-proliferation policy, Russian-Iranian relations and development of nuclear crises: V. Naumkin, D. Trenin, and A. Arbatov.
- The fundamental background of facts is provided by the Monterey Center for Non-proliferation Studies (CNS).

There are several articles that worth detailed attention, as the topic of them is rather close to the thesis research. However, there are some gaps in them that provide the field for further consideration of the issue.

In 2007 the Russian Academy of Science, Institute of Middle East, published “Nuclear Factor in Russian-Iranian Relations” by the Armenian scholar Sevak Saruhanyan. He made a complex research: provided assessments to the Iranian nuclear program, its influence on Russian-Iranian relations, and how the program percept by the United States, the European Union and the United Nations. The first part of the book is devoted to non-proliferation regime and its inefficiency on the examples of Israel, India, North Korea and Pakistan. In such a way the author underlines the importance of Iranian case for the regime as a whole. In the chapters dedicated to Russian-Iranian cooperation in nuclear field he tries to avoid single value estimations: excessive praise or definitely negative attitude to the problem. This contributes to research value. Earlier it was common for academic or political debates to follow one “side of the camp”. The author avoids anti-American stamps or critiques against the U.S. policy. The author’s conclusions are also interesting. He writes that “at the present stage Russian-Iranian relations have all the chances to come to the new level”, because in the case of peaceful settlement of the situation around the Iranian nuclear program there will be another reality in the

relations between Iran and West. In such circumstances Russia, counting on energy resources in its policy implementation, may face a serious competitive on the European gas market.

However, Saruhanyan in his study does not pay attention to the issue of conceptual background of Russian non-proliferation policy and decision-making process.

All in all, many of the modern studies of Russian-Iranian relations or Iran are written from the nuclear or military-technical perspective, and touch aspects of Iranian nuclear and military development and Russian participation in it. Here it is possible to mention several authoritative Russian scholars: Alexey Arbatov (Director of Center for International Security, Russian Academia of Science), Vladimir Dvorkin (Carnegie Endowment, Moscow), Vladimir Orlov (Director of Center for Policy Studies, PIR-Center), Anton Khlopkov (Director of Center for Energy and Security), Roland Timerbaev (Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador, doctor of history, expert of Center for Policy Studies), Vladimir Novikov, Dmitry Krasnov and Andrew Frolov.

One of the most famous works by Alexey Arbatov and Vladimir Dvorkin is “On the Nuclear Edge: Lessons from Iran and North Korea”, published in 2007. The book is dedicated to North Korean and Iranian nuclear programs. Authors of the book are leading experts in the field of non-proliferation. They consider different aspects of the problem (system of the IAEA warranties, role of the UN, NPT and procedure of withdraw from the Treaty, export control and etc.).

The chapter on history and background of the Iranian nuclear program is written by Anton Khlopkov. He is known more within expert community as a leading specialist on the Iranian nuclear and missile programs. He provides detailed research on history, background and

current situation around Iran. Among the most famous publication in the field are “Iranian Nuclear Program in Russian-American relations” (2001) published by the Russian Center for Policy Studies; “Iran as a Nuclear-Missile Puzzle for Russia” (2003) in Nuclear Control Journal; articles for encyclopedia on Nuclear Non-Proliferation on Bush nuclear plant, Iranian nuclear and missile programs. Concerning Russian contemporary policy toward Iran, Anton provides a lot of interviews on the subject to Russian media on behalf of the experts community.

Within the Russian scholars there are not so many who study other aspects of bilateral Russian-Iranian relations (political and economic dimensions). Most of them are concentrated on Iranian studies: internal political, social, economic situation; Russian policy in Middle East or arms and nuclear non-proliferation.

Russian-Iranian relations and modern foreign policy of Russia are not only interesting for Russian scholars; there are also works of foreign researchers devoted to the subject.

There are several articles published in the Middle East Journal by Mark Katz, professor of government and politics in George Mason University. The articles were released in 2002, 2008 and 2010, the titles to them are very similar: *Russia and Iran in Putin's, Ahmadinejad's and Obama's Era* respectively.

Katz considers the relations between Moscow and Teheran from the perspective of American impact. So, the author makes a stress on the triangle Moscow-Iran-Washington. Actions of one actor cause counteractions of the others. He supposes that anti-US and Western trends within Iranian and Russian government push them closer to each other. However, Iranian nuclear ambitions have brought disbalance in Russian-Iranian cooperation.

Other authors focus more on Middle Eastern policy of Russia or nuclear-military aspects of Russian-Iranian cooperation. Here it's possible to mention two scholars: Robert Freedman and Benn Aluf.

Articles by Robert Freedman, President of Baltimore Hebrew University, are related to the 1990s. He published a range of articles on Russian policy in the Middle East and Iran. In the mid 1990s policy of Russia in the region was getting more active. The author considers Russian actions in Iran or Middle East through American antagonism: Moscow has the goal to bring troubles to the U.S. when develops its relations with the states in the region.

The attempt to assess the strategic partnership of Russia and Iran by analyzing the political dimension of cooperation was made by Nathan Burns and Houman Sadri, professor of political science department from University of Central Florida, in "Russia, Iran and Strategic Cooperation in the Caspian Region". The authors consider Russian-Iranian relations from geopolitical perspectives. They pay attention to the fact that both states are geographically close to each other and belong to the same region of the Caspian Sea. They underline that Russia and Iran conduct dialogue on the resolution of Caspian Sea issue (territorial dispute) and in the frame of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The relations are determined by existing internal political situation in both states. The authors devote several paragraphs in the paper to the history of relations, Putin's and Ahmadenijad's policies. The other aspect of relations is interaction between interested players. Authors named the United States and China. They defined several dimensions for cooperation and provided the assessment to each of them: military and technical ties, diplomatic ties and economic ties.

So far the available literature once again highlights the essential topics in Russian-Iranian interaction. Scholars are interested in Russian policy in Iran due to the Iranian nuclear crisis, so they focus on Russian nuclear and military ties with the state. The other issue is the triangle Russia-Iran-the United States: the influence of one bilateral relationship (Russian-American) on the others (Russian-Iranian) and vice versa.

As if the considered topic is rather fresh a lot of information on current events is available in media sources. So, we widely use interviews, articles and comments published mainly in Russian media as an essential source of information.

1.3.3 Media

Russian media always pays attention to Russian-Iranian relations. Several newspapers cover the events related to Iran, its nuclear program and Russian policy toward Iran. Among them “Nezavisimaya Gazeta”, “Vedomosti”, “Vzglyad”, “Rossiiskaya Gazeta”, “RIA Novosti” and “Gazeta.ru”.

Some of them publish special columns dedicated to the Russian-Iranian relations, where possible to find comments of experts, politicians and diplomats on the issue.

The most popular comments are made by Fedor Lukyanov (editor-in chief of the journal “Russia in global politics”). Usually he publishes comments in the column in “Gazeta.ru”. The column itself is dedicated to Russian foreign policy.

The Russian-Iranian relations come to be one of the most popular topics for media coverage. There is no column devoted to international politics or business that doesn't include

the material on current events around Russian-Iranian cooperation. However, as it was mentioned above, the number of trustful media resources is limited.

On the other hand, the level of independence of Russian media today is rather low, so most of the media resources reflect or at least cannot ignore the official governmental position on the subject.

1.4 Thesis structure

The structure of this master thesis meets its goals and objectives. It consists of six chapters. The first chapter, Introduction, contains research motivation, research question, objectives, literature review and method of analysis.

The second chapter is devoted to the Iranian Nuclear Crisis. It estimates the reasons of the crisis, its development and consequences for the international community. The chapter starts with the description of contemporary non-proliferation regime, its main challenges in order to place the Iranian crisis within the framework of recent developments. Then it covers the history of the Iranian nuclear program, which resulted in the nuclear crisis. This chapter chronologically follows the crisis development and the chain of multilateral negotiations. Such analysis let us make conclusions on controversy of contemporary non-proliferation regime, when any state can develop its nuclear program being within the legal framework of the international regime. The nuclear crisis challenges regional security. The situation is complicated with inability of the international community to find the common solution to the problem, as the positions of different players are not homogeneous. Their positions on the problem cannot coincide as they follow their own interests (national interests) is decision-making process.

The third chapter is dedicated to Russian non-proliferation policy. It focuses on basic policy concepts, the legal framework and the process of decision-making. The chapter comes to the conclusion that non-proliferation plays a significant role within the Russian foreign policy. It is a subject of high concern for the Russian government. Russia follows the principles of non-proliferation regime and international law, creating an image of reliable partner and responsible member of the international community.

The fourth chapter of this master thesis concentrates on the Russian-Iranian cooperation in the nuclear field. It assesses the level of bilateral cooperation to 2002 (when Iranian Dossier appeared on the agenda of the international community) and main trends in its development. Since 2000 Russian policy in Iran has become more organized and centralized comparing to the 1990s. It resulted in the decrease of inconsistencies between the state policy and enterprises actions in cooperation with Iran.

The next chapter refers to the Russian position toward the Iranian nuclear crisis. The Russian policy during the crisis has been formed due to its international obligations, participation in nuclear non-proliferation regime, political, economic and geostrategic motivations. Russia, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council and guarantor of international legitimacy, admits the right of Iran to develop a peaceful nuclear program according to the international norms and the Iranian obligations. At the same time, it is very important for Russia not to avoid the creation of nuclear weapons by Iran, because it would influence the non-proliferation regime and security of Russia.

A geostrategic approach makes Iran very attractive for Russia due to its oil and gas resources, transportation routes. Russia is interested in further development of its relations with Iran as it

opens the access to transportation routes, additional resources and provides good opportunities for the Russian business to enter international markets.

The developed cooperation in nuclear, military-technological, oil and gas industries, electrical energy, trade and bank areas shows the level of the Russian-Iranian relations and positive future trends. Scaling down the cooperation would mean the voluntary back down of Iranian market in favor of other players (China, the European Union, and the United States).

The influence of the Russian position in the Iranian crisis on its relations with the United States, Europe, China and the Middle East is considered in the last chapter.

Chapter 2. Iran's Nuclear Crisis

2.1 Contemporary non-proliferation regime

2.1.1 The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of non-proliferation regime

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) signed in 1967 remains the cornerstone of the international legal regime for non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The Treaty divides party-states into two categories: nuclear and non-nuclear. Nuclear status was given to the states which tested nuclear explosive device by the time of the signing of the Treaty: Russia, the United States, China, the United Kingdom and France. All of them are permanent members of the UN Security Council with veto power. Non-nuclear states don't have a right to develop nuclear weapons.

By itself, NPT does not establish a verification mechanism for its enforcement, nor international body, which monitors its implementation. Such monitoring is carried out by the Review Conferences, held every five years in New York. The last one was in May 2010.

Practically, the compliance of states with the NPT is checked by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It was founded in 1950 in Vienna to assist developing countries in acquiring access to nuclear energy and ensure its safe use. After signing NPT, the IAEA completed safeguards agreement with non-nuclear party states. Under this Safeguards Agreement international inspectors have a right to visit facilities declared by party-states as nuclear.

The disadvantage of this regime is that member states can decide which objects should be placed under IAEA safeguards. It opens the possibility to break the Treaty, since any state can

hide the presence of nuclear program infrastructure, and IAEA had no right to check it. However, even such limited testing revealed a few facts of illegal activities. For instance, in early 1990s, during inspections carried out by the IAEA of North Korean sites the implementation of Pyongyang large-scale nuclear weapons program was revealed. Such weakness of safeguard regime became obvious during the first war in Persian Gulf (1990-1991), when it was discovered that Iraq is very active in secret development of its nuclear program.

As a result, in 1996 the agreement on Additional Protocol to system of safeguards was reached under the IAEA auspices. All states, parties to the Treaty, nuclear and non-nuclear, were invited to sign such Protocol. IAEA inspectors were given the right to visit sites not declared by the host country. It increases Agency's efficiency in verification of states' compliance with NPT.

In the 1970s, in order to control the supply of dangerous nuclear materials, NPT member-states, possessing nuclear technology, established two informal "clubs" – the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and Zangger Committee. While the decisions of these two structures are not legally binding, the member countries voluntary pledged to comply with them. At the "club" meetings member states agreed on the lists of materials and technologies, which are under export control of competent authorities within the state. For example, in 1992 NSG decided to ban the transfer of any nuclear technology (including those for peaceful purposes) to the states, which haven't placed all its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards. The exception was made for five nuclear states (according to the NPT).

All in all, since the end of the Cold War, the non-proliferation regime has reached a significant success. Almost 40 states have joined NPT, including China and France. In 1995 the Treaty was extended for an indefinite term. Four states have abandoned their military nuclear programs and even refused of the nuclear weapons, created or received by them before (South Africa, Brazil, and Argentina). Iraq was deprived from it by external force. Hence, the NPT has

become the most universal treaty. It brings together 189 UN member states and only 4 are outside it (Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea, that left the Treaty in 2003).

2.1.2 Key concerns of contemporary non-proliferation

In spite of the universal character of the non-proliferation regime, it raises concerns within the international community and political elites of many countries. According to one of the leading Russian scholars, Alexey Arbatov, there are several reasons of such alarming situation.⁸

First of all, state-outsiders of the Treaty are mostly located in unstable regions of the world. They are involved in conflicts, which may escalate and lead to the war with unpredictable consequences.

Secondly, examples of Iraq, Iran, Libya, and North Korea have demonstrated the lack of effective international control over nuclear trafficking. The IAEA safeguard system is also often criticized.

Thirdly, the existence of “black market” in nuclear materials, technology and expertise is a reality of today’s world. It also involves NPT member states (particularly Libya, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Algeria) and persons or organizations of countries, which are not linked to any treaty, export restrictions and control mechanism (Pakistan).

The next problem is the global market for nuclear materials and technologies, which promises billions in profits and has turned to be the scene of severe competition of exporters. In the struggle for markets main suppliers (the United States, Russia, China, France, Germany,

⁸ А. Арбатов, В. Наумкин, Угрозы режиму нераспространения ядерного оружия на Ближнем и Среднем Востоке (Arbatov, Naumkin, The threat of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East) (Moscow: Carnegie Endowment in Moscow, 2005), 18

Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Italy and Israel)⁹ were not inclined to act strictly in compliance with IAEA Safeguards. Moreover, some of them were not stopped by the fact that importing countries very often are not obliged by NPT at all (India, Pakistan, and Israel). Even information about ongoing military developments and presence of natural energy resources in some states (that excludes the necessity to develop nuclear one), didn't stop suppliers from exporting (cases of Iran, Iraq and Libya).

As a result of such development international community has faced with two serious nuclear crises: in North Korea and Iran. North Korean experience has demonstrated that complete universality of NPT does not guarantee against further nuclear proliferation. The precedent of North Korea, which may serve as a model of behavior for other states, revealed a new threat. It opened the possibility to use, as NPT member, the fruits of international cooperation in the field of peaceful nuclear energy and science (under Article IV), then publicly withdraw from the Treaty and create its nuclear weapon (three months prior make a notice according to Article X).¹⁰

In this regard, Iran and its nuclear development come under suspicion as a potential “objector” to the NPT, eager to possess nuclear weaponry. The case of Iranian nuclear crisis is either the fruit of disadvantages in non-proliferation regime. There are two aspects within the problem. The first one is the uranium enrichment program of Iran and the second one is Tehran compliance with the IAEA safeguards agreement, signed in 1974.

If the situation surrounding the agreement of 1974 constituted a violation of the international non-proliferation regime, the question of Iran's uranium program is more

⁹ Ibid., 25

¹⁰ Federation of American Scientists, *Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons* (Washington: Federation of American Scientists, 2001), <http://www.fas.org/nuke/control/npt/text/npt2.htm> (accessed February 7, 2012)

complicated. In accordance with Article IV of the Treaty, Iran, like any other non-nuclear member state of the Treaty, has the right to develop peaceful nuclear energy. Tehran insists that the purpose of nuclear development is to acquire technical capacity to enrich uranium for independent production of fuel for nuclear plants.¹¹ There is no reason to believe that Iran has managed to produce highly enriched uranium. However, Iran is already able to enrich uranium to a level suited for fuel. So it would be able to use the same technology for further enrichment.

The United States and its allies insist on termination of Iran's uranium program. They follow the position, that Iran can exercise its rights under Article IV of the NPT only if it remains in compliance with all other provisions of the Treaty.¹² Such arguments are rather controversial. In the beginning of crisis Washington made a lot of efforts to delegitimize the Iranian program.¹³ Teheran's unwillingness to adequately resolve issues with IAEA was used against it. The endless delay in the provision of necessary documentation, constant problems with the admission of international inspectors, the aggressive rhetoric prompted all the major powers to agree that the issue of Iran was introduced for consideration in the UN Security Council. The Iranian government did not make any concessions at that moment, which paved the way for the adoption of several UN Security Council Resolutions, requiring Iran to resolve the issues with IAEA and

¹¹ International Atomic Energy Agency, *Statement by H.E. Reza Aghazadeh Vice-President of Islamic Republic of Iran and President of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran* (Vienna: IAEA, 2002), <http://www.iaea.org/About/Policy/GC/GC46/iran.pdf> (accessed February 7, 2012)

¹² The United States Mission to the United Nations, *Statement by Ambassador Susan E. Rice, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, at a Security Council Briefing on Iran and Resolution 1737* (New York: the United States Mission to the United Nations, 2010), <http://usun.state.gov/briefing/statements/2010/143721.htm> (accessed February 7, 2012)

¹³ The U.S. Department of State, *Background Note: Iran* (Washington: the Department of State, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, 2012), <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5314.htm#relations> (accessed February 7, 2012)

stop the uranium enrichment process. Iran ignored those Resolutions and violated its obligations as a UN member-state.

The application of provisions concerning uranium enrichment into UN Resolutions has brought difficulties in the diplomatic solution of Iranian problem. The positions of China and Russia were different from the United States and Western Europe in terms of actions against Iran. The crisis should be solved with diplomatic means. Implementation of sanctions regime and its tightening are radical measures, which became possible due to Iran's non-compliance with previous decisions of international community. The last but not the least factor of instability around contemporary non-proliferation is the result of nuclear powers policies itself.

2.2 Nuclear program of Iran

The nuclear program of Iran is a development plan of the nuclear industry in the Islamic Republic of Iran, launched in 1957 and based on the agreement with the United States in the sphere of peaceful nuclear energy.¹⁴

Since its establishment until present the nuclear program of Iran has gone through a number of phases. American Atoms for Peace program supported the development of Iran's peaceful nuclear program. Within the framework of this program the United States were bound to supply Iran with equipment and nuclear facilities, train Iranian specialists in exchange for monitoring the nuclear objects with respect to the peaceful use sustainability. In 1958 Iran

¹⁴ Khlopkov Anton, "Nuclear program of Iran – unfinished story", in *The nuclear threshold: the lessons of Iranian and North Korean nuclear crisis for non-proliferation regime*, ed. Arbatov A. (Moscow: Carnegie Endowment, 2007), 37. http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/12398nuclear_threshold_russian.pdf (accessed February 7, 2012)

became a member of the IAEA and in 1970 it ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).¹⁵

In the 1960-1970s Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi decided to turn Iran into an industrial world power. Amid the multiplied Iran's revenues owing to the increased oil and gas prices the country introduced a number of social, economic, political and administrative reforms causing the economic growth and the upraise of new industries.¹⁶ In March 1974, Shah Pahlavi declared the program of nuclear energy development. Iran established the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) responsible for implementing nuclear energy program of the country. At the same time, Iran signed the safeguards Agreement with the IAEA; and with the participation of France, Western Germany, the United States and a number of other countries, it started developing its atomic energy industry.

The initial nuclear program plans included mastering the complete nuclear fuel cycle (NFC) and construction of 23 nuclear reactors to ensure energy independence of Iran. These ambitious plans implied import of nuclear reactors from Europe, particularly from France and West Germany in spite of the fact that at that point of time these countries did not ratify the NPT.

In 1975 the United States signed the Memorandum 292 entitled "The U.S.-Iran Nuclear Cooperation". It allowed Iran to enrich uranium and acquire the technology of plutonium extraction. This material could be applied for creating nuclear bombs.¹⁷ According to the IAEA prospects, planned to be completed by 1994, the nuclear program would help Iran to achieve

¹⁵ Iran signed the Treaty in 1968 and ratified it in 1970

¹⁶ S. Agayev S., *Iran between the past and the future* (Moscow: Nauka, 1981), 7

¹⁷ National Security Council, *Memorandum 292, April 1975* (Washington: Gerald R. Ford Library, 2006), <http://www.ford.utexas.edu/library/document/nsdmnssm/nsdm292a.htm> (accessed February 7, 2012)

25% share of atomic energy in the total energy balance of the country by 1990.¹⁸ For that reason, the initial plan was to import the nuclear fuel from the partner-countries, who were also bound to supply Iran with nuclear facilities: France – 8 reactors, Western Germany – 4 reactors, the United States – 6-8 reactors.¹⁹

In the long term the program suggested the production of uranium by Iran itself based on the geologic research of uranium reserves. The program involved not only the supply of technological infrastructure but also the quality specialists training and experts in nuclear physics. Iranian students were admitted to achieve nuclear science degrees in many of the Western European and American universities including the leading technical university of the United States – the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.²⁰

In 1979 Iran witnessed the Islamic revolution resulting in the overthrow of monarchy and Ayatollah Khomeini's accession to power. The Shah's nuclear program based on the close cooperation with the United States ended up frozen for almost a decade because of the radicalism and anti-Americanism of the new government. In the beginning of 1990s, Iran resumed the work on its nuclear program. The return to the nuclear program development and its military trend was the major consequence of the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-1988, that made the capital and the major cities of Iran experience massive missile attacks. After concluding the truce with Iraq, Iran reconsidered its attitude to the weapons of mass destruction significantly. The other factor, that influenced Iran's decision to continue the development of its nuclear program, was increasing

¹⁸ Novikov V. and Khlopkov A. "Nuclear program of Iran", in. *Nuclear non-proliferation*, ed. Khlopkov A (Moscow: PIR-Center, 2009), 51

¹⁹ Ibid, p 52

²⁰ Khlopkov A., *Nuclear program of Iran – unfinished story*, 40

nuclear capabilities of neighboring states: Pakistan, India and Israel. In addition the pending threat from the United States (after Operation Desert Storm) forced other states in the Middle East find ways to protect themselves from such kind of expansion.

Looking for partners Iran turned to Russia. In 1995 Russian Minatom made a decision to build a light-water 1000 MW capacity nuclear reactor in Bushehr.²¹ This decision stirred a huge campaign against reactor construction in Western Europe and the United States. The peaceful use of atom might be a cover for Iran to produce weapon-grade plutonium. In the West this decision stirred a huge campaign against construction motivated by fears that the peaceful use of atom might be a cover for Iran to produce weapon-grade plutonium from the spent nuclear fuel.

The first Iranian Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) in Bushehr was finished in cooperation with Russian specialists. After the launch Russia made a commitment to supply nuclear fuel to Iran in an amount enough for 11 years operation. The NPP was launched on August 2010.

Today, the well-known Iranian nuclear facilities are situated in Arak, Ardakan, Bandar-Abbas, Bushehr, Darkhovin, Isfahan, Qum, Natanz, Sagand (uranium mine), and Tehran. Experts assume that some facilities are hidden underground, in the caves or mountain tunnels.

²¹ A.L. Saliev 2007. Nuclear program of Iran: history and major stages of development. *Vremya Vostoka*, May. <http://easttime.ru/analitic/2/11/212.html>

In 2009 Iran officially declared its intentions to build 20 new nuclear power plants and 10 new uranium enrichment plants.²²

2.3 Nuclear crisis of Iran

The United States have been accusing Iran of violation of the NPT since 1980s, pointing at the industrial complexes at Natanz and Parchin, Nuclear Technology/Research Center in Isfahan and saying that Iran is planning to produce nuclear weapon.²³ The situation around the Iranian nuclear problem was aggravated in 2002 due to the revealed violations of the nuclear Safeguards Agreement with IAEA signed in 1974.²⁴ American satellites pictured two suspicious facilities near Iranian settlements in Natanz and Arak, which again led to accusations of producing nuclear weapon components bypassing the IAEA. In response to these accusations, Tehran admitted the existence of the objects and invited IAEA inspection.

In January 2002 in his Annual State of the Union Address to Congress US President George Bush stated that Iran, Iraq and North Korea constitute an “axis of evil”.²⁵ In the official statements Iranian authorities insisted that the goals of Iranian nuclear program are purely

²² “Iran is going to built 10 more uranium enrichment plants”, *RIA Novosti*, November 29, 2009, <http://atominfo.ru:17000/hl?url=webds/atominfo.ru/news/air8274.htm&mime=text/html&charset=windows-1251> (accessed February 8, 2012)

²³ The U.S. Department of State, *Background Note: Iran* (Washington: the Department of State, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, 2012), <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5314.htm#relations> (accessed February 7, 2012)

²⁴ Saprykin V. “Iranian nuclear program behind the scenes”, *Almanac Vostok* 35-36, no 11-12 (November 2005), http://www.situation.ru/app/j_art_1003.htm (accessed February 8, 2012)

²⁵ “Bush presented his annual message on the State of the Union to the Congress”, *News.ru*, January 30, 2002 <http://www.newsru.com/world/30jan2002/polozhenie.html> (accessed February 8, 2012)

peaceful, however, in 2003 the world community was concerned about the statement by the President of Iran Mohammad Khatami that Iran intends to create a complete nuclear fuel cycle and to build production capacities to ensure energy security.²⁶ At the same time in 2003 the Head of the IAEA paid a visit to a number of Iranian nuclear sites and was impressed by the high level of nuclear technology that was reflected in the IAEA report along with the statement: for almost 18 years Iran have been hiding from the Agency certain aspects of its nuclear program.²⁷ The report raised deep concern not only in the United States and the countries of Western Europe, but in Russia as well.²⁸ As a result, in 2003 Iran signed a Supplementary Agreement to the NPT and declared voluntary moratorium on uranium enrichment.

Another aggravation of the Iranian nuclear problem began to take shape in 2004 against the background of such events as the confession by the “father” of the Pakistan’s nuclear bomb, Abdul Qadeer Khan, about the transfer of uranium enrichment technology to Iran, and Iran’s refusal to accept IAEA inspections to some of its nuclear facilities. The series of meetings with the EU-3 (the United Kingdom, France and Germany) that followed these events resulted in signing a specific agreement that Iran would guarantee the peaceful nuclear research.²⁹

²⁶ Iranian President, Mohammad Khatami, Speaks on the Right of all Nations to Use Nuclear Energy”, *Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA)*, February 9, 2003, <http://www.iranwatch.org/government/Iran/iran-irna-khatami-yazd-isfahan-kashan-020903.htm> (accessed February 8, 2012)

²⁷ IAEA, *Implementations of NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran* (Vienna: IAEA, June 2003), <http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Board/2003/gov2003-40.pdf> (accessed February 8, 2012)

²⁸ “The U.S. Administration Began Examining the IAEA Report on Iranian Nuclear Program”, *News.ru*, June 7, 2003, <http://www.newsru.com/world/07jun2003/doklad.html> (accessed February 8, 2012)

²⁹ Johnson, Rebecca, “Iran’s Nuclear Program: EU-3 Snubbed as Iran Begins Uranium Conversion at Isfahan” *Disarmament Diplomacy* 80, no 3 (Autumn 2005), <http://www.acronym.org.uk/dd/dd80/80news01.htm> (accessed February 8, 2012)

However, in June 2005, a conservative leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad won the elections for the post of the President of Iran, and his accession to power has changed both the Iranian nuclear program and the country's foreign policy in general. In February 2006, the President terminated the Supplementary Agreement with IAEA of 1997 and threatened to withdraw from the NPT and from cooperation with IAEA in case any sanctions would be imposed against Iran.³⁰ Iran resumed its nuclear research in the Nuclear Technology/Research Center in Isfahan and, insisting on its right as NPT member of the peaceful use of nuclear technology declared Iran's intention to develop its nuclear program including enrichment of uranium.

On February 3, 2006, during its intercessional meeting IAEA prepared a resolution on Iran that recommended transferring the problem to the UN Security Council. In response, Iran warned that the transfer of Iranian "nuclear dossier" to the UN Security Council would make Iran refuse to cooperate with IAEA and stop efforts to settle the crisis through diplomatic tools.³¹ However, after three days of consideration, IAEA transferred the "nuclear dossier" to the UN Security Council that could lead to sanctions against Iran.

In 2007, despite the UN Security Council Resolutions, the Iranian nuclear program remained one of the most sensitive issues of the international relations. In January 2008, the Head of IAEA, Mohamed ElBaradei, came to Iran for negotiations.³² In the course of negotiation process the statement by the chairman of the National Security Council of Majlis about the

³⁰ International Atomic Energy Agency, *Safeguards Statement* (Monterey: James Martin Center for Non-proliferation Studies, 2006), http://cns.miis.edu/inventory/pdfs/iaea_dept_of_safeguards.pdf (accessed February 8, 2012)

³¹ Ibid

³² UN Information Center in Moscow, *IAEA and Iran* (Moscow: UN Information Center, January 2008), <http://www.unic.ru/bill/?ndate=2008-01-15#802> (accessed February 8, 2012)

readiness of Iran to ratify the Supplementary protocol on IAEA Safeguards signed in 2003 gave a certain hope for overcoming the crisis, although Iran demanded that the world community acknowledge Iran's right for peaceful nuclear energy.³³

Nevertheless, despite the fact that none of the IAEA inspections proved military component of Iranian nuclear research, the United States and the EU-3 insist on its existence. This resulted in the third resolution (since December 2006) on Iran No.1803.³⁴ One of the factors inducing the adoption of the resolution was the launch of the first Iranian Earth-orbiting satellite called "Omid" ("Hope").

Russia, whose position significantly differed from that of the United States and European countries, commented the launch of the satellite with the following statement:

*"The launch of the satellite by Iran does not indicate a leap in the country's nuclear program. Moreover, there is nothing unexpected about the launch. In the end of the previous year there was established the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization – APSCO. Obviously, Iran did not join it empty-handed. It is also crucial to remember that the launch is of utmost importance for the country's internal policy...Today there are no longer nine countries in the world that are capable of launching a satellite, there are ten including Iran."*³⁵

³³ Mamedova N., "Iranian nuclear program in 2008", *RAS Institute of the Middle East*, March 15, 2009, <http://www.iimes.ru/rus/stat/2009/15-03-09a.htm> (accessed February 8, 2012)

³⁴ United Nations Organization, *Resolution 1803* (New York: UN Organization., 2008), <http://www.un.org/russian/documen/scresol/res2008/res1803.htm> (accessed February 8, 2012)

³⁵ Mikhail Margelov's comment to the article by Yuryeva Darya "On Iran with Hope", *Rossiiskaya gazeta* (Russian Newspaper) (Moscow), February 5, 2009, <http://www.rg.ru/2009/02/05/sputnik.html> (accessed February 8, 2012)

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Supposedly, the Earth-orbiting satellite helped Ahmadinejad to be re-elected. However, the outcome of elections was not of fundamental importance because none of the candidates planned to abandon the line of Iranian nuclear development.³⁶

In March 2009, the representatives of China, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States and Russia (G6) issued a joint statement that called for transparency of Iranian activities and expressed their concern about the uncertainty of the situation. The foreign affairs ministers of the G8 countries gathered at a summit in Trieste, the issue of Iran being the main topic on the agenda.³⁷

In September 2009, IAEA Director General reported, that although the Islamic Republic of Iran has cooperated with the Agency on some issues, several critical areas remain unaddressed. In this regard the Agency concerned over “the possibility of there being military dimensions to Iran’s nuclear program”.³⁸ At the same time in the letter to IAEA Director General Iran informed the Agency on the second uranium enrichment plant construction.³⁹ This news was announced on the eve of the next round of talks (October 1st) on the problem of Iran between the G6 countries in Geneva.

³⁶ “Iran Walks into Space”. *Kommersant*. February 12, 2008, <http://www.kommersant.ru/Doc-rss/851757> (accessed February 8, 2012)

³⁷ “Iran and the G8”, *Rossiiskaya gazeta* (Russian Newspaper) (Moscow), June 26, 2008, <http://www.rg.ru/2009/06/26/lavrov-peregovory-site.html> (accessed February 8, 2012)

³⁸ IAEA, *Introductory statement to the Board of Governors by IAEA Director General Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei* (Vienna: IAEA, September 2009), <http://iaea.org/newscenter/statements/2009/ebsp2009n009.html#iran> (accessed February 8, 2012)

³⁹ Permanent Mission of Islamic Republic of Iran to the IAEA, *A Letter to the Agency Regarding Implementation of Safeguards in Iran* (Vienna: IAEA, September 2009), <http://iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Infcircs/2009/infcirc768.pdf> (accessed February 8, 2012)

The G6 countries agreed with Iran on the transfer of the major part of the low-grade uranium from Iran to Russia, then, according to the plan, uranium would be transferred to France and from there it would be returned to Iran in the form of fuel.⁴⁰ This Iranian concession was unexpected, but did not ease the tension.

In the beginning of November, 2009, it turned out that Iran once again refused to give away its low-grade uranium for further abroad processing. In an attempt to explain this contradictory behavior, Iranian lawmaker Ahmad Avai expressed an opinion that the refusal to export its uranium abroad is connected with the lack of trust in the West: there are no guarantees that the uranium would be returned back to the country.⁴¹ On November 20, in the course of Brussels negotiations, Iran repulsed not only the IAEA proposal to enrich uranium in Russia, but also the alternative proposal to export uranium to Turkey.⁴² In response to the international pressure Iranian parliament recommended its President to reduce the level of cooperation with IAEA.⁴³ The G6 countries gave Iran a new deadline to make a decision – the end of 2009.

In February 2010, Tehran presented IAEA with new documents verifying that the experiment to achieve 19.8% of uranium-235 enrichment was successfully carried out in

⁴⁰ “G6 was Satisfied with the Negotiations on Iran in Geneva”, *RIA Novosti*, October 2, 2009

⁴¹ “Top Iran Lawmaker: we could Leave the NPT”, *Associated Press*, November, 2009
<http://www.haaretz.com/news/top-iran-lawmaker-we-could-leave-the-npt-1.3237> (accessed February 8, 2012)

⁴² “We can Enrich ourselves”, *Vedomosti*, October 9, 2009,
http://www.memoid.ru/node/Yadernaya_programma_Irana#cite_note-35politru-41 (accessed February 8, 2012)

⁴³ “Top Iran Lawmaker: we could Leave the NPT”, *Associated Press*, November, 2009
<http://www.haaretz.com/news/top-iran-lawmaker-we-could-leave-the-npt-1.3237> (accessed February 8, 2012)

Natanz.⁴⁴ At the same time Brazil offered IAEA a new alternative for the Iranian issue settlement – to exchange Iranian ore and the enriched uranium through the third “depository state”, located close and neutral to Iran. Iran made its decision and on May 17, 2010, has signed an agreement with Brazil and Turkey that 1,200 kilograms of Iranian uranium ore (supplied in a month after the agreement signature) would be exchanged for 120 kilograms of 20% enriched uranium (supplied in a year after agreement signature) on the territory of Turkey.⁴⁵ However, the United States continued to demand sanctions against Iran – a “surprising reaction” according to Mohamed ElBaradei.

2.4 Regime of sanctions

In December 2009, the United States unilaterally introduced several sanctions against Iranian individuals and legal entities who invested more than 20 million dollars into Iranian energy industry and exported petroleum derivatives to Iran, including gasoline – everyone was denied loans or investments from the United States residents.⁴⁶

In the beginning of 2010 Washington declared its readiness to introduce new severe sanctions against a number of Iranian companies working in spheres of telecommunications,

⁴⁴ “Iran Called the New IAEA Report “Desinformation”, *Rosbalt*, February 21, 2010, <http://www.rosbalt.ru/main/2010/02/21/714698.html> (accessed February 8, 2012)

⁴⁵ “Iran Handed IAEA a Letter on Uranium Exchange Agreement”, *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, May 24, 2010, <http://www.rg.ru/2010/05/24/iran-anons.html> (accessed February 8, 2012)

⁴⁶ “The U.S. is Seeking a Range of Sanctions against Iran”, *The New York Times*, September 27, 2009. <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/28/world/middleeast/28iran.html> (accessed February 8, 2012)

finances and energy industry. After another IAEA report was published in February 2010 that Iran called “unbalanced”, the sanctions were backed by Russia. A party still arguing against sanctions was China, although it was expected to stick to it for long.

Despite the agreement of Iran to exchange uranium outside its country, the USA insisted on imposing sanctions and on June 9, 2010 the UN Security Council by majority vote (12 out of 15 – except Brazil Turkey and Lebanon) voted in favor of sanctions. The sanctions involved inter-bank money transfers, external economic operations, maritime traffic monitoring, prohibition against certain arms import to Iran, freeze on assets of certain individuals and companies on the US list. The reaction of Iran was harsh. It claimed that Resolution did not have a legal value and it was just “worthless paper”. From the Iranian perspective “nuclear issue is just a pretext as “United States government is going to swallow the whole Middle East region”.⁴⁷

The EU countries, following the mechanism of sanctions, in July 2010, toughened up measures against Iran, including the adoption of new visa requirements and limitations and prohibitions to enter the European Union countries, froze the investments into Iranian oil and gas sector.⁴⁸ China did not approve the EU decision and called for the return to the means of diplomacy.

Russia criticized the unilateral the U.S. and the EU sanctions as well. In March 2011, the Foreign Affairs Minister of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov stated that Russia would not

⁴⁷ Mahmoud Ahmadinejad Labels Iran Sanctions “Worthless Paper”, *Daily News and Analysis*, June 11, 2010, http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report_mahmoud-ahmadinejad-labels-iran-sanctions-worthless-paper_1394812 (accessed February 9, 2012)

⁴⁸ “UN Approved Additional Sanctions against Iran”, *RIA Novosti*, July 26, 2010, <http://ria.ru/world/20100726/258614362.html> (accessed February 9, 2012)

back any further sanctions against Iran, because these sanctions are not directed against the nuclear program of Iran, but against the economy and the population of the country.⁴⁹

Summing up, the review of the Iranian crisis one can draw a conclusion that the situation around Iran proves the contradictory nature of today's nuclear non-proliferation regime. Being a legal participant of the NPT a country can independently develop its nuclear industry and consequently create a conflict potential that threatens both the non-proliferation regime itself and the stability of the surrounding region. In addition, different countries perceive the nuclear non-proliferation problem differently, making decisions primarily based on their own interests.

The objective of this work includes an assessment of Russian interests in order to explain its behavior in the course of Iranian crisis development. The next chapter will dwell on the current Russian policy in the sphere of non-proliferation as well as the policy-making process.

⁴⁹ "Russia will not Back Further Sanctions against Iran", Interview by Sergey Lavrov, *Rossiiskaya gazeta* (Russian Newspaper) (Moscow), February 15, 2011, <http://rg.ru/2011/02/15/iran-lavrov-anons.html> (accessed February 9, 2012)

Chapter 3. Non-proliferation Policy of the Russian Federation

3.1 Development of non-proliferation policy

In the early 1990s Russian non-proliferation policy was linked with changes in domestic policy line and approaches of Russian leaders (Boris Yeltsin period) toward decision-making process on strategic issues. Therefore, Russian approach to non-proliferation issues (first of all non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and means of delivery) had different specific features in certain periods. It is possible identify at least five periods in dynamic of changes within Russian policy: three in Yeltsin times and two in Putin-Medvedev's Russia.

The first stage started from the moment of Russian independency in 1991 and lasted till 1993/1994. In strategic terms, this stage is characterized by commitment to continuity in non-proliferation policy. In tactical terms, the fluctuation of policy line reflected existing struggle for power within Russian governmental bodies. At this stage, Russia actively expressed its willingness to support or coordinate actions with the United States or other Western powers. Russian understanding of its place and role in international relations was rather romantic or naïve connected with underestimation of its national interests. Those times were featured by the lack of relevant perception of internal proliferation threats, possibility of nuclear terrorism, and absence of well-managed export control, weakness of custom and border services.

The second stage started in 1994 when the period of euphoria was changed by deeper understanding of domestic and foreign policy goals, national interests. Here the significant role was played by the members of new State Duma, elected in December 1993. They were against the previous policy line in opposition to Yeltsin and his team. The idea to renew the relationships with such states as Iran, North Korea, and Iraq was under discussion within Russian political

circus. Diplomatic contacts with China and India turned to be more active. Domestic chaos in nuclear security was getting worse and resulted into nuclear thefts, smuggling missile components (namely to Iraq) and irresponsible declarations on intentions to supply materials from checklists (for example to Iran). Moreover, during this period the background for further tensions in Russian-U.S. relations was laid down. The perception of Russia within Western states has been changed.

The third stage began in 1996 and related to the name of new foreign minister Eugenie Primakov. This policy line was conducted even in the first two years of Putin's presidency. It was characterized by warming in Russian-U.S. relations, Russian rapprochement with "rogue states". At the same time the range of domestic problems has got their solutions: the control over nuclear weapons materials (due to the U.S. support and domestic efforts); the improvement of physical protection, recording and control of nuclear material. The coordination of foreign policy was also improved, that decreased the risk of independent actions by export-oriented Ministries and enterprises. At that time Russia started to realize (not so much for outside world, but for itself) "what is good or bad" in nuclear non-proliferation. The efforts to separate the strategic understanding of national interests from immediate "advantages" (sometimes rather doubtful) were undertaken (more in statements than in practice). Practically, Russia ratified START II⁵⁰, CTBT⁵¹ and proposed set of initiatives in non-proliferation.

However, within Russian political elite the approaches toward nuclear non-proliferation did not coincide (as it was in previous stages either). The decision-making process (next paragraphs cover the topic more precisely) was handling not only by the people who rigidly

⁵⁰ Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty

⁵¹ Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

insisted on necessity to follow Russian international obligations, but also by those, who were convinced in possibility to reconsider such obligations, if there is an urgent need.

At that time the relations with the United States were full of “minor squabbles” (first of all over Russian export to Iran, which turned to be a permanent problem in Russian-U.S. relations), as strategic approaches of both states were completely different. As a result, there was no adequate reaction on nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan in 1998. Missile proliferation also remains “hot issue” for discussions and was far from its solution due to inconsistency of Russian-U.S. positions.

Next stages in Russian non-proliferation policy development refer to Putin-Medvedev or contemporary period. For eight years of Putin’s Presidency Russian foreign policy suffered several changes. The first key point is September 11th 2001, after which Russia proclaimed the intentions to create a “strategic alliance” with the U.S. and be closer to the European Union. For a short period of time, Russian-U.S. relations warmed. As a result, in 2002 both states signed Joint Declaration “On New Strategic Relations”. Concerning non-proliferation issues, the text of Declaration has following paragraph: “Russia and the United States will step up joint efforts in their struggle with global threats of 21st century, including interconnected problems of international terrorism and WMD proliferation”.⁵² However in 3-4 years Moscow turned its back to the West. It was getting more obvious, that it follows own policy line, forming its “system of

⁵² Center for Arms Control, Energy and Environmental Studies, *Совместная декларация Президента Российской Федерации В. Путина и Президента Соединенных Штатов Америки Дж. Буша о новых стратегических отношениях между Российской Федерацией и Соединенными Штатами Америки* (Joint Declaration by President of Russian Federation V. Putin and President of United States G. Bush on New Strategic Relations between Russia and the U.S.) (Moscow: Center for Arms Control, Energy and Environmental Studies, 2002), <http://www.armscontrol.ru/start/rus/docs/jointdecl0602.htm> (accessed February 9, 2012)

international relations”. Two years later, Russia tried to impose its own terms of cooperation to the West. Finally, in autumn 2008, Russian relations with the United States and Europe reached their lowest point (Caucasus War). The relations improved due to World Economic Crisis and changes in United States administration, resulted in Russian-U.S. “reset” and new START treaty, ratified by the end of 2010.

During this period Russia actively participated in different international forums, launched its own initiatives on the range of issues: International fuel center to terminate internationalization of nuclear fuel cycle⁵³; International project on elimination of radioactive waste; active participation in export control regimes; joined Global Nuclear Energy Partnership proposed by the United States in 2006; Global initiative on struggle with nuclear terrorism, etc.

So far Russian-U.S. relations were rather complicated and worth special attention. Main tensions were raised over Russian relations with states, suspected by the United States in nuclear weapons development. Under Putin administration Russia developed cooperation with such states rather actively. While Washington considered use of force, the “purchase” of nuclear program and the idea of “external control” over nuclear objects, - as instruments to deal with those countries; Moscow inclined to diplomatic instruments and didn’t refuse to cooperate with “unreliable” states. Russia supported its position with the following argument: if there is no convincing evidence, that non-nuclear state is eager to create nuclear weapon, it is possible to

⁵³ States, that develop nuclear programs for peaceful purpose become shareholders of international fuel center, and shouldn’t develop sensitive technologies on their territories. The Center should be under the IAEA Guarantees.

cooperate with it.⁵⁴ The international law doesn't prohibit states to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

The United States blamed Russia, that under certain circumstances Russia may obey non-proliferation principles and put her economic interests on the primary positions. As evidence of such argument, American administration always paid attention to Russian-Iranian cooperation in science and technology, especially when the situation around Iranian Nuclear Dossier was getting worse. Russia in its turn criticized the United States for the policy of double standards (U.S.-India cooperation in nuclear field).

The "reset" in Russian-U.S. cooperation proposed by Obama administration started from non-proliferation and arms control issues. It was logical due to the importance of the subject for both sides.

During the 2000s non-proliferation policy of Russia was getting more synchronized and consistent comparing to the 1990s. Changes in domestic policy arrangements have resulted in creation of legal framework of non-proliferation policy. Decision-making process turned to be more centralized. The system of governmental institutions and the responsibilities of those institutions have received its complete shape.

⁵⁴ Radio "Echo of Moscow", *Interview by Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov* (Moscow: Echo of Moscow, January 2006)

3.2 Legal framework of non-proliferation policy of the Russian Federation

According to official documents and declarations, one of the distinctive features of Russian non-proliferation policy now is similar to those of Soviet times. Russian actions in the international arena and domestic efforts in non-proliferation have always coincided with general lines of international non-proliferation regimes (in words) and appear to be adequate to threats posed by WMD proliferation.

Russian foreign policy in non-proliferation has the following characteristics:

- Perspective of proliferation threats;
- Accommodation of the interests of all participating parties;
- Promotion of national interests;
- Use multilateral diplomacy and collective measures to response international proliferation concerns.⁵⁵

In recent ten years, non-proliferation issues received great attention in Russian society. The evidence of such attention is the improvement of legislation basement. The range of conceptual and legislative documents was adopted by Russian government. Official documents and statements proclaim the commitment of Russia to WMD nonproliferation regime and particularly to NPT. In June 2003 President of Russia Vladimir Putin in his interview to BBC News underlined, that “the main threat to international security in the 21st century is proliferation of WMD”. The same idea was sounded in his speech during the UN General Assembly meeting in September 2003.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Забалуев Ю. “Политика России в сфере нераспространения ОМУ и средств его доставки” (Zabaluev Yu, “Nonproliferation policy of Russia”) *Обозреватель (Observer)*, no 2 (February 2008):16

⁵⁶President Administration, *Interview by President Putin to BBC* (Moscow: President Administration Office, June 2003), http://archive.kremlin.ru/appears/2003/06/22/1210_type63379_47510.shtml (accessed February 9, 2012)

The legal framework for the development and implementation of State policy of Russia in non-proliferation is confined to Russian international obligations in the area and national legislation.

There is no word devoted to non-proliferation in Russian Constitution. However, it contains two important paragraphs. The first one proclaims that international agreements and treaties are subject to Russian national legislation. The second one is about the priority of international legislation over national.⁵⁷ So, the obligations of Russia under international agreements and treaties in non-proliferation should be subject to compulsory implementation.

The fundamental international agreements in nuclear non-proliferation are:

- Treaty on Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT);
- Treaties and Agreements on Creation of Nuclear Weapons Free Zones;
- Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT);⁵⁸

Other multilateral agreements are the IAEA Charter, IAEA Safeguards Agreements, the UN Security Council Resolution 1540 on Non-proliferation (2005), regulative documents of multilateral export control regimes (control lists and principles of transfer of dual-use products), where Russia participates (Nuclear Suppliers Group, Zangger Committee, Missile Technology Control Regime). In 2004 Russia joined the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), which can be also referred to the “club” like regimes.

⁵⁷ Government of the Russian Federation, *Constitution of the Russian Federation* (Moscow: Government of the Russian Federation, 2001) <http://www.constitution.ru/> (accessed February 9, 2012)

⁵⁸ Concerning the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), Russian officials and representatives in different international organizations often in their statements underlined the fact, that Russia has signed and ratified the Treaty, while the U.S. in contrary has not ratified it yet. The Treaty was opened for signature in September 1996. The Treaty has not entered into force, as among required 44 states, possessing nuclear capabilities, only 35 ratified it. Israel, India, Iran, China, North Korea, United States, Pakistan, etc. haven't joined the Treaty or completed the procedure of its ratification.

International norms in non-proliferation of WMD and means of delivery can be effective only under the conditions of their implementation in national level. Hence in Russia non-proliferation issues have great importance not only for its foreign policy strategy, but also reflected in national legal regulations. So far in national level the system of regulative policy has been formed with conceptual, legislative and normative background, which is obligatory for federal institutions, individuals and organizations on the territory of the Russian Federation (Table 1)

Table 1. National Laws and Regulations in Non-proliferation of WMD and Means of Delivery

Basic Conceptual Guidance and Policy Documents on Non-proliferation, Approved by Decree of the President or the Government of the Russian Federation			
Concept of National Security of Russian Federation	Concept of Foreign Policy of Russian Federation	Principles of State Policy in the Field of Non-proliferation of WMD and their Means of Delivery	Comprehensive Program for Non-proliferation of WMD and their means of Delivery

Legislation on Non-proliferation and Export Control		
Federal Law of Russian Federation on "Export Control"	Federal Law of Russian Federation on "Military and Technical Cooperation with Foreign States"	Federal Laws on "Basic Principles of State Regulations in International Trade ", "On Atomic Energy", "On CTBT Ratification"

Regulatory Legal Acts by President and Government of Russian Federation and federal Agencies of Executive Branch	
President and Government Decrees Concerning: -Export Control Implementation - Work of Export Control Commission - Military and Technical Cooperation with Foreign States	Legal Acts of Federal Bodies Exercising Powers in the Sphere of Export Control and Nonproliferation of WMD (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Federal Agency on Export and Technical Control, Ministry of Defence, Federal Custom Service, Federal Agency on Military and Technical Cooperation, Ministry of Economic Development, Russian Federal Atomic Energy Agency (Rosatom), Federal Space Agency (Roscosmos), etc)

So, since the 2000s non-proliferation policy of Russian Federation has got its conceptual framework. Before that time the principles of Russian policy in non-proliferation were written in the Concept of National Security, Concept of Foreign Policy and other documents. In 2005 Russian government issued the range of documents devoted to the problem of non-proliferation. One of them is “Principles of State Policy in the Field of Non-proliferation of WMD and their Means of Delivery”.

The document is of high importance. The “Principles of State Policy” was the first document in Russia devoted to the problem of non-proliferation. The document contains the comprehensive state approach to non-proliferation; it underlines the power authorities of all governmental bodies, including president and government of Russian Federation; and provides the definition of non-proliferation of WMD and means of delivery. According to the “Principles of State Policy” *WMD Non-proliferation* is “complex of political, economic, legal and administrative measures undertaken in the interests of international peace and security of the Russian Federation.” Those measures are aimed at:

- Prevention or suppression of illicit trafficking;
- Fulfillment of international obligations and laws of Russian Federation in non-proliferation, including export and import control;
- Protection against unauthorized access to WMD and means of delivery, related materials and technology; providing them with reliable accounting, monitoring, security, transportation, use and recycling.⁵⁹

This definition gives almost comprehensive view on the position, attitude and approaches of Russian authorities toward the idea of “WMD non-proliferation” (Figure 2).

⁵⁹ “Основы государственной политики Российской Федерации в области нераспространения оружия массового уничтожения и средств его доставки” (“Principles of State Policy in Nonproliferation of WMD), *Rossiiskaya Gazeta* (The Russian Newspaper) (Moscow), May 17, 2005, <http://www.rg.ru/printable/2005/05/17/osnovy-orujie-dok.html> (accessed February 10, 2012)

Figure 2. State Policy of the Russian Federation in Non-proliferation of WMD and Means of Delivery



All in all, the “Principles...” identifies two components of Russian non-proliferation policy. The first one relates to the international level. It touches Russian participation in international organizations and forums, such as the UN, the IAEA and other multilateral institutions (G8, G20, Zangger Committee, etc.). The second one contains measures undertaken on national level and aimed at fulfillment of international obligations of Russian Federation.

In addition to the “Principles...” in 2005-2006, the Russian government adopted several other documents that are also considered as conceptual background of Russian non-proliferation policy. Among them is “Comprehensive Program for Non-proliferation of WMD and Means of Delivery to 2010” (October 2005). This document identifies practical measures that should be undertaken to implement the “Principles of State Policy”, mentioned above.

In June 2006, Russian Ministry of Defense published its White Book: “Russian Federation and the Situation in Non-proliferation of WMD: Threats, Estimations, Objectives and Ways of Implementation”. The document declares Russian position and practical approaches in non-proliferation. It defines main threats to Russian security and means of their neutralization. So far, in its first Chapter once again it is underlined that one of the basic principles of Russian foreign policy is to follow the principles of non-proliferation. “The increase in number of countries possessing WMD, especially if the state locates near Russian borders, is considered as one of the main threats to Russian security.”⁶⁰ Furthermore, the document provides the idea, that today estimations of threats depend on geopolitical location of a state, its relations with allies, economic interests and historical background. Moreover, contemporary approaches to non-

⁶⁰ Ministry of defense of Russian Federation, *Российская Федерация и ситуация в области нераспространения ОМУ и средств его доставки: угрозы, оценки, задачи и пути их реализации* (Russian Federation and the Situation in Nonproliferation of WMD: Threats, Estimations, Objectives and Ways of Implementation) (Moscow: PIR-Center, 2006), http://www.pircenter.org/data/npr/white_book.pdf (accessed February 10, 2012)

proliferation have got more political influence. So, due to their understanding of “non-proliferation” different states implement political, economic, diplomatic and even military measures to reach non-proliferation goal. In this context, Russia follows political and diplomatic approach when refers to the problem. Use of force is considered as a measure of last resort and possible only with the approval of the UN Security Council.⁶¹

The legal framework of Russian non-proliferation policy is more fully presented in the field of export control. According to Figure 2 export control is essential element of non-proliferation policy, implemented and legally regulated on the national level. In 1999 the law “On Export Control” was adopted by Russian government. This document provides following definition to “export control”: “The control over external trade activities with nuclear materials, special non-nuclear materials and related technologies, including dual-use goods and technologies.”⁶² In its turn “external activities” means “external trade, investments and other activity, including manufacturing cooperation in the sphere of international exchange of goods, information, labor, services, results of intellectual activities, including intellectual property”.⁶³ Export control relates not only to export of goods and technologies abroad, but also to the transfer of goods or technology to a foreigner on the territory of Russia.

According to the law “On export control” all governmental bodies and institutions take part in export control. The state policy is determined by the Russian president. The list of controlled dual-use items are approved by presidential decrees. The government of Russian Federation organizes the implementation of state policy. And the practical realization of export

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² State Custom Service, *Федеральный закон об экспортном контроле* (Federal Law “On Export Control”) (Moscow: State Custom Service, 1999), <http://www.tks.ru/docs/10022349>

⁶³ Ibid

control is conducted by federal institutions, namely Federal Service for Technical and Export Control (FSTEC). It has following functions:

- Considers applications of external trade participants for getting license on export of dual-use goods or technologies;
- State examination of foreign trade transactions;
- Issues permissions on export without license (in special cases);
- Makes proposals on adjustments in control lists.

Besides FSTEC those functions are also exercised by other governmental institutions, especially if the matter concerns state examination of foreign trade activity (according to the responsibility of federal agency). Among these institutions are Ministry of Defense, Rosatom (Russian Federal Atomic Energy Agency), Roscosmos (Federal Space agency of Russian Federation), Rosprom, Ministry of Economic Development, Federal Property Management Agency, FSB (Federal Security Service of Russia) and Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), etc.

Another interdepartmental agency that responsible for organization of all procedures related to non-proliferation of WMD is the Export Control Commission. The head of the Commission is appointed by among one of deputies of Chairman of the Government (Prime Minister). Now the head of the Commission is Sergey Ivanov (former Minister of Defense).

The work of the Commission was renewed by Presidential Decree in 2005. At the moment the Commission is presented by 21 Ministry and Governmental Agencies, Governmental Administration, Security Council and Russian Academy of Science. The functions of this institution are rather wide and include not only export control issues. The Commission is responsible for coordination of work of executive governmental bodies in strategic planning,

detection of threats to national security and analyzes Russian non-proliferation activity in international arena.

All in all, Russian non-proliferation approach follows its own logic and has its meaning. This logic is defined by national security interests with traditions and norms of cooperation with other states in the international arena. That is why in international disputes when non-proliferation principles are violated by other members of international community, Russia, practically inclines to political and diplomatic measures. The second resort is economic instruments of influence or sanctions, which must be implemented in accordance with international law and with Resolution of the UN Security Council. This principle makes the Russian approach different from other states (the U.S. for example).

After analyzing the basic principles of Russian policy we focus on its actors: who form, implement and control non-proliferation policy. What is the main motivation, economic or strategic, behind real political actions of Russian Federation?

3.3 Decision-making process: institutions, actors and interests

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of non-proliferation policy it is necessary to refer to the main stages of foreign policy process (as nonproliferation is a part of foreign policy). Different social forces and institutions play their special roles in this process.

The process starts with formulation and interpretation of foreign policy interests. It involves governmental agencies, institutions and organizations, the media, academic and research centers, political parties, etc. They reflect the interests of different social and elite

groups, which are connected with the various segments of economic system and different components of bureaucratic system. Finally, various concepts have appeared. Those concepts serve as a background for foreign and strategic policy.

Governmental bodies and institutions in charge of foreign policy rely on this system of beliefs as a conceptual background, when prepare proposals and documents for specific foreign policy steps and actions. This is another stage of foreign policy process. Within Russian bureaucratic system those institutions are Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defense. Other governmental agencies are responsible for economic cooperation with foreign countries and actively participate in decision-making process (Ministry of Atomic Energy, various intelligence agencies, and organizations related to scientific research).

The documents prepared by these institutions proceed to the president of Russian Federation, who is in charge of foreign policy and takes concrete decisions, approving, correcting or rejecting the proposed courses of actions in international arena. This is the third stage of foreign policy process. The described mechanism is rather idealistic. Practically in the Russian elite there are various “pressure groups” or “group of interests”, which express sometimes the conflicting interests and in many cases associated with these or other state institutions.

Two big interest groups, seeking to influence the formulation and implementation of strategic and foreign policy, were formed in the early 1990s and still exist in Russian society. The first one includes the army, military-industrial complex and associated research centers. The director of Center for Analysis, Strategy and Technology, member of Public Council of Russian Defense Ministry, Ruslan Pukhov, analyzing the approaches of the military-industrial complex to

international politics in the 1990s, said: “the main problem of Russian defense industry today is search for markets...Russian defense enterprises’ main customers have turned to be foreign companies instead of Russian armed forces”.⁶⁴ This general statement hasn’t lost its applicability. Today Russia exports its weaponry primarily to China, India, Algeria, Venezuela, Iran, Vietnam, Malaysia, Sudan, Syria and Egypt.⁶⁵ Most of these top recipients had or have tensions with the United States and its Western European allies. So far Russian military-industrial complex is interested in such orientation of Russian foreign policy, when its vector is moving in direction of “anti-Western” states. At the same time Russian military-industrial complex is interested in getting access to Western technologies and development of cooperation with European states.

One of the main components of military industrial complex is nuclear weapons complex, which has its own interests in international affairs. The director of Center for Policy Studies in Russia, Vladimir Orlov, considers the interest in expanding the export of nuclear technology and materials as a driving power for Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy in the 1990s and early 2000s to develop cooperation with Iran, Cuba and other states with anti-American stance of policy. Such position of the Ministry had its influence on Russian diplomacy for sure.⁶⁶ Step by step Ministries, Atomic Energy and Foreign Affairs, had come to the conclusion that their performance was interconnected and it’s necessary to join their hands in actions. To find the

⁶⁴ Радиостанция «Эхо Москвы» («Echo of Moscow» radio station), *Russia Sells Weapons Abroad* (Moscow: “Echo of Moscow”, May 2006), <http://www.echo.msk.ru/programs/razvorot/43853/> (accessed February 20, 2012)
Радиостанция «Эхо Москвы» («Echo of Moscow» radio station), *Why does Russia Sell its Weapons?* (Moscow: “Echo of Moscow”, September 2006), <http://www.echo.msk.ru/programs/exit/42240/> (accessed February 20, 2012)

⁶⁵ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *Importer/Exporter TIV Tables* (Stockholm: SIPRI, 2009), <http://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/page/values.php> (accessed February 20, 2012)

⁶⁶Vladimir Orlov, Alexander Vinnikov. “The Great Guessing Game: Russia and the Iranian Nuclear Issue”, *The Washington Quarterly* 28, no 2 (Spring 2005): 54

reason of what lies at the basis of this understanding, interests of Ministry of Atomic Energy as an exporter or Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a creator of foreign policy, is similar to riddle the puzzle about chicken and eggs. However, it's worth to admit, that in the early 1990s former Minister of Atomic Energy Mikhailov has defined the priorities faster and more pragmatic than Andrey Kozyrev (the first head of Russian MOFA). As a result, the Ministry of Atomic Energy acted even faster, than Russian diplomats. In time Ministry of Foreign Affairs even started to use Atomic Energy as a conductor of Russian foreign policy interests. But those interests of military industrial complex came to contradictions with modernization of Russian society that needed cooperation and investment from Western European states and the United States.

In this sense, the other group of interests stands for full cooperation with Western states and building partnership with them. They see the main goal for Russia in modernization of economy and society; attraction of foreign investments. Such views reflect the interests of social and economic groups involved in the intense foreign economic relations, oriented at preferential development of export industries, services, trade and finance.

In previous decades the foreign policy of Russia was supposed to defend and promote national interests in the international arena, formulated by country's political elite. The priority was given to politico-military security. Even in the early 2000s leading groups of economic interests, especially big business, and leading corporations had no significant influence on international politics of the Russian Federation. Quite often they solved their problems abroad, relying on their own resources, bypassing the institutions of state power. However, in the middle of 2000s the situation started to change. Russian foreign policy began to take more and more into consideration the interests of leading business groups (fuel and energy sector, for instance). At the same time the Kremlin started to lay hands on leading export enterprises. The heads of

leading exporting corporations began to be appointed by the Administration of the president. Here we are most interested in such enterprises as *Rosoboronexport*⁶⁷ and *Rosatom*⁶⁸.

So far, the Russian government (the political elite) supports Russian exporting enterprises, because it is not only export of weaponry or resources and making profits, but also the expansion of political influence. The balance between economic and political interests moved to the side of the last one, or better to say economic motives supplement the political and strategic interests of Russian foreign policy.

Since Putin presidency the system of decision-making over foreign and security policy in Russia has become rather centralized. The leading role of Russian President in the foreign policy process is fixed by the Constitution of Russian Federation (Article 80).⁶⁹ However, after 2008 presidential election some scholars in abroad and in Russia incline to mention about political “duumvirate” within Russian government.⁷⁰ Dmitry Medvedev was elected President and Vladimir Putin, who ruled Russian policy since 2000, moved to the position of Prime Minister. Besides the internal policy of Russia, he continues to exert the significant influence on foreign policy. It is the first time in Russian history when prime minister interferes in foreign affairs.

⁶⁷ Rosoboronexport is the Russian state company, intermediary in export and import of military goods. In December 2006, by the President Decree the company was acknowledged as the only Russian exporter of weaponry. The owner of the company is the Russian State, directors are appointed by the President Decrees.

⁶⁸ Rosatom is the State Corporation that possesses all actives of the Russian Federation in nuclear energy sector. It is authorized on behalf of the Russian Federation to comply with international obligations of Russia in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and nonproliferation of nuclear materials.

⁶⁹ Конституция Российской Федерации (The Constitution of the Russian Federation), <http://constitution.garant.ru/rf/chapter/4/#80> (accessed February 20, 2012)

⁷⁰ Tsypkin M., Luokyanova A., “Formulation of Nuclear Policy in Moscow: Actors and Interests”, in *Engaging Russia and China on Nuclear Disarmament*, ed. Christina Hansell and William Potter (Monterey: CNS, 2008): 118

Within the President Administration and Office of Prime Minister there are people who advise on foreign policy. The main advisors are Segei Prihodko and Yuriy Ushakov. The first one occupied the post of President Aide on foreign policy rather long time. He started to serve within Yeltzin administration and still remains in office. When Putin moves to the position of Prime Minister he appointed another person as his advisor on foreign policy issues. This part was given to Yuriy Ushakov, former Russian ambassador to the United States.

Referring to the Office of Prime Minister it's necessary to mention the position of Deputy Prime Minister. There are several of them within the government. However we are interested in two: Sergei Ivanov and Igor Sechin. The first one is former Minister of Defense and Head of Russian Security Council. He concentrates in his hands national defense and security issues. The other one represents economic circles and at the same time is on the position of Head of Board of Directors of *Rosneft*.⁷¹

The next body in the governmental structure we refer to is the Security Council. The meetings of the Council are chaired by the President. The members of the Security Council are presented by the director of Federal Security Service (FSB), State Duma (lower chamber) Chairman, ministers of foreign, internal affairs and defense, the Federal Council Chairman, Prime Minister, director of intelligence service. The Secretary of the Council is Nikolay Patrushev, former head of FSB (Federal Security Service)⁷². He was appointed by Putin and still remains at office. It was not Medvedev's choice. Patrushev is famous for his negative attitude

⁷¹ Rosneft is the state oil corporation, one of the largest, in Russia.

⁷²The Security Council of the Russian Federation, *Состав Совета Безопасности РФ* (Members of the Security Council of the Russian Federation) (Moscow: 2012), <http://www.scrf.gov.ru/persons/sections/6/> (accessed February 20, 2012)

toward NGO's activities. Being FSB director he contributed a lot in cultivation of "anti-Western paranoia".

The concentration of power in the Presidential Administration on foreign and defense policy issues became the reality of contemporary Russia. Putin appointed rather convenient figures at the head of Defense and Foreign Ministries. The first one is Anatoliy Serdyukov, Defense Minister, who has no experience in foreign policy issues and stays in office due to Putin's support. He hardly ever will "bring to Putin's attention anything of which Putin might disapprove".⁷³

On the contrary, the head of Foreign Ministry, Sergey Lavrov, has gained more influence in recent years. He stays in office rather long time and is popular among both administrations, Putin and Medvedev. Lavrov is rather experienced in wide range of international issues and very cautious in statements. He never delivers a speech which is in contradiction with official state policy. It is difficult to know what kind of advises he provides to Russian leaders and to what extent this advice is taken into consideration by them.

The centralization of power touched the nuclear energy industry either. In August 2004, the meeting on nuclear energy issues was held by Russian president in the Kremlin. Putin announced the state decision that nuclear energy complex came under responsibility of Defense Ministry. "The issue is too important, that deserves personal attention of the President".⁷⁴ The decision brought changes within decision making process. Since that time, it was impossible that

⁷³Ведомости (Vedomosti), *Anatoliy Serdyukov: Biography and Media Assessments* (Moscow: Vedomosti, 2012), <http://www.vedomosti.ru/persons/2138/%D0%90%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B9%20%D0%A1%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B4%D1%8E%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B2> (accessed February 20, 2012)

⁷⁴ "Nuclear Industry Falls under President Attention", *PIA Новости* (RIA NEWS), August 9, 2004, <http://npc.sarov.ru/digest/152005/section2p2.html> (accessed February 20, 2012)

Minister of Atomic Energy takes individual decision on export of dual-use technologies (before such precedents took place).

In the conclusion to this chapter we should underline that nonproliferation rhetoric occupied a significant part within Russian foreign policy. Its new Concept adopted in 2008 refers to nonproliferation issue in the first paragraph of “International Security” section, which means the importance of the subject.

The decision-making process is centralized and there is still lack of transparency. So, it is difficult to predict the development or changes within Russian policy relying on knowledge of key actors. To estimate the importance of strategic or economic considerations is rather difficult in such case. So it is necessary to analyze the relations of Russia with Iran in nuclear sector and real actions of Russia during the crisis.

As the Director of PIR-Center Vladimir Orlov mentioned in one of his articles:

“A closer look at the evolution of Russian views and policy toward Iran’s nuclear program and the idiosyncratic interactions among Russia, the United States, and the EU illuminate the dilemma that Moscow still faces between proliferation concerns and strategic temptations—both economic and geopolitical—as well as the challenges that the international community currently faces as it attempts to avert an Iranian nuclear crisis”.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Orlov V. and Vinnikov A., “The Great Guessing Game”, 49

Chapter 4. Russian-Iranian Nuclear Cooperation

4.1 Political dimension

4.1.1 Relationship between Russia and Iran in the 1990s

Passing on to the history and problems of Russian-Iranian nuclear energy cooperation, it is worth underlining the fact mentioned in the previous chapter once again. Since the beginning of the 1990s (this period can be nominally referred to as the Yeltsin era) until the year 2000 Russian foreign policy was far from being cohesive in respect to various relevant foreign policy and world issues. The Islamic Republic of Iran was probably the country most affected by the uncertainties and ambiguous goals of the Russian foreign policy in the 1990s.

During the Rafsanjani's visit to the USSR in 1989 Iran was full of hope for the potential warming up in the Russian-Iranian intergovernmental relations. However, since the USSR collapse and the creation of the Russian Federation in the early 1990s there began the so called "Honeymoon" in the Russian-American relations. This fact naturally had an adverse effect on the development of Russian-Iranian intergovernmental dialogue.

Gradually, along with the cooling in relations with the USA and due to the adopted doctrine of NATO expansion to the East, Russia started turning its attention to the development of relations with the so called "problem countries" that were independent of the USA. Many research analysts started to discuss the possibility of military-strategic alliance between Russia and such countries as Iran, China, India and even DPR of Korea and Cuba.⁷⁶

What concerns the implementation of the Iranian nuclear program, it was dependent on the inconsistency of the Russian politicians' positions. Thus, in 1995 the President of the Russian

⁷⁶"Russian Foreign Policy: Iran Challenge", *Независимая газета* (Independent Newspaper), March 15, 2001, http://www.ng.ru/world/2001-03-15/1_probation.html (accessed February 21, 2012)

Federation Boris Yeltsin admitted that “the plans of Russian-Iranian nuclear cooperation include military components.”⁷⁷ The same year in the course of his meeting with the President of the United States he stated that the issues concerning the military part of the Russian-Iranian nuclear cooperation, production of nuclear weapon-grade fuel, construction of centrifuge and storage pits were negotiated out.⁷⁸ Similar ambiguity and inconsistency of characterization can be traced throughout the entire period of Boris Yeltsin’s rule.

Taking a look at political aspects of Russian-Iranian nuclear cooperation it is important to make a note of the specific position of the two ministers of Atomic Energy of the Russian Federation – Mikhailov and Adamov, which differs from the official point of view. Their wanted to go much further in the cooperation with Iran than the nuclear power plants construction and training of Iranian specialists in the Russian institutions.

In the mid-1990s the development and tightening up of Russian-Iranian relations was caused mainly by the political decisions of the new Minister of Foreign Affairs Evgeniy Primakov, who replaced the pro-western Andrey Kozyrev. However this period was also marked by inconsistency. Thus, in 1996 rather successful Evgeniy Primakov’s visit to Iran was accompanied by the statement by the Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation Igor Radionov that Iran was a potential military threat.⁷⁹

A similar extent of uncertainty and contradictions was present in the External Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation (the SVR) estimates. In their report of 1998 the SVR stated

⁷⁷ Mamedova N, Fedorov Yu, Fedchenko V, “Nuclear program of Iran and Russian-Iranian relations”, *Аналитические Записки* (Analytical Notes) (Moscow), no 2 (2003): 4

⁷⁸ Ibid.,8

⁷⁹ “Igor Rodionov Came out for Creation of CIS Countries Defense Alliance”, *Независимая газета* (Independent Newspaper), December 26, 1996, <http://www.uni-potsdam.de/u/slavistik/zarchiv/1296m/k243-15.htm> (accessed February 21, 2012)

that “Iran has a program of applied military research in the sphere of nuclear science. Iranian government has developed a system of dual-use technologies acquisition from abroad similar to Iraq and Pakistan. Many specialists are alert to the statements by Iranian administration about the country’s soon transition to a nuclear-armed state and to the information about the growing import of dual-use goods to Iran.”⁸⁰ In 1995, with the appeared prospects for the Russian-Iranian nuclear cooperation, the style was altered and the SVR wrote: “There is no convincing evidence of the military nuclear program in the country. The current state of the industrial potential suggests that Islamic Republic of Iran is unable to organize nuclear weapons production without external assistance. In 1970 Iran ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and since February 1992 allowed IAEA to inspect any of their nuclear facilities. None of the IAEA inspections revealed any violations of the Treaty by Tehran”... “The accusations against Iran are often based on unverified information” ... “The level of Iran achievements in the sphere of nuclear science does not exceed the equivalent for 20-25 other world countries”.⁸¹

These uncoordinated statements and actions of Russian politicians complicated the state of affairs of Russia in the Middle East and could raise questions on who actually defines the Russian foreign policy. Similar questions should have appeared in Washington as well.

In general, by the time Vladimir Putin got elected the President of Russia, Russian-American relations were marked by the huge disagreement concerning Russian-Iranian nuclear cooperation. The election of Vladimir Putin brought corrections to the Russian foreign policy

⁸⁰External Intelligence Service (SVR), *Новые угрозы после холодной войны: распространение ОМУ* (New Challenges after the Cold War: WMD Proliferation) (Moscow: SVR, 1993), <http://www.svr.gov.ru/material/2-13-9.htm> (accessed February 21, 2012)

⁸¹External Intelligence Service (SVR), *Договор о нераспространении ядерного оружия: вопросы продления* (Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty: The Issue of Extension) (Moscow: SVR, 1995), <http://www.svr.gov.ru/material/4-iran.htm> (accessed February 21, 2012)

and made its nature pragmatic and multidimensional. This resulted in warming up of relations with Iran and defined the plan of cooperation, any deviation from which could not be possible. Strict centralization of foreign policy had also caused resignation of the Minister of Atomic Energy Evgeniy Adamov, who tried to “enter into deals with Iran that were not approved by the Kremlin”.⁸²

4.1.2 Russian policy towards Iran since 2000

The Putin’s presidency began with revitalization of Russian policy towards Iran. In 1995 Russia unilaterally quit the secret Russian-American agreement over Iran, which is better known as Gore-Chernomyrdin Agreement.⁸³ It has also undertaken a number of practical steps to complete the nuclear reactor construction in Bushehr which Yeltsin put freeze on; it started developing military-technical cooperation with Iran and politically supported Iranian nuclear program.

In March 2001, in the course of President of Iran Mohammad Khatami’s visit to Moscow, the parties signed an Agreement of the Basic Principles of Relations and Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran. This agreement underlies the intergovernmental relations. The text of the agreement, Chapter 6 in particular, states that the parties intend to develop the relationship in the sphere of peaceful use of nuclear energy and construction of nuclear power stations.⁸⁴

⁸² Freedman Robert, “Putin and the Middle East”, *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 6, no 2 (June 2002): 1

⁸³ The Agreement limited the Russian cooperation and assistance to Iran in nuclear weapon acquisition.

⁸⁴ Iran News, *Договор об основах взаимоотношений и принципах сотрудничества между РФ и ИРИ* (Agreement on Basic Principles of Relations and Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran) (Moscow, 2001), <http://www.iran.ru/rus/dogovorobosnovnixvzaimootnosheniiax.php> (accessed February 21, 2012)

Today the political dialogue between Russia and Iran covers a wide range of bilateral, regional and intergovernmental issues including the nuclear programs of Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Middle East peacemaking process, efforts against international terrorism and drug trafficking, as well as the Central Asia, South Caucasus and Caspian region safety issues. The countries regularly hold intergovernmental consultations of foreign affairs ministries on the level of deputies, heads of departments and experts. Furthermore, there is the Russian-Iranian Commission for Trade and Economic Cooperation.

Iran is close to Russia in its position regarding a number of regional and international problems, particularly the problems of building multipolar world order, consolidation of UN international role, peacemaking processes in Afghanistan and Iraq. Russian position stems from the assumption that the cooperation with Iran is necessary to serve national interests of our country, preserving stability in the Central Asia and South Caucasus, restrain the tensions in the Middle and Central East.

Relations between Russia and Iran have always been a matter of concern for Washington, who kept hoping for the end in Russian-Iranian cooperation. Putin's proclaimed multidimensional policy supposed the balance in all the lines of international relations including the cooperation with Iran.

Thus, Richard Perle, Ex-President's Advisor, Chairman of the Defense Policy Board Advisory Committee, suggested that the cooperation between Russia and Iran, especially in the sphere of nuclear and military technologies would remain one of the most sensitive questions for the Russian-American relations.⁸⁵

⁸⁵Sazhin V., "Introduction", in *Iranian Nuclear Program and Russian-American Relations*, ed. Zadonskiy M. (Moscow: IIBV, 2002), p.5

For Russia, nuclear cooperation is the crucial point of relations with Iran.⁸⁶ The major goal of this cooperation is the construction of nuclear power plant on Iranian territory. Russia is currently the only state in the world that cooperates with Iran in the sphere of nuclear technologies.

4.2 Nuclear Power Plant Construction

The contract procedure to build a nuclear power plant in Iran has been under negotiations between Russia and Iran since around 1991. In August 1992, the Russian Federation and Islamic Republic of Iran signed a “Cooperation Agreement in the field of peaceful use of atomic energy” regulating the principle policies of countries’ cooperation in the sphere of nuclear energy use.

The Agreement provided for the supply of research nuclear reactors to Iran, joint scientific researches, specialists training for Iran. The latter point attracted strong criticism on the United States part, despite the fact that in the period of Shah’s rule the USA themselves as well as European countries committed to training high-skilled Iranian specialist in western educational institutes and centers.⁸⁷

Russia motivated its specialist training assistance to Iran by the Bushehr contract cooperation noting that “It is hard to picture a country that puts a nuclear power plant into operation without training specialists to handle it”.⁸⁸ In May 1999, Iranian nuclear technology

⁸⁶ Orlov V. and Vinnikov A., “The Great Guessing Game”, 57

⁸⁷ In 1977 from 30 to 40 thousand Iranians (according to US Department of State) were students at the American colleges, including a part of them who studied the majors connected with nuclear physics and missile engineering, in Sober S. “*The US and Iran, an Increasing Partnership*”, www.sedona.net/pahlavi/us-iran.html (accessed February 21, 2012)

⁸⁸ Mikhailov V. “Minatom and the International Community”, *Ядерный контроль* (Nuclear Control) 44, no 2 (1999): 65

specialists started their training in the Novovoronezh training center. Besides this location, Iranian specialists were trained at Kalinin and Balakovo Nuclear Power Plants and at the Obninsk Institute for Nuclear Power Engineering. For the period from 1999 to 2004 Russia trained more than 700 specialists from Iran.⁸⁹

The contract provisions for finishing the plant construction in Bushehr that was started by German companies were settled in September 1994. As a result, in January 1995 the representatives of the All-Russian Production Association Zarubezhatomenergostroy and the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran signed a contract to finish the first WWER-1000 pressurized water reactor unit in Bushehr (the reactor power was later increased to 1.2GW). Further Russia was supposed to supply three more power reactors: one of 1000MW and two of 440 MW each. The contract was accompanied by the Minutes of negotiations between the Russian Federation Minister of Atomic Energy, Professor Viktor Mikhailov and the Vice-President of Islamic Republic of Iran, President of AEOI, Reza Amrollahi.

In practice, the agreement meant the construction of the new nuclear reactor instead of completing the existing one, because Bushehr nuclear complex was repeatedly bombarded by Iraqi aviation during the war between Iran and Iraq. In addition, after the Islamic Revolution the Iranian authorities did not provide the incomplete nuclear power plant with sufficient maintenance. This factor was one of the causes of the first reactor construction hold-up.

The cost of construction of the first nuclear reactor of the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant was estimated in a range between 800 million and 1 billion USD. Supposedly this sum was

⁸⁹“600 Iranian Specialists Finished their Training in Nivovoronezh Training Center”, *Iran News*, February 19, 2004, <http://news.iran.ru/news/17557/> (accessed February 21, 2012)

composed of the following: 780 million for the reactor installation; about 150 million – for the construction works; 20 million – preparatory inspection of constructions.⁹⁰

Besides the financial profit, the economic benefit of the Bushehr project for Russia was the fact that 300 Russian enterprises contributed to the project; it saved 20,000 workplaces at Russian institutes and enterprises that were practically idle.

However, the implementation of the power plant construction in Iran was not only driven by the economic benefits, but also the strategic factor. According to the Russian Political Analyst, Chairman with the Council for Foreign and Defense Policies Sergey Karaganov, Russia is not going to stop the nuclear cooperation with Iran because the spheres of energy and nuclear science are represented in Moscow by a powerful lobby.⁹¹ Moreover, the Bushehr project was an issue of reputation. Success in this project could secure other international contracts. On the other hand, Russia aspired to carry out its pledge despite the international community pressure, particularly on the part of the United States, to protect its national interests and the sovereignty of its foreign policy. Strategically, the construction of the Nuclear Power Plant allowed Russia to fill up the void in the Iranian nuclear science and to reinforce its geostrategic position in the Middle East region.⁹²

Speaking about the international community concerns about the Russian-Iranian nuclear cooperation it should be mentioned that Russian-Iranian agreement on the first Bushehr nuclear

⁹⁰ Safranchuk Ivan. “Nuclear and missile programs of Iran and the Russian security: the boundaries and Russian-Iranian cooperation”, *Научные записки ПИП-Центра* (Scientific Notes) (Moscow), no 8 (1998): 26

⁹¹ Karaganov Sergey, “Iran, Russian and Nuclear Weapon”, *Центр Азия* (Asia Centre), November 14, 2005, <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1131952560> (accessed February 21, 2012)

⁹² Acknowledgement of strategic benefits have come later, geostrategy of the Bushehr project was discussed for the first time in the mid-2000. At the time of the contract signing, Russia was motivated by the necessity to support its nuclear complex, use it to enter the international markets, in *Great Guessing Game* by Orlov, Vinnikov, 52

reactor construction fully complied with the requirements of NPT and International Atomic Energy Agency's safeguards system.⁹³ Ministry of Atomic Energy specialists worked this process through very carefully. The Russian party had not been signing any documents for two years – until Iran entered into an agreement with IAEA on comprehensive control over every nuclear object in the country.

The analysis of Russian-Iranian nuclear cooperation can lead to the conclusion that Russia only implemented the projects which do not aim at producing the “critical” nuclear output. The technologies of uranium enrichment, plutonium recovery or construction of production reactor were not transferred to Iranian party.⁹⁴

According to Western politicians, primarily American and Israeli, the agreement reached by Russia and Iran in the sphere of nuclear cooperation would accelerate the process of nuclear weapon acquisition for Iran. They explained it by the following: the Russian reactor could be used to produce weapon-grade plutonium; the uranium enrichment equipment and technologies would be used by Iran for military purposes; the cooperation with Russia would enable Iran to gain experience of handling nuclear materials, which would act as a trigger for military nuclear program development.⁹⁵

In August 1995, in compliance with their obligations, the representatives of Russia and Iran signed a contract to supply nuclear fuel to Bushehr Power Plant for an amount of \$300 million over the 2001 to 2011 period. This contract did not specify the procedure of the spent

⁹³ Timerbaev R., “Ближний Восток и атомная проблема” (The Middle East and the Nuclear Problem), *Ядерный контроль* (Nuclear Control) (Moscow) 3, no 3 (2003): 24

⁹⁴ Novikov V. and Khlopkov A., “Military Nuclear Program of Iran”, in *Nuclear Non-proliferation*, ed. Khlopkov A. (Moscow: PIR-Center, 2009): 48

⁹⁵ Safranchuk Ivan. “Nuclear and missile programs of Iran and the Russian security”, 37

nuclear fuel (SNF) return to Russia, because it was classified as the nuclear waste and prohibited against being imported to the country. This problem was solved in February 2005, which in essence resolved the concerns of the international community about the plutonium potential of SNF for military purposes. In December 2007 – January 2008, the Bushehr Power Plant was supplied with the nuclear fuel required for the first loading. From then on, the nuclear unit was covered by the IAEA safeguards.

By April 1998 the parties had drawn up the contract to supply a research reactor to Iran, it was obliged to be working under IAEA control fueled with uranium-235 of maximum enrichment rate of 20%. The Washington pressure on Moscow forced the Russian party to cancel this contract.

From 1992 to 1997, Russian specialists developed a uranium recovery mine project in Iran, but it was not implemented. Due to lack of financing, the negotiations on natural uranium supply to Iran were terminated. As a result, the only remaining contract was to build the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant, which was expected to be completed by September 2003.

However, significant difficulties of both objective and subjective nature resulted in a 7 hold-up of the construction. The following objective causes of the hold-up can be considered:

- In the course of the war between Iran and Iraq the incomplete Nuclear Power Plant and the imported technological equipment was repeatedly and massively bombarded by Iraqi aviation, which led to significant damage of the reactor containment;
- The specifications and manuals for the major part of the German equipment had been lost, which complicated the equipment certification and repair works planning (Berlin evaded any form of cooperation);

- Bushehr contract for Russia was the first international contract on energy reactor construction after the USSR collapse, it required arranging the production chain, searching for financing and recruiting engineering and building personnel;
- Iranian contractors, required to take part in the project implementation, failed to fulfill their obligations on time with necessary quality; This situation made Russian party agree to complete the Bushehr nuclear power plant construction on a turn-key basis for the period of 52 months;
- Western countries embargoed any imported equipment for the Bushehr power plant construction, which, in particular, made it impossible to supply the reactor control system from Germany;
- Russian construction project of the power plant had to be adapted to the existing site, facilities and equipment built by the German specialists;
- According to the contract, the cost of construction was not indexed; consequently it led to significant financial losses on the Moscow part, because of the considerable rise of euro against dollar in the first decade of XXI century.

The construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant is practically complete. In August 2010, the first power unit has reached first criticality. Russia fulfilled its obligations to build the nuclear power plant in the period of concern about the “Nuclear Dossier” of Iran.

The Iranian Nuclear Program holds a special place in the Russian-Iranian relations. According to the experts of the Russian Academy of Science Institute of the Middle East, “Russian contribution to the development of Iranian peaceful nuclear program serves not only as a goal, but as means of reinforcing the partnership with the old neighbor Iran and means of consolidation of the Russian Federation position in the Middle East. For Iran the Nuclear Program serves not only the goal of establishing the true sovereignty and the status of the major

regional power in the Middle East, but also a certain national idea able to pull together all the classes of Iranian society around the country's authorities. From this point of view, external appearance of the bilateral relations did not always reflect its smooth nature. Moreover, internationally, the approach towards partners and opponents, who were not the same for the sides, in various situations differed to a significant extent. Russian and Iranian diplomacy had to demonstrate incredible flexibility and ingenuity under heavy international pressure on both Russia and Iran. Moscow and Tehran used the best endeavors not to stray from the principal line of bilateral relations. Despite the importance of the nuclear program for Iran, it does not exhaust the essence of relations between Russia and Iran and does not substitute the broad nature of cooperation of these countries».⁹⁶

⁹⁶ Dunaeva E., "Russian-Iranian Relations: Tehran Perspective", *Institute of the Middle East*, April 29, 2004, <http://www.iimes.ru/rus/stat/2010/29-04-10a.htm> (February 22, 2012)

Chapter 5. Politics of Russia and the Nuclear Crisis of Iran

The Russian political line in respect to the development of the Nuclear Crisis of Iran can be characterized as “two-faced”, “inconsistent”, “contradicting the overall spirit and the goal of the dialogue”.⁹⁷ This policy combined both the willingness to cooperate with the West in restraining Iran from acquiring nuclear weapon and the open opposition to sanctions amid the continuing cooperation with Iran.

The nuclear problem of Iran attracted the international community attention in 2002, when the secret nuclear activities of Iran were revealed. It came as a shock for Moscow. Russian political elite “naively believed” that the nuclear cooperation with Iran ensures informational advantage and Russia would be aware of the nuclear development of its neighbor Iran. In fact, Iran managed to keep almost 20 years of its nuclear industry development in secret.

Russia was “frustrated”. This frustration resulted in the decision made in the Moscow political circles to slow down the Power Plant construction in Bushehr due to technical difficulties.⁹⁸ To support the right of Iran for peaceful use of nuclear energy Russia had to be confident in the plans and capabilities of Iran. In 2002-2003 this confidence was shaken. This fact is proved by indirect statements of Russian diplomats at international forums. For example, during the G8 summit in June 2003 the member countries have drawn up a joint declaration recommending Tehran to immediately accede to the supplementary IAEA protocol.⁹⁹ Russia

⁹⁷ Orlov Vladimir and Trushkin Ivan, “The Iranian Nuclear Program: Dilemmas Facing Russia”, *Security Index Journal* 95, no 2 (Spring 2011), 34

⁹⁸ Novikov V. and Khlopkov A., “Military Nuclear Program of Iran”, 50

⁹⁹ The G8 Summit, *Non-proliferation of weapons of Mass Destruction: A G8 Declaration* (Evian: the G8 Summit, 2003)

signed this declaration. Furthermore, in October 2003 the Russian Ministry of Defense published a report which referred to Iran as a state of an “undefined” status along with the North Korea.¹⁰⁰

Changes in the Russian attitude did not escape Iran’s attention. On the eve of the IAEA Board Meeting in summer 2004 the representative of Iran Hassan Rowhani (Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council of Iran) in his statement called Russia a “friendly state” that would be cooperating with Iran due to the upcoming hearings on the Iranian nuclear dossier. Moreover, Iran was hoping for the speedy completion of the Bushehr Power Plant. The Iranian party considered this project a pilot that would serve as a demonstration of the Russian-Iranian relations and the level of mutual trust.

By October 2004, Russia was at the final stage of Bushehr Power Plant construction. The issue of spent nuclear fuel return to Russia was still pending. At the time the contract to build the plant was signed, the parties could not sign a protocol obliging Iran to return the spent fuel because of the Russian internal legislation that prohibited the nuclear waste import into Russia. Thanks to the November agreement between Iran and the EU-3 (France, Germany and the UK)¹⁰¹ the political situation became favorable for this kind of document to be signed.

http://www.g8.fr/evian/english/navigation/2003_g8_summit/summit_documents/non_proliferation_of_weapons_of_mass_destruction_-_a_g8_declaration.html (accessed February 22, 2012)

¹⁰⁰“Relevant Goals of the Russian Armed Forces Development”, *Красная Звезда* (Red Star) (Moscow: Ministry of Defense), October 11, 2003, http://www.redstar.ru/2003/10/11_10/3_01.html (accessed February 22, 2012)

¹⁰¹ According to the Paris Agreement Iran agreed to stop uranium enrichment, cooperate with IAEA and comply with the provisions of the supplement protocol on the IAEA safeguards. The EU-3 agreed to support the development of the Iranian nuclear power energy industry, provide the light-water reactors and cutting-edge technologies, and provide Iran with the security safeguards. However the Agreement had a declarative nature and did not have any legal force.

Putin's administration came up with a proposal to create a joint factory producing nuclear fuel to be used at the Bushehr NPP. Consequently, the fuel would have to be returned to Russia. Moscow argued that these measures along with the IAEA control should ease the tension around the issue of nuclear proliferation. Iran expressed the position that uranium had to be enriched within the country so that it would not depend on the foreign supply. In February 2005, the parties achieved a certain progress in negotiations and Iran agreed to return the spent nuclear fuel. In its turn the Russian party agreed to supply the nuclear fuel for Bushehr NPP.¹⁰²

Despite the concern around the Iranian nuclear issue, in October 2004, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs representative made a statement that "the cooperation with Iran is pivotal for the Russian foreign policy."¹⁰³ Thus, it may be concluded that in the end of 2004 the Kremlin plan to develop the economic, military technical and political relations with Iran did not change. It was obvious that the development of connections with Iran was not a tactical step for Russia in expectation of quick dividends, but a long-term strategic choice.

Among the existing concerns of Moscow over Iranian activity was the possibility of rapprochement between Iran and America. In that case Russia could lose its status in Iran and as a country with massive oil reserves; nuclear technologies and broad arms market Iran might reorient and prefer America as its major partner. If that happens, Russia is doing a thankless job

¹⁰²Leskov Sergei, "Uranium for Iran", *Izvestiya*. February 28, 2005, <http://www.izvestia.ru/news/300107> (accessed February 22, 2012)

¹⁰³Ivanshentsev Gleb, "Россия и Иран: горизонты партнерства" (Russia and Iran: Horizons of Partnership) *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn* (International Life) 10, no 4 (2004): 24

trying to protect Iran from the Western criticism by sacrificing its own relations with the United States and European countries.¹⁰⁴

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's accession to power (July 2005) and his strongly pronounced anti-American policy reassured Moscow to some extent and allayed the fears about the strategy of Iran. On the other hand, Russia was afraid that the hostile rhetoric of Iran (towards Israel), its activities in the Middle East against the United States and its perpendicular attitude in the nuclear issue negotiations with the EU-3 might result in significant problems for Moscow and its relations with the West. Iran itself complicated the positions of Russia: it refused to give up on enriching uranium and to accept the compromise variants offered by Russia on the construction of a joint Russian-Iranian uranium enriching factory on the Russian soil controlled by the IAEA. Obviously, Iran made it clear to the Russian authorities that its nuclear program cannot be developed without enriching uranium on its own territory. Russia was disappointed by the Tehran position.¹⁰⁵ It had done a lot for Iran.

In October 2006, Russia helped Iran launch its own sputnik and started to bring into action the billion contract signed with Iran to supply the country with the advanced air-defense systems of "Tor M-1" and "Pechora-2A" type.¹⁰⁶ On the eve of the IAEA summit in January 2006 Ali Larijani, the major negotiator on the nuclear problem, paid a visit to Moscow. Moscow let Tehran know that it might join the West in its position about Iranian nuclear dossier transfer

¹⁰⁴ Sysoev Gennadiy, "Цена вопроса" (The Value of the Matter), *Kommersant*, February 2, 2005, http://www.cargobay.ru/news/kommersant_/2005/2/2/id_63280.html (accessed February 22, 2012)

¹⁰⁵ Radio "Echo of Moscow", *Interview by Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov* (Moscow: Echo of Moscow, January 2006)

¹⁰⁶ "Russia will Supply Air-Defense Systems to Iran Pechora-2A", *Lenta.ru*, December 15, 2005, <http://www.lenta.ru/news/2005/12/15/pechora/> (accessed February 22, 2012)

from the IAEA to UN Security Council. Larijani assured Russian authorities that Iran does not refuse to sign a contract with Moscow to create uranium processing factory, but it requires additional revisions.¹⁰⁷ In February 2006, Moscow along with the majority of the IAEA board members, voted for transferring the nuclear dossier of Iran to the UN Security Council. The Iranian press interpreted this Moscow act as a betrayal and Ahmadinejad threatened to pull Iran out the supplementary protocol allowing unannounced inspections by the IAEA.¹⁰⁸¹⁰⁹ However, after a couple of days, official representatives of Iran stated that they are ready to continue negotiations with Moscow on the creation of the joint uranium processing factory on the condition that a part of it would be situated in Iran and would be controlled by Iranian authorities. On February 26, 2006, Iran declared its consent to build a Russian-Iranian uranium processing plant. Yet, later on representatives of Iran made it clear that this proposition is not considered seriously.

Russia was not comfortable with the military aspect of the nuclear program of Iran. In his interview with the radio station Echo of Moscow in January 2006 Sergey Lavrov ambiguously implied that for Iran it is economically unprofitable to enrich uranium by them, it is less expensive to buy it from abroad. The practical side of the Tehran's ambitions was not clear due

¹⁰⁷ "SNSC Secretary of Iran visited Moscow", *IRNA*, January 23, 2006, <http://news.iran.ru/news/36986/> (accessed February 22, 2012)

¹⁰⁸ "IAEA at an Intercessional Meeting Prepares to Adopt a Resolution on Iran", *News.ru*, February 3, 2006, <http://www.newsru.com/world/03feb2006/magates.html> (accessed February 22, 2012)

¹⁰⁹ "IAEA Transferred the Nuclear Dossier to the UN Security Council", *News.ru*, February 4, 2006, <http://www.newsru.com/world/04feb2006/magate.html> (accessed February 22, 2012)

to the fact that the only NPP in the country was under construction (by Russia) and there were no other nuclear plants in Iran.¹¹⁰

Moscow planned to deal with the “controllable Iran”. At the same time, the Minister emphasized that “There were and there are no bad attitudes between us and Iran”. The crucial issue was that Iran continued cooperation with the IAEA and observed a moratorium. Besides the nuclear cooperation, Russian-Iranian relations cover a wide range of issues, “*these are trade and economic contacts and plans for the future...*”¹¹¹

However, Iran turned out to be quite a complicated partner, almost impossible to control. Nevertheless, during the whole period of the crisis Russia took a line of contact with Iran, not of its isolation. At the same time, Moscow had to fulfill its international obligations and be a responsible actor on the international scene. Consequently, Russia voted for transferring the nuclear dossier of Iran to the UN Security Council, and will be supporting its resolutions in order to soften and to water them down.

On June 6, 2006, five regular members of the UN Security Council and Germany put forward a five-point plan suggesting a number of compensation measures for Iran if it gives up processing and production of the nuclear fuel on its territory. Iran gave a final response to this plan in August 2006. Moscow was trying to influence Iran and to speed up the process of the G6

¹¹⁰Radio “Echo of Moscow”, *Interview by Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov* (Moscow: Echo of Moscow, January 2006)

¹¹¹ Ibid

plan adoption. Russia even suggested that it might join the sanctions, but later reconsidered this decision.¹¹²

In the course of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization meeting¹¹³, Russia again made several tentative steps to persuade Iran to adopt a more flexible position in the nuclear issue negotiations with the West. In Shanghai, Russia and Iran agreed on the oil and gas prices and split the gas market areas: Russia – to Europe, and Iran – to India and Southern China. The President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin held a meeting with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, which resulted in Russia affording the ground for convincing the West that Moscow is capable of influencing Iran and controlling its nuclear program situation.¹¹⁴

Nevertheless, in July 2006, the UN Security Council adopted the first resolution on Iran, under No.1696. Russia voted in favor of this resolution that obliged Iran to discontinue the nuclear fuel production on its territory by the August 31, 2006. However, during the preparation of the resolution the Russian party, supported by China, opposed the tough sanctions and declared its determination to develop relations with Iran.

The course of the situation went on the same way. In response to the statements by Iran about the success in enrichment the international community convened the UN Security Council and adopted another resolution that appealed to Iran to comply with the international obligations,

¹¹² “Lavrov Promised to Reveal the G6 Plan on Iran”, *Lenta.ru*, July 13, 2007, <http://lenta.ru/news/2006/07/13/lavrov/> (accessed February 22, 2012)

¹¹³ “Iranian Gambit”, *Независимая газета* (Independent Newspaper), May 17, 2006, http://www.ng.ru/politics/2006-05-17/1_iran.html (accessed February 22, 2012)

¹¹⁴“Shanghai Cooperation Organization at the Crossroad”, *Независимая газета* (Independent Newspaper), June 15, 2006, http://www.ng.ru/world/2006-06-15/10_shos.html (accessed February 22, 2012)

to stop uranium enrichment and to cooperate with the IAEA. In its turn Russia tried to prevent sanctions against its partner.

Thus, on September 27, 2008, the UN Security Council adopted another resolution No. 1835, induced by Russia, that appealed to Iran to stop uranium enrichment and to fulfill the nuclear program requirements previously adopted by the UN Security Council (resolutions No.1696, 1737, 1747, 1803). At the same time, Russia did not support the tough economic sanctions imposed over Iran. Iranian authorities made a stand against the new resolution. This led to a certain cooling in the relations between Russia and Iran. The President Ahmadinejad made it clear that his country would not yield to the pressure brought on Iran and would not stop the process of uranium enrichment.

There are two principles Russia follows concerning the nuclear program of Iran. First of all, Iran should not create or possess nuclear weapon. Second, Iran has a right to implement its peaceful nuclear program. Between 2009 and 2010, Russia considered the confrontational policy of Ahmadinejad's government to be thoughtless and acknowledged that its appeals to balanced approach did not resonate with Tehran.¹¹⁵ Gradually, Moscow was coming round to supporting the economic sanctions against Iran. In the course of Paris negotiations in March 2010 the president of Russia Dmitry Medvedev acknowledged the fact that the situation around Iran is "degrading": "*The appeals we make to Iranian authorities and our calls for peaceful nuclear program controlled by international community did not yet produce any results.*"¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵Sazhin Vladimir, "Iran: December 2009, military-political situation", *RAS Institute of the Middle East*, January 27, 2010, <http://www.iimes.ru/rus/stat/2010/27-01-10c.htm> (accessed February 22, 2012)

¹¹⁶"Russia is Ready to Back the Sanctions against Iran", *Русская служба BBC* (BBC, Russian Service), March 2, 2010, http://www.bbc.co.uk/russian/russia/2010/03/100301_medvedev_sarkozy.shtml (accessed February 22, 2012)

Earlier, in mid 2009, Russia de facto discontinued the implementation of the contract to supply five air-defense missile systems batteries S-300 priced at about 1 billion dollars for Iranian air-defense. A year later, Russia voted in favor of the UN Security Council resolution No.1929¹¹⁷ prohibiting the import of heavy armament into Iran, and then it officially banned the supply of S-300.¹¹⁸ The detailed steps on the part of Moscow were reflected in mass media as a transformation of the Russian policy line towards Iran.¹¹⁹

Right before adopting the Resolution No.1929 the Foreign Affairs Minister of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov visited Beijing. In his interview Sergey Lavrov underlined that owing to the common efforts of Russia and China the resolution to be presented for the UN Security Council consideration “would be concentrated on the issue of nuclear weapon nonproliferation and would accommodate the economic interests of Russia and China as much as possible”.¹²⁰ Thus, through diplomatic efforts Russia ensured the profound protection of its channels of cooperation with Iran¹²¹ and seconded the resolution.

However, Tehran’s response was not slow to arrive. After the sanctions were imposed in summer 2010 the President of Iran Mahmoud Ahmadinejad accused the Russian President of being a “spokesman” for the “enemies of Iran”: “*Russia is a great nation and we are friends and*

¹¹⁷ As opposed to the previous resolutions on Iran the Resolution 1929 limits export and bans the supply of arms into Iran as defined in the UN Register of Conventional Arms

¹¹⁸ The president of Russia Dmitry Medvedev’s decree “On the measures taken on the UN Resolution 1929 of June 9, 2010”

¹¹⁹ “Russia Sacrificed Iran”, *Iran.ru*, September 25, 2010, http://globalrus.blogspot.com/2010/09/blog-post_5579.html (accessed February 22, 2012)

¹²⁰ “Iran is Safe from Paralysis. Russia and China Protected their Economic Interests”, *Vremya Novostei* (The Time), June 7, 2010, <http://www.vremya.ru/2010/07/5/255467.html> (accessed February 22, 2012)

¹²¹ The Resolution does not concern oil and gas industry that is the main source of profit for Iranian budget and is the promising sphere of intergovernmental cooperation.

are interested in expanding our friendly relationship, but you should know that the remarks of Medvedev are a trailer for the propagandist scenario that the US will stage".¹²²

An anti-Russian attitude started developing in Iran since the beginning of 2009. As it was mentioned in one of the publications by the RAS Institute of the Middle East, the concern over the future of the Russian-Iranian relations began to manifest itself at the time of the Russian-American "reset" policy.¹²³ "The official Tehran declaring its allied relations with Russia and aiming at developing strategic relations with Russia as a counterweight to the United States and the Western Europe, expressed its concern over the improved Russian-American relations that might become directed against Iran. Putting-off the date of the Bushehr NPP startup – the demonstrative example of the Russian-Iranian cooperation in the eyes of Iranian people – was qualified as Russian concession to the pressure from the West."¹²⁴

According to Dunaeva, Iranian political elite's perception of the Russian-Iranian relations stems from the "exaggerated role of Iran in the international priorities of Russia". Moreover, Iranian authorities overlooked the general strategy of the Russian foreign policy stated in the "The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation".

Iranian criticism caused certain confusion in Russia. As it was mentioned by Professor Vladimir Sazhin, the chief specialist on Iran at the RAS Institute of the Middle East, Russia has been "advocate for the interests of Iran" in the international arena for many years.¹²⁵ In addition,

¹²² "Ahmadinejad: Medvedev Became the Spokesman for the Enemies of Iran", *Russkaya Sluzhba BBC*. July 24, 2010, http://www.bbc.co.uk/russian/international/2010/07/100724_ahmadinejad_medvedev_critics.shtml (accessed February 22, 2012)

¹²³ Dunaeva E, "Russian-Iranian Relations: Terhan's Perspective", *RAS Institute of the Middle East*, April 29, 2004, <http://www.iimes.ru/rus/stat/2010/29-04-10a.htm> (accessed February 22, 2012)

¹²⁴ Ibid

¹²⁵ Sazhin Vladimir, "Iran: December 2009, military-political situation", *RAS Institute of the Middle East*, January 27, 2010, <http://www.iimes.ru/rus/stat/2010/27-01-10c.htm> (accessed February 22, 2012)

Rosatom helped Iran to construct their first NPP in the country and Roscosmos announced the first Iranian astronaut flight in the upcoming 2017.¹²⁶

According to most Russian experts,¹²⁷ the obstacle on the way of developing close relations between Russia and Iran is Iran's confrontation with the West and the USA, who remain important economic partners for Russia. It is impossible to build a relationship based only on the anti-American factor. Above all, Russian foreign policy protects its own national interests. With Obama's administration in the White House it became clear that Washington and Moscow would make an effort to reach a mutual compromise. The main topic of negotiations is the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. In the course of Moscow negotiations in March 2010, before the agreement was signed, the parties also discussed the issues of Afghan peacemaking procedures and the nuclear program of Iran; the positions of the countries split over Iran, particularly the Bushehr NPP start. Hillary Clinton considered the start of the NPP to be premature until Iran proved the peaceful nature of its nuclear program. Nevertheless the Russian party represented by Sergey Lavrov made it clear that the "nuclear power plant will be started". "This object is fully covered by the IAEA safeguards, and it is of utmost importance for...ensuring the presence of the IAEA in Iran, for ensuring that Iran fulfills its nonproliferation treaty obligations."¹²⁸ Thus, Iran remains a stumbling rock of the Russian-American relations.

The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty was signed by both Russian and American parties. Russia

¹²⁶ "Iran and Russia: Strategic Friendship", *Izraelskiye Novosti* (Israeli News), August 7, 2010, <http://news.israelinfo.ru/world/33998> (accessed February 22, 2012)

¹²⁷ Mamedova Nina, "Iran and Russia in 2008", *RAS Institute of the Middle East*, March 3, 2009, <http://www.iimes.ru/rus/stat/2009/03-03-09a.htm> (accessed February 22, 2012); Sazhin Vladimir, "Iran: December 2009, military-political situation"; Dunaeva E. "Russian-Iranian Relations: Terhan's Perspective"

¹²⁸ "Agreed on SNF and Split on Bushehr", *Gazeta.ru*, March 18, 2010, http://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2010/03/18_a_3340133.shtml (accessed February 22, 2012)

backed the resolution No. 1929 at the UN Security Council and reduced the scale of military-technical cooperation with Iran.¹²⁹

Currently, as of summer 2011, Russia continues to stick to the view that Iran has to continue cooperation with the IAEA and the international community shall not call for harsh economic sanctions that would cripple Iranian economy. In June 2011, Russia voiced its criticism towards unilateral US sanctions imposed against Iranian airline Iran Air and Tidewater Middle East Company. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs estimation, these sanctions “harm Russian business interests”. Moreover, “American policy of sanctions towards Iran serves the goals other than WMD non-proliferation.”¹³⁰

Consequently, Russia protects its own interests rather than those of Iran. The nature of these interests is still an open issue. Undoubtedly, the trade and economic relations between Russia and Iran have witnessed significant development within the last decade. However, Iranian segment in the total trade balance of Russia remains rather small, only 0.6% as of August 2010.¹³¹ Russian political science experts dwell on the importance of Iran as a regional leader state. For Russia it would be unwise to oppose it, therefore it seeks common ground. One of the

¹²⁹ Termination of the contract on the air-defense system S-300 supply

¹³⁰ “Russia Criticizes the New US Sanctions against Iran”, *Russkaya sluzhba BBC*, June 24, 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/russian/international/2011/06/110624_russia_iran_sanctions.shtml (accessed February 22, 2012)

¹³¹ Rusimpex Agency, *Export and Import of Russia by countries in January-August 2010: Economy and Statistics of External Trade* (Moscow: Rusimpex, 2010), <http://www.rusimpex.ru/index1.htm?varurl=Content/Economics/> (accessed February 22, 2012)

areas of common interest is the energy cooperation in oil, gas and nuclear sphere. Russia and Iran continue cooperating in such spheres as transport and space technologies. From the perspective of political relations the countries are engaged in a dialogue within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and stand for settlement of the Caspian conflict and Afghan drug trafficking.

Chapter 6. Conclusions and Political Implications

As a conclusion on the Russian position during the nuclear crisis in Iran, it can be noted that Russian policy towards Iran has undergone certain transformations. However, its general line remained stable: Russia develops multidimensional cooperation with Iran and acts as a moderator in the negotiations between Iran and the international community. Russian efforts are concentrated on preventing international isolation of Iran, respect the right of Islamic Republic for the peaceful nuclear energy program while maintaining its denuclearization status. From the perspective of the foreign policy strategy it would be unwise of Russia to neighbor a nuclear Iran or an unstable Iran. After all, the countries are geographically close to each other. Iran and Russia are separated from each other by nothing but the Caspian Sea.

Undoubtedly, Russia is interested in cooperation with Iran as a major state of the Middle East, which allows Russian presence in the region. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the connections between Russian and Iran are not limited to the construction of the Power Plant and arms trade. The oil and gas industry is another important sphere of cooperation.

On the other hand, Iran is a complicated partner for Russia from the point of view of “controllability”. The main source of Iran’s complexity stems from the anti-Western component of its foreign policy direction. For Russia the relations with the West (Europe and the United States) are of high priority, which is proved by the main concepts of its current foreign policy. Russia strives for maintaining the image of a responsible player on the international scene, a powerful state that is capable of constructive cooperation from the point of view of investments into Russian economy as well as from that of solving the global modern world problems (WMD nonproliferation).

Russian-Iranian cooperation in general and the Russian policy direction towards Iranian nuclear crisis in particular were bound to be reflected in the relations of Russia with the Middle Eastern countries and with other members of the international community in the region (the United States, the EU, China and the Middle Eastern countries).

6.1 Russia – the Middle East

The Middle East is strategically crucial for Russia. According to the Deputy Prime-Minister of Russia Igor Ivanov, Russian authorities are interested in the stability in the Middle East region. “Otherwise it could influence Russian interests including oil and gas interests”.¹³² Although the Ivanov’s statement refers to the spring collisions of the authorities and opposition in a number of the Middle Eastern countries (Egypt, Tunisia, Libya), it speaks for the general attitude of the Russian political elite towards the situation in the region.

In terms of nuclear non-proliferation, the Middle Eastern countries constitute the biggest threat. The threat evidences in several factors. First of them is the presence of Israel in the region, one of the three unrecognized and officially undeclared nuclear states. Second, the Arab-Israeli conflict remains unsettled. Moreover, many Muslim countries of the region are conflicting. Third, the region contains the major home bases of the international terrorism. The situation is complicated by the concentration of the strategic interests of the global players (primarily due to the abundance of natural resources in the region), presence of the international coalition forces in the two states of the region (Iraq and Afghanistan), bombarding of Libya by NATO. Finally,

¹³²“Ivanov: Instability in the Middle East Bears a Threat to the Russian Federation Interests”, *RIA Novosti* (RIA News), April 6, 2011, <http://ria.ru/politics/20110406/361515688.html> (accessed February 27, 2012)

from the nuclear point of view, several states of the region used to have nuclear programs in the past (Libya) or are currently suspected of its development (Iran). Therefore, the region possesses a number of nuclear facilities both of power and research application as well as the objects of the nuclear fuel cycle.

All the above mentioned factors give the grounds for the nuclear program development in Iran. In case of success of this program, other countries of the region would have to create nuclear weapons, which would inevitably lead to the nuclear arms race in the unstable region. In terms of proneness to conflict, Iran has the most unstable relations with Israel and the Saudi Arabia. Saudi officials have stated their readiness to run a nuclear program in response to that of Iran. “We cannot live in a situation where Iran has nuclear weapons and we do not”, - a remark by the Saudi Arabia Ambassador to the United States addressed to NATO officials.¹³³

Thus, the Moscow policy towards the Middle East in general and Iran in particular is summed up to ensuring its own security. The president of the RAS Institute of the Middle East Evgeniy Satanovskiy gives the following assessment of the Russian policy: “This is a policy of no enemies, equidistance, not getting mixed in the conflicts of others and clear commitment to the purely Russian economic and political interests – above all the security interests”.¹³⁴

In Satanovskiy’s definitions, the current Russian policy toward the Middle East predetermines country’s refusal to provide tens or hundreds billion budget dollars to anyone “for the mere demonstration of their sham anti-Americanism and willingness to become a pro-

¹³³ “Saudi Arabia will Create Nuclear Weapons Following Iran”, *Rosbalt*, June 30, 2011, <http://www.rosbalt.ru/main/2011/06/30/864370.html> (accessed February 27, 2012)

¹³⁴ “The Kremlin Policy in the Middle East: without Changes”, *Golos Ameriki* (The Voice of America), May 10, 2012, <http://www.voanews.com/russian/news/russia/VV-Bin-Laden-Middle-East-2011-05-10-121583519.html> (accessed February 27, 2012)

Russian country”. “The policy is very pragmatic, - he insists. – And it resembles Chinese policy in this regard”.¹³⁵

For example, Russian active participation in solving the nuclear crisis in Iran is not conducted at the expense of its relations with Israel. Russian-Israeli relations develop in a fast-paced manner. Russia ranks second by the number of citizens visiting this country after the US. Currently, there is an agreement of the Russian Federation citizens’ visa-free entry and stay on the territory of Israel. The issues of the Iranian nuclear program as well as the process of the Middle Eastern settlement (the Israel-Palestine issue) appear on the agenda during the official negotiations. Moscow voices its complaints and criticism of the Iranian President Ahmadinejad’s hostile rhetoric against Israel.¹³⁶

A pragmatic line can be traced in other strands of Russian policy. The Western European countries are active participants of the Iranian nuclear crisis. The negotiation process members include France, Germany and the UK. European approach is different from the Russian position. In this regard, Russia is forced to maneuver between Europe and Iran.

6.2 Russia – the European Union

On the scale of Russian geostrategic interests the development of partnership with the EU is essential. The priority of this partnership is governed by the historical, cultural and economical proximity of Europe to Russia. Today, the political and strategic dialogue between Russia and

¹³⁵ Ibid

¹³⁶ « Russian-Israeli Relations : A Notice », *PIIA Novosti* (RIA News), February 16, 2010, <http://ria.ru/spravka/20100216/209418584.html> (accessed February 27, 2012)

the European Union is mostly developed bilaterally (Russia-Germany, Russia-France, Russia-Italy, etc.). Therefore, when reviewing the issue of Iranian factor influence on Russia - the EU relations the emphasis should be put on the relations between Russia and a certain European state. In their turn, the European participants of the Iranian nuclear problem negotiations (Germany, France and the UK) although practicing similar carrot-and-stick diplomacy (forcing Iran to cooperation through tough sanctions), act in pursuit of their own national interests. The example is the position of Germany that although acting within the framework of the EU and backing the sanctions, advocates the cooperation with Iran due to its national economic and strategic interests. As of today, Germany, the state providing 9.7% of the total Iranian import (ranks third after the United Arab Emirates and China) is the leading trade partner of Iran among European states. In contrast, Russia only ranks fifth.¹³⁷

Russia and Germany cooperate with Iran in the similar spheres – nuclear technology, military-technical, oil and gas, electrical energy, trade and banking, - for both countries the development of this partnership is beneficial in terms of reinforcing national companies' positions on foreign markets, gaining profit and achieving a number of political goals. Hence, Russia and Germany share the understanding of rationality of trade and economic relations with Iran and the necessity to protect them from overwhelming sanctions and activity of other European and Asian competitors. On the other hand, Russia and Germany are potential rivals on the Iranian market in a number of spheres including nuclear science, which requires accurate policy coordination to maintain constructive bilateral relations. At the same time, the split in positions toward Iran and to a greater degree in positions toward policy-making cannot

¹³⁷ Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook: Iran*, (The Central Intelligence Agency: Washington, 2012), <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html> (accessed February 27, 2012)

drastically alter the situation in the bilateral Russian-German relations that witness strong growth and development in recent times.¹³⁸ In this regard, the Iranian factor cannot be considered as determining, despite the fact that Iranian issue is a popular topic for discussion at the Russian-German meetings.¹³⁹

At the same time, the recent international political situation leads to the understanding that it is beneficial to maintain constructive relations with major players on the international arena. To this end, the major goal of the Russian activity on the international arena is the coordination of interests and the partnership with both the EU and the United States.

6.3 Russia – the United States

The Iranian factor has always been a stumbling rock for the Russian-American relations. With the Obama's accession to power the keynote of the US foreign policy has changed, his administration has created a completely different climate in relations with Moscow. The so called "reset" policy was in fact the beginning of the new dialogue between two countries. This dialogue omitted the irritants that were on the road of constructive cooperation between Russia and the United States (questions of Georgia, South Ossetia, Abkhazia and the ABM systems configuration in Europe).

¹³⁸ Germany is the main financial and trade partner of Russia among the European countries. The share of Germany in the trade balance of Russia accounts for 8.5% (second after China) in *The Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, Foreign economy of the Russian Federation in January and February 2011*, http://www.budgetrf.ru/Publications/mert_new/2011/MERT_NEW201103251112/MERT_NEW201103251112_p_011.htm (accessed February 27, 2012)

¹³⁹“Medvedev and Merkel Discussed Iranian Nuclear Crisis and Climate Change”, *Deutsche Welle*, February 26, 2012, <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,5287574,00.html> (accessed February 27, 2012)

The changed approach of the United States toward Moscow signaled to Russian officials the possibility of dialogue in the common spheres.¹⁴⁰ Concerning Iran Russia and the US agreed on the fact that Iran should continue its status of denuclearization. The difference of opinions lies in the approach to the problem. The policy of harsh sanctions practiced by the US as well as the plan to bring about regime change in Iran did not satisfy Moscow. However, Obama managed to persuade the Russian administration that above all the United States is concerned about the issue of nuclear nonproliferation.

Indeed, Russia has its own interests connected with Iran, the growing power and potential regional leader. Furthermore, Moscow is not comfortable with the status of an “advocate” for the country that entered into conflict with the international community. In June 2010, Russia backed the UN Resolution with the introduction of sanctions against Iran and refused to fulfill the contract to supply S-300. This step can be perceived as an accession to the United States, but it is much more likely to be a Moscow signal to Iran about the limits of its support.

In February 2011, the Washington Post newspaper published the statement by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Ryabkov regarding the Iranian factor in the Russian-American relations. He emphasized that “the cooperation of Russia and the United States” on the issue of Iran “is unprecedented”.¹⁴¹ At the same time he did not miss the fact of discordance of opinions on sanctions. According to Ryabkov, these measures just “cause misery for the

¹⁴⁰Monterey Center for Nonproliferation Studies, *Interview of the Russian Federation Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the USA, S. Kislyak*, Fall 2009, http://pircenter.org/data/publications/sirus3-09/011-016_interv_kisl.pdf (accessed February 27, 2012)

¹⁴¹“Russia’s Ryabkov on US-Russia’s Relations: We can Offer Tangible Results and we can Do More in the Future”, *Washington Post*, January 31, 2011, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/01/31/AR2011013105212.html?wprss=rss_world/asia (accessed February 27, 2012)

countries they are used against”, and the unilateral US sanctions only “increase the pressure on the international community”.¹⁴² Russia believes that the only way to solve this problem is the dialogue with Iran.

China, that has even closer strategic connections with Russia maintains a similar position. The shift in the Russian position on Iran influenced China that also voiced its support for the Resolution No.1929. The countries continue to follow the similar line regarding the nuclear issue of Iran: it is necessary to continue cooperation and dialogue with Iran, the harsh sanctions or the use of military actions are unacceptable. China is a source of essential support for Russia, however, it is true of Russian support for China as well.

6.4 Russia-China

The interests of China in Iran are reduced to the economic component. These interests are based on the increasing energy resources requirements of China (oil accounts for about 80% of Chinese import from Iran). The Middle East remains the main hydrocarbon supplier for Chinese economy. Iran occupies the leading position among the oil and gas suppliers to China and its share continues to kite. Moreover, China is the main Iran’s trade partner. For the short period of time it managed to take the place that used to belong to the Western European countries. The

¹⁴² Ibid

volume of trade between China and Iran for more than 30 years of cooperation (since 1970) has grown almost 3,000 times and now accounts for about 38 billion dollars.¹⁴³

In addition to that, China is the biggest foreign investor into oil and gas industry of Iran. Other spheres of economic cooperation concern the construction of subway in Tehran, construction of railways and other objects of infrastructure.

Regarding the nuclear program of Iran China backs the right of Iran for the peaceful nuclear energy development and is strongly opposed to the solution of this problem by force.¹⁴⁴ However, until the present, China did not vote in favor or abstained from voting on any of the UN Resolutions on Iran. Amid the obvious development and expansion of the economic connections between China and Iran the role of the latter in the Chinese national economy remains nominal. From the economic point of view, China is more important for Iran than vice versa. For that reason China would not act alone to “cover” Iran while neglecting its own interests. The American market is more attractive for export of Chinese goods. To put this in perspective, the trade balance of China with the US accounted for 456 billion in 2010, in which 365 billion is the profit from Chinese goods export to the US.¹⁴⁵ Even taking into account the energy deficit experienced by the Chinese economy, the Chinese-Iranian economic ties are unlikely to keep up with the pace of Chinese-American cooperation.

¹⁴³ “Iran-China Trade Volume Reaches 38 bn Dollars”, *Alexander Gas and Oil Connections*, February 2011, http://www.gasandoil.com/oilaround/economy/27ef10447716399a55ff510d44e061f2?b_start=120 (accessed February 27, 2012)

¹⁴⁴ Dingli Shen, “Iran’s Nuclear Ambitions Test China’s Wisdom”, *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 2006, http://www.twq.com/06spring/docs/06spring_shen.pdf (accessed February 27, 2012)

¹⁴⁵ “The U.S.-China Trade Statistics and China’s World Trade Statistics”, *The U.S-China Business Council*, <http://www.uschina.org/statistics/tradetable.html> (accessed February 27, 2012)

Regarding the nuclear problem of Iran, China cooperates with Russia, who is interested in limited sanctions imposed against Iran and is strongly opposed the use of military force. In June 2010, before the final UN Security Council Resolution was adopted, Russian and Chinese diplomats were working together putting their efforts at softening the sanctions suggested by the European countries and the United States.

Nevertheless, Russian policy in Iran is complicated by the strategic component. Russia is facing the even bigger dilemma. By supporting the right of Iran for the peaceful use of nuclear energy, Russia cannot accept the transition of Iran into the nuclear states category. This part of the policy agrees with the US view. For Russia it is important to maintain its influence in Iran, moreover, to make Iran dependent even though only on the fuel supply to Bushehr NPP. Russia is not comfortable neighboring a powerful Islamic Republic at its southern borders, as well as observing an arms race in the Middle East in case Iran acquires nuclear status.

The chance that Russia and China views split at the nuclear program of Iran is very small. It is more likely that the countries continue to pursue their own interests and the factor of Iranian nuclear problem does not have any impact on the development of the Russian-Chinese partnership.

Considering the influence of nuclear crisis of Iran on bilateral relations of Russia with other states, it is interesting to refer to Dmitriy Trenin from the Carnegie Moscow Center. Currently “Moscow makes a common stand with the other responsible members of the international community. By disabusing Iran of any illusions, Russia gives another chance to the peaceful settlement of the nuclear program of Iran. Moreover, by adopting a strong position long time ago, Moscow made Beijing establish its own position. For many years, China had an opportunity to set out any conflicts without any risk or payments. Now they had to make a choice.

They have made it pragmatically, judging from the state interests of the People's Republic of China. This is a very important and positive moment in the international relations.”¹⁴⁶

Making forecasts of the Iranian crisis development, Dmitriy Trenin assumes that the settlement by force is possible in case Iran refuses to cooperate with the international community and discontinues its contacts with the international organizations such as IAEA. However, the United States is unlikely to make a strike at Iran themselves. It is more likely that it would be made by Israel secured with the US backing, since Israeli leaders cannot “passively observe Iran improving its missile potential and creating the nuclear power”.¹⁴⁷

What would the world community reaction be? The Muslim world would be infuriated, the Arabs would be relieved. The nuclear energy development brings about the misbalance into the Middle Eastern region and makes Arab capitals' leaders restless. Europe would clamor about the use of military force. China would express discontent. Moscow would try to distance from the military actions due to its own Muslim population and in the fear of further “militarization of the US foreign policy”. For the world community in general the settlement of Iranian problem by force would be a significant challenge.

Today, this scenario is not the only one possible. Diplomatic efforts of Russia and China are still concentrated on persuading Tehran that the cooperation and negotiations are crucial. In any case, the settlement of Iranian crisis depends hugely on Iran itself. Supposedly, at this point Tehran has to make the most important choice in its history.

¹⁴⁶ Trenin D. “Russia, Iran and Uranium”, *Carnegie Endowment in Moscow*, <http://carnegie.ru/publications/?fa=40982> (accessed February 27, 2012)

¹⁴⁷ Ibid

All in all, the research of this master thesis let us make the conclusion that Russia in its foreign policy follows the principles of non-proliferation and plays the role of responsible shareholder. Its position on the nuclear crisis in Iran is determined by strategic national interests.

Russia stands on the position of denuclearization of Iran because one more nuclear state in the Middle East will raise the arms race in the region and cause its instability.

On the other hand Russia supports the right of Iran to develop peaceful nuclear program. At the moment, Russia is the only state which cooperates with Iran in nuclear field. Main considerations behind this cooperation are not only economic benefits, but influence in Iranian nuclear market and information on its nuclear development.

The existing dilemma for Russian policy today is to support Iran and cooperate with it or to keep the image of responsible power. So due to this dilemma Russian approach is aimed at negotiations process and diplomatic means of conflict resolution. Russia insists on the necessity to develop dialogue with Iran.

The harsh sanctions and military intervention hardly get the approval from Russian side, as it causes a lot of troubles for Russia. The termination of all cooperation projects with Iran, military presence of aliened troops in the region so closed to Russian borders, increase in terrorist activities, the problem of refugees and etc.

Russia conducts independent political course. It supports Iran while it is in Russian interests to do so. The cooperation in wide range of issues: political, economic, technological, military and nuclear field show the great interests of Russia in Iran. However the support of Russia on Iranian nuclear problem has its limits. Where is this limit? This is the question that may be unveiled in the nearest future.

The influence of outside factors, such as Russian relations with the United States, may not change the position of Russia on the crisis, but may change Russian behavior in negotiation process or vote cast in the Security Council.

When the crisis situation gets negative development and the military operation becomes the inevitable reality, Russia hardly will use its veto power to protect Iran. It is more likely that Russia condemns such actions and abstains from voting.

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