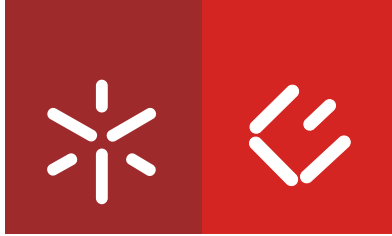




Universidade do Minho
Escola de Economia e Gestão

Mohammad Ranjbar Nikdel

**Analyzing the (non) Alignment with the UN,
EU and US Sanctions against Iran in
the foreign policies of the CIS states**



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Supervision:
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É AUTORIZADA A REPRODUÇÃO PARCIAL DESTA DISSERTAÇÃO APENAS PARA EFEITOS DE INVESTIGAÇÃO, MEDIANTE DECLARAÇÃO ESCRITA DO INTERESSADO, QUE A TAL SE COMPROMETE;

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present thesis is to explore the foreign policy of the five countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in the context of the hardened economic sanctions against Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI). The sanctions' regime against Iran is a topical issue of world politics, especially in the context of the crisis of the non-proliferation regime. In the last few years, Iran was object of sanctions imposed by the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU) and the United States of America (USA). The sanctions introduced between 2005 and 2012 are the most severe ones in the history of the sanctions' regime against Iran since 1979. The Hypothesis of the present thesis is that the position of the CIS states on sanctions would be different, according to the degree of the individual countries' proximity (cultural, political, economic and geographic) with Iran. We also aim at exploring the ideational or rationalist nature of the foreign policy choices, and the stability of these choices, which is expected to be related to either the ideational or rationalist nature of the respective decisions. In the analysis of the five case studies – Azerbaijan, Belarus, Russia, Tajikistan and Ucrânia – we could not find examples of absolutely pure ideational policies or absolutely pure rationalism: all of them represent a mixture where both elements are present at least to some extent. These findings corroborate the postulates of the so-called third debate between rationalism and constructivism whereby the two paradigms complete rather than compete with each other. When determining our Hypothesis, we expected the ideational decisions of non-alignment to produce a consistent and stable foreign policy posture, while rationalist-induced options were expected to favour a shift. Our findings demonstrate that, out of the five cases, Belarus, Tajikistan and Azerbaijan are more consistent in their position about (non)alignment with sanctions against Iran, while Russia and Ukraine were found to be non-consistent, i.e. they change their position (although Ukraine's position has been determined by a fundamental change in the very foundations of its foreign policy priorities). Our findings shed light upon different motivations for (non) alignment with sanctions amongst CIS states, while sharing an important feature: in contrast to other actors, CIS states take into account regional considerations and, eventually, they understand the role of Iran as an international actor other than that the current academic and political debate depicts.

Key words: CIS, EU, Iran, (non) Alignment, Russia, Sanctions, US and UN.

Análise do (não) alinhamento com as Nações Unidas, União Europeia e as sanções contra o Irão nas políticas externas dos Estados da CEI.

Sumário

O objetivo primordial da presente dissertação é analisar a política externa dos cinco países da Comunidade de Estados independentes (CEI) no contexto das sanções económicas contra a República Islâmica do Irão (RII).

O regime de sanções contra o Irão é uma questão mandatária na agenda política mundial, especialmente no contexto da crise do regime da não-proliferação. Nos últimos anos, o Irão tem sido alvo de sanções das Nações Unidas (ONU), da União Europeia (UE) e os Estados Unidos da América (EUA). As sanções introduzidas entre 2005 e 2012 são as mais graves na história do regime de sanções contra o Irão desde 1979.

A hipótese da presente dissertação parte do pressuposto de que a posição dos Estados da CEI sobre as sanções seriam diferentes, de acordo com o grau de proximidade de cada um dos países em apreço (cultural, política, económica e geográfica) com o Irão. Foi ainda nosso objetivo explorar a natureza ideacional ou racionalista das opções de política externa e a estabilidade destas escolhas, sendo expectável materializar-se uma relação com a natureza ideacional ou racionalista das respectivas decisões.

Na análise dos cinco estudo de caso – Azerbaijão, Belarússia, Rússia, Tadjiquistão e Ucrânia – não identificámos exemplos de políticas ideacionais absolutamente puras ou racionalismo absolutamente puro: encontramos uma mistura onde ambos os elementos estão presentes, pelo menos em certa medida. Estes resultados corroboram os postulados do chamado terceiro debate entre racionalismo e construtivismo segundo o qual os dois paradigmas se completam em vez de competirem entre si.

Ao determinar a nossa hipótese, esperávamos que as decisões ideacionais de não-alinhamento produzissem uma política externa consistente e estável, sendo expectável que as opções induzidas racionalistas favorecessem a possibilidade de uma mudança. O nosso estudo demonstra que, dos cinco casos analisados, a Belarússia, o Tadjiquistão e o Azerbaijão são mais os consistentes no que se reporta ao seu (não) alinhamento com as sanções contra o Irão, enquanto que a Rússia e

a Ucrânia parece não assumir posições consistentes, ou seja, alteram a sua posição (embora a posição da Ucrânia tenha sido determinada por uma alteração fundamental dos alicerces das suas prioridades de política externa).

Os resultados de nossa investigação evidenciam motivações diversas relativamente ao (não) alinhamento com sanções entre os Estados da CEI, identificando-se uma característica em comum: contrariamente aos outros atores, os estados que integram a CEI espelham considerações regionais e, eventualmente, consideram que o Irão é um ator internacional que desempenha um papel diferente daquele que percebemos no debate académico atual.

Key words: CEI, UE, Irão, (não) Alinhamento, Rússia, Sanções, EUA e ONU.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BI	Billion
BPC	Belarus Petroleum Company
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
E.g.	for example (Latin: <i>exempli gratia</i>)
EU	European Union
FATF	The Financial Action Task Force
GDP	Gross domestic product
IAEA	The International Atomic Energy Agency
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
i.e.	In other words or that is (Latin: <i>id est</i>)
IO	International Organization
IR	International Relations
IRI	Islamic Republic of Iran
JSC(RZD)	Russian Railways (Russian: <i>Российские железные дороги РЖД</i>)
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization

mln	million
NAM	Non-aligned movement
NAR	Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic
NPP	Nuclear power plant
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
RF	Russian Federation
SCO	The Shanghai Cooperation Organization
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States of America
USD	United States Dollar
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WMD	Weapon of Mass Destruction

INTRODUCTION:

I. WHY STUDYING THE POSITIONS OF CIS STATES REGARDING THEIR ALIGNMENT WITH SANCTIONS AGAINST IRAN ?

The present Master dissertation aims at analyzing the foreign policy of the five countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in the context of the hardened economic sanctions against Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI).

The sanctions' regime against Iran is a topical issue of world politics agenda, especially in the context of the crisis of the non-proliferation regime. States that do not possess nuclear weapons seek to balance power by acquiring a nuclear bomb. The number of states possessing nuclear technologies has been growing, while the black market of technologies and materials has thrived. The sanctions regime, imposed by several International Organizations (IOs) and individual states, influences the relations amongst states in political and economic terms, impacts upon the security of the region of the Persian Gulf, the Middle East and it also fuels global implications. The sanctions regime is thus an element of the global security system, the participants of which often act upon the effect of the security dilemma, tending to balance power. Iran turned out to be in a highly tense situation, given that the first and second order neighbors (Israel, Pakistan and India) already possess nuclear weapons, while the relations with the neighbors in the Persian Gulf region are unfriendly. However, if Iran acquired nuclear weapons by the reason that the neighbors already possess it, it would create a precedent for other states – neighbors of nuclear powers, whose respective actions would finally destroy the non-proliferation regime.

Iran was object of sanctions imposed by the United Nations (UN Security Council Resolution 1929), the European Union (EU Council Regulation 961/10, EU Council Regulation 56/2012) and the United States of America (Presidential Documents: Executive Order 13553, Executive Order 13574, and Executive Order 13590). However, the issue of sanctions against Iran dates back to the 1970ies. Generally speaking, three phases of sanctions can be distinguished. First, the sanctions were imposed after the throw-down of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi and the hostage crises at the American Embassy on the 4th of November 1979. The second phase dates back to the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988). President of Iran, Seyyed Mohammad Khatami facilitated the

Dialogue Among Civilizations, and the sanctions of that time represented an attempt to pressure Iran. In general, subsequent Iranian relations with the West started to normalize. The third period of the Iran sanctions is connected with the Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's presidency. A summary of the major provisions of the all four of these resolutions is contained in the table below

Table 1. Summary of Provisions of U.N. Resolutions on Iran Nuclear Program: (1696,1737, 1747, 1803, and 1929)

Number	Year	Type/Content
1696	31 July 2006	Demanded that Iran suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities and threatened sanctions.
1737	23 Decem ber 2006	Arms Embargo, Targeted Financial Sanctions – imposition of new measures, in response to the proliferation risks presented by the Iranian nuclear program and, in this context, by Iran's continuing failure to meet the requirements of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors and to comply with the provisions of Security Council resolution 1696 (2006). It became mandatory for Iran to suspend enrichment-related and reprocessing activities and cooperate with the IAEA, imposed sanctions banning the supply of nuclear-related materials and technology, and froze the assets of key individuals and companies related to the program.
1747	24 March 2007	Targeted Financial Sanctions (related) It imposed an arms embargo and expanded the freeze on Iranian assets. It prohibited Iran to export arms or WMD-useful technology.
1803	3 March 2008	Targeted Financial Sanctions (related) It extended the asset freezing and called upon states to monitor the activities of Iranian banks, inspect Iranian ships and aircraft, and to monitor the movement of individuals involved in the program through their territory.

1929	9 June 2010	<p>Targeted Financial Sanctions (related)</p> <p>It banned Iran from any activities related to ballistic missiles, tightened the arms embargo. It imposed travel bans on individuals involved in the program, froze the funds and assets of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and IRI Shipping Lines. It recommended that states inspect Iranian cargos, prohibited the servicing of Iranian vessels involved in prohibited activities, prevented the provision of financial services used for sensitive nuclear activities, closely watch Iranian individuals and entities when dealing with them, prohibited the opening of Iranian banks on their territory and prevented Iranian banks from entering into relationship with their banks if it might contribute to the nuclear program, and prevented financial institutions from operating in their territory and opening offices and accounts in Iran.</p> <p>It prohibited Iran to invest abroad in uranium mining, related nuclear technologies or nuclear capable ballistic missile technology;</p> <p>It required Iran to suspend uranium enrichment, and to refrain from any development of ballistic missiles that are nuclear capable;</p> <p>It mandated the countries not export major combat systems to Iran, but did not bar sales of missiles that are not on the U.N. Registry of Conventional Arms;</p> <p>It called for vigilance (voluntary restraint) with respect to all Iranian banks, particularly Bank Melli and Bank Saderat; as well as on on international lending to Iran and providing trade credits and other financing;</p> <p>It called on countries to inspect cargoes carried by any ships in national or international waters—if there were indications they carried cargo banned for carriage to Iran. Searches in international waters would require concurrence of the country where the ship is registered.</p>
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Source: Summary of the author based upon the texts of U.N. Security Council resolutions 1737, 1747, 1803, and 1929, and the project 'Targeted Sanctions Toolkit' of the Watson Institute for International Studies.¹

A Sanctions Committee, composed of the 15 members of the Security Council, monitors implementation of all Iran sanctions and collects and disseminates information on Iranian violations and other entities involved in banned activities. A 'Panel of Experts' is empowered by the 1929 Resolution to assist the UN Sanctions Committee in implementing the Resolution and previous Iran resolutions, and to suggest ways of more effective implementation.

Currently, the sanctions are the most severe ones out of the three phases distinguished above. That is why the present dissertation is going to deal with the sanctions of the third phase, in the timeline between 2005 and 2012. This is the time period when conflicts emerged and the Iranian relations with the West aggravated, leading to stricter sanctions. It is in this time period, 2005 – 2012, that Iran tried to challenge the Western powers by fostering its nuclear program.

This time period also corresponds to changes occurred in the Post-Soviet region as for instance, Ukraine designed a new foreign policy vector after the Orange Revolution in 2004. In Russia this period is connected with the second term of the presidency of Vladimir Putin (2004-2008) and after May (2008-2012) Dmitry Medvedev, which shared a number of similar features as compared to Vladimir Putin's first presidential term

Out of all actors imposing the sanctions, the most restrictive ones are the sanctions imposed by the USA as they introduce limitations on a much wider range of issues than those of the UN or the EU and cover investments, import of oil and gas and services of infrastructure, ban on insurance inter alia.

Although neglected in the current academic debate, the foreign policy of the CIS states regarding sanctions against Iran is important to analyze. Firstly, due to the geographical position and the historical background, these states have been closely connected with Iran (Persia). After the revolution in Iran (1979) ending the monarchy, which had close ties with the USA and the

¹. More information on specific provisions of each of these resolutions and the nuclear negotiations with Iran is in Congressional Research Service Report, RL32048, Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses, authored by Kenneth Katzman (July 2013).

European states, Iran virtually has had no relations with the West. In the meanwhile, the leadership of Iran was closely cooperating with the Soviet Union and after its dissolution in 1991, with the CIS, especially Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. This cooperation included not only political and economic ties, but also strategically important military-industrial cooperation. Secondly, and as a result of the longstanding cooperation, the military-industrial ties with several states in the region have been of strategic importance to Tehran. This makes non-alignment a considerable option for all of the CIS states, while the possible alignment becomes an issue with significant implications, both for Iran and the CIS states themselves (although to a lesser extent).

This traditional economic, political, and especially military-industrial cooperation between Iran and the CIS sets these countries apart from other possible case studies which could be chosen for investigation. No similar multi-dimensional interdependence exists between Iran and Western countries' economies, including the US. In this sense, economic sanctions of non-CIS actors will always have a different impact upon Iran. This also includes countries of the Middle East, which view Iran as a rival and a potential threat: due to the Iran's rivalry with the Arab countries in the Middle East, a range of issues with the Saudi Arabia, Iraq and the UAE, and the Sunni - Shiite split, Iran's relations with its neighbors - which could have been severely affected by the sanctions to a comparable extent – are rather limited. Economic sanctions would produce even more significant losses for the Iranian economy if CIS countries aligned with the existing EU and US sanctions.

Given this kind of close and longstanding relations between Iran and CIS states, it is surprising that the issue has attracted little interest in the existing academic literature. Although some attention has been paid to the countries which entertain partner-style relations with Iran, such as China, India and Turkey² the relations between Iran and CIS has remained the blind spot in the existing academic debate. This lack of interest is the more intriguing as one considers the fact that several CIS states possess nuclear power industry. Iran has traditionally developed cooperation with the USSR in a number of fields, and after its dissolution, the CIS states continued developing relations in this respect, including education, training, and trade in products and technologies. Furthermore, many CIS states are important natural gas and oil exporters for the

² Garver 2011, Downs 2011, and Malley 2012, Oktav 2011.

international markets, being economically dependent on any aggravation around Iran that brings about change in oil and gas prices. Given this variety of reasons, it is important to look into the position of the CIS states regarding their (non) alignment with sanctions against Iran.

II. STATE OF THE ART

The issue of economic sanctions against Iran can be approached from different perspectives. This section illustrates this point by analyzing three such perspectives: the most recent contributions to the stream, which can be designated as the 'Iranian problem' stream, and the theory-driven account on sanctions. Furthermore, due to the focus of the present thesis, the section includes a literature review on the bilateral relations between the CIS states and Iran.

While providing an important contribution to the subject, the theoretically driven accounts of sanctions against Iran seem to let the issue of sanctions' effects on the target state out of sight. However, it seems important to evaluate such effect, as it should underlie the arguments for (or against) the application of sanctions. Henry Kissinger stated,³ Iran's nuclear bomb should be controlled and the war should be avoided. We believe the pressure and isolation can only bring about the necessity of sophisticated nuclear infrastructure and nuclear weaponry.

2.1. The recent contributions of Mark Frizpatrick, Kenneth Waltz, and Zbigniew Brzezinski. (2010-2012)

The issue of political and especially economic sanctions against Iran has always enjoyed attention of International Relations scholars.⁴ It has been often analyzed in the context of Iran's nuclear program and the other related regional issues. Recently, this research stream has been complemented by the contributions of Mark Fitzpatrick, Kenneth Waltz, Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinsky, who have added to the topicality of the issue in the ongoing academic debate.

³ <http://www.infowars.com/kissinger-predicts-nuclear-war-with-iran/> (January 2013)

⁴ Adler 2005, Drezner 2000, Galaka 2006, Limbert 2009

Mark Fitzpatrick explores the issue of the Iranian nuclear program from the perspective of its possible outcomes for the international community: “The sanctions bite is only going to get worse for Iran ... It is not inevitable that Iran will arm itself with nuclear weapons. Nor is a military strike by Israel or the United States the only alternative. Such worst-case assumptions could lead to another unnecessary war in the Middle East, this time possibly lasting a decade or more”.⁵ The contribution of Mark Fitzpatrick is especially valuable because he is one of the few scholars to point to the actual outcome of the sanctions imposed. While emphasizing, those sanctions alone are not bringing about a durable solution: “Iran's nuclear program has not been stopped, nor even slowed. Both the pace and accumulation of enriched uranium continues to grow. One cannot ignore the many reports of weapons-related work... The IAEA's report last November detailed 65 paragraphs of activity of a ‘possible military dimension’. Most of the reported activity was in the past, pre-2004, although some apparently continued. The IAEA's evidence is not conclusive proof of nuclear weapons activity, but it is certainly evidence of ‘signs’”⁶

Analyzing the sanctions and the situation around the Iranian nuclear program Kenneth Waltz focuses on Iranian problem as well. He offers two possible ways of the evolution of the Iranian behavior: Iran abandoning the pursuit of, or, rather continuing with its nuclear plans.

“First, diplomacy coupled with serious sanctions could convince Iran to abandon its pursuit of a nuclear weapon. But this outcome is unlikely: the historical record indicates that a country bent on acquiring nuclear weapons can rarely be dissuaded from doing so. Punishing a state through economic sanctions does not inexorably derail its nuclear program. Take North Korea, which succeeded in building its weapons despite countless rounds of sanctions and UN Security Council resolutions. If Tehran determines that its security depends on possessing nuclear weapons, sanctions are unlikely to change its mind. In fact, adding still more sanctions now could make Iran feel even more vulnerable, giving it still more reason to seek the protection of the ultimate deterrent. The second possible outcome is that Iran stops short of testing a nuclear weapon but develops a breakout capability, the capacity to build and test one quite quickly. Iran would not be the first country to acquire a sophisticated nuclear program without building an actual bomb. Japan, for instance, maintains a vast civilian nuclear

⁵ Fitzpatrick M. Iran Talks: What Should Be on the Table? [<http://www.cfr.org/iran/iran-talks-should-table/p27714>]

⁶ Fitzpatrick M. Iran Talks: What Should Be on the Table? [<http://www.cfr.org/iran/iran-talks-should-table/p27714>]

infrastructure. Experts believe that it could produce a nuclear weapon on short notice”⁷

Still, Waltz is convinced that Iran should get a bomb due to a set of reasons, including the complex situation in the region.

“First, diplomacy coupled with serious sanctions could persuade Iran to abandon its pursuit of a nuclear weapon. But this outcome is unlikely. Second, Iran could stop short of testing a nuclear weapon but develop a breakout capability and enjoy all the benefits of having a bomb (such as greater security) without the downsides (such as international isolation). The problem is that a breakout capability might not work as intended...The third possible outcome is that Iran continues its current course. In fact, by reducing imbalances in military power, new nuclear states generally produce more regional and international stability, not less...Israel’s regional nuclear monopoly, which has proved remarkably durable for the past four decades, has long fueled instability in the Middle East. In this way, the current tensions are best viewed not as the early stages of a relatively recent Iranian nuclear crisis but rather as the final stages of a decades-long Middle East nuclear crisis that will end only when a balance of military power is restored”.⁸

Waltz asserts that a nuclear Iran would represent the best outcome for the Middle East region and in fact, the world. We believe that a possible stability that would occur in the region will have unpredictable price and lead to a new stage of hostility. The assertion that power has to be balanced absolutely coincides with our view on the problem.⁹ Waltz stands for the idea of inefficiency of sanctions and asserts and the further sanctions only bring about a new motivation for Iran to possess nuclear weapons, as adding sanctions makes Iran feel more vulnerable and willing to seek protection of “the ultimate deterrent”. Thus, the sanctions will fail to meet an ultimate goal of their initiators, cause much damage and will not affect the nuclear program. Waltz also stresses that Iran would not risk its security and compares the IRI to the Maoist China, being less bellicose after the acquisition of nuclear weapons. Israel, in his opinion, is a bigger threat to the Arab world than Iran with its contemporary nuclear program. Furthermore, the scholar maintains that two nuclear states, Iran and Israel would be able to deter each other. So, Waltz

⁷ Waltz K. Why Iran Should Get a Bomb [<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137731/kenneth-n-waltz/why-iran-should-get-the-bomb>], last accessed 29.09.2012.

⁸ Waltz K. Why Iran Should Get a Bomb [<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137731/kenneth-n-waltz/why-iran-should-get-the-bomb>], last accessed 29.09.2012.

⁹ It is difficult to dimension the role of Israeli nuclear program, though we should not forget about the Saudi effect of proliferation.

believes, Iran should acquire a bomb to deter Israel, which would eventually bring more stability to the Middle East.

Thus, following Waltz *rationale*, and covering for the situation around the Iranian nuclear program, a number of eminent academics emphasize the necessity of preventing an armed conflict with Iran. Matthew Kroenig and Zbigniew Brzezinski follow this opinion. There are, however, divergences among scholars as to specific means of pursuing this objective. Kroenig believes it is going to be necessary to attack the Iranian infrastructure, however in a distant future. On the contrary, Brzezinski is deeply convinced the USA should avoid the aggravation of the situation and by all means prevent a situation where the war is the only solution. According to him, Iran should be deterred, just like the USSR under Joseph Stalin needed to be deterred, while the situation with Iran today being far more dangerous than with USSR. At the same time, the scholar argues that a possible war – if started – would be a disaster for the USA even to a greater extent than for Israel. This is especially so given the fact that neither Russia nor the Europeans would be willing to engage in such a war. Thus, Brzezinski considers that a military solution to the Iranian nuclear program is not “credible or desirable” (Brzezinski, 2012); that a war with Iran would be far easier to start than to end; and that the costs would be borne primarily by the United States “both in blood and money.”

The major issue raised by the recent contributions to the academic debate centers on the implications of Iran’s obtaining the nuclear weapons for the international community. The aforementioned contributions Mark Fitzpatrick, Kenneth Waltz and Zbigniew Brzezinski have contributed to a growing number of studies dedicated to analyzing the Iranian problem in these terms.

At the same time, a range of questions related to the ongoing process of the application of sanctions and its short-to-mid-term effects has moved the issue away from the center of the academic attention. This is to say that the actual effects of sanctions are not being evaluated *per se*; sanctions are rather viewed as an alternative to war¹, i.e., as an option which allows to avoid a war, by preventing Iran from going nuclear. The present work, on the contrary, aims at looking into the effect of sanctions in more detail, and in this sense, complement the existing contributions by looking into their application. The point of departure of this project is that the current academic

(and political) debate overlooks the fact that the viability of sanctions may be questioned in yet another way, i.e. through the limits to their effectiveness, which arise during the very process of their application. With this idea in mind, the Master thesis aims to look into the impact of (further) (non-) alignment of selected CIS states with existing or future sanctions imposed by UN, EU, and the USA.

In this context, the Research Question of the present Master thesis can be formulated as follows: 'What is behind the CIS states decisions regarding the (non)-alignment with the sanctions adopted by the USA, UN, and the European Union (EU)?

2.2. The research stream oriented towards theorizing sanctions

Some political scientists have approached the issue of sanctions against Iran by theoretically thinking about the applications of these sanctions, while using the case of Iran as one of the case studies.¹⁰ According to Francesco Giumelli's theory of the purposes of the sanctions, one should distinguish between the coercion, constraint, and signaling sanction. From this perspective, the sanctions against Iran are directed to imposing a burden to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear bomb in order to avoid a possible armed conflict¹¹; they are, therefore, supposed to coerce Iran into behaving in a particular manner.

Brendan Taylor analyses the 'sanctions paradox', the fact that none of the sanctions' schools can provide sufficient evidence whether sanctions actually work¹². Sanctions do not always make the target state change its behavior – as a matter of fact, they did not bring about the result the US and the UN expected.

¹⁰ Guimelli Francisco, *Coercing, Constraining and Signalling : Explaining UN and EU Sanctions*, Esper 2012.

¹¹ Guimelli 2010, (pp 20-50)

¹² Taylor B. *Sanctions as Great Strategy // Adelphi Papers*. – 2011. - pp.10-24

2.3. The contributions focusing on Iran relations with individual CIS states

There are several studies dedicated to the bilateral relations of the CIS states with IRI. In this last group, separate dimensions of the 'Iranian problem' have been often selected for investigation. They mostly often include the analysis of security implications for specific states, with the preference given to Russia¹³ or regional states' relations with other major powers, namely the USA, in the context of these states' position adopted on Iran – again, with the preference given to Russia¹⁴. Economic sanctions against Iran are sometimes included into the analyses of the problems of the Persian Gulf¹⁵, studies in non-proliferation¹⁶, and the bilateral relations of Iran and the Arab states¹⁷. The latter group sometimes includes the implications of the security problems in the Middle East for individual CIS states, like Ukraine - without, however, focusing on the issue of economic sanctions against Iran specifically. In general terms, these studies are focused on bilateral relations only and present a good display of particular spheres of interest of both Iran and the CIS region or a certain CIS state, but they do not systematically evaluate the relations between several CIS states and Iran in the context of sanctions and especially their actual effects for Iran. In this sense, the thesis aims to complement the existing literature on the bilateral relations between Iran and individual CIS states. It is worth mentioning that so far, the issue has only been sporadically addressed by this stream of literature.

¹³ e.g. Safranchuk 1998, Trushkin 2010, Trenin 2012

¹⁴ Khlopkov A. Interview 24.02.2012 // Russia Voice (Голос России) [http://rus.ruvr.ru/2012_02_24/66804622/]. - last attended 9.10.2012

¹⁵ Koppel O. The Persian Gulf : Security Problems in 1980-1990s. (Проблеми безпеки Перської затоки у 1980-1990х рр) – Kyiv.-1998. - 200p.

¹⁶ Galaka S. The Problem of Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East // Actual problems of international relations: Collected Essays. Vol. 62. - Part II. - Kyiv: Kyiv National Taras Shevchenko University, Institute of International Relations, 2006. - pp. 28 - 37.

¹⁷ Eisenstadt M. Iran's Influence in Iraq: Countering Tehran's Whole-of-Government Approach // Policy Focus. – 2011. : [<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/pubPDFs/PolicyFocus111.pdf>]

III. THE ANALYTICAL APPROACH

We believe that the context of bilateral relations in exploring the alignment of CIS states to the sanctions should be best studied in the two 'grand' categories of International Relations (IR) and Social Sciences in more general terms, namely the rationalism and constructivism^{18 19}.

Our point of departure in terms of theoretical debate is the contribution of Fearon and Wendt), who consider that "rationalism and constructivism are viewed as most fruitful and pragmatic analytical tools, rather than as metaphysical positions or empirical descriptions of the world". Thus Constructivism focuses upon the values and identities rather than on national interests or power, which is an attribute to realism; grants alternative solutions to any problem in accordance with the values and beliefs of the actors²⁰; assumes that the main connection lies between the national interests and the identities; and involves dependence of the security from the culture in its broad sense. Rationalism at the same time underestimates the importance of culture and identities.

Thus, the sanctions in this view are either an efficient instrument of a well-calculated foreign policy and pressure, or a function of values and beliefs of the leaderships of the CIS states. The present thesis aims to establish the Constructivism and Rationalism in action on the example of the five CIS states. It therefore aims to determine as to whether the foreign policies of selected CIS states are best explained by the rationalist or constructivist approach.

The clearest formulation of this approach was articulated by Fearon and Went. In their contribution "Rationalism Versus Constructivism: A Skeptical View" (2005). Their main argument relevant for the present analysis may be represented through the so-called 'opticians' metaphor (Kratovchil and Tulmets 2010): if we assume the position of 'opticians', we can see Constructivism and Rationalism like two different ways and methods of research in International Relations (IR). Thus, in contrast to the debate which separates Rationalism and Constructivism as two different

¹⁸ Wendt A. *Social Theory of International Relations/ Cambridge*. - Cambridge University Press. - 1999

¹⁹ Fearon J. and Wendt A. *Rationalism v. Constructivism: A Skeptical View / Carlsnaes (ed.)*. *Handbook of International Relations* - 2005.- pp. 52-72

²⁰ Wendt A. *Social Theory of International Relations/ Cambridge*. - Cambridge University Press. - 1999

ways to IR, according to the 'optitians', there is nothing that would make the two approaches incompatible or even directly contradictory. Constructivism and Rationalism are two compatible analytical views or methodological instruments that are applied or taken off by the analyst as the differing empirical context require.²¹

This position corresponds to the position of Fearon and Wendt who are convinced that "Rationalism and Constructivism are most fruitful and pragmatic views as analytical tools, rather than as metaphysical positions or empirical descriptions of the world."²² In more general terms, Fearon and Wendt relate their 'optitios metaphor to the Methodological choice in employing both perspectives – in contrast to Metatheoretical and Empirical alternatives.²³

Following Kratochvil and Tulmets, we are, however, convinced that this pragmatic choice must be ultimately based upon the empirical situation to which our analytical tools are applied. We should know the pragmatic and empirical grounded choice of rationalism and constructivism, or even if it is a combination or a kind of different combination of the two. However, in many case studies the division of labor between the two approaches does not need be defined in advance, but it will rather follow from the empirical research.

IV. Selection of case studies and Hypothesis

The sanctions' regime against Iran sheds light upon the complexity of regional relations, stresses the role of Russia in region and globally and it has a great impact on the political and economic life of the region. To investigate the effectiveness of such tools as economic sanctions, we consider the introduction of UN sanctions, the EU and U.S. relations in the context of certain CIS countries' relations with Iran. Considering the CIS states, we can distinguish countries bearing important characteristics to the issue of anti-Iranian sanctions and 'Iranian problem' in more general terms, such as the possession of nuclear power and industry – Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, or the position of states-exporters of oil and gas – Russia, Central Asian states (Tajikistan), Azerbaijan²⁴.

²¹ Kratochvil P.Tulmets L. Constructivism and Rationalism in EY External Relations //nomos.Baden-Baden-2010.

²² Fearon,J. and Wendt, A " Rationalism v. Constructivism: A Skeptical View" on: Carlsnaes, W.A(ed.),Handbook of International Relations. London. Sage, 2005.pp.52-72.

²³ Same.

²⁴ Russia, Azerbaijan and Central Asian states are also interested in the Caspian issue settlement, in which they have opposite views with Iran.

In accordance with the selected research question, we consider the causes and consequences of the alignment with the sanctions on the part of Azerbaijan, Russia, Tajikistan, Belarus and Ukraine, while paying attention to either the rationalist or constructivist (ideational) underpinning of the respective foreign policies.

1. **Russia.** Russia's relevance to the research project stems from the history of the military-industrial cooperation with Iran. After the revolution of 1979, Russia has been supplying arms to Tehran, and it was essentially the major strategic partner for Iran. In addition, Russia is an important energy exporter constantly competing with Iran. At the same time, Russian and Iran share a longstanding history of political and economic relations. The position of Russia is important to investigate for the reason that there is a number of countries, including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, which are likely to follow the suit of Moscow in the Iranian issue, i.e. fully support the Russian position on the issue of sanctions.
2. **Belarus.** Belarus represents a special case in the context of the chosen research focus, due to the foreign policy which often borders on antagonistic confrontation with the West²⁵. Belarusian leadership has often coupled its anti-Western position with steps indicating close cooperation with countries like Venezuela and Iran. This includes a non-alignment with the sanctions issued by the UN, EU, or USA. The Iranian-Belarus relations should therefore represent an example of rapprochement with Iran based on ideological, anti-Western (and especially anti-USA) motives; and it is not probable to change its foreign policy position on sanctions against Iran over time. This policy line chosen by the Belarusian leadership stands in stark contrast with the pro-Western orientation of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine. At the same time, it should be noted that a strengthening of the relations with Iran allows to pursue one more important goal for the Belarusian leadership, namely the diversification of its economic ties away from Russia. In the recent five years, Belarus has come to realize the cost of its orientation on Moscow²⁶ and considered a number of joint economic projects with Iran in such areas as, for instance, automotive industry.

²⁵ Vysotskaya Guedes Vieira, Alena. 'The politico-military alliance of Russia and Belarus: Re-examining the role of NATO and the EU in the light of the intra-alliance security dilemma. Forthcoming in Europe-Asia Studies.

²⁶ Vysotskaya Guedes Vieira, Alena. 'The politico-military alliance of Russia and Belarus: Re-examining the role of NATO and the EU in the light of the intra-alliance security dilemma. Forthcoming in Europe-Asia Studies.

3. **Republic of Azerbaijan** is chosen due to a number of reasons. First, Azerbaijan has a range of problems with Iran, including problems of ethnic and religious nature. Historically Azerbaijan was part of Great Iran (Persia) till 1828.²⁷ In addition, Azerbaijan is concerned about the export of a religious ideology, which threatens its national security. Iran and Azerbaijan do also have a lot of problems in the Caspian Sea (especially concerning its legal status and governance regime).²⁸ In addition, there is an unresolved Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with Armenia in which Iran supports the latter one. As a result, sanctions are viewed in Baku first of all as an instrument of deterrence, i.e. countering threats from the neighboring Islamic Republic.
4. **Ukraine** represents another important case for the chosen research focus. Ukraine remained one of the largest partners for Iran since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Remarkable examples of this cooperation include the joint construction of the aircraft "Antonov", and the supply of the respective turbines. In the mid-1990s, Ukraine abandoned cooperation with Iran under the U.S. pressure), and lost critical investment projects including the one on the construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant, subsequently assumed by Russia. Ukraine's position is important to analyze since it is similar to other likeminded countries, i.e. Georgia and Moldova: it may be similarly informed by a pro-Western way of development, which entails a support to the initiatives of the EU and the U.S.
5. **Tajikistan** is also of particular importance for our study, due to ethno-cultural affinity and the high level of interdependence with Iran. Tajikistan has cooperated closely with Iran in the construction of factories, automobile roads, and hydroelectric stations (Sangtuda-2) in the Tajikistan territory. Apart from this, Iran is one of the largest investors in the economy of this state. Tajikistan is the only CIS state having military cooperation with Iran, realized in the regular security issues consulting. Iranian charity organization "Emdad" holds wide social programs in Tajikistan. The reduction of the level and the quality of cooperation and

²⁷ The **Treaty of Turkmenchay** ([Russian](#): Туркманчайский договор, [Persian](#): میسرکجهن چا عهدنامه) was a treaty negotiated in [Turkmenchay](#) by which the [Qajar Empire](#) (modern [Iran](#)) recognized [Russian suzerainty](#) over the [Erivan khanate](#), the [Nakhchivan khanate](#), and the remainder of the [Talysh khanate](#), establishing the [Aras River](#) as the common boundary between the empires, after its defeat in 1828 at the end of the [Russo-Persian War, 1826-1828](#).

²⁸ The competing political and economical interests of the Caspian coastal states after the dissolution of the Soviet Union resulted in a prolonged, fruitless dispute over the definition of the legal status and regime of the Caspian Sea. Different legal interpretations of the existing Soviet-Iranian treaties led to difficulties over the rules of public international law applicable in the Caspian case.

investment due to the imposed sanctions means an inevitable negative effect on the economy of Tajikistan. Furthermore, the cooperation between Iran and Tajikistan is of strategic importance for Iran as it provides the access to Central Asia and as a potential partner in uranium mining (Tajikistan possesses 14 to 40 % of the world's uranium Mesamed 2010). And Tajikistan is also a unique example of such cooperation with Iran in the post-soviet space, which poses a particular importance for our research.

Table 2. Case studies and their properties: five CIS states and their position towards sanctions against Iran

	Anti-Western foreign policy orientation	Proximity as a positive or negative factor	Commercial contacts/economic benefits stemming from cooperation	Position on sanctions	Foundation of the position: ideational or rationalist
Russia	0	Positive	+	Only aligning with UN; non-alignment with US and EU	?
Belarus	yes	0	+ (tangible benefits)	Non-alignment with US and EU sanctions	?
Azerbaijdschan	no	Negative: Armenia	-	Alignment	?
Ukraine	Pro-Western	0	- (tangible costs)	Alignment	?
Tadjikistan	0	Positive	+ (tangible benefits)	Only aligning with UN	?

The table above demonstrates that all the cases differ: the case of Belarus is a combination of an anti-Western foreign policy and tangible cooperation benefits; Russian position is neither pro-Western nor anti-Western; Azerbaijan is more pro-Western than otherwise, but preserving its own alternatives and having a negative factor, namely Armenia; Ukrainian position represents a case of a pro-Western foreign policy and displays tangible costs of aligning with the sanctions. The

Tajikistan case indicates neutrality as to the issue of anti-Western orientation and benefits from not-aligning with the sanctions. So, we focus on five different cases that are present the CIS region.

Moreover, they also differ in terms of the support of the sanctions: there is clearly a group of the states that tend towards alignment (Ukraine, Azerbaijan) and those towards non-alignment (Belarus and Tajikistan), and Russia being a special case). This divergence is important due to the focus of the present. On the one hand, it is important to choose the states that aligned with the sanctions and explore the actual extent of the alignment, and those states that did not align, thereby indirectly challenging the sanctions. In both cases, it is important to investigate what stands behind the decision of (non-)aligning with the sanctions.

For the purpose of the present research we concentrate our attention on the period of 2005-2012. These eight years present a special interest as at this time the sanctions tightened and the relations of Iran with the West worsened. At the same time, an essential change happened in Ukrainian internal and external political course after the Orange Revolution, in addition to the changes in the Russian politicum and following two Gas Wars between Russia and Ukraine, which evolved around the same time period.

V. HYPOTHESES

Looking at the foreign policies of the CIS countries, one can distinguish two groups of cases which correspond to the 'rationalist' or 'constructivist' foreign policy style – although we expect a mixture of both to be present in each case study. The first group includes such countries as Azerbaijan and Russia. Russia is expected to act rationally and even pragmatically and fully support only the international UN sanctions. Russia has significant economic interests and large-scale projects in Iran. Moscow develops wide cooperation in the technical sphere with Iran. While any machinery, production of which involves the USA companies at least by 3% (such as *Boeing, Airbus etc*) is unavailable for Iran, Russia remains the only partner able to provide technical

equipment, and Iran for Russia is a sales area²⁹. Moscow is committed to support the efforts directed to prevent the emergence of another nuclear power. Thus, the economic collapse of this economy is undesirable for Russia, as the economic instability in Iran could affect the Russian economy. In this light, Russia is not expected to consider aligning with the further USA or the EU economic sanctions. It only ratifies the UN sanctions aimed at the controlling for the Iranian nuclear program, whilst seeking to prevent Iran from obtaining the nuclear bomb. Russia is willing to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear state, though Iranian economic weakness reflects on the Russian economy. At the same time Russia is strongly against any new regime in Iran (Russia is strongly against any Regime change project), as in such situation the new regime would be pro-Western, and any new regime will be anti-Russian.

Azerbaijan acts on positions of rationalism. In spite of a potential and actual significant commodity turnover between the two countries (\$550mln in 2009, reduced to \$150mln in 2012), according to Cafarov³⁰, security issues create an obstacle for cooperation as Azerbaijan has an unresolved Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with Armenia, supported by Iran. On the other hand, Azerbaijan actively promotes the relationship with the Iranian rival, Israel.

Another group of countries should follow the ideational rather than rational approach in making decisions guided by the categories of ideology. We distinguish such states as Belarus and Ukraine, Belarus in this group³¹. Any support to Iran in Minsk represents a mixture of ideological and pragmatic motives, where the ideological motives prevail. Similarly to Russia, Belarus has a wide range of joint projects with Iran, which are now being rendered operational. The projects of automotive plant construction or cooperation in the energy sector are of strategic importance for Belarus. And given current international isolation of Minsk, it is not going to abandon the cooperation. Ukraine has a lot of economic interests in Iran. Iran and Ukraine have considerably expanded their relations in recent years. On the other hand, Ukraine has close ties with EU and US; Ukraine's relations with Iran during Viktor Yushchenko's terms were pegged to the bond between

²⁹ We have a lot of examples and secondary literature, which we used in chapter of Russia.

³⁰ Ceferov K. Yusifzade A. *Azərbaycan və İran arasında mal dövriyyəsi iki dəfə artırılı bilər – İranın ticarət naziri (Iran-Azerbaijan Commodity Turnover)* // az.trend.az. – 2010

³¹ Armenia is the only country to coordinate and secretly make a sale of necessary goods, materials and weapons to Iran, standing out as an intermediary. Armenia's objective goal is to seek a partner to protect its interests in an unfriendly environment of hostile relations with neighboring Turkey and Azerbaijan. By not supporting the sanctions Armenia strengthens the relations with a strong and indispensable ally.

Kiev and Washington. This did not come as a surprise to Iranians who knew well about this pro-Western leader. Staying far from all the heat and enthusiasm, from the beginning it was clear that 'Orange Revolution' failed to describe clearly the 2004 developments in Ukraine³².

Tajikistan is expected to be seen as a partner to Iran and which position is going to be shaped by a very balanced mixture of rationalist and ideational deliberations where the ideational ones would slightly prevail over the rationalist ones. Tajikistan declares linguistic and cultural unity with Iran as well as Fars identity, so by reasons of such close relations, Tajikistan does not support the US sanctions against Iran. However, rationalism also has its important role in Tajikistan foreign policy: Dushanbe is interested in Iranian investment. Iran is a major investor in the Tajikistan economy. Thus, Tajikistan would make both rationalist and constructivist-inspired choice by supporting Iran by reason of cultural closeness seeking at the same time certain economic benefits.

In this research we analyze why each of the states decides to (not) align with UN, US, and EU sanctions. Another focus of the study is the possible outcomes in the case when a state changes its behavior in the context of support of the sanctions. Thus, if Ukraine refused to support sanctions it would meet a strong pressure from the West and, possibly, Russia, and could finally find itself in international isolation as well. Azerbaijan, also having the pro-Western foreign policy, still has other reasons to tend to deter Iran. And its relations with Iran are unlikely to improve should Azerbaijan lift sanctions. If Belarus supports sanctions – it could improve relations with the West, which is unlikely to happen. Hence, it would just remain in isolation and loose the important partner.

In our research we take into consideration that a rationalist approach offers a wider range of options, rendering foreign policy more flexible, while an ideational, or constructivist-style posture, informed by ideational factors and values, is not expected to be flexible.

³² No genuine revolution took place in this former Soviet republic as the only thing changed was the administration and in some case foreign policy. No fundamental changes, in constitution or other powers, was supposed took place. It was merely the replacement of a pro-Russia government with a pro-West government. The tide has changed its course today, and after few years, a pro-Russia figure has come to power. In second chapte we will talk more about Iran-Ukraine relations.

VI RESEARCH DESIGN

Primarily, we use the method of case study. For comparison, we take these five selected cases and consider the context of the accession or acceding to the sanctions against Iran. We also compare this experience to political position and perceptions of sanctions in general. Case-study methods include both within-case analysis of single cases and comparisons of a small number of cases, and there is a growing consensus that the strongest means of drawing inferences from case studies is the use of combination of within-case analysis and cross-case comparisons within a single study or research program (A. George, A. Bennett 2004, 18). In addition, we use such method as structured, focused comparison, which is used to observe rationalist and constructivist underpinning of CIS states' aligning or boycotting the Iran sanctions.

For the purpose of the present research we concentrate our attention on the period of 2005-2012. These eight years present a special interest as at this time the sanctions tightened and the relations of Iran with the West worsened. At the same time, an essential change happened in Ukrainian internal and external political course after the Orange Revolution, in addition to the changes in the Russian politics and following two Gas Wars between Russia and Ukraine, which evolved around the same time period.

VII DATA

In the course of work we used sources, official and semi-official documents of the UN, the EU, the CIS, the GCC, foreign policy documents of the CIS and GCC states and IRI as primary Documents and references. Also in the research the author used a number of periodic publications written in Ukrainian and Russian, namely "Asia and Africa", "Diplomatic service", "International relations and world economy" and information agencies of the Institute for the Middle East, of the National Institute of Ukraine for International Security Problems, of the Carnegie center, the Institute for Strategic Studies.

When working with spring-documentary framework in thesis apply some practical methods of political research, including – the critical analysis of primary and secondary literature.

Among the empirical methods used in the study were also monitoring of events, articles, journals and news agencies reports; as well as discourse and content analysis. The present thesis recurred to information acquired by the author during the interviews with officials, including the talks with representatives of the Iranian Embassy in Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Portugal, as well as with the officials of IRI and Ukraine.

In preparing this thesis, the author consulted primary and secondary sources in Persian, English, Russian, Ukrainian, Azerbaijani and Belarusian languages.

VIII Structure

Apart from the present Introduction, the thesis is composed of three chapters, Conclusion and Bibliography. We present as the first chapter, the Russian position on sanction against Iran; in this dissertation, the Russian position and the role it plays is considered especially important, a landmark. Russia is an important actor in the international system, successor of the Soviet Union, including its permanent membership on the Security Council of the United Nations (UNSC)). At the same time, Russia is one of the founders of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), thereby holding close ties with IRI. In general, Russia relations with Iran include various dimensions relevant to this thesis, and therefore, this chapter is longer than others. Individual sections of the chapter focus on Russia's position on sanctions against Iran; the analysis of Russia's position on sanctions in the context of Russia's relations with Iran including (a) commercial and economic ties, (b) military-industrial cooperation and in particular trade in long range surface-to-air missile systems like Tor missile system (Tor M1) and S-300 missiles, and (c) energy cooperation; as well as Russia's relations with the 'West', where Iran features as a pawn in the Russia's diplomatic game

In the second chapter the primary focus is on the 'alignment with sanctions'; and two cases, Ukraine and Azerbaijan, are object of lengthy discussion. The chapter demonstrates that in spite

of the Iran-Ukraine trade turnover of 2 billion dollars (with a potential to achieve 4 billion, according to Iran's Minister of Industry)³³, Ukrainian pro-western foreign policy did not allow the relations to grow. The chapter furthermore looks into the reasons and implications of the position taken by Azerbaijan; including problems in economic and energy cooperation and also considering religious factors. Whilst drawing upon the analysis of the official positions of these countries since 2005-2012, the chapter looks into Ukraine's position and Azerbaijani consistent alignment. The chapter considers the context of Ukrainian and Azeri relations with IRI and its implications: Ukraine's trade and non-material costs and Azeri position, which is assumed notwithstanding the acknowledgement of the costs.

In the third chapter, the primary focus is on 'non-alignment with sanctions' in the cases of Belarus and Tajikistan. The chapter focuses upon Belarus and Tajik positions in the context of their relations with Iran, including Iran-Belarusian oil production cooperation and car assembly plan projects. In the case of Tajikistan's relations with Iran, the chapter especially considers Iran plays a special role in the foreign policy of the Republic of Tajikistan, which is illustrated by the historic context of relations with Iran. Both parties have a number of mutual important projects, including Rogun hydroelectric dam³⁴ that is of vital value for Tajikistan. Finally, this chapter unveils the official position under analysis.

The Conclusions of the present dissertation sum up the studies and materialize an in-depth analysis of the findings in relation to the proposed research question and hypotheses.

³³ <http://www.day.kiev.ua/en/article/day-after-day/ukraine-iran-relations-fresh-start>

³⁴ Rogun Dam is an [embankment dam](#) in the preliminary stages of construction on the [Vakhsh River](#) in southern [Tajikistan](#). It is one of the planned [hydroelectric](#) power plants of Vakhsh Cascade. Over three decades only preliminary construction has been carried out on the dam. Due to its controversial state, construction was suspended in August 2012 pending a World Bank report that is expected to be released in the summer of 2013. The dam has drawn complaints from Uzbekistan downstream who fears it will negatively impact their lucrative cotton crops.

Chapter 1. Analyzing the case of Russia: a contradictory approach

This chapter analyzes the position of Russia with on sanctions. According to our Hypothesis, Russia is only expected to align with UN sanctions but non with US' and EU' (as well as other unilateral sanctions). To test this Hypothesis, Russian position is explored by paying special attention to the cases of Bushehr nuclear power plant, energy cooperation, commercial and economic ties, military cooperation (and in particular cooperation in the matter of S-300 and TOR M1 missile system). Due to the importance of the common interests and values for the present analysis, the chapter also looks into the Russian position on the Syrian crisis. Given the fact that Russia is actively shaping the decisions on sanctions against Iran in the UNSC, the first section looks into the Russian position in more detail in the context of Russia's relations with Iran and West. Subsequently, we explore the Russian position on sanctions in the context of the bilateral ties between Russia and Iran. The chapter demonstrates that Russian position is not fixed, but rather changing over time and especially after 2010.

1.1. Russia's position on sanctions against Iran

The Russian leadership has always had its own position on UN resolutions. While being traditionally concerned about Iranian nuclear program, Russia defended Iranian right for civilian space program, and has prioritized dialogue with Iran over sanctions on the country (especially the tougher ones). At the same time, it has been emphasizing its own mediator role between Iran and the Western countries (in the framework of the so-called 'Moscow Negotiations 5+1').³⁵ This official Russian position on Iran has been repeatedly declared by Russia's representative in the terms layed out by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in January 2013:

“Thus the international community should adequately reciprocate on the positive steps on the part of Iran, including suspension of sanctions - both

³⁵ Iran has held a series of meetings with a group of six countries: China, France, Germany, Russia, United Kingdom, United States. These six are known as the P5+1 (the permanent five members of the UN Security Council plus Germany) or alternatively as the E3+3. These meetings are intended to resolve concerns about Iran's nuclear program.

unilateral and imposed through the UN Security Council. We call on every part to act very cautiously - the threat of force hinder the achievement of mutually acceptable agreements, and the military scenario implementation would have the most negative consequences for regional and global security".³⁶

At the heart of the official Russian position is the often-repeated idea that "there is no alternative for political and diplomatic settlement".³⁷

When in 2002 a group of Iranian dissidents revealed a number of facts indicating the existence of Iran's secret nuclear program in gaining capability to enrich uranium, Russia with the assistance of the IAEA was able to convince the U.S. and the Europeans of the IRI's nuclear program's peaceful nature. In 2007, then-Russian President Vladimir Putin expressively described Moscow's position in the following words:

"We have no proof of Iran's intentions to produce nuclear weapons. Therefore, we proceed from the assumption that Iran has no such plans. However, we share the concerns of other partners, and we believe that Iran's program must be transparent." ³⁸

Russia's diplomacy has been focused on the UN, and in case of the adoption of UN sanctions, these have been continuously supported by Moscow.

The origins of the current Russia's position on Iran date back to 1995, when Russia unilaterally withdrew from a secret US-Russian agreement on Iran better known as the Gore-Chernomyrdin agreement,³⁹ under which Russia had undertaken commitments to substantially limit its cooperation and assistance to Iran in possessing nuclear technology. Subsequently, Russia took a number of practical steps to complete the construction of a nuclear reactor at the Buser

³⁶ Lavrov S.V. The World in the Era of Change : the Russian foreign policy priorities // Diplomatic annual 2012 (Статья Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова для «Дипломатического ежегодника 2012» «Мир в эпоху перемен: приоритеты внешнеполитической деятельности Российской Федерации»). – 2012
[\[http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/newsline0/3B8F7D1B9B34BAD744257B03002CB30D\]](http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/newsline0/3B8F7D1B9B34BAD744257B03002CB30D)[\[http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/newsline0/3B8F7D1B9B34BAD744257B03002CB30D\]](http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/newsline0/3B8F7D1B9B34BAD744257B03002CB30D)

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Richard Weitz Why China and Russia Help Iran // The Diplomat. - November 19, 2011

³⁹ <http://www.acronym.org.uk/dd/dd51/51iran.htm>

nuclear plant (which will be analyzed in detail below). After having been frozen during Boris Yeltsin presidential term, the military-technical cooperation between Russia and Iran started to develop (May 2000), boosted by Russia's political support of Iran's position on its nuclear program. The actions taken by the Russian authorities have contributed to the development of the entire range of Russian-Iranian bilateral relations, and eventually brought them to a new level. The rapprochement between Iran and Russia was taking place under the heavy external pressure on both countries which had to show the wonders of flexibility and ingenuity to stay on the chosen course. Despite the importance of the IRI's nuclear program, it in fact does not exhaust the essence of the relationship and is not a substitute for their broad nature.

It should be noted, that the cooperative, pro-Iran Russia's position was largely motivated by the latter's desire to return to the Middle East and gain a foothold in Central Asia, where its position has been considerably weakened in the 1990ies and especially after the two Gulf wars (1990-1991, 2003). The fall of the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq meant a loss of the largest Arab country, and led to a weakening Russia's position in the context of an unprecedented strengthening of U.S. military power in the region. At the same time, Iran has significantly strengthened its position in the Middle East, in some Central Asian states (especially notable after 2003). Thus, while for Russia, the nuclear program has been a means to improve its position in the region, to Iran, it was and remains a kind of national idea capable of uniting all strata of Iranian society around the leadership of the IRI. From this perspective, the external manifestations in the rapprochement between Russia and Iran conceal very different positions and motives.

The UN Security Council unanimously adopted a number of Resolutions (1696, 1747 and 1803) ⁴⁰ that impose sanctions against a number of Iranian individuals and entities, and encourages countries to take all necessary measures to prevent the supply to Iran "items, materials, equipment, goods and technology" that could contribute to activities related with the creation of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. The 1696 Resolution on Iran, adopted by the UN Security Council, stated that the contracts, which were signed at the time of its adoption, shall remain in force and, therefore, can be implemented.

⁴⁰ In 2006, 2007 and 2008 respectively. See *Introduction*, pp. 4-5.

In January 2006, Moscow indicated that it could join the West's position on the transfer of the Iranian nuclear issue of the IAEA to the UN Security Council. On the eve of the summit in Moscow (January 2006), the chief negotiator on the nuclear issue Ali Larijani visited the IAEA. Ali Larijani has assured Russian officials that Iran is not against the conclusion of a treaty with Moscow on the establishment of enterprises for processing of uranium, but that this treaty would need some refinement. In February 2006, Moscow, along with most members of the IAEA Board of Governors voted to transfer the IRI's nuclear dossier to the UN Security Council. .⁴¹

On June 6, 2006 the five permanent UN Security Council members and Germany put forward a five-point plan that offered a number of compensatory measures for Iran if it refuses to processing and production of nuclear fuel on its territory. Despite the fact that Ali Larijani and Mahmud Ahmadinejad have seen in this context, a number of positive aspects, Iran has decided to give a definitive answer to it only in August 2006. Moscow sought to influence Iran and Tehran's plan to accelerate the adoption of "six". Russia has even hinted that it may adhere to the sanctions, but in the end, Moscow (and Beijing as well) vetoed the stringent economic sanctions that the West and the U.S. were going to take against Tehran if it refuses the proposed plan.

At the meeting of SCO, Russia is once again made efforts to convince Iran to adopt a more flexible position in negotiations with the West over its nuclear program. In Shanghai, Russia and Iran agreed on gas prices and negotiated the potential division of markets for gas, whereby Russia 's attention would be directed to Europe, while Iran's efforts could be concentrated on India and southern China. Russian President Vladimir Putin held a meeting with Mahmud Ahmadinejad (3 June 2006), which results gave reasons to Russia to try to convince the West of Moscow's ability to influence and monitor the situation of Iran's nuclear program IRI.

In spite of this, Moscow voted for the UN Security Council Resolution 1696 on July 31, 2006 obliging Iran to stop the production of nuclear fuel on its territory by 31 August 2006. At the same time, Moscow (along with Beijing) has opposed tough sanctions and expressed willingness to develop relations with the IRI. Thus, it can be said that Russian behavior demonstrates pragmatism

⁴¹ In March 2006, the issue was discussed at the UN Security Council, which called for a report by the IAEA to establish Iran's compliance with the terms of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT).

-even considering the turnaround in Russia's positions in 2010. Russia's position does not achieve quality which would allow to call it 'ideational'.

On September 27, 2007 the UN Security Council approved a new resolution № 1835, developed on Russia's proposal, calling on Iran to stop enriching uranium and to fulfill the requirements of previously adopted Security Council over its nuclear program (UN Security Council Resolutions 1696, 1737, 1747, 1803)⁴². Once again, Russia did not support the imposition of severe economic sanctions against the IRI. Iran's leaders in their turn acted strongly against the new Resolution. Due to the fact that Russia has tabled a proposal for this resolution, Russian-Iranian relations cooled down, and President Mahmud Ahmadinejad made it clear that his country would not yield to pressure and will not stop uranium enrichment.

By the end of 2008, the number of centrifuges to enrich uranium in Iran has reached 3820 and further increase was planned. The use of uranium enrichment technology by Tehran raised further concerns of the international community, since the IRI has opened a direct path to producing nuclear weapons. Russia as a supporter of non-proliferation of WMD demonstrated that it was in favor of Iran's compliance with IAEA resolutions, while supporting the continuation of negotiations with the IRI over its nuclear program.

In 2010, Iran's refusal to halt uranium enrichment led the UN to pass a new Resolution, 1929, introducing new sanctions against Iran that bans the sale of all types of heavy weaponry (including missiles) to Iran. This led to the cancellation of the delivery of the S-300 system to Iran on the part of Russia. Thus, although never recognized by Moscow as such, Russia has been in fact aligning with sanctions of US and EU after 2010.

Nowadays, Russia finds itself in a difficult position. Traditionally, Russia has been supportive of Iran: Russia did not support strong sanctions, sometimes vetoing them in the UNSC, advocating the peaceful settlement by diplomatic means only. Russia repeatedly insisted on the Iranian right for civilian space program, and for nuclear program. Contracts were implemented even in the conditions of the sanctions (TUR M1 and S300 missiles- prior to 2010, as analyzed below), and during the whole time Russia provided Iran with the technologies and armaments.

⁴² In 2006, 2007 and 2008 respectively. See *Introduction*, pp. 4-5.

Thus, to sum up, with the exacerbation of the international crises around Iran starting with the presidency of Mahmud Ahmadinejad since 3 August 2005, Russia maintained its role as key intermediary between Iran and the West. This position was characterized by a high degree of cooperation, and support between Russia and Iran. However this position has changed after 2010, when Russia not only supported the UN sanctions, but withdrew from the fulfillment of another contract, namely the delivery of S-300, analyzed below.

1.1.1 Buser Nuclear Power Plant ⁴³

The main object of the Russian-Iranian cooperation is the energy sector, in which the Buser nuclear power plant, the oldest (and still unfinished) energy project worldwide, which construction has taken around 40 years, occupies a special place.

The history of this plant goes back to 1975 when the German company Siemens started the construction, which was interrupted by the Islamic Revolution in 1979. In the 1990ies, the construction of the Buser nuclear power plant became the main object of the Russian-Iranian cooperation. Since 1992, Russia has provided technical expertise, nuclear fuel, equipment, parts, and other components for the Buser reactor.⁴⁴ In 1995, the contract for completing the plant was signed by Russian Ministry for Atomic Energy in 1995, designating Russia's enterprise Atomstroyexport as the main contractor.

In 2002, following the announcement of a group of Iranian dissidents the existence of Iran's secret nuclear program, the main argument to convince the U.S. and the Europeans of the IRI's nuclear program's peaceful nature were the Russian-Iranian consultations. The latter resulted in a proposal of the mechanism of enriched nuclear fuel supply for the Buser reactor with the following return of spent fuel to Russia. In February 2005, Moscow, finally managed to obtain the consent of Tehran to return spent nuclear fuel to Russia for processing and enrichment in Russian

⁴³ The Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant (Persian: بوشهر اتمی نیروگاه) is a [nuclear power plant](#) in [Iran](#) 17 kilometres southeast of the city of [Bushehr](#), between the fishing villages of Halileh and Bandargeh along the [Persian Gulf](#).

⁴⁴ David Satter Obama's Open Microphone // NATIONAL REVIEW ONLINE . - March 28, 2012

enterprises to supply them to the subsequent reactor at Buser, which would be followed by the supply of fuel for the Buser nuclear power plant.

After construction was again in danger of being stopped in 2007, a renewed agreement was reached in which the Iranians promised to compensate for rising costs and inflation after completion of the plant⁴⁵. Delivery of nuclear fuel started the same year. The plant started adding electricity to the national grid on 3 September 2011. .⁴⁶

In 2007, according to Moscow Defense Brief, Russia made a strategic decision to finish the plant and in December 2007 started to deliver nuclear fuel to the site⁴⁷. On 20th January 2008 a fourth Russian shipment of nuclear fuel arrived. Russia has pledged to sell 85 tons of nuclear fuel to the plant. ⁴⁸

In March 2009, the head of Russia's state nuclear power corporation Rosatom, Sergei Kiriyenko, announced that Russia had completed the construction of the plant. A series of pre-launch tests were conducted after the announcement⁴⁹. On the 22nd September 2009, it was reported that the first reactor was 96% complete and final testing would begin in the near future.⁵⁰ In early October final testing was started⁵¹. In January 2010, Kiriyenko announced to the public that the Buser reactor would be opening in the near-future, declaring 2010 the "year of Buser."

Although the construction of the Buser nuclear power plant is derived from the UNSC sanctions, the construction of nuclear power plant (as a possible basis for the creation of nuclear weapons), has led to US pressure on Russia, and contributed to the adoption of sanctions. Undoubtedly, one of the major delays in commissioning the Buser nuclear power plant was the US position. However, after the U.S. positive-neutral position in Georgia's military conflict in South Ossetia and the Russian positions changed and Moscow was in agreement with a new Security Council resolution on Iran (№ 1835 of September 27, 2008).

⁴⁵ Khlopkov, Anton (2010). "Iran Breakthrough for the Russian Nuclear Industry". *Moscow Defense Brief* (Centre for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies) 1 (19).

⁴⁶ "[Iranian nuclear power station 'begins generating electricity'](#)". *Reuters* (The Guardian). 4 September 2011. Retrieved 4 September 2011.

⁴⁷ "[Russia delivers nuclear fuel to Iran](#)". CNN. 17 December 2007. Retrieved 13 August 2010.

⁴⁸ "[Russian nuclear fuel shipment reaches Iran](#)". [msnbc.com](#). *Associated Press*. 20 January 2008. Retrieved 13 August 2010.

⁴⁹ "[Iran's Bushehr NPP no threat to its neighbors — experts](#)". *RIA Novosti*. 13 May 2009. Retrieved 13 August 2010.

⁵⁰ "[Iran in final preparations for launch of first nuclear plant](#)". *RIA Novosti*. 22 September 2009. Retrieved 13 August 2010.

⁵¹ "[Iran to start final test run of Bushehr nuclear power plant](#)". *RIA Novosti*. 5 October 2009. Retrieved 13 August 2010.

Since the contract for the construction of other nuclear power plants was not forbidden, Russian-Iranian cooperation continued; the main emphasis of Russia-Iran cooperation in the energy dialogue has been the cooperation in production, distribution of electricity, the production of energy resources and energy transport. In February 2008, energy cooperation between Tehran and Moscow entered a new state as the CIS Electric Power Council and Iran's Ministry of Energy signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the purpose of synchronizing electric systems. While Iran's Energy Minister Parviz Fattah referred to the fact that "Iran and Russia rank high among countries having huge oil and gas reserves in the world", he also mentioned that time was ripe "for the two sides to raise cooperation in producing electricity."⁵² The CIS Electric Power Council Director Anatoly Chubais on his trip to Iran expressed astonishment at the breakneck speed of the country's power industry growth. Anatoly Chubais said Russian president Vladimir Putin's visit to Iran last year (2008) opened a new horizon for energy cooperation and other areas between the two countries⁵³. After a long history of delays (the construction was almost completed in early 2008), in 2010, Buser facility started to work, and in September 2011, NPP was put into operation, followed by the plan it has been connected to the electricity grid of Iran in 2012. Undoubtedly, this will increase the energy potential of the IRI. But the question of Iran's nuclear program remains open and any progress is possible only due to changes in international situation.

⁵⁴.

Overall, Buser is emblematic of Russia's position⁵⁵, as an instrument pressure for Russia about Iran. Russia's involvement in Buser has allowed Moscow to collect a considerable sum of money⁵⁶, and signaled close partnership and cooperation to Tehran. On the other hand Russia does not allow nuclear plant to work independently and delays its start contrary to the aspirations of the Iranian side. Moscow uses several and different excuses for the delays. Many times senior Iranian lawmakers says: "The Islamic Republic of Iran will accept no excuses from Russia, if Moscow fails

⁵² <http://www.thetruthseeker.co.uk/oldsite/article.asp?ID=8077>

⁵³ <http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/52643/iran-russia-sign-mou-to-synchronize-power-grids.html>

⁵⁴ Trenin K. Bushehr and the balance of power // Centrasia. – 2012

⁵⁵ Despite the negotiations on the further cooperation in this area, new contracts for the construction of nuclear power plants have not been concluded. The main focus of the energy dialogue is the cooperation in production and distribution of electricity in the production of energy resources and means of transporting them.

⁵⁶ The total cost of the project is estimated to be over €3 billion including the payments to both Russia and Germany. The original 1995 contract with the 1998 addendum was worth \$1 billion and was not adjusted for inflation. Although in 2007 Iran agreed to compensate for the rising costs after the construction is finished, it is regarded that the possibility of the project turning a profit are remote. However, the project allowed the nuclear industry of Russia to preserve its expertise in times when funding was scarce, and until the sector started to receive orders from China and India.

to launch Buser nuclear power plant within the specified deadline.⁵⁷ But Russia always had his technical excuses. Also Russia uses Buser and negotiations with Iran in more general terms as a bargaining chip in the negotiations with Western powers. This perception is additionally supported by the Wikileaks-provided documents, whereby Russia promised Israel and Western countries⁵⁸, that Buser will work just when Moscow decided so. Therefore Russia's position can be characterized as a pragmatic policy; which firmly rooted in rationalism.

1.1.2 Military cooperation

Russia-Iran cooperation embraces arms sales as well. Unlike in the previous years (before the Revolution 1979) in which Iran's air fleet were entirely Western-made, Iran's Air Force and civilian air fleet have been increasingly produced domestically as well as in Russia, while the US and the EU continued to maintain sanctions on Iran.⁵⁹

One of the important aspects of Russia-Iran cooperation is the self-propelled anti-aircraft short range missile system 9K331 "Tor-M1", which was developed in the 1980's. It was designed to engage aircraft, helicopters, cruise missiles and guided bombs, to track up to 48 targets simultaneously and hit two of them (in the range 1,5-12 km and a height of 10 m - 10 km). Ammo - eight missiles deployment time of this system is three minutes, the response time to the target - 7.4 seconds. In the 90 years of "Tor-M1" was delivered in China and Greece, the latter transferred a purchased "Thor" Cyprus. In the fighting it was not used.

The reason for which the TOR M1 has been continuously supplied to Iran is that firstly, this system belongs to defensive weapons, and secondly, the respective contract was signed before the UNSC resolution 1737 (December 2006), which contains the possibility of implementing such a contract signed before the Resolution. Thus, Russia has claimed that Iranian-supplied equipment does not fall under any restrictions.

⁵⁷ <http://www.presstv.com/detail/190501.html>.

⁵⁸ <http://www.boursenews.ir/fa/pages/?cid=97722>

⁵⁹ - BBC: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4504434.stm - <http://www.payvand.com/news/04/mar/1195.html> - <http://www.ainonline.com/Publications/dubai/2005/d1iranp41.htm>.

In November 2005, Russia agreed to the sale of 29 TOR-M1 short-range anti-aircraft systems to Iran, which cost amounted to more than \$700 mln (EUR 600 million). The then-Defence Minister of the RF, Sergi Ivanov stated that Moscow might supply Tehran with more weapons in the future⁶⁰. The position was quite plain: If Iran wants to buy defensive equipment for its armed forces, it has right for it. That happened right after the United States adopted new sanctions against Iran (targeting arms sales to Iran).⁶¹

According to the contract (concluded in 2005), Russia was also providing the infrastructure elements related to the operation of "Tor-M1"- command and transport-charging machines, fitness equipment, etc, and was supporting the modernization of the Iranian military aircraft Su-24 and MiG-29. According to expert estimates, the total value of the contract was \$ 1.4 billion.⁶² Since then, Moscow argued that the sale of air defense missile systems to Iran is part of the Defense Contract concluded between the two countries in November 2005. On the 24th of November 2006, Iran received the first batch of systems, and by the end of December 2006, the delivery was completed. Moreover, in October 2006, Russia has helped Iran to launch its own satellite and Iran signed a contract to supply another modern air defense system, Pechora-2A .^{63/ 64}

US in a statement condemned Russia's actions, noting that Iran is "a state sponsor of terrorism."⁶⁵ Russia's position is that the agreement between Russia and Iran "does not cause a change in the balance of forces in the region," and all arms deliveries are carried out, observing international law. In August 2006 the US State Department imposed sanctions on "Rosoboronexport", targeting its contract for the supply of "Tor-M1". Sanctions were substantiated by the fact that the supply contributes "to the development of weapons of mass destruction." In January 5, 2007 the United

⁶⁰ <http://www.ndu.edu/press/lib/pdf/strategic-perspectives/Strategic-Perspectives-9.pdf>

⁶¹ In June 2005, President [George W. Bush](#) issued [Executive Order 13382](#) freezing the assets of individuals connected with Iran's nuclear program. In June 2007, the U.S. state of [Florida](#) enacted a boycott on companies trading with Iran and Sudan, while [New Jersey's state legislature](#) was considering similar action. [

On June 24, 2010, the [United States Senate](#) and [House of Representatives](#) passed the [Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010](#) (CISADA), which President Obama signed into law July 1, 2010. The CISADA greatly enhanced restrictions in Iran. Such restrictions included the rescission of the authorization for Iranian-origin imports for articles such as [rugs, pistachios, and caviar](#). In response, President Obama issued [Executive Order 13553](#) in September 2010 and [Executive Order 13574](#) in May 2011, and [Executive Order 13590](#) in November 2011.

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http://www.europesworld.org/NewEnglish/Home_old/CommunityPosts/tabid/809/PostID/1460/UNSecurityCouncilSanctionsonIranRussiaMakingtheBestofBothWorlds.aspx

⁶³ Iran and Russia have prepared and approved an agreement project on the purchase of the Russian surface-to-air missile complex Pechora-2A in the second half of 2006. Pechora-2A can hit the air targets at distances from 3.5 to 38 kilometers and at heights from 0.02 to 20 kilometers, flying at a speed of up to 700 meters per second. The complex was successfully tested at a Middle East firing range, hitting an F-16 fighter and an analogue of a Tomahawk cruise missile.

⁶⁴ <http://www.military-quotes.com/forum/iran-buy-pechora-2a-t18086.html>

⁶⁵ Linzer, Dafna (February 8, 2006). ["Strong Leads and Dead Ends in Nuclear Case Against Iran"](#). Washington Post. Retrieved July 4, 2007.

States imposed additional sanctions on the "Rosoboronexport". Despite U.S. sanctions against Russia for the supply of supply "Tor-M1", Russia has fulfilled the contract.

As mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, in 2010, Iran's refusal to halt uranium enrichment led the a new UN Resolution, 1929, referring to new sanctions against Iran that banned the sale of all types of heavy weaponry to Iran. This resulted in the cancellation of the delivery of the S-300 system to Iran on the part of Russia⁶⁶. Together with the TOR-M1 surface-to-air missile system already deployed by Tehran, S-300 should have offered Iran a defensive shield which could have prevented a strike on Iran's nuclear program⁶⁷. If achieving an ICBM capability, it could threaten neighbors and fulfill strikes.⁶⁸

The S-300 contract between Russia and Iran was signed after the Resolution (1737), which prohibited this arrangement, and thus the contract was legally withdrawn. In September 2010 Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has signed a decree banning the delivery of S-300 missile systems, armored vehicles, warplanes, helicopters and ships to Iran⁶⁹. This decision involved a loss of \$13 billion in arms sales and potentially strengthened Iran's dependence on China⁷⁰. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad criticized Russia for kowtowing to the United States⁷¹. As a result of the cancellation, Iran brought suit against Russia in International Swiss court and in response to the lawsuit; Russia threatened to withdraw diplomatic support for Iran in the nuclear dispute.⁷²

On the other hand, given the fact that Russian arms exports have reached record levels, and at this point is reserved on orders over \$ 30 billion, the Russian government can consider refusal to sell S-300 missiles without incurring significant economic loss. All other Russian arms deal remain in force. Russian diplomats have also made it clear that they hope that Israel and the

⁶⁶ <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iran/2010/iran-100625-voa01.htm>.

⁶⁷ Ariel Cohen, "Can the U.S. F-35 Fighter Destroy Russia's S-300 Systems?" United Press International, January 20, 2009, at http://www.upi.com/Security_Industry/2009/01/20/Can_the_US_F-35_fighter_destroy_Russias_S-300_systems/UPI-39001232464740 (March 16, 2009).

⁶⁸ RIA Novosti, "Russia Has Not Delivered S-300 Missile Systems to Iran—Source," March 18, 2009, at <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090318/120623475.html> (April 1, 2009).

⁶⁹ Medvedev bans sale of S-300 missiles, other weapons to Iran, RIA Novosti, 22/09/2010

⁷⁰ <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/russia/2010/russia-100803-rianovosti02.htm>. according to Igor Korotchenko

⁷¹ <http://www.almanar.com.lb/newssite/NewsDetails.aspx?id=160753&language=en>

⁷² Strokan, Sergey. "Russia and Iran: Heading toward a political earthquake?" *RT*, 15 August 2012.

US, for its part, will refrain from supplying weapons to Georgia, as compensation for its failure to deal with Iran.

Russia's approach can be best illustrated by the arrangements around the missile systems S-300. The missile system S-300 was of great importance for Iran to build its security system, and now it finds it insecure – as the Conventional Armed Forces are insufficient.

It is well known that in the relationship between Russia and Iran, military-technical cooperation occupies an important place. In recent years, it is composed mainly by the export of finished products, and Iran is one of the main buyers of Russian military-industrial complex (MIC). Russia, following its international obligations supplies defense products to Iran. During his visit to Tehran in October 2008, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergy Ryabkov confirmed that the

"military-technical cooperation between Russia and the IRI is developed in full and strict compliance with all the obligations which the Russian side has in its bilateral relations with Iran, and in connection with the existing export control and non-proliferation demands of the Russian domestic law and international obligations of Russia"⁷³

The main intrigue of 2008 was the appearance of frequent posts in the Russian and Iranian press reports on the supply to Iran of anti-aircraft missile systems S-300 and the beginning of deliveries S-300. And only in December 22, Federal Service for MIC of Russia announced that these air defense systems to Iran is not supplied. On the same day, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Hassan Kyashkyavi confirmed that Iran and Russia have not yet signed a definitive agreement to supply Iran with the S-300. While Iranian officials reported about the supply of components of S-300. Moscow, however, did not confirm this information, and in January 2009, Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that Russia is at this stage will provide anti-aircraft missiles to Iran long-range S-300.

Russia's refusal to supply Tehran anti-aircraft missile systems S-300 was not only one factor, which led to the exacerbation of Russia-Iran relationship. Other factors included the alignment with additional sanctions against the IRI in June by the UNSC, the suspension of execution of the contract on the supply of the TU-204, and agreement on satellite "Zohreh" /

⁷³ <http://en.rian.ru/world/20081225/119166824.html> (2/June/2012)

"Venus" /, signed in January 2005. Today it is extremely difficult to find in Russia a contractor for the execution of any order of Iran. The conclusion in case of S-300 demonstrates that the position and action of Moscow is very rational in Russian way.

1.2. Russian position in the context of Russia's relations with Iran

Russia and Iran (Persia) have long history and strong historical, cultural and even political ties. These contacts were especially close between the Russian Empire and the Persian Empire (pre-1935 Iran), officially commenced in 1592, with the Safavid in power. Past and present contacts between Russia and Iran are not only longstanding, but also complicatedly multi-faceted, and they often changed from collaboration to rivalry. This turbulent past has its implications for how the societies view each other today: According to a 2013 BBC World Service Poll, 10% of Russians view Iran's influence positively, with 40% expressing a negative view.⁷⁴

Russian–Iranian interests do not always coincide, they have controversial issues both in economic and geopolitical sphere. During the fall of 2008 the conflict in the Caucasus, Iran in fact, supported by Moscow, but in 2009 it expressed waiting attitude towards the recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. In addition, IRI and Russia are the major players in the Caspian Sea, and solution of the issue depends on them in a significant extent. In the early 1990s the international legal situation in the Caspian region changed. Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan declared their claims to ownership of certain parts of the Caspian Sea. The increased interest in the Caspian Sea is determined by its strategic location between Europe and Asia, large oil reserves, convenient transport routes, valuable species of sturgeon. But in spite of the competing positions, the interests of Russia and Iran in the Caspian region are also very similar. Russia and Iran agreed that Caspian Sea should be civilian sea and also foreign powers should not be there. Also, Iran and Russia's interests are intertwined in the energy field. In the field of transport projects, the issue of security in the region, its ecology, the interests are the

⁷⁴ http://www.globescan.com/images/images/pressreleases/bbc2013_country_ratings/2013_country_rating_poll_bbc_globescan.pdf

same. From the positions of the two countries their cooperation depends largely on the effectiveness of conflict prevention in the area and reduced degree of militarization.

Nonetheless, they share the common threats as well – both are willing to diminish the US influence in the Caspian Sea region. As confrontation between the United States and Iran escalates, the country is finding itself further pushed into an alliance with China and Russia. In addition, Iran, like Russia, "views Turkey's regional ambitions and the possible spread of some form of pan-Turkic ideology with suspicion".⁷⁵ In the context of the rivalry around Caspian Sea, a strengthened regional partnership between Russia and Iran in political, economic and military fields could be an especially important factor.

Besides, a third factor may be added. Russian leadership is concerned about high Muslim birthrates in Russia, especially as the Slavic Orthodox population is declining. Russia is facing an increasingly radicalized Muslim population along its southern "soft underbelly," particularly in the North Caucasus, where two Chechen rebellions, even though they were effectively crushed, led to the spread of Salafi Islam. Many young Russian Muslims view themselves more as members of the global Islamic Ummah (community) than as citizens of 'Mother Russia'. Keeping Muslim powers such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, preventing them from supporting insurgencies in Eurasia, and toning down radicalization are unspoken but important items on the Kremlin's agenda.

1.2.1. Russia, Iran and the 'West'

Moscow sees Iran as a partner and an ally to challenge the U.S. power. Today, both Russia and Iran favor a strategy of "multipolarity," both in the Middle East and worldwide. They seek to diminish the American influence, shift away from dollar as a reserve currency, and dilute the influence of NATO⁷⁶. Russia considers Iran a partner and de facto ally in its plans to reshape the power balance in the Middle East and dilute U.S. influence in the region. Putin is loudly rejecting the American approach of democracy and human rights, which has stumbled and sputtered in the

⁷⁵ Herzig Edmund, *Iran and the former Soviet South*, [Royal Institute for International Affairs](#), 1995, ISBN 1-899658-04-1, p.9.

⁷⁶ Ariel Cohen, "How the Obama Administration Should Engage Russia," testimony before the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, March 19, 2009, at <http://www.heritage.org/research/russiaandeurasia/tst031909a.cfm>.

Middle East. In addition, Russia is following the Soviet model of opposing first the British and then the US presence in the Middle East by playing to anti-Western sentiment in the "street" and among the elites. Putin's Munich speech, his Al-Jazeera interview, and his press conferences in Jordan and Qatar solidified the Kremlin's public diplomacy message, emphasizing its differences with Washington⁷⁷. It should be noticed that Iran took the neutrality of such important issues as Russia's Chechen problem (1994-1996/1999-2000, in spite of the proximity with the religious groups and their ideological visions) and the Russian-Georgian conflict (2008)). The main goal of Russia and Iran at this very crucial stage of the international economic and political crisis is the preservation and strengthening of Russian-Iranian cooperation and collaboration.

The issue which illustrates the extent to which the two states share the same vision is the Syria crisis. From the Iran's point of view Russian firm stance on Syria, is a kind of litmus test, showing Moscow's determination not to give in to U.S. pressure. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia Mikhail Bogdanov said: "We believe that the Syrians should solve their own problems in its domestic agenda. This is an internal civil conflict and it should not be internationalized."⁷⁸ Russia fiercely defends Syria, seeking to have an impact in the international scene. Russia considers Syria a strategic partner, which gives it, in addition to the political advantage of the West, the benefits of security, mainly through the use of the military infrastructure of Syria.

Syria's geopolitical importance for Russia is largely due to the presence of the only means of access to the Mediterranean Sea. The Syrian port of Tartus is the only Russian military base outside the former Soviet Union. This facility is available to Russia since 1971. Some critics of Russia point to the fact that the old ships stationed there and in very poor condition,⁷⁹ and the port itself heavily decayed. Russia has economic interest in Syria as well. For many years, Russia has consistently build partnership relations with Syria, investing and political life in this country. Russia and Iran are moving to settlements in national currencies, plans to jointly develop oil and gas fields, to develop transportation projects and projects in the Caspian Sea.

⁷⁷ <http://www.iranwatch.org/government/Russia/russia-putin-aljazeera-021007.htm>

⁷⁸ <http://carnegie.ru/2013/02/12/mythical-alliance-russia-s-syria-policy/ff4>

⁷⁹ In 2010, Russian exports to Syria totaled \$ 1.1 billion. Investment in the country more than 20 billion dollars, mainly due to the export of Russian armaments. According to the SIPRI report, Syria is one of the most active buyers of weapons in foreign markets. From 2007 to 2011, Damascus has increased arms purchases by 580%. With most arms imports into Syria provided by Russia (72%). Syria buys eagerly the MiG-29 combat training aircraft, Yak-130 air defense system "shell" and "Book" onshore "Bastion", anti-ship missiles P-800 "Yakhont". Some of the weapons smuggled from Syria to Iran.

The core of the relations between Russia and Iran was the trend established in recent years, determined by the coincidence of both economic, and mainly geopolitical interests. Russia and Iran adhere to the concept of a multipolar world order, in favor of the UN leading role in international relations. The fundamental common position is expressed in the views on the expansion of NATO to the East, the presence of US forces in the region, the presence of third countries on the Caspian Sea. Definite confirmation of the matching estimates on the geopolitical developments in the region began in 2008⁸⁰. To a certain extent it was confirmed by IRI's position regarding the conflict in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Iranian officials (President and Minister of Foreign Affairs) recognized the validity of Russia's actions, to prevent further deepening of hostilities.

One of the overall objective of IRI-Russia cooperation was to fight against drugs coming from Afghanistan (in 2005 signed a joint memorandum on cooperation in this area, cooperation in this field were discussed during the visit to Moscow in October 2008 the head of the Headquarters for Drug-IRI Mogaddam Ahmadi). Iran and Russia took an active part in international anti-drug operation "Channel". To some extent converging point is the "biased" attitude of the US are sufficiently cautious towards Russia and openly hostile to Iran.

Cooperation is multidimensional and implemented at different levels. In recent years, they reached the highest level.

Russia's position on Iran in the context of the anti-Western motives is far less straightforward and consistent, as it seems. The case in point is the position of Moscow on Iran's membership in the SCO, which counts among its members Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The organization is promoting the political and economic cooperation of the SCO, but is although widely considered to prevent the military and economic penetration of the West and especially the US in the Central Asian region, which coincides with the interests of Russia and Iran. According to both states' interest in limiting the political influence of the US in Central Asia, this cooperation could be expected to be running smoothly. Indeed, the commonality of interest has led the SCO to extend to Iran observer status in 2005, and to raise the issue of membership in 2006. Iran's relations with the organization, which is dominated by Russia and

⁸⁰ Kind of Delimitation.

China, represent the most extensive diplomatic ties Iran has shared since the 1979 revolution. Iran currently has observer status in the organization, and applied for full membership on March 24, 2008.⁸¹

The SCO issue demonstrates that, the issue of sanctions is present in this Russia's position towards the region, as well, as illustrated by the adoption of the criteria for entry of new candidates in the SCO, adopted at the 2004 Tashkent summit. One of the criteria for closing the road to full membership of Iran in the SCO is the lack of sanctions by the UN. Although the criteria for inclusion in the paragraph on sanctions was supported by the majority of the members, Iran is clearly understood that the choice of these criteria was determined, mainly, the position of China and Russia. Thus, because of ongoing sanctions levied by the UN Iran is blocked from admission as a new member.⁸²

The way the issue of Iran's membership application is dealt with indicates that Russia, once again, has played a card - the SCO card in this case - by using Iran in Moscow's relations with China and the US rather than acting upon a commonality of interests. This contradicts with Iran's vision of the SCO as anti-American alliance where Russia and China help Tehran to realize its counter anti-Iranian sanctions policy of the United States and will provide support to the ruling IRI regime. Once again, it is demonstrated that in terms of the nature of RF position, there is a swing between pragmatic-rationalist and ideational policy, while there is a clear tendency towards the former.

⁸¹ <http://www.presstv.ir/detail.aspx?id=48781§ionid=351020101>

⁸² Wu Jiao and Li Xiaokun (June 12, 2010). "SCO agrees deal to expand". *China Daily*. Retrieved June 15, 2010.

1.2.2. Commercial and economic ties

In this section we are going to analyze Russian-Iranian commercial and economic relations and the effect of sanctions on them, including the changes in Russian policy after 2010, while looking into the actual and potential losses for Russia and Iran.

As indicated above, Russia has significant economic interests and large-scale projects in Iran. Moscow develops wide cooperation in technical sphere with Iran. Moscow is committed to support the efforts directed to prevent the emergence of another nuclear power. At the same time, the economic collapse of this economy is undesirable for Russia, as the economic instability in Iran could affect the Russian economy.

Russia is interested in trade with Iran, which gives it the opportunity to diversify its exports, while Iran's interest in Russia is due to both the economic ties established for many decades. The main barriers are the sanctions, the presence of constraints on the Iranian market of US and European companies. Russia, which acts on the world market as a raw material supplier, supplying the Iranian market, primarily its industrial products, as well as scientific and technical services. In 2005 trade between the countries amounted to 2.1 billion dollars, then in 2008, it rose to 3.2 billion dollars mainly due to Russian exports. The main items of Russian exports to Iran are metals and metal products (over 70%), machinery and equipment, wood and pulp and paper products. Imports from the IRI is represented mainly by consumer goods, food products (60%), machinery and equipment. Nevertheless, despite the instability in the dynamics of bilateral relations, the objective was realized the need to maintain the leadership of both Russia and Iran.

Despite the obstacles, Iran continues to be an attractive target objective of economic partnership. It has considerable economic potential and quite diversified economy. Despite all the pessimistic forecasts are associated with the UNSC resolutions, Iran has maintained a positive trend of economic development. Although the situation in the country at the level of microeconomic indicators, especially the continued rise in prices and unemployment sufficiently intense, however, macroeconomic indicators are positive. GDP grew in 2008 (in constant prices), according to Iranian statistics, by 6.9%, without the oil industry by 7.6%,⁸³, according to

⁸³ CB IRI. Key Economic Indicators 1387 (2008-2009). Trends .- No 53. -p.3.

international statistics by 6.4%.⁸⁴. GDP per capita in 2008 was 5,380 dollars or 12,100 at purchasing power parity.⁸⁵.

For Russia, Iran is an objectively beneficial economic partner, having a considerable economic potential and development of domestic markets. Despite the crisis unfolded and tightened sanctions regime, Iran has remained solvent partner. In ranking of the World Bank on July 1, 2011 Iran has taken in terms of GDP in 2010 (at the exchange rate), 29th place in terms of GDP at purchasing power parities (PPPs) - 18 place. Once in a critical situation, Iran has managed to avoid economic collapse and avoid regression. High enough - at 26-27% is the rate of gross investment that provides a guarantee of economic growth, especially considering the optimal structure of technology investments.

Foreign exchange reserves of Iran remained relatively high. According to the estimates at the beginning of 2012 the amount reached almost USD 110 bln (ranking 22 in the world). Iran has a large domestic market, which is the most important part for the Russian producers. Suffice it to say that over 80% of Iranian imports account for equipment and semi-finished products for industry. Therefore, Russia is interested in trade with Iran, allowing it to diversify their exports. Russia, which acts on the world market as a raw material supplier, supplying the Iranian market, primarily its industrial production and scientific-technical services.

The turnover of Russian-Iranian trade in 2010 constituted 3.65 billion dollars, while Russia's exports amounted to 3.4 billion dollars, i.e., more than 12 times higher than imports from Iran. The main items of Russian exports to Iran were metals and metal products (65%), precious metals and stones (17.5%) , machinery and equipment, ships and vehicles, timber, pulp and paper products. For Iran under sanctions for banking transactions, trade in gold and precious stones was particularly important. It should be noted that exports of steel products in Iran reduced the proportion of products with high added value. Iran buys Russian part of the metal for further processing in a better steel. Import of the IRI were represented mainly by consumer goods (textiles, plastic products, carpets, glassware, chemicals), food products and motor vehicles ("Samand").

⁸⁴ Iran // CIA.The World Factbook - 2009. [<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html>]

⁸⁵ Mamedova N. Russia and Iran in 2008 // Institute for Middle East .- 2009 [<http://www.iimes.ru/rus/stat/2009/03-03-09a.htm>]

Institutionally, the Russian-Iranian relations were (and still are) represented on the following levels: intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation, the Forum of Gas Exporting Countries (granted the status of the organization in 2008), under the direct links regions of Iran and Russia (free economic zone "Anzali" intensified in 2008). contacts at the regional level, have developed a close relationship with the Iranian side of the subjects of RF, including also cities Moscow, St. Petersburg, Tatarstan, Mordovia, Astrakhan, Volgograd, Nizhny Novgorod, Omsk region. At the end of 2007. IRI on an official visit in the framework of the Caspian states summit Vladimir Putin has arrived. Exchanges take place between interdepartmental foreign ministries, the security councils, parliaments and various ministries of Russia and Iran.

Issues of economic ties are subject to the Permanent Russian-Iranian intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation. In December 2007, Moscow hosted the 7th meeting, when Memorandum of Intent of the trade-economic, industrial, scientific and technical cooperation between Russia and the IRI was signed as well as the "Protocol of the 7th meeting of the Permanent Russian-Iranian Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation". In 2008 to enhance economic ties with Iran in the Chamber of Commerce of Russia was created by the Russian-Iranian Business Council. On the 14th of July 2010 in Moscow, the "road map" of Iranian-Russian cooperation in the energy field was adopted, designed for 30 years. It provides for exchange of technical know-how, technology and expertise not only in energy, but also for the cooperation in the field of oil and gas production, processing, conducting research on oil and gas wells in the exploration of new fields offshore. But the presence of Russian companies in Iranian oil and gas market is very limited, mainly under pressure from US sanctions. Of course, the latter sanctions, along with the EU ones affect the energy exchange scheme with the participation of Iran. This could reduce Iran's ability to participate in export projects, but it is possible with a high degree of probability to predict, and weaken the potential leverage on him by other participants in collaborative projects.

1.2.3. Energy cooperation

Energy cooperation is an important issue in Iran-Russia relations. The energy cooperation occupies special place due to the priority position of Iran as one of the most important oil and gas exporter in the OPEC⁸⁶, and Russia's aspiration to evolve into a Great Energy Power attributes to the issue. Obviously, sanctions had effects on Iran's oil exports, but not a direct effects on Iranian-Russian's cooperation till 2010, after which as we saw a change in the Russian positions occurred.

In the gas energy sector the activity of some Russian companies activated since 2008. Thus, the Russian company Gazprom Neft invited the Government of Iran to develop in addition to the North and "South Azadegan" (one of the largest deposits in the world with reserves of about 5.7 billion tons). In August 2008, Gazprom Neft prospect to the Government of Iran, a report on a study of the northern block of the Azadegan field, and is currently negotiating with National Iranian Oil Company to jointly develop this project . Gazprom Neft, a party will be the operating company which will develop the project, as well as the investor of the project. The main problem is the issue of production sharing. In 2008 the main subject of the negotiations was the creation of a joint oil company, the decision to create it moved to the beginning of 2009. In 2008 it continued activities in Iran, the company "Tatneft", which set up a joint Russian-Iranian venture "Tatneft Pars". As part of the company's contract research field, "Le Monde" is made, but continued operations of the joint venture, which created the "Tatneft" and the Islamic Foundation "Fund for disadvantaged" (Bonyad mostazaffin)" (with equal shares of participation) for the conduct of Iran's drilling and exploration in the oil and gas, to provide engineering services to the oil and petrochemical sectors of the Iranian industry, including petroleum refining from sulfur plant at Kharg Island . In late October 2008, Kazan "Tatneft", Iranian National Oil Company and the Fund for the disadvantaged (the Imam Homeini Fund), have signed a new memorandum of cooperation, opening up new opportunities for Russian companies in the oil market of Iran. The company "Lukoil", which is in the joint venture with Norwegian company "Hydro" has successfully drilled an exploration well in

⁸⁶ Iran's oil output capacity is on the wane. With due regard for the fact that internal consumption is growing at a rapid rate__and barring capacity expansion, substitution of gas for oil in domestic consumption, or changes in the oil consumption rates__Iran's export potential will, by the end of the decade, be reduced to around 1.7 million b/d. This will place the country in the position of sixth exporter in OPEC after Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, UAE and Venezuela. However, resource-wise, Iran still has the potential to regain its rightful position within OPEC, provided it takes necessary measures to revive the oil industry, to change its international image and its relations with OPEC Arab members, and rid itself of the current state of international politico-economic isolation.

the field "Anaran" that allowed the discovery of new large deposits of hydrocarbon reserves of 2 billion barrels of oil because of U.S. sanctions had suspend its activities in Iran. Cooperation in the gas sector is developing at the level of bilateral relations and multilateral, in the format of the Forum of Gas Exporting Countries . In Tehran in October 2008 within the framework of the Forum of Energy Ministers of Iran, Qatar and the head of Gazprom Alexei Miller signed the Agreement on the establishment of the High Technical Council of the gas, a kind of "gas OPEC" which can be international dimation of energy cooperation. On December 23 in Moscow, the Forum received legal status as an organization. In meeting energy ministers from 14 countries, owning 73% of world gas reserves and providing 42% of its global production was GECF charter and signed an intergovernmental agreement, which includes the principles of the Forum, and activities-on the order of relations with the countries-consumers of gas, the exchange of information on the implementation of major investment programs, the organization of joint work on liquefied natural gas (LNG). For Russia and Iran participated in the Forum provides an opportunity to optimize the possible routes of gas pipelines and participate in joint projects for the extraction and sale of gas.

In 2008, "Gazprom" (a 30% stake) in the composition formed in 1997 consortium with the French company "Total" and Malaysian "Petronas" has already completed work on the development of offshore gas field sites "South Pars", but as long as the calculations of return on investment is not completed. A promising project with Gazprom is to build a gas pipeline from Iran to India and Pakistan. In addition, they are building in this country, underground gas storage facilities and develop the general scheme of development of the country's gas distribution network, and participates in the construction and maintenance of the regional gas networks. Iran and Gazprom in 2008 started negotiations on deliveries of Russian gas to Iran under the scheme of substitution (swap), similar to transactions with Russian and Kazakh oil. As part of these supplies the Russian side will deliver its gas to northern Iran, and in return an equivalent amount of gas will be transferred to the Russian partners in the south.

Although countries are oil exporters, Russia is an exporter of gas and Iran has large gas reserves and export sets the goal to increase its gas export capacity, we cannot treat them merely as competitors. At the initiative of Iran's OPEC in the face of his manager, the Iranian representative Mohammad Ali Khatibi has invited Russia to participate in a meeting of OPEC in

December 2008. Previously, in early December, the head of OPEC suggested that Russia, Norway and Mexico to become members of this organization. However, on the Iranian oil market, the presence of Russian companies is still limited, mainly under pressure from U.S. sanctions. At the same time securing for Russia in the Iranian market and share of Iranian gas is an economic interest, in terms of filling its planned gas pipeline to Europe. Cooperation in the gas sector, although limited to the sanctions regime, but it continues to evolve at the level of bilateral relations and in the format of the Forum of Gas Exporting Countries.

One of the promising areas of cooperation between Russia and Iran is transport. In March 2008, the parties signed a MOU, which referred to Russia's participation in the reconstruction of existing and construction of new railway lines. At the same time the president of JSC "RZD"⁸⁷ Vladimir Yakunin and the president of the Iranian railways Housein Ziyari signed a contract for the electrification of the railway line Tabriz - Azarshahr length of about 50 km. After this project the Iranian side is supposed to involve the Russian company to the project of electrification of the railway line Tehran - Mashhad 800 km.

For Russia, Iran remains a potentially profitable economic partner; a country does not affect Russia's geopolitical interests in the region. Availability of energy resources, which, on the one hand, makes the country's competitors, on the other hand, is a factor in the strengthening of economic interests. The geographical remoteness of the Russian and Iranian deposits, a common interest in increasing participation in supplying the world markets of oil and gas, Iran's interest in the markets for gas and Russia's interest in the southern sources of gas supplies to southern Europe and Asian markets, create objective conditions for the coordination of activities in this promising direction. This trend is clearly manifested itself in different conclusions 2008 the conclusion of various agreements of intent. However, as to the actual realization of these intentions, the situation was quite complicated. On the one hand, the level of competition in the Iranian market of major Western companies reduced. Iran indicated the possibility of contracting for the development of gas fields without bidding. But the limiting factor was the reduction of damage

⁸⁷ JSC(RZD) Russian Railways ([Russian](#): Российские железные дороги РЖД)

from the economic ties with the US. This applies in particular to the Russian companies that are associated with the US market and US financial institutions.

Many of the economic ties, especially in the exchange of scientific personnel, training of Iranian students, etc. were minimized after 2010. In economic relations, trade was not so much important for the two countries as the economic cooperation. Its main areas of focus are energy, transport, oil-gas sector and the military-technical cooperation. The main object of the Russian-Iranian cooperation are energy projects. Also one of the major areas of economic cooperation is an oil and gas industry, included Transport (air transport, rail) Military-technical cooperation, nuclear sphere.

After 2010, the dynamics of the Russian – Iranian relations has changed. The Russian companies have commercial interests both in Europe and the USA withdraw from Iran. In October 2010 “Lukoil” as well as “Gazprom neft” announced the termination of their relations with the Iran. The only company to stay in Iran was “Tatneft” having joint venture with the Foundation for the disadvantaged (Boniade mostazaffin).

Even before the UN sanctions,⁸⁸ some Russian companies have stopped cooperation with Iran. Indicative of this is the example of the company "Lukoil Overseas", which, together with the Norwegian Statoil conducted exploration work on the Iranian block "Anaran" but out of the joint project. On top of this Russian company stopped exporting oil products to Iran. Today, however, the parties expect to resume fruitful cooperation in the oil and gas field, and take concrete steps in this direction. For example, in the International Exhibition "Oil and Gas 2012", held in Moscow in the summer of 2012, the large Iranian delegation expressed the country's achievements in the hydrocarbon sector, and discussed with the Russian side long-term projects in the oil, gas and petrochemicals. In this regard, it is likely that in the future due to the lack of its own refining capacity of Iran a blind eye to the case of the "Lukoil Overseas" and resume with Russia to work together in this area. As a proof there are such facts as the first Russian-Iranian business forum, in which the main organizer of the event - Russian Chamber of Commerce - it was stated that promising areas for bilateral economic cooperation could be refining and petrochemicals. Russian companies have reserved comment, but do not deny such a scenario. In particular, representatives of the "Lukoil Overseas" were confident that with substantial available today to minimize the

⁸⁸ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1929, 9 June 2010.

serious political and economic risks of cooperation with Tehran, the parties could start again cooperation under the buy-back («buy back»), allowing to pass a ban on mineral rights on the basis of concessions and production sharing agreement. And if Russian companies in the oil industry in Iran have potential foreign competitors, the military-technical sphere, the situation is different.

- **Horizontal relations**

Economic ties with Iran in recent years acquired a political character, as the impact on Russia's relations with other countries. In particular this applies to the military-technical cooperation with Iran. Russia has fully complied with the contract for the supply of air defense missile system to Iran, "Tor-M1", but in 2009 suspended the delivery of S-300, and in 2010 issued a presidential decree banning the supply in Iran. Payment of the Iranian side has been returned.

In June 2010, Russia in the UN Security Council got more on the side of the Western powers than Brazil and Turkey, and voted in favor of a fourth round of mandatory sanctions against Tehran because of its ongoing suspicious activity in the area of nuclear fusion. This has been done in violation of previous Security Council sanctions banning Iran to enrich uranium or other activities that could contribute to the development of nuclear weapons, while Tehran will not make his current and past activities in the nuclear field more transparent to the IAEA.

However, despite the negotiations on the further cooperation in the nuclear area, new contracts for the construction of nuclear power plants has not yet been concluded. The main focus of the energy dialogue is on the cooperation in production and distribution of electricity in the production of energy resources and means of transporting them.

By examining various aspects of the Iranian-Russian relations like energy cooperation and military cooperation; we can understand Russia's position is more pragmatic. As one Russian observer put it, weapons sales create allies. Russia is using weapons and nuclear reactors the way imperial Germany used railroads—to bolster influence and to undermine the dominant power in the Middle East. Indeed Moscow try to use all his instruments to save and improve his position in International relations and Iran nuclear conflict card is one of the important instrument.

It should be noted, however, that Russia supports only the UN sanctions, tending to contain Iran on the way to acquire a nuclear bomb. There is, however, ambiguity as to extent of aligning with US and the EU sanctions. Thus, Russia is not expected to consider aligning with the further USA or the EU economic sanctions and only ratifies the UN sanctions aimed at the control nuclear program of Iran, seeking to prevent Iran from obtaining to a nuclear bomb. Russia is willing to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear state, though Iranian economic weakness reflects on the Russian economy. At the same time Russia is strongly against any new regime, as in such situation the new regime would be pro-Western, and any new regime will be anti-Russian.

Russia's aspirations to get the consent of the Iranian leadership to the proposed scheme of Moscow's Bushehr nuclear power plant fuel supply was dictated by the Russian government account on some flexibility that Iran could have shown in this issue. In this case, Russia could withdraw Iran from the strike attacks of the U.S. and the IAEA and the EU. At the same time Russia, building up its military presence to protect nuclear facilities in Iran, has become the guarantor of the peaceful nature of the IRI's nuclear program, which excluded the possibility of self-Iran nuclear technology for military purposes.

In 2006 Russia along with China, opposed the adoption of stringent economic sanctions against the IRI. Despite the fact that Moscow did not support the proposal Ahmadinejad in April 2006 on the membership of Iran in the "nuclear club", Russia continued to oppose the use of force against Tehran. On the other hand, Moscow made it clear that in the event of U.S. attack on Iran, it can take a "neutral" position as in the case of Kosovo and Iraq.

At the same time, whatever the situation is not formed around the emitter, Russia will never agree to the use of force against Iran, because it is harming the interests of Moscow in the region, discredit its role in the Middle East and will cause irreparable damage to cooperation with the IRI in the oil and gas sector and in the Caspian region. In addition, Iran is a major buyer of Moscow for Russian arms. At present, Russia is discussing with Iran issues a large batch of supply defensive weapons, including as noted above, the latest air-defense systems, which causes great concern the U.S. and Israel. In this regard, visiting IRI in 2008, Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia Sergey Ryabkov emphasized that Russian-Iranian cooperation is not directed against third countries, while the supply of modern weapons in Iran are not a threat to other states. Iran is in fact part of today

provides the fundamental work of the three branches of the Russian economy to oil and gas, nuclear and arms exports. Of course, Russia could find other buyers in the field of nuclear energy and to establish cooperation with them, but she realizes that in this case it would have to come into a tough confrontation with many countries. Some hope in this regard Russia now holds the development of their contacts with the countries of Latin America, which received a strong impetus in recent times. Meanwhile, Iran in this regard has already secured a reliable partner. Therefore, to Moscow's important to keep Iran as its economic partner for gas and oil, and use due to the IRI for the monitoring of political processes in Central Asia, particularly in reinforcing expansion of the USA and the West (NATO). This is especially important in the international financial and economic crisis, whose consequences for Russia and Iran could be very difficult test of their relationship.

Iran also relies on significant strengthening of ties with Moscow, hoping for a constructive dialogue in the gas, oil and military-industrial sphere, Russia is unlikely to benefit from stopping or reducing the export of Iranian hydrocarbons in the global market, since, as has already happened in practice, missing volumes will make up the other players. Effective energy cooperation with Iran is possible. The only point in the "issue price" for each of the parties: whether Tehran is interested to go to Russian conditions and not violate its interests by their actions, and whether Moscow to find the courage, not afraid of Western sanctions, to develop an effective mechanism for the resumption of the old and the start of new projects Iran. Russia is supporting Iran and is not allowing a war against it. However, the nuclear Iran is a threat for the Russian security. Russia is not bolstering anything that would provide sources for Iran to become nuclear. This is a security dilemma in act, and Russia is not willing to strengthen the Iranian security by the costs of its own. Any drastic changes might lead to nuclearization of Iran. Iran possessing a nuclear bomb and a status of a nuclear state produces several threats for Russia. Firstly, nuclear Iran as a strong state can bring about conflictogenic situation in the Caucasus, thus it could lead to riots in Chechnya and burst out of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Nuclear Iran would launch negotiations on the Caspian Sea regime (the only sea without a legal regime) as a strong partner, thus other parties can lose their positions. For Russia it can bring about economic losses in the oil and gas sector. Besides, nuclear Iran would definitely change the Middle East balance of power.

Chapter 2. Analyzing Alignment with Sanctions: Ukraine and Azerbaijan

In this chapter we will analyze position of two CIS states Ukraine and Azerbaijan which both are expected to adopt of alignment with sanctions against Iran.

After collapse Soviet Union Ukraine had very close relations and economic cooperation with Iran until Orange Revolution and leadership of the pro-western⁸⁹ president Victor Yushchenko. His efforts to balance Russian hegemony in region and politics of proximity to West and NATO, did not allow him to continue the previous course of the political and economic relations with Iran.

Ukraine is not a member of a single management structure of the IO through which Ukraine would have been able to communicate their position: Ukraine is not a member of the UNSC. Thus, Ukraine is absent from the mechanism of review and decision-making. Nevertheless, decisions about the Iranian nuclear program and the subsequent political developments in the Iranian and international context around its nuclear program influence the Ukrainian national interests, primarily economic ones. The political and other aspects play a less significant role for for Ukraine because of the lack of strategic nature of this state⁹⁰.

Azerbaijan and Iran are neighbors, and in this case, the proximity did not translate into bilateral trust: for many reasons, Iran- Azerbaijan relations is full of suspicion and tensions, which will be explored in the section 2.2.2. In March 2012 Azerbaijan arrested 22 people on suspicion of plotting attacks on the US and Israeli embassies in Baku on behalf of neighboring Iran. The foreign ministry said that the suspects were recruited from 1999 onwards and trained in the use of weapons and spy techniques at military camps in Iran to enable them to gather information on foreign embassies, organizations and companies in Azerbaijan and stage attacks⁹¹; It is good example as a culmination of tensions in 2012.

⁸⁹ <http://www.polis.leeds.ac.uk/assets/files/students/student-journal/ug-summer-10/daniel-hatton-summer-10.pdf>

⁹⁰ Volovytych O. Igoshina J. Strategy for activation of cooperation of Ukraine with the states of the Persian Gulf region.- 2011. – National institute for Strategic Research // <http://od.niss.gov.ua/content/articles/files/perska-zatoka-42e92.pdf>

⁹¹ <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4202927,00.html>.

This chapter will demonstrate that while in the case of the both countries, there are mostly ideational reasons for non-alignment, the rationalist considerations in terms of economic 'costs' and 'losses' are much more present in the Ukrainian as opposed to Azeri case (where the material considerations are part of the decision on non-alignment to a far lesser extent).

.2.1. The official position in focus

2.1.1. The official position of Ukraine: alignment since 2005

IRI recognized the independence of Ukraine December 25, 1991. Bilateral relations began signing the Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Ukraine and the Islamic Republic of Iran on the 22nd January 1992. Over 22 years of independence, two presidential visits took place of : 25-26.04.1992 – Ukrainian President visited Iran and in 15-16.10.2002 - President of IRI a visited Kiev. In the political culture of CIS states and also Iran, bilateral meetings is very important, because they have very close system, sophisticated and informal politics which they can talk about it just face to face.⁹²

Among the Ukrainian-Iranian official meetings the following are essential: the official visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs of IRI in Ukraine (03-04.02.2004 City); official visit to the Secretary of the National Security of Ukraine to the IRI (11-13.07.2005) Foreign Ministers meeting Ukraine and IRI during the session of the UN (2006), the Third Session of the Committee on trade between Ukraine and IRI (17-18.11.2007 a Ukrainian delegation headed by Deputy Minister of Economy of Ukraine Vitally.T. P'yatnytskyy; meeting of the Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine Hetman Nemyria Foreign Minister IRI Manuchehr Mottaki (20.01.2008, the city of Tbilisi, in the events dedicated to the inauguration of the President of Georgia). Furthermore, the exchange of government delegations took place through individual ministries and departments of Ukraine, in particular the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Industrial Policy, Ministry of Transport, National Bank, Ministry of Culture and other government ustanov. In June 2011 in Kyi,v Ukrainian-Iranian political

⁹² ⁹² At the time of dictatorship of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, Ukraine was Ally of the West and in the same time sold an important forbidden arms to Iraq which was a big scandal inside of ukrainian parlement and also in Ukrainian foreign policy.

consultations at the level of Political Directors of departments of the two countries took place. In March 2011, the Parliaments' Chairman of the Committee on National Security and Defense, Anatoly Hrytsenko took part in the international conference "World Without Terrorism", which was held in Tehran. Currently, bilateral trade and economic cooperation between Ukraine and Iran is focused upon such industrial sectors as aircraft, machinery, metallurgy, and in the transport sector. IRI is an important trade and economic partner of Ukraine. The highest turnover rate in bilateral relations, according to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine was achieved in 2011 - USD1.174 bn.. Ukraine and Iran actively work in the humanitarian field.

The legal basis of Ukrainian-Iranian bilateral relations provides for mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries in political, economic and humanitarian spheres. As of 2012 legal basis of Ukrainian-Iranian relations are composed by 34 current document.. The fundamental document of bilateral relations between Ukraine and Iran is the Declaration on Principles of Friendly Cooperation between Ukraine and the Islamic Republic of Iran, signed by the Presidents of the two countries in Tehran April 26, 1992.

Ukraine has always supported the right of Iran to use the peaceful energy in IOs like UN and IAEA:

“Ukraine does not question the right of Iran to the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in conformity with its obligations under the NPT, a right which we have consistently reaffirmed. We take note that the Director General has reported that the Agency has been able to continue to verify the non-diversion of declared nuclear material in Iran and that there have been no indications of ongoing reprocessing related activities at the relevant nuclear facilities declared by Iran.”⁹³

However, when new pro-western President, Victor Yushchenko took office on January 23, 2005, following a period of popular unrest known as the Orange Revolution.⁹⁴ , a new direction of foreign policy was decided upon. His foreign policy was developed to achieve as much as possible politics proximity to West, EU, US and NATO. Subsequently, Ukraine's statements in IOs changed; in this period usually Ukrainian governments officially aligned with EU and US positions:

⁹³ <http://vienna.mfa.gov.ua/mediafiles/files/iran.pdf>

⁹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orange_Revolution.

“Ukraine doesn’t welcome the decision of Iran to start enrichment activities to produce 20% enriched uranium for the TRR. Technically it is not a wise decision. We recognize the need in Iran for medical radioisotopes and the assurances of fuel supply for the TRR, but we believe that there are appropriate options to have necessary supplies without resorting to high enrichment. We call on Iran to revise its decision and continue negotiations with the IAEA. Existing IAEA proposals on this issue are worth of further considerations. Meanwhile we call on Iran to agree with the IAEA as soon as possible on additional measures to be put in place to ensure the Agency’s continuing ability to verify the non-diversion of the nuclear material at the PFEP in Natanz.”⁹⁵

On the other hand Ukraine as a post-soviet country has a conservative foreign policy, so that usually is not easy to find clear official position about a country like Iran; even in few available interviews conducted by the author with Ukrainian diplomats and experts, they tended to repeat some general official positions which stress neutrality of Ukraine. Even on the official website of the MFA of Ukraine, there is no straight mention to (non) alignment sanctions on Iran.

We need to therefore analyze Ukrainian policy in the areas like economic cooperation.⁹⁶

There was a negative attitude of the leadership of Iran to the official Kyiv supporting international sanctions on Iran. Ukraine has joined pursuant to paragraph 19 of resolution 1737 (2006), paragraph 8 of resolution 1747 (2007) and paragraph 13 of resolution 1803 (2008) concerning the IRI (resolution 1803 confirms previously approved sanctions on transit and trading with Iran and urges Tehran to fulfill its obligations to the nuclear program). These actions of Ukraine are considered by the Iranian side as being contrary to the spirit and principles of cooperation between the countries. The consequences were:

⁹⁵ <http://vienna.mfa.gov.ua/mediafiles/files/iran.pdf>.

⁹⁶ In this chapter we tried to explain it more: 2.2.1. Ukraine: trade and non-material costs.

1. Low intensity of political relations between Ukraine and Iran.
2. The refusal of Ukraine still impacts the bilateral relations with Iran as well as have created negative image of unreliable partner abroad.

It should be noted that in the case of Ukraine, there are two periods, 2005-2010, under the Yushchenko presidency (known as pro-western) and 2010-2012, under the Yanukovich presidency (known as Pro-Russian).

Following the beginning of the presidency of Viktor Yushchenko in 2005. Increased Ukraine's efforts to join EU and NATO. in this regard Kiev tried to demonstrate maximum alignments with Western policies, including close attention to the Washington's international position. The Bush administration tried to turn Ukraine into an American ally, pulling it into the US geopolitical orbit. Adding Kiev to NATO would allow the alliance, which had already advanced to Russia's borders, to increasingly encircle Moscow. As a part of this policy Yushchenko administration tried to show interest to western side alignment with sanctions against Iran.

Rather than encouraging stability and peace, Washington's efforts roiled Russia's relations with the US as well as with Ukraine. Moscow became less willing to cooperate on other American objectives, such as expanding sanctions against Iran, becoming more willing to threaten states which cooperated with Washington, such as Poland, on missile defense, and more willing to use force against other nations siding with America, notably Georgia. Seldom has a greater hash been made of an important international relationship.⁹⁷

In 2010, Ukraine's elected Viktor Yanukovich president revealed himself as "pro-Russian", at least to view of US and EU's policy makers. He is looking to the West economically but has credibility in Moscow and, most importantly, does not want to join NATO, which would entangle the US militarily against Russia.

In these two periods Ukraine had different policy; Viktor Yushchenko tried to demonstrate his alignment with US, EU and UN sanctions, while in Yanukovich period Kiev tried to support Russian position and alignment UN sanctions (of course this period is still open and ongoing).

⁹⁷ <http://nationalinterest.org/article/washington-lucked-out-3412>

As to the Kiev's relations with Iran during both distinguished phases, the first decade of the relations between Iran and Ukraine, established since 1991, was marked by rather static development, with an exception: the creation of the Intergovernmental Ukrainian-Iranian Joint Commission on Economic and Trade Cooperation (IJC) in 1996, and a contract on joint production of passenger aircraft i AN-140⁹⁸ n 1997.

The position of Viktor Yushchenko government on sanctions has been very different from Viktor Yanukovich. Viktor Yushenko even discovered a prohibited delivery to Iran under Yanukovich government, which was widely discussed by the Parliament. Eventually, The position of Yushchenko government has been to align with sanctions against Iran, including US and EU.

The potential of bilateral cooperation between the countries was considerably complicated in the afterwards of the USA pressure on Ukraine. The denial of the Ukrainian part to fulfill the Busher contract, led to the loss of million-worth contracts by Ukraine. This was one of the results of the visit of State Secretary M. Albright to Kyiv in 1998.⁹⁹ The refusal of Ukraine still impacts the bilateral relations with Iran as well as have created negative image of unreliable partner abroad.

Also Ukraine officially was Third Country regularly aligning with EU position on sanctions on Iran (2011/235/CFSP), introducing restrictive measures directed against certain persons and entities in view of the situation in Iran, Press release (2011/04/28).¹⁰⁰

The “Turboatom” of Kharkiv rejected on behalf of Ukraine to participate in the Iranian-Russian agreement to supply equipment for nuclear power plant in Bushehr.

According to Moscow Defense Brief, until 2005 Washington exerted considerable diplomatic pressure on Russia to stop the project, as the US administrations viewed it as evidence of Russia's indirect support for the alleged Iranian nuclear arms program. The US also tried to persuade other countries to ban their companies from taking part. For example, Ukraine's Turboatom was to supply a turbine, but cancelled the deal after the US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's visit to

⁹⁸ The **NA-140** or **Iran-140** (Persian: ایران-۱۴۰) is a short-range twin-turboprop airliner based on the [Antonov An-140](#) and assembled under license by [HESA](#) of [Iran](#). The Iran-140 is able to seat 52 passengers, land on a dirt airstrip and fly almost 3,000 km (1,900 mi) before refueling. It can be configured to carry passengers, cargo, or a combination of the two.

⁹⁹ Nagornyi S. Problems and prospects of cooperation of Ukraine and Iran in the economic sector Foreign Policy Strategy Department of the National Institute for Strategic Research. – 2009. [<http://old.niss.gov.ua/Monitor/october09/14.htm>]

¹⁰⁰ http://www.sanctionswiki.org/EU_Third_Countries.

Kiev on 6 March 1998. The US lifted its opposition to the project in 2005, partly due to the deal signed by Moscow and Tehran, under which spent fuel from the plant would be sent back to Russia.¹⁰¹¹⁰² This led to delay in the launch of the station and deterioration of the relations with Iran. Moreover, such situation as the refusal of Ukraine to meet the contract provisions created the image of an unreliable partner that affected relations with the states of the Middle East region in general.

In the energy sector, there was an exchange of technical and engineering information and technology transfer¹⁰³ (oil, gas and petrochemical industries); Cooperation in the field of design and manufacturing technologies for small and medium-sized hydropower stations and production designs for energy needs; Reconstruction and modernization of power plants, transmission lines, pipelines and other energy facilities; Participation in projects of thermal power plants; Engineering design and use of domestic power production capacity in carrying out projects; Cooperation in production in IRI the main equipment for hydro and thermal power plants.¹⁰⁴

The "Gas War" (2008-2009) with Russia showed that Ukraine's goal of diversification of energy supplies was a priority. Iran ranks second after Russia in the world largest gas fields and is a potential candidate for the role of energy supplier. The Iranian leadership has had interest in this field. Tehran has created all necessary conditions for successful implementation of their gas export plans in the Caucasus. But in order to enter the European gas market, Iran has required transport capacity in Eastern Europe - Russia or Ukraine. Russian gas pipelines in the EU is unlikely to be enough on its own partial diversification of Russian gas exports. Therefore, the Russian gas transportation system in the short term will not accept Iranian gas. Thus, the most realistic way to transport Iranian gas to Europe is its charge through the Ukrainian gas transportation system that has unused reserve capacity and is connected with Western pipelines. Therefore, in early 2001, Tehran has stepped up negotiations with Kyiv. But the specific arrangements in this regard has been reached, primarily due to political tensions over Iran in Mahmoud Ahmadinejad presidency.

¹⁰¹ Khlopkov, Anton (2010). "Iran Breakthrough for the Russian Nuclear Industry". *Moscow Defense Brief* (Centre for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies) **1** (19).

¹⁰² Anton Khlopkov and Anna Lutkova (21 August 2010). [The Bushehr NPP: Why did it take so long](#). Center for Energy and Security Studies. Retrieved 1 March 2011.

¹⁰³ Nagorny D. The Development of the Ukraine – Iranian cooperation in the energy sector in the context of the major world powers policy. –National Institute for Strategic Research // www.niss.od.ua/p/368.doc

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.day.kiev.ua/en/article/day-after-day/ukraine-iran-relations-fresh-start>

After establishment of the transit system there is a project for years, so the partners must make certain. In a stabilization around Iran project "Iran-Caucasus-Ukraine-Europe" was quite feasible, but its implementation involved the effort. Also, in developing cooperation in the field of aircraft engine company "Motor Sich" and the aviation industry of Iran, there is an agreement between Isfahan steel mill, while the "Hai-op-Reza" and by "AzovImpeks" have an agreement on the supply of metallurgical equipment to Iran.

The legal basis of Ukrainian-Iranian relations in general, provides a legal basis for cooperation between Ukraine and Iran in trade and economic cooperation. Today the two countries signed 18 documents and acts to regulate trade and economic relations between the two countries.

Cooperation in production and repair in Iran gas compressors continued, in oil and gas industry, petrochemicals. From 2001 to 2006, trade turnover between the two countries has almost tripled (from 165 to almost 595 million dollars. USA).

The complementarity of the economies, relative proximity, the prospect of development of the Iranian market and access to southern transport network, of course, make profitable Iranian direction of foreign economic relations and public companies in Ukraine, for private enterprise. Despite the overall success of the Iranian-Ukrainian relations, it should be noted that the end of the 1990s marked a certain cooling in relations between Kyiv and Tehran, which originated as Ukraine rejected to supply turbines for Buser plant. Such a move Ukraine made under severe pressure from the US and Israel. Refusing to supply turbines to Iran, Ukraine lost \$400-500 mln (including the prospective of 4 units supply to Bushehr) to \$1.4 bln or even more considering also the missed opportunity to join other energy contracts in Iran). Tension in Iran-Ukrainian relations has been overcome. This was due to the summit between the leaders of Ukraine and Iran in 2005. It's worth noting that the trade turnover between Ukraine and Iran was \$500 million in 1992 and rose to \$443 mln. in 2004 and in \$595 mln in 2006. This volume of Ukrainian exports to Iran was 40 times higher than imports from that country.

2.1.2. Azerbaijan: consistent alignment.

IRI recognized the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan on December 25, 1991. The diplomatic relations between two countries were established on March 12, 1992. The Islamic Republic of Iran opened its consulate in Baku in 1969 which became embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Azerbaijan in March, 1992. The Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Iran was opened in December, 1992. Iran has consulate in Nakhchivan AR (from December, 1992), Azerbaijan also has consulate in Tabriz (from October 20, 2004). The ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2013 is Javanshir Axundov. Contractual-legal base: 99 documents were signed between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Since 1993 there were 15 high – level visits. The latest are visits in November 17, 2010 - The President of the IRI Mahmood AhmediNejad paid an official visit to Azerbaijan and in October 15-16, 2012 - The President of the IRI Mahmoud Ahmadinejad paid an official visit to Azerbaijan (The 12th Session of Organization of Economic Cooperation). Azerbaijan is strongly against any use of force towards Iran. ¹⁰⁵.

As a young Azerbaijani diplomacy that practically is in a state of war in the whole of his history of the independence (with Armenia) and is focused on the solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, this conflict is the main subject in the relations between Azerbaijan and other countries, Russia, the West and Iran. Baku knows the fact that Europe and the US can affect Moscow and Tehran in resolving the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict. Azerbaijan uses the Iranian card (sanctions and nuclear conflict) in relations with the West. Iran, in turn, is also reacting to this situation. For the first time in the history of the IRI military exercises of the Iranian Air Force, "Velayet-3"(September 2011) were conducted in the close-to-border to Azerbaijan territory in preemptive (as opposed to defensive) nature, at the risk of Israel military strikes on Iran from the territory of Azerbaijan¹⁰⁶. Azerbaijan has that it opposes a military solution to the "Iranian problem",

¹⁰⁵ Азербайджан против силового решения «иранской проблемы» (Azerbaijan is Against Power Solution of Iranian Problem) - МИД // anspress.com

¹⁰⁶ Баку and Tehran on the verge of split (Баку и Тегеран на пороге размежевания) // Journal-Neo.- 2012 <http://www.ru.journal-neo.com/node/117279>

and said¹⁰⁷ that it would not provide its territory for such attacks. Thus, Azerbaijan is rapidly changing its position as to the allowance to use its territory, which is an evidence to Azerbaijan using the “territory card”.¹⁰⁸ Also, the tension between the two countries demonstrates the mutual accusations of supporting terrorism. Iran says, relying on its own its intelligence data, that Israel lobby is putting pressure on the authorities of Azerbaijan to let the anti-Iranian organization OMIN’s troops set in its territory. Azerbaijan has 16 abandoned and already reconstructed bases that Azerbaijan might provide to Israel which supports the OMIN). Azerbaijan has made a far too big step in aligning with the West, sacrificing the relations with Iran in favor to Israel.¹⁰⁹¹¹⁰.

Even the USA did not supply such amounts of armour to Azerbaijan, not to launch the Armenia-Azerbaijan war. Analyzing the Caspian Sea issue, Iran has not changed its position and it does not recognize Azerbaijan agreements with Russia and Kazakhstan (2007). That agreement rules the 60% of the Caspian Sea equators. Iran uses armed forces to ensure its security in the region, particularly using the combat aircrafts against the Azeri sea craft, exploring the seashell . Azerbaijan declared its weakness and need in support in case of a conflict with Iran. The BP and Statoil companies suspended exploring the disputes territories (2001) . Thus, given the weakness of Azerbaijan versus Iran, their opposition in the water area might easily bring to a conflict. Supporting the USA isolating policy toward Iran, Azerbaijan can find itself in isolation of its neighbors, to start with Russia.

¹⁰⁷ <http://focusjerusalem.com/newsroom140.html>

¹⁰⁸ Ceferov K. Yusifzade A. Azərbaycan və İran arasında mal dövriyyəsi iki dəfə artırıla bilər – İranın ticarət naziri (Iran-Azerbaijan Commodity Turnover) // az.trend.az. – 2010

¹⁰⁹ “Azerbaijan-Israel Relations Don’t Harm Iran – Baku,” Interfax, July 1, 2009

¹¹⁰ Kazejev K. Azerbaijan will not allow to use its territory to attack Iran (Азербайджан не допустит использования своей территории для нападения на Иран) // Itar-tass. – 2012 <http://www.itar-tass.com/c11/364414.html>

2.2. The context of Ukrainian and Azeri relations with Iran and its implications

2.2.1. Ukraine: trade and non-material costs

During 2004 the main task of Ukraine in the Middle East foreign policy direction has been an active participant securing geopolitical and geo-economic processes in the Middle East and further strengthening of relations with Middle Eastern countries. For Ukraine, which has defined its main strategic guideline policy towards European integration, mainly at this stage is filling it with practical solutions and actions. The strategy of economic and social development of Ukraine for 2004-2015 years "European integration" examines the markets of the Middle East as the most promising markets for Ukrainian products machine-building and metal products, providing scientific, technical and construction services., Ukraine could take an active part in building facilities primarily industrial infrastructure - bridges, roads, pipelines, ports, airports, railways, major energy and industrial projects. Perspectives also included expansion of cooperation with the Middle East region in the military-technical sphere, joint implementation of Ukrainian technologies and further development of joint national and regional markets.

Due to the UNSC economic sanctions against Iran, Ukraine faces the following prospects. Similarly to the other economic European partners of Iran (including Italy, Britain, Germany), Ukraine will incur large losses for the duration of the embargo. It will have to switch back to the Russian sources of energy or urgently seek new partners, a range of which is very limited. A deepening of bilateral economic cooperation between Ukraine and Iran to the level of strategic dependence (which is adequate for the energy sector) is associated with a number of risks to our country.

At the current stage Ukraine is also on the threshold of significant losses from the sanctions imposed. The first aspect: Ukraine needs to diversify sources of energy and gain greater independence from the supplies from Russia. The second aspect: the loss of already approved contracts with Iran, which called into question the activities of several companies and factories of Ukraine.

Thus, despite some political and economic dividends that Ukraine could get from involvement Iran to the main importers of oil and gas, the negative effects of such cooperation may outweigh the expected benefits (in purely material terms).

An exception may be involvement of Ukraine in large energy projects on a European scale, which will guarantee the implementation of powerful European countries - the US strategic partners. In the case of an embargo on trade with Iran the damages for Ukraine will reach enormous proportions. Ukrainian companies, among which are Naftogaz of Ukraine, InterNaftoHazProm-Pars (INHP), JSC "Institute of Oil Transportation" (IOT) will lose the opportunity to participate in the modernization of Iran's oil and gas industry, the development of its infrastructure and exploration of the Iranian territory. Ukraine also loses the initiative proposed by the Iranian side to make up projects of common building power plants and construction of metal bridges, development of joint ventures in the areas of petrochemical industry, including specific oil refining projects. Also, Ukraine is unable to continue cooperation with Iran to modernize Iranian railway, locomotive repair, and implementation of a projects related to roads and railways. The economic aspect and priority in solving the nuclear conflict plays a central role to Ukraine. For Ukraine the situation in Iran as a whole points to two scenarios of the situation, which depend on the Iran's willingness to sign the new agreement. If the situation in Iran will be settled and consensus agreement will be signed by which Iran once again repeated the commitment given by him in the NPT and complied with the requirements of the UNSC, without unnecessary confrontation, it will positively contribute to the Ukrainian national interests.. If such an agreement will be signed, Ukraine will have opportunities to cooperate with Iran in energy and high-tech industries that significantly contribute to the Ukrainian economy and the establishment of friendly relations with Iran. Ukraine would rely on possible cooperation with Iran in energy. Or rather one can use Iranian gas to diversify sources of natural resources that will help reduce dependence on the Russian side. It should be noted that currently this scenario seems most elusive. Also for 2005, current version of a chance to place in Ukraine parts Iranian nuclear cycle, which would be mutually beneficial for both countries. This was important because Ukraine itself due to lack of funding could not make NFC. But this idea gradually died and today considering applications

Ukrainian leaders on the international scene, Ukraine refuses to enrich uranium, and thus the possibility of cooperation even a hypothetical possibility vanishes.

IRI is the world's second largest gas reserves, therefore, study the prospects for deepening bilateral cooperation is gaining importance for Ukraine. Ukraine is interested in increasing imports from Iran, primarily due to energy supplies. Moreover, Ukraine's one of the most options for increasing bilateral trade is the calculation of Iranian oil for Ukrainian goods. IRI is a major economic partner of Ukraine in the Middle East, cooperation with whom is of great interest for the state. Iran is a promising market of Ukrainian products, in addition, the relevance of increased cooperation in recent years when some problems with the procurement of Russian gas caused the need to diversify sources of supply.

But against the backdrop of relations with Europe and the US which are more than cool, Ukraine urgently needs new markets. According to the experts on economic issues of the International Institute of Comparative Analysis, "basic industrial sector of Ukraine - metallurgy, textile, chemical industry - have recently begun to lose their markets in the US and Russia. Therefore, they need to find new markets. These can be the Middle East." A late summer Kharkov Plant "Electrotyazhmash" signed a major contract to supply equipment for thermal power plants in Iran. The plant will supply equipment of thermal power plants "Bisotoun", located in west of Iran. The company signed a contract production of two sets of turbogenerators THV3202PT3 nominal power 320 MW with Iranian company "AzarabEnergy".

The contract value was not disclosed, but in any case, tens of millions of euro are at stake. The plant must execute the order within two years. The great potential for the Ukrainian state is working with Iran in energy cooperation area, including involvement of Ukraine in the international gas projects, which includes transporting Iranian, Azeri and Turkmen gas to Europe. The deepening of bilateral economic cooperation between Ukraine and Iran to the level of strategic dependence, which is the energy associated with a number of risks to the Ukrainian state. Despite some political and economic dividends that Ukraine could get involvement from Iran to the main importers of oil and gas, the negative effects of such cooperation may outweigh the expected benefits. According to State Statistics Committee of export of goods from Ukraine seven months of 2010 grew at 33, 3% - up to 27.335 billion dollar import - by 30.1% to 30.789 billion dollars. As

already mentioned, the trade balance began to deteriorate in June, if the results of five months it was better than last year's value by 8.3%, then up to six months is more than in 2009 2% and reached 2.515 billion. Exports from Ukraine to Iran in the first half rose by 33.5% - up to 23.098 billion dollars, imports - by 29.6% to 25.613 billion. According to State Statistics Committee in January-July 2010 import-export ratio was 0.89 (seven months in 2009 - 0.87). Ukraine conducted external trade transactions with partners from 208 countries. During the 2010 balance of trade improve reached 12848.2 mln compared to 2009 (in 2009 the negative balance amounted to \$18,580.9 mln). In 2010, imports exceeded exports by 18,531.9 million. During the 2010 balance of trade in goods deteriorated times to 7210 million compared to 2009 (in 2009 the negative balance amounted to 11,321.9 million.).¹¹¹

Thus, it is difficult to overestimate the importance of expansion and strengthening of relations between Ukraine and the IRI, because Iran keeps its influence, though not direct, the events in the Middle East. This dual effect is not always focused and effective, because of powerful contradictions in the camp of those responsible for political decision-making. It is important for high dynamics of Iranian foreign policy of its low efficiency in regard to the impact on the system of regional relations. However, this factor should not be diminished, because Iran has a large financial and cultural potential. But when Ukraine should choose between EU-US and Iran; and when Ukraine had pro-western president, his choice is clear, alignment with western sanctions.

These analysis allows to conclude that the position of Ukraine is based upon ideational and not material factors. Especially the industrial cooperation and energy cooperation clearly show that Ukraine with its alignment with sanctions lost a lot of future cooperation and new contracts with Iran.

¹¹¹ Zakharchenko A. Ukraine-Iranian relations in the context of the confrontation of Iran with the USA and Israel. – National Institute for Strategic Research // www.niss.od.ua/p/147.doc

Institutional level

Founding document of mutual relations Declaration on principles of friendly cooperation between Ukraine and the IRI (April 26, 1992) and the Memorandum between the Government of Ukraine and Government of the IRI on trade and economic cooperation for 2003-2007 (15 October 2002). The development of Ukrainian-Iranian relations in trade and economic fields has been coordinated by the Intergovernmental Ukrainian-Iranian Commission on Economic and Trade Cooperation (CIC). Intergovernmental Commission fulfilled its own action plan for 2004-2007, however, its activities over the past three years actually collapsed, as well as the last (fourth) joint meeting held 26-27 May 2004 in Kiev. Joint Ukrainian-Iranian intergovernmental commission on economic and trade cooperation was created May 22, 2003 based on Article 5 of the Declaration on principles of friendly cooperation between Ukraine and Iran. The parties agreed to meet the Commission once a year alternately in Ukraine and Iran. The Commission is preparing proposals and makes recommendations to the governments of both countries to implement programs and projects of economic and scientific-technical cooperation in areas of mutual interest. Current cooperation between Ukraine and the IRI is based on a number of agreements were reached in the new millennium. They are: the Agreement on Basic Principles of Relations and Principles of Cooperation between Ukraine and the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Memorandum between Ukraine and the Government of the IRI on trade and economic cooperation for 2003-2007 and program areas of trade and economic cooperation between Ukraine and Government of the IRI for 2003-2007 (signed during the official visit of President of IRI S.M.Hatami to Ukraine in October 2002).

Besides Ukraine's accession to the sanctions against Iran cannot but affect the relations between the two countries. The Ukrainian-Iranian relations are still under the impact of the refusal under US pressure of Ukrainian part to participate in the Bushehr contract. As a result, the terms of the run of the NPP "Bushehr" was postponed several times. Despite the Iranian government statements that the decision is not to be reflected on the bilateral cooperation, a cold snap in Ukraine-Iranian relations took place.

Projects

Today, Ukraine and Iran cooperate in 20 projects. First of all, this is partnership in the field of passenger aircraft for local airlines AN-140 (Iran-140) by Ukrainian license. IRI produces 30% of the units, the remaining 70% coming in finished form from Ukraine. In general, planned to produce 43 such planes (according to other sources, 80). The contract signed in 1997, making the first An-140 was completed in October 2000 and in February 2001 began his trial. It is possible to use the aircraft in the military-transport aircraft. Modification of the Iran-140MP is designed for maritime patrol, Iran-140T is a tactical transport version.

Ukraine is interested in joint projects with Iran in various fields. In agrarian field - there's an expectation for the future joint projects: from a potato processing and manufacturing of its dextrose from starch, sugar, chips, polisterol filaments, electrodes, waterproof paint, etc, which as a result of the economic embargo was destined to fail. The most promising directions of cooperation between Ukraine and Iran in the economic sphere is the energy, oil refining, petro chemistry, metallurgy, mining, aircraft, transportation, engineering, agriculture, training. Ukrainian-Iranian cooperation in other high-tech areas: shipbuilding, heavy engineering, mining industry, construction, chemical industry and so on.

The further development of Ukrainian-Iranian relations in trade and economic, scientific and technical cooperation will take place as through the implementation of previously signed at the international level of joint projects, what more interested Iranian side and towards cooperation at the level of private enterprise. Predicted a gradual shift of emphasis from the usual import of Ukrainian production to its import under the conditions of technology transfer, joint venture in Iran.

In scientific and technical cooperation between Ukraine and Iran are following the perspectives of the following. In aircraft: Cooperation in a joint Ukrainian-Iranian project to production in Iran AN-140 (Iran-140), increasing the export volume of aviation products to Iran Ukrainian aviation company Antonov. Antonov (Kyiv), JSC "Motor Sich" (Zaporozhye) and Kharkiv State Aviation Production Enterprise (HDAVP, Kharkov); Launched negotiations to produce a new family in Iran Ukrainian An-148; Transfer of technology, know-how and engineering (provided the rights of the license agreement "contract on joint production planning technology transfer and

production of AN-140. Which is a mandatory part of the contract) manufacturing aircraft engines and technology of their service;

In June 2009 Ukraine and Russia signed a trilateral memorandum with Iran to supply 50 An-148 airliners. The negotiations to increase the supply of liner AN-148 to Iran up to 80 piecestook place. It was expected that a contract to supply aircraft to be signed by the end of 2009 for prior agreement of the An-148 to be delivered to Iran in assembled condition, the last - in a car sets, which planes are to meet Iranian company "HESA".

2.2.2. Azeri position: non-alignment based upon longstanding suspicion.

The relationship between Iran and Azerbaijan is antagonistic due to historical and cultural reasons: Division of the Caspian Sea, Influence of Iran in Shia population, Nag-Karabakh conflict, Ethnic Azeri in Iran etc. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of Azerbaijan in 1991, Relations between the two countries has always been with conflicts and stress. The roots of these tensions are older than Republic of Azerbaijan itself. Azerbaijan was part of Great Iran (Persian Empire) and only around 170 years ago with Treaty of Turkmenchay¹¹² became part of Russian empire. Iran has big Azeri population and Iranian Azerbaijan province (Persian Azerbaijan) is a region in northwestern Iran. The region is referred by some as South Azerbaijan or Southern Azerbaijan;¹¹³ however some scholars and sources view these terms as being irredentist¹¹⁴ and politically motivated. ^{115 116}

Sometimes these tensions even were close to a armed conflicts. Obviously security in Caspian Sea is very important for Azerbaijan (because Azeri gas and oil); The scramble for oil in

¹¹² The treaty was signed on February 21, 1828 by [Abbas Mirza](#), the crown prince, and Allah-Yar Khan Asaf al-Daula, chancellor of [Fath Ali Shah](#), on behalf of Persia, and General [Ivan Paskievich](#) representing [Imperial Russia](#). As was the case for the [Treaty of Gulistan](#), Persia was forced to sign the treaty by Russia, as it had no alternative after the crown prince's defeat. The Russian general had threatened Fath Ali Shah that he would conquer [Tehran](#) in five days unless the treaty was signed.

¹¹³ Brown, Cameron S. 2002 (Dec.). "Observations from Azerbaijan." *Middle East Review of International Affairs*: v. 6, no. 4,

¹¹⁴ ^ Bert G. Fragner, 'Soviet Nationalism': An Ideological Legacy to the Independent Republics of Central Asia ' in" in Van Schendel, Willem(Editor).

¹¹⁵ Michael P. Croissant, "The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict: Causes and Implications", Praeger/Greenwood, 1998. excerpt from pg 61: "During the Soviet-era historical revisionism and myth-building intended to denounce imperialism, the notion of a "northern" and "southern" Azerbaijan was created and propagated throughout USSR. It was charged that the "two Azerbaijanis" once united were separated artificially by conspiracy between imperial Russia and Iran".

¹¹⁶ *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*, Edited by Michael E. Brown, Princeton University Press, 1993

the Caspian Sea has taken a dangerous turn after Iranian aircraft and a gunboat threatened survey ships working for British Petroleum. ¹¹⁷

Also after 1990s nationalist sentiments in Azerbaijan were very strong with one slogan “unity of Azerbaijanis on both sides of Aras” which was dangerous threat for Iranian national security. The sum of these factors, which I call two centuries of suspicion did not allow to two neighbors to have a good economical and political relationship, Iranian nuclear crises and series of sanction give a good chance to Azerbaijan to use this card against Iran.

A Caspian Sea summit in November 2010 brought Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to Baku, but it was Iran’s bilateral relations with Azerbaijan that commanded a greater share of attention. Although Ahmadinejad left Azerbaijan with little to show for his time, Azerbaijani analysts are interpreting the visit as a sign that Baku does not want to give open support to US and EU sanctions against Iran.

Officially, all was positive between the two countries during Ahmadinejad’s official visit; During talks with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, held on the sidelines of the Caspian summit, the Iranian leader declared that “with my Azerbaijani brother [Aliyev] we discussed and have a similar view on all international problems.” But as a post-Soviet country, only Azerbaijan’s pro-government TV stations were allowed to cover the meeting. ¹¹⁸

Baku-based political analyst Rasim Musabekov believes Ahmadinejad’s visit shows that, while Azerbaijan, as a UN member, will follow the UN resolutions, it has no intention to lend official support to the harsher US and EU sanctions against Iran. “Azerbaijan has its own national interests,” Musabekov said. “No country among Iran’s neighbors supported these sanctions and I do not see a reason why Baku should do it.” However, in reality it is more of a political gesture. Baku does not want the relationship to be more strained, Azerbaijan knows that it does not need a new big enemy like Iran and adversarial relations with Iran can save a big effect to Nagorno-Karabakh conflict¹¹⁹ and Caspian Sea Talks. On the other hand if Azerbaijan has not his own

¹¹⁷ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/1335235/Iran-threatens-BP-vessels-in-Caspian-Sea.html>.

¹¹⁸ <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/62410>

¹¹⁹ <http://www.karabagconflict.org/2012/12/26/iran-considers-karabakh-issue-can-be-settled-only-peacefully/>.

conflicts with Iran and Iranian hegemony in region it was difficult for Azerbaijan to follow EU and US sanctions.

Analyst Ilgar Mammadov shares this opinion: “It will be very difficult for the US to convince Baku to closely cooperate on sanctions against Iran” since Azerbaijan is eager to avoid the problems with the Iranian government that official support for US sanctions would entail. “Baku will refer to the economic links between Iran and Armenia – vital for the latter – in downplaying Washington’s arguments.”¹²⁰

On March 19, 2007, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran joined President Robert Kocharyan of Armenia to inaugurate a gas pipeline to pump Iranian natural gas to Armenia,¹²¹ Azerbaijan’s arch-foe. Likewise, in a Washington Institute for Near East Policy analysis, Soner Cagaptay and Alexander Murinson alluded to reports that Israeli intelligence maintains listening posts along the Azerbaijani border with Iran.

On November 11, 2009, Iran unilaterally lifted visa regime for Azerbaijani citizens. But Azerbaijan close his border to Iranian citizens.¹²²

Azerbaijan's president Aliyev has stated that he supports the US sanctions against Iran. In a meeting with US officials in Baku in February 2010 Aliyev expressed his support and he also criticized European oil and gas companies for sabotaging the international sanctions regime. This information came out in one of the released diplomatic cables of the US diplomatic cables leak in November 2010.

On March 2012 Azerbaijan arrested 22 people on suspicion of plotting attacks on the U.S and Israeli embassies in Baku on behalf of neighboring Iran. The ministry said that the suspects were recruited from 1999 onwards and trained in the use of weapons and spy techniques at military camps in Iran to enable them to gather information on foreign embassies, organizations and companies in Azerbaijan and stage attacks. All 22 were found guilty and given jail terms of at least a decade.

¹²⁰ <http://www.meforum.org/article/987> Israel and Azerbaijan's Furtive Embrace.

¹²¹ <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/3/5030F364-4B10-4C18-9C39-076C11C7F742.html>

¹²² [Iran unilaterally lifts visa regime for Azerbaijani citizens](#). Victoria Dementyeva. APA. 11 November 2009.

Helgesen, Jan-Petter (November 29, 2010). "Wikileaks: Statoil får kjeft for Iran-støtte" [Wikileaks: Statoil is scolded for supporting Iran]. *Stavanger Aftenblad* (in Norwegian). [Archived](#) from the original on 30 November 2010. Retrieved November 29, 2010.

Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov has denied reports that Israel has been given permission to use Azerbaijan bases for an attack on Iran. Top Israeli security officials blamed the leak of the plan on Obama administration officials who were trying to prevent the strike on Iran. The plan apparently involves using an Israeli tanker aircraft painted in the colors of a third country airline company that would land and refuel in Azerbaijan and then refuel the Israeli strike aircraft.

Azerbaijan position affected by his tense relations with Iran, Azeri position is mixture of ideational and rationalism. All this factors and circumstances show since 2012 until now Iranian-Azerbaijani relation became worst and Azerbaijan determined and committed to the implementation of sanctions.

Chapter 3. Analyzing non-Alignment with sanctions: Belarus and Tajikistan

This chapter looks into the position of Belarus and Tajikistan, two states that are expected to chose a non-alignment with sanctions;

Belarus is a post-soviet state, which is well known for its anti-Western policy. Among all CIS states, Belarus is the country which has the most conflictual relationship with the West¹²³. Since 2003 European and American political leaders increasingly began to refer to Belarus as “Europe's last Dictatorship”¹²⁴. Following the 2003 invasion of Iraq, American intelligence agencies reported that aides of Saddam Hussein managed to acquire Belarusian passports (while noting, however, at it was unlikely that Belarus would offer a safe haven for Saddam and his two sons).¹²⁵ These actions, along with arms deals with Iran, prompted Western governments to take a tougher position against the president of Belarus, Aliaksandr Lukashenko. The US was particularly angered by the arms sales and also relations between Belarus and EU worsened. President Alexander Lukashenko has a special policy, He and other Belarusian officials are also the subject of Sanctions imposed by the European Union and the US for human rights violations off and on since 2006.¹²⁶¹²⁷ Belarus also is under EU and US series of sanctions, last sanction announced by EU in May 29, 2013

Alexander Lukashenko's domestic policies are similar to those of the former Soviet Union, and aim at maintaining government control over key industries. At the same time, the Belarusian President is keen on denouncing the privatization seen in other former Soviet republics. and also support enemy of his enemy (which in this logic Iran has an important place), in this chapter with many examples we will see close cooperation between Iran and Belarus as a close ally. .¹²⁸

¹²³ Vysotskaya Guedes Vieira, Alena. 'The politico-military alliance of Russia and Belarus: Re-examining the role of NATO and the EU in the light of the intra-alliance security dilemma. Forthcoming in Europe-Asia Studies.

¹²⁴ "Profile: Europe's last dictator?". BBC News. 2001-09-10. Retrieved 2007-10-13.

¹²⁵ "Saddam aides may flee to Belarus: report". Australian Broadcasting Corporation. 2003-06-24. Retrieved 2007-10-13.

¹²⁶ "COUNCIL DECISION 2012/642/CFSP concerning restrictive measures against Belarus" (PDF). *Official Journal of the European Union*. Council of the European Union. 15 Oct 2012. Retrieved 2013-01-07.

¹²⁷ Department of the Treasury (5 Dec 2012). "Belarus Sanctions". Government of the US. Retrieved 2013-01-07.

¹²⁸ May 29, 2013 - implementing regulation (EU) No [494/2013](#) of 29 May 2013 implementing Regulation (EC) No 765/2006 concerning restrictive measures in respect of Belarus.

In US and EU Belarus has been always suspected of helping Iran skirt sanctions. In September 2011 Western diplomats told Reuters:

“Belarus is the latest country that Western powers suspect of helping Iran skirt even U.N. sanctions aimed at preventing it from expanding its ballistic missile and nuclear programs.... Belarus is becoming a key element in Iran's efforts to develop its SSM (surface-to-surface missile) and nuclear capabilities, especially with regard to navigation and guidance products, which are defined as dual-use..”¹²⁹

Belarus is becoming increasingly important to Iran, due to the drastic reduction in Iran's ability to procure products from countries such as China, Turkey, Venezuela, Russia and Emirates (Dubai), which used to be its major sources of such procurement; In this case Belarus has no reason for alignment with sanctions against Iran. Minsk and Tehran can help each others to bypass sanctions. This ideational link is expected to be visible in Belarusian decisions regarding the alignment with sanctions on Iran.

As for Tajikistan, it was part of Great Iran (Persia) and until now it is one the few countries in which Persian language, culture and traditions were saved, and which has connection to all ancient Persian culture (like NowRuz Persian New Year). What is more, Tajikistan is one the few countries in the world which use Persian language as its official language. Tajikistan siege has been the Uyghur Turkic¹³⁰ countries, with which Tajikistan has deeply ingrained tensions until today (specially with Uzbekistan). In the all modern regional conflicts involving Tajukistan, other important regional actors like Russia, China and US, have supported the opposite party (either Uzbekistan or Kyrgyzstan). This support is critical to Tajikistan. For example, Tajikistan has the greatest capacity for hydroelectric power in the region (over 300 terawatt-hours (TWh) annually), but during the winter it is often dependent on importing electricity from Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in no small

¹²⁹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/09/15/us-iran-belarus-sanctions-idUSTRE78E0VA20110915>

¹³⁰ The Turkic ethnic group living in Eastern and Central Asia. Today, Uyghurs live primarily in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in the People's Republic of China. An estimated 80% of Xinjiang's Uyghurs live in the southwestern portion of the region, the Tarim Basin. Outside Xinjiang, the largest community of Uyghurs in China is in Taoyuan County, in south-central Hunan province. Outside of China, significant diasporic communities of Uyghurs exist in the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. Smaller communities are found in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Germany, Russian Siberia and Turkey.

part because the water used for hydroelectricity freezes, and demand increases. However, because of shortages in those countries as well, electricity supplies have been severely restricted.¹³¹ Furthermore, Uzbekistan cut natural gas supplies to Tajikistan on 24 January 2008 for payment delays.¹³² The amount of water in the reservoirs is at a record low.¹³³ In this conflict and also other several problems (like railway blockade from Uzbekistan in 2012) it was only Iran, which stand by Tajikistan with all his power. For instance, Iran stopped all shipments from Persian Gulf to Uzbekistan in one of the aforementioned conflicts. In this case we can expect the Tajik non-alignment to be very rational: Tajikistan needs Iran as a trustful political-economic partner and investor. In terms of the overall character, non-alignment is expected: Tajikistan's important economic and cultural ties to Iran leave the Tajik government with little incentive to comply with US and EU sanctions.

3.1. The historical context of relations with Iran and its implications

3.1.1. The historical context and the relationship today: Belarus

Belarus and Tajikistan present a group of CIS close partners of IRI. Especially in the case of Belarus, the relations with Iran are driven by political reasons, in an attempt to withstand the West. Though these relations are not deprived economic factor. Belarus presents a unique and specific case in the CIS region due to the fact that its closeness with Iran is based on political will only - in absence of religious, cultural, or even geographical proximity.

Diplomatic relations between the Republic of Belarus and the IRI were established in March 1993, but developed rather slow at the beginning: While the Embassy of the Republic of Belarus started its activities in Iran in December 1997, the Embassy of the IRI started its duty in Minsk since February 2001. However, after 2000, a high level of political relations has been achieved between two countries, including exchange of high ranked delegations.

¹³¹ Farangis Najibullah (January 13, 2008). "Tajikistan: Energy shortages, extreme cold create crisis situation". EurasiaNet. Archived from the original on 2010-01-16. Retrieved 2008-02-08.

¹³² Olga Tutubalina (January 25, 2008). "Tajik energy crisis deepens as Uzbekistan cuts down natural gas supplies". Yahoo! News. Archived from the original on July 18, 2011. Retrieved 2008-02-09.

¹³³ "Severe energy crisis leaves Tajikistan without heat and water". CARE International. February 7, 2008. Retrieved 2008-02-08.

The President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko came to Iran for the first time on March 6-8, 1998. The visit of the former President of the IRI Mohammad Khatami held on September 9-11, 2004. The President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko paid a second visit to Iran on November 5-7, 2006. The President of Iran Mahmud Ahmadinejad stayed in Belarus with a two day return visit on May 21-22, 2007. Presidents of two countries met within the framework of Millennium Summit in New-York in September 2000 (with Mohammad Khatami), 60th session of UN General Assembly and NAM summit in Havana (Cuba) on September 2005 and September 2006, respectively (with Mahmud Ahmadinejad).

There was a number of visits exchange between the Heads of Parliaments, secretaries of Security Councils, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Ministers of Commerce, Ministers of Industries, Ministers of Defense, Ministers of Culture and Heads of Central banks of both countries. Belarus and Iran cooperate constructively on the global arena: both countries provide active support to each other in the elections to the UN bodies. Belarus and Iran agree their points of view on the main issues of global agenda, in particularly concerning the necessity of creating the fair world order, based on strengthening the multipolar world and following universally admitted standards of international law.

Following a *rapprochement* between Minsk and Tehran, they decided to move on with a number of commercial projects, the most resounding of which is the oil production project at Jofeyr field in the south west of Iran. The service contract for development of this well was concluded in September 2007 and a joint venture Belarus Petroleum Company Ltd, (BPC) was founded. In spite of the initial enthusiasm, the project ran into difficulties, and had not started oil extraction thus far.

Another large scale Belarusian-Iranian project is Samand car assembly plant. The Samand cars maker, the Iranian-Belarusian-British joint venture Unison, is the only car manufacturer in Belarus. In 2010 Unison produced 241 cars, which were far below the 30 000 mark expectations related to it. The company's representatives declared their intention to increase their production rate in 2010 by 4.5 times compared to 2009 and produce 1.1 thousand cars . Samand assembly turned out to be "not very profitable", the Iranian ambassador admitted. The Iranian side hopes that Belarus joining the Customs Union will "lead to a duty increase which will make home car assembly profitable." It was decided to produce 2 more Samand car models in Belarus.

Among the problems with Samand, there were some legal issues. 49% of the project belongs to Iran Khodro, which in 2009, increased its stake to 49%. This Iranian company which signed the 2007 investment agreement furthermore announced plans to ramp up its controlling stake, adding that this will be a major requirement for further investment and the launch of the second phase of the project. At the same time, the Samand projects were has suffered from the negative characteristics of the Belarusian economic model: most of the production has been realized on the basis of the state order.

Unpromising project lasted six years, showing only modest achievements. Only over a thousand cars were released, obsolete long before a noisy campaign to draw foreign investment. However, investment has not realize, even in the form of written-off from the Iranian plant equipment. As the Ambassador noted, they "had legal and technical problems."

Among such problems is the fact that the car market of Belarus has been already saturated by models in its class. In addition, the production of "Samand" took place during a period of global financial and economic crisis. Though the official reason of the project shut down(in 2009), is the legal issues as to the controlling interest, still it happened due to the lack of demand for Iranian cars from the Belarusian companies and the problem is not in crisis, or the control of the assembly. Virtually all production Samand - about 1,140 cars - has been implemented using the administrative resource (in ministries and state-owned enterprises); the also Iranian side, was not satisfied with the relationship. The current Iranian ambassador in Minsk Abdullah Hosseini said in summer 2009, "The administration system of this country [Belarus] is not too smooth (ravan), it has a peculiar bureaucracy and lack of regular sea route with the Iranian side is a noticeable problem." Another problem, according to Mr. Hosseini, is that "the English language in this country is not widespread."¹³⁴

For Iran, Russia, Ukraine and Belarus have unique features not found in Western countries. Belarus has a small economy with an annual turnover of capital less than 70 billion dollars. It is 3% of Russia, but from the country can make a good race to improve its position in the international arena. She also has great potential in high-tech industries.

¹³⁴ <http://belarusdigest.com/story/belarus-iran-noisy-friendship-without-real-results-5225>

As to the "Jofeir" project, it was also shut down in 2012. The official reasons are the same - technical and legal issues. The length of the field is 22 km long and 10 km wide, oil reserves are estimated at 2.1 billion barrels. Contractual agreement for US \$ 500 million was signed between "Belorusneft" and the National Iranian Oil Company (Nina) in September 2007. Belarusian company acquired the right to develop the field Jofeir. The development strategy of the energy potential of Belarus for the period until the end of 2020 provides production in Iran more than 9 million tons of oil. In August 2011, the Production Association "Belorusneft" has officially announced its withdrawal from the contract as "new data on geology and financing of the projects arose, bringing about shift in the contract provisions". Besides, in March 2011, the US government imposed sanctions against "Belorusneft". The reason for this was the cooperation of Belarusian companies with Iran in the oil sector. This demonstrates which Iran and Belarus even under sanctions trying to develop their economic relations, which have not any economic reasons, in this case it is clear Belarus have an ideological action.

3.1.2. The historical context and the relationship today: Tajikistan

Official position as to the sanctions was outlaid clearly by the President of Tajikistan in his annual address to the Majlis Oli (legislative body) in 2008:

“The Republic of Tajikistan is an active partner of the international coalition in fighting against terrorism, and it confirms its intention to be such partner in future as well. In this direction, we will develop our cooperation with the US of America, the European Union and other countries of coalition not only in this important field, but we will continue pay particular attention to developing mutual beneficial economic cooperation”.

IRI is one of the first states in the region, which officially recognized the sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Tajikistan and in January 1992 opened its Embassy in Dushanbe. Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan in Tehran is in operation since July 1995. In June 1992, the

first visit of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan to Iran took place. Documents were signed to start the bilateral relations. Among them are: the Declaration of Principles of Cooperation between the Republic of Tajikistan and the IRI, a memorandum on political consultations between the Republic of Tajikistan and the IRI, a memorandum on scientific and cultural exchange between the Republic of Tajikistan and the IRI, a memorandum on economic and scientific-technical cooperation between the Republic of Tajikistan and the IRI, a memorandum between the Republic of Tajikistan and the IRI on the abolition of visas for holders of official and diplomatic passports¹³⁵.

Common historical roots, the affinity of language, culture, religion and traditions have created a basis for the development of cooperation. Much has been done to intensify the Tajik-Iranian bilateral relations. At a high level official in 1995, 1997 and 2006 were mutual visits of the Presidents of Tajikistan and Iran. The legal basis for the relations accounts more than 57 documents.

New positive sign in the bilateral relationship can be called the desire of Iranian private sector to participate more actively in the various trade and economic projects in Tajikistan. Year after year, continue to steadily develop relations between Tajikistan and Iran for the benefit of the two peoples in the interests of regional and international peace, stability and development, become a regular political contacts in the bilateral format and within the international community and regional organizations like the SCO, OIC, ECO¹³⁶.

After the introduction of the US sanctions in the 1990s, the US pursued a policy of isolating Iran in the north and south (the "Domato" law, 1995), and Armenia, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan supported and strengthened ties with the USA, while Tajikistan supported Iran. Tajikistan cooperation with Iran in the 1990s was mainly based on the principle of Islamic brotherhood and cultural-historical community. The current close relationship between Iran and Tajikistan is important given its historical context: in the early 1990s, cooperation between the two countries was limited to the cultural sphere and education, and the initiative mainly came from the Iranian side. Though Tajikistan acquired sovereignty, it still remained tied to Russia.

¹³⁵ Iran and Tajikistan (Иран и Таджикистан) // Georgia Times. - 2012 <http://www.georgiatimes.info/analysis/72405.html>

¹³⁶ MOHIADDIN MESBAHI (2004): Iran and Central Asia: paradigm and policy, Central Asian Survey, 23:2, 109-139 To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02634930410001310508>

With the formation of the new Tajik state and national interests of Tajik-Iranian relations have been launched in economy. The economic aspect of the Tajik-Iranian relations was strengthened due to the socio-economic situation of post-conflict Tajikistan. Since 1996 the potential ability appeared to attract investments from Iran for the construction of such important objects such as Kulob-Darvaz roadway, Sangtuda power station. In 1997 the talks on Iranian investment in Sangtuda, roads Kulyab Kalaihumb and joint exploitation of gas fields were launched. In 2010 With the participation of Iran in Tajikistan such projects as construction of tunnel "Istiqlof", HPS "Sangtuda-2"¹³⁷, JV "TodzhIron" were launched, and the construction of the tunnel "Chormagzak" drafted¹³⁸.

On the other hand, common culture, history, language and identity of Tajiks and Iranians, as a cultural factor provide a special role of Tajikistans foreign policy. Though Iran is building its relationship with republics of Central Asia in the context of regional cooperation and the interests of all the geopolitical rivals, the relations with Tajikistan are mutually driven by cultural, religious closeness. This reflects the constructivist approach of the two states in building the relationship.

¹³⁷ Iran sends equipment by air to complete Sangtuda-2 dam // Asia news.- 2011 // <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Iran-sends-equipment-by-air-to-complete-Sangtuda-2-dam-20447.html#>

¹³⁸ (Umarov F.B. REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN AND THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN: COOPERATION FEATURES // Tajikistan and the modern world. - 2010. - P.88-97 http://mts.tj/vestniki/vestnik_%20%20_25_2010.pdf#page=88) (Умаров Ф.Б. РЕСПУБЛИКА ТАДЖИКИСТАН И ИСЛАМСКАЯ РЕСПУБЛИКА ИРАН: ОСОБЕННОСТИ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА // Таджикистан и современный мир. – 2010. – p.88-97 http://mts.tj/vestniki/vestnik_%20%20_25_2010.pdf#page=88)

3.2. How does Belarus and Tajikistan justify their position on sanctions

3.2.1. Justifying the position on sanctions: Belarus

Belarus does not ally with the sanctions against Iran. Belarus as a post-soviet country have a one the closest system between CIS sets, sometimes it is impossible to find official position of country but we can analyze political actions and economic relations and find a way to understand (non) alignment with sanctions.

The Belarusian position has to be evaluated in the context of Belarus' antagonistic relations with the West. Belarus has been subject to sanctions itself, having tensions with both the US and the EU. So this is a position when there is nothing to lose but this is only what lies on the surface.

Certainly the Belarusian and Iranian press are not paradigms of freedom and cannot be expected to discuss sanction avoidance openly. Nevertheless, not all relationships are innocent; the Islamic Republic's developing ties to Belarus certainly bear watching.

Belarus and Iran have continuous series of official visits at different levels (president's official visits till economic delegations). Because Belarus is not only among Russia's closest allies, but also a major importer of Russian defense equipment, the revolving door visits of Iranian delegations to Belarus should raise questions about why Belarus has become such a frequent destination for Iranian officials and delegations. Normally, Iranian officials' travel and diplomatic outreach outside its immediate neighborhood falls into one of two categories: The first target of Iranian outreach is to those countries which sit on the United Nations Security Council or the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Board of Governors, that is, countries for which the Islamic Republic can receive a quid pro quo for any trade or assistance. The second category is military and nuclear trade partners, such as North Korea, Venezuela and Belarus.

March 29: The US Department of State designated the Belarusian-owned petroleum company Belarusneft under the Iran Sanctions Act for entering into a \$500 million business contract with the sanctioned Iranian firm NaftIran Intertrade Company. NaftIran sought to develop the Jofeir oil field, an energy sector investment that could be used to support the development of Iran's nuclear program.¹³⁹ Belarusneft's parent company, Belneftekhim, was sanctioned in 2007.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ "Iran Sanctions Act Announcement," US Department of State, March 29, 2011. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2011/03/159309.htm>

Iran and Belarus are close and have the political will for cooperation. At the same time, this cooperation is technically and economically not always beneficial, which demonstrates that the political will is not enough, as the Samand and Joyfer projects illustrate. However, there is also cooperation in the military sphere except for investments, and they are performed with greater efficiency.¹⁴¹ Along with this support from Iran, Belarusian companies suffer that have had lost the opportunity to do business with European and US banks. However after long history of sanctions they came to know how to deal with it¹⁴². Slowly they studied how they can bypass sanctions and how they can develop and continue their relations in secret. It is interesting to know national Iranian(Caspian Airlines) and national Belarusian Airlines, everyday have direct flight Tehran to Minsk, Whereas now even Iran Air cancelled many his flights to many European capital.

Belarus has no reasons to ally with the sanctions, as it will solve nothing in the current tensions with the EU, or USA. None of the joint projects as Samand, the joint oil production or even construction of plants met their deadlines and ultimately goals. The only political will has been insufficient to fulfill the projects or meet a consensus in the legal sphere. It is clear Belarus non alignment with sanctions on Iran have an ideational reasons which based in Belarus policy.

¹⁴⁰ Josh Rogin, "State Department sanctions Belarus firm for doing business with Iran; GOP not satisfied," Foreign Policy, March 29, 2011.

http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/03/29/state_department_sanctions_belarus_firm_for_doing_business_with_iran_gop_not_satisf.

¹⁴¹ Sergei Bogdan FROM KARAKAS TO TEHRAN: BELARUSIAN DIPLOMACY IN ASIA, AFRICA, LATIN AMERICA AND AFRICA // foreign Affairs - 2009 - p 99-11

¹⁴² Belarus walking on the razor's edge in its oil cooperation with Iran // AFN. January 29, 2010: <http://www.afn.by/news/i/130744>

3.2.2. Justifying the position on sanctions: Tajikistan

Chairman of Tajikistan's Assembly of Representatives Shukurjon Zuhurov voices opposition to sanctions against Iran, in March 2012, while stressing the importance of settling issues through diplomatic channels and dialogue:

“Tajikistan’s parliament, government and people condemn sanctions against the Islamic Republic [...] despite enemy plots against the Muslim people of Iran, the country is powerful and enjoys a special position in the region and the world. Two countries have signed more than 150 agreements and over 150 Iranian firms are conducting important projects in Tajikistan in the fields of transportation, development, gas pipeline, water and electricity transfer and trade. [...] Iran as Tajikistan’s closest and most reliable strategic ally both in the region and the world after the country’s independence in 1991.”¹⁴³

Tajik government disappointed by the Western biased position on regional conflicts, opts to choose a pragmatic, rationalist stance by choosing, and constantly repeating its non-alignment position on sanctions against Iran.

As mentioned above, IRI for a number of reasons holds a special place in the foreign policy of the Republic of Tajikistan. Specificity of the relations between Tajikistan and Iran, above all, is a consequence of the conceptual provisions of the foreign policy of the Republic of Tajikistan, which were presented at the XVIII Session of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Tajikistan by President Emomali Rahmon during his tenure as a Chairman of the Supreme Council of the RT December 28, 1993.

According to the Tajikistan President, - “In developing of the concept of foreign policy, we have to keep in mind that the Republic of Tajikistan in its geographical and geopolitical location and economic interests is included in five political communities, two of which are the communities of the Persian and Islamic states”.¹⁴⁴ According to the dynamics of the relations between Tajikistan and Iran, multilateral cooperation between the two countries is mainly carried out within these two communities i.e. based on the historical, cultural and religious generality. Although Tajikistan and

¹⁴³ <http://www.presstv.com/detail/230767.html>. (12 June 2013)

¹⁴⁴ <http://www.euronews.com/2012/03/30/president-emomali-rahmon-there-is-no-short-cut-to-democracy/>.

Iran have different, even in some areas opposing concepts of foreign policy, the abovementioned communities play a significant role in the relations between the two countries.

The constructivism in the Iranian relations with the partners leads to economic obstacles. The political will only is often insufficient to cover all economic needs. This is true in the case of Tajikistan as it is in the case of Belarus.

Iran, which is constructing several large projects, has to deal with noticeable problems with their conclusion. For a variety of reasons the aforementioned projects, the tunnel "Istiklol" and Sangtuda-2 power plant, were disrupted. Iranians committed more than 37 million dollars for tunnel construction "Istiklol" since 2003, and 180 million for Sangtuda-2¹⁴⁵.

The first obstacle was connected with the deterioration of tensions between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The second lied within the domestic Tajikistan policy, Dushanbe did not commit to its obligation to provide sufficient logistics. Finally, the third one were the legal issues between Iran and Tajikistan. Iran finds itself between two fires – Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, which for a long time have deep dissents over water supplies, and Uzbekistan repeatedly closed the railways to Tajikistan, as they want to prevent any water plants in the Tajik territories which can endanger their own security. Due to the regular railway disrupt blockade of Uzbekistan in 2010 Iran has to deliver individual components by air¹⁴⁶. Tajikistan has not prepared the network infrastructure to sell electricity to Afghanistan and Pakistan, which could but eventually did not make the hydropower profitable. As to the legal issues, Tehran and Dushanbe failed to agree on details of the new delineation of the ownership rights within the projects, namely, a time during which "Sangtuda-2" will be owned by the Iranian investor.

In the end, the difficulties in the implementation of the already agreed investment programs created a skeptical view as to the new plans, statements of the parties (construction in Tajikistan

¹⁴⁵ Попов Tajikistan in the context of the foreign policies of major countries // Problems of National Strategy. - 2011. - № 3. - P. 40-60 (Попов С. Таджикистан в контексте внешнеэкономических стратегий крупных государств // ПРОБЛЕМЫ НАЦИОНАЛЬНОЙ СТРАТЕГИИ. - 2011. - №3. - P. 40-60)

¹⁴⁶ Muzalevsky R. Iran Maneuvers Uzbek-Tajik Squabbles // International relations and security network. - 2011 [<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Articles/Detail/?id=127166&lng=en>]

two cement plants cost about \$ 300 million or the hydropower construction "Ayni" with the capacity of 170 MW)¹⁴⁷.

Dushanbe sees in Iran, as in Russia, a potential investor, into its infrastructure, both internal and interstate one. This is well understood in Tehran which takes into account that the transport and communication isolation of Tajikistan significantly reduces the intensity of mutual trade and economic relations. The volume of trade between the two countries in 2010 amounted to about 200 million dollars. For this indicator Iran is only up to 5-6th place among the leading trade partners of the Republic, strongly after Russia and China. The size of the public debt of Tajikistan to Iran over the debt to China is small and of only 17.4 million dollars. The trade is deeply dependent on Uzbek position, as there are no alternative railways, and the roads cross Afghanistan territories.

"We do not support any sanctions, particularly economic ones. Sanctions - is not the answer," - said Hamrokhon Zafiri Tajik Foreign Minister at the briefing, when asked about the attitude of Dushanbe to the sanctions imposed by the West. "We adhere the position of political negotiations and diplomatic solution to this kind of problem," - said the head of the Tajik Foreign Ministry. According to him, on the Tajik-Iranian economic ties "sanctions will not affect." IRI Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi, who held talks with his Tajik counterpart during an official visit in Dushanbe, declared "We intend to strengthen bilateral relations. Iran is well placed, and Tajikistan has good features that can be implemented." ¹⁴⁸ Many times Tajik officials announced that the IRI is a strategically important partner for Tajikistan.

Tajikistan is not going to support sanctions for two reasons. And in this case it has both constructivist and pragmatic approach. Tajikistan is not only geographically close to Iran, they have closeness within the culture, religion, traditions and language. At the same time, based on these aforementioned connections, Iran is supporting Tajikistan economically. For Iran, Tajikistan is an outpost to widen its influence in the region, thus Iran also has pragmatic reasons to build its security on its own terms. For Tajikistan, Iran is one of the most important trade partners. With Iranian investments and companies the important infrastructure projects in energy, transport and

¹⁴⁷ Tajikistan suffered from sanctions against Iran // Voice of Russia. - 2012 [http://rus.ruvr.ru/2012_03_31/70216760/] (Таджикистан пострадал от санкций против Ирана // Голос России . - 2012 [http://rus.ruvr.ru/2012_03_31/70216760/])

¹⁴⁸ <http://world.einnews.com/news/hamrokhon-zafiri>.

agriculture are realized. According to the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, and direct investment in the economy of Iran, Tajikistan in 2011 exceeded \$ 14.2 million¹⁴⁹.

Tajikistan's economy has suffered serious losses from the introduction of the West of sanctions against Iran, which is accused of seeking to build nuclear weapons. Greater involvement of Iran in the Tajik economy is prevented by the sanctions, according to Tajik leaders.¹⁵⁰ Still, after the introduction of sanctions Tajikistan and Iran continue cooperation. Tajikistan expressed its will to import Iranian oil, and cooperate in joint construction of gas pipeline routed Tajikistan - Afghanistan – Kyrgyzstan – China. If this pipeline is built, it will be possible to get the route for transporting oil and gas from Iran, and water - from Tajikistan to Iran, Afghanistan and some of the Gulf countries. Tajik-Iranian also discussed the construction of a refinery in Tajikistan by Iranian technology. Thus, Tajikistan will not align with the sanctions, as it implies will suffering significant losses. First, it will lose the great investor. This loss will bring about economic disrupts within domestic economy, as Iran helps Tajikistan cover the internal debts. Second, Tajikistan without its partner will remain the only warrior in the hegemonic Central Asia region with strong Russian influence. And next, it will lose all chances to deal positively the water issues with Uzbekistan, especially given Russian support for Uzbekistan.

As we explained in this chapter Tajikistan and Belarus have different types of non-alignment, which in conclusion we will talk about this again. Belarus vision is more ideational and Tajikistan more rationalism, In the case of both countries also there are ideational reasons for non-alignment. Obviously we have kind of mix between Rationalism and Ideational (Ideology); also both country had consistent in non alignment with sanctions on IRI.

¹⁴⁹ Mark N. Katz Russia, Iran, and Central Asia: Impact of the US Withdrawal from Afghanistan // Iran Regional Forum .- 2013.- № 3. – pp. 1-4

¹⁵⁰ Marlene Laruelle (2007): The Return of the Aryan Myth: Tajikistan in Search of a Secularized National Ideology, Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity, 35:1, 51-70

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Conclusion

This dissertation aimed at describing and exploring the foreign policy of the five countries of the CIS in the context of the hardened economic and political sanctions against IRI. The CIS states were chosen due to their traditional economic, political, and especially military-industrial cooperation with Iran, which does not seem to be present in the case of most states. Due to this multi-dimensional interdependence with Iran, the alignment with economic sanctions would both be viewed differently, and it would also be the cause of significant losses for the Iranian economy. Given this kind of close and long standing relations between Iran and CIS states, decisions on alignment or non-alignment of these countries are very important for the EU, the US and the international system, as a whole.

Our Hypothesis was that the position of the CIS states on sanctions against Iran would be different, depending upon the countries (cultural, political, economic and geographic variables) and their proximity relations with the IRI. We also aimed at exploring the ideational or rationalist nature of the choices, and the stability as related to the ideational or rational choices.

We expected the Russian Position on sanctions to be stable over time, and Russia would be only aligning with UN sanctions with regard to the control of the nuclear program of Iran, while it would be non-aligning with EU and US sanctions. Nevertheless, our findings did not support fully the original hypothesis: on the one hand, Russia supports the UN sanctions, tending to contain Iran on its pursuit to become a nuclear power (hence, the hypothesis has been confirmed). As far as the alignment with the UN sanctions is regarded, security considerations do outweigh economic benefits. In light of the aforementioned rationale, Russia is willing to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear state, even though Iranian economic weakness reflects on the Russian economy.

On the other hand, there is ambiguity as to what extent does Russia favor an alignment positioning with US and the EU sanctions. This ambiguity is especially clear in the case of Russia's withdrawal from the delivery of S-300. Behind this decision, there are several reasons, including the unwillingness to strengthen Iran, as it would bring about its nuclearization and challenges at the Southern border for Russia afterwards, unwillingness to change the balance of power in the

Middle East but it also sheds light upon some implications for Russia's relations with the West, especially with the USA and Israel.

This quasi-alignment posture of Russia (with US and EU sanctions) is surprising to the extent that Russia has significant economic interests and large-scale projects in Iran. In addition, the economic collapse of this economy is undesirable for Russia, as the economic instability in Iran could affect the Russian economy. Moreover, Russia views Iran as a partner. Russia's support to Iran and the apparent unwavering passes new test following the publication of the IAEA report. In the relations between Russia and Iran in the past there can be depicted a lot of ups and downs. And yet, both countries do seem to manage to overcome their differences, as they are interested in cooperation, which overshadows all other considerations.

Russia's zigzag position of sanctions against Iran is closely related with Russia's relationship with the West. Russia's position can be better understood if one perceives that Moscow is actually using its relationship with Iran as a means to increase its leverage regarding the US and the West. As it was demonstrated before, Russia's image of a reliable partner in Iran is changing: Russia is considered to be yielding to the US pressure (especially with regard to such cases as delaying the construction and commissioning of the Buser nuclear power plant, withdrawing from/slowing down the delivery of S-300). However, even in this changing situation, Russia's economic losses in such a game directed simultaneously towards Iran and the West are minimal (except for the sale of controlled anti-aircraft missiles S-300): commercial ties between Russia and Iran as a result of these sanctions are not severely affected. Russia remains one of the main suppliers of arms to Iran, and Russian companies have undertaken a significant role in assisting the development of Iran's peaceful energy, including nuclear sector: Russia has recently completed the construction of Iran's first nuclear reactor in Bushehr. Although Russian businessmen complain about tough Iranian negotiating tactics, , Russian companies are well positioned to expand their activities in case of isolating Iran. At the same time, Russia reaps the benefits of the improved relationship with the West stemming from the quasi-alignment posture, while maintaining the image of a country with a considerable influence over Iran (including the start of Buser, as demonstrated before). It is other act highlighting Russia has used the card of Iran in a rationalistic way.

As far as the case of Ukraine and Azerbaijan is regarded, our hypothesis was that Ukraine (since 2005) and Azerbaijan positions on sanctions (stable over time) would be to align with all sanctions: UN, US and the EU. This would be especially visible in Ukraine after the shift in Ukrainian foreign policy following the start of the presidency of Viktor Yushchenko in 2005. Ukraine's efforts to join EU and NATO would be accompanied by the alignment with all EU and US policies. Again, in what regards to the sanctions on Iran, the case of Azerbaijan' alignment was expected to be a result of the foreign policy choices related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The cases of Ukraine and Azerbaijan allow to conclude on different types of non-alignment. In the case of both countries, there are ideational reasons toward non-alignment. Azerbaijan has deep tensions with Iran based upon historical, political, social, territorial and religious problems whilst the alignment with sanctions against Iran gave Baku an important opportunity for increasing pressure against Tehran. Both countries have a pragmatic policy, and one can perceive that their positions are for the benefit of their national interest. However, our findings indicate that the alignment in the cases of Ukraine and Azerbaijan is different: while there are rationalist considerations related to the pressure over Iran in the case of Azerbaijan, there is mainly the aspiration to show good faith to the US and the EU in the case of post-2005 Ukraine's pro-Western leadership eager to join NATO and the EU. In the case of Belarus and Tajikistan, we expected non-alignment. Our hypothesis was Belarus does not support any kind of sanctions against Iran. Belarus does not entertain good relations with EU and US, and Belarus itself is under the Western (US and EU) sanctions. In this light, Belarus simply has no reasons for alignment with sanctions against Iran, on the contrary: Minsk and Tehran can help each other to bypass sanctions. This ideational link was indeed visible in the Belarusian decisions regarding the non-alignment with sanctions on Iran, in spite of a number of failed projects aimed at strengthening economic and commercial ties. Belarus position is clearly ideational and even ideological (anti-western and anti-imperialism).

Insofar the for the case of Tajikistan is concerned, it is only aligning with UN sanctions against Iran. As comprehensively described in the third chapter, Tajikistan has a lot of historical, cultural and traditional characteristics in common with Iran, while Tajikistan's economy is heavily dependent on Iran. The two countries have a lot of common projects, which are of crucial importance for

Tajikistan (e.g. Sange Toode). In terms of the value of a partner to Tajikistan, it is hard to find a replacement of Iran: Western aid to Tajikistan is not comparably significant. At the same time, by aligning with UN sanctions, Tajikistan aims at improving the balance in its relationship with Iran, EU and USA. Thus, Tajikistan economic and political ties with Iran dictate rationalism, while Tajikistan cultural and historical ties with Iran have ideational roots. Hence, we may conclude that Tajikistan position embodies a mixture of ideational and rationalism features.

The analysis of all five cases permits us to draw further the following conclusions. The CIS states, as young independent countries, which emerged after a strong ideological regime, maintain a lot of political heritage of the former Soviet Union. Two decades is not time enough to design a new strong policy. Moreover, the majority of CIS leaders were politically educated and trained throughout the Soviet period. In some countries like Russia, Belarus and Azerbaijan, leaders do unveil ideational views whilst designing their states' foreign policies.

Another conclusion to be drawn from the analysis of the five case studies is that we could not find examples of absolutely pure ideational policy or absolutely pure rationalism: all of them represent a mixture where both elements are present at least to some extent. These findings corroborate the postulates of the so-called third debate between rationalism and constructivism whereby the two paradigms complete rather than compete with each other.

When determining our hypothesis, we expected the ideational decisions of non-alignment to produce a consistent and stable foreign policy posture, while rationalist-induced options were expected to favor a shift. Our findings demonstrate that, out of the five cases, Belarus, Tajikistan and Azerbaijan are more consistent in their position about (non)alignment with sanctions against Iran, while Russia and Ukraine was found to be non-consistent, i.e. changing their position; whereby the change in Ukraine's position has fully accompanied the change in foreign policy priorities. (Ukraine Yushchenko policy after 2005 was absolutely inconsistent.)

Two conclusions can then be drawn. Firstly, Russian position, i.e. shift towards quasi-alignment, is indeed supported by rationalist calculations, which translate themselves into a number of aforementioned reasons (including the prevention of the emergence of a nuclear state on the borders, balance of power in the Middle East in spite of the longstanding historical and cultural ties

and the commercial and economic contacts). In addition, Russia's position includes considerations related to its own position as a mediator in the negotiations with and over Iran.

Secondly, the findings demonstrate that stable and consistent decisions on non-alignments may be both rationalist and ideational: Belarus has a strong ideational component in its non-alignment, while Azerbaijan is driven by rationalist calculations, and Tajikistan's position is supported by a mixture of both. This sheds light upon the importance of the regional interests in CIS foreign policies towards the sanctions against Iran.

Finally, it is worth emphasizing the general context of motivations of CIS states as to their decisions on (non) alignment with sanctions. The mainstream of the academic debate argues that a possible war – if it started - it would be a disaster for the USA even to a greater extent than for Israel. This is especially so given the fact that neither Russia nor the Europeans would be willing to engage in such a war. Even Zbigniew Brzezinski considers that a military solution to the Iranian nuclear program is not “credible or desirable” (Brzezinski, 2012); that a war with Iran would be far easier to start than to end; and that the costs would be borne primarily by the US “both in blood and money”. In this influential academic debate, sanctions are only considered as an alternative to war; but to CIS states, this perspective does not always correspond to their primary concerns.

The present study has demonstrated that the CIS states have very different motivations for (non) alignment with sanctions on Iran amongst themselves, while sharing this important feature in common. Indeed, CIS states have a very different perception of Iran as international actor. CIS states are a landmark in the regional considerations and some of them, while Iran's neighbors, have a complex set of interests, which do include Iran. Eventually, the CIS states may be eager to adjust their foreign policies with respect to Iran according to their national interests, viewpoint and aims. As Winston Churchill said: "A nation has no permanent enemies and no permanent friends, only permanent interests."

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