



Modern Iran and the challenges it poses in front of the International security

Gabriela Tabakova¹

Abstract: The analysis of a country's policy and the understanding of the reasons for its actions require a deep historical knowledge about its ruling elite and about the events and tendencies caused by it. This fact is very relevant in Iran, whose political course is mainly conducted by the Supreme Leader. The basic principles which set the goals and the means for their achievement are the resentment to USA, the extreme religious beliefs, the western influence's hostility and the desire for regional domination. Today, Iran poses many threats, driven mostly by the nuclear program's development. The Western countries are facing a political, economic and military challenge. Iran is important trade and economic partner as well as it is dangerous for its relentless political character.

POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Iran is Islamic democratic republic. Its religion is Shiite islam and its regime – theocratic. The jurisprudence and the political life are based on the religion's canons. According to its constitution Iran's Supreme Leader represents the supreme political and religious power, defines the political course, he is commander-in-chief, he controls the intelligence and the country's secret operations. He is responsible for the home and foreign policy. The political figure of the president takes second place. He observes the constitution's norms and is head of the executive power. He is being elected by majority. He is responsible for the economic policy, he sees to the execution of laws, passed by the parliament, manages the state budget and he has circles of vice presidents and ministers who are his advisors. The National Security's Supreme Council is responsible for the so called Islamic awakening, the territorial integrity and national sovereignty. It is appointed by the president with the parliament's approval. The parliament, as a part of the legislative power ratifies international treaties and agreements and its members are being approved by the Guardians' Council.

¹ Gabriela Tabakova, is with the Dept."International relations, University of National and World Economy, Sofia, Bulgaria

The Council, on its way, consists of jurists, half of them selected among the clerical circles and the other half are approved by the parliament. It interprets the constitution and takes care of the Iranian jurisprudence's accordance with the Islamic canons. It approves presidential and parliamentary nominations. The Advisability Council exercises advisory functions toward the Supreme Leader and is also a mediator in the disputes' settlement between the other institutions.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guardian Corps is established after the Revolution and is the biggest component of the Iranian military body. Its functions are to sustain the Iranian religious spirit and nature. Many of the current political figures have left the Corps after developing a military career. It maintains its own institutions and apparatus. The Iranian military force is being complemented by voluntary, civilian and paramilitary structures. Again after the Revolution, as a feature of the post-revolutionary Iran the Ministry of Intelligence and Security is established. It is an heir of the Intelligence service at Shah's time. Its task is to oppress the inner dissident movements. It operates under surveillance of the Supreme Leader. The Ministry accumulates database for enemy governments and institutions, including USA.

HISTORY OF AMERICAN-IRANIAN RELATIONS

1

Centuries ago Iran has been important from a strategic point of view and a sphere of competition between countries like Great Britain and Russia. The first aims at defending its trade ways towards India and the second – at extending its territories in Northern Iran and at a sea outlet. Iran finds its ally in the person of USA which would help him overcome the negative effects of English and Russian economic invasion. In the 50s the Anglo-Persian oil company grabs 85% of oil revenues leaving to Iran the rest 15%. The Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mousaduk decides to nationalize the company because Iranian lands and natural resources have been exploited and the revenues of this activity

¹ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jan/28/iran-united-states-relations-explained>

flow out. Dissatisfied with the premier's Great Britain and USA decide to depose him through coup d'état and then enthrone shah Raza Pahlavi. He takes the road of modernization and pro-western policy, maintains Iran's traditionally friendly relations with USA because he shares their anti-communistic view. USA are interested in Iran because of its hared border with USSR and because it is the biggest and richest country in petrol in the bail. During the petrol crisis in the 70s Iran's population reaches the highest level of poverty, until the king's family accumulates billions of dollars from the oil revenues. The Shah tolerates the pre-islamic elements in the country and enhances the clergy's pursuit to occupy with politics. Under Jimmy Carter USA flatly rebuke Iran in infringing upon human rights. In February, 1979, the lowest society's circles lead the Iranian Revolution. The Shah is dethroned and ayatollahs' regime comes into power. On the 30th and 31st of March referendum is held for the creation of Islamic Republic and 99.3% of the population votes positively. At this time the Shah is in USA to treat his cancer but Iranians want to him to be judged. In November, 1979, young islamists assault the American Embassy in Tehran and kidnap 52 American hostages. The well-known hostages crisis ends with the Algerian agreement's signing on 19.01.1981. After the Shah being dethroned Abdoulhasan Banishadr becomes the first Iranian president. Shortly afterwards he is also dethroned through impeachment and convicted of adverse actions against the clergy in the power. Mohammed Ali Radja, who replaces Banishadr, dies after successful assault, organized by young islamist. The ideological leader of the Revolution, Ayatollah Homeini, holds the post of the Supreme Leader from 1979 to 1989, when he dies. Ayatollah Ali Hamenei becomes the third Iranian president and rules from 1981 to 1989, when he becomes the second Supreme Leader of Iran. His successor, Hashemi Rafsanjani, doesn't succeed to manage the necessary intern stability. His plans for privatization and his support for the feminist movements sow discontent among Iranian people. USA accuses the country of supporting the international terrorism and the developing of nuclear weapon, which Rafsanjani denies. Iran, on its hand, criticizes USA in interfering with the Persian Gulf's war and with the peace negotiations between Israel and Palestine. Mohamed hatami steps into power in 1997 and enjoys big approval. He improves the relations with USA. The then American president, Bill Clinton, takes off the embargo on Iran and tries to bring together both countries. But the Supreme Leader rejects this

opportunity and threatens all the actors who maintain close relations with USA. In 2005 the extreme conservator Ahmadinedjad wins the elections and today he is still the Iranian president. After ayatollahs's coming on power Iran's aggression towards USA accelerates and in direct proportion to it the threats to international security.

In 2003 the USA-Iran relations are getting more aggravated when it becomes clear that Iran is trying to create nuclear program. Both USA and Iran are parties to the Non-proliferation treaty. USA insists on strong measures against Iran and the issue is put on the agenda of the UN Security Council. USA organizes military interventions in Iran, uses sanctions upon Iranian banks, suspected in financing terrorist organizations, support paramilitary organizations ² in order to destabilize Iranian power ³. As an example of the policy where the end justifies the means it can be pointed at the selling of American weapons to Iran the profits with which USA finances the anti-communist contras in Nicaragua.

THOUGHTS

Politics are made by people with ideals, convictions and value system which they transfer there and thus provoking crushes of goals and interests – and this weakens the pillars of the international order. According to the political realism people are evil by their nature and transfer their personal interests and qualities in the politics. So countries also persuade their interests with all the possible resources. And although Brian-Kellog Pact forbids the war as a mean for conflict resolution it continues to be possible outcome in certain cases. Although Iranian regime is democratic the convictions of some political figures lead the Iranian state policy. Or, as Pascal de Suter puts it – billions of people in the world depend on few world leaders. ⁴

When making security politics Taleb's Black swan must be considered ⁵ – the unforeseen and unexpected events which can change the historic course. For the West the Black swan can be unexpected actions on behalf of Iran. The scenario we watch nowadays is Iran's promotion of imperialistic ideas and attempts to unify the Arab world and work it up against Israel and USA. The developments of this situation can be several – the usage of nuclear weapon, the civilians' suffering, damages in regional scale and radiation waves,

² <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2006/09/20060930-4.html>

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran%E2%80%93United_States_relations#cite_note-kucinich-83

⁴ Вж. Сютер, П. „Лудите, които ни управляват”, 2009г.

⁵ Вж. Талеб, Н. „Черният лебед”, 2007г.



spreading all over Europe and maybe other continents nearby, irreversible pollution of the environment, possible evoking hostilities with conventional and maybe nuclear weapon. Many politicians are warning of these risks and they do not reject possible military conflict. The other outcome of the current situation is Iran to follow the UN sanctions, to adopt more realistic policy opened to negotiations, collaboration and mutual concessions. The consequences of every conflict should be examined from all sides, the possibility for them to happen must be estimated in order to be identified the reasons for the damage and the measures that would prevent or mitigate them. It is short-sighted explicit directions to be prescribed for coping with the Iranian crisis. The alerts have theoretical and material basis – respectively the religious fundamentalism and the development of nuclear weapon. According to Iranian politicians the usage of nuclear weapon is not compatible with the Muslim values but they consider it their right to obtain it for peaceful purposes.

Many are the possibilities of setting free the Iranian aggression but despite the threats and the determination of Iran there is uncertainty as to what extend it is prepared to implement them. Verbal offensive strategy should be supported by real action, so President Barack Obama expressed doubt that Iran has the capacity to attack U.S.⁶

Iran threatens all the regimes that support Israel: "All who recognize Israel will burn in the fire of the anger of Muslim nations."⁷ He thus indirectly interferes with the internal politics of these countries and repeats U.S.'s actions during the Cold War, when Americans declared enemy anyone who joins the socialist bloc and adopt its ideology. The reasons for the conflict relations are the nuclear weapons on the side, blocked oil supplies to Europe, religious fundamentalism, the insolvable dispute between Israel and Palestine and inconclusive talks between them and the international community.

It is vital that international organizations are unanimous in taking measures to act against any aggression by Iran or failure of UN sanctions. It is however difficult for Member States to harmonize their positions on issues affecting their sovereign interests. Disagreement is the factor that would spoil the united policy while conducting negotiations and military actions.

There are different strategies and tactics of warfare, preventive diplomacy, using a soft or hard power, balancing on the brink of war, causing the enemy to declare it first. Is Iran's behavioral strategy predictable enough for democracies to decide which is the right approach towards it? This is the key question they are facing with. Looking back at the history of Iran will follow the trends that have led to its present behavior of the political scene. It is not necessary to make inferences from past actions of the state for its future actions. An important factor in the course of Iranian politics is the distribution of power in regional and global scale. Therefore we will briefly discuss the relationship of Iran with its allies and potential adversaries.

SOURCES OF THREATS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY 8

The reasons for today's Iran policy, which emits a number of threats to international security must be sought in history. After the removal of Raza Shah Pahlavi, the mullahs, who have always been in opposition against Iran's pro-Western policy, came to power. Conservative and extremely religious, they are against foreign interference in domestic politics of Iran, against the Western democratic model which, they argue, has nothing to do with Islam - their "basic law". They pursue policy of anti-Semitism and hostility to Israel, the United States and Zionism. Due to the interests, the ideology and the characteristics of the ruling top in Iran, gradually the sphere of security weakens and poses threats.

Ayatollah Khomeini. He participated in the revolution to overthrow the Shah. He establishes the regime in Iran we see today and is responsible for the trends in foreign and domestic policy. He conducts anti-Western foreign policy breaking with the norms of the western liberal democracy reflected in the founding pacts, treaties and statutes of the international organizations.

"Those who know nothing about islam claim he preaches against war."

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. He is the current clerical leader of Iran. Under his presidency Iran enlarges its sphere of influence over the shia society. He participates in rebellions against the Iranian opposition, secular dissidents and Kurdish minorities. At this time Iran becomes Hamas' patron in Palestine and

⁶ http://www.dnevnik.bg/sviat/2012/02/06/1760321_obama_riskovano_e_da_napadnem_iran_triabva/

⁷ Bж. Yonah Alexander, Y., Hoenig, M. "The new Iranian leadership, Ahmadinejad, Terrorism, Nuclear Ambition, and the Middle East", 2007

⁸ Bж. Alexander, Y., Hoenig, M., "The New Iranian Leadership, Ahmadinejad, Terrorism, Nuclear Ambition, and the Middle East", 2007

simultaneously sponsors Hizbullah which converts into organized political movement in Lebanon.

“Israel must be wiped out of the world map.”

“The sufferings of Iraqi, Palestinians and even Americans are result of the liberal democracy and this must point a moral to the rest of the world.”

“USA doesn’t have the competence to lead the global movement against terrorism.”

“If they recognize our right of possession nuclear power we are ready to negotiate control, supervision and international security.” “We consider the usage of nuclear weapon against Islamic laws.” “Those countries which threaten us with sanctions must know they will not influence on us and they will not frighten us but they will encourage the Iranian youth to improve its scientific capacity.”

“Our government is in good relations with the European countries. They can be even better in the future when oil will have more important role as an energy resource. They need our oil.” “In order to frighten Iran you (Americans) say you can ensure oil supplies in the region. You are wrong If you make the smallest mistake towards Iran the flow of energy in the region will be seriously endangered.”

Khamenei calls for Islamic alliance and taking into account West European and American plots and conspiracies that are trying to control the region. According to the leader the West tries to maintain its influence after the revolutions in Africa and for that purpose it may try to provoke intrastate conflicts - between tribes, ethnic groups, parties and countries in the region. Preservation of the Islamic principles and of the achievements of the revolution must be pursued, the revolutionary path must be followed. The aim is to be created a unified Islamic nation and a new Islamic civilization based on morality, religion and science. Iran must provide the Arab states a successful revolutionary model to protect them from returning to reactionary policy, imperialism and tyranny.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. He is the current Iranian leader, former mayor of Tehran and extremely conservative. By that time he conducts the most steady course of policy of all its predecessors. Among his many occupied positions as a mayor, a counsellor in the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education, Governor General of Ardabil province, he has a Ph.D. in engineering and transport planning by Iranian University of Science and Technology. His policy is focused on extending the system of welfare, the redistribution of national wealth to the poorer working

class, supporting the Islamic character of the country. He supports the development of the nuclear program, denies Israel's right to exist, advocates for the Shiite minority in the Middle East and particularly in Iraq and Lebanon. He is criticized both within the country and in the international community for non-compliance with international rules, non-observance of the Non-Proliferation treaty and for denying the Holocaust.

“Destroy Israel before it is too late and save yourself from the wrath of the peoples of the region.”

“Cooperation between Iran and Syria will be effective for the region and the Muslim world ...”

“God willing, with his support, we will soon see the world without the United States and Zionism.”

“They ask us why we have started nuclear researches. Our answer is that there are no restrictions for this. There are no restrictions neither in the Non-Proliferation Treaty nor in its Additional Protocol. The people of Iran will not renounce its right to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Iran is ready to transmit the technique and methods of production of nuclear technology to Islamic countries according to their needs. ”

The main pillars of the threats Iran poses are four - development of nuclear weapons, energy security, development of terrorism and religious contradictions.

Religion which divides

The renowned Professor of History of the Middle East, Vladimir Chukov, speaks about the history of Islamic fundamentalism. It’s most important feature is anti-Americanism. He highlights the following reasons for its appearance: Washington’s support for Israel, the military interventions and sanctions against the Middle East regimes, while supporting undemocratic Muslim regimes with established U.S. bases and the politics at Washington's own Muslim citizens after 11.09. alleged in supporting terrorism. Anti-Americanism obtains its complete version with the development of Jihadist philosophy bringing the idea of educated Muslim leaders against "Western influence and its heartlessness". Education is an essential part of fundamentalism as its main themes are religion and patriotism.⁹ Islamic Jihad as a network of radical Islamist movements emerged in Iran after the Revolution, when it began to export radical revolutionary ideas. Coordinating Center for the extremist groups is the Islamic Revolutionary Council. Religious fundamentalism in Iran obtains different

⁹ Вж. Чуков, В. „Ислямският фундаментализъм”, гл. 2, стр. 133



characters because of the religious uniqueness Iran wants to possess in order to preserve its national identity. Chukov indicates that the expansion of the Islamic revolution is defined in the Constitution of 1979 which states that "its task is not only security and protection of the borders, but the burden of religious mission - Jihad in the name of God and the fight to spread God's law in the world. " 10 Adopting shiite Iran is in constant war with the Sunnis. Shiite clergy plays an important role in the political life of Iran. There is a belief that the "hidden imam" is the only legitimate leader of society and his character is projected on the Iran's ruler. In foreign policy Shiite fundamentalism indicates his greatest enemy, namely Israel and the USA (Zionism). On religious grounds are Iran's relations with Kurdish minorities and the countries in which they reside, the tribe Baluchis (living on the borders with Afghanistan and Pakistan). So Iran combines democracy and Islam, which in order to unite all Shiites in the Islamic world becomes a catalyst of political tension.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO TERRORISM ¹¹

"The systematic, carefully organized terrorism that we see in the Middle East, is a new type of warfare. Terrorism ... is part of a strategy with well-defined political and military objectives. "

For U.S. terrorism raises the most serious challenges to their policies when it affects regions in their area of interests. Iran definitely belongs to them after ayatollahs came to power. For them terrorist activities are a way to combat U.S. influence in the region. Iran is bitter to the U.S., its allies and Zionism who share common western liberal principles. This is an adequate response to the entry of undesirable pro-Western tendencies in country's public life. In Iran different nationalist movements set up and want to preserve its appearance and independence from the initial raids on Britain and Russia in the past and from American expansionist ideals today. Isn't it this reaction justified, as in the medieval Europe wages wars against Islamic wave from the east and doesn't allow it to settle on its land? Iran is a sovereign country with its own rules and laws that do not belong to European civilization and therefore has its right to defend its cultural and political independence, just as no country wants someone else to impose her its

cultural and political frameworks. Therefore, arguing that it violates human rights, we must clarify that we operate with the Western empirical interpretation of the term "human rights".

Terrorism is a channel which Iran uses to become a regional leader and to fight against Western influence there. It founds, directs and maintains internal and external terrorist groups, cooperates with Al Qaeda and other jihadist fractions and hinders the Israeli-Arab peace process. In particular, Iran provides financial, organizational and operational assistance to Hezbollah and Hamas.

Hezbollah emerges in response to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon during the Lebanese civil war in 1982. Shi'a's community comes to unification. Iran sends troops from the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps to help and participate in creating an organization to represent Shiite interests. Iran hopes to expand its influence among the Shiite population and to be recognized as an unofficial spokesman of the international Shiite community. Sunni communities which are on good terms with US react immediately. Iran makes attempts to overthrow the government in Bahrain, and in Kuwait Shiite organizations throw bombs at Western countries' embassies. The greatest danger is nuclear weapons falling into the hands of terrorist organizations with extreme xenophobic sentiments.

Nuclear Weapons ¹²

Iran's nuclear program began in the 50s, supported by the U.S. and the West as part of the Atoms for Peace. After the revolution Iran secretly continues its development. The concern that he is trying to acquire nuclear weapons is increasing. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) can not confirm the veracity of the of Iranian peaceful objectives allegations. There are concerns about a parallel military nuclear program for obtaining nuclear weapon under the direction of Iran's Revolutionary Guards. Iran doesn't announces its nuclear program until 2003 when it breaches its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation, of which is a Member State. Shortly thereafter, Iran acknowledged that this is for social and industrial purposes and that it failed to inform the IAEA. Iran began its secret uranium enrichment in 1985 during the war with Iraq.

The latest IAEA report says that Iran neither stopped developing reactors and other facilities with hard water, nor has ceased procedures for uranium enrichment. Iran

¹⁰ Вж. Чуков, В. „Ислямският фундаментализъм”, гл. 4, стр. 402, Конституция на Ислямска република Иран, Прембюл

¹¹ Вж. Alexander Y., Hoenig, M. "The new Iranian leadership", Chapter 4, p. 48

¹² http://eeas.europa.eu/iran/nuclear_en.htm

does not allow scientists and experts from the West near the reactor for enrichment. He informed the Agency about initiating projects on research and development of uranium enrichment, initially to 5%, then to 20%. Resolution 1929 of 2010 recalls the obligations of Iran to cooperate with the Agency, particularly on the possible military application of nuclear weapons and to provide the experts access to equipment, documents, work areas and personnel. IAEA report says it is based on reliable sources - some Member States, the efforts of the agency and information submitted directly from Iran.

The report says Iran is trying to gain a nuclear equipment for different reasons and materials of military parties and communities, to develop methods for undeclared production of nuclear material, gains information and documents to develop nuclear weapons from secret, clandestine supply networks and carries out experiments with nuclear components available. There are also indications of development nuclear explosive device, computer simulations to develop a bomb detonator.

Experts suppose the assumptions and hypotheses that should be taken into account In order to be ready for every possible turn of events and prepare a strategy for action. The Agency has serious concerns regarding possible military dimensions to Iran's nuclear programme.¹³

"The good bad West"

The West takes a commanding model of action which in the near future can play a practical joke and turns out to be counterproductive.¹⁴

First. Iran belongs to a world with different culture, worldview, lifestyle. For Western Europe and the United States it is poorly understood area of manners and mores for them. We supported by quotations the idea that Iran doesn't want western democratic values to be spread on its soil.

Second. Western countries must accept that they can not be eternal messiah and can not export democratic, economic, market, liberal values. We might otherwise begin to outline the trend of "Democrat", "liberal," "ideological" colonization.

Third. A cautious approach to Iran and unanimity among the EU member states, NATO and the UN are needed. Otherwise they would be vulnerable, and Iran will take advantage of this. The more Western

democracies teach Iran dictate his behavior patterns, the more the Islamic Republic will respond with animosity and relations will be strained.

Fourth. If Western countries put themselves in Iran's position they will understand how they would react. They never allowed Islam to sweep over their lands. So Iran threatens to prevent Western democratic liberal values from erasing Islamic identity of such a regional power as it is.

ENERGY SECURITY

According to data from 2010 Iran has 138 billion barrels of oil reserves, he is fourth among the oil exporters in the world and second with the largest reserves after Russia. Compared to the OPEC Iran exports more than its quota. Iran, however, is dependent on imported oil, which could be used by his opponents as a weak point. The oil industry has 85% share of the revenues of Iran. Partners in export are France, Holland, Turkey, China, Japan and Italy. Some, like France and the Netherlands support the policy of sanctions against Iran, but others such as China, oppose such moves. Russia is the main rival of Iran in this field because she wants to be first exporter of gas for Europe. In Iran, however, domestic demand grows more than in other countries in the region, therefore the amount of oil intended for export decreases. The country also has one of the lowest productivity levels of electricity, produced mainly by technology, powered by gas. In winter, however, it is used oil, because gas is needed for heating and the amount of its exports decreased. This puts Iran in an energy dependence.¹⁵

On the 23th of January 2012, EU countries unanimously adopted a decision prohibiting the import of Iranian oil, although they recognize the negative consequences for the crisis in Europe and the countries dependent on Iranian oil, such as Greece, Italy, Spain. It is believed that Iran uses oil to produce nuclear weapons, so EU sanctions are issued in order to coerce the Iranian authorities to halt illicit nuclear program and to comply with UN resolutions. But Iran says that sanctions will have no deterrent effect on his right to possess nuclear material and even threatened to be the first to terminate its oil supplies to the continent. Israel supports the embargo on Iranian oil. European Parliament rejects military solution of the conflict and Barack Obama has declared a diplomatic solution to the dispute, given the enormous risks of military conflict. The latest sanctions against Iran are double-edged sword, because Iran will continue to export oil,

¹³ Вж. последния доклад на МААЕ – <http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Board/2011/gov2011-65.pdf>

¹⁴ http://www.dnevnik.bg/sviat/2012/01/02/1737117-iran_izstrelia_probno_raketi_s_dalechen_obseg_v/

¹⁵ <http://www.imra.org.il/story.php3?id=32159>



but several European countries will be affected and there will be no guarantees that the desired effect of stopping the nuclear program will be achieved.

Why and for whom is Iran a threat?

"The most alarming dangers posed by Iran, are related to security, welfare and rights of ordinary people in the Middle East, system's stability in the region, the movement towards democracy and the survival of civilization." ¹⁶

From the above facts we can deduce the reasons for the present crisis in relations between Iran and the West, most important of which is uranium enrichment, which Iran claims it makes for peaceful purposes, while the West suspects of developing nuclear weapons. Iran poses a threat primarily to U.S. security and their respective allies who share a common value system. Joining in supranational organizations (NATO, UN) Member states created a system of international rules and regulations, adopted their own laws and principles - civil rights and freedoms, market economy, independent media, liberal values. They shared ideas on regional and global level. At the regional level, this is the future enlargement of the European Union successful fulfillment of NATO missions in areas of commitment, proper functioning of UN's body, smoothing the contradictions between the Member States, effective results form UN sanctions. At the global level objectives are an application of UN, NATO, EU and other supranational structures' values and practices - to preserve peace, resolve disputes by peaceful means, common defense, security protection, crisis management, environmental protection, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, drug trafficking and crime, tackle the global crisis, etc. ¹⁷ The regime in Iran is a democracy with free elections held. Among the differences between "two types of democracy" are the following - in Iran, there are unique structures, which were described previously, with the greatest impact and importance of which is the Revolutionary Guards Corps. Although there is difference between the authorities, relations between them are in different hierarchical subordination of what we know in Western countries. Iran aims to be regional leader and center of the Shiite community. He has his allies, but his neighbors are not reluctant to allow him to become a regional leader, and to intrude in their internal politics. Each party to the conflict tries to spread and impose its own ideology - democratic and theocratic.

¹⁶ Вж. Майер, М. „Петролът в Близкия Изток”, 2010г.

¹⁷ http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_63654.htm?selectedLocale=en

The fact that we talk about threats to international security means that on the line of interaction between these countries contradictions and conflicts of interests occur. The dangers come when Iran's policy objectives are to the detriment of another actor's interests, where scopes of both overlap. USA were the first to enter the radius of Iranian sovereignty. Iran considers its right to develop nuclear weapons with social objectives, which runs counter to accepted Western norms of nuclear non-proliferation. In Western countries opinion Iran violates basic human rights. There are contradictions of principles, of cultural and moral character - Iran is not part of Western supranational organizations and their treaties, so it is not obliged to live according to their dogmas. West, however, impose its principles as universal and fight against violence and injustice. Here we can ask where was he when in Rwanda Hutu and Tutsi were killing each other? The principles of democracy are transparent and behind them can be seen eastern national interests. Islamic fundamentalism is also a direction in which Iran is seen as a threat because of the many illegal immigrants, religious extremists and terrorist attacks, organized in London and Madrid in recent years.

The balance of power: potential allies and opponents

Kissinger asks "How can we achieve stability in the Persian Gulf against its two most powerful forces (Iran and Iraq) with no permanent military bases and the support of wavering allies?" ¹⁸

Turkey

In the 19th and 20th centuries, relations between Iran and Turkey have been strained by the emergence of pan-turkism whose ideologists use ethno-linguistic diversity in Iran in order to undermine its territorial integrity. Turkic and Arab invasions change the ethnic and linguistic character of Iran and its national identity erodes. Turkey fears of ethnic disintegration in Iran, formation of a Kurdish state and rise of Kurdish minorities, given their serious percentage of the population in Turkey. Iran has pragmatic relations with Turkey - its strategic trade and economic partner. Until the revolution in Iran, both countries share common secular views. Some groups in Turkey, however, consider Iran ideological threat. In the 80s, under the Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Ozal relations remain peaceful because neither Turkey considers Iran an ideological threat, nor Iran considers it a target for export of Islamic revolution.

¹⁸ Вж. Kissinger, Н. "The politics", 2002

The bone of contention in the relationship between both is the reversal of the Turkish-Syrian dialogue where Turkey opposes the regime of Assad and warns Iran not to patronize it. The motive of Iran is that Turkey appeals to ideological "revolution" in the Arab world, which is the instrument of carrying out pro-American policy aimed at interference in the internal affairs of Arab Gulf states, especially Iran. After the fall of communism, Turkey sees the door open to the possibility of becoming a leading country in the post-Soviet Muslim countries and to realize the pan-Turkic ideal. Another factor in the discord between Turkey and Iran is Azerbaijan, where Shiite predominate. Turkey supports anti-Iranian sentiments, undermining Iran's attempts to mediate between Azerbaijan and Armenia on the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh and supporting separatist elements in the Iranian province of Azerbaijan. Factor of disagreement are the gas mains. Turkey aims to be a major export center, however, but Iran has big export terminals in the Gulf. The problem is geopolitical - if Iran becomes a main export, energy security will depend on the mood in the unstable Persian Gulf, but also the influence and role of Iran will rise at a time when the West is trying to "curb" its policy. The most important reason, however, problematic for the Turkish-Iranian relations is Israel. Turkey first recognizes its existence and considers it strategically beneficial to be on good terms with its new state. The reason is the powerful Israeli lobby in the U.S., which works for Turkish interests. Thus, Turkey becomes the preferred partner of U.S., and through NATO, it intervenes in Afghanistan, Syria and Pakistan, while Iran remains aloof.

Occasions for cooperation between the two countries are the containment of the Kurdish communities, mutual interests in economic cooperation and relations with Israel. Relations between both depend on who has the power. Iran's nuclear program and the risk of military confrontation between the West and impede Iranian-Turkish relations. Turkey is uncertain about the extent of its pro-Western policies and its pressure on Iran. Breaking out of armed conflict in the region is not in its interests. In 2009 Erdogan rightly reproved U.S. that Israel's nuclear weapons are never taken into account, unlike that of Iran.¹⁹ Recently, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said that Turkey will not participate in foreign intervention in Iran. Turkey considers Israel a threat to the region and seeks Iran's help to deal with Kurdish rebels in the country.

¹⁹ Вж. Kissinger, H. "The politics", 2002

Iran criticizes Turkey for its decision to deploy anti-missile radar on its territory as part of a NATO missile defense program by concluding a treaty with the U.S.²⁰ It causes anxiety in Iran. Iranian media warns Turkey to care for the consequences of its decision.²¹ Accusations come from the head of the Committee of Foreign Policy and National Security, namely that Turkey serves the interests of its Western allies by its policy in Syria and its efforts to strengthen the Sunnis in Iraq and prevent the growing influence of Iran. Turkey is placed in a position to choose between the West (EU accession) and its relations with the Middle East.

Israel and Palestine

The main outstanding issues between Israel and Iran are Iran's support of Hezbollah and its nuclear weapons. Israel intends to deter Iran's nuclear program through pre-emptive strike²² and so it extends the scope of its nuclear weapons.²³ Accordingly, Iran held the position of defender of Palestine, which should not fall into the hands of Zionists. Fearing that Iran goes too far with the development of nuclear weapons, Israel insists on more extreme sanctions.²⁴ In October, 2011 Ayatollah Ali Khamenei again spoke in support of Palestine's territorial integrity and said all Palestinian territory from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea must be free. He continued with the threats against Israel and made accusations against countries, including Egypt and Jordan supporting the United States. Iran declares itself major supporter of the Palestinian liberation, saying the early warning of attacks from countries like Iran will be ineffective.²⁵ In December, 2010 Israel forced the U.S. and its allies to put military threat against Iran, but also hinted that it would take unilateral measures to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons.²⁶

Iraq

Iranian-Iraqi war has cooled relations between Iran and the Arab world because of Arab countries' support to Iraq. According to Kissinger, Iran and Iraq are the

²⁰ <http://www.crethiplethi.com/iran-turkey-criticized-over-its-decision-to-deploy-anti-missile-radar-in-turkish-territory/islamic-countries/iran-islamic-countries/2011/>

²¹ <http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/site/html/search.asp?isSearch=yes&isT8=yes&searchText=T90&pid=108&sid=13&preview>

²² http://www.dnevnik.bg/sviat/2011/11/02/1194395_netaniahu_tursi_mnozinstvo_v_kabineta_za_ataka_sreshtu/

²³ http://www.dnevnik.bg/sviat/2011/10/31/1192265_doklad_iz_rael_iska_da_uelichi_obsega_na_iadrenite_si/

²⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/12/11/us-israel-iran-barak-idUSTRE7BAOR520111211>

²⁵ <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/10/01/169617.html>

²⁶ <http://www.irantracker.org/cairo/israel-iran-foreign-relations>



two largest countries in the region and balancing them will be difficult task because they have large military potential, ethnic strifes and ambition for power. First, disadvantages to Iran bring the close relationships between Iraq and the U.S. Iranian security is questionable and while the U.S. maintain their fleet in the Persian Gulf and Iraq. Today point of conflict is the Shiite population in Iraq, divided into pro and anti-Iranian groups and the fueled Sunni hostility towards Iran. The future of the Iranian-Iraqi relations depends on the orientation of the countries' governments. In recent years, Ahmadinejad and Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki exchange visits, during which Iraq reassured there will be no strategic alliance with the U.S. or possible use by Americans of Iraqi territory as a base for attacking Iran. Unresolved issues remain demarcated boundaries, reparations to Iraq, Shatt al-Arab - the river that for centuries has been the occasion for disputes between the parties and their unsettled borders, passing on it.

However, trade between Iran and Iraq is growing every year, in 2011. Iraq, Iran and Syria signed a contract to the value of \$ 10 billion for building a pipeline.²⁷

Iran and the Arab world

On the nature of these relations influence have ethnic minorities, different economic interests, but mainly ideological, religious principles and power and the desire for regional influence. Between Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shiite Iran there are disputes over ethnic Sunni minorities (Baluchis tribe) in Pakistan and Afghanistan and over Saudi Arabia's desire to remain faithful U.S. ally. President Ahmadinejad is seeking to strengthen relations with his neighbors, offering a security system in the Persian Gulf and the Economic Development Council. Iranian president visits Saudi Arabia in 2007. He has a twofold purpose - to remove the fears of Gulf countries of Iran's nuclear program, to persuade them not to cooperate with the U.S. in case of conflict and to clarify Iran's intentions in Iraq. Regarding nuclear weapons, Saudi Arabia takes very hard position.²⁸ "If Iran develops a nuclear weapon, that will be unacceptable to us and we will have to follow suit." - Turki al Faisal's words clearly show the response of Saudi Arabia to possible changes in the status quo in the Middle East. Moreover Turki called for a nuclear-free zone which includes Iran and

Israel. According to Saudi Arabia, which is the main enemy of Iran in the region, sanctions will not subdue the Islamic Republic and more extreme measures will be required. Saudi Arabia recognizes that security largely depends on good relations with the increasingly powerful Iran. Both are competing for leadership in the Islamic world. Worst fears of Saudi Arabia are the spread of Iran's control and influence across the Persian Gulf and the development of nuclear weapons. Iran in its turn claim itself against monarchical regimes in Islam. Energy sources are also a reason for the gap in relations between the countries - while Saudi Arabia (with fewer people and more oil reserves) may look long-term global oil market and strive for an average price level, Iran (with more population and less stocks) seeks short-term higher prices.

Iran signed a security agreement with Qatar in 2010 including terrorism, drugs, money laundering. In the 80s, Iran attacked Kuwait because of his support for Iraq during the Iranian-Iraqi war and in Bahrain was trying to overthrow the Sunni government and grumbles at the presence of U.S. Navy there. Today, Iran's relations with both sides largely rely on economic relations. Relations with Tunisia and Algeria are calm. The visits between the presidents of Iran and Algeria led to the signing of agreements in economic, legal, financial sector and air transport. Algeria and Tunisia supported Iran's right of peaceful nuclear program. Egypt does not approve of the fact that Iran is too much lobbying among Arab countries in favor of Palestine, which aspires it to become a regional leader. However, it opposes a military method of solving the problem of Iranian nuclear weapons. Egypt made it clear that it would not neglect its relations with the Gulf because of those with Iran and seeks to balance good relations with both Arab countries and Western Europe.²⁹ Close are the relations with Iran, Lebanon and Syria. Both countries support Iran's nuclear program for peaceful purposes. They are unanimous in their non recognition of Israel and on the right of Palestinians to return home. Iran supports and finances the terrorist groups Hezbollah and Palestinian Hamas in their anti-Israeli policies. In April, 2011 Lebanon criticizes Iran's apparent interference in the internal affairs of Bahrain and Kuwait.³⁰ Syria supports Iran in its war against Iraq, helps the arms smuggling to Hezbollah and signs an agreement for military cooperation against the common enemies - Israel and the U.S. Both sides share

²⁷ <http://www.irantracker.org/foreign-relations/iraq-iran-foreign-relations>

²⁸ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jun/29/saudi-build-nuclear-weapons-iran>

²⁹ <http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/07/04/155952.html>

³⁰ http://www.irantracker.org/foreign-relations/lebanon-iran-foreign-relations#_edn32

the Shia ideology. During the unrest in Syria in the spring of 2011, Iran supports the Syrian government in its dealing with the rebels by investing in the Syrian economy, supplying it with intelligence equipment, oil and providing training for Syrian troops. Syria supports Iran's acquisition of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and according to a report of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), it refuses to cooperate with experts from the IAEA and is suspected of cooperation with Iran.³¹ As to the uprisings in Syria, Iran says that despite the friendship between the parties it criticizes the methods of for coping with them. Assad must respect the demands of his people, and opposition and government must try to resolve problems causing unrest in the country.³²

Arab countries see Iran as a threat to their sovereignty while it delivers revolutionary ideas and tries to extend its influence among them by peaceful means. Iran needs a more pragmatic strategy. The Council for Gulf Cooperation (GCC) approves further consolidation of its military forces to prevent the growing threat from Iran.³³ On the 21st meeting of EU and GCC countries urge Iran to suspend its political course, to observe the sanctions of the UNSC and to cooperate with the IAEA's experts.³⁴

Russia

Russian-Iranian cooperation is based on interests in certain areas than on the general worldview.³⁵ After the collapse of the USSR Iran loses a staunch ally against the United States, therefore, it tries to keep the Russian-Iranian relations. They develop in the light of competition, cooperation and conflict of interests. Both parties endeavor to maintain the territorial status quo in the region because of their minorities, to limit American influence and Turkish ambitions. Russia has the ambition to become the most important gas supplier to Europe with most pipelines passing through its territory, but Iran has huge oil reserves that it needs to sell in order to provide income. On the other hand Russian energy companies Lukoil and Gazprom participate in the development of oil projects in Iran. Both countries have excellent trade relations (guns, tanks, military equipment, vehicles), but each is fighting for regional

influence. So on the one hand Russia is cautious in its relations with its southern neighbor, while retaining the ability to play its trump card in any conflict with the West - making it dependent on its ability to force Iran to abandon uranium enrichment and leaving Iran dependent on her help in the design of reactors.

In 2007 Russia promises to sell to Iran system of protection on air as an expression of enhanced cooperation in defense between the two countries. Today, they trade with weapons, and Russia supports Iran's right to nuclear program for peaceful purposes. Under U.S. pressure, however, due to financial difficulties, it slows down the building of the nuclear power plant in Bashahr which builds as a partner of Iran. The plant is considered the first civilian nuclear power plant. Russia is playing a double game - being economically dependent on the West, she agrees with Obama's ideas to reduce nuclear weapons while cooperating with Iran and does not support any sanctions imposed by the UNSC. In 2009. Iran and Russia sign agreement on trade with natural gas, agreeing a year earlier to exploit some of the Iranian oil fields.³⁶ The greatest diplomatic achievements of Iran in the region is its accession to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 2006.

Iranian National Security Strategy³⁷

National Security Strategy defines the priorities of Iran – its security, the threats it perceives, the achievement of the objectives and risk controlling. It is based on six main points:

- Acceptance and recognition of the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic regime
- Guarantees of territorial integrity and security
- Getting the Iranian natural resources and turning them into economic benefits
- Regional hegemony in terms of influence and veto power on events and incidents in the immediate surroundings of Iran and in the heart of the Middle East (Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine)
- Recognition of the leading international status of the state
- Leader in the Islamic camp

Iranian policy is expansionary, and the means by which it is pursued directly threaten regional and international security. And precisely therein consists the paradox and the mismatch of means and goals. If Iran wants to progress in technology and economics it should

³¹ <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011/sc10292.doc.htm>

³² <http://news.antiwar.com/2012/03/08/iran-arab-countries-sending-mercenaries-to-syria/>

³³ <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2011/06/2011626112649845386.html>

³⁴ <http://www.gcc-sg.org/eng/index5ec6.html?action=Sec-Show&ID=322>

³⁵ http://www.mideastmonitor.org/issues/0907/0907_5.htm

³⁶ http://www.irantracker.org/foreign-relations/russia-iran-foreign-relations#_ftn10

³⁷ <http://reut-institute.org/Publication.aspx?PublicationId=1769>



make this with civilized approach, rather than becoming a nuclear dictator. If it wishes to be integrated in the international community and to earn its status as a regional power - the way is through cooperation. Iran rejects the norms of international order, which now rests on the western liberal democratic and market values. Here are the means which the Islamic republic uses:

- Resistance network - the first source of risks to security. Initiated and supported militarily and politically by Iran, this network consists of countries and organizations which commit terrorist acts against Israeli, American and Western interests, and undermine the regimes in the region, imposing Islamism and Iranian interests.

- Shi'ite crescent - religion as a threat. Iran builds Shiite political alliance in neighboring countries, mainly in Lebanon and Iraq.

- Global Islamic network led by Iran.

- The nuclear program is the fundamental pillar of the national security of Iran. Nuclear capability would serve Iran's aspirations to provide security, economic, regional and cultural leadership.

- Iran cooperates in economic, political and military aspect with countries like Russia, China and India to try to sabotage the U.S. sanctions in the UN.

NATO^{38/39}

Iranian Intelligence Center is concerned about NATO's new strategy and its implications on the security of the Islamic Republic. Six aspects of the strategy and their impact on Iran are highlighted.

1. Measures related with the wide range of missiles and nuclear weapons. The deployment of missile shield in Turkey near the Iranian border is considered a threat to security. Tehran faces the challenge coming from cooperation between NATO, the Gulf states and Russia and the monitoring of its nuclear program.

2. Embarrassing is NATO's presence in Afghanistan and Iraq, where its influence is growing, tightening the circle around Iran's borders. Iran must take diplomatic steps to strengthen its cooperation with Afghanistan and Iraq.

3. NATO increases its influence in the pro-Western Arab countries and Iran's neighbor countries where measures must be taken also.

4. U.S. passed its energy strategy and its interests in the extraction of fuels through the deployment of NATO forces in the Gulf and Middle East.

5. The cooperation between NATO and the Gulf in technology, intelligence and military training increases.

6. Cyber activity of NATO increases. Iran must also take measures of protection against cyber attacks.

EU

Although Iran is the sixth largest importer of oil to the EU and trade between them is amounted to billions of euros, the EU countries prohibit the imports of Iranian oil.⁴⁰ Iran responds by stopping sales of British and French companies. The main points of contention in the diplomatic relations between the EU and Iran are the nuclear program and Iran's violations of human rights. The sanctions, which the UNSC uses, force Iran to develop its nuclear program. Blockade of oil exports to Europe increases fuel costs and affects the economic crisis.⁴¹ This clearly confirms some of the assumptions above - we can not be sure neighter of Iran's intentions, nor in its potential to fulfill them. It's obvious that pressing Iranian leaders does not bear the desired results and that the different positions of the European countries on key issues can make them look like unsure of their strategy actors. We pointed out the danger of the "security dilemma", when we could observe an armament race with offensive and defensive weapon (in which would include Saudi Arabia, Israel, Russia).

Threats to the Bulgarian National Security

Referring again to the great authority on the sphere Vladimir Chukov, we must point out that the greatest danger for Bulgaria is immigration. With rising living standards in our country because of our membership in the EU, Bulgaria will feel the current problems in France, Germany and other countries where Muslims immigrate from the Middle East. He points at the demographic collapse in our country and the illegal immigration issues as essential to the security of Bulgaria. According to Chukov "future potential immigrants will be the generator of ideas of Islamic fundamentalism. They will pose a serious threat to the Bulgarian national security only when their number grows to such an extent that in electoral terms can affect the Bulgarian political decision." ⁴²

³⁸ <http://www.crethiplethi.com/majles-research-center-warns-about-natos-new-strategy-and-its-consequences-for-iran/islamic-countries/iran-islamic-countries/2011/>

³⁹ http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_68580.htm

⁴⁰ <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/creating-opportunities/bilateral-relations/countries/iran/>

⁴¹ http://www.dnevnik.bg/sviat/2012/01/29/1755220_iran_moje_da_nalozi_do_15_godini_petrolno_embargo_na/

⁴² Вж. Чуков, В. „Ислямският фундаментализъм”, стр. 412