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PRESSURE (2003-2023)**

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*На правах рукописи*

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**ДИПЛОМАТИЯ ИРАНА И РОССИИ В УСЛОВИЯХ САНКЦИОННОГО  
ДАВЛЕНИЯ (2003-2023 гг.)**

Специальность 5.6.7 История международных отношений и внешней политики

**ДИССЕРТАЦИЯ**

на соискание ученой степени  
кандидата исторических наук

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## INTRODUCTION

**The relevance of the study is** conditioned by the need to comprehend the role of diplomacy in a situation of escalating sanctions pressure from Western countries on Iran and Russia, which resulted from the withdrawal of the United States of America (US) from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear program (JCPOA) on May 8, 2018, and the imposition of unprecedented sanctions against Russia after the events of February 24, 2022. The expansion of the range of sanctions used against Russia and Iran emphasizes the relevance and practical demand for the study of sanctions approaches used against these countries and the experience of countering restrictive measures in the diplomatic sphere.

It is also relevant to study the peculiarities of the foreign policy activities of Iran and Russia under sanctions in addressing the development of bilateral relations, and international relations, and ensuring regional and international security. In addition, the study of the experience of confrontation and self-development under sanctions is an applied interest for both countries.

The relevance of the research topic is also emphasized by the impact of the following main factors on the development of the situation around Iran and Russia.

First, the international system has witnessed the revival of sanctions as a significant instrument of global-local governance by individual states, groups of states (European Union), and the world community (UN Security Council), which determines the need for in-depth study of the practical experience gained.

Second, diplomatic relations between Iran and Russia have become increasingly important, especially in light of their common interests in countering Western influence and expanding their regional influence. Their cooperation is not limited to the political and economic spheres but also extends to areas such as military cooperation and energy partnerships. This growing alliance is a subject of study to understand how countries adapt to the changing global environment and develop strategic partnerships to overcome emerging constraints and achieve their goals.

Thirdly, Iran's accession to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (2023) and the BRICS international association (2024), as well as the conclusion of a free trade zone

agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union, signified a break in the international isolation around the Islamic Republic and proved the effectiveness of diplomacy as a means of overcoming sanctions restrictions.

In general, the desire of Iran and Russia to use diplomatic tools to ensure national sovereignty and preserve the civilizational identity of their countries in contrast to the sanctions policy has identified a new dimension of modern diplomacy, the study of which is of scientific and practical interest.

**The object of research** is the foreign policy activities of Iran and Russia in the situation of external sanctions pressure.

**The subject of research** is the main directions, goals, forms and priorities of Iran's and Russia's foreign policy activities in connection with the application of international, regional and state sanctions against them.

**The purpose of the thesis** is to identify the commonalities and peculiarities of Iranian and Russian diplomacy under sanctions and international pressure in the context of the development of bilateral relations.

In order to achieve the objective, the following **research objectives** should be accomplished:

1. Examine the nature and effectiveness of international, regional, and state sanctions against Iran and Russia in the context of achieving their intended policy objectives.
2. Identify and characterize the main stages of sanctions pressure on Iran and Russia.
3. To characterize the main directions of foreign policy activities (diplomacies) of Iran and Russia in the conditions of sanctions pressure, including analysis of the peculiarities of national diplomatic approaches.
4. Show the place and role of Iranian and Russian diplomacy in overcoming sanctions restrictions and achieving national development goals.
5. Consider the main formats of Iranian and Russian activities to overcome international pressure and joint participation in the processes of regional and international integration.

6. Provide a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the main results of sanctions pressure on Iran and Russia.

7. Assess the impact of sanctions on the development of bilateral relations between Iran and Russia.

**The chronological framework** of the study covers the period from 2003 to 2023. The lower boundary of the study is 2003, when the Iranian government and the foreign ministers of the three EU-3 countries made a statement known as the Tehran Declaration<sup>1</sup>, but the deal failed due to European inconsistency. The West against Russia realized a similar scenario of non-compliance with promises after NATO enlargement in 2004. A key event occurred in 2015 with the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, but the diplomatic landscape underwent a radical change in 2018 when the US unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA. For Russia, an unprecedented expansion of the range of sanctions used occurred after the events of 2014 and especially after the launch of the special military operation on February 24, 2022. The upper boundary - 2023 - is defined in relation to Iran's diplomatic breakthrough by becoming a member in the SCO and BRICS and agreements in principle on cooperation under the Free Trade Area Agreement with the EAEU and deepening sanctions pressure on Iran and Russia.

**Literature Review.** Four historiographical complexes in Persian, English and Russian have been studied within the framework of the subject of the research, which covered: general problems of the development of regional international relations and foreign policy with the participation of Western countries, the USSR/Russia and the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Near and Middle East; various aspects of foreign policy and diplomatic activities of the IRI and the Russian Federation in the context of the development of bilateral relations; the activities of Iran and Russia in connection with the sanctions pressure of the West and to counteract and overcome the sanctions imposed by the West.

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<sup>1</sup> Timeline of Nuclear Diplomacy with Iran, 1967-2023 // Arms Control Association Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Timeline-of-Nuclear-Diplomacy-With-Iran> (accessed: 22.11.2023).

Within the framework of the *first historiographical complex*, the works of Russian and foreign scientists - international and orientalists, devoted to the analysis of general issues of international relations and foreign policy of the Western countries in relation to Iran and Russia, the study of the approaches of the United States of America (USA) and other Western countries to building relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) and with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR; Soviet Union), later the Russian Federation (RF, Russia) and in the Near and Middle East region were studied, which include: V.A. Avatkov<sup>2</sup>, S.A. Bagdasarov<sup>3</sup>, V.I. Belov (Yurtaev)<sup>4</sup>, R.Yu. Belyakov<sup>5</sup>, A.D. Bogaturov<sup>6</sup>, Al.A. Gromyko<sup>7</sup>, S.V. Kortunov<sup>8</sup>, A. Kosov<sup>9</sup>, V.V. Naumkin<sup>10</sup>, M.F. Polynov<sup>11</sup>, E.M. Primakov<sup>12</sup>, A.A. Sushentsov<sup>13</sup>, A.V. Torkunov<sup>14</sup>, A.P. Tsygankov<sup>15</sup>,

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<sup>2</sup> Аватков В. А., Крылов Д. С. Внешнеполитические идеологемы России и их актуальность для региона Ближнего Востока в контексте трансформации современной системы международных отношений // Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Серия: Политология. 2023. Т. 25, № 1. С. 163-174; Аватков В. А., Евстафьев Д. Г. Постсоветская Евразия в эпоху глобальных трансформаций: вызов институциональности и управления // Россия и современный мир. 2023. № 3 (120). С. 58-71.

<sup>3</sup> Багдасаров С.А. Ближний Восток. Вечный конфликт. М.: Эксмо, 2016. 288 с.

<sup>4</sup> Краснов К. Г., Юртаев В. И. Внешняя политика Ирана на Ближнем Востоке и американская стратегия «системного сдерживания» // Вестник РУДН. Серия: Международные отношения. 2016. Т. 16, № 4. С. 616-627.

<sup>5</sup> Беляков Р. Ю. Общее и особенное в формировании политического лидерства Владимира Путина и Дмитрия Медведева // Вестник экономики, права и социологии. 2008. № 1. С. 98-100.

<sup>6</sup> Богатуров А. Д. Международные отношения и внешняя политика России: монография. М: Аспект Пресс, 2020. 480 с.

<sup>7</sup> Громько Ал. А. «Постоянство и изменчивость в истории международных отношений» // Современная Европа, 2016. № 1 (67). С. 5-8.

<sup>8</sup> Кортунов С. Современная внешняя политика России: стратегия избирательной вовлеченности. Москва: ГУ-ВШЭ, 2009. 603 с.

<sup>9</sup> Косов А. США и «Арабская весна»: оценки российского экспертного сообщества // Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Серия: Международные отношения. 2016. № 3. С. 473-481.

<sup>10</sup> Наумкин В. В. Конфликты на Ближнем Востоке вышли на первый план в мире. 16.02.2018 [Электронный ресурс]. Режим доступа: <https://ria.ru/interview/20180216/1514794208.html> (дата обращения: 17.02.2018); Naumkin Vitaly. The Middle East: Hard Times Coming. December 12, 2012. [Электронный ресурс]. Режим доступа: [http://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/vitaly-naumkin-the-middle-east-hard-times-coming/?sphrase\\_id=81390](http://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/vitaly-naumkin-the-middle-east-hard-times-coming/?sphrase_id=81390) (дата обращения: 15.11. 2024).

<sup>11</sup> Польшов М. Ф. Внешняя политика Горбачёва. 1985–1991 гг. СПб.: Алетейя, 2015. 504 с.

<sup>12</sup> Примаков Е. М. Конфиденциально: Ближний Восток на сцене и за кулисами (вторая половина XX – начало XXI века). М.: Российская газета, 2006. 384 с.

<sup>13</sup> Сушенцов А. А. Международные последствия распада СССР: концептуальный угол зрения // Сравнительная политика. 2012. Т. 10, № 4. С. 12-16.

<sup>14</sup> Торкунов А. В. По дороге в будущее. М.: Аспект Пресс, 2010. 476 с.

<sup>15</sup> Цыганков А. П. Внешняя политика России от Горбачева до Путина. М.: Научная книга, 2008. 270 с.

P.A. Tsygankov<sup>16</sup>, Z.V. Verdikhanova<sup>17</sup>, I.D. Zvyagelskaya<sup>18</sup>, S.S. Zhiltsov<sup>19</sup>, as well as Z. Brzezinski<sup>20</sup>, R. Cohen<sup>21</sup>, J. Friedman<sup>22</sup>, F. Fukuyama<sup>23</sup>, R. Haas<sup>24</sup>, S. Huntington<sup>25</sup>, G. Kissinger<sup>26</sup>, I. Wallerstein<sup>27</sup>.

These studies address fundamental issues of the multifaceted confrontation within the bipolar system of international relations, highlighting the motives behind the West's pressure on the Soviet Union (later the Russian Federation) and the responses and countermeasures taken by the Russian side. In the collective monograph of MGIMO (U) MFA RF “Russian foreign policy, 1991-2016<sup>28</sup>” analyzes the main regional directions and the most important institutional dimensions, considers the main stages and results of Russian foreign policy at the turn of XX-XXI centuries.

The matters of foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, including on the Russian track, were covered in the works of such famous scholars as: A. Azkhandi<sup>29</sup>,

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<sup>16</sup> Международные отношения: теории, конфликты, движения, организации / Под ред. П. А. Цыганкова. М.: Альфа-М, 2011. 335 с.; Теория международных отношений / Под ред. П. А. Цыганкова. М.: ГАРДАРИКИ, 2003. 400 с.

<sup>17</sup> Вердикханова З. В. «Цветная революция» как политический феномен современности // Вестник университета. 2014. № 5. С. 200-204.

<sup>18</sup> Звягельская И. Д. Ближний Восток и Центральная Азия. Глобальные тренды в региональном исполнении. М.: Аспект Пресс, 2018. 224 с.; Звягельская И. Д. Международные отношения на Ближнем и Среднем Востоке // Современные международные отношения и мировая политика. 2004. С. 644-671.

<sup>19</sup> Жильцов С. С. Геополитическое соперничество России и США за европейский газовый рынок // Проблемы постсоветского пространства. 2022. Т. 9, № 1. С. 8-19; Жильцов С. С. Геополитическая трансформация Каспийского региона: итоги и направления развития // World economy and international relations. 2023. Т. 67, № 2. С. 130-138; Жильцов С. С. Политика России в Каспийском регионе. М.: Аспект Пресс, 2018. 240 с.; Жильцов С. С. Политика России в условиях глобальной неопределенности: вызовы и возможности // Проблемы постсоветского пространства. 2023. Т. 10, № 1. С. 8-16.

<sup>20</sup> Бжезинский З. Великая шахматная доска: Господство Америки и его геостратег, императивы. М.: Международные отношения, 1998. 704 с.

<sup>21</sup> Кохейн Р. О. Международные отношения: вчера и сегодня // Политическая наука: новые направления / Под ред. Р. Гудина и Х. Клингеманна. М., 1999. С. 438-452.

<sup>22</sup> Фридман Дж. Следующие 100 лет: прогноз событий XXI века / Джордж Фридман; (пер. с англ. А. Калинина, В. Нарицы, М. Мацковской). М.: ЭКСМО, 2010. 292 с.

<sup>23</sup> Фукуяма Ф. Сильное государство: Управление и порядок в XXI веке. М.: АСТ ХРАНИТЕЛЬ, 2006. 220 с.

<sup>24</sup> Хаас Р. Мировой беспорядок. М.: АСТ, 2019. 320 с.

<sup>25</sup> Хантингтон С. Столкновение цивилизаций. М.: АСТ МОСКВА, 2006. 571 с.

<sup>26</sup> Киссинджер Г. Дипломатия / Пер. с англ. В. В. Львова / Послесл. Г. А. Арбатова. М.: Ладомир, 1997. 848 с.

<sup>27</sup> Валлерстайн И. Анализ мировых систем и ситуация в современном мире. СПб.: Университетская книга, 2001. 416 с.

<sup>28</sup> Внешняя политика России 1991-2016 / Под ред. А. В. Торкунов, Е. Кожокин, А. Чечевишников. М.: МГИМО-Университет, 2017. 538 с.

<sup>29</sup> 2002 تهران. سیاست خارجی ایران. ، ازخندی. Azkhandi A. Iran's foreign policy. Tehran. 2002. 248 p.



A.M. Ansari<sup>30</sup>, F. Ataei<sup>31</sup>, K. Barzegar<sup>32</sup>, A.H. Borujerdi<sup>33</sup>, J.F. Dehghani<sup>34</sup>, J. Calabrese<sup>35</sup>, D. Firoozabadi<sup>36</sup>, A.M. Hajiyousefi<sup>37</sup>, M. Heydari<sup>38</sup>, N. Keddie<sup>39</sup>, H. Molana<sup>40</sup>, R. Ramazani<sup>41</sup>, K. Sadjadpour<sup>42</sup>, M. Sanaei<sup>43</sup>, and etc.

<sup>30</sup> Ansari Ali M. Iran and the United States in the shadow of 9/11: Persia and the Persian question revisited. // Iran in the 21st Century. Politics, economics and conflict / Ed. by Homa Katuzian and Hossein Shahidi. London: Routledge, 2008. P. 107-122.

<sup>31</sup> Ataei F. A Look to the North: Opportunities and Challenges. // Iran in the 21st Century. Politics, economics and conflict. / Ed. by Homa Katuzian and Hossein Shahidi. London: Routledge, 2008. P. 123-135.

<sup>32</sup> Barzegar K. Balance of Power in the Persian Gulf: an Iranian View. // Middle East Policy. 2010. Vol. 17, № 3. P. 74-87.

<sup>33</sup> 1386 Borujerdi A. H. توسعه روابط ایران و عرب: مجموعه بحث‌های نشست اندیشمندان ایران و عرب. 1386. Development of Arab-Iranian relations. // Tehran: Publishing house of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016. 804 pp.

<sup>34</sup> دکتر دهقانی فیروز آبادی، سید جلال. سیاست خارجی جمهوری اسلامی ایران – تهران: سازمان مطالعات و تدوین علوم انسانی دانشگاه ها 1388 [Доктор Дехгани-Фирузабади Джелал Сейид. Сийасат-э хареджи-йе джомхури-йе эслами-йе Иран. – Тегран: Сазэман-э мотале'э ва тадвин-э кетаб-э алум-э энсани-йе данэшгахха (Самт), 1388.] [Дехгани-Фирузабади Сейид Джелал. Внешняя политика Исламской Республики Иран. – Тегран, 2010/2011. 580 p.] (на перс. яз.)

<sup>35</sup> Calabrese J. Revolutionary horizons: Regional foreign policy in post Khomeini Iran. N.Y. 2005. 233 pp.

<sup>36</sup> 1384 دهقانی فیروز آبادی، سید جلال، تحول گفتمانی در سیاست خارجی جمهوری اسلامی ایران، تهران، مؤسسه ایران، 1384 Firoozabadi S. J. D. Discourse transformation in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Tehran: Iran Institute, 2005. 168 p.

<sup>37</sup> 1368 [Хаджи-Юсефи یوسفی، امیر محمد. سیاست خارجی جمهوری اسلامی ایران در پرتو تحولات منطقه ای 1990-2001 تهران، 1368. Amir Mохаммад. Сийасат-э хареджи-йе джомхури-йе эслами-йе Иран дар портоу тахвалат-э мантагеи. 1991-2001. – Тегран, 1386.] [Хаджи-Юсефи Amir Mохаммад. Внешняя политика Исламской республики Иран на фоне изменений в регионе (1991 – 2001 гг.). – Тегран, 2008. 22 p.] (на перс. яз.)

<sup>38</sup> 1383، محمد. دگرگونی ژئوپولیتیک دهه 1990 و جغرافیای نوین امنیت ایران // خاورمیانه نوین امنیت ایران // خاورمیانه، 1383، 1 [Хейдари Mохаммед. Дегагуниха-и жеополитик-е дахе-йе 1990 ва джографія-и новин-э омният-э Иран. // Ховар-э мийанэ. – 1383, бахар. – № 1.] Геополитические изменения 1990-х гг. и новая география безопасности Ирана. // Средний Восток. 2004, весна. №1. С. 47-74. (на перс. яз.)

<sup>39</sup> Keddie N. R. The Roots of Ulama Power in Modern Iran. // Scholars, Saints and Sufis / Keddie, ed. – Los Angeles: University of California Press. 1972. P. 211-229; Keddie N. R., Hooglund E. The Iranian Revolution and the Islamic Republic. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press. 1986. 246 pp.

<sup>40</sup> 1387 پروفیسور سید حمید مولانا، دکتر منوچهر محمدی. سیاست خارجی جمهوری اسلامی ایران در دولت احمدی نژاد – تهران: نشر دادگستر 1387 [Профессур Сейид Хамид Моулана، доктор Манучехр Mохаммади. Сийасат-э хареджи-йе джомхури-йе эслами-йе Иран дар доулат-э Ахмадинежад. – Тегран: Нашр-э додгостар, 1387, паиз.] [Моуляна Хамид, Mохаммади Манучехр. Внешняя политика Ирана при правительстве М. Ахмадинежада. – Тегран: Нашр-э додгостар 2009. 240 p.] (на перс. яз.)

<sup>41</sup> Ramazani R. Iran's National Security Policy: Capabilities, Intentions and Impact. Washington, 2003. 10 pp; رمضانی، روح الله، (1384)، چارچوب تحلیلی برای بررسی سیاست خارجی جمهوری اسلامی ایران، تهران: نی. Ramazani R. Methodology of studying the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Tегran: May, 2005. 214 p.

<sup>42</sup> Sadjadpour K., Ben B. Iran in the Middle East: leveraging chaos // FRIDE, a European think tank for Global Action, 2015. [Электронный ресурс]. Режим доступа: [http://fride.org/descarga/PB202\\_Iran\\_in\\_the\\_Middle\\_East.pdf](http://fride.org/descarga/PB202_Iran_in_the_Middle_East.pdf); Саджадпур К. Аятолла Хаменеи: Высший руководитель // Pro et Contra. 2008. № 4.; Саджадпур К. Читая Хаменеи: Взгляды на мир самого влиятельного деятеля Ирана / Пер. с англ. А.С. Сатунина; Московский центр Карнеги. 2009. 46 с. URL: [http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Reading\\_Khamenei\\_rus.pdf](http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Reading_Khamenei_rus.pdf).

<sup>43</sup> Санаи М. Внешняя политика Ирана: между историей и религией. // Россия в глобальной политике. 2006. № 1. URL: <http://www.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/18/5295.html>; Санаи М. Диалог цивилизаций и исламский фактор. // Диалог цивилизаций: исторический опыт и перспективы XXI века. Доклады и выступления. Российско-иранский международный научный симпозиум 1-2 февраля 2002 г. М.: РУДН, 2002.

In general, considering the changes in the Middle and Near East in the situation of the collapse of the bipolar world, scholars have concluded that in the early XXI century the system of regional international relations has actually broken down under the complex influence of geopolitical, economic, civilizational and military factors, which leads to chronic instability and a high level of conflict in the region.

*The second historiographical complex* consisted of works by scholars devoted to analysing the foreign policy and diplomatic activities of Iran and Russia, including in the context of the development of Iranian-Russian relations in the situation of sanctions pressure, including diplomatic and economic aspects.

Within the framework of this historiographical complex it is necessary to emphasize the extensive literature in Russian and, first of all, the works of Russian orientalists В. Ananyev<sup>44</sup>, V.I. Belov (Yurtaev)<sup>45</sup>, A.N. Chekushkin<sup>46</sup>, S.B. Druzhilovskiy<sup>47</sup>, E.V. Dunaeva<sup>48</sup>, I.E. Fedorova<sup>49</sup>, E.L. Kalinin<sup>50</sup>, M.S. Kameneva<sup>51</sup>, Н.

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<sup>44</sup> Ananyev В. Sanctions in IR: Understanding, defining, studying // International organisations research journal. 2019. Vol. 14, № 3. P. 136-150.

<sup>45</sup> Юртаев В. И. Особенности и реализация внешней политики Исламской Республики Иран (1979-2010 гг.). М.: Российский университет дружбы народов, 2012. 439 с.; Юртаев В.И. Исламизация как фактор внешней политики Ирана. М.: Аспект Пресс, 2018. 160 с.; Белов В. И. С. Внешнеполитические и экономические приоритеты Ирана на этапе формирования «экономики сопротивления» // Иран в мировой политике. XXI век / Отв. ред. Н. М. Мамедова, ред.-сост. М. С. Каменева, И. Е. Федорова; Институт востоковедения РАН. М.: ИВ РАН, Издатель Воробьев А. В. 2017. С. 222-231; и др.

<sup>46</sup> Чекушкин А. Н. Россия – Иран: проблемы и перспективы сотрудничества // Инженерные технологии и системы. 2010. № 3. С. 60-66.

<sup>47</sup> Дружиловский С. Б. Мировое сообщество и новая внешнеполитическая концепция Ирана // Иран-диалог цивилизаций / Под ред. Н. М. Мамедова, М. Санаи. Орехово-Зуево: Дом «Муравей», 2003. С. 36-42.

<sup>48</sup> Дунаева Е. В. Мамедова Н. М. Иран в 2020 г. – под гнетом санкций и пандемии // Восток (Oriens). 2020. № 6. С. 120-140; Дунаева Е. В., Сажин В. И. Исламская Республика Иран в условиях новых вызовов // Азия и Африка сегодня. 2020. № 5. С. 12-20.

<sup>49</sup> Федорова И. Е. Иран – США: Диалог и противостояние / Отв. ред. Н. М. Мамедова. М.: Институт востоковедения РАН, 2004. 143 с.; Иран: прошлое и настоящее / Сост. Дунаева Е. В., Каменева М. С., Мамедова Н. М., Федорова И. Е. М.: Институт востоковедения РАН, 2018. 376 с.

<sup>50</sup> Калинин Е. Л. Исламская революция 1979 года в Иране. М.: Институт востоковедения РАН, 2010. 236 с.

<sup>51</sup> Каменева М. С. Иран во втором десятилетии XXI века: вызовы и перспективы // Восток. Афро-азиатские общества: история и современность. 2016. № 3. С. 181-187.

A. Kozhanov<sup>52</sup>, L.M. Kulagina<sup>53</sup>, N.M. Mamedova<sup>54</sup>, A. G. Maryasova<sup>55</sup>, M.V. Novikov and S.V. Zemlyanskaya<sup>56</sup>, L.M. Ravandi-Fadai<sup>57</sup>, V.I. Sazhin<sup>58</sup>, A. Skryabin, A.S. Skryabina<sup>59</sup>, G.V. Samokhina and A.A. Draganov<sup>60</sup>, R.F. Vinogradov<sup>61</sup>, S.S. Zhiltsov<sup>62</sup>, and also H. Noibakhush<sup>63</sup>. Among the works of Iranian and Western scholars, the following studies should be emphasized F. Aliakbari<sup>64</sup>, H.S. Esfahani<sup>65</sup>, D. Esfandiary<sup>66</sup>,

<sup>52</sup> Kozhanov N. A. Iran's economy under sanctions: two levels of impact // *Russia in global affairs*. 2022. Vol. 20, № 4. P. 120-140; и др.

<sup>53</sup> Кулагина Л. М. Основные направления внешней политики ИРИ на современном этапе. // *Ближний Восток и современность*. 1996. №2. С. 15-24.

<sup>54</sup> Мамедова Н. М. Политико-экономический аспект диалога цивилизаций // *Иран--диалог цивилизаций / Под ред. Н. М. Мамедова, М. Санаи. Орехово-Зуево: Дом «Муравей», 2003. С. 15-25.*

<sup>55</sup> Марьясов А. Г. Ядерная проблема в отношениях Ирана с Западом // *Иран в мировой политике. XXI век / Отв. ред. Н. М. Мамедова, ред.-сост. М. С. Каменева, И. Е. Федорова; Институт востоковедения РАН. М.: ИВ РАН, Издатель Воробьев А. В. 2017. С. 74-79.*

<sup>56</sup> Новиков М. В., Землянская С. В. Соглашения о зоне свободной торговли между ЕАЭС и Ираном: тенденции, проблемы и перспективы развития // *Вестник Волгоградского государственного университета. Серия 3: Экономика. Экология*. 2022. Т. 24, № 4. С. 163-178.

<sup>57</sup> Раванди-Фадаи Л. М. Российско-Иранские отношения и Венское ядерное соглашение. Doha: Arab center for research and policy studies, 2015. 20 С.

<sup>58</sup> Сажин В. И. 40 лет Исламской Республики Иран: (Коллективная монография) / Отв. ред. М. С. Каменева, И. Е. Федорова; Ин-т востоковедения РАН. 358 с. Авт. раздел: «Ядерная программа: история и современное состояние». Гл. 2. М.: ИВ РАН. 2020. С. 99-128. С. 114-115.

<sup>59</sup> Скрябина А., Скрябин А. С. Развитие российско-иранских отношений: состояние и перспективы // *Россия в глобальном мире*. 2023. Т. 26, № 2. С. 16-32.

<sup>60</sup> Самохина Г. В., Драганов А. А. Специфика российско-иранских отношений в контексте современной геополитической ситуации в мире // *Общество: политика, экономика, право*. 2016. № 3. С. 43-45.

<sup>61</sup> Виноградов Р. Ф. Влияние сделки по ядерной программе Ирана на расстановку сил в регионе Ближнего Востока: новый вызов внешней политике США // *Управленческое консультирование*. 2016. Т. 88, № 4. С. 274-280.

<sup>62</sup> Жильцов С. С. Политика России в Каспийском регионе. М.: Аспект Пресс, 2018. 240 С.

<sup>63</sup> Ноиббахуш Х. Эволюция и перспективы развития отношений Ирана и России // *Вестник Московского государственного лингвистического университета. Общественные науки*. 2021. № 4. С. 218-221.

<sup>64</sup> اثر تحریم های اقتصادی بر سرمایه گذاری بخش خصوصی در ایران. فرزانه علی اکبری. کنفرانس جامع و بین المللی اقتصاد مقاومتی. ۱۱-۰۱. Aliakbari F. The effects of economic sanctions on private investment in Iran // *Journal of resistive economics*. 2020. Vol. 8, № 4. P. 1-11.

<sup>65</sup> اقتصاد ایران در قرن بیستم؛ چشم انداز جهانی. هادی صالحی اصفهانی و هاشم پسران. مطالعات ایران. ۱۳۸۸. دوره ۴۲. شماره ۲. ص ۱۷۷-۲۱۱. Esfahani H. S., Pesaran M. H. The Iranian economy in the twentieth century: A global perspective // *Iranian studies*. 2009. Vol. 42, № 2. P. 177-211.

<sup>66</sup> تحریم های ایران: تعریف و توانمندسازی «موفقیت». اسفندیاری. فیتزپاتریک. ۱۳۹۰. دوره ۵۳. شماره ۵. ص ۱۴۳-۱۵۳. Esfandiary D., Fitzpatrick M. Sanctions on Iran: Defining and enabling 'success' // *Survival*. 2011. Vol. 53, № 5. P. 143-156.

M.R. Farzanegan<sup>67</sup>, M. Ghodsi, H. Karamelikli<sup>68</sup>, A.F. Majidi and Z. Zarouni<sup>69</sup>, V. Yazdi-Feyzabadi<sup>70</sup>, and also works of E. Ashford<sup>71</sup>, M. Aoui<sup>72</sup>, O. Borszik<sup>73</sup>, B. Chaudhry<sup>74</sup>, E. Carmona<sup>75</sup>, C. Glenn<sup>76</sup>, S.I. Moya Mena<sup>77</sup>, G. Smith<sup>78</sup>, M. Warnaara<sup>79</sup>.

Russian scholars have presented a multidimensional analysis of the formation and development of Iran after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, its foreign policy and diplomacy under the leadership of Iranian Supreme Leaders R. Khomeini and A. Khamenei, emphasizing the commitment to the principles of independence, freedom, justice, self-reliance. The collective monographs and collections of articles prepared by scholars of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences present the whole spectrum of the main directions of development of the Islamic Republic of Iran, established in 1979. In the book “40 Years of the Islamic Republic of Iran<sup>80</sup>”, the

<sup>67</sup> تحریم ها و اقتصاد سایه: شواهد تجربی از استان های ایران. فرزانتگان. اقتصاد کاربردی. ۱۳۹۷. دوره ۲۶. شماره ۶. ص ۵۰۵-۵۰۱. Farzanegan M. R., Hayo B. Sanctions and the shadow economy: empirical evidence from Iranian provinces // Applied economics letters. 2018. Vol. 26, № 6. P. 501-505.

<sup>68</sup> تأثیر تحریم های اعمال شده توسط اتحادیه اروپا علیه ایران بر تجارت دوجانبه آنها: تحریم های عمومی در مقابل تحریم های هدفمند. قدسی. Ghodsi M., Karamelikli H. The impact of sanctions imposed by the European Union against Iran on their bilateral trade: general versus targeted sanctions // World trade review. 2021. Vol. 21, № 1. P. 33-58.

<sup>69</sup> Majidi A. F., Zarouni Z. تأثیر تحریم ها بر اقتصاد ایران. مجیدی، زرونی. اقتصاد مقاومتی. ۱۳۹۹. دوره ۸. شماره ۴. ص ۴۹-۶۵. The impact of sanctions on the economy of Iran // Resistive economics. 2020. Vol. 8, № 4. P. 49-65.

<sup>70</sup> پیامدهای سلامت تحریم های اقتصادی: فراخوان دیپلماسی سلامت و همکاری بین المللی. یزدی فیض آبادی، امینی، دلاوری. آرشیو طب Yazdi-Feyzabadi V., Amini-Rarani M., Delavari S. The health consequences of economic sanctions: Call for health diplomacy and international collaboration // Archives of Iranian medicine. 2020. Vol. 23, № 4. P. 51-53.

<sup>71</sup> Ashford E. Not-So-Smart sanctions: The failure of Western restrictions against Russia // Council on foreign relations. 2016. Vol. 95, № 1. P. 114-123.

<sup>72</sup> Ahouie M. Exploring President Rouhani's foreign policy doctrine 2013-2017 // Contemporary Gulf studies. 2020. P. 15-41.

<sup>73</sup> Borszik O. International sanctions against Iran and Tehran's responses: political effects on the targeted regime // Contemporary politics. 2015. Vol, 22. № 1. P. 20-39.

<sup>74</sup> Chaudhri V., Fyke J. P. Rhetoric in hostile diplomatic situations: A case study of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's rhetoric during his 2007 US visit // Place branding and public diplomacy. 2008. № 4. P. 317-330.

<sup>75</sup> Karmon E. Iran challenges the United States in its backyard, in Latin America // American foreign policy interests. 2010. Vol. 32, № 5. P. 276-296.

<sup>76</sup> Glenn, C. Lessons in Sanctions-Proofing from Russia // The Washington Quarterly. 2023. Vol. 1, № 46. P. 105-120.

<sup>77</sup> Moya Mena S. I. Regaining space: Iranian foreign policy toward Latin America during the first presidential term of Hassan Rouhani (2013–2017) // Contemporary Gulf studies. 2020. P. 157-176.

<sup>78</sup> Smith G. The Iran-contra connection: Secret teams and covert operations in the Reagan era // Foreign Affairs. 1987. Vol. 66, № 2. P. 438.

<sup>79</sup> Warnaar M. Iranian foreign policy behavior 2005–2013 // Iranian foreign policy during Ahmadinejad. Germany: Springer, 2013. P. 113-136.

<sup>80</sup> 40 лет Исламской Республике Иран: (Коллективная монография) / Под ред. М. С. Каменева, И. Е. Федорова. Москва: Институт востоковедения РАН, 2020. 358 с.

collective studies “Iran in the Context of New Geopolitical Realities<sup>81</sup>” and “Iran: Past and Present<sup>82</sup>” consider the main characteristics of the Islamic state model based on the principle of “velayat-e faqih”, examine key aspects of national development and foreign policy, including Russian-Iranian relations.

In the context of studying the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the peculiarities of Iranian diplomacy, it is important to note the works of V.I. Belov (Yurtayev)<sup>83</sup>, in which special attention is paid to the analysis of the structure of Iranian foreign policy and diplomacy, analyzing its main formats and features, which allows us to identify, among other things, the logic of Iran's responses to international sanctions and external pressure. In the context of analyzing IRI's strategy to overcome sanctions pressure, V.I. Belov examined such significant areas of IRI's foreign policy activities as dialogue of civilizations diplomacy, atomic diplomacy and Iran's eastern diplomacy, and triangle diplomacy, emphasizing the following: “Atomic diplomacy, which was a distinctive feature of Iranian foreign policy in the second half of the first decade of the 21st century, determined the dynamics of global and regional dimensions in IRI's foreign policy, which continued to follow the path of the Islamic Revolution. ... It was in the phenomenon of “atomic diplomacy” that the Tohid (i.e. holistic, inherent in the model based on Islamic values) nature of Iran's foreign policy was manifested. The conclusion of the JCPOA was a significant achievement of Iranian diplomacy, showing its maturity and readiness to tackle high international level tasks<sup>84</sup>.”

The reports of the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) published in 2014 and 2017 are devoted to the study of the potential and peculiarities of the development of Russian-Iranian relations and cooperation in general, including in connection with the sanctions policy of Western countries against the IRI<sup>85</sup>. The influence of external factors

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<sup>81</sup> Иран в условиях новых геополитических реалий / Под ред. Е. В. Дунаева. М.: Садра, 2019. 256 с.

<sup>82</sup> Дунаева Е. В., Каменева М. С., Мамедова Н. М., Федорова И. Е. Иран: прошлое и настоящее. М.: Институт востоковедения РАН, 2018. 376 с.

<sup>83</sup> Юртаев В. И. 40 лет Исламской Республики Иран: (Коллективная монография) / Отв. ред. М. С. Каменева, И. Е. Федорова; Ин-т востоковедения РАН. 358 с. Авт. раздел: «Основные форматы и особенности иранской дипломатии». Гл. 4. М.: ИВ РАН. 2020. С. 184-202.

<sup>84</sup> Юртаев В. И. 40 лет Исламской Республики Иран. Указ. соч. С. 190.

<sup>85</sup> Современные российско-иранские отношения: вызовы и возможности / Гл. ред. И. С. Иванов; [Российский совет по международным делам]. Спецкнига, 2014. 72 с.; Партнерство России и Ирана:

on Russia's Caspian policy at the beginning of the 21st century is traced in S.S. Zhiltsov's monograph "Russia's Policy in the Caspian Region" (2018)<sup>86</sup>.

Noting that the Soviet Union's (later Russia's) relations with Iran had ups and downs, several Western authors argue that Iranian and Russian interests are always a source of concern for the United States in the region. R.A. Kossa<sup>87</sup> pointed to the factor of third-party influence on Iran-Soviet relations, which made them unstable. V.A. Orlov<sup>88</sup> and N. Paulraj<sup>89</sup> found the main reason for the instability of relations between Iran and Russia in the nuclear issue. Other studies show the presence of other important factors affecting Iranian-Russian relations. For example, M.N. Katz<sup>90</sup> argued that Iran-Russia relations have more of a cooperative nature. E. Geranmae and N. Grazewski<sup>91</sup> and S.N. Macfarlane<sup>92</sup> believed that Western policies towards Iran and Russia have encouraged these countries to develop and improve their relations in various sectors. Western approaches, especially the sanctions approach, and new ideas such as multipolarity have influenced Iranian-Russian relations and brought cooperation to a new level.

*The third historiographical complex* consisted of works by Russian scholars analyzing the activities of the IRI and the Russian Federation in connection with the sanctions pressure of the West and their efforts to counteract and overcome these sanctions.

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текущее состояние и перспективы развития. 13 марта 2017 / Гл. ред. И. С. Иванов ; [Российский совет по международным делам. Центр по изучению Ирана и Евразии] // [https://russiancouncil.ru/activity/publications/russia-iran-partnership-an-overview-and-prospects-for-the-fu/?sphrase\\_id=99211409](https://russiancouncil.ru/activity/publications/russia-iran-partnership-an-overview-and-prospects-for-the-fu/?sphrase_id=99211409) (дата обращения: 10.10.2023).

<sup>86</sup> Жильцов С. С. Политика России в Каспийском регионе. М.: Аспект Пресс, 2018. С. 125-130.

<sup>87</sup> Cossa R. A. Iran-Soviet interests, US concerns. Washington: The institute for national strategic studies, 1990. 111 pp.

<sup>88</sup> Orlov V. A., Vinnikov A. The great guessing game: Russia and the Iranian nuclear issue // *The Washington quarterly*. 2005. Vol. 28, № 2. P. 49-66.

<sup>89</sup> Paulraj N. The JCPOA and changing dimensions of the Russia–Iran relations // *Contemporary review of the Middle East*. 2016. Vol. 3, № 1. P. 95-110.

<sup>90</sup> Katz M. N. Elusive as ever: The state of Iranian-Russian cooperation // *Wilson Center*. 2015. № 73. P. 1-5.

<sup>91</sup> Geranmayeh E., Grajewski N. Alone together: How the war in Ukraine shapes the Russian-Iranian relationship // *European Council on foreign relations*. 2023. P. 1-15.

<sup>92</sup> Macfarlane S. N. The 'R' in BRICs: is Russia an emerging power? // *International Affairs*. 2006. Vol. 82, № 1. P. 41-57.

The following scholars have paid special attention to the study of the problem of sanctions pressure on Iran and Russia: V.M. Akhmedov and L.M. Kulagina<sup>93</sup>, I.E. Fedorova<sup>94</sup>, M. Khanov<sup>95</sup>, Yu.V. Kovtunova<sup>96</sup>, N.A. Kozhanov<sup>97</sup>, O.V. Komshukova<sup>98</sup>, V.A. Laptev<sup>99</sup>, N.M. Mamedova<sup>100</sup>, V.I. Mesamed<sup>101</sup>, N.A. Mashkov<sup>102</sup>, A.I. Polishchuk<sup>103</sup>, O.I. Reshchikov<sup>104</sup>, V.I. Sazhin<sup>105</sup>, G.I. Starchenkov<sup>106</sup>, Y.S. Sokolshchik and V.A. Morozov<sup>107</sup>, S.A. Tarnopolsky<sup>108</sup>, I.N. Timofeev<sup>109</sup>.

<sup>93</sup> Кулагина Л. М., Ахмедов В. М. Россия и Иран – основные направления и перспективы сотрудничества // Институт Ближнего Востока. 2009. URL: <http://www.iimes.ru/?p=8432&print=1> (дата обращения: 18.09.2023); Кулагина Л. М., Ахмедов В. М. Влияние режима санкций на внешнеполитическую деятельность ИРИ // Санкции и их влияние на Иран / Отв. ред.: Мамедова Н. М. М.: Институт востоковедения РАН, Институт Ближнего Востока, 2012. С. 58-65.

<sup>94</sup> Федорова И. Е. Санкции против Ирана // Санкции и их влияние на Иран / Отв. ред.: Мамедова Н. М. М.: Институт востоковедения РАН, Институт Ближнего Востока, 2012. С. 70-80; и др.

<sup>95</sup> Ханов М. Юбилей поправки Джексона-Вэника, или краткая история санкций Запада против России [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <https://tass.ru/opinions/7390489> (дата обращения: 25.07.2023).

<sup>96</sup> Ковтунова Ю. В. Особенности инфляции в России 2014-2015 года // Экономика и социум. 2015. Т. 14, № 3. С. 608-611.

<sup>97</sup> Кожанов Н. А. О влиянии экономических санкций на внутривосточную ситуацию в Иране // Санкции и их влияние на Иран / Отв. ред.: Мамедова Н. М. М.: Институт востоковедения РАН, Институт Ближнего Востока, 2012. С. 35-57.

<sup>98</sup> Комшуклова О. В. Санкции в отношении Ирана: цели и последствия // Экономические и социальные проблемы России. М.: ИНИОН РАН, 2016. С. 24-41.

<sup>99</sup> Лаптев В. А. Международно-правовые основы санкционного режима и проблема легитимности односторонних санкций против Ирана // Санкции и их влияние на Иран / Отв. ред.: Мамедова Н. М. М.: Институт востоковедения РАН, Институт Ближнего Востока, 2012. С. 27-34.

<sup>100</sup> Мамедова Н. М. Санкционный режим в отношении Исламской Республики Иран и его влияние на ситуацию в стране // Санкции и их влияние на Иран / Отв. ред.: Мамедова Н. М. М.: Институт востоковедения РАН, Институт Ближнего Востока, 2012. С. 6-18.

<sup>101</sup> Месамед В. И. Иранское оружие в Западной Африке. 27.02.2011 Институт Ближнего Востока. URL: <http://www.iimes.ru/?p=12203> (дата обращения: 24.03.2024).

<sup>102</sup> Машков Н. А. Экономическое положение и экономическая политика Ирана в период санкций // Санкции и их влияние на Иран / Отв. ред.: Мамедова Н. М. М.: Институт востоковедения РАН, Институт Ближнего Востока, 2012. С. 19-26.

<sup>103</sup> Полищук А. И. Проблемы безопасности Ирана в региональном контексте // Иран во втором десятилетии XXI века: вызовы и перспективы / Под ред. Мамедовой Н. М., Каменевой М. С., Федоровой И. Е. М.: ИВ РАН, 2016. С. 231-242.

<sup>104</sup> Решиков О. И. Проблема приобретения Ираном самолетов гражданской авиации западного производства // Иран в мировой политике. XXI век / Отв. ред. Н. М. Мамедова, ред.-сост. М. С. Каменева, И. Е. Федорова; Институт востоковедения РАН. М.: ИВ РАН, Издатель Воробьев А. В. 2017. С. 177-189.

<sup>105</sup> Сажин В.И. Ситуация вокруг иранской ядерной программы // Санкции и их влияние на Иран / Отв. ред.: Мамедова Н. М. М.: Институт востоковедения РАН, Институт Ближнего Востока, 2012. С. 81-88.

<sup>106</sup> Старченков Г. И. Иран - новая газэкспортирующая держава XXI века // Исламская революция в Иране. Прошлое, настоящее, будущее. М.: Институт востоковедения РАН, 1999. С. 156-166.

<sup>107</sup> Тимофеев И. Н., Соколыцкий Ю. С., Морозов В. А. Санкции против Ирана: уроки для России в новых международных условиях // Вестник СПбГУ. Международные отношения. 2022. Т. 15, Вып. 4. С. 405-420.

<sup>108</sup> Тарнопольский С. А. Диверсификация энергетики - основа устойчивого развития России // Научно-аналитический журнал Обозреватель - Observer. 2012. Т. 265, № 2. С. 33-39.

<sup>109</sup> Тимофеев И. Н. Санкции против России: новая финансово-экономическая реальность? // Ибер американские тетради. 2022. Т. 10, № 4. С. 65-76.

N.M. Mammadova's works considered the key problems of Iran's political and economic relations with Western countries and Russia examined in detail the instruments of Western influence on Iran, including sanctions pressure, and noted that the world market is interested “in Iranian energy resources, in Iranian transit potential, in the Iranian consumer market<sup>110</sup>”. Assessing the limits of sanctions pressure on Iran, Russian Iranologists emphasized that “whatever the situation around Iran, Russia will never agree to the use of force against Iran<sup>111</sup>.” V.I. Sazhin in the collective monograph “40 Years of the Islamic Republic of Iran (2020)” gave an in-depth analysis of the history of the development of the Iranian nuclear program and the situation around the JCPOA after the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal. Important for understanding the essence of the moment was the conclusion that “Iran is looking for a way out of the most difficult situation for it, up to ignoring the JCPOA...Tehran has gone all-in<sup>112</sup>.”

In the collection of reports of the scientific conference “Sanctions and their impact on the situation in Iran” held at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences on April 11, 2011, special attention was paid to the characterization of the legal regime of sanctions, the history of their application against Iran, the analysis of the sanctions themselves and the effectiveness of their application. As V.M. Akhmedov and L.M. Kulagina showed, by increasing the sanctions pressure on Iran, Washington, first of all, solved the problems of neutralizing Iran's influence in the Middle East (where their efforts eliminated the front of moderate Sunni Muslims opposing Iran); undermining the image of Iran “as an influential regional power”; and “preventing the development of Iran's nuclear program<sup>113</sup>.” This forced the IRI leadership to reconsider its foreign policy priorities. The new foreign policy was called “a look to the East” and “was reflected in

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<sup>110</sup> Мамедова Н. М. Проблемы взаимоотношений Ирана с западными странами (экономический аспект) // Иран в мировой политике. XXI век / Отв. ред. Н. М. Мамедова, ред.-сост. М. С. Каменева, И. Е. Федорова; Институт востоковедения РАН. М.: ИВ РАН, Издатель Воробьев А. В. 2017. С. 62-73.

<sup>111</sup> Кулагина Л. М., Ахмедов В. М. Россия и Иран – основные направления и перспективы сотрудничества // Институт Ближнего Востока. 2009. URL: <http://www.iimes.ru/?p=8432&print=1> (дата обращения: 18.09.2023).

<sup>112</sup> Сажин В. И. 40 лет Исламской Республики Иран: ... Указ. соч. С. 114-115.

<sup>113</sup> Кулагина Л. М., Ахмедов В. М. Влияние режима санкций на внешнеполитическую деятельность ИРИ // Санкции и их влияние на Иран / Отв. ред.: Мамедова Н. М. М.: Институт востоковедения РАН, Институт Ближнего Востока, 2012. С. 58.



Iran's movement towards the CIS, the SCO, the Eurasian Economic Community, and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation <sup>114</sup>.” I.E. Fedorova emphasized that it is the imposition of various kinds of sanctions that is “the key lever of American diplomacy, which is designed to put the Iranian leadership in front of a choice either to change the foreign policy parameters of its policy or to remain in isolation <sup>115</sup>.” According to the assessment of the U.S. leadership itself, as stated, in particular, by U.S. Secretary of State H. Clinton, during 2011 there was an “escalation of pressure” on the IRI from the U.S., which continued in 2012. The U.S. sanctions pressure was supported by the European Union <sup>116</sup>.

The approaches of the governments of M. Khatami (1997-2005) and M. Ahmadinejad (2005-2013) to reaching agreements with the West on the Iranian nuclear program (INP) are analyzed in detail in the article by A.G. Maryasov (2017). As it was emphasized, “compromise on the INF became possible only under Presidents H. Rouhani and B. Obama when the leadership of both countries realized the futility and danger of a harsh confrontational confrontation,” and the Supreme Leader of the IRI A. Khamenei and the then U.S. President gave “the green light to the JCPOA <sup>117</sup>. At the same time, “An important direction of Iran's foreign policy was the strengthening of Iran's activity in international organizations <sup>118</sup>.”

In general, as Russian scholars have stressed, by agreeing to the JCPOA, the Iranian leadership was aware that “the crippling sanctions imposed by the international community not only cause very sensitive damage to the country's economy but also significantly slow down the implementation of its nuclear program <sup>119</sup>. As a result, the departure of “both sides from the tough confrontation had a positive impact on the atmosphere of the dialog on the NPT,” which was conducted by Iran with the “six”

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<sup>114</sup> Кулагина Л. М., Ахмедов В. М. Влияние режима санкций ..., С. 59.

<sup>115</sup> Федорова И. Е. Санкции против Ирана ..., С. 72.

<sup>116</sup> Федорова И. Е. Иран – США: ..., С. 78.

<sup>117</sup> Марьясов А. Г. Ядерная проблема в отношениях Ирана с Западом ... С. 74; 78.

<sup>118</sup> Комшукова О. В. Санкции в отношении Ирана: ..., С. 35.

<sup>119</sup> Современные российско-иранские отношения: вызовы и возможности / Гл. ред. И. С. Иванов; [Российский совет по международным делам]. Спецкнига, 2014. С. 11.

international mediators, including Russia and China<sup>120</sup>. V.I. Belov drew attention to the readiness of the IRI leadership to “make the most of the situation after the lifting of international sanctions - to start building its relations with the outside world from scratch<sup>121</sup>”. According to A.I. Polishchuk, the policy of imposing economic sanctions on “undesirable” countries by the West “has become inherently tantamount to an economic and technological blockade, which in the broadest sense undermines the security of the countries to which it is applied<sup>122</sup>”.

Even though the “pro-Western trend” became the main trend in the IRI foreign policy under the IRI President H. Rouhani<sup>123</sup>, with the election of U.S. President D. Trump the period of “engagement in joint actions” in the U.S. policy towards Iran came to an end<sup>124</sup>.

Important for understanding the grounds for the convergence of the positions of Iran and Russia in the 2010s is I.E. Fedorova’s remark that the consensus on the status of the Caspian Sea (2018) was reached “under the influence of many factors that brought the positions of the Caspian littoral states closer. In addition, the imposition of Western sanctions against Russia and Iran led to the gradual resolution of many issues, including the legal status problem. China's growing involvement in Central Asia and the Caspian

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<sup>120</sup> Современные российско-иранские отношения: вызовы и возможности / Гл. ред. И. С. Иванов; [Российский совет по международным делам]. Спецкнига, 2014. С. 12.

<sup>121</sup> Белов В. И. С. Внешнеполитические и экономические приоритеты Ирана на этапе формирования «экономики сопротивления» // Иран в мировой политике. XXI век / Отв. ред. Н. М. Мамедова, ред.-сост. М. С. Каменева, И. Е. Федорова; Институт востоковедения РАН. М.: ИВ РАН, Издатель Воробьев А. В. 2017. С. 226.

<sup>122</sup> Полищук А. И. Проблемы безопасности Ирана в региональном контексте // Иран во втором десятилетии XXI века: вызовы и перспективы / Под ред. Мамедовой Н. М., Каменевой М. С., Федоровой И. Е. М.: ИВ РАН, 2016. С. 232.

<sup>123</sup> Дунаева Е. В. Проблемы отношений ИРИ и Запада во внешнеполитическом дискурсе в период президентства Х. Роухани // Иран в мировой политике. XXI век / Отв. ред. Н. М. Мамедова, ред.-сост. М. С. Каменева, И. Е. Федорова; Институт востоковедения РАН. М.: ИВ РАН, Издатель Воробьев А. В. 2017. С. 43.

<sup>124</sup> Федорова И. Е. С. Иран – США 2017 // Иран в мировой политике. XXI век / Отв. ред. Н. М. Мамедова, ред.-сост. М. С. Каменева, И. Е. Федорова; Институт востоковедения РАН. М.: ИВ РАН, Издатель Воробьев А. В. 2017. С. 126.

region has had an impact, which has also prompted Russia and Iran to restore regional cooperation<sup>125</sup>.

The geopolitical struggle for influence in the Eurasian region, particularly in the context of Western sanctions against Russia, has been analyzed by S.S. Zhiltsov<sup>126</sup>. The study highlights Russia's strategic efforts to strengthen integration through the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) as a response to these sanctions. The effectiveness of the sanctions imposed on Russia by the European Union, the United States and other countries since 2014 and the measures taken by Russia to mitigate their consequences were studied by S. Belozorov and O. Sokolovskaya, emphasizing a strategy of diversifying trade ties with Western partners toward Eastern<sup>127</sup>. In the article of O. Kuznetsova and A. Kuznetsov<sup>128</sup> examines the strategic shift in Russia's foreign economic policy towards the Global South. This shift in diplomatic and economic emphasis is assessed as a necessary adaptation to counter the effects of Western sanctions, aimed at reducing economic dependence on Western countries and increasing Russia's geopolitical stability.

In their detailed analysis, Snegova M., Dolbaia T., Fenton N., and Bergmann M.<sup>129</sup> critically examine the Western sanctions imposed on Russia following its operation in Ukraine in 2022, drawing comparisons with historical sanctions on South Africa and Iran. An analysis of the results in South Africa and Iran shows that the main goal of regime change was never achieved in either case.

In addition, Simonds G.'s report “A Year of Sanctions against Russia - Now What?”<sup>130</sup> critically examines the impact of Western sanctions on Russia. The report

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<sup>125</sup> Федорова И. Е. С. Иран – США 2017 // Иран в мировой политике. XXI век / Отв. ред. Н. М. Мамедова, ред.-сост. М. С. Каменева, И. Е. Федорова; Институт востоковедения РАН. М.: ИВ РАН, Издатель Воробьев А. В. 2017. С. 131.

<sup>126</sup> Zhiltsov S.S. Fighting for Eurasia // *Post-Soviet Issues*. 2021. Vol.8, №1. P. 8-19.

<sup>127</sup> Belozorov S. A., Sokolovska O. Economic sanctions against Russia: Assessing the policies to overcome their impact // *Economy of region*. 2020. Vol. 16, № 4. P. 1115-1131.

<sup>128</sup> Kuznetsova O., Kuznetsov A. Russia's pivot to the global south as a factor of its regional development // *Russia and the moslem world*. 2024. №1. P. 5-29.

<sup>129</sup> Snegovaya M. Dolbaia T., Fenton N., and Bergmann M. Russia sanctions at one year // *Center for Strategic and international studies (CSIS)*. 2023. Vol. 7, № 2. P. 01-15.

<sup>130</sup> Simond G. Year of sanctions against Russia-now what? London: Center for strategic & international studies Europe program, 2015. 40 pp.

recognizes that while these sanctions have created significant economic problems for Russia, they have failed to achieve their primary goal of destabilizing the country and provoking regime change. As the report notes, “rather than [the sanctions] turning Russians against their government, the sanctions have not prevented them from supporting President Putin even more<sup>131</sup>” and have strengthened Russia's resolve to defend its interests.

Zakharova D., Soltakhanov A., Zhdanova A., Arabyan K.,<sup>132</sup> argue that sanctions have had a negligible impact on Russia's GDP and inflation, with the value of the ruble primarily reflecting fundamental economic factors.

*The fourth historiographical complex* includes works of Iranian, and Western scholars, focuses on the economic and diplomatic impacts of international sanctions on Iran and Russia, examining their strategies to counteract and adapt to Western pressures.

The analysis of IRI's position in connection with external pressure, peculiarities of its diplomacy, and implemented political strategies after the 1979 revolution is presented in the works of J.H. Aghaie<sup>133</sup>, M. Amoozegar<sup>134</sup>, E. Ejazee<sup>135</sup>, N. Ghasemi, M.M. Milani<sup>136</sup>, H. Moshirzadeh<sup>137</sup>, S.A. Niakooee, A. Omid<sup>138</sup>, F. Rezaei<sup>139</sup>, and B.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., P. 8.

<sup>132</sup> Zakharova D., Soltakhanov A., Zhdanova A., Arabyan K. Course of the Ruble as an indicator of the state of Russia's economy under sanctions // ESPACIOS. 2018. Vol. 39, № 18. P. 1-11.

<sup>133</sup> رمزگشایی از سیاست «فشار حداکثری» ترامپ: چالش پایدار مهار ایران. آقایی جوبانی، دهشور. مطالعات خاورمیانه جدید. ۱۳۹۹. دوره ۲۲-۴۴ شماره ۱. ص ۲۲-۴۴. Aghaie Joobani H., Daheshvar M. Deciphering Trump's "Maximum pressure" policy: The enduring challenge of containing Iran // New Middle Eastern studies. 2020. Vol. 10, № 1. P. 22-44.

<sup>134</sup> تبیین قاعده حفظ نظام سیاسی و تعیین مبانی کاربرد آن در حمایت از استقلال اقتصادی از دیدگاه امام (ره). قاسمی، آموزگار. تحقیق انقلاب ۱۲۷-۱۵۰ شماره ۲. ص ۱۲۷-۱۵۰. Ghasemi N., Amoozegar M. Explaining the rule of maintaining the political system and determining the principles of its application in support of economic independence from the perspective of Imam (ra) // Islamic revolution research. 2021. Vol. 10, № 2. P. 127-150.

<sup>135</sup> سیاست خارجی و توسعه اقتصادی: ایران در دوران رفسنجانی. نیاکویی، اجازی. بررسی روابط خارجی ایران. ۱۳۹۳. دوره ۵. شماره ۳. ص ۱۷۹-۲۰۰. Niakooee S. A., Ejazee E. Foreign policy and economic development: Iran under Rafsanjani // Iranian review of foreign affairs. 2014. Vol. 5, № 3. P. 179-200.

<sup>136</sup> Milani M. M. سیاست ایران پس از جنگ سرد در خلیج فارس. میلانی. مجله بین المللی. ۱۳۷۳. دوره ۴۹. شماره ۲. ص ۳۲۸-۳۵۴. Iran's post-Cold War policy in the Persian Gulf // International journal. 1994. Vol. 49, № 2. P. 328-354.

<sup>137</sup> ایده گفتگوی تمدن ها و گفت و گوی هسته-حاشیه در روابط بین الملل. مشیرزاده. همه آزمون: مجله سیاست خارجی و صلح. ۱۳۹۹. شماره ۲۱۱-۲۲۸. Moshirzadeh H. The idea of Dialogue of Civilizations and core-periphery dialogue in international relations // All azimuth: A journal of foreign policy and peace. 2020. Vol. 9, № 2. P. 211-228.

<sup>138</sup> Omid A. سیاست و دیپلماسی فشار حداکثری ترامپ. امیدی. بررسی روابط خارجی ایران. ۱۳۹۹. دوره ۱۱. شماره ۳۱. ص ۵-۳۲. Trump's maximum pressure policy and diplomacy // Iranian review of foreign affairs. 2020. Vol. 11, № 31. P. 5-32.

<sup>139</sup> Rezaei F. Khatami's گفتگوی خاتمی بین تمدن ها و "عمل ناپدید شدن" هسته ای. رضایی. برنامه هسته ای ایران. ۱۳۹۶. ص ۷۷-۱۱۸. Dialogue among civilizations and the nuclear "Disappearance act" // Iran's nuclear program. 2017. P. 77-118.

Rezvani<sup>140</sup>. By examining the potentials and challenges of Iran's foreign policy and, in particular, Iran's diplomacy under Western pressure, J. Karami and M. Sanaei have shown that Iran's eastern strategy has been a response to Western pressure and a proactive step in a changing global environment<sup>141</sup>. In the publications of Z. Balazadeh<sup>142</sup>, M. Sanai,<sup>143</sup> and A. Abedi<sup>144</sup> based on rich factual material, analyzes the rapprochement and cooling in relations between Iran and Russia. In the studies of Iranian scholars J. Kerami<sup>145</sup>, and E. Kolayi<sup>146</sup>, analyzes the role of diplomacy in relations between the two countries<sup>147</sup>, describes the advantages and challenges of Iran-Russia relations. E. Kolayi's works analyze the relations between Iran and the Soviet Union after the 1979 Islamic Revolution and in the Iran-Russia-West triangle<sup>148</sup>, the influence of "Putin's pragmatism" and Russia's renewed diplomacy on shaping Russian and Iranian foreign policy<sup>149</sup>. Also noteworthy are two seminal works by D.R. Bakhshi, S.R. Nakhli, M. Rafat, and M.

<sup>140</sup> پیامدهای حقوقی و ژئوپلیتیکی خروج یکجانبه ایالات متحده از توافق هسته ای. رضوانی. مجمع ژئوپلیتیک قومی. ۱۳۹۷. ص ۰۷-۰۵. Rezvani B. Legal and geopolitical implications of US unilateral withdrawal from the nuclear agreement // Forum of ethno geopolitics. 2018. Vol. 6, № 1. P. 5-7.

<sup>141</sup> Sanaei M., سیاست شرق ایران: پتانسیل ها و چالش ها. سنایی، کرمی. روسیه در امور جهانی. ۱۴۰۰. دوره ۱۹. شماره ۳. ص ۴۹-۲۵. Karami J. Iran's eastern policy: potential and challenges // Russia in Global Affairs. 2021. Vol. 19, № 3. P. 25-49.

<sup>142</sup> مقایسه تحلیلی روابط ایران و روسیه در دوران خاتمی و احمدی نژاد. بالازاده، غیبی. بررسی روابط خارجی ایران. ۱۳۹۳. دوره ۴. شماره ۳۵-۶۲. Balazadeh Z., Ghaibi F. Analytical comparison of relations between Iran and Russia during the era of Khatami and Ahmadinejad // Iranian review of foreign affairs. 2013. Vol. 4, № 15. P. 35-62.

<sup>143</sup> Sanaei M. Investigating the relations between Iran and Russia. Tehran: IRAS studies. 2010.

<sup>144</sup> فراز و نشیب روابط ایران و روسیه ۲۰۱۶-۱۹۹۰. عابدی. بررسی روابط خارجی ایران. ۱۳۹۷. دوره ۱۰. شماره ۴۰. ص ۱۶۴-۱۳۷. Abedi A. Ups and downs of Iran-Russia relations 1990-2016 // Iranian review of foreign affairs. 2018. Vol. 10, № 40. P. 135-164.

<sup>145</sup> روابط ایران و روسیه در سال های ۱۳۶۸ تا ۱۳۸۸: بسترها، عوامل و محدودیت ها. کرمی. مطالعات اوراسیا مرکزی. ۱۳۹۰. دوره ۳. Kerami J. Relations between Iran and Russia in the years 1368 to 1388: platforms, factors and limitations // Studies of Central Eurasia. 2011. Vol. 3, № 6. P. 112-136.

<sup>146</sup> Kolayi E. The book of the Soviet Union and the Iranian Islamic Revolution. Tehran: Science publication, 2012. 250 pp.

<sup>147</sup> Kerami J. ایران و روسیه: متحد شرقی یا تهدید جنوبی؟. کرمی. فصلنامه تحقیقات روابط خارجی. ۱۳۹۰. دوره ۲. شماره ۳. ص ۱۹۹-۱۷۲. J. Iran and Russia: eastern ally or southern threat? // Foreign relations research quarterly. 2011. Vol. 2, № 3. P. 172-199.

<sup>148</sup> Kolayi E. Russia, the West and Iran // Studies of Central Asia and the Caucasus. 1999. № 12. P. 121-155.

<sup>149</sup> عمل گرایی پوتین و تغییر رویکردهای سیاست خارجی روسیه. کولایی، نوری. فصلنامه سیاست دانشگاه تهران. ۱۳۹۸. دوره ۴۰. شماره ۲۱۶-۲۱۲. Kolayi E., Noori A. Putin's pragmatism and change in the approaches of Russian foreign policy // Tehran university politics quarterly. 2019. Vol. 40, № 2. P. 212-216.

Rafei<sup>150</sup>, which provided in-depth analysis of the impact of economic sanctions on Iran's financial and energy sectors.

The issue of Western sanctions toward Iran, and Iran's economic through the analyzing the ideological discourse of Imam Khomeini, investigated by the work of M. Farajollahzadeh<sup>151</sup>. His research examines the mechanisms of Western influence, focusing on economic pressure and its implications on Iran's political sovereignty. The article argues that Khomeini perceived sanctions as a strategic attempt by adversaries to destabilize Iran's Islamic governance by instigating economic hardship and disillusionment within the Iranian society. The study concludes that Khomeini's doctrine advocates for exploiting sanctions as an opportunity to strengthen national unity and economic independence, ultimately viewing them as an ideological war that must be fought with perseverance and innovation. In his next work M. Farajollahzadeh, with his colleagues F. Rahbar, and A.M. Seif, provide a comprehensive analysis of Ayatollah Khamenei's views on economic sanctions<sup>152</sup>. The article outlines the instruments of Western influence on Iran, primarily through sanctions, and emphasizes Khamenei's stance that "sanctions are a tool for exerting maximum pressure to influence Iran's sovereign decisions<sup>153</sup>". According to the research's results, Khamenei asserts that sanctions, while intended to isolate Iran, have instead prompted the nation to pivot towards self-reliance and seek alternative economic partnerships, particularly with

<sup>150</sup> تجزیه و تحلیل اثرات تحریم های اقتصادی: شواهدی از بانک مرکزی ایران. نخلی، رافعی، بخشی، رفعت. مجله ایرانی مطالعات اقتصادی. ۲۰۲۰. Vol. 9, № 1. P. 35-70. Nakhli S. R., Rafei M., Bakhshi D. R., Rafat. M. A. DSGE Analysis of the effects of economic sanctions: Evidence from the Central Bank of Iran // Iranian journal of economic studies. 2020. Vol. 9, № 1. P. 35-70; نخلی، رافعی، بخشی. مجله مطالعات اقتصادی. چگونه تحریم های مالی و نفتی بر اقتصاد ایران تأثیر می گذارد: چارچوب DSGE. Nakhli S. R., Rafei. M., Bakhshi D. R., Rafat M. How do the financial and oil sanctions affect the Iran's economy: a DSGE framework // Journal of economic studies. 2020. V. 48, № 4. P. 761-785.

<sup>151</sup> تحلیل گفتمان اندیشه ها، آراء، نظرات و رهنمودهای حضرت امام خمینی (ره) در زمینه مقابله با تحریم های اقتصادی، محمد فرج اله زاده، Farajollahzadeh M. Discourse analysis of the thoughts, opinions, opinions and guidelines of Imam Khomeini (RA) in the field of dealing with economic sanctions // National Defense Strategic Management Studies, Vol. 3, № 11. 2020. P. 273-237.

<sup>152</sup> تبیین گفتمان اندیشه ها، آراء، نظرات و رهنمودهای حضرت امام خامنه ای (مدظله العالی) در زمینه مقابله با تحریم های اقتصادی، محمد فرج اله زاده، فرهاد رهبر، مراد سیف، فصلنامه علمی مطالعات بین رشته ای دانش راهبردی، دوره ۱۰، شماره ۴۰، ۱۳۹۹، صفحه ۳۱۹-۳۵۴. Farajollahzadeh M., Rahbar F., Seif M. Explanation of the discourse of the thoughts, opinions, opinions and guidelines of Imam Khamenei in the field of dealing with economic sanctions // Scientific Quarterly of Interdisciplinary Studies of Strategic Knowledge. 2019. Vol. 10, № 40. P. 319-354.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid. P. 336.

Eastern and neighbouring countries and that ensures Iran's economic stability and security against external threats.

Regarding studies of Iranian scholars about Iran's responses and strategies toward Unilateral, regional and international sanctions, the work of Ghamari Farzad F. should be mentioned that explores the comprehensive strategy of Iran in managing the impact of international sanctions through the lens of resistance economy<sup>154</sup>. The study examines the key challenges that sanctions pose to Iran's economic and political systems, identifying them as tools of foreign policy by hostile states aimed at undermining Iran's sovereignty and stability. Ghamari Farzad emphasizes that despite the sanctions being publicized as a means to bring about economic and political change, their effectiveness largely hinges on the presence of a robust and cohesive national strategy. The article concludes that Iran's response to sanctions involves not only mitigating their effects but also leveraging them to spur innovation and self-reliance within the country. This strategic pivot is seen as a calculated move to counteract the economic isolation intended by the sanctions and to reinforce Iran's economic and political resilience against external pressures. In addition to Farzad's work, Najafzadeh F., Heydarpour M., and Torabi M.'s article explores Iran's public policy strategies in addressing the challenges posed by unilateral U.S. sanctions through the lens of soft power<sup>155</sup>. The research highlights Iran's shift from reliance on hard power, given its high costs, to the strategic application of soft power to influence both domestic and international perceptions. The study identifies cultural diplomacy and foreign policy as key components of Iran's soft power, enabling it to reduce the effectiveness of sanctions by fostering alliances and enhancing its international standing. The results show that Iran's response to sanctions involves leveraging soft power to create resilient public policies that emphasize economic resistance and strategic ambiguity. This approach not only counters the immediate effects of sanctions but also reinforces Iran's

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<sup>154</sup> مدیریت تحریم های اقتصادی با تاکید بر اقتصاد مقاومتی، فرهاد قمری فرزاد، کنفرانس بین المللی مدیریت و کار آفرینی در شرایط اقتصاد مقاومتی، ۱۳۹۴، صفحه ۱-۹. Ghamari Farzad F. Management of economic sanctions with an emphasis on resistance economy // International conference on management and entrepreneurship in the conditions of resistance economy. 2015. P. 1-9.

<sup>155</sup> تحلیل سیاستگذاری عمومی ایران در مقابله با تحریمهای یکجانبه آمریکا از منظر قدرت نرم، فاطمه نجف زاده، ماشاءالله حیدر پور، محمد ۱۷۶-۱۵۳. Najafzadeh F., Haiderpour M., Torabi M. Analysis of Iran's public policy in dealing with unilateral US sanctions from the perspective of soft power // Soft Power Studies Quarterly. 2022. No. 3. P. 153-176.

long-term diplomatic goals, ensuring its sovereignty and stability in complex geopolitical circumstances.

Among Iranian scholars and ideologists, one should note two important works of former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mr. Javad Zarif who published one in 1997 and another in 2023. In his older work “International law issues: unilateral US sanctions against Iran<sup>156</sup>”, Mr. Zarif analysis the unilateral sanctions of US toward Iran, and argues because unilateral sanctions are limiting the right of development of the country, and unilateral sanctions violating the principle of non-interference in internal and foreign policy of the country, US sanctions are illegal action according to international law. The article concludes that US, via its congress, tries to bypass international law to be able to stabilize unipolar world after Cold war, and be able to put pressure on countries like Iran without consequences. In his 2023 article “Trump’s campaign to re-securitize Iran<sup>157</sup>”, he marks the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and the UN Security Council Resolution 2231 as the start of de-securitization of Iran nuclear program. The idea of article is that the Trump policies toward Iran, the campaign of maximum pressure, was not to merely hurt the Iranian economy and its people, but to reverse the de-securitization of Iranian nuclear program through JCPOA and UNSCR 2231. The results shows that while Trump policy succeeded in imposing heavy economic cost on Iran, it failed to re-securitize the Iranian nuclear program.

In addition, studies that attempt to examine the diplomatic component of Iran's and Russia's anti-sanctions response should be mentioned separately. Such studies include the

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<sup>156</sup> مباحث حقوق بین الملل: تحریمهای یک جانبه آمریکا علیه ایران، محمدجواد ظریف، سعید میرزایی، مجله سیاست خارجی، ۱۳۷۶، شماره ۱، صفحه ۹۱-۱۰۸. Zarif J., Mirzaei S. International Law Debates: Unilateral US Sanctions against Iran // Journal of Foreign Policy. 1997. No. 1. P. 91-108.

<sup>157</sup> Zarif M.J., Afjei J. Trump’s campaign to re-securitize Iran // International studies. 2023. No. 2. P. 235-285.



works of R. Alexander<sup>158</sup>, S. Arie<sup>159</sup>, B. Aris<sup>160</sup>, O. Borszik<sup>161</sup>, S. Bhavish<sup>162</sup>, R. Connolly<sup>163</sup>, D. Gros<sup>164</sup>, H. Haukkala<sup>165</sup>, P. Osiewicz<sup>166</sup>, M. Schmidt<sup>167</sup>, D.K. Simes<sup>168</sup>, and W. Taubman<sup>169</sup>. The aforementioned studies analyze Western sanctions policies against Iran and Russia and clarify Iranian and Russian strategies under international pressure in different periods.

Analyzing the scientific works of Iranian, Russian, and Western scholars devoted to topical issues of international relations and foreign policy, one can conclude that there is a significant degree of scientific development of the problem of diplomacy under sanctions and international pressure. The studies cover a wide range of topics, from geopolitical dynamics and interaction between Iran, the USSR/Russia, and the West, to the specifics of foreign policy and diplomacy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Particularly valuable is the multidimensional approach to analyzing the impact of sanctions on Iran's financial and energy sectors, as well as on the formation of its foreign policy strategy. Nevertheless, despite the extensive amount of research conducted, there is a noticeable lack of development on the issue of the impact of sanctions and pressure on relations between Iran and Russia, which indicates the need for further research in this area. There is no special monograph on the topic of the dissertation research.

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<sup>158</sup> Alexander R. Iran and Lib an and Libya sanctions act of 1996: Congr a sanctions act of 1996: Congress exceeds its ceeds its jurisdiction to prescribe law // Washington and Lee law review. 1997. Vol. 54, № 4. P. 1601-1634.

<sup>159</sup> Arie S. Unintended consequences of sanctions against Iran // BMJ. 2013. Vol. 347, № 2. P. 46-50.

<sup>160</sup> Aris B. Impact of sanctions on Russia: An assessment. European leadership network, 2014. 7 pp.

<sup>161</sup> Borszik O. International sanctions against Iran and Tehran's responses: political effects on the targeted regime // Contemporary politics. 2015. Vol, 22. № 1. P. 20-39.

<sup>162</sup> Sashi S., Bhavish S. Macroeconomic implications of US sanctions on Iran: A sectoral financial balances analysis // Studies in business and economics. 2019. Vol. 14, № 3. P. 182-204.

<sup>163</sup> Connolly R. Western sanctions and the Russian response // Russia's response to sanctions. Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 2018. P. 56-77.

<sup>164</sup> Gros D., Mustilli F. The economic impact of sanctions against Russia: Much ado about very little // Centre for European policy studies. 2015. № 4. P. 1-4.

<sup>165</sup> Haukkala H. Russian reactions to the European neighbourhood policy // Problems of Post-Communism. 2008. Vol. 55, № 5. P. 40-48.

<sup>166</sup> Osiewicz P. EU-Iran relations in the Post-JCPOA period: Selected political aspects // Przegląd politologiczny. 2018. № 2. P. 153-164.

<sup>167</sup> Schmidt M. Is Putin pursuing a policy of Eurasianism? // Demokratizatsiya: The journal of Post-Soviet democratization. 2005. Vol. 13, № 1. P. 87-100.

<sup>168</sup> Simes D. K. Gorbachev: A new foreign policy? // Foreign Affairs. 1986. Vol. 65, № 3. 477 pp.

<sup>169</sup> Taubman W. Khrushchev: The man and his era. USA: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004. 929 pp.

**Main Source of Data.** In order to achieve the author's goal and solve the research task, a group of sources were involved, analysed and systematized and this can be divided into several groups.

The *first group* «regulatory and legislative sources» include the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986<sup>170</sup>, the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988<sup>171</sup>, The Covenant of the League of Nations<sup>172</sup>, Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties (1991 and 1993)<sup>173</sup>, and Council of European Union. Measures targeting nuclear proliferation activities<sup>174</sup>, UN Security Council Resolutions Concerning the Nuclear Program of Iran (1696)<sup>175</sup>, (1737)<sup>176</sup>, (1747)<sup>177</sup>, (1803)<sup>178</sup>, (1835)<sup>179</sup>, (1929)<sup>180</sup>, (2224)<sup>181</sup>, (2231)<sup>182</sup>, Joint

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<sup>170</sup> Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/99th-congress/house-bill/4868> (date of access: 21.06.2023).

<sup>171</sup> Public Law 100-418: Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-102/pdf/STATUTE-102-Pg1107.pdf> (date of access: 25.06.2023).

<sup>172</sup> The Covenant of the League of Nations (Art. 1 to 26). Electronic resource. URL: <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1919Parisv13/ch10subch1#:~:text=Article%2010.,all%20Members%20of%20the%20League.> (date of access: 20.06.2023).

<sup>173</sup> Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties, 1991 and 1993. Electronic resource. URL: <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/pcw/104210.htm> (date of access: 27.07.2023).

<sup>174</sup> Council of European Union. Measures targeting nuclear proliferation activities - key developments. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/iran/history-iran/> (date of access: 18.07.2023).

<sup>175</sup> S/RES/1696 (2006), Expresses concern at the intentions of Iran's nuclear programme and demands that Iran halt its uranium enrichment programme. Electronic resource. URL: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/450/22/PDF/N0645022.pdf?OpenElement> (date of access: 15.07.2023).

<sup>176</sup> UNSC: Resolution 1737 - Security Council Imposes Sanctions On Iran For Failure To Halt Uranium Enrichment, Unanimously Adopted. Electronic resource. URL: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/681/42/PDF/N0668142.pdf?OpenElement> (date of access: 15.07.2023).

<sup>177</sup> UNSC: Resolution 1747. Electronic resource. URL: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N07/281/40/PDF/N0728140.pdf?OpenElement> (date of access: 15.07.2023).

<sup>178</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 1803 on Iran's Nuclear Program. Electronic resource. URL: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N08/257/81/PDF/N0825781.pdf?OpenElement> (date of access: 16.07.2023).

<sup>179</sup> UNSC: Resolution 1835. Electronic resource. URL: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N08/525/12/PDF/N0852512.pdf?OpenElement> (date of access: 15.07.2023).

<sup>180</sup> UNSC: Resolution 1929. Electronic resource. URL: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N10/396/79/PDF/N1039679.pdf?OpenElement> (date of access: 15.07.2023).

<sup>181</sup> UNSC: Resolution 2224. Electronic resource. URL: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N15/172/87/PDF/N1517287.pdf?OpenElement> (date of access: 15.07.2023).

<sup>182</sup> Resolution 2231 (2015). Electronic resource. URL: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N15/225/27/PDF/N1522527.pdf?OpenElement> (date of access: 15.08.2023).

Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)<sup>183</sup>, Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996<sup>184</sup>, Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act (CISADA)<sup>185</sup>, Iran-Iraq Arms Non-Proliferation Act of 1992<sup>186</sup>, EU restrictive measures against Russia over Ukraine<sup>187</sup>, US sanctions on Russia<sup>188</sup>, The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran<sup>189</sup>, The Foreign Policy Concept Of The Russian Federation (2000)<sup>190</sup>, (2008)<sup>191</sup>, (2023)<sup>192</sup> are useful for this study.

The *second group* «clerical sources» represents reports of international and regional organizations, such as: The Council Of Heads Of State Of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)<sup>193</sup>, The World Bank<sup>194</sup>, The Office of Foreign Assets Control<sup>195</sup>, The European Council and Parliament<sup>196</sup>. This group of sources also can be related to the

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<sup>183</sup> Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Electronic resource. URL: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N15/225/49/PDF/N1522549.pdf?OpenElement> (date of access: 15.08.2023).

<sup>184</sup> Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996 - Declares U.S. policy with respect to Iran and Libya. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/104th-congress/house-bill/3107> (date of access: 03.07.2023).

<sup>185</sup> Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act (CISADA). Electronic resource. URL: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/e/eb/esc/iransanctions/docs/160710.htm> (date of access: 19.07.2023).

<sup>186</sup> Iran-Iraq Arms Non-Proliferation Act of 1992. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/102nd-congress/house-bill/5434> (date of access: 03.07.2023).

<sup>187</sup> EU restrictive measures against Russia over Ukraine (since 2014). Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/#diplomatic> (date of access: 26.08.2023).

<sup>188</sup> Nelson R. U.S. Sanctions on Russia: Economic Implications. Electronic resource. URL: <http://mepoforum.sk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/R43895.pdf> (date of access: 25.08.2023).

<sup>189</sup> The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran // The Guardian Council (Shoraye Negahban). Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.shora-gc.ir/0001Dv> (date of access: 22.11.2023).

<sup>190</sup> The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (2000). Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.bits.de/EURA/russia052800.pdf> (date of access: 25.08.2023).

<sup>191</sup> The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (2008). Electronic resource. URL: <http://en.kremlin.ru/supplement/4116> (date of access: 25.08.2023).

<sup>192</sup> The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (2023). Electronic resource. URL: [https://mid.ru/en/foreign\\_policy/fundamental\\_documents/1860586/](https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/fundamental_documents/1860586/) (date of access: 25.08.2023).

<sup>193</sup> New Delhi Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Electronic resource. URL: <http://eng.sectsco.org/load/948725/> (date of access: 20.08.2023).

<sup>194</sup> Russia Economic Report 32: Policy Uncertainty Clouds Medium-Term Prospects. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/russia/publication/russian-economic-report-32> (date of access: 26.08.2023). Russia Economic Report 33: The Dawn of a New Economic Era? Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/russia/publication/russia-economic-report-33> (date of access: 26.08.2023).

<sup>195</sup> Ukraine/Russia Related Sanctions Program. Electronic resource. URL: <https://ofac.treasury.gov/media/8741/download?inline> (date of access: 25.08.2023).

<sup>196</sup> Sanctions adopted toward Russia. Electronic resource. URL: [https://finance.ec.europa.eu/eu-and-world/sanctions-restrictive-measures/sanctions-adopted-following-russias-military-aggression-against-ukraine\\_en](https://finance.ec.europa.eu/eu-and-world/sanctions-restrictive-measures/sanctions-adopted-following-russias-military-aggression-against-ukraine_en) (date of access: 30.08.2023). Consolidated text: Council Regulation (EU) No 269/2014 of 17 March 2014. Electronic resource. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/269/2023-02-08> (date of access: 26.08.2023). Texts adopted - Human rights dialogue with Iran - Thursday, 24 October 2002. Electronic resource.

direct order of the President that cannot be considered a law, but it provides important information regarding the studies. Presidential documents<sup>197</sup> and Executive Orders<sup>198</sup> could be added to this group of sources.

The *third group* «media sources» represent statements and speeches of heads of states and officials, which include the speech of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini on 5 November 1979<sup>199</sup>, the statement of the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, in connection with the expansion of NATO, National Security of the Russian Federation, and the start of “Special Military Operation” of the Russian Federation<sup>200</sup>. Here also, we can add notes from President Boris Yeltsin that describe his diplomacy and political strategies<sup>201</sup>. Also, this group of sources cover books and other forms of published material that disseminate information to the public like the six books of “The sealed secret<sup>202</sup>” written by former Minister of Foreign Affairs of IRI, Mohammad Javad Zarif and his team who were participated in the nuclear negotiations.

The *fourth group* contains «statistical sources». The group includes materials from international database systems such as IMF<sup>203</sup>, World Bank<sup>204</sup>, and WTO,<sup>205</sup> which were

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URL: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-5-2002-0522\\_EN.html?redirect](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-5-2002-0522_EN.html?redirect) (date of access: 13.07.2023).

<sup>197</sup> Presidential Documents. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-1997-08-21/pdf/97-22482.pdf> (date of access: 05.07.2023).

<sup>198</sup> Executive Order 13846-Reimposing Certain Sanctions with Respect to Iran. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/DCPD-201800524/pdf/DCPD-201800524.pdf> (date of access: 17.08.2023).

<sup>199</sup> Khomeini R. A speech to the employees of the Central Insurance of Iran (American conspiracies). Electronic resource. URL: <https://irandataportal.syr.edu/speech-on-american-conspiracies> (date of access: 21.09.2023).

<sup>200</sup> Обращение Президента Российской Федерации [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67843> (дата обращения: 30.08.2023).

<sup>201</sup> Ельцин Б. Записки президента [Электронный ресурс]. URL: [https://urfu.ru/fileadmin/user\\_upload/common\\_files/docs\\_units/mvk/yeltsin/Eltsin\\_Boris\\_Zapiski\\_prezidenta.pdf](https://urfu.ru/fileadmin/user_upload/common_files/docs_units/mvk/yeltsin/Eltsin_Boris_Zapiski_prezidenta.pdf) (дата обращения: 27.07.2023).

<sup>202</sup> راز سر به مهر. مجید تخت روانچی، علی اکبر صالحی، محمدجواد ظریف، سیدعلی موجانی، سیدعباس عراقچی. ناشر اطلاعات. ۱۴۰۰. Araghchi S. A., Ravanchi M.T., Salehi A.A., Zarif M.J., Mojani S.A. The sealed secret. Iran: Information, 2021. 3445 pp.

<sup>203</sup> Ture H. E., Khazaei A. R. Determinants of Inflation in Iran and Policies to Curb. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/001/2022/181/article-A001-en.xml> (date of access: 31.08.2023).

<sup>204</sup> Lifting Economic Sanctions on Iran. Electronic resource. URL: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/298681467999709496/pdf/WPS7549.pdf> (date of access: 21.09.2023).

<sup>205</sup> Russian Federation and the WTO. Electronic resource. URL: [https://www.wto.org/english/thewto\\_e/countries\\_e/russia\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/countries_e/russia_e.htm) (date of access: 31.08.2023).

especially useful in studying the effects of sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation in different periods.

It should be noted that the publications of Russian research centers contain significant factual material on the problem under study. The works of the Russian scholars of Iranian studies, representing the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Middle East Institute, the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, the Institute of Asian and African Countries of Lomonosov Moscow State University, the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia named after P. Lumumba, the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies, experts of the Russian Council on International Affairs (RIAC) and others<sup>206</sup>.

In general, the source base is quite representative, which allows for a comprehensive and reliable analysis of the topic being studied.

**Methodology of research** results from the multifaceted nature of the chosen topic. The multifaceted nature of the research topic, which explores the diplomacy and strategies of Iran and Russia in response to Western and global sanction pressures, necessitates a diverse methodological framework and is based on a systematic approach to studying the history of international relations. Within the framework of the interdisciplinary approach, the peculiarities of the sanctions policy against Iran and Russia were analyzed on the basis of the neorealism and constructivism theory. Methodologically, the study was carried out with reliance on such general scientific principles as historicism, scientific validity and scientific objectivity. The problem-chronological approach was also applied within the research process.

The principle of historicism made it possible to analyse the issue under study, taking into account historical realities; the principle of scientific objectivity was

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<sup>206</sup> Институт востоковедения Российской Академии Наук. [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <https://www.ivran.ru/>; Институт Ближнего Востока. [Электронный ресурс]. URL: [www.iimes.ru](http://www.iimes.ru/); Институт Стран Азии и Африки Московского государственного университета им. М.В.Ломоносова. [Электронный ресурс]. URL: [www.iaas.msu.ru](http://www.iaas.msu.ru/); Российский университет дружбы народов имени Патриса Лумумбы. [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <https://www.rudn.ru/>; Российский институт стратегических исследований. [Электронный ресурс]. Российский совет по международным делам [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <https://russiancouncil.ru/>.

implemented in the course of the study as a reliance on sources and facts, which made it possible to reveal the problems posed and obtain reasonable conclusions deeply. The problem-chronological approach made it possible to present the main historical events in connection with the changes in the foreign policy of Iran and Russia due to international pressures. Based on the problem-chronological principle, the Content was formed, and the logic of the presentation of the material in the text of the work was determined.

**Methods of the research.** The following research methods were employed:

- This research primarily relies on a detailed case study analysis of Iran and Russia. Case studies serve as the foundational methodology for examining strategies of diplomatic action of these two countries in the context of sanctions. The historical trajectories, foreign policy decisions, and interactions with Western countries are meticulously examined to identify patterns and shifts in diplomatic approaches.

- Extensive document analysis was conducted, examining various secondary sources. These sources include government statements, official documents, policy papers, academic literature, and media reports. Document analysis facilitated retrieving historical data, policy documents, and diplomatic exchanges relevant to the research.

- A comparative research method was employed to draw parallels and distinctions between Iran's and Russia's responses to sanctions. Comparative analysis allowed for a systematic examination of the similarities and differences in strategies of diplomatic action, enabling a deeper understanding of state behaviour under sanctions.

- A longitudinal analysis was conducted to track the evolution of Iran's and Russia's strategies of diplomatic action over time. This method facilitated the identification of key turning points, policy shifts, and the impact of significant events on their responses to sanctions.

- Qualitative content analysis was utilized to categorize and analyse textual data from documents. This method enabled the identification of recurring themes, patterns, and trends in strategies of diplomatic action and responses to sanctions.

- Combining these research methods allows for a comprehensive and nuanced exploration of the research topic. It ensures that the study accounts for the historical,

political, economic, and strategic dimensions of Iran's and Russia's diplomacy in the face of sanction pressure, providing a robust foundation for analysis and interpretation.

**The scientific novelty** of the dissertation consists in the following:

- A comprehensive multidimensional analysis of the main directions of foreign policy activities (diplomacy) and strategies used by Iran and Russia in response to the pressure of Western and international sanctions was carried out in the specified chronological framework, taking into account various international, geopolitical, economic, political and strategic aspects, which made it possible to provide a holistic understanding of the processes under consideration.

- An innovative approach of combined study of sanctions policy and diplomacy as an interdependent factor influencing the foreign policy decisions of Iran and Russia was applied.

- For the first time, the anti-sanctions response of Iran and Russia, expressed through diplomatic methods, is considered as a special direction of foreign policy, which also allows us to judge the effectiveness of diplomacy as a tool for overcoming sanctions restrictions.

- The specific experience of Iranian and Russian actions in their historical, economic, civilizational and geopolitical contexts was considered, which made it possible to highlight the peculiarities of diplomacy and strategies of diplomatic actions under sanctions.

- Established that Iran and Russia's commitment to protecting their national identities correlates with maintaining sovereignty over their development trajectory, allowing the countries to develop a strategic partnership and complement each other's efforts to combat common challenges caused by Western sanctions.

- The possibilities of a deeper analysis of the peculiarities and logic of the sanctions policy of the West were revealed when using the provisions of the theory of geopolitical realism in the analytical process.

- The importance of long-term strategic thinking in foreign policy decision-making is revealed. Examining how Iran and Russia strategically deal with the challenges posed

by sanctions opens new perspectives for states seeking to protect their interests in the face of external pressures.

The study draws on a wide range of sources and literature in Persian, Russian and English, many of which are represented in academia, allowing access to a comprehensive and diverse set of perspectives.

### **The main provisions for the defence.**

The following provisions are submitted for defence:

1. Sanctions have become a defining feature of modern diplomacy, affecting bilateral relations and stability both regionally and globally. Under the profound impact of Western sanctions, Iran and Russia have adapted their diplomacy and diplomatic strategies, developing alternative foreign economic ties and making their increasingly coordinated and strategically oriented foreign policy decisions. At the same time, the negative effects of sanctions have had a devastating impact on traditional relations between the countries and in the international arena. Iran and Russia's desire to preserve their sovereignty, independence, and national identity in the face of external pressure was manifested in the convergence of the two countries' positions, including diplomatic responses to the sanctions approach, which affected the dynamics of international relations.

2. Iran and Russia have experienced three phases of sanctions, with the first and second phases consisting of two periods each. As for Iran, the first phase began in 1979 and ended in 2004. The initial period of this phase, which ended in 1994, was marked by the imposition of "reasonable" sanctions against Iran aimed at its international isolation, including a boycott of Iran's nuclear program. Iran's anti-sanctions response in the sphere of foreign policy was implemented in the format of dialogue of civilizations diplomacy, which allows us to speak of the events of 1994-2004 as the second period of the first stage. The second stage (2005-2018) is associated with the imposition of international sanctions against Iran, primarily in connection with the IRI's nuclear program and its efforts to lift the sanctions regime, and can also be divided into two periods. Between 2005 and 2014. Iran pursued confrontational diplomacy in response to mounting sanctions pressure. Then, during the period of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of



Action (JCPOA) in 2015-2018, the IRI acts in a win-win diplomacy. The third stage (2018-present) begins with the US withdrawal from the JCPOA and is characterized by a policy of "maximum pressure" on Iran, which found a response in Iran's resistance diplomacy. For Russia, the first stage covers the period from 1979 to 1999, which began with sanctions against the USSR in connection with the events in Afghanistan. The second period (1992-1999) of the first phase is associated with the emergence of the Russian Federation and Western sanctions pressure, including the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. The second phase, from 2000 to 2021, includes two periods. The first begins in 2000 and ends in 2014 with the imposition of Western sanctions against Russia; the second is from 2015 to 2021, during which there is a marked shift in Western policy toward Russia and Russia's gradual pivot to the East. The third stage for Russia began in 2022 and is characterized by the full strengthening of anti-Russian sanctions and comprehensive pressure on Russia and its partners from the West.

3. Iran's steps to bring the country out of international isolation were seen as the main task of IRI foreign policy and were consistently framed in the format of various diplomacies: pragmatism (A.A. Hashemi-Rafsanjani) dialogue of civilizations (M. Khatami), confrontation (M. Ahmadinejad), "win-win" (H. Rouhani), "Look East" (M. Raisi). In general, these approaches were realized within the framework of the general doctrine of "resistance" (R. Khomeini and A. Khamenei).

4. The strategy of jointly countering external influence through coordinated diplomatic measures and economic cooperation involves efforts to diversify trading partners, reduce dependence on the U.S. dollar through de-dollarization, promote cooperation in energy sectors, strategically manage critical resources, and achieve economic self-sufficiency. These strategic measures are designed to provide the necessary economic resilience as the centerpiece of Iranian and Russian diplomatic responses to sanctions.

5. In countering sanctions pressure, Iran and Russia are confidently utilizing their geopolitical advantages and knowledge of the realities of the tangled geopolitics of their regions, with a particular focus on the Middle East and the understanding that opposition to Western domination is an "eternal" theme.

6. The diplomatic maneuvers of Iran and Russia in response to increased sanctions pressure have demonstrated the high ability of these countries to strategically adapt to the increasingly turbulent landscape of international relations. Both countries have shaped new foreign policy directions. In the sphere of foreign policy, Iran used diplomacy: “dialogue of civilizations”, “atomic”, “confrontation”, “look East”, and “resistance”. Russian foreign policy was realized within the framework of diplomacies: “turn to the East”, “transport corridors” and “Greater Eurasian Partnership”. Both countries have also utilized the opportunities of multilateral diplomacy, from the creation of international integration associations and strategic partnerships to “triangle” diplomacy and participation in multilateral negotiation formats. This adaptability emphasizes the importance of diplomacy as a tool of resilience, enabling Iran and Russia to maintain their positions in the world and pursue strategic goals despite significant external pressures. Regardless of the type of Iranian or Russian diplomacy, whether in line with Western interests or in spite of them, the results will generally be the same, and improved relations with the West and the lifting of sanctions are unlikely to be achieved, as the logic of Western actions is driven by the desire for regime change in both Iran and Russia.

7. The experience of Iran's and Russia's anti-sanctions response has shown the effectiveness of diplomacy as a tool for overcoming sanctions restrictions, primarily in the sphere of international relations. The formalization of activities to counter sanctions pressure as a direction in Iran's foreign policy and the increasing attention to the issue of countering sanctions in Russia's foreign policy (after 2014) suggest the effectiveness of diplomacy as a significant tool for countering sanctions policy. In this regard, the participation of Iran and Russia in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the BRICS international association and the Eurasian Economic Union is considered an important factor.

8. The pursuit of a strategic partnership relationship between Iran and Russia reflects, among other things, their response to essentially uniform Western sanctions and pressures, encompassing political, economic, cultural, and military aspects. This partnership can be assessed as a transformational shift in their foreign policy, strengthening their diplomatic defenses, expanding economic cooperation, and promoting

military-technical and military cooperation. The result is a platform for sustainable leadership in the Near and Middle East region.

9. Anti-sanctions diplomacy of Iran and Russia can be presented as a multidimensional adaptive tool for sustainable national development interests and strategic goal-setting, creation of strategic partnerships as an effective format for countering the sanctions influence of Western powers in the context of global power shifts and a driver of transition to a strategy of sustainable mutually beneficial strategic partnership.

**Theoretical significance of the thesis** lies in the development of the author's approach to the periodization of the sanctions policy conducted at the international, regional and country levels in relation to Iran and Russia, the study of the peculiarities of the formation and implementation of diplomatic activities as a direction of foreign policy of Iran and Russia in response to external sanctions pressure, the analysis and systematization of a large amount of historical material on the development of sanctions policy and its impact on the economy and politics of the target countries. The author's concept of studying anti-sanctions diplomacy as a multidimensional adaptive tool for sustainable national development interests and strategic goal-setting is proposed. The problem of studying the role of strategic partnerships as an effective format for countering the sanctions influence of Western powers in the context of global power shifts and a driver of transition to the strategy of sustainable mutually beneficial strategic partnership is posed. Thus, the thesis makes a significant contribution to the development of the theory and history of international relations, the history of Iranian and Russian foreign policy in connection with the policy of sanctions.

**Practical significance of the research.** The dissertation offers practical recommendations for politicians, diplomats and international relations specialists in shaping foreign policy. The results of the study can be applied to the development of strategies to counter sanctions pressure and to the development of diplomatic approaches in the framework of participation in bilateral or multilateral partnerships, especially in geopolitically unstable regions. The study's focus on identifying the secondary effects of sanctions provides an opportunity to see the deeper horizons of sanctions policy,

contributing to the development of comprehensively justified and targeted sanctions regimes.

The study contributes to the debate on regional stability, especially in the Middle East and Eurasia, by highlighting the factors affecting the behaviour of states under sanctions. For countries facing economic sanctions, the study offers practical examples of how to diversify national economies, enter new trade partnerships, and achieve economic resilience. The thesis' examination of the long-term effects of sanctions and diplomatic responses to their application can help states in strategic planning, allowing them to anticipate potential challenges and better capitalize on opportunities.

**Approbation of the research.** The main provisions and conclusions of the dissertation research are reflected in nine scientific publications of the dissertant in peer-reviewed scientific publications included in the list of VAK, Russian Science Citation Index and RUDN, and in Scopus-indexed journals. Some theoretical provisions and conclusions of the research were presented by the author in reports and theses at interuniversity, all-Russian and international conferences, such as annual conferences of Iranian studies at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (2022-2024) and scientific-practical conferences of students, postgraduates and young scientists held at the Patrice Lumumba Peoples' Friendship University of Russia.

**Reliability of research funding** and validity of the author's conclusions are ensured by the use of a representative source base and verifiable information, the use of a variety of research methods approved in domestic and foreign historical science, and careful verification of the facts obtained from the sources.

**Structure of the dissertation.** The dissertation includes an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a list of sources and literature.

## **Chapter I: The Nature of Sanctions Policy Against the Islamic Republic of Iran (1979-2002) and Characteristics of Western Pressures on the Russian Federation (1991-2002).**

### **1.1. Sanction policy from the point of view of international law and practice.**

Using economic, financial, and technological tools is one of the effective methods in implementing foreign policy, realizing the goals, and securing the interests of governments. In the current structure of the international system, countries take such methods to have hegemonic stability. Clues and evidence have shown that the country or countries with hegemonic stability, their behavioural patterns as a leader government can significantly affect maintaining international partners<sup>207</sup>.

In the current structure of the international system, the United States of America is a country that has the characteristics of hegemonic stability. Features such as mastery of advanced technology and economy, having a growing economy, and support of political power through military power and its behaviour patterns in the fields of foreign policy have been able to bring together a group of governments to use the benefits that this country has provided for them in the form of public and free goods<sup>208</sup>.

The United States holds global dominance not just through its economy and military but also through its active involvement in international institutions and alliances. As a founding member of influential organizations like the United Nations and NATO, the US significantly shapes global norms and policies<sup>209</sup>. The US uses this information to advance its interests and promote its values on a global scale. The US can leverage its economic and military power to shape international agreements, influence decision-

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<sup>207</sup> Ghavam S. International relations theories and approaches. Tehran: SAMT publication, 2005. P. 225-230. (In Persian)

<sup>208</sup> US hegemony and its perils. Electronic resource. URL: [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjbxw/202302/t20230220\\_11027664.html](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjbxw/202302/t20230220_11027664.html) (date of access: 02.08.2023).

<sup>209</sup> Finger S. M. United States policy toward international institutions // International organization. 1976. Vol. 30, № 2. P. 347-360.

making processes, and maintain its position as a global superpower through its active involvement in international institutions and alliances<sup>210</sup>.

Owing to the accessibility of diverse resources such as energy and other vital assets, combined with its position in the UN Security Council, and its possession of nuclear weapons, the United States was able to establish a form of global hegemony following the Cold War. This dominance enabled the U.S. to exert significant influence over the political dynamics of various nations, thereby facilitating alterations in the global structural framework. These changes were primarily driven by interests deemed essential by the United States, underpinned by its demographic resources and the execution of global projects. This strategic positioning allowed the country to make necessary adjustments in the international arena, reflecting its national interests.

In contemporary international relations, “sanctions” transcends its traditional sociological and behavioural connotations. Researchers and scholars within the field of international relations employ the concept of sanctions to elucidate the intricate dynamics governing the interactions and diplomatic relations among sovereign nations and international actors<sup>211</sup>. Within this context, sanctions manifest as a multifaceted tool of statecraft, encompassing punitive measures as negative sanctions and incentives as positive sanctions, with the overarching aim of shaping the conduct of nations in alignment with international norms and standards<sup>212</sup>.

However, sanctions should be used according to international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter, ensuring that they are proportionately targeted and do not unnecessarily harm civilian populations. Additionally, countries must engage in open dialogue and diplomatic negotiations to resolve conflicts and address grievances before resorting to sanctions. Thus, it is possible for nations to enhance the confidential and mutual trust, which will contribute to the management of global problems in a more effective manner. This is however true given that, we live in a world where power

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<sup>210</sup> Reisman W. The United States and international institutions // *Survival*. 1999. Vol. 41, № 4. P. 62-80.

<sup>211</sup> Zahrani M. Theories of economic sanctions. Tehran: Ministry of Foreign Affairs publication, 1998. P. 158-177. (In Persian)

<sup>212</sup> Mungan M. C. Positive sanctions versus imprisonment // *SSRN Electronic journal*. 2019. № 19. P. 1-31.

transcends the law<sup>213</sup> and there are world powers like the USA that could sometimes overpower their able and reduce the use of sanctions to more of a dominance tool rather than a tool for fair and efficient resolution<sup>214</sup>.

Therefore, while sanctions are not hard deterministic in theory, they have a number of practical functions in international relations that are not readily apparent from the theory. As they are social forces that regulate behaviours of people within their societies, they cannot be overemphasized within the realms of laws, politics and economics. It must be pointed out that these initiatives are indissolubly connected with the exertion of the economic influence within the international level and the application of the most efficient methods for the administration of the created power<sup>215</sup>. Sanctions one of the most observable depiction of power in IR, which are often employed in economic warfare. Sanctions of this type such as, embargoes, for example, are inflicted as forceful tools planned to create the conditions for overhauling political and social revolutions within the targeted country.

These make diplomacy a form of coercion; a form of conflict that addresses international statecraft and diplomacy in connecting the world's nations by pursuing all the way from "deterrent diplomacy" as an influence on a nation's behaviour to preparations for further considerable conflicts; the whole process is multifaceted complex<sup>216</sup>. Therefore, it is clear to see that economic warfare in the context of today's interconnected world is not restricted to the concept of embargo. It also employed miscellaneous measures such as the use of the financial tool, cyber warfare and manipulation of the currency among others. These methods brought deterioration of the economy in the target country and pressuring its government that eventually leads to shifts in geopolitical situation of the country<sup>217</sup>.

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<sup>213</sup> Ranjbar Meshkin D. The supremacy of power over the law in international community // Materials of the International Youth Scientific Forum LOMONOSOV-2020. 2020. 2 pp.

<sup>214</sup> Mastanduno M., Foot R. US hegemony and international organizations: The United States and multilateral institutions // Research papers in economics. 2003. Vol. 2, № 04. P. 892-893.

<sup>215</sup> Barclay P., Kiyonari T. Why sanction? Functional causes of punishment and reward // Reward and punishment in social dilemmas. 2014. P. 182-196.

<sup>216</sup> Parasiliti A. Iran: Diplomacy and deterrence // Survival. 2009. Vol. 51, № 5. P. 5-13.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.P. 17.

In a broad sense, sanctions include various actions, including suspension of political relations, disruption of communications, limiting or cutting off part or all of the commercial and financial affairs, and military action<sup>218</sup>. Following its invasion of Kuwait, the United Nations sanctions against Iraq in the 1990s demonstrated the multifaceted nature of sanctions in international diplomacy<sup>219</sup>. Its measures were cutting off political ties, interfering with the diplomatic communication, and introducing a complete ban on business and financial interactions. These sanctions also have a military aspect, especially the onset of the Gulf War of 1990-1991 and the military coalition from the United States liberating Kuwait from Iraq. The Iraq sanctions case exemplifies the diverse range of actions and measures that sanctions can take in international relations<sup>220</sup>.

It is important to mention different types of sanctions in relations between governments. First, unilateral sanctions, in which the initiating state uses punitive measures as a tool of its foreign policy against the target state.<sup>221</sup> The unilateral sanctions imposed on Cuba by the United States were first imposed in the early 1960s in response to the Cuban government's alignment with the Soviet Union, which is a good example<sup>222</sup>. Second is the multilateral sanctions, in which a group of states participates<sup>223</sup>. For instance, the multiple bans imposed in 2014 targeted the Russian economy because of the conflict in Ukraine. Most of the countries in the world, particularly the US and most of the European Union member states, placed multilateral sanctions to Russia. These sanctions were aimed at applying diplomatic and economic pressure on Russia and at

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<sup>218</sup> Agha Bakhshi, Ali Akbar, Afshari Rad M. Culture of political sciences. Tehran: CHAPAR publication, 2008. P. 312-320. (In Persian)

<sup>219</sup> Resolution 661, the situation between Iraq and Kuwait. Electronic resource. URL: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/575/11/PDF/NR057511.pdf?OpenElement> (date of access: 03.08.2023).

<sup>220</sup> Sponeck H. C. Iraq: Burden of UN sanctions // Economic and political weekly. 2005. Vol. 40, № 47. P. 4902-4905.

<sup>221</sup> Ghasemi N., Amoozegar M. Explaining the rule of maintaining the political system and determining the principles of its application in support of economic independence from the perspective of Imam (ra) // Islamic Revolution research. 2021. Vol. 10, № 2. P. 127-128. (In Persian)

<sup>222</sup> US sanctions against Cuba. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2010-title22/html/USCODE-2010-title22-chap32-subchapIII-partI-sec2370.htm> (date of access: 03.08.2023).

<sup>223</sup> Ghasemi N., Amoozegar M. Explaining the rule of maintaining the political system and determining the principles of its application in support of economic independence from the perspective of Imam (ra) // Islamic Revolution research. 2021. Vol. 10, № 2. P. 129-131. (In Persian)



putting into practice the western policies in the mentioned region. However, it should be mentioned that such attempts by the West often failed<sup>224</sup>. The last type is international sanctions, in which the international community, including most countries in the world, applies specific punishments against a government violating international law's norms and principles<sup>225</sup>. The international sanctions on North Korea (DPRK) are a good example.<sup>226</sup> The international community, led by the United Nations, has imposed sanctions on North Korea (DPRK) in response to its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs. These sanctions curb North Korea's nuclear ambitions and promote denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula<sup>227</sup>.

However, due to the Western hegemony, some countries face all the sanctions mentioned. The Islamic Republic of Iran is one such country that has been subjected to unilateral sanctions from the US, multilateral sanctions from the European Union and other US allies, and international sanctions via UNSC resolutions. These sanctions have significantly impacted Iran's economy and ability to engage in global trade and access certain resources. In addition to this division, sanctions are classified into primary, secondary, and tertiary sanctions according to the position of the initiating government and its relations with the target government<sup>228</sup>. In the initial embargo, the initiating government has direct political and economic differences with the target government, and the embargo only includes the target government. The U.S. has maintained primary sanctions on Cuba for several decades, often called the U.S. embargo on Cuba. These primary sanctions primarily involve restrictions the U.S. government imposes on

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<sup>224</sup> Тимофеев И. Н. Санкции против России: новая финансово-экономическая реальность? // Ибер американские тетради. 2022. Т. 10, № 4. С. 65-76.

<sup>225</sup> Ghasemi N., Amoozegar M. Explaining the rule of maintaining the political system and determining the principles of its application in support of economic independence from the perspective of Imam (ra) // Islamic Revolution research. 2021. Vol. 10, № 2. P. 130-131. (In Persian)

<sup>226</sup> The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1718. Electronic resource. URL: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/572/07/PDF/N0657207.pdf?OpenElement> (date of access: 03.08.2023).

<sup>227</sup> Rüdiger F. Economic sanctions against North Korea // National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR). 2018. Vol. 13, № 03. P. 05-12.

<sup>228</sup> Qanbarlu A. Analyzing the ratio of unilateral economic sanctions with contemporary international law // Strategic studies quarterly. 2021. Vol. 25, № 96. P. 301-305. (In Persian)

American individuals and entities conducting business or financial transactions with Cuban entities<sup>229</sup>.

There are secondary sanctions against other countries with commercial and financial relations with the target government<sup>230</sup>. The secondary sanctions on North Korea (DPRK) by the USA are a good example in this case. The United States has employed secondary sanctions targeting entities and individuals engaged in trade and financial transactions with North Korea. Under these secondary sanctions, the U.S. government can penalize foreign companies, banks, or individuals who are found to be conducting business with North Korea<sup>231</sup>. The third sanction is against the parties with economic relations with the target country or countries in the secondary sanction<sup>232</sup>. Tertiary sanctions are typically less common than primary and secondary international relations sanctions. They are a more advanced form of economic pressure designed to exert pressure on entities indirectly connected to the target country or entity<sup>233</sup>. Tertiary Sanctions on Financial Institutions Dealing with Sanctioned Countries like Iran and North Korea can be counted as using such sanctions in international relations.

Economic sanctions are also divided into two trade and financial types. A trade embargo is usually selective and covers one or more goods, but a financial embargo involves cutting official and government aid and, at its most severe, freezes the assets of the target government. As a result, this sanction stops the process of financial relations and prevents the target government from doing business activities directly or indirectly<sup>234</sup>. In this way, the financial embargo, especially in the cases of financing the basic

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<sup>229</sup> Oliver I., Venancio M. Understanding the failure of the U.S. embargo on Cuba. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.wola.org/analysis/understanding-failure-of-us-cuba-embargo/> (date of access: 05.08.2023).

<sup>230</sup> Qanbarlu A. Analyzing the ratio of unilateral economic sanctions with contemporary international law // Strategic studies quarterly. 2021. Vol. 25, № 96. P. 306-308. (In Persian)

<sup>231</sup> Comprehensive sanctions: North Korea. Electronic resource. URL: <https://complianceconcourse.willkie.com/resources/sanctions-us-comprehensive-sanctions-north-korea/> (date of access: 05.08.2023).

<sup>232</sup> Qanbarlu A. Analyzing the ratio of unilateral economic sanctions with contemporary international law // Strategic studies quarterly. 2021. Vol. 25, № 96. P. 309-315. (In Persian)

<sup>233</sup> Виноградова Е. В. Экономические санкции как инструмент международной политики // Экономические и социальные проблемы России. 2016. № 2. С. 9-23.

<sup>234</sup> Ananyev B. Sanctions in IR: Understanding, defining, studying // International organisations research journal. 2019. Vol. 14, № 3. P. 136-150.

development plans, imposes more difficult conditions and more costs on the target country. The trade embargo on Cuba by the US in the 1960s<sup>235</sup> and the financial embargo on Iran via international sanctions are examples of using such sanctions in international relations. Unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States and its supporting countries aimed at depriving Iran's nuclear program of financial resources and Russia's economic sphere. Meanwhile, these sanctions have become more intense in recent years and entered new stages by entering Iran and Russia's oil sales and exports. By limiting these countries' foreign exchange earnings, it sought to put pressure on the weaker sections of the society and freeze the country's oil industry.

The US's unilateral economic sanctions on Iran and Russia have been transformed into multilateral sanctions by the UN and EU, affecting their political, diplomatic, and economic relations. The financial system is the most affected sector, with sanctions aimed at paralyzing financial relations with foreign countries. These sanctions affect the import of raw materials and capital goods, leading to decreased production, unemployment, and decreased quantity and quality of goods<sup>236</sup>. Understanding sanctions policy in international relations theories is crucial for understanding the West's behavior towards sanctions and understanding the evolution of diplomacy between Iran and Russia.

Realists conceptualize sanction policy no longer as punishment for unlawful or immoral acts but as a state's foreign-policy instrument to pursue countrywide egoistic interests. In the classical definition of realism, sanctions entail "the deliberate government-inspired withdrawal of trade or financial relations to obtain foreign policy goals<sup>237</sup>." The U.S. sanctions on Russia in 2014 serve as an example of the realist perspective on sanctions. In this case, the U.S. government imposed sanctions not solely as a punishment for unlawful acts but as a foreign policy instrument to advance its national interests<sup>238</sup>. Furthermore, sanctions are a two-edged sword because they penalize

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<sup>235</sup> Fabry M. The U.S. trade embargo on Cuba just hit 55 years. Electronic resource. URL: <https://time.com/4076438/us-cuba-embargo-1960/>. (date of access: 05.08.2023)

<sup>236</sup> Elliott K. A. Economic variables // Economic sanctions reconsidered. New York: Columbia university press, 2009. P. 180-190.

<sup>237</sup> Hufbauer G. Analyzing the utility of sanctions // Economic sanctions reconsidered. New York: Columbia university press, 2009. P. 30-40.

<sup>238</sup> Ashford E. Not-So-Smart sanctions: The failure of Western restrictions against Russia // Council on foreign relations. 2016. Vol. 95, № 01. P. 114-123.

not solely the target country; however, the enterprises in the initiated government face losses and challenges. The sanctions imposed on Russia by the European Union and the United States in 2014 serve as an example of how sanctions can have a two-edged impact, affecting not only the target country but also businesses in the sanctioning countries. These sanctions had unintended consequences for European businesses with economic ties with Russia. European companies engaged in trade with Russia, especially those involved in the energy sector and manufacturing, faced significant challenges<sup>239</sup>.

Although, the neo-realist view about sanction policy is more clear. As one of the neo-realists, Drezner states that the expectation of countries for future conflicts and the possible costs they may pay in the event of a stalemate are the main reasons for the implementation and success of sanctions. He talks about a kind of sanctions paradox: if the situation remains, the countries that do not impose sanctions are ready to use force on the enemy countries. However, they have no desire to apply it against allied nations<sup>240</sup>. Drezner's argument suggests that countries weigh various factors, including potential future conflicts and potential costs when deciding whether to impose sanctions. The “sanctions paradox” suggests that countries may be more willing to use sanctions against their enemies but hesitate to impose them on their allies, reflecting the strategic nature of sanctions in international relations. The 2014 U.S. sanctions on Russia serve as a prime example. The paradox is that sanctions are often more successful against allied countries than against enemy countries. Because of the relative benefit involved, allies surrender more easily than enemies. On the other hand, the enemy country feels that if it offers, it will not only lose its position in the negotiations; Rather, it will directly increase the relative achievement of the implementing country and thus help to improve the levers of that country in future disputes<sup>241</sup>. For this reason, the enemies do not give in to requests for sanctions.

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Drezner D. W. The sanction paradox, economic Strat craft, and international relation. Cambridge: Cambridge university press. 2010. P. 166-169.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

Neo-realism is also discussed concerning the consequences of the embargo on the West's economy and finances. The lower the expected costs (immediate or future), the more likely it is to consider sanctions as a favourable option. Conversely, the higher the cost, the less likely sanctions will be applied<sup>242</sup>. When the interests of the United States are threatened, economic costs have not prevented this country from imposing sanctions. Imposing trade sanctions on China in 2020 can be considered an attitude<sup>243</sup>. There are five main neorealism ideas about sanction policy in the international system:

1. The more strategically important the violating country is, the less likely it will be sanctioned, and the possible measures will be lighter.
2. The more the country violates international rules and structures, the more important a threat it is to the big powers, especially the European Union and the United States, and the higher the possibility of sanctioning it if it ignores the non-proliferation,
3. Enemies are likely to be sanctioned more severely than allies,
4. Imposing sanctions can be better because of the economic benefit and the cheap cost and to prevent the spread of disobedience compared to war,
5. The more important a country is in terms of trade, market, possession of oil or nuclear energy, or geographical proximity, the less likely pressure actions will be imposed, regardless of possible non-proliferation violations. Israel and Saudi Arabia are the best examples of this point<sup>244</sup>.

Neo-realists view Iran's nuclear activities and support of Islamic groups as threats to Western countries, including Israel and the US in the Middle East. They have attempted various sanctions to persuade Iran to stop its activities, but since Iran is not considered a friendly country and has few trade exchanges with the USA, sanctions against it cannot harm the US and its allies. However, in the case of Russia, sanctions against Russia due

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<sup>242</sup> Copeland D. C. Economic interdependence and war: A theory of trade expectations // *International security*. 1996. Vol. 20, № 4. P. 5-41.

<sup>243</sup> Swanson A. U.S. imposes sanctions on 11 Chinese companies over human rights. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/20/business/economy/china-sanctions-uyghurs-labor.html> (date of access: 06.08.2023).

<sup>244</sup> Ellings R. J. Embargoes and world power: Lessons from America foreign policy. London: Routledge, 2019. P. 155-158.

to its ties with the international community can increase the consequences for initiating governments.

Besides traditional theories in international relations usually used by the West, mentioning constructivism theory is important, too. In this theory, societies' beliefs, values, and norms are studied in the case of sanctions. This theory believes that except for material interests, there are factors like social norms and values that need to be attention. Practically, with the tool of sanctions, states and global organizations try to change the behaviour of the target country to the norms and values of the international community<sup>245</sup>. Richard Lebow created one of the most important and controversial theoretical efforts in the first decade of the 21st century in 2006. In his article “Fear, Interest, and Honor: Outlines of a Theory of International Relations<sup>246</sup>” he argues that we should not view human motives only from one dimension in international relations. Honor and status in international relations, which can be seen as manifestations of bravery in Plato's work, are no less important than interests. These three should be considered, along with fear. As a result, honor and dignity should also be considered along with security, emphasized by realism and neo-realism in international relations<sup>247</sup>.

For instance, Islamic values conflict with Western materialistic values. The root of the conflict is not necessarily about interest or fear; it can be about glory and honor. According to constructivists, “the sanction strategy is aimed to ensure common values in the international society but not in the international system, which is based on the power balance of normative rules of the international institutions<sup>248</sup>.” The theory suggests that the effectiveness of sanctions depends on the policy's design, use, and the norms and values it covers, despite differing perspectives on their effectiveness.

Sanctions pressure culpable actors and inflict pain on leaders whose policies the sender aims to influence. They should minimize humanitarian impact on the target state

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<sup>245</sup> Checkel J. T. Norms, institutions, and national identity in contemporary Europe // *International studies quarterly*. 1999. Vol. 43, № 1. P. 84-114.

<sup>246</sup> Lebow R. N. Fear, interest and honour: outlines of a theory of international relations // *International affairs*. 2006. Vol. 82, № 3. P. 431-435.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.* P. 436-440.

<sup>248</sup> Wendt A. *Social theory of international politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 1999. P. 15-30.

and are more effective when political opposition in the target state is present<sup>249</sup>. Multilateral cooperation among initial states is essential for producing a successful outcome. However, cooperation issues can be sabotaged by bargaining difficulties or lack of enforcement. International organizations serve as a coordinating mechanism for reassurance and information, enabling governments to resist domestic pressure and provide side payments to increase the value of continued cooperation<sup>250</sup>.

The sub-chapter analysed the multifaceted dynamics of sanctions in international relations, emphasizing their dual role as punitive measures and incentives consistent with international norms and the UN Charter. It examined unilateral, multilateral and international sanctions in the context of Iran and Russia. The study emphasizes the need for a balanced sanctions policy that takes into account strategic interests and humanitarian implications, ensuring effectiveness and respect for international law and human rights. In addition, it can be concluded that Western sanctions against Iran and Russia are built within the paradigm of neorealism, which aims at regime change through gradual tightening of sanctions to achieve political goals.

## **1.2. Reasons and goals of sanctions imposed on Iran after 1979.**

After the success of the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran and the end of the Pahlavi dynasty, Iran has been subject to sanction policies. Since the outset of its establishment, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been subjected to various sanctions, even to the extent of being proclaimed a pariah state, which has significantly influenced its internal and external policies. Sanctions have greatly restricted Iran's circle of foreign partners and largely determined the development of a parallel (closed) component in its external economic activities. In the early 2000s, the 'red line' issue emerged due to Iran's nuclear program<sup>251</sup>. The primary driver of sanction policies against Iran has been the USA, with

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<sup>249</sup> Portela C. European Union sanctions and foreign policy. London: Routledge, 2010. P. 111.

<sup>250</sup> Drezner D. W. Bargaining, enforcement, and multilateral sanctions: When is cooperation counterproductive? // International organization. 2000. Vol. 54, № 1. P. 73-102.

<sup>251</sup> Юртаев В. И. Иран и санкции: пределы саморазвития // Мировая экономика и международные отношения. 2016. Т. 60, № 5. С. 26.

the support and cooperation of allies. For a better understanding and analysis of the role of sanctions and diplomacy of Iran in the period of 1979 - 2002, the author divides the research into periods of 1979 - 1989, the 1989 till August 1997, and the period from August 1997 till end of 2002 due to the specific events, and strategies of diplomatic action by the Iranian government.

### **The period 1979-1989.**

The US started to use the sanction policy toward Iran in 1979-1981 because of the hostage crisis that took place in Iran and lasted for 444 days. The sanctions imposed by the US at that time were more symbolic because Iran and the US had already cut ties after the revolution. However, the sanctions freeze Iran's assets in the USA and cut the economic cooperation between both countries. Also, the US encouraged other states to join this policy and impose economic sanctions on Iran. Japan and some Western countries followed the US order and suspended their economic ties with Iran<sup>252</sup>.

Iran's oil industry suffered due to sanctions, resulting in a lack of equipment, decreased export customers, and a loss of the "Rial" value. This led to a unstable and significant economic impact after the revolution<sup>253</sup>. Iran faced economic, political, and psychological sanctions from 1979-1981, escalating tensions with the U.S. and fostering victimization under Western imperialism. Iran used these sanctions to defend its sovereignty and Islamic values, leading to an escalating anti-American stance. Iran responded by engaging in diplomatic efforts against U.S. policies.

Iran sought diplomatic resolution to the hostage crisis and U.S. sanctions, proposing various solutions, including a hostage exchange for frozen assets. Influenced by revolutionary ideology, Iran sought to rally domestic support and demonstrate resilience against external pressures, often using hostile rhetoric in its diplomatic communications<sup>254</sup>. Despite active diplomacy, sanctions significantly affected Iran's economy and international standing, limiting its regional influence. However, these

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<sup>252</sup> Bostdorff D. M. Idealism held hostage: Jimmy Carter's rhetoric on the crisis in Iran // *Communication studies*. 1992. Vol. 43, № 1. P. 14-28.

<sup>253</sup> Ebrahimi S. Financial constraint and output pricing: the case of international sanctions against Iran // *Journal of applied economics*. 2022. Vol. 25, № 1. P. 1219-1238.

<sup>254</sup> Borszik O. International sanctions against Iran and Tehran's responses: political effects on the targeted regime // *Contemporary politics*. 2015. Vol. 22, № 1. P. 20-39.



diplomatic efforts established a foundation for Iran to later enhance its global influence and assert its independence.

In the early 1980s, the war with Iraq and new Western sanctions complicated Iran's situation. These sanctions, which targeted arms sales, trade, and investment, aimed to pressure Iran's military and government to end the war as the West desired. Despite this, Iran circumvented the sanctions by sourcing necessary goods and weapons from China and the Soviet Union. The sanctions impacted Iran's infrastructure and oil industry, reducing oil production and exports, and leading to shortages in essential goods and services, inflation, and significant challenges to the transportation network<sup>255</sup>. However, war and sanctions did not defeat the Islamic Republic. The government pursued several strategies of diplomatic action to reduce the impact of sanctions and assert its independence on the global stage. The chosen diplomacies were:

1. **Economic Diversification:** Iran expanded trade with new partners and focused on domestic industry growth to lessen import reliance.
2. **Alliance Building:** Iran allied with sanctioned countries like Syria, Libya, and North Korea, and supported Palestinian groups to bolster anti-imperialist ties.
3. **Nuclear Advancement:** Iran developed its nuclear program under claims of peaceful use, sparking future conflicts with Western nations.
4. **Support for Resistance:** Iran supported groups such as Hezbollah, increasing regional influence and complicating Western relations<sup>256</sup>.

The combination of pragmatism and ideological commitment can be seen in Iran's diplomacy during this time. Besides, Iran's politics can be seen regarding increasing regional influence and achieving national interests. However, anti-imperialism and anti-Americanism remained important to Iran's revolutionary leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. "I think that it is in a narration that the Messenger of God, when he was sent, that great Satan shouted and gathered the devils around him and that it became difficult

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<sup>255</sup> Fayazmanesh S. Sanctions, wars and the policy of dual containment // *The United States and Iran*. Routledge, 2008. P. 28-33.

<sup>256</sup> Mesbahi M. Free and confined: Iran and the international system // *Iranian review of foreign affairs*. 2011. Vol. 2, № 5. P. 09-34.

to work. In this revolution, the great Satan, the USA, gathers the devils around him with a shout. And the US has gathered the children of Satan in Iran and abroad and started a commotion<sup>257</sup>.” During the Islamic revolution, Iran's leader believed the US aimed to hinder its independence. Despite facing sanctions and diplomatic isolation in the 1980s, Iran maintained its regional role, aligning its foreign policy with anti-imperialist actions and forming alliances. Despite Western pressures, Iran continued supporting resistance movements and remained diplomatically isolated.

### **The period from 1989 till August 1997.**

The relationship between Iran and the US entered a new era in the late 1980s when the war would end. The US continues to impose more economic sanctions on Iran, blaming Iran for supporting the resistance group and developing a nuclear program. However, one of the key factors that increased the number of sanctions on Iran and reduced the hope of improvement in the relationship with the West was the matter known as the Iran-Contra affair<sup>258</sup>. At that time, Iran was under an arms embargo. However, before the end of the Iran-Iraq war, the Reagan administration violated the US law and arms embargo and sold weapons to Iran.

The strategy of the US at that time was to exchange weapons with American hostages in Lebanon. Also, the US supported the rebel group fighting leftists in the Nicaragua government via their sales from Iran. Such actions put the US in a huge scandal in 1986, and the Reagan administration faced huge investigations<sup>259</sup>. In 1987, the US imposed sanctions on Iran, halting economic cooperation, freezing assets, and limiting financial transactions. The sanctions were aimed at punishing Iran for supporting resistance groups, nuclear program development, and involvement in the Iran-Iraq war. In 1986, the US enacted the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act<sup>260</sup>. Additionally, in 1987, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 598, which Iran rejected. This resolution led

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<sup>257</sup> Khomeini R. A speech to the employees of the Central Insurance of Iran (American conspiracies) // Imam's book. 1979. Vol. 10, P. 1-6. (In Persian)

<sup>258</sup> Smith G. et al. The Iran-Contra connection: Secret teams and covert operations in the Reagan era // Foreign Affairs. 1987. Vol. 66, № 2. P. 127-137.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid, Page 1-10.

<sup>260</sup> Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/99th-congress/house-bill/4868> (date of access: 21.06.2023).

to sanctions that restricted Iranian oil imports, froze Iranian assets in foreign banks, and impacted arms transactions<sup>261</sup>. To further bolster these sanctions and exert economic pressure, US allies also imposed an embargo on Iranian oil and oil products in 1987<sup>262</sup>.

However, among all the economic pressures and international isolations, Iran decided to use several strategies of diplomatic action to reduce the effect of sanctions and find a bypassing way. Iran continued its diplomacy from 1979 and developed its political and economic ties with countries that had the same vision regarding US on their foreign policies. In this regard, Iran continued to develop relationships with Libya and Syria. At the war's end with Iraq, Iran also decided to diversify its investment and trade relationships by creating ties with China, Japan, India, and Pakistan<sup>263</sup>.

Another key diplomatic action of Iran was enhancing relations with the Soviet Union, especially given the Soviet's support to Iraq in the war against Iran. The Iranian government saw the Soviet's stance on the West as closely aligned with its own, providing a strong basis for rekindling ties. This alignment culminated in President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's official visit to the Soviet Union in 1989, marking a pivotal diplomatic move.<sup>264</sup> To mitigate the impact of sanctions and reduce reliance on oil, the Iranian government enacted economic reforms, incentivizing foreign investment with tax breaks and bolstering domestic non-oil industries. Despite sanctions hindering international cooperation, these strategies aimed to preserve Iran's revolutionary values and national interests<sup>265</sup>.

In 1991, the US and West imposed sanctions on Iran due to the Gulf War, viewing it as a threat to their national interests and destabilizing the Middle East. Iran's alliance with Iraq and support for Hamas and Hezbollah led to severe economic repercussions.

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<sup>261</sup> The situation between Iran and Iraq. Electronic resource. URL: [https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/IQ%20IR\\_870720\\_Security%20Council%20Resolution%20598%20%281987%29.pdf](https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/IQ%20IR_870720_Security%20Council%20Resolution%20598%20%281987%29.pdf) (date of access: 21.06.2023).

<sup>262</sup> Shehadi P. Economic sanctions and Iranian trade // MERIP reports. 1981. № 98. P. 15.

<sup>263</sup> Alizadeh P., Hakimian H. Iran and the global economy petro populism, Islam and economic sanctions. London: Routledge, 2013. P. 144-146.

<sup>264</sup> Cossa R. A. Iran-Soviet interests, US concerns. Washington: The institute for national strategic studies, 1990. P. 86.

<sup>265</sup> Alizadeh P., Hakimian H. Iran and the global economy petro populism, islam and economic sanctions. London: Routledge, 2013. P. 149.

Concerns over Iran's nuclear and missile capabilities led to a new wave of sanctions, restricting trade and exports to the US. The US banned exporting military, dual-use, and civilian goods, frozen Iranian assets in foreign banks, sanctioned companies involved in certain trades, and imposed travel restrictions on US citizens and businesses<sup>266</sup>. Iran faced sanctions in 1991, limiting its trade capabilities and increasing international isolation. To mitigate these effects, Iran adopted diplomatic strategies, strengthening ties with nations under Western pressure, and developing domestic technological capacities in sectors like nuclear energy, aerospace, and telecommunications. It also enhanced diplomatic relations with international organizations like the UN and initiated dialogues with Western countries to alleviate international pressures and address tensions related to sanctions. This strategy aimed to reduce Iran's reliance on Western technologies<sup>267</sup>.

From 1979 to 1991, Western sanctions aimed to limit Iran's access to certain goods and technologies, severely impacting its economy. These sanctions were intended to prompt changes in Iran's international policies and behaviours. Despite the challenge of quantifying the exact number of sanctions, which varied in definition and effect, some merely symbolic, the measures spurred Iran towards self-sufficiency and less reliance on Western trade and technologies. Throughout this period, Iran faced significant sanctions from three main entities: the USA, the EU, and the UN.

Beginning in 1979, the United States imposed a freeze on Iranian assets, followed by a comprehensive trade embargo in 1980 and again in 1987, alongside a specific ban on U.S. oil imports from Iran in 1984, reflecting escalating tensions and policy responses to perceived threats. Similarly, the United Nations and the European Union implemented significant measures, with the UN enacting oil and gas investment-bans in 1980 and 1990 and an arms embargo in 1987. The European Union also participated in imposing arms embargoes starting in 1987 and extended its measures to include a trade embargo by 1990. These sanctions, collectively, aimed to exert economic and political pressure on Iran to

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<sup>266</sup> Esfahani H. S., Pesaran M. H. The Iranian economy in the twentieth century: A global perspective // *Iranian studies*. 2009. Vol. 42, № 2. P. 177-211.

<sup>267</sup> Milani M. M. Iran's Post-Cold War policy in the Persian Gulf // *International journal*. 1994. Vol. 49, № 2. P. 328-354.

alter its policies, significantly impacting Iran's ability to engage in international trade and investment, particularly in critical sectors such as oil, gas, and arms<sup>268</sup>.

During the last five years of President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's presidency (1992-1997), Iran navigated a period of domestic and international challenges marked by complex economic, political, and social dynamics. The last five years of Rafsanjani's presidency were characterized by efforts to rebuild Iran after the war, stimulate economic growth, and engage with the international community through pragmatic foreign policy initiatives, and these years laid the groundwork for subsequent political and social developments in Iran.<sup>269</sup> Despite various developments in Iran, the country's progress was hindered by sanctions, predominantly unilateral ones from the USA. The Iran-Iraq Arms Non-Proliferation Act of 1992, enacted by the US Congress and signed by President George H.W. Bush, intensified these pressures. This act specifically aimed to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) in the Middle East, targeting both Iran and Iraq<sup>270</sup>. The law imposed strict sanctions and export controls to prevent Iran, Iraq, and any entities providing them with sensitive technology from developing weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). This act not only restricted these countries but also aimed to maintain U.S. influence in the Middle East by ensuring that no regional powers acquire such potent armaments. Furthermore, it served to project a firm stance against WMD proliferation, deterring other nations from initiating similar programs and thereby enhancing global security<sup>271</sup>.

The Iran-Iraq Arms Non-Proliferation Act, except for obvious impacts such as the isolation of Iran and pressure on Iran's nuclear program, challenged the normalization of relations with the West. Additionally, it may have impacted some of Iran's industries and

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<sup>268</sup> Samore G. *Sanctions against Iran: A guide to targets, terms, and timetables* // Cambridge: Belfer Center for science and international affairs, 2015. P. 1. P. 5.

<sup>269</sup> Sanaei M., Karami J. *Iran's eastern policy: potential and challenges* // *Russia in global affairs*. 2021. Vol. 19, № 3. P. 25-49.

<sup>270</sup> *Iran-Iraq Arms Non-Proliferation Act of 1992* - declares that it is U.S. policy to oppose any transfer of goods or technology to Iraq or Iran whenever there is reason to believe that such transfer could contribute to that country's acquisition of chemical, biological, nuclear, or advanced conventional weapons. 1992. Electronic resources. URL: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/102nd-congress/house-bill/5434> (date of access: 03.07.2023).

<sup>271</sup> Kattan A. *Fact sheet: Iran sanctions*. Electronic resource. URL: <https://armscontrolcenter.org/fact-sheet-iran-sanctions/> (date of access: 03.07.2023).

relations with other countries, but still, the act was not powerful enough by itself to be able to cover other spheres of the Islamic Republic. In this regard 1996, the US Congress declared the US policy toward Iran and Libya by passing the Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996<sup>272</sup>. The main goal of this Act was to attack Iran's economy. The economy of Iran, especially in 1996, was very dependent on the energy sector. The main provisions of ILSA include imposing sanctions on any person who invests \$40 million or more in Iran or Libya and directly contributes to developing their petroleum resources<sup>273</sup>. The sanctions under the Iran and Libya Sanctions Act included denying Export-Import Bank financing, export licenses, and U.S. government procurement, as well as prohibiting U.S. financial institutions from making loans to sanctioned entities. This act enabled the United States to exert economic pressure on Iran and Libya, discouraging their nuclear ambitions and efforts to destabilize the Middle East. The U.S. aimed to isolate these nations diplomatically and economically, thereby hindering their access to crucial resources needed for their nuclear programs and sending a clear message against nuclear proliferation<sup>274</sup>. This act was part of a broader strategy to increase pressure and force these countries to change their policies.

It should be noted that ILSA has been criticized for its extraterritoriality and its burden on foreign countries and companies<sup>275</sup>. Another criticism is that ILSA unilaterally allocates the burden of enforcing U.S. foreign policy by utilizing a boycott against foreign countries and companies beyond the jurisdiction of the United States<sup>276</sup>. However, no firms have been sanctioned under ILSA, forcing many countries not to cooperate or reduce their collaboration with Iran and Libya.

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<sup>272</sup> Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996 - Declares U.S. policy with respect to Iran and Libya. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/104th-congress/house-bill/3107> (date of access: 03.07.2023).

<sup>273</sup> Alexander R. Iran and Lib an and Libya sanctions act of 1996: Congr a sanctions act of 1996: Congress exceeds its ceeds its jurisdiction to prescribe law // Washington and Lee law review. 1997. Vol. 54, № 4. P. 1601-1634.

<sup>274</sup> Dunning T. D'amato in A China shop: Problems of extraterritoriality with the Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996 // University of Pennsylvania journal of international law. 1998. Vol. 19, № 1. P. 191-193.

<sup>275</sup> Esfandiary D., Fitzpatrick M. Sanctions on Iran: Defining and enabling 'Success' // Survival. 2011. Vol. 53, № 5. P. 143-156.

<sup>276</sup> Alexander R. Iran and Lib an and Libya sanctions act of 1996: Congr a sanctions act of 1996: Congress exceeds its ceeds its jurisdiction to prescribe law // Washington and Lee law review. 1997. Vol. 54, № 4. P. 1620-1625.

Besides these two, Order 13059 by President Clinton complicated the relationship between Iran and the USA. President Bill Clinton issued Executive Order 13059 on August 19, 1997<sup>277</sup>. This executive order expanded the sanctions imposed on Iran under the Iran and Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA) of 1996. The order targeted the Iranian government's ability to raise funds and conduct financial transactions in the United States. The expansion of sanctions under Executive Order 13059 prohibited U.S. persons from entering into any contracts or transactions with the Iranian government and freezing their assets in the United States<sup>278</sup>. The order aimed to deter foreign support for Iran by penalizing violators and restricting US-Iran trade. Imposed from 1992 to 1997, these sanctions significantly damaged Iran's economy, affecting private sector investment and reducing oil production, government revenues, and foreign reserves, while worsening the exchange rate and budget deficit<sup>279</sup>. Financial sanctions raised transaction costs and inflation and decreased non-oil exports and imports. The consequences of the sanctions cannot be reversed through fiscal and monetary policy alone, highlighting the need for political negotiations with the US<sup>280</sup>.

The sanctions limited access to finance and foreign exchange, decreased investment, and led to an economic slowdown. Additionally, the intensification of oil and international financial sanctions reduced oil production, government revenues, and GDP while increasing inflation and household consumption<sup>281</sup>. While the sanctions posed challenges, they also allowed Iran to lessen its oil dependency and boost domestic production. Analysis of monetary policies under sanctions suggested that targeting the producer price index could minimize economic losses and enhance the effectiveness of output-focused monetary strategies<sup>282</sup>. The analysis also indicated that targeted monetary

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<sup>277</sup> Presidential Documents. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-1997-08-21/pdf/97-22482.pdf> (date of access: 05.07.2023).

<sup>278</sup> Ibid.

<sup>279</sup> Sashi S., Bhavish S. Macroeconomic implications of US sanctions on Iran: A sectoral financial balances analysis // *Studies in business and economics*. 2019. Vol. 14, № 3. P. 182-204.

<sup>280</sup> Aliakbari F. The effects of economic sanctions on private investment in Iran // *Journal of resistive economics*. 2020. Vol. 8, № 4. P. 1-11.

<sup>281</sup> Niakooee S. A., Ejazee E. Foreign policy and economic development: Iran under Rafsanjani // *Iranian review of foreign affairs*. 2014. Vol. 5, № 3. P. 179-200.

<sup>282</sup> Nakhli S. R. et al. How do the financial and oil sanctions affect the Iran's economy: a DSGE framework // *Journal of economic studies*. 2020. Vol. 48, № 4. P. 761-785.

policies could mitigate sanctions' adverse effects on inflation and household consumption, while promoting investment in non-oil sectors for economic diversification and growth. Between 1992 and 1997, Iran faced significant challenges due to sanctions and isolation. In response, the Iranian government, under Rafsanjani, adopted pragmatic foreign policies and economic reforms aimed at attracting foreign investment and boosting the oil sector to address these economic challenges.

President Rafsanjani focused on normalizing relations with neighboring and Persian Gulf countries to stabilize the region and improve Iran's standing. His diplomatic efforts included engaging with Western nations, particularly the U.S., to ease tensions through dialogue and present Iran's nuclear program as peaceful, aiming to mitigate sanctions' effects. While not all challenges were addressed, Rafsanjani's strategies laid the foundation for future Iranian leaders to similarly tackle sanctions and isolation.

#### **The period from August 1997 till end of 2002.**

During the Mohammad Khatami's presidency, Iran experienced a period marked by domestic reforms and efforts at international engagement. However, challenges such as sanctions and geopolitical tensions continued to influence Iran's relations with the international community. During the Presidency of Mr. Khatami, Iran faced higher pressure than before but less official actions from the West. Thanks to Khatami's "Dialogue Among Civilizations" initiative, Iran and the West were more engaged in dialogue than actions. Khatami's Dialogue Among Civilizations initiative aimed to liberalize Islamist politics and improve Iran's relations with the international community. It also included a promise to give up the illicit nuclear project<sup>283</sup>. The initiative sought to promote dialogue to prevent conflicts and struggles at local, national, and international levels<sup>284</sup>.

Khatami's vision of the dialogue of civilizations emphasized the importance of mutual understanding and common ground found through dialogues among scholars from

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<sup>283</sup> Mezhev V. Dialogue of civilizations or the dialogue civilization? // Polylogos. 2018. Vol. 2, № 1. P. 10.

<sup>284</sup> Rezaei F. Khatami's Dialogue among civilizations and the nuclear "Disappearance Act" // Iran's nuclear program. 2017. P. 77-118.



different civilizational backgrounds in international relations.<sup>285</sup> The Dialogue Among Civilizations initiative, initiated by Iranian President Khatami, aimed to promote peace and cooperation by fostering a multilingual global dialogue. It encouraged diverse perspectives and open communication, focusing on understanding and empathy over confrontation. The initiative was positively received by the international community, marking a new beginning in Iran's relations and a promise to liberalize harsh Islamist politics. The United Nations General Assembly accepted the proposal in 2001<sup>286</sup>. The positive response from public opinion, intellectuals, thinkers, and academic circles was also impressive.

The Dialogue Among Civilizations initiative influenced Iran's response to sanctions, with President Khatami promising improved international relations and ending the illicit nuclear project, aligning with dialogue among civilizations<sup>287</sup>. The Iranian government's commitment to dialogue among civilizations, including its involvement in interreligious dialogues like the Joint Russian-Iranian Commission for Orthodoxy-Islam Dialogue, promotes equal participation among all civilizations<sup>288</sup>. However, despite the initial optimism, implementing the Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations faced numerous challenges.

Some countries remained skeptical about Iran's true intentions and questioned its commitment to fostering genuine dialogue. Additionally, geopolitical tensions and conflicts in various regions further complicate efforts to promote understanding and cooperation among nations<sup>289</sup>. Iran's sanctions hindered its participation in international dialogue, hindered cultural exchange, and limited its ability to sustain meaningful dialogue initiatives due to financial constraints<sup>290</sup>. During Khatami's presidency, Iran

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<sup>285</sup> Moshirzadeh H. The idea of dialogue of civilizations and core-periphery dialogue in international relations // *All azimuth: A journal of foreign policy and peace*. 2020. Vol. 9, № 2. P. 211-227.

<sup>286</sup> Khatami S. M. Dialogue among civilizations : Contexts and perspectives // *UN Chronicle*. 2012. Vol. 49, № 3. P. 11-14.

<sup>287</sup> Zeleneva I. V., Matveevskaya A. S., Ermolina M. A. Dialogue of civilizations-new model of world politics // *The european proceedings of social and behavioural sciences*. 2018. Vol. 35, № 1. P. 829-831.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.* P. 832-836.

<sup>289</sup> Wastnidge E. *Diplomacy and reform in Iran*. London: Bloomsbury publishing, 2016. P. 106-110.

<sup>290</sup> Дружиловский С. Б. Мировое сообщество и новая внешнеполитическая концепция Ирана // *Иран-диалог цивилизаций / Под ред. Н. М. Мамедова, М. Санаи*. Орехово-Зуево: Дом «Муравей», 2003. С. 36-42.

faced economic pressures and sanctions, limiting its access to global markets and technologies. The Iran and Libya Sanctions Act targeted Iran due to its nuclear program. The ILSA restricted foreign investment in Iran's energy sector, affecting its ability to attract capital and expertise. It discouraged major international energy companies from participating in Iran's energy development<sup>291</sup>. The threat of penalties under ILSA made many foreign companies hesitant to engage in significant business transactions with Iran, limiting the growth and modernization of Iran's energy sector.

The consequences of the sanctions on Khatami's presidency included negative effects on the Iranian economy, particularly in terms of national revenues, earnings, and inflation rate<sup>292</sup>. Also, the healthcare sector was significantly impacted, with reduced access to healthcare, increased prices of health technologies, and shortages of medicine. These damages to the healthcare system continued even later, especially during COVID-19<sup>293</sup>. The sanctions also imposed extra costs on domestic companies to acquire technological knowledge while stimulating policy-makers' determination and empowering a self-reliance doctrine. The impact of the sanctions on human rights, democracy, and life expectancy in Iran was found to be minor, with limited contribution to the sender's goals<sup>294</sup>. The economic pressure from the sanctions contributed to Iran's focus on diversifying its economy and exploring alternative sectors beyond energy.

During Mohammad Khatami's presidency, the Iran Nonproliferation Act of 2000 (INA) aimed to prevent foreign transfers of weapons of mass destruction, missile technology, and advanced conventional weapons technology to Iran, preventing NASA from purchasing Russian goods for the International Space Station<sup>295</sup>. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) increased U.S.-Iran diplomatic tensions by imposing sanctions on foreign entities supporting Iran's nuclear program, impacting Iran's access to

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<sup>291</sup> Мамедова Н. М. Политико-экономический аспект диалога цивилизаций // *Иран-диалог цивилизаций* / Под ред. Н. М. Мамедова, М. Санаи. Орехово-Зуево: Дом «Муравей», 2003. С. 15-25.

<sup>292</sup> Arie S. Unintended consequences of sanctions against Iran // *BMJ*. 2013. Vol. 347, № 2. P. 46-50.

<sup>293</sup> Yazdi-Feyzabadi V., Amini-Rarani M., Delavari S. The health consequences of economic sanctions: Call for health diplomacy and international collaboration // *Archives of Iranian medicine*. 2020. Vol. 23, № 4. P. 51-53.

<sup>294</sup> Omati J., Kim E. C. The consequences of sanctions result on human rights, democracy and life expectancy, 1978-2012 // *International journal of economics & management sciences*. 2015. Vol. 4, № 10. P. 1-7.

<sup>295</sup> Squassoni S., Smith M. The Iran non-proliferation act and the international space station: Issues and options. USA: The library of Congress of the USA, 2005. P. 2-5.

critical technologies and resources, and reflecting global concerns about Iran's nuclear weapons potential. As elucidated in the sub-chapter and further expounded by Belov (Yurtaev) in “Sanctions and Import Substitution as Exemplified by the Experience of Iran and China,<sup>296</sup>” the United States implemented unilateral sanctions against Iran from 1979 to the end of 2002, marking a critical phase in diplomatic relations.

This period, extending from 1979 to 2009, encapsulates three distinct stages of U.S. sanction policy towards the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI). Initially, from 1979 to 1993, U.S. efforts aimed to achieve the maximum international isolation of Iran, leveraging the perceived threat of Islamic fundamentalism and the potential export of the Islamic revolution. The subsequent stage coincided with Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's second presidential term (1993–1997) and saw the formalization of a new anti-Iran policy under U.S. President Bill Clinton, particularly following the enactment of the D’Amato Bill in 1996. This phase was characterized by efforts to block Iran's involvement in developing oil and gas resources and constructing pipelines in Central Asia. The third stage (1997–2009), during the presidencies of Mohammad Khatami and the initial term of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, initially witnessed a relative easing of sanctions, which subsequently intensified again. The analysis of these stages in the sub-chapter reveals a cyclical pattern of escalation and mitigation in U.S. sanctions policy, reflecting broader geopolitical strategies and the dynamic nature of international diplomacy. The analysis emphasizes the cyclical nature of sanctions, their impact on Iran's economy, and Iran's strategic responses of self-reliance and pragmatic diplomacy. The period emphasizes the complexity of sanctions as an instrument of international politics and Iran's resilience in mitigating their effects.

### **1.3. The features and objectives of the Western pressures toward Russia after 1991.**

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<sup>296</sup> Salitskii A. I., Zhao X., Yurtaev V. I. Sanctions and import substitution as exemplified by the experience of Iran and China // Herald of the Russian Academy of Sciences. 2017. V. 87, № 2. P. 208-209.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia faced a tumultuous period characterized by profound political, economic, and social transformations. From a Russian viewpoint, the increase of Western pressure on the newly formed Russian Federation was often perceived as challenging the country's sovereignty, national identity, and security<sup>297</sup>. Russia perceived NATO's eastward expansion and the inclusion of former Soviet republics as a breach of its sphere of influence, conflicting with prior agreements. The shift to a market economy, driven by Western advice, aimed at modernization but led to severe economic issues like hyperinflation and unemployment, worsening living standards for many Russians<sup>298</sup>. The continuation of measures such as the Jackson-Vanik Amendment highlighted how Western sanctions targeted Russian domestic policies, exacerbating perceptions of Western exploitation. Notably, sanctions on Russia until July 16, 2014, focused on individuals, limiting their travel and freezing assets, without broader economic restrictions<sup>299</sup>. However, the West increased its pressure on Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and these pressures required different diplomacy and strategies from the Russian government.

By analyzing Russia's diplomacy change toward Western pressures, we can observe a shift in Russia's policy and a change in its approaches toward Western countries. In this regard, to gain better results in our analysis, we divided the duration of 1992 till end of 2002 into two main periods: 1) the Presidency of Boris Yeltsin (1992–1999), 2) the Presidency of Vladimir Putin 2000 till end of the 2002. Each period had unique challenges and priorities for Russia's diplomacy, leading to distinct approaches to dealing with Western pressures.

### **Presidency of Boris Yeltsin (1992–1999)**

During Boris Yeltsin's presidency, various forms of Western pressure were perceived as encroachments on Russia's sovereignty and interests. These pressures required different diplomatic responses from the government of the Russian Federation,

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<sup>297</sup> Сушенцов А. Тридцать лет внешней политики постсоветских государств: достаточно ли для зрелости? URL: <https://ru.valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/tridtsat-let-vneshney-politiki-postsovetskikh-gosudarstv/> (дата обращения: 20.07.2023).

<sup>298</sup> Бобров А. Три десятилетия внешней политики современной России. URL: <https://interaffairs.ru/jauthor/material/2574> (дата обращения: 20.07.2023).

<sup>299</sup> Aris B. Impact of sanctions on Russia: An assessment // European leadership network. 2014. P. 5.

which often had to balance the need to protect national interests with maintaining positive international relations. These pressures from the West can be categorized into political, and economic areas.

- **Political Pressures**

The expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe and the consideration of admitting former Soviet republics and Eastern Bloc countries were seen by Russia as a direct threat to its security. This expansion was viewed as a breach of informal post-Cold War agreements, an encirclement of Russia, and a symbol of Western disregard for Russian interests and sovereignty<sup>300</sup>. Russia viewed NATO's expansion into Eastern Europe and the Baltic states as a security threat, bringing NATO forces closer to Russian borders. This challenged Russia's regional influence and Western attempts to dominate Eastern Europe, escalating tensions and worsening alliance relations.

Russian leaders claimed there was an informal agreement post-Cold War that NATO would not expand eastward beyond a reunified Germany. Russia viewed NATO's eastward expansion as a betrayal of this agreement<sup>301</sup>. NATO expansion under Yeltsin is seen as a strategic power play by the West, enhancing Western influence and potentially containing Russia. This expansion is seen as a dual affront, strategically curbing regional influence and nationally disregarding Russia's sovereignty, fueling nationalism and a desire to reassert Russia's global status<sup>302</sup>.

NATO's expansion has significantly impacted Russia's self-perception and interactions with the West, reinforcing the narrative of Russia as a victim and boosting national pride. This has heightened tensions, as both sides struggle to reconcile divergent interests. NATO's expansion has also strained diplomatic relations, leading to heated rhetoric and public disagreements<sup>303</sup>. The Russia-West relationship is strained due to

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<sup>300</sup> Барсенков.А. Внешняя политика России на начальном этапе становления новой государственности (1991-1993) // Вестник Московского университета. Серия 25. Международные отношения и мировая политика. 2013. №4. С. 75-105.

<sup>301</sup> Беспалов С. Политика России на постсоветском пространстве: основные этапы и современное состояние // Russian journal of education and psychology. 2014. Т. 35, № 3. С. 13-38.

<sup>302</sup> Братерский А. 20 лет первому расширению НАТО на Восток [Электронный ресурс]. URL: [https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2019/03/12\\_a\\_12237643.shtml](https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2019/03/12_a_12237643.shtml) (дата обращения: 21.07.2023).

<sup>303</sup> Ibid.

historical events like the Cold War and Soviet collapse, and economic and geopolitical factors. This complex dynamic hinders global cooperation and fosters mistrust, highlighting the intricacies of their global engagement. Yeltsin responded to NATO expansion with a multi-pronged approach. He voiced anxieties, pursued diplomatic channels, and negotiated security guarantees, all while balancing domestic pressures with maintaining dialogue with the West<sup>304</sup>. Despite a challenging diplomatic landscape due to NATO expansion, the Yeltsin administration prioritized dialogue and security guarantees with the West<sup>305</sup>.

During Boris Yeltsin's presidency, the perception of Western interference in Russia's internal affairs was a significant concern for the Russian government and many citizens. Western nations saw this interference as an attempt to shape Russia's political landscape and influence the direction of its domestic policies<sup>306</sup>. Western intervention in nations, such as funding opposition groups and imposing economic sanctions, is often seen as a threat to sovereignty and anti-Western sentiment. This approach, despite promoting democracy and human rights, can backfire, as seen in Russia<sup>307</sup>.

By analyzing the support of the opposition groups by the West, it became evident to the Russian government that these reforms were not solely driven by domestic concerns but rather part of a larger geopolitical strategy aimed at weakening Russia's influence and expanding Western influence in the region. This realization deepened Russia's suspicion and mistrust towards the West, making it more resistant to further attempts at collaboration or cooperation. Western media's negative portrayal of Russia, seen as an attempt to undermine its stability and international standing, drew criticism for potentially shaping biased global perceptions<sup>308</sup>.

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<sup>304</sup> Цыганков А. П. Внешняя политика России от Горбачева до Путина. М.: Научная книга, 2008. С. 110.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid.

<sup>306</sup> Беллер А. В. Эволюция внешней политики Российской Федерации в пост биполярной системе международных отношений // Уральский государственный педагогический университет: Выпускная квалификационная работа. С. 32-40. [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <http://elar.uspu.ru/bitstream/uspu/3697/1/21Beller.pdf> (дата обращения: 22.07.2023).

<sup>307</sup> Цыганков А. П. Внешняя политика России от Горбачева до Путина. М.: Научная книга, 2008. С. 112.

<sup>308</sup> Беллер А. В. Эволюция внешней политики Российской Федерации в пост биполярной системе международных отношений // Уральский государственный педагогический университет: Выпускная квалификационная работа. С. 41-49. [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <http://elar.uspu.ru/bitstream/uspu/3697/1/21Beller.pdf> (дата обращения: 22.07.2023).

Western media portrayal and engagement with civil society are viewed by some as tools to undermine countries outside their sphere of influence. Critics argue such methods, including negative media coverage and funding NGOs, aim to shape global perceptions and influence international relations in favor of Western agendas<sup>309</sup>. It would appear that through causing the fragmentation of key Russian civil society organizations foreign actors are capable of destabilizing the state. As a result, the activity of these organizations has become more closely monitored and controlled as the Russian authorities enhanced their attempt to control the situation and safeguard the national interests within the Russian Federation.

Western pressure for democratic reforms in Yeltsin's Russia faced skepticism. Many Russians viewed it as an imposition of Western norms without considering their unique context, reflecting a common tension in US/EU foreign policy. "The EU and US are established liberal democratic powers, having a shared political and intellectual tradition. Promoting democracy is critical to their foreign policies in areas they deem to be of strategic importance to their core interests. The EU and US efforts oscillate between state/regional interests and values promotion. Also, both actors are willing to set aside democratic values when their overriding core interests are threatened<sup>310</sup>."

Constructivism allows us to examine how Western demands for democratic reforms in Russia might have fostered skepticism and resistance among Russians, highlighting the significance of ideas, norms, and beliefs in international relations<sup>311</sup>. Evaluating Russia with Western democratic paradigms does not consider the historical sociopolitical culture, thus creating a clash of norms and values resulting in suspicion and resistance as the West attempts to spread its agenda.

Thus, the diplomacy of Yeltsin during the 1990s was a complex and balanced formula, where the Leadership of Russia combined attempts at cooperation with the West with strengthening the Russian state and pursuing its national interests. His strategy,

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<sup>309</sup> Henderson S. L. Selling civil society // Comparative political studies. 2002. Vol. 35, № 2. P. 139-167.

<sup>310</sup> Honrada G., Ranjbar D., Mukan S. Regional democratization: A comparative analysis of EU and Us efforts in Central Asia and Southeast Asia // Journal of international studies. 2023. Vol. 19, № 2. P. 277-306.

<sup>311</sup> Karkalanov T.V. The Intrinsic explanatory value of social constructivism in international relations theory // Сравнительная политика. 2016. Vol. 26, №4. P. 5-12.

driven by the simultaneous constraints of domestic changes and external difficulties, sought to protect Russia's identity and global stature<sup>312</sup>. Yeltsin's diplomacy was based on negotiating from a strong position, opposing compromises that were detrimental to Russia's interests, and seeking balanced accords with Western states in order to win friends and counter perceived Western overreach<sup>313</sup>.

- **Economic Pressures**

Western organizations, especially the IMF and World Bank, advocated shock therapy economic changes under Boris Yeltsin's presidency with the goal of modernizing Russia's economy, attracting international investment, and raising living standards<sup>314</sup>. Russia adopted these changes to ensure economic stability and prosperity, thinking that shifting to a market-oriented economy would help reduce corruption and improve openness in corporate activities. The adoption of shock therapy in Russia, which included quick liberalization and privatization, resulted in substantial economic issues such as firm closures, widespread unemployment, lower living standards, and hyperinflation as a result of the sudden removal of price restrictions<sup>315</sup>.

It is also critical to note that the economic reforms sparked issues to do with the national pride and integrity of Russia and this is because some individuals saw it as a number of neo-liberal reforms backed by the west as undermining the ability of the nation to sustain its economy independently of foreign support. This created concern about dependency on the West<sup>316</sup>. In constructivist's opinion, the perception of state's international identity defines its behaviors in the world politics,<sup>317</sup> and if Russia receives signals of threat or assertion from West, it may react with a more forceful and aggressive approach toward the West. This might lead to heightened global tensions and violence.

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<sup>312</sup> Dundovich E. The Russia of Yeltsin looks to Europe // European and global studies journal. 2019. Vol. 2, № 2. P. 35-44.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid.

<sup>314</sup> Начало экономической реформы [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <https://histrf.ru/read/articles/nachalo-ekonomichieskoi-rieformy-event> (дата обращения: 23.07.2023).

<sup>315</sup> Гайдар Е. Т. Смуты в аграрных обществах – крушение и восстановление привычных порядков // Власть и собственность. Санкт-Петербург: Норма, 2009. С. 17-23.

<sup>316</sup> Гайдар Е. Т. Проблемы обществ с рухнувшими институтами // Власть и собственность. Санкт-Петербург: Норма, 2009. С. 39-45.

<sup>317</sup> Hopf T. The promise of constructivism in international relations theory // The MIT press, international security. 1998. Vol. 23, № 1. P. 171-174.



Western pressure to make swift and substantial economic changes has been identified as a contributing reason to the economic and social upheaval of the Yeltsin administration<sup>318</sup>. Although certain components of the reforms were recognized for their possible long-term advantages, they were widely seen as being performed too quickly, with scant respect for the current well-being of the Russian public<sup>319</sup>.

On the other hand, the multination primarily listed the West's trade barriers, as well as the sanctions to restraint what they deemed as Russian aggression as major hindrances to the country's economic progress. business challenges like the Jackson Vanik amendment guaranteed the Cold War-era policies that restrained Russia from engaging in ordinary business with most of the developed nations<sup>320</sup>. After the collapse of Soviet Union, it had faced international challenges like trade restrictions, sanctions and Jackson-Vanik Amendment which in fact has detrimental effects on Russian economy and integration into the Western liberalized market despite its attempts of establishing independence<sup>321</sup>. West's continued Jackson- Vanik Amendment, failed to seize the chance of increasing their economic interaction with Russia as poor adaptability precluded them from taking advantage of a changing international environment<sup>322</sup>. Thus it can be said that during the period between 1992 and 1999 Western pressures determined Russian course of developments and its sovereignty and role in the international system was under threat. Boris Yeltsin's presidency – in the context of post-Soviet Russia – demonstrated the unstable hull of a state moving in an unstable environment on the

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<sup>318</sup> Узун В. Я. Оценка результатов Ельцинской аграрной реформы // Всероссийский экономический журнал ЭКО. 2013. № 3. С. 05-27.

<sup>319</sup> Российская Федерация в 1990-х годах-начале XXI Века [Электронный ресурс]. URL: [https://www.rsu.edu.ru/wp-content/uploads/e-learning/Agarev\\_Native\\_history\\_for\\_non-historical\\_faculties/R26.htm](https://www.rsu.edu.ru/wp-content/uploads/e-learning/Agarev_Native_history_for_non-historical_faculties/R26.htm) (дата обращения: 23.07.2023).

<sup>320</sup> Поправка Джексона-Вэника оспаривается в суде [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <https://web.archive.org/web/20110708113714/http://www.warandpeace.ru/ru/news/view/57361/> (дата обращения: 25.07.2023).

<sup>321</sup> Ханов М. Юбилей поправки Джексона-Вэника, или краткая история санкций Запада против России [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <https://tass.ru/opinions/7390489> (дата обращения: 25.07.2023).

<sup>322</sup> Заяц П. В. Экономический курс Бориса Ельцина глазами современников: дискуссии по осмыслению выбора модели экономического развития // Социально-гуманитарные знания. 2012. № 11. С. 195-202.

international stage, and show the importance of sovereignty and political identity for a nation<sup>323</sup>.

Putin entered the political scene of Russia in August 1999 first as the Prime Minister, then in January 2000 as the Interim President and in May of the same year as the President-elect. Putin declared his first priority to strengthen the Russian government through reforms. At the beginning of his presidency, he completely purged the government of members affiliated with Yeltsin, who were corrupt<sup>324</sup>.

From President Vladimir Putin's viewpoint, the revised national security doctrine of Russia shifted beyond ideological frameworks to focus on strengthening Russia's sovereign authority and achieving a dominant global position. As the new millennium began, it became clear that Russia's foreign policy was entangled in difficulties, requiring a strategic recalibration of its international engagements<sup>325</sup>.

The June 2001 summit between President Bush and President Putin marked the beginning of a new era in US-Russian relations, based in no small part on Russia's support for the United States' war on terrorism, particularly in terms of military action in Afghanistan. In the wake of the September 11 attacks, President Putin was quick to respond to the stated intentions of the Bush administration to attack Afghanistan in order to dismantle the Taliban and al-Qaeda's operations there, dramatically demonstrating a strategic convergence between domestic policies and foreign diplomatic initiatives that set nationalism and human rights.

President Putin's foreign policy, reflecting his domestic priorities, aimed to correct three widespread misperceptions that disrupted global balance: the notion of Russia's Cold War defeat, the threat of a unipolar world dominated by a single superpower at the expense of collective state interests, and the undue vulnerability of the Russian economy to external influences. Consequently, the fundamental goals of Russian foreign policy

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<sup>323</sup> Ельцин Б. Записки президента [Электронный ресурс]. URL: [https://urfu.ru/fileadmin/user\\_upload/common\\_files/docs\\_units/mvk/yeltsin/Eltsin\\_Boris\\_Zapiski\\_prezidenta.pdf](https://urfu.ru/fileadmin/user_upload/common_files/docs_units/mvk/yeltsin/Eltsin_Boris_Zapiski_prezidenta.pdf) (дата обращения: 27.07.2023).

<sup>324</sup> Кахе А. The Russians' new game with the American world system. 2008. URL: <https://shorturl.at/5X6FA> (дата обращения: 10.07.2023). (In Persian)

<sup>325</sup> Talebi S., Khani M. H. Russia's position in the international system in the 21st century: imagined scenarios // Studies of Central Asia and the Caucasus. 2013. Vol. 18, № 77. P. 113–120. (In Persian)

under Putin were clearly defined. To forestall the emergence of a unipolar world order, thereby ensuring a multipolar international system.

- To restore and elevate Russia's stature within the global community, reaffirming its sovereignty and influence.
- To counteract Western encroachments and preserve Russia's geopolitical interests in its immediate environs.
- To engender stability and security within Central Asia and the Caucasus, areas of strategic interest to Russia.
- To fortify Russia's economic resilience, thereby underpinning its national security and global standing<sup>326</sup>.

Until the end of 2002, President Vladimir Putin mainly dealt with the objectives of integrating the Russian economy into the global markets and improving the international perception of Russia. His administration encouraged foreign investment, regulatory reform, and global trade-friendly economic policies as a basis for continued economic integration and the reorganization of the Russian economy, driven by Russia's huge natural resources. This economic opening seemed to be a strategic way to reposition Russia's role on the world stage.

This subchapter analyzed sanctions imposed on Russia in the post-Soviet period, focusing on Western pressure from 1979 to 2002. Economic measures, such as the Jackson-Vanik amendment, and strategic concerns, such as NATO expansion, led to trade and security tensions in Russia. Political tensions were exacerbated by Western support for opposition groups. Under Putin, Russia has shifted from defensive to assertive diplomacy in pursuit of economic sustainability and a multipolar world order. The analysis emphasizes the need for mutual respect and dialogue in international relations, advocating partnership rather than dominance, and stressing the importance of understanding historical, cultural, and political context.

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<sup>326</sup> Fasihi Dolatshahi M. A. Russia's foreign policy during Putin's era (from interaction to confrontation with the West) // Scientific-research quarterly of Ghalib Private Higher Education Institution. 2015. № 1. P. 81–98. (In Persian)

## **Chapter II: Diplomacy of Iran Under Sanction During 2003 – 2013 and Position of Russian Federation.**

### **2.1. Principles and objectives of global embargoes toward Iran.**

During the period of relations, from 2003 to 2013 Iran faced a challenging situation involving economic, military and diplomatic restrictions. This era put Iran under scrutiny due to issues related to its nuclear program alleged support for terrorism and human rights violations. Several nations and international bodies imposed sanctions, on Iran due to these worries with the intention of limiting its activities and directing its policies. The diplomatic strategy of Iran was one of dealing with the sanctions as it negotiated its way while protecting its sovereign space. This chapter looks into the Iranian moves in terms of relations with actors, bilateral and regional cooperation. In analysing the efforts of Iran one can understand the methods implemented to deal with the challenges caused by the sanctions and how they have moulded, its foreign policy journey. To provide a better analysis and be able to study this matter in more detail, we divided the time frame into two main periods: 2003-2005, and 2005-2013. In each mentioned period, Iran imposed specific and different policies toward sanction policy. We will study the main sanctions in each period, their effects on Iranian society and government, and also review Iran's diplomacy in each time frame. We can analyse Iran's diplomatic efforts and strategies by the end of each session.

- **End of Presidency of Mohammad Khatami (2003 – 2005)**

Except for the “Dialogue Among Civilizations” initiative, the Khatami administration imposed specific strategies to deal with sanctions and Western pressures. Khatami's administration sought to improve relations with the European Union (EU) through diplomatic channels. This engagement aims to ease tensions, attract investment, and potentially find common ground on issues of mutual interest. Khatami's government negotiated with the international community, including the EU-3 (United Kingdom, France, Germany), to address concerns about Iran's nuclear program. The negotiations

aimed to find a diplomatic solution that would satisfy Iran's energy needs while assuring the international community about the peaceful nature of its nuclear activities.<sup>327</sup> In an attempt to build confidence and ease international concerns, Iran temporarily suspended its uranium enrichment activities in 2003 as a goodwill gesture during negotiations.

As written in “Analysis of Iran’s behavior under sanction pressure,” “Although, in 2003, following the resolution of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which calls Iran to suspend any nuclear activities, Iran negotiated with IAEA and European foreign ministers. As a result, Iran agreed to suspend its nuclear activities and provide access to all sites in the country to the IAEA to monitor Iran’s uranium enrichment activities. However, European countries demanded more than the 2003 agreement. In this regard, the Iranian government decided not to sign any agreement with European countries<sup>328</sup>.” As a result, in the following years, European countries and the UN decided to use a sanction policy by accusing the Iranian government of disturbing the international system’s rules.

Khatami's presidency highlighted the complex relationship between domestic reform, diplomatic engagement, and external pressures in Iran. He navigated Iran's internal political landscape and international dynamics, finding diplomatic solutions to balance national interests and international concerns. Despite his efforts, some countries remained skeptical. Khatami's presidency also exposed the West's paradoxical policy towards Iran, with Westerners' lack of understanding and attention to Islamic Republic values pushing the Iranian government towards more conservative policies.

### **The Period of 2005 - 2013.**

During Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's presidency (2005-2013), Iran faced controversial policies, confrontational diplomacy, and escalating tensions with the international community. Iran's economy was challenged by sanctions and domestic policies, and its regional influence evolved. Iran was among the most sanctioned countries worldwide,

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<sup>327</sup> Texts adopted - human rights dialogue with Iran - Thursday, 24 October 2002. Electronic resources. URL: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-5-2002-0522\\_EN.html?redirect](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-5-2002-0522_EN.html?redirect) (date of access: 13.07.2023).

<sup>328</sup> Belov V. I., Ranjbar D. Analysis of Iran’s behavior under sanction pressure // The herald of the diplomatic academy of the MFA of Russia. Russia and the world. 2023. Vol. 36, № 2. P. 111-122.

with the United Nations and European Union joining the sanctions. After negotiations failed, the Iranian government was deemed the guilty party and a threat to the international community. The UN Security Council imposed resolutions to limit Iran's access to the global market and increase pressure on the Iranian government. UNSCRs concerning the Iranian nuclear program are listed below.

- **Resolution 1696 (31 July 2006)**

This resolution, adopted in July 2006, demanded Iran suspend all uranium enrichment activities and comply with previous IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) resolutions.<sup>329</sup> It also expressed the Security Council's intention to adopt further measures if Iran did not comply. This resolution acted as a last notification before practical pressure on Iran. However, the President of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, said he would not bow to “the language of force and threats<sup>330</sup>.” Resolution 1737 was adopted by the UNSC due to Iran's lack of policy change. After 2003 negotiations with the West, Iran refused resolution 1696, temporarily suspending uranium enrichment to gain trust. Resolution 1696 was seen as West propaganda.

- **Resolution 1737 (23 December 2006)**

The resolution imposed sanctions on Iran, freezing assets of those involved in its nuclear and ballistic missile programs, and prohibiting the supply of specific goods and technology. It aimed to pressure Iran to stop nuclear activities and called for member states to prevent material transfers<sup>331</sup>. The resolution emphasized diplomatic efforts and negotiations for a peaceful resolution, urging member states to dialogue with Iran. Iran's response was defiance, political maneuvering, and economic adaptations. They rejected the resolution's legitimacy, sought support from countries like Russia and China, and implemented economic adaptations<sup>332</sup>. However, due to the lack of understanding of the

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<sup>329</sup> S/RES/1696 (2006), Expresses concern at the intentions of Iran's nuclear programme and demands that Iran halt its uranium enrichment programme. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/s/res/1696-%282006%29> (date of access: 15.07.2023).

<sup>330</sup> BBC news | Middle East | Iran defiant on nuclear deadline Electronic resource. URL: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/5236010.stm> (date of access: 15.07.2023).

<sup>331</sup> Busch N. E., Joyner D. Combating weapons of mass destruction. USA: University of Georgia press, 2009. P. 285.

<sup>332</sup> Borszik O. International sanctions against Iran and Tehran's responses: political effects on the targeted regime // Contemporary Politics. 2015. Vol. 22, № 1. P. 20-39.

Iranian position in negotiations and the conservative diplomacy of the Ahmadinejad administration, the resolutions and embargoes continued in the following years.

- **Resolution 1747 (24 March 2007)**

On March 24, 2007, the UN adopted Resolution 1747 on Iran. In addition to the terms described in Resolution 1737, Iran was banned from transferring, importing, and exporting any arms and conventional arms (UNROCA) by its nationals or using its flag vessels or aircraft. Travel and asset restrictions were placed on individuals connected to Iran's nuclear program<sup>333</sup>. Resolution 1747 aimed to pressure Iran to engage in diplomatic negotiations regarding its nuclear program, despite Iran's stance that nuclear weapons are “anti-Islamic.” The West questioned this, but due to trust issues and prioritizing negotiations, actions from both sides are expected.

- **Resolution 1803 (3 March 2008)**

This resolution reinforced the requirements set out in the previous resolutions. It also added restrictions on Iran's banks' transactions and required all countries to inspect cargo entering or transiting from or to Iran within their territory if there were “reasonable grounds to believe the cargo” included prohibited items<sup>334</sup>. Iran's response to a resolution expanding asset freezes and travel bans on individuals and entities subject to asset freezes and travel bans has been met with condemnation. Iran argues that sanctions violate its sovereignty and are unjust, citing the National Policy on Nuclear Peace (NPT) as a basis<sup>335</sup>. The lack of specific facts has allowed Iran to gain domestic support and demonstrate West power's superiority over international law.

- **Resolution 1835 (27 September 2008)**

Briefly, this resolution does not consist of embargoes, but it focuses more on attracting attention to negotiations and cooperation of Iran with the IAEA. However, its

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<sup>333</sup> Report: Iran to start hiding its nuclear plans. Electronic resource. URL: [https://web.archive.org/web/20070927183414/http://cbs5.com/topstories/topstories\\_story\\_089141347.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20070927183414/http://cbs5.com/topstories/topstories_story_089141347.html) (date of access: 16.07.2023).

<sup>334</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 1803 on Iran's nuclear program. Electronic resource. URL: <https://2001-2009.state.gov/t/isn/rls/fs/102891.htm> (date of access: 16.07.2023).

<sup>335</sup> The IAEA and the non-proliferation treaty. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.iaea.org/topics/non-proliferation-treaty#:~:text=The%20Treaty%20on%20the%20Non,and%20general%20and%20complete%20disarmament.> (date of access: 16.07.2023).

reaction to Iran has not changed, and the President of Iran said that Iran would resist “bullying powers<sup>336</sup>.” Iran responded positively to the 1835 resolution, negotiating its nuclear program to ease international tensions. However, both sides lacked trust due to a lack of trust in the West and the international community.

- **Resolution 1929 (9 June 2010)**

The resolution imposed additional sanctions on Iran, including an arms embargo, tighter financial restrictions, and expanded sanctions list. It called for increased international cooperation and diplomatic efforts<sup>337</sup>. Ahmadinejad suppressed opposition and increased embargoes in 1929 due to domestic policy analysis and external pressure, but Iran adopted embargoes, reducing sanctions effectiveness.

- **Resolution 1984 (June 9, 2011)**

This resolution extended the mandate of the panel of experts established to monitor the implementation of sanctions and reaffirmed the Security Council's commitment to a diplomatic solution<sup>338</sup>. Iran argues that the West's policy paradox shows Iran's inability to trust it. Despite the UNSC's resolutions, Iran's conservative President Ahmadinejad uses various diplomacy strategies to maintain Islamic Revolution values and international pressures. Despite denying nuclear peaceful use, Iran continues diplomacy and negotiations with the West and cooperation with the IAEA.

On the other hand, resolutions put high pressure on Iran and have a huge impact on Iran’s economy and society. The economic sanctions are imposed by the UN Security Council, leading to limited access to finance and foreign exchange, low investment, an increase in unemployment and inflation, and a slowdown in economic growth. These sanctions have shackled the hands of Iranian policymakers and transmitted the effects to the Iranian economy through various transmission mechanisms, among which are

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<sup>336</sup> BBC news | Special reports | UN approves new Iran resolution. Electronic resource. URL: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7640133.stm> (date of access: 16.07.2023).

<sup>337</sup> Тимофеев И.Н., Соколыцкий Ю.С., Морозов В.А. Санкции против Ирана: уроки для России в новых международных условиях // Вестник Санкт-Петербургского университета. Международные отношения. 2022. Т. 15, № 4. С. 405-420.

<sup>338</sup> UN Security Council extends mandate of Iran panel of experts. Electronic resource. URL: [https://web.archive.org/web/20110614085326/http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2011-06/10/c\\_13920806.htm](https://web.archive.org/web/20110614085326/http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2011-06/10/c_13920806.htm) (date of access: 17.07.2023).



inflationary expectations, exchange rate volatility, financing surcharges, and foreign direct investment. This projection includes reductions in foreign and government investment, oil production, GDP, and non-oil exports, accompanied by an increase in inflation and household consumption<sup>339</sup>.

Although sanctions affected Iran's economy, one of the main goals of these embargoes was to impact Iran's nuclear program and limit its progress. There are differing opinions on the most effective approach to bringing Iran into compliance, including postponing, preventing, or preparing for the consequences of a nuclear Iran<sup>340</sup>. To prevent the increase of the idea of nuclear Iran, during the duration of the presidency of Ahmadinejad, Iran also faces an increase of sanctions by the USA and the European Union. It is important to note that some European countries before 1988 and after the Iran-Iraq war imposed some sanctions on Iran. However, the EU joined the sanction policy toward Iran by cooperating with the UNSCRs in 2006. The European Union sanctions, implemented between 2005 and 2013, were aimed at pressuring Iran to address international concerns about its nuclear program and human rights practices. The sanctions encompassed a range of measures, including asset freezes, travel bans, and restrictions on trade, finance, and energy sectors. The EU sanctions toward Iran are shown in the Table 1.

<b>Title of Embargo</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
EU Sanctions Package	2007	Comprehensive sanctions package targeting Iran's nuclear and missile programs.
EU Sanctions Extension	2008	Extension of existing sanctions and addition of new entities and individuals.
EU Asset Freeze	2010	Asset freeze and travel ban on Iranian entities and individuals involved in nuclear activities.
EU Oil and Gas Restrictions	2012	The embargo on importing, purchasing, and transporting Iranian crude oil and petroleum products.
EU Financial and Energy Sanctions	2012	Financial sanctions targeting transactions with Iranian banks and energy-related entities.

<sup>339</sup> Yurtaev V. Iran and sanctions: Limits of self-reliance // World economy and international relations. 2016. Vol. 60, № 5. P. 26-29.

<sup>340</sup> Nakhli S. R. et al. A DSGE analysis of the effects of economic sanctions: Evidence from the Central Bank of Iran // Iranian journal of economic studies. 2020. Vol. 9, № 1. P. 35-70.

EU Embargo on Natural Gas and Metals	2013	The embargo on imports of Iranian natural gas and restrictions on trade in gold, precious metals, and diamonds.
EU Sanctions on Iranian Banks	2012-2013	Restrictions on financial transactions and business relationships with designated Iranian banks.

Table 1: The European Union sanctions imposed on Iran between 2005 and 2013<sup>341</sup>.

EU sanctions on Iran have had significant effects on the Iranian economy. General sanctions have strongly hampered trade flows between the EU and Iran, with a greater impact on imports to the EU than on exports.<sup>342</sup> These sanctions have affected trade in almost all sectors except the primary ones. On the other hand, smart sanctions targeting specific individuals and entities have done little to trade values and are statistically insignificant for most sectors' imports from Iran. Economic sanctions have also blocked Iran's access to finance and foreign exchange, reducing investment and hence causing an economic slowdown<sup>343</sup>. Iran's primarily driven sectors, such as the agricultural and mining sectors, were hardly affected by EU sanctions since they relied upon very few imports. However, secondary and tertiary sectors, such as manufacturing and services, had witnessed disruptions in supply chains and an increased rate of inflation. Iran reacted by reducing oil export to Europe, adopting alternative markets, namely Russia, China, India, and Turkey<sup>344</sup>. Meanwhile, due to the negative<sup>344</sup> impact, the sanctions also serve as an opportunity for Iran to diversify its economy, cut back oil dependence, and enhance the domestic production capacity. For instance, the results from sanctions on the agricultural sector are astounding since the investment and modernization increased. Besides, its government has implemented policies on support and incentives for domestic production in several sectors, which advances Iran's economic resilience<sup>345</sup>.

<sup>341</sup> Council of European Union. measures targeting nuclear proliferation activities - key developments. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/iran/history-iran/> (date of access: 18.07.2023).

<sup>342</sup> Ghodsi M., Karamelikli H. The impact of sanctions imposed by the European Union against Iran on their bilateral trade: general versus targeted sanctions // *World trade review*. 2021. Vol. 21, № 1. P. 33-58.

<sup>343</sup> Aliakbari F. The effects of economic sanctions on private investment in Iran // *Resistive economics*. 2020. Vol. 8, № 4. P. 01-11.

<sup>344</sup> Engerer H., Horn M. EU-Ölembargo gegen Iran wenig wirksam // *DIW Wochenbericht*, German Institute for economic research. 2012. Vol. 79, № 22. P. 12-19.

<sup>345</sup> Seeberg P. The EU and the international sanctions against Iran: European and Iranian foreign and security policy interests, and a changing Middle East // *Palgrave communications*. 2016. Vol. 2, № 1. P. 1-9.

During the same time period, the U.S. Congress imposed two important Acts against Iran, consisting of different categories of embargoes, and over four Executive Orders signed by the President of the United States. The imposition of these sanctions had considerable implications to Iran's economy and its relation with the international community during the presidency of Ahmadinejad. The Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act (CISADA) is a piece of U.S. legislation aimed at tightening sanctions on Iran and promoting divestment from companies doing business with Iran. It was passed by the U.S. Congress and signed into law by President Obama on July 1, 2010<sup>346</sup>. The Act includes financial and energy sanctions on sectors, insurance limitations, as well as prohibitions on trade and investment. CISADA was a portion of the comprehensive U.S. policy of pressuring Iran into holding diplomatic talks about the country's nuclear program and concerns raised from the country's activities. The law had the objective of completely cutting off Iran from the world economically and financially through application of stiff penalties on those engaging in the country's targeted sectors<sup>347</sup>.

The European Union have criticized the United States for the extraterritoriality of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act (CISADA) economic sanctions on Iran. The EU criticized the CISADA legal and political issues related to secondary sanctions and how they may run counter to international principles of law<sup>348</sup>. The sanctions, including the 2012/2013 embargoes, negatively impacted the informal economy, negatively affecting the growth rate of the shadow economy<sup>349</sup>. They limited Iran's connections with international art networks, led to changes in artistic production, and denied scholars access to essential resources<sup>350</sup>.

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<sup>346</sup> Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act (CISADA). Electronic resource. URL: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/e/eb/esc/iransanctions/docs/160710.htm> (date of access: 19.07.2023).

<sup>347</sup> Timeline of U.S. sanctions. Electronic resource. URL: <https://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/timeline-us-sanctions>. (date of access: 19.07.2023).

<sup>348</sup> Farzanegan M. R., Hayo B. Sanctions and the shadow economy: empirical evidence from Iranian provinces // *Applied economics letters*. 2018. Vol. 26, № 6. P. 501-505.

<sup>349</sup> Rafiei Vardanjani A. United States economic sanctions on Iran and their impacts on the Middle Eastern art market // *Arts*. 2020. Vol. 9, № 4. P. 1-11.

<sup>350</sup> Kokabisaghi F. Et al. Impact of United States political sanctions on international collaborations and research in Iran // *BMJ global health*. 2019. Vol. 4, № 5. P. 3-6.

The USA continued the pressure by adopting the United States National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). This annual legislation usually sets the budget for the country's defense department. However, in 2012, the legislation contained specific points about Iran to increase the pressure on this country. The NDAA includes sanctions against Iran's Central Bank, limitations on transactions with Iran, expanding sanctions on the energy sector, and additional embargoes on the shipping and insurance sectors. This act also allows the president to sanction foreign banks that conduct financial transactions for Iranian oil and petroleum products<sup>351</sup>.

Iran's responses to CISADA and the NDAA (2012) were defiant, politically manipulative, and aimed at the adaptation to the economic trials posed by the sanctions. Though the country remained defiant to the legitimacy of the sanctions, Iran continued with its nuclear activities. At the same time, it framed these measures as opportunities to prove itself a responsible actor on the world's arena and to unite the domestic population against the external pressures<sup>352</sup>. Also, Iran tried to reduce the influence of these sanctions by diversifying its economy and building its relationships with non-Western countries, primarily in Asia. In addition, Iran negotiated with the international community to demonstrate its ability and readiness to achieve a diplomatic solution to the problems and reduce the tension<sup>353</sup>. Finally, several United States Executive Orders signed by the Presidents of this country consist of additional embargoes and limitations toward Iran and its government. In the Table 2 all Orders during the presidency of Ahmadinejad are shown.

<b>The number of Executive Orders</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
13382	2005	It applies to entities accused of supporting Iran's nuclear proliferation and missile-related activities.
13553	2010	It applies to Iranian officials responsible for serious human rights abuses.
13574	2011	It applies further sanctions to entities under the Iran Sanctions Act

<sup>351</sup> Timeline of U.S. sanctions. Electronic resource. URL: <https://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/timeline-us-sanctions>. (date of access: 19.07.2023).

<sup>352</sup> Warnaar M. Iranian foreign policy behavior 2005–2013 // Iranian foreign policy during Ahmadinejad. Germany: Springer, 2013. P. 113-136.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid.

		of 1996.
13590	2011	It authorizes the Secretary of State to impose sanctions on persons involved in in Iran's energy and petrochemical sectors.
13599	2012	It blocks the property of the Government of Iran and all Iranian financial institutions.
13606	2012	It blocks the property and suspends the entry into the United States of certain persons involved in grave human rights abuses via information technology.
13608	2012	It prohibits certain transactions with and suspends entry into the United States of Iran sanctions evaders. It authorizes the Secretary of the Treasury to impose certain measures on a foreign person violating sanctions on Iran.

Table 2: The United States Executive Orders Concerning Iran's Nuclear Program between 2005-2013<sup>354</sup>.

Iranian Foreign Policy during Ahmadinejad focused on ideology and actions. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad employed various strategies of diplomatic action in the face of international sanctions. Initially, he expanded Iran's nuclear program in response to high oil income and resistance to Western regime-change ambitions<sup>355</sup>. When faced with a hostile diplomatic situation during his visit to the United States, Ahmadinejad used various strategies such as blame avoidance, imposition, and credit gain to defend himself and his policies<sup>356</sup>. Additionally, Ahmadinejad employed counter-hegemony strategies against the United States hegemonic expansion in the West Asia region, using a war of position and a balance of power approach<sup>357</sup>. These strategies aimed to maintain intra-elite cohesion and contain factional disputes within Iran's regime.

From 1992 to 2013, the diplomatic responses of Iranian presidents to Western sanctions varied markedly according to their leadership styles. President Rafsanjani focused on economic recovery, President Khatami on diplomacy and engagement, and President Ahmadinejad on confrontation. These varied approaches reflect the complex interaction of international relations theories, demonstrating how power, ideas, and

<sup>354</sup> Timeline of U.S. sanctions. Electronic resource. URL: <https://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/timeline-us-sanctions>.(date of access: 19.07.2023).

<sup>355</sup> Borszik O. International sanctions against Iran and Tehran's responses: political effects on the targeted regime // Contemporary politics. 2015. Vol. 22, № 1. P. 20-39.

<sup>356</sup> Chaudhri V., Fyke J. P. Rhetoric in hostile diplomatic situations: A case study of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's rhetoric during his 2007 US visit // Place branding and public diplomacy. 2008. № 4. P. 317-330.

<sup>357</sup> Riki R. et al. Iran's counter-hegemony under the leadership of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005-2009) towards US hegemony in West Asian region // UKM journal article repository. 2013. Vol. 5, № 2. P. 17-34.

identity shape a nation's behavior on the global stage. This period also illustrates the challenges in Western-Iranian relations, where misinterpretations and mistrust influenced the effectiveness and reception of diplomatic efforts.

The sub-chapter examines the objectives and impact of international sanctions against Iran imposed by the UN, EU, and US between 2003 and 2013, targeting Iran's nuclear and ballistic programs, financial institutions, energy industry, and arms trade. These sanctions placed significant pressure on Iran, resulting in a complex interplay of resistance, adaptation, and engagement. This period highlights the dual nature of sanctions as a deterrent and a catalyst for strategic adaptation, emphasizing the need for subtle, cooperative international diplomacy to achieve sustainable peace. The different diplomatic responses of Iranian presidents - Rafsanjani, who focused on economic recovery, Khatami, who emphasized diplomacy and changing Iran's image, and Ahmadinejad, on confrontation - demonstrate the impact of leadership styles on Iran's global engagement and the complexities of Western-Iranian relations characterized by misinterpretations and mistrust.

## **2.2. The impact of the western and international sanctions on Iran's diplomacy.**

From 2003 to 2013, Western and international sanctions significantly shaped Iran's diplomacy due to concerns about its nuclear program and purported terrorism support. These sanctions created a challenging diplomatic landscape, prompting Iran to adopt strategic and adaptive diplomatic strategies. The sanctions encompassed economic, financial, military, and technological restrictions, prompting Iran to employ various diplomatic tactics to lessen their impact and adeptly navigate global politics<sup>358</sup>.

The primary result of Rafsanjani's political activities was the normalization of relations through resolving national security issues and multiple meetings between the president, the foreign minister, and international political figures. Over his two terms,

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<sup>358</sup> Nabavi M. A re-reading of Iran's diplomacy in the second republic, Iran's foreign policy during Mr. Hashemi's presidency // Strategy Quarterly. 2004. Vol. 12, № 4. P. 159-170. (In Persian)

Hashemi-Rafsanjani undertook 33 foreign missions, averaging about one trip per quarter<sup>359</sup>. During Khatami's presidency, the international system's main subjects were defined, and Iran's interests were declared. Khatami expanded on Hashemi-Rafsanjani's approaches, highlighting the material and moral costs of hostile nations opposing the Islamic Revolution to deter hostility against Iran<sup>360</sup>.

Regarding the policy of *détente*, Khatami also noted: “The Islamic Republic of Iran and its Ministry of Foreign Affairs employ diplomatic methods based on national interests protection. The policy of *détente* aims to establish trust-building, leading to cooperation and regional integration. By transforming enemies into friends, the country can achieve full regional integration<sup>361</sup>.” Iran's strategy and diplomacy focus on promoting peace, maintaining friendly relations with Islamic nations, fostering unity and cooperation within the Islamic world, collaborating with aligned countries and organizations, and actively participating in international organizations, which has influenced its fight against Western sanctions<sup>362</sup>.

Khatami's government prioritized reducing sanctions on Iran, rebuilding diplomatic relations, and focusing on Iran's strategic position, defense, and containment policy to avoid conflicts and reduce sanctions impact<sup>363</sup>. Khatami's government boosted Iran's relations with Arab nations, enhancing cultural, economic, and security ties, strengthening its position in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and supporting Palestinian rights<sup>364</sup>. Iran's *détente* policy established close ties with Saudi Arabia,

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<sup>359</sup> Sarmadi H., Badri M. The Effect of Hashemi Rafsanjani's Technocrat Government and changing of foreign policy of Iran from power to pragmatism // *Academia Journal of Educational Research*, 2017. Vol.7, No.36. P. 259-272. (In Persian)

<sup>360</sup> Esfahani A.S. Cultural Globalization and Foreign Policy Strategies of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Case Study; the Seventh and the Ninth Governments) // Published by Canadian Center of Science and Education, 2017. Vol.10, No.3. P. 125-137.

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.* P. 129.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.* P. 130-137.

<sup>363</sup> Clawson P., Eisenstadt M., Kanovsky E., Menashri D. Iran under Khatami: a political, economic, and military assessment // *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*. 1998. P. 97-100.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.* P. 101-103.

promoting regional cooperation and understanding. This marked a shift in Iranian foreign policy towards engagement and diplomacy.<sup>365</sup>

From 2005 to 2013, Iran's external affairs strategy was primarily idealistic, with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad leading a significant evolution in diplomatic engagements and international strategy. Iran's nuclear program became a focal point of international scrutiny, leading to extensive inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)<sup>366</sup>. Iran reaffirmed Islamic Revolution's ideals and pursued idealistic foreign policy, expanding diplomatic ties with Southern Persian Gulf nations, aiming for greater Gulf Cooperation Council and Arab League involvement, opposing US unilateralism, and forming alliances with Eastern countries<sup>367</sup>.

Ahmadinejad's foreign policy focused on idealism, regional cooperation, and forging new alliances. He defiantly resisted Western sanctions and refused to compromise on Iran's nuclear program, resulting in increased tensions and economic difficulties for Iran<sup>368</sup>. On the other hand, his strategies defended the values of national sovereignty and independence, resonating with some segments of the Iranian population who supported his strong stance against external interference. Iran's foreign policy during Ahmadinejad's presidency consisted of three main approaches: Western-oriented, focusing on Western nations, Eastern-oriented, prioritizing alliances with Asian powers like China and Russia, and neutrality, prioritizing national interests and autonomy over alignment with Western or Eastern blocs. This approach influenced Iran's relations with non-Western states and influenced its foreign policy decisions<sup>369</sup>.

Iran's foreign policy is guided by the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic, who emphasizes adhering to the values of the Islamic Revolution, engagement with its

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<sup>365</sup> Sadeghi B., Tabatabai S.M. Metaphor Analysis and Discursive Cycle of Iran's Foreign Policy: Justice' through the lenses of US-IRAN Presidents // Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Fen Bilimleri Dergisi. 2015. Vol. 36, No. 3. P. 2338-2358.

<sup>366</sup> Hafezi P., Sedarat F. Ahmadinejad says Holocaust a lie, Israel has no future [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <https://www.today.com/news/ahmadinejad-says-holocaust-lie-israel-has-no-future-wbna31581977> (дата обращения: 20.02.2024).

<sup>367</sup> Molana H., Mohammadi M. The foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Ahmadinejad government. Iran: Dadgostar, 2009. P. 20-80.

<sup>368</sup> Ibid. P. 80-100.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid. P. 190-220.



ideologies, governance, resistance, and allegiance to revolutionary tenets, and resistance against external domination and cultural assimilation.<sup>370</sup> Iran's Supreme Leader supports resistance against Western sanctions, supporting anti-imperialist movements and self-sufficiency. This narrative shapes Iran's negotiation strategies and maintains principles in diplomatic relations in time of Ahmadinejad.

Iran's foreign policy shift challenges Western double standards by focusing on Southern Africa and Latin America, including observer status in the African Union, support for Zimbabwe under Mugabe, and backing movements in Cuba, Bolivia, and Venezuela to advance Iran's national interests<sup>371</sup>. In the Middle East, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Iran compete for regional leadership. The ongoing Sunni-Shiite divide enables the West to maintain influence in the Persian Gulf, vital for energy security. However, recent tensions between the U.S. and oil monarchies, like Saudi Arabia and the UAE, stem from disagreements over Yemen and the nuclear deal, highlighted by their refusal to boost oil production<sup>372</sup>. Iran's strategy involves forming alliances with countries opposing colonialism and imperialism to counter global powers' influence. Focusing on Southern nations, Iran aims to diversify international partnerships and increase global influence through bilateral and multilateral geopolitical engagements.

### **Bilateral Engagements**

**Syria:** Iran's strategic alliance with Syria, rooted in geopolitical and sectarian alignments, was crucial for counterbalancing Western influence in the region. The relationship was based on mutual interests, with Syria providing Iran a strategic foothold and Iran providing economic and military support<sup>373</sup>. Iran's regional alliance with Syria, driven by geopolitical interests and sectarian considerations, is a key example of its strategy to counter Western influence<sup>374</sup>.

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<sup>370</sup> Mehdipour A. Investigating the dimensions and consequences of resistance strategy in the thought of Ayatollah Khamenei (Madazaleh) // *Political sociology of the Islamic world*. 2019. Vol. 8, № 2. P. 01–30. (In Persian)

<sup>371</sup> Barzegar K. Iran's foreign policy strategy in regional power balance // *Strategic Studies Quarterly*. 2018. № 4. P. 183–189. (In Persian)

<sup>372</sup> Аватков В. Дихотомия "Восток-Запад" Идеино-ценностное измерение мировой политики // *Свободная мысль*. 2022. № 3(1693). С. 118.

<sup>373</sup> Кириченко В. П. Иран и Сирия: Факторы сближения и сотрудничества // *Россия и мусульманский мир*. 2020. С. 75-85.

<sup>374</sup> Богачева А. Политика Ирана в Сирии // *Анализ и прогноз. Журнал ИМЭМО РАН*. 2020. С. 74-80.

Paying attention to the presented analysis model, the most important factor is the strategic alliance, the existence of common threats, which in the relations between Iran and Syria are: 1) **Saddam Hussein's policy:** Saddam Hussein and Hafez Assad had different approaches to Iran's Islamic revolution, leading to strained relations before the Iraq-Iran war. While Assad focused on the threat from Israel, Saddam aligned himself with Iran and limited Assad's military capabilities. This alliance between Syria and Iran prevented a shift in power favoring Iraq among Arab nations. Iraq felt threatened by Iran's influence in Iraq, particularly among Kurds and Shia populations<sup>375</sup>. 2) **Israeli politics:** Israel, which was (and is) supported by the United States and had stable relations with the Arab Middle East, sought to create a new block of regional actors against Iran. On the other hand, Israel's encroachment on Syrian soil and the insecurity of the cause were strong factors for Iran and Syria to experience a common threat in the name of Israel<sup>376</sup>. 3) **The politics of Saudi Arabia:** Saudi Arabia has been a powerful regional actor, acting as a big brother to Arab countries. However, Syria's refusal to comply has caused it to be seen as an obstacle. In contrast, Saudi Arabia has aligned with the US, leading to a rift with Iran. This has resulted in Iran and Syria forming a united front against Saudi Arabia<sup>377</sup>. Iran's foreign policy towards Syria is influenced by two main approaches: ideological and geopolitical. The ideological perspective suggests that the Syrian government is at the center of regional resistance, strategically located near resistance groups in Lebanon and Palestine. Geopolitically, the Islamic Republic's dominant power in the region is attributed to its political structure, security system, and alliances with resistance groups like Hezbollah. However, the Syrian government's downfall could benefit regional competitors and transnational opponents<sup>378</sup>.

The Middle East's geopolitical landscape is divided into two alliances: one with the USA and Western allies, aligning with moderate Arab nations, and the other, a

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<sup>375</sup> Tolouei H., Haghshenas M. J. Analysis of relations between I.R.Iran and Syria in the light of the theory of regional balance of power // Political Knowledge Scientific Journal (Bi-quarterly). 2021. Vol. 17, № 1. P. 196. (In Persian)

<sup>376</sup> Ibid.

<sup>377</sup> Ibid. P. 197.

<sup>378</sup> Ibid, P. 198-203.

“Resistance front,” combining countries and groups with shared threats to sovereignty and regional influence<sup>379</sup>. The dichotomy between governance ideologies and strategic interests highlights the tensions between Western-backed nation-states and those resisting Western dominance. Alliances are driven by geopolitical goals and perceived threats, encapsulating broader regional strategic maneuvers and highlighting the friction between these entities.

**Iraq:** Iran’s policy towards Iraq post-2003 has been characterized by a complex and multifaceted approach. The primary focus of this approach has been on fostering strategic collaboration and forming coalitions with various political and sectarian groups within Iraq. This policy is designed to influence Iraq's political structure, particularly by supporting Shia factions to gain a substantial foothold in the governance of Iraq. The empowerment of the Shia community in Iraq has been a significant part of Iran's policy. This has been achieved through political support, religious affinity, and sometimes by direct intervention in Iraqi politics to secure positions for Shia leaders and parties<sup>380</sup>. In the broader regional context, Iran's approach towards Iraq is heavily influenced by its strategy to extend its influence in the Middle East. Establishing a strong presence and influence in Iraq allows Iran to counterbalance Sunni-dominated nations in the region and secure its borders against potential threats. This geopolitical maneuvering is crucial for Iran's regional security and its role as a key player in Middle Eastern politics<sup>381</sup>. Iran's policy towards Iraq focuses on economic and diplomatic engagement, aiming to strengthen economic ties, facilitate trade, and ensure mutual benefits aligning with Iran's regional interests. This strategy not only strengthens ties but also consolidates Iran's influence in Iraq.

Additionally, Iran's policy includes military and security cooperation, particularly in the context of shared threats like ISIS. This cooperation involves training, arming, and sometimes direct military intervention to support Iraqi forces and allied militias. Such

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<sup>379</sup> Ibid. P. 205.

<sup>380</sup> Vatankeh Z., Darvishi Setalani F. A Study of the Islamic Republic of Iran’s Policy Toward New Iraq (2003-2015) // International Quarterly of Geopolitics. 2018. Vol. 13, № 48. P. 01-05.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid. P. 08.

military and security measures are pivotal for maintaining stability in Iraq, which in turn, serves Iran's interests in maintaining a stable and friendly neighboring country<sup>382</sup>. Iran's strategic approach to economic and diplomatic engagements, military cooperation, and military cooperation demonstrates its understanding of soft power and economic interdependence for long-term influence, aiming to position itself as a key regional power in Middle East politics and security.

**Turkey:** Iran's policies towards Turkey throughout the 21st century have been marked by various stages of development, reflecting the complexities of the geopolitical landscape and the intricate dynamics of bilateral relations. The period of the Justice and Development Party in Turkey saw these relations evolve, influenced by both regional events and direct economic and political interactions between the two states. Key events such as the Arab Spring and the situation in Syria played a crucial role in this development, highlighting the interconnected nature of regional politics and its impact on bilateral relations<sup>383</sup>. Iran has adopted a balanced strategy to align with Turkey, demonstrating a pragmatic and strategic foreign policy. This approach acknowledges the need for diplomatic finesse in navigating the Middle East's complex geopolitical terrain, demonstrating readiness for cooperation where mutual interests intersect.

Post 1979, Iran-Turkey relations were tense due to Turkey's fears about the Islamic revolution's potential export and Iranian leaders' open expressions. The ongoing competition in Central Asia and the Caucasus for influence exacerbated these tensions, highlighting the historical complexities and evolving nature of Iranian-Turkish relations<sup>384</sup>. The economic and political interactions between Iran and Turkey have been pivotal in shaping their bilateral relationship. These interactions have likely included trade, energy cooperation, and diplomatic engagements, reflecting the intertwined interests of the two regional powers. Iran's approach towards Turkey is characterized by a nuanced understanding of the regional geopolitical landscape and adaptability in

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<sup>382</sup> Ibid. P. 12-15.

<sup>383</sup> Иванова И. И. Динамика развития отношений между Турцией и Ираном в XXI в. // Восточная аналитика. 2020. № 4. С. 183-184.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid. 185-186.

policies. Balancing common goals with Turkey demonstrates the importance of maintaining a functional relationship despite historical tensions and competing interests. This approach also positions Iran in the broader regional context<sup>385</sup>. The evolution of Iranian-Turkish relations shows how regional events, like the Arab Spring and the Syrian conflict, can significantly impact bilateral relationships, necessitating adaptive and flexible foreign policies.

**Azerbaijan and the South Caucasus:** Iran's approach towards Azerbaijan has been dynamic and evolved through various stages, reflecting the complexities of bilateral relations and regional geopolitics. Initially, the focus was on building relations, as both countries navigated the post-Soviet geopolitical landscape. The early years were characterized by efforts to establish a foundation for cooperation and mutual understanding. However, the relationship went through distrust and tension influenced by different factors, most notably their difference in political alignments and regional conflicts. In particular, the legal status of the Caspian Sea and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict featured as prominent issues in the dynamics of Iran-Azerbaijan relations. These issues exposed divergent interests and strategic priorities of the two nations<sup>386</sup>.

There remained some periods of amplified cooperation, especially in the spheres of trade and economics. Iran was looking for directions on how to involve Azerbaijan in what benefits both, particularly in spheres such as tourism and trilateral platforms that could involve other actors from the region. This, again, was part of the larger Iranian strategy of binding economic relations and constructing regional coalitions. Though, the relationship at certain times had acute deteriorations owing to the change in regional alliances and the internal political changes of both countries. This fluctuation was an outcome of the fragile nature of the Iran-Azerbaijan relations and the external geopolitical factors<sup>387</sup>. Iranian policies towards Azerbaijan are a complex and adaptive response to regional complexities and evolving geopolitical realities. Despite political and strategic

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<sup>385</sup> Ibid. 200-202.

<sup>386</sup> Агазаде М.М. Азербайджано-иранские отношения: основные направления и особенности в 1991—2019 гг. (историографический обзор) // Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Серия: Международные отношения. 2021. Т. 21. № 4. С. 803-805.

<sup>387</sup> Ibid. P. 806-811.

differences, Iran's focus on economic cooperation and mutual benefit reflects a pragmatic foreign policy strategy. This approach aims to maintain regional influence and foster partnerships despite challenges and uncertainties, fostering a broader strategy of regional influence. Azerbaijan, seeking to balance international relations, aims to enhance cooperation with Iran, prioritizing East-West and North-South trade routes. Plans for a railroad linking Iran to Azerbaijan would boost passenger and cargo traffic, complementing existing networks like those with Turkey<sup>388</sup>.

The development of Iran-Azerbaijan relations also sheds light on the broader dynamics of the South Caucasus region. This shows the impact of regional conflicts, such as the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute, on bilateral relations, and the importance of economic and diplomatic engagement in overcoming periods of tension. Engagement between Iran and Azerbaijan is not, therefore, an interest that is *sui generis*; it is in relation to the broader regional context and the number of irons Iran has to keep in the fire as it engages with changing political landscapes.<sup>389</sup>

- **Multilateral Engagements**

**Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO):** Iran's relations with the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) vary over the years, and in its nature, it includes all sorts of interests that Iran has: economic, geopolitical, or regional strategies. This forms part of Iran's engagements with ECO, a regional economic organization with members mainly from Central Asia and the Middle East.

Iran emphasizes regional economic cooperation and development in its policy toward ECO. Part of this policy is the cooperation on increasing trade and economic integration and infrastructural connectivity with member states. Being strategically located geographically and politically, Iran becomes a central player in the organization that can influence regional economic policies and initiatives<sup>390</sup>. Iran places special emphasis on the process of establishing economic cooperation in ECO, following a more

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<sup>388</sup> Аватков В. А. Основы внешнеполитического курса Азербайджанской Республики на современном этапе // *Контуры глобальных трансформаций: политика, экономика, право*. 2020. Т. 13, № 3. С. 128.

<sup>389</sup> *Ibid.* P. 812-816.

<sup>390</sup> Abbasi Ashlaghi M., Daman Pak Jami M. Islamic Republic of Iran and ECO Economic Cooperation Organization, twenty years after the expansion of this organization // *Central Asia and Caucasus Quarterly*. 2013. № 84. P. 63-80.

general strategy of forming regional alliances and partnerships. This is important in managing the geopolitical complexities of the region in the Middle East and Central Asia. Iran's membership in ECO further highlights its attempt to bring diversified political and economic interests together in the establishment of a solid economic front. More so, ECO can be used to leverage the impacts of international sanctions and political isolation<sup>391</sup>.

Iran's approach to the Economic Cooperation Organization is a strategic component of its wider foreign policy, aiming to bolster regional economic ties and counterbalance external pressures<sup>392</sup>. Iran's policy emphasizes regional economic integration in a globalized world, actively participating in the ECO to promote growth, stability, and development. This policy demonstrates Iran's desire to lead in regional affairs, focusing on collective economic goals and shared interests. It combines economic pragmatism and diplomatic foresight, recognizing that economic partnerships can lead to broader political and strategic cooperation.

**Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO):** Iran's pursuit of full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) reflects its strategic aim to deepen its engagement with this key regional bloc. After gaining observer status in 2005, Iran's application for complete membership, approved in September 2021, marks a significant shift in its regional diplomacy. This move is a part of Iran's broader strategy to enhance its geopolitical influence and strengthen ties with key regional players<sup>393</sup>. The SCO, comprising major powers like Russia and China, along with several Central Asian nations, serves as a vital platform for Iran to pursue its geopolitical and security interests. Iran's engagement with the SCO aligns with its efforts to counterbalance Western influence, particularly in light of the challenges posed by international sanctions and diplomatic isolation.

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<sup>391</sup> Зеленева И. Сотрудничество Ирана и ЕАЭС: Проблемы и перспективы // Вестник Томского государственного университета. философия. социология. политология. 2022. С. 140-148.

<sup>392</sup> Abbasi Ashlaghi M., Daman Pak Jami M. Islamic Republic of Iran and ECO Economic Cooperation Organization, twenty years after the expansion of this organization // Central Asia and Caucasus Quarterly. 2013. № 84. P. 85-100.

<sup>393</sup> Ranjbar D., Honrada G. Iran's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. A SWOT analysis // Asia and Africa Today. 2023. № 3. P. 30-32.

Iran's potential contributions to the SCO include diplomatic, economic, military, and informational domains. Economically, it provides a Middle Eastern gateway for energy and trade, while militarily; it can aid the SCO in combating terrorism and drug trafficking<sup>394</sup>. Iran's full membership in the SCO could enhance its regional voice, allowing it to advocate for its interests and participate more actively in conflict resolution and cooperation initiatives. This strategic recalibration aims to mitigate Western sanctions and strengthen its regional standing.

The SCO offers Iran a multilateral platform to engage with key regional powers, enhancing its diplomatic reach and influence. This engagement is crucial for Iran, as it navigates complex regional dynamics and seeks to assert its role as a key regional player. Iran's participation in the SCO can also be seen as a part of its broader strategy to diversify its diplomatic and economic partnerships, reducing its reliance on Western-dominated international systems<sup>395</sup>. Iran's prospective full membership in the SCO also underscores the importance of regional organizations in contemporary international relations. It highlights how countries can leverage these platforms to advance their national interests, foster regional stability, and create collaborative frameworks for addressing shared challenges.

- **Geopolitical Strategies**

Iran's regional diplomacy was also shaped by its geopolitical strategies. It sought to position itself as a crucial player in regional security and stability, offering to mediate conflicts and participating in regional security dialogues. Additionally, Iran increasingly looked towards non-Western powers, such as Russia and China, for diplomatic support and economic cooperation. These relationships were critical in providing Iran with alternative markets, sources of technology, and diplomatic backing in international forums<sup>396</sup>. Iran's engagement with non-Western powers amid sanctions reflects a strategic

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<sup>394</sup> Ibid. P. 32-33.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid. P. 33-36.

<sup>396</sup> Pahlavi B. P. The origins and foundations of Iran's "Look East" policy // Australian institute of international affairs Electronic resource URL: <https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/the-origins-and-foundations-of-irans-look-east-policy/> (date of access: 22.11.2023).



reorientation, focusing on emerging powers and non-traditional allies, aiming to balance the effects of sanctions and Western geopolitical power.

Indeed, part of Iran's reorientation toward other powers was the deepening relationship with Russia and China. Being two of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, they were the key to any international diplomacy and, therefore, Iran's strategy of circumventing Western pressure<sup>397</sup>. Russia and Iran aim to challenge U.S. influence in international affairs, leading to a strong relationship involving military, nuclear, and energy cooperation. Iran's diplomacy also includes a Chinese part due to its economic lifeline and pragmatic approach. The Sino-Iranian economic relationship, including oil trade and infrastructure projects, demonstrates Iran's ability to diversify its partnerships under Western sanctions<sup>398</sup>.

Iran's approach to Latin America—through countries like Venezuela and Bolivia—was based on a commonality of anti-imperialist views and reciprocal dislike of the United States' foreign policy. In the same way, its dealings with other countries in Africa and Asia were essentially attempts to open up new markets for its oil and look for investment opportunity<sup>399</sup>. Iran's engagement with these non-Western powers was not merely a reactionary measure against sanctions but also part of a broader strategic vision to carve a niche in a rapidly changing global order. This approach was indicative of Iran's recognition of the shifting power dynamics in international politics, where emerging economies and non-traditional powers were gaining increased significance.

Iran has strategically remained ambiguous on its nuclear program in order to leverage gains in negotiations with the West, particularly the P5+1 countries. The ambiguity has allowed Iran the space to negotiate from a position of power, which, most of the time, saw the Western powers get to the table of offering concessions for greater transparency<sup>400</sup>. The flexibility with which Iran has been able to balance cooperation and

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<sup>397</sup> Ibid.

<sup>398</sup> Ibid.

<sup>399</sup> Niakoi S. A., Karmi M. A constructive look at the relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Latin America (Venezuela case study) // *International relations research quarterly*. 2014. Vol. 4, № 13. P. 81-95. (In Persian)

<sup>400</sup> Araghchi S. A., Ravanchi M.T., Salehi A.A., Zarif M.J., Mojani S.A. The sealed secret. Iran: Information, 2021. 50-90. (In Persian)

defiance with the changing international and internal political tides was vital in the way it advanced its nuclear program without actually causing outright confrontation<sup>401</sup>. It has faced international pressure to hold its nuclear activities back, balancing expectations at home and pressures abroad. Its diplomacy spoke of a deep understanding of the international system and power relations. It managed to keep diplomatic avenues open, which became instrumental in pursuing agreements such as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) by keeping the international community guessing about its intentions<sup>402</sup>.

Strategic ambiguity in Iranian nuclear negotiations allowed Iran to balance regional and global interests in strategic deterrence against regional adversaries in the Middle East and influence major powers' engagement with Iran. However, this could hardly be a long-term process, since constant ambiguity creates many dangers concerning regional instability and miscalculated conflict. The key diplomatic strategy was Iran's use of ambiguity in response to sanctions<sup>403</sup>.

Also, Iran invested in public diplomacy efforts to counter the narrative of the sanctions. This included outreach to international publics and the diaspora, emphasizing the unjust nature of the sanctions and showcasing Iran's cultural, scientific, and technological achievements. Iran invested significantly in cultural diplomacy, leveraging its rich Persian heritage, history, and culture to foster a positive image internationally<sup>404</sup>. This included hosting cultural festivals, supporting Persian language courses abroad, and promoting Iranian arts and literature. Such initiatives were aimed at building cultural bridges and softening the image of Iran globally. Iran established international news networks like Press TV to challenge Western media, criticize Western policies, and extend its influence within the Muslim world, supporting Islamic educational institutions and promoting Palestinian causes<sup>405</sup>.

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<sup>401</sup> Ibid. P. 100-120.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid. P. 121-145.

<sup>403</sup> Ibid. P. 150-170.

<sup>404</sup> Hajimineh R., Mirmohammad Sadeghi M. The role of Iran's "soft power" in confronting Iranophobia // Вестник МГИМО университета. 2019. № 4. P. 216-238.

<sup>405</sup> Soltani A., Izadi J., Khademzadeh J. Structural pathology of public diplomacy of the Islamic Republic of Iran // Strategic policy research. 2020. Vol. 9, № 34. P. 107-147. (In Persian)

Iran also focused on academic diplomacy, facilitating intellectual exchanges and conferences that brought together scholars and experts from around the world. These initiatives aimed to promote a deeper understanding of Iran's policies, culture, and perspectives on international issues<sup>406</sup>. Iran utilized cultural and media outreach to counter Western media portrayals of sanctions and build international sympathies. It used soft power to create a favorable international environment, but Western skepticism and political tensions limited its effectiveness.

From 2003 to 2013, Iran's diplomatic environment was shaped by Western and international sanctions, primarily due to concerns over nuclear ambitions and terrorism support. Under Hashemi Rafsanjani and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Iran shifted from focusing on national interests and regional alliances to adopting a strategic ambiguity and resistance stance. This era is marked by Iran's efforts to strengthen ties with non-Western powers like Russia and China and its active participation in organizations such as the ECO and SCO, reflecting a strategic shift towards alternative political and economic partnerships. The period also showcased Iran's resilience and strategic positioning, utilizing both hard and soft power to navigate the sanctions landscape. By promoting its cultural heritage and framing itself as a victim of unjust international policies, Iran worked to counteract isolation and build solidarity with the Global South. This approach not only highlights Iran's adept maneuvering on the geopolitical stage but also sets the foundation for a more diversified and robust foreign policy, balancing national sovereignty with active global engagement.

### **2.3. Western Pressure on Russia and the Dynamics of Russia-Iran Relations in the Context of International Sanctions on Iran.**

The stance of the Russian Federation with respect to Iran within the international community has historically fluctuated, contingent upon the evolving bilateral relations and mutual interests of both nations. Prior to the collapse of the USSR, Western sanctions

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<sup>406</sup> Ibid. P. 120.

and pressures significantly influenced the dynamics of the relationship between Iran and the Soviet Union.

Before the Iranian Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran was an ally of the United States under Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. Both countries considered Moscow a common threat. However, following the revolution and the rise of Ayatollah Khomeini, Iran's relationship with the United States deteriorated rapidly<sup>407</sup>. This allowed the Soviet Union to strengthen its ties with Iran, as they shared a common enemy in the United States. Some events, such as occupying the US embassy, taking US diplomats hostage, and cutting ties between Iran and the USA, became reasons for the West, especially the USA, to impose sanctions and pressure on the Iranian government<sup>408</sup>. At the same time, during the 8-year war, Iran-Soviet relations became cold. After the war and increased Western pressure on the Soviet, this country shifted to cooperating with non-Western countries, particularly those with negative West-related relationships. Due to heavy weapons losses and US sanctions, Tehran expanded relations with Moscow to rebuild its economy<sup>409</sup>.

In 1989, Rafsanjani's visit to the Soviet Union marked a new era in Iran-Russia relations, with significant contracts signed with Gorbachev's government. However, due to inadequate Iranian assessment and Western trends introduced by Russian diplomats, relations between Iran and Russia faced challenges<sup>410</sup>. The pragmatic cooperation between Iran and the Soviet Union, despite their ideological differences, demonstrated the complexities of international relations in a time of geopolitical uncertainty. However, both Iran and the Soviet Union have different values that are considered important and respectful. In this regard, it can be seen that the Western sanctions and pressure during this period positively impacted relations between Iran and the Soviet Union. However, other reasons, such as the Iran-Iraq War, differences in ideologies, a lack of appropriate

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<sup>407</sup> Trenin D., Malashenko A. Russian-Iranian relations // Iran a view from Moscow. Washington: Carnegie endowment for international peace, 2010. P. 19-23.

<sup>408</sup> Trenin D., Malashenko A. Iran-the world's top challenge of the next decade // Iran a view from Moscow. Washington: Carnegie endowment for international peace, 2010. P. 1-3.

<sup>409</sup> Trenin D., Malashenko A. What does Iran want? // Iran a view from Moscow. Washington: Carnegie endowment for international peace, 2010. P. 13-16.

<sup>410</sup> Kolayi E. The book of the Soviet Union and the Iranian Islamic Revolution. Tehran: Science publication, 2012. P. 200-206.

assessments, and Western trends in diplomacy, reduced the effectiveness and development of the relations between Iran and the Soviet Union<sup>411</sup>.

During the post-Soviet era, good relations between Iran and Russia were not established due to Western tendencies of Russian foreign policy officials. However, Iran's increased pressure from the US and other powerful countries led to more active cooperation. Russia was willing to cooperate with Iran due to Iran's support for the Russian Federation's territorial integrity during the Chechen conflict, its role in the Tajik civil war, and the expansion of Taliban influence in Afghanistan<sup>412</sup>. Primakov's rise to power and the dominance of the new Eurasianism attitude in Russia's foreign policy were other important reasons that pushed the two countries toward each other<sup>413</sup>.

Due to the necessity of cooperation between the two countries, Russia actively provided Iran with military technologies and agreed to end the Bushehr nuclear power plant project. This is important to mention because Russia accepted all pressure from the USA, Iran and Russia developed their relations during times of high pressure from the West. In this period, despite the sanctions of the United States and the absence of US companies in the Iranian markets, Russia's Gazprom and the French company Total won the energy contracts<sup>414</sup>.

Three important reasons limited the cooperation between Iran and Russia in this period. First, the financial crisis in Russia. Because of this crisis, Russia again negotiated with the USA, and one part of this negotiation was the cooperation between Iran and Russia. The second important reason was the Western, specifically the US, sanctions on Iran, which created problems for Iran to make payments and expand its cooperation and trade with Russia. The last key reason was the change in Iran's foreign policy and Mohammad Khatami's Civilizations Dialogue diplomacy<sup>415</sup>. Iran's diplomacy turned

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<sup>411</sup> Kerami J. Relations between Iran and Russia in the years 1368 to 1388: platforms, factors and limitations // Studies of Central Eurasia. 2011. № 6. P. 112-136. (In Persian)

<sup>412</sup> Kozhanov N. Russia's relations with Iran: Dialogue without commitments // Policy analysis. 2012. P. 1-52.

<sup>413</sup> Kolayi E. Russia, the West and Iran // Studies of Central Asia and the Caucasus. 1999. № 12. P. 121-155. (In Persian)

<sup>414</sup> Kozhanov N. Understanding the revitalization of Russian-Iranian relations // Carnegie Moscow center. 2015. P. 1-21.

<sup>415</sup> Чекушкин А. Н. Россия-Иран: проблемы и перспективы сотрудничества // Инженерные технологии и системы. 2010. № 3. С. 60-66.

West, challenging the relations with Russia as well. But again, this resulted in further deepening the relationship in the 1990s. Iran's economic cooperation and technological access, despite Western objections, went hand in glove with Russia's strategic interests. Its readiness to engage with Iran was also for the West to counter.

As much as the sanctions could be considered beneficial in the cooperation between the two countries, they forced Iran and Russia to work with the West, undermining the effectiveness of their cooperation. More importantly, the sanctions obstructed the exchange of high-tech machinery and equipment between Iran and Russia, thus limiting their full potential of shared knowledge. Further, the pressure mounted on them by Western countries caused a feeling of mistrust and carefulness with one another, which in turn made it harder for strong alliances to be formed between Iran and Russia in these important fields.

Iran and Russia were benefiting from the high price of energy and cooperating in this regard. However, Russia decided to start selling military equipment to Iran. In this regard, the visit of Iranian President Mohammad Khatami to Moscow in 2001 was the beginning of a new round of Tehran-Moscow agreements<sup>416</sup>. The two nations have agreed to resolve disputes over oil and gas sovereignty in the Caspian Sea, enhance military and nuclear collaboration, and escalate arms transactions<sup>417</sup>.

At the same time, the relationship between the United States and Russia had worsened with the cancellation of the anti-ballistic missile agreement by the United States and the expansion of NATO to the Baltic countries<sup>418</sup>. Russia's strategy for the diplomatic actions was to continue its cooperation with countries like China, India, and Iran and on the one hand, create a better image of itself in the West, and continuing cooperation with Western institutions like NATO.<sup>419</sup> In this regard, while there were developments in cooperation with Iran, Russia was trying to deal with Western pressures and more focused

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<sup>416</sup> Kerami J. Iran and Russia: Eastern ally or southern threat? // Foreign relations research quarterly. 2011. Vol. 2, № 3. P. 172-199. (In Persian)

<sup>417</sup> Isachenkov V. Iranian president visits Russia to bolster arms sales. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.seacoastonline.com/story/news/2001/03/12/iranian-president-visits-russia-to/51303675007/> (date of access: 16.07.2023).

<sup>418</sup> Freedman R. O. Russia, Iran and the nuclear question. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. P. 195-221.

<sup>419</sup> Rukavishnikov V. Choices for Russia: Preserving inherited geopolitics through emergent global and European realities. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. P. 54-78.

on its relations with the West. Also, Iran and Russia face challenges and disagreements, including the Caspian Sea and its borders, and a change in Iran's diplomatic vision under Mahmud Ahmadinejad's presidency. Russia struggles with this change, but is complicated by the UN Security Council resolution against Iran's nuclear program and sanctions, which Russia supports as a UNSC member.

However, the official trip of the Russian President Vladimir Putin to Iran and meeting with Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 2007, opened new horizons of bilateral and regional cooperation in Central Asia for both sides in the Caspian and Caucasus regions. During the second term of Putin's presidency, strategic and political factors replaced economic considerations while implementing Russia's foreign policy in the Middle East<sup>420</sup>. Despite improved relations with Iran due to intensifying US pressures, the 2008 transfer of power from Putin to Medvedev led to significant stagnation between Tehran and Moscow. While there was much cooperation in the Iran-Russia relationship at this time, it was also characterized by complexities. Russia, in its own interest, and cognizant of its relations with other regional players and its position in the world, did not jump fully on the Iranian bandwagon on every issue<sup>421</sup>. Furthermore, Russia's involvement in forums like the P5+1 talks (comprising the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, plus Germany) over Iran's nuclear program demonstrated how Russia was ready to pursue a balancing act between Iran and the West<sup>422</sup>.

Russia's approach to Iran-Russia relations was a pragmatic one, maintaining partnerships while maintaining international influence. This balancing act allowed Russia to navigate the region's complexities while pursuing its objectives. Western pressure and sanctions on Iran initially pushed Iran towards cooperation with Russia. However,

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<sup>420</sup> Handa S. Russia in the Middle East - BASIC. Electronic resource. URL: <https://basicint.org/publications/shivani-handa/2012/russia-middle-east> (date of access: 31.07.2023).

<sup>421</sup> Ryabkov S. Further sanctions against Iran pointless // Security index: A Russian journal on international security. 2012. Vol. 18, № 3. P. 11-16.

<sup>422</sup> Orlov V. A., Vinnikov A. The great guessing game: Russia and the Iranian nuclear issue // The Washington quarterly. 2005. Vol. 28, № 2. P. 49-66.

Russia's positive vote on the UN Security Council resolution against Iran changed the role of sanctions, reducing cooperation between the two countries.

Medvedev suggested that Russia's foreign policy has transitioned towards more Western coordination, leading to a “restart” policy with Obama. This has complicated Russia's diplomacy towards Iran, putting more pressure on the country and impacting Iran's nuclear issue<sup>423</sup>. Russia has imposed sanctions on Iran, including embargoes, in response to UNSC Resolution No. 1929. In a decree issued on September 22, 2010, Dmitry Medvedev prohibited the export of tanks, armored vehicles, artillery, warships, and “S-300” anti-aircraft systems to Iran, as well as the transfer of financial services related to Iran's nuclear program<sup>424</sup>.

During Putin's third term, Russia's policy towards Iran remained unchanged compared to previous policies. Putin's return in 2012 did not revive the relationship, but Iran's diplomacy towards sanctions improved relations between Iran and Russia in subsequent years. What is clear is that sanctions negatively impacted the Iran-Russia relationship, altering diplomacy in Russia and imposing embargoes on Iran. This hindered cooperation in energy and military sectors, and decreased trade volume between the two countries. The sanctions also strained economic ties and diplomatic atmosphere, making it difficult to foster trust and understanding between the two nations. For better understanding of the diplomacy of Russia toward Iran, and why the position of Russia changed in this duration, studying the Western pressures against Russia could be helpful. In this regard, for providing more clear analyze, the author examines the pressure of the West especially USA toward Russia in two main periods: Presidency of Vladimir Putin after 2002 till 2008, and Presidency of Dmitry Medvedev from 2008 till May 2012.

### **Presidency of Vladimir Putin (2000-2008)**

During Vladimir Putin's presidency from 2000 to 2008, several perceived Western pressures impacted various aspects of Russia's domestic and foreign policies. These pressures can be categorized as political and economic, each influencing Russia's global

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<sup>423</sup> Katz M. N. Elusive as ever: The state of Iranian-Russian cooperation // Wilson center. 2015. № 73. P. 1-5.

<sup>424</sup> Kozhanov N. Understanding the revitalization of Russian-Iranian relations // Carnegie Moscow center. 2015. P. 1-21.



stance. Surly, the government of Russia deals with these pressures by changing its diplomacy and strategy to mitigate the effects of these pressures.

- **Political Pressures**

The expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe and the Baltic states was viewed as significant political pressure that directly impacted Russia's security and geopolitical standing. This expansion continued the West's encroachment into what Russia historically considered its traditional sphere of influence. The expansion of NATO was perceived as a direct security threat to Russia. The alliance's presence in Eastern Europe was interpreted as moving NATO's military infrastructure closer to Russian borders, potentially compromising Russia's security and strategic interests<sup>425</sup>.

Additionally, another political pressure imposed by the West was the color revolution. The term “Color Revolution” referred to a series of uprisings and political movements in post-Soviet states that were often perceived as being influenced or supported by Western powers. These movements, characterized by their colorful names like the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, the Rose Revolution in Georgia, and the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan, raised concerns within Russia about Western interference in the domestic affairs of its neighboring countries<sup>426</sup>. Russian leaders viewed the Color Revolutions as a threat to regional stability, causing political upheaval and spreading instability across borders. The sudden leadership change raised concerns about maintaining stable governance, and Russian authorities suspected Western governments, particularly the US and some European nations, were funding these movements<sup>427</sup>. Russia viewed Western advisors, NGOs, and funding in countries like the Color Revolutions as evidence of foreign involvement, viewing it as an attempt to advance geopolitical goals and expand regional influence. They characterized these movements as “color-coded” regime change tactics, potentially weakening Russia's political and economic influence.

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<sup>425</sup> Trenin D. Russia redefines itself and its relations with the West // *The Washington quarterly*. 2007. Vol. 30, № 2. P. 95-105.

<sup>426</sup> Вердиханова З. В. «Цветная революция» как политический феномен современности // *Вестник университета*. 2014. № 5. С. 202.

<sup>427</sup> Vaezi M. Display of power: Analysis of Russia’s behavior towards the actions of the United States of America: reasons and hypotheses. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.isrjournals.com/en/monograph/647-archive-special-articles-farsi-67.html> (date of access: 29.07.2023). (In Persian)

Russian leaders also expressed concerns about erasing national identity and cultural values, fearing Western-backed movements might dilute traditional values and adopt unaligned political and economic systems<sup>428</sup>.

Putin's administration aimed to consolidate political power, centralize authority, and streamline decision-making processes to prevent opposition and internal dissent, ensuring stability and preventing political turmoil from neighboring states<sup>429</sup>. The Russian government prioritized political stability, leadership continuity, and preventing regime changes, limiting foreign-funded NGOs' influence and preventing Western-promoting organizations from undermining its cultural and political identity<sup>430</sup>. Putin adopted a more assertive foreign policy stance to protect Russia's interests and challenge Western dominance in international affairs. This included efforts to establish strong alliances with other emerging powers, such as the formation of the BRICS group (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and advocating for a multipolar world order that recognized Russia as a significant global player<sup>431</sup>. Putin's administration aimed to strengthen ties with neighboring countries through initiatives like the Eurasian Economic Community, countering Western influence, and maintaining diplomatic channels while respecting Russia's sovereignty and core interests.

By analyzing the Putin administration's diplomacy toward political pressures, it becomes evident that Putin sought to assert Russia's influence on the global stage while also safeguarding its domestic stability. This was achieved through partnerships with countries like China and India and actively participating in international organizations such as the United Nations and G20. Additionally, Putin emphasized the importance of maintaining strong ties with neighboring countries to enhance regional security and economic cooperation.

- **Economic Pressures**

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<sup>428</sup> Алиевич А. К. Цветная революция как угроза политической системе государства: проблемы определения // Вопросы управления. 2019. Т. 38, № 2. С. 6-15.

<sup>429</sup> Koolae E., Noori A. Putin's pragmatism and change in the approaches of Russian foreign policy // Tehran university politics quarterly. 2019. Vol. 40, № 2. P. 212-216. (In Persian)

<sup>430</sup> Ibid. P. 2016-219.

<sup>431</sup> Macfarlane S. N. The 'R' in BRICs: is Russia an emerging power? // International affairs. 2006. Vol. 82, № 1. P. 41-57.

The economic pressures related to the energy market were viewed as attempts by Western powers to exert influence over Russia's vast energy resources, undermine its economic sovereignty, and control its energy exports. Russia's status shaped this perspective as one of the world's largest energy producers and exporters, particularly in oil and natural gas. Western interests in gaining control over key energy infrastructure, such as pipelines and transit routes, were perceived by Russia as efforts to manipulate the flow of its energy resources to Europe and other markets. Projects like the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline bypassing Russia and the proposed Nabucco pipeline to transport gas from Central Asia were seen as strategies to reduce Russia's monopoly over transit routes<sup>432</sup>. Russia responded to perceived threats to its energy dominance by strengthening alliances with energy-producing nations and establishing alternative routes for resources. Partnering with China and India, Russia diversified export markets and reduced European dependence. Investments in infrastructure projects like the Nord Stream pipeline allowed control over energy resource flow<sup>433</sup>.

The push for market liberalization and fair pricing in global energy markets was often seen as a Western attempt to undermine Russia's influence in setting energy prices, with Gazprom at the center of these discussions<sup>434</sup>. Russia's historical dependence on energy and its belief in national security led to the establishment of direct pipelines and energy agreements with consumer countries, allowing it to bypass transit countries and maintain control over energy resources. Long-term contracts ensured stability in energy trade and pricing. The presence and influence of Western energy companies in Russia were viewed with suspicion, especially in the context of the Yukos affair. Some perceived the arrest and prosecution of Yukos's CEO, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, as a result of Western interference in Russia's internal affairs, particularly due to Khodorkovsky's alleged ties to

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<sup>432</sup> Nikerov R., Magomedov A. Caspian energy resources and the “pipeline war” in Europe in the 21st century: energy geopolitics in northern Eurasia // *Central Asia and the Caucasus*. 2010. № 3. P. 7-18.

<sup>433</sup> Haukkala H. Russian reactions to the European neighbourhood policy // *Problems of Post-Communism*. 2008. P. 40-48.

<sup>434</sup> Margelov. victory on points: Pragmatism in foreign policy. Electronic resource. URL: <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/victory-on-points-pragmatism-in-foreign-policy/> (date of access: 29.07.2023).

Western interests. This suspicion led to tightening regulations and restrictions on foreign investment in Russia's energy sector<sup>435</sup>.

Russia responded to these initiatives by diversifying its energy export routes and seeking new markets in Asia, particularly China. This allowed Russia to mitigate the potential impact of reduced European dependence on its energy resources and strengthened its position as a global energy player<sup>436</sup>. Additionally, Russia focused on developing its domestic energy sector, investing in advanced technologies and infrastructure to ensure long-term self-sufficiency in meeting its energy needs.

The West's economic pressure on Russia is primarily due to the delay in its WTO membership, which Russia perceives as a means to extract concessions and push for changes in its economic policies. Western demands for reduced agricultural subsidies and import barriers are seen as a threat to domestic producers, food security, and rural economy, and as a means to press Russia to open up their economies without reciprocation<sup>437</sup>. Western countries are pressuring Russia to improve its enforcement of intellectual property rights and patents, which Russia sees as a threat to its industries and employment. The demand to reduce import tariffs is seen as a threat to domestic industries and economic development. These pressures often clash with Russia's domestic priorities and aspirations to protect its resources and sovereignty. Delaying Russia's WTO membership could help maintain Western influence and align domestic economic policies with international standards, potentially leading to further concessions from the Russian government<sup>438</sup>.

As it mentioned, there were no sanctions against Russia in this period of the time. However, the Western pressures experienced by Russia during Vladimir Putin's presidency from 2000 to 2008 profoundly impacted shaping Russia's domestic policies

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<sup>435</sup> Рачков И. В. Бывшие акционеры “ЮКОСа” против России // Международное правосудие. 2014. Т. 11, № 3. С. 18-34.

<sup>436</sup> Гарнопольский С. А. Диверсификация энергетики - основа устойчивого развития России // Научно-аналитический журнал Обозреватель-Observer. 2012. № 2. С. 33-39.

<sup>437</sup> Булатов А. Повышение устойчивости агропродовольственного комплекса в условиях членства в ВТО // Международный сельскохозяйственный журнал. 2014. № 3. С. 46-48.

<sup>438</sup> Гусейнов З. А. Внешнеторговая политика России и Всемирная торговая организация // Вопросы структуризации экономики. 1999. № 4. С. 30-32.

and foreign relations. These pressures were seen as attempts to limit Russia's sovereignty and influence, leading to a more assertive and self-reliant stance. The response was characterized by a consolidation of domestic control, strengthening alliances, using energy as a strategic tool, and a commitment to preserving national identity and sovereignty in the face of perceived Western encroachments<sup>439</sup>. Russia maintained cooperation with the West on counterterrorism and arms control, demonstrating its willingness to engage in certain areas while maintaining assertiveness in others. It also sought to diversify its diplomatic relationships by forming closer ties with non-Western powers like China and India.

### **Presidency of Dmitry Medvedev (2008-2012)**

During Dmitry Medvedev's presidency in Russia, which lasted from 2008 to May 2012, various perceived Western pressures on Russia can be categorized into political, economic, and strategic dimensions. These pressures were often viewed from a Russian perspective as attempts to influence Russia's domestic and foreign policies. There were notable Western pressures on Russia concerning democratization, human rights, and the rule of law. These pressures were often framed as concerns about democracy and civil liberties in Russia.<sup>440</sup> Critics of Russia's democracy often undermined its sovereignty, citing limitations on political freedoms, media censorship, and irregular elections. Russia viewed these concerns as part of Western interference, arguing that its political system should evolve organically, considering its unique history and cultural context, rather than conforming to Western democratic models<sup>441</sup>.

Russia further emphasized that it had made significant progress in strengthening its democratic institutions since the collapse of the Soviet Union. It highlighted establishing a multi-party system, independent media outlets, and regular elections as evidence of its commitment to democracy.<sup>442</sup> But Western countries remained

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<sup>439</sup> Schmidt M. Is Putin pursuing a policy of Eurasianism? // *Demokratizatsiya: The journal of Post-Soviet democratization*. 2005. Vol. 13, № 1. С. 87-100.

<sup>440</sup> Энтин М. Новая архитектура безопасности: от утопии к реальности // *Современная Европа*. 2009. Т. 40, № 4. С. 131-133.

<sup>441</sup> *Ibid.* С. 133-135.

<sup>442</sup> Сушенцов А. А. Международные последствия распада СССР: концептуальный угол зрения // *Сравнительная политика*. 2012. Т. 10, № 4. С. 14.

unconvinced and urged more openness and accountability in Russia's political life. Western governments, as well as human rights organizations, have criticized Russia's policies toward press freedom and the treatment of activists in civil society. Very often, the arguments and assessments from the Russian perspective are oversimplified the complexity of the domestic situation and the balance that Russia is trying to strike between openness and security. The point of reference to these issues from the Western side is interpreted by them as a way to damage Russia's standing in the eyes of the global community. Russia has argued that press freedom and civil society activism need to be curtailed to fight terrorism and maintain stability within Russia's borders<sup>443</sup>. In addition, the Russian government has stressed its concern for the national sovereignty and security necessary to protect citizens from the danger of outside interference that would, at least in the Russian view, call into question the measures taken by the state for the sake of transparency and accountability.

It is clear through an analysis of Russia's reaction to the Western pressures that a clear point can be discerned: the governmental concept created in the West, through the ideals of democracy and human rights, is not universally applicable or otherwise well suited for every nation; rather, it is the prerogative of each respective nation to develop its own unique system of politics and government based on its historical, cultural, and social context.

The 2008 conflict with Georgia and the Ukrainian crisis brought specific sanctions aimed at Russia. Russian activities in those countries violated international law in the eyes of Western powers. Russia interpreted this otherwise as an effort to protect its interests and respond to the long Western intervention in its traditional area of influence<sup>444</sup>. The Russian perception of the sanctions was further bolstered by its historical sense of being hemmed in by hostile powers and its aspiration to keep neighboring lands under its control. Russia further claimed that pro-Western governments in Georgia and Ukraine, the restoration of which were sponsored by the West, posed a

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<sup>443</sup> Ibid. С. 98-101.

<sup>444</sup> Тангёр Б., Демираг Й. Грузинский кризис 2008 года и пределы возможностей управления Европейской безопасностью // Центральная Азия и Кавказ. 2011. № 2. С. 39-61.

threat to its national security and hence evoked legitimate reaction<sup>445</sup>. The US has restructured its missile defense plans in Europe in the face of changing leaderships and security dynamics, including the Iran nuclear deal, to promote dialogue and cooperation with Russia. This diplomatic step, combined with the missile defense reshuffle, opened the way to rapprochement between the two countries<sup>446</sup>.

As this sub-chapter will demonstrate, the trajectory of Iran-Russia relations from the Cold War to the post-Soviet period reflects changes in interests, shifts in ideology, and twists in the perception of strategic goals that have traditionally been some of the defining influences in their interactions. The story presents episodes of cooperation and frictions, indicating the impact of Western pressures, in particular from the United States, which led both states toward a pragmatic partnership. The primary driving force behind this relationship, from its inception to the present, has been mutual geopolitical needs, particularly in the areas of military technology and nuclear energy.

With all the strategic advantages, the partnership between Iran and Russia is facing economic competition and diplomatic disagreements, the intensity of which varies across different Russian administrations. The historical and geopolitical analysis presented below suggests a possible shift of global alliances, holding countries such as Iran and Russia in leading roles in the formation of new multilateral platforms prioritizing mutual economic and security interests. Such a move toward a multipolar world order is bound to challenge the dominance of the West and very clearly exemplifies how historical and strategic contexts are needed to be able to predict future geopolitical trends. The dynamic interaction between Iran and Russia, conditioned by external and internal factors, shapes a brilliant case of the complex and never-static landscape of global politics.

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<sup>445</sup> Ibid.

<sup>446</sup> Приходько О. В. Россия - запад: «Перезагрузка» и несбывшиеся ожидания // Научно-аналитический журнал Обозреватель - Observer. 2012. № 5. С. 56-71.

## **Chapter III: Russia & Iran: The Change of The strategies of diplomatic action toward Sanction Policy in 2014-2023.**

### **3.1. Shift in Iran’s foreign policy in face of international and unilateral sanctions.**

During Mahmud Ahmadinejad's presidency, Iran faced international pressure due to stalled negotiations with the West on its nuclear program. Economic sanctions were imposed, and the Ahmadinejad administration remained stubborn on nuclear energy development. The sanctions led to a period of new diplomatic hardship for the state, which lost its influence and links. Hassan Rouhani, the new president after Ahmadinejad, thoughtfully mulled over a new diplomatic approach to cope with Western embargoes.

#### **The Presidency of Hassan Rouhani (2013 - 2021)**

In 2013, Hassan Rouhani became the President of Iran, implementing an economic strategy called the “economy of resistance” to stimulate domestic growth and boost national production. This strategy emphasized knowledge-intensive industries and export-oriented deep processing of hydrocarbons and natural resources<sup>447</sup>. In 2013, Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei outlined persistent challenges such as oil dependency, non-strategic imports, inflation, unemployment, and systemic inefficiencies. He advocated for economic and managerial jihad, involving persistent efforts at individual and collective levels, to address these issues<sup>448</sup>.

Rouhani's presidency marked a significant shift in Iran's international relations, focusing on constructive engagement and dialogue. His commitment to negotiation led to the historic nuclear deal, easing tension and allowing Iran to rejoin the global community. Rouhani's administration navigated geopolitical and economic challenges, promoting Iran's national interests through diplomatic engagement and JCPOA negotiations<sup>449</sup>. However, further restrictions and embargoes toward Iran were not prevented by this shift

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<sup>447</sup> Юртаев В. И. Иран в ситуации трансформации санкционного режима // Контуры глобальных трансформаций: политика, экономика, право. 2017. Т. 10, № 2. С. 71.

<sup>448</sup> Ibid. P. 72.

<sup>449</sup> Shanahan R. Iranian foreign policy under Rouhani // Lowy institute for international policy. 2015. P. 1-15.



of diplomacy between Iran and more engagement with the West and the international community. For a clear understanding of the diplomacy of Iran during Rouhani's presidency and to improve the quality of our analysis, we divide this period into three parts: 1) International actions before JCPOA, 2) The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action Period, 3) Challenges of post-JCPOA.

### **1) Global actions before Iran's Nuclear Deal**

In 2013, the E3 countries, France, Germany, and the UK, agreed with Iran, leading to the suspension of EU embargoes towards Iran in 2014. The EU suspended specific sanctions for six months, which were extended until the final agreement of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2015. The agreement allowed the EU to suspend sanctions on Iran's crude oil, petrochemical products, gold and metal trade, and financial transactions<sup>450</sup>. The E3 and EU, as the first international actors to agree with Iran, suspended sanctions and prepared a final agreement, benefiting both parties by reviving ties in economics, energy, regional matters, and nuclear dossier<sup>451</sup>. JCPOA, an international law agreement, benefits the EU by providing economic opportunities and access to the Iranian market and lifting sanctions has opened new trade and investment avenues. Then-U.S. President Barack Obama issued Executive Order 13645 on June 3, 2013. This order imposed additional sanctions on Iran, particularly targeting its automotive sector, currency, and ability to access certain precious metals.<sup>452</sup>

Iranian officials have criticized unilateral actions aimed at Iran, arguing they violate international norms, target Iran's economy, and undermine diplomatic efforts, hindering peaceful conflict resolution<sup>453</sup>. Iran's political parties criticized the USA's

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<sup>450</sup> Iran: EU suspends certain sanctions as Joint Plan of Action enters into force. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/21850/140660.pdf> (date of access: 15.08.2023).

<sup>451</sup> Osiewicz P. EU-Iran relations in the Post-JCPOA period: Selected political aspects // Przegląd politologiczny. 2018. № 2. P. 153-164.

<sup>452</sup> Executive Order-revocation of executive orders 13574, 13590, 13622, and 13645 with respect to Iran, amendment of executive order 13628 with respect to Iran, and provision of implementation authorities for aspects of certain statutory sanctions. Electronic resource. URL: [https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/01/16/executive-order-revocation-of-executive-orders-with-respect-to-Iran#:~:text=\(d\)%20Executive%20Order%2013645%20of,Sanctions%20With%20Respect%20To%20Iran.](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/01/16/executive-order-revocation-of-executive-orders-with-respect-to-Iran#:~:text=(d)%20Executive%20Order%2013645%20of,Sanctions%20With%20Respect%20To%20Iran.) (date of access: 15.08.2023).

<sup>453</sup> The depth of all sanctions. Electronic resource. URL: [www.shana.ir/news/228765/](http://www.shana.ir/news/228765/) (date of access: 15.08.2023).

actions during negotiations, but the Iranian government and international actors successfully reached the final version of JCPOA in 2015<sup>454</sup>. Iran's JCPOA negotiation marked a turning point, as it agreed to limit its nuclear program in exchange for relief and improved diplomatic relations.

## 2) The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action Period

By submission of JCPOA and UNSC resolution 2231, Iran's nuclear deal became operational. Resolution 2231 was crucial in providing the international legal framework for the JCPOA's implementation and facilitating sanctions relief for Iran<sup>455</sup>. Resolution 2231 addressed Iran's nuclear program concerns through negotiated agreements, multilateral cooperation, compliance with JCPOA obligations, transparency, and accountability, maintaining arms embargo for five years and ballistic missile restrictions for eight years<sup>456</sup>. These measures were designed<sup>456</sup> to address concerns about Iran's regional influence and its missile capabilities.

A close look at this resolution reveals that the international community was concerned with preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and controlling its influence in the region. The resolution intended to maintain the balance of letting Iran pursue peaceful nuclear energy while imposing strict supervision and curbs on the nuclear program. On the other hand, it should be mentioned that the community was satisfied with this agreement. The JCPOA aimed to end nuclear proliferation, promote regional stability, and facilitate diplomatic solutions through international cooperation, lifting sanctions on Iran, facilitating foreign investments, and implementing strict monitoring measures<sup>457</sup>. The JCPOA is, therefore, a great diplomatic achievement and an example of

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<sup>454</sup> Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/122460/full-text-of-the-iran-nuclear-deal.pdf> (date of access: 15.08.2023).

<sup>455</sup> Resolution 2231 (2015) on Iran nuclear issue. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/2231/background> (date of access: 15.08.2023).

<sup>456</sup> Resolution 2231 (2015). Electronic resource. URL: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N15/225/27/PDF/N1522527.pdf?OpenElement> (date of access: 15.08.2023).

<sup>457</sup> Роман В. Влияние сделки по ядерной программе Ирана на расстановку сил в регионе Ближнего Востока: новый вызов внешней политике США // Управленческое консультирование. 2016. Т. 88, № 4. С. 274-280.

how multilateral negotiations can solve complex problems and help build confidence between parties, stabilizing the region<sup>458</sup>.

Besides the international community's will and the benefits that JCPOA can offer, there is another important reason why the Iranian government signed this agreement. As it analyzed, "Psychological constructivism highlights the role of the non-material approach of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the negotiation process with the West. The West believes that Iran's values should not be considered when interests are at the top, leading to Iran's resistance to Western expectations and material-based Western perspectives. This non-acceptance of Iran's values, such as honor, national pride, and martyrdom, has exacerbated the conflict. When negotiations between Iran and the West were not considering values, Iran stood up to sanctions and threats, and the international community faced Iran's intensified responses. The JCPOA was signed by Iran only when security, respect, honor, and dignity were considered<sup>459</sup>".

Due to the JCPOA, except for the UNSC that suspended sanctions regarding Iran's nuclear program, the EU and USA lifted embargoes gradually, according to the agreement. With regular positive reports of IAEA 2016, the Council of Europe dropped all economic and financial sanctions regarding Iran's nuclear program<sup>460</sup>. The US fulfilled its sanctions relief obligations by terminating nuclear-related sanctions and lifting sanctions from certain individuals and sectors like automotive and aviation<sup>461</sup>. However, there were sanctions not related to Iran's nuclear program, like secondary sanctions, and arms embargoes that US did not lift. Iran's diplomacy under the JCPOA aimed to operationalize the agreement, ease sanctions, and reintegrate into the global

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<sup>458</sup> Entessar N., Afrasiabi K. The Iran nuclear accord and the future of non-proliferation // The Brown journal of world affairs. 2016. Vol. 22, № 2. P. 177-195.

<sup>459</sup> Belov V. I, Ranjbar D. Analysis of Iran's behavior under sanction pressure // The herald of the diplomatic academy of the MFA of Russia. Russia and the world. 2023. Vol. 36, № 2. P. 111-122.

<sup>460</sup> Iran: Council lifts all nuclear-related economic and financial EU sanctions. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/01/16/iran-council-lifts-all-nuclear-related-eu-sanctions/> (date of access: 16.08.2023).

<sup>461</sup> A look at Obama's executive order regarding the JCPOA. Electronic resource. URL: <https://basijnews.ir/00aB4B> (date of access: 15.08.2023). (In Persian)

community<sup>462</sup>, influenced by leadership changes, regional conflicts, and U.S. policy shifts<sup>463</sup>.

In contrast, the removal of sanctions did not boost foreign investment in Iran's aviation industry, and the JCPOA did not address Iran's economic issues, reducing its influence<sup>464</sup>. By withdrawing from the agreement in 2018, the USA further undercut the profitability of the JCPOA because it lost a party that was crucial to the deal's success<sup>465</sup>. Such withdrawal created a sense of uncertainty and, with it, prevented other countries from getting fully involved with Iran, therefore restraining the very growth and development the said accord was hoping to achieve.

By Executive Order 13846 on August 6, 2018, the US withdrew from the agreement and reimposed sanctions lifted as part of the 2015 nuclear deal<sup>466</sup>. The US withdrew from the JCPOA due to various reasons. One reason was the belief that the agreement did not effectively address Iran's aggressive behavior and malign activities, which destabilized the Middle East<sup>467</sup>. Another reason was the security dilemma the US and its allies faced, leading to the perception that the agreement was unreliable<sup>468</sup>. The US viewed its withdrawal from the JCPOA as justified under international law, while other participating countries deemed it against international law<sup>469</sup>. The USA's sanctions and actions eroded trust between Iran and the West, demonstrating power beyond

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<sup>462</sup> Dadpay A., Tabrizy S. S. Political agreements and exporting activities: An empirical assessment of the effects of the JCPOA agreement on Iran's exports // *Comparative economic studies*. 2020. Vol. 63, № 1. P. 147-180.

<sup>463</sup> Dadpay A. Iran aviation industry and nuclear deal: The poster child of sanctions and JCPOA // *SSRN Electronic Journal*. 2019. P. 1-8.

<sup>464</sup> Moradianfar H., Hooshmand M. M., Fateh O. Studying the impact of joint plan of action (November 2013) on Iran economic sanctions // *Resistive economics*. 2019. Vol. 7, № 2. P. 16-35.

<sup>465</sup> Landler M. Trump abandons Iran nuclear deal he long scorned. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/08/world/middleeast/trump-iran-nuclear-deal.html> (date of access: 17.08.2023).

<sup>466</sup> Executive Order 13846-reimposing certain sanctions with respect to Iran. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/DCPD-201800524/pdf/DCPD-201800524.pdf> (date of access: 17.08.2023).

<sup>467</sup> Imanuarif Shafar W., Mutmainah D. Resistensi hubungan luar negeri Amerika serikat dan Iran: Studi kasus Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) // *Transformasi global*. 2020. Vol. 7, № 1. P. 144-175.

<sup>468</sup> Paramasatya S., Wiranto S. Konfrontasi Amerika serikat dan Iran dalam Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) // *Jurnal hubungan internasional*. 2019. Vol. 12, № 2. P. 297-314.

<sup>469</sup> Valerio Jovan C. The United States unilateral withdrawal from the restrictions of Iran's nuclear program in JCPOA 2015 under international law // *Padjadjaran journal of international law*. 2021. Vol. 4, № 2. P. 247-264.

international law, enabling Iranian opposition to pressure the Rouhani administration since 2003.

The re-imposition of US sanctions on Iran's economy has had a detrimental effect, leading to a decline in foreign investment and a sharp decrease in oil exports<sup>470</sup>. This has resulted in a severe economic downturn, with high inflation, rising unemployment, and a devaluation of the Iranian currency<sup>471</sup>. The withdrawal has also caused uncertainty and instability in the region, leading to a reformation of regional alignments and a change in the stance of Persian Gulf countries and other regional states<sup>472</sup>. Besides negative consequences for Iran's economy, the US withdrawal from the agreement increased the Islamic Republic's power inside the country and highlighted to other countries that the result of trusting the West is negative. Such an image changed the relations between the US, Europe, and other countries, so maybe the JCPOA could be an example to start negotiating with countries in the international community, like North Korea and Venezuela.

### **3) Post - JCPOA**

This work identifies the fact that after the US pulling out of the agreement, the JCPOA faced various challenges from its implementation. Some of the remarkable events and concerns were regarding the JCPOA status in international law and whether it can be defined as an international treaty or not<sup>473</sup>. Other nations view the US withdrawal from the JCPOA as illegal and unconfirmed due to its lack of commitment. The agreement still lacks the necessary ratifications for it to be effective, with US among the countries still awaiting completion<sup>474</sup>. Thus, the executive branch is in the process of popularizing the treaty with the American public as well as lobbying the Senate for their ratification<sup>475</sup>.

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<sup>470</sup> Ghasemi Z., Dolatabadi H. An analysis of French and Iranian political cartoons on Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA // Iranian review of foreign affairs. 2020. Vol. 11, № 1. P. 33-58.

<sup>471</sup> Lewis-Beck M. S., Tien C. The political economy model: 2016 US election forecasts // PS: Political science & politics. 2016. Vol. 49, № 04. P. 661-663.

<sup>472</sup> Paramasatya S., Wiranto S. Konfrontasi Amerika serikat dan Iran dalam Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) // Jurnal Hubungan internasional. 2019. Vol. 12, № 2. P. 297-314.

<sup>473</sup> Karmon E. Iran challenges the United States in its backyard, in Latin America // American Foreign policy interests. 2010. Vol. 32, № 5. P. 276-296.

<sup>474</sup> Valerio Jovan C. The United States unilateral withdrawal from the restrictions of Iran's nuclear program in JCPOA 2015 under international law // Padjadjaran journal of international law. 2021. Vol. 4, № 2. P. 247-264.

<sup>475</sup> Rushefsky M. E. Public policy in the United States. London: Routledge, 2017. P. 320.

The EU and UN avoided imposing new sanctions on Iran, instead prioritizing nuclear weapons prevention through JCPOA, while US sanctions made commitments difficult, leading to Iran's frustration. The US President signed Executive Orders to follow the “Maximum Pressure” policy, which includes embargoes, global diplomatic efforts, and diplomatic isolation. Below in the Table 3, the post JCPOA Executive Orders are shown.

<b>Executive Order Number</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
13871	2019	It blocked transactions with Iran’s iron, steel, aluminum, and copper sectors.
13876	2019	It imposed sanctions on Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and his office. It also allowed the Treasury Department to sanction officials appointed by Khamenei and those providing material support to his office.
13902	2020	It blocked transactions with and barred entry to the U.S. financial system for any individual or entity operating in the Iranian economy's construction, manufacturing, textiles, or mining sectors.
13949	2020	It authorized secondary sanctions on individuals supporting Iran’s nuclear, missile, and conventional arms-related activities.

Table 3: Executive Orders Post-JCPOA Period<sup>476</sup>.

Surely, the maximum pressure policy affected Iran’s economy. However, it has not been successful in achieving its goals. Despite the efforts of the Trump administration to contain Iran and coerce it into changing its behavior, the enmity between Washington and Tehran has only intensified<sup>477</sup>. The maintained sanctions policies are unlikely to win any significant concessions from Iran and the future of the JCPOA and its economic sanctions remain uncertain<sup>478</sup>. Iran views US sanctions as threatening its sovereignty and self-determination. The US withdrawal from JCPOA exacerbated tensions, prompting Iran to

<sup>476</sup> Timeline of U.S. sanctions. Electronic resource. URL: <https://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/timeline-us-sanctions> (date of access: 18.08.2023).

<sup>477</sup> Aghaie Joobani H., Daheshvar M. Deciphering Trump’s “Maximum pressure” policy: The enduring challenge of containing Iran // *New Middle Eastern studies*. 2020. Vol. 10, № 1. P. 21-44.

<sup>478</sup> Kortunov P., Timofeev I. Controversial efficiency? the experience of the U.S. sanctions against Iran // *The geopolitics of Iran*. 2021. P. 215-244.

seek allies. Despite sanctions, Iran seeks a new era of peace through the Hormuz Peace Endeavour, aligning with religious and pragmatic interests<sup>479</sup>.

However, it must be reminded that the Maximum Pressure Policy remained quite controversial and was denounced by the critics as worsening tensions, humanitarian strains, and limiting diplomatic freedoms<sup>480</sup>. The assassination of Qasem Soleimani, a major general in Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, in January 2020 by the United States<sup>481</sup> intensified the deteriorated relationship between Iran and the United States. The difficulties that the JCPOA faces are due to the existing contradiction between the United States and Iran failed to pose for their subsequent reaction.

Hassan Rouhani, known for his moderate, pragmatic, and self-interested foreign policy, has been working on resolving Iran's nuclear issue with major powers through project-based diplomacy to bring the deal to fruition<sup>482</sup>. Rouhani, despite expectations of significant foreign policy changes, has maintained the fundamental geopolitical principles of the Islamic Republic since the 1979 revolution, prioritizing Iranian national interests and state security<sup>483</sup>. His administration has shifted away from anti-imperialist rhetoric and adopted a more pragmatic and less belligerent approach, focusing on broadening trade relations with governments that uphold different ideologies<sup>484</sup>. Rouhani's presidency showcased Iranian foreign policy's complexity, balancing diplomatic pragmatism with domestic politics. He successfully negotiated the JCPOA, demonstrating moderate intent and engagement while maintaining strategic gains.

### **The Presidency of Ebrahim Raisi (2021 - 2023)**

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<sup>479</sup> Ранджбар Д., Чикризова О.С. «Позитивный мир» в исламском восприятии международных отношений: пример внешней политики Ирана // Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Серия: Международные отношения. 2023. Т. 23, №2. С. 290-291.

<sup>480</sup> Omidi A. Trump's maximum pressure policy and diplomacy // Iranian review of foreign affairs. 2020. Vol. 11, № 31. P. 05-32.

<sup>481</sup> Crowley M., Hassan F., Schmitt E. U.S. strike in Iraq kills Qasim Suleimani, Commander of Iranian Forces. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/02/world/middleeast/qassem-soleimani-iraq-iran-attack.html> (date of access: 17.08.2023).

<sup>482</sup> Ahouie M. Exploring President Rouhani's foreign policy doctrine 2013–2017 // Contemporary gulf studies. 2020. P. 15-41.

<sup>483</sup> E. Yazdani. Iranian foreign policy during Rouhani Presidency: Perspective on change and continuity // International relations and diplomacy. 2019. Vol. 7, № 10. P. 472-484.

<sup>484</sup> Moya Mena S. I. Regaining space: Iranian foreign policy toward Latin America during the first presidential term of Hassan Rouhani (2013–2017) // Contemporary gulf studies. 2020. P. 157-176.

The Raisi's government faces challenges in the economic situation and geopolitical context, following Rouhani's resignation. Iran was under pressures and embargo from western countries. On the other side Iran along with China and Russia supporting 'neighborly and East' diplomacy. Despite some international events being beneficial for Iran's progress, others were centred, and the Iranian government's strategy was effective up to a certain extent<sup>485</sup>. Raisi's administration faces a significant challenge due to the swift increase in US sanctions against Iran, imposed by the Treasury Department for various reasons. The Table 4 below shows the latest sanctions from the USA imposed on Iran from January 2021 until June 2023.

Date	Sanction Explanation
January 5, 2021	The Treasury Department sanctioned 12 Iranian and four foreign-based companies and one Iranian man involved with steel production and sales.
January 13, 2021	The United States sanctioned two major foundations, heads, and subsidiaries controlled by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.
January 15, 2021	During President Donald Trump's last full week, the United States expanded sanctions on Iran's defense and shipping industries. The sanctions targeted three branches of Iran's defense ministry: the Marine Industries Organization (MIO), the Aerospace Industries Organization (AIO), and the Iran Aviation Industries Organization (IAIO).
March 9, 2021	The United States designated two IRGC interrogators in the first new sanctions imposed by the Biden administration on Iran.
September 3, 2021	The Treasury Department sanctioned four Iranian intelligence operatives who plotted to abduct an Iranian-American activist.
November 18, 2021	The United States sanctioned six Iranian men and one entity for attempting to interfere with the 2020 U.S. presidential election.
December 7, 2021	The Treasury Department sanctioned eight Iranian officials and the Law Enforcement Forces Special Units, Counter-Terror Special Forces, Isfahan Central Prison, and Zahedan Prison for human rights abuses.
September 9, 2022	The United States sanctioned Iran's intelligence ministry and minister for cyberattacks against the United States and its allies.
January 23, 2023	The United States sanctioned five senior Iranian officials and Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) commanders.

<sup>485</sup> Iran's foreign policy under Ebrahim Raisi: General directions and new faces. Electronic resource. URL: <https://epc.ae/en/details/featured/irans-foreign-policy-under-ebrahim-raisi-general-directions-and-new-faces> (date of access: 19.08.2023).



February 9, 2023	The United States sanctioned nine companies based in Iran, Singapore, and Malaysia that produced, sold, and shipped Iranian petroleum and petrochemicals.
March 8, 2023	The United States, Britain, the European Union, and Australia imposed sanctions on more than a dozen Iranian government and security officials, business leaders, companies, and government institutions for human rights issues.
March 9, 2023	The United States sanctioned 39 companies for providing Iranian oil firms access to the international financial system.
June 6, 2023	The United States sanctioned six companies and seven people in Iran, China, and Hong Kong that procured technology and parts for the Islamic Republic's ballistic missile and military programs.

Table 4: The USA Sanctions From 2021-2023<sup>486</sup>.

The timeline of sanctions against Iran shows that the international community has been quite proactive in addressing perceived concerns from Iran, whether they are humanitarian, political, or any of the following: interference in elections, cyberwarfare, or the production of Ballistic missile technology. The US and other nations are implementing sanctions to control Iran's actions across defense, shipping, intelligence, and governmental structures, escalating pre-existing political tensions between Iran and global powers<sup>487</sup>. US withdrawal from Iran's deal and new sanctions intensify tensions, causing inflation and drop in living standards, prompting Iran to focus on its neighbors and the East diplomacy<sup>488</sup>. The 2022 Russian special military operation in Ukraine prompted Iran to strengthen cooperation with the East. The West imposed sanctions on Russia, Iran, and China, positively impacting relations and collaboration between these nations, and East countries including India<sup>489</sup>.

In the context of the article titled “Discourse Analysis of the Foreign Policy of the 13th Government,” which scrutinizes the foreign policy under the administration of

<sup>486</sup> Timeline of U.S. sanctions. Electronic resource. URL: <https://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/timeline-us-sanctions> (date of access: 18.08.2023).

<sup>487</sup> Dubowitz M., Kittrie O. Strategy for a new comprehensive U.S. policy on Iran. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2023/01/10/strategy-for-a-new-comprehensive-us-policy-on-iran/> (date of access: 18.08.2023).

<sup>488</sup> Kozhanov N. A. Iran's economy under sanctions: two levels of impact // Russia in global affairs. 2022. Vol. 20, № 4. P. 120-140.

<sup>489</sup> Sariolghalam M. Diagnosing Iran's emerging pivot toward Russia and China. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.mei.edu/publications/diagnosing-irans-emerging-pivot-toward-russia-and-china> (date of access: 19.08.2023).

Ebrahim Raisi, the author writes about Central Signifiers, and Peripheral Elements and Strategies. The central signifiers of the foreign policy discourse of the 13th government is anchored around “pragmatic revolutionism” and “justice-oriented multilateralism.” These central signifiers shape the core ideological framework that guides the government’s international relations strategy<sup>490</sup>. However, the peripheral elements and strategies could be divided to four main points:

1. **Neutralization of Sanctions and Balanced Foreign Relations:** The government employs a dual-strategy approach to counteract sanctions and balance Iran’s foreign economic and political relations. This includes: a) **Look East Policy:** Prioritizing engagement with Eastern powers as strategic economic and political partners. b) **Neighborhood Policy:** Enhancing diplomatic and economic interactions within the proximate geographic region to foster regional stability and cooperation.

2. **Establishment of a Just International System:** This strategy is predicated on fostering multilateralism and constructing an international system that emphasizes justice and equitable relations, resisting unilateral coercive measures.

3. **Anti-Sanctions Strategy:** a) **Simultaneous Neutralization of Sanctions:** This strategic facet involves deploying measures to undermine the impact of economic sanctions. b) **Embargo-Eliminating Policies:** As a tactical maneuver, this involves specific actions aimed at dismantling barriers imposed by sanctions, thereby reducing their efficacy.

4. **Decoupling National Economy from External Pressures:** Efforts are concentrated on insulating the domestic economy from the adverse effects of international economic sanctions, thereby stabilizing the national economy<sup>491</sup>.

Iran is implementing sanctions neutralization strategies to mitigate economic disruptions and secure economic sovereignty. These policies focus on resilience and strategic autonomy, allowing Iran to adapt to international order and resist external economic aggression. Iran is diversifying economic partnerships and accessing new

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<sup>490</sup> Soleimani R. Discourse analysis of the foreign policy of Ebrahim Raisi government // Strategic studies of public policy. 2022. V. 12, № 44. P. 15-16.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid. P. 16-18.

markets in the East, and normalizing political relations with Saudi Arabia to cope with sanctions<sup>492</sup>. Iran's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)<sup>493</sup> was another success of Iran's new diplomacy that can help Iran reduce and bypass the effects of sanctions. Due to Iran's diplomatic, informational, military, and economic improvements and the importance of multipolarity, Iran's membership in this organization is expected to be a game changer for Iran and members of the SCO. As mentioned, "Iran's strong diplomatic ties with China and Russia align with the SCO's values of sovereignty and non-interference. Its eastern-oriented foreign policy aligns with the SCO's vision. Iran's intelligence agencies, including the IRGC and MOIS, contribute to intelligence sharing and counterterrorism cooperation. Its military strength also aids in power balancing and security cooperation<sup>494</sup>."

Besides, Iran's active participation in regional organizations like the Eurasian Economic Union<sup>495</sup> and its recent membership in BRICS<sup>496</sup> demonstrate its eagerness to expand its economic and political influence beyond the Middle East. Iran's strategic engagement with these organizations can expand its market reach, attract foreign investments, and strengthen its global ties, benefiting its economy and geopolitical standing<sup>497</sup>. Iran's East Diplomacy achievements demonstrate its ability to navigate complex international relations and secure partnerships with countries outside its traditional sphere of influence, providing alternative support and resources, and deterring

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<sup>492</sup> Akbari R. Raisi, the Presidency and Iran's foreign policy. Electronic resource. URL: <https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2021/oct/04/raisi-presidency-and-irans-foreign-policy> (date of access: 19.08.2023).

<sup>493</sup> New Delhi Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Electronic resource. URL: <http://eng.sectsc.org/load/948725/> (date of access: 20.08.2023).

<sup>494</sup> Ranjbar D., Honrada G. Iran's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. A SWOT analysis // *Asia and Africa Today*. 2023. № 3. P. 30-36.

<sup>495</sup> Новиков М., Землянская С. Соглашения О Зоне Свободной торговли между ЕАЭС И Ираном: Тенденции, проблемы и перспективы развития // *Вестник Волгоградского государственного университета. Серия 3: Экономика. Экология*. 2022. Т. 24, № 4. С. 163-178.

<sup>496</sup> Iran officially becomes member of BRICS. Electronic resource. URL: <https://en.irna.ir/news/85208993/Iran-officially-becomes-member-of-BRICS> (date of access: 20.08.2023).

<sup>497</sup> Sanaei M., Karami J. Iran's eastern policy: Potential and challenges // *Russia in global affairs*. 2021. Vol. 19, № 3. P. 25-49.

potential adversaries<sup>498</sup>. In addition, it motivates the West, especially the USA, to reconsider their approach towards Iran and engage in diplomatic dialogue.

Seyed Ebrahim Raisi's 13th government has shifted from a one-sided approach to a “neighborhood policy” and a balanced foreign policy, aiming to diversify Iran's international relationships and reduce its dependence on Western powers. This shift prioritizes regional cooperation and a more balanced foreign policy, aiming to strengthen Iran's global position and foster regional stability<sup>499</sup>. As discussed in the “US-IRAN: Between Confrontation and Reconciliation” article, the U. S. has taken numerous measure as a way of containing and marginalizing Iran since 1979, swinging between aggression and diplomacy. Iran's economic efforts have been significant, but its international image and domestic political situation remain unchanged. Despite self-defense and U.S. meddlesomeness, Iran plans to regain geopolitical hegemony in Raisi time<sup>500</sup>.

Sanctions have severely affected Iran economy especially from 2013 to 2023 as per Figures 1 and 2 due to sanctions imposed by key countries led by the US because of Iran nuclear program and regional activities. Introduced in the form of an attempt at a strategic international move in targeting the major income yielding industrial segments including automotive, energy, financial, and access to metals, the sanctions were to be first directed at leading revenue earning segments. The period of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) saw a temporary easing of these sanctions, lifting embargoes particularly related to the nuclear program, including those on the insurance and transportation of Iran's crude oil and petrochemical products, and allowing legal trade in gold and metals, along with lifting embargoes on financial transactions. Since Trump's 2018 withdrawal from JCPOA, the US has imposed new sanctions on Iran, including new

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<sup>498</sup> Ranjbar D., Honrada G. Diplomacy of Iran in the face of sanction pressure: the case of ASEAN // Альманах «Казачество». 2023. № 66. P. 135-140.

<sup>499</sup> Ebrahim Raisi's foreign policy views. Electronic resource. URL: <https://peacediplomacy.org/2021/06/23/foreign-policy-brief-ebrahim-raisis-foreign-policy-views/> (date of access: 21.08.2023).

<sup>500</sup> Belov V.I., Savicheva E.M., Werfelli W. US-IRAN: Between Confrontation and Reconciliation // Information and Innovations. 2023. No.18. P. 16-17.

restrictions on industries, the supreme leader's office, construction, manufacturing, textile, mining, and nuclear fields.

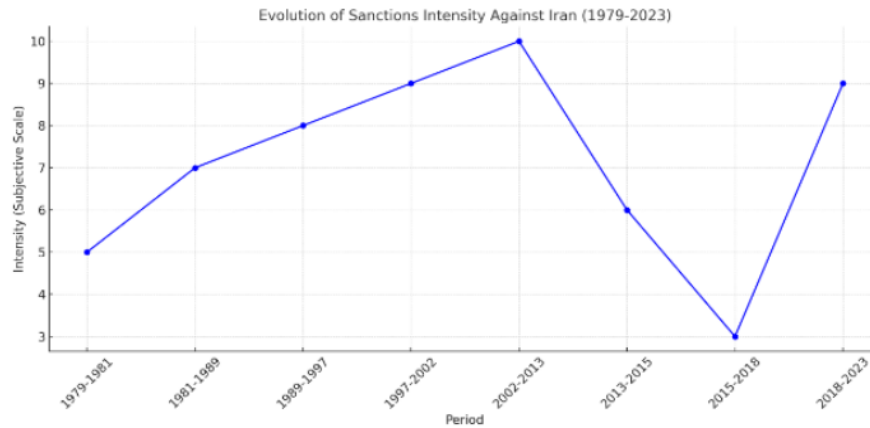


Figure 1: Evolution of sanctions against Iran created by the author.

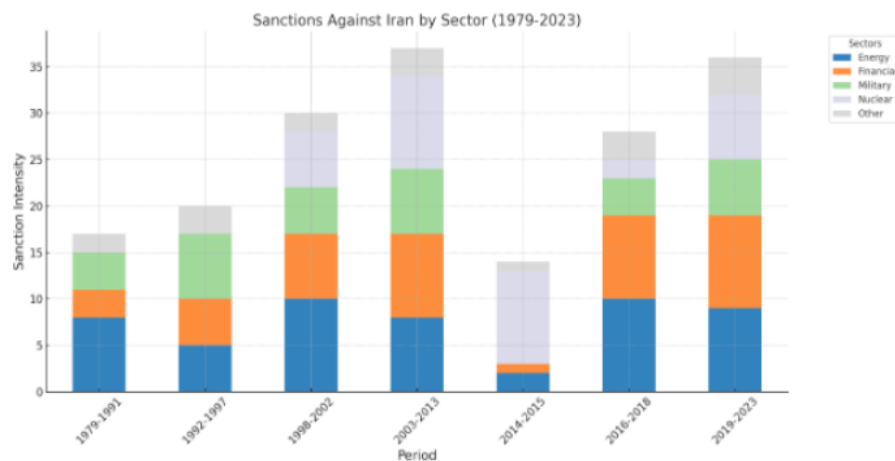


Figure 2: Sanctions against Iran by sector, created by the author.

This extensive analysis demonstrates that, while the Iranian foreign policy was traditionally grounded in the resistance, this shift has been more pro-partnership in the latest decades. The experience described above raises questions related to regional relationships, interstate legal frameworks, and power imbalances that underlie foreign policy. It also suggests new avenues for further research on the ways and relations by which countries navigate the challenges of the global arena, interdependence, and autonomy. This analysis shows that Iran, as a state with a historical script of the world-systems' stratification, oscillates between the West and the East as the way to avoid being entrapped into the bipolar or the unipolar constructed cantons at a certain period of time, take maximum advantage in a multipolar world. Iran's diplomacy demonstrates the importance of flexibility, vision, and partner diversification in international relations, guiding national and regional actions and policies.

### **3.2. Diplomatic efforts of Russia under the global sanctions.**

Before July 16, 2014, sanctions against Russia targeted legal entities and involved restrictions on certain individuals' movements and asset freezes. However, post this date, the U.S. Treasury expanded sanctions to include significant sectors of the Russian economy. These broader sanctions by the EU and USA aim to exert economic and diplomatic pressure on Russia due to the ongoing conflict with Ukraine. To analyze the pressure of sanctions and understand the diplomatic efforts of the government of the Russian Federation, the author examines two main periods: 2014-2020 and 2021-2023.

#### **The Duration of 2014-2020**

- **Sanctions Imposed by USA**

The US has imposed sanctions against Russia for four periods, with the first round of sanctions being imposed on March 17, 2014, following the Crimea referendum and the declaration of independence, involving the addition of the first group of Russians<sup>501</sup>. On July 16, 2014, the US Treasury issued a two-part document, marking the beginning of targeted sanctions against Russian oil and energy companies following Ukraine's escalated conflict<sup>502</sup>. US citizens and residents are prohibited from trading bonds or buying shares of Russian banks and energy companies, financing, 90-day debt purchases, and new shares related to these individuals<sup>503</sup>. On July 29, 2014, three Russian banks and the Russian National Shipbuilding Company were added to the list of sanctions<sup>504</sup>. The US Department of Commerce announced restrictions on equipment used in Arctic oil exploration and extraction, prohibiting re-exporting or re-purchasing outside US borders,

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<sup>501</sup> Nelson R. U.S. sanctions on Russia: economic implications. USA: Congressional research service, 2015. P. 13.

<sup>502</sup> Ibid. P. 15.

<sup>503</sup> Announcement of expanded treasury sanctions within the Russian financial services, energy and defense or related materiel sectors. Electronic resource. URL: <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jl2629> (date of access: 25.08.2023).

<sup>504</sup> Announcement of additional treasury sanctions on Russian financial institutions and on a defense technology entity. Electronic resource. URL: <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jl2590> (date of access: 25.08.2023).

affecting deep waters and salt marshes<sup>505</sup>. The US launched a third round of sanctions on September 12, 2014, imposing additional sanctions on five Russian defense companies, five oil and gas companies, and five military companies, according to the Office of Financial Control<sup>506</sup>. The circulars prohibit US citizens from buying and selling debt securities with a maturity of over 30 days from sanctioned companies, including banks and companies with over 50% of employees from these companies, as per the partial sanctions list<sup>507</sup>. The US Treasury Department's fourth circular prohibits American persons from exporting goods or technology aiding oil exploration in polar regions and Russia's salt flats. The Ministry of Commerce added five energy and defense sector companies to its list of institutions<sup>508</sup>.

The US sanctions measure 2015 expanded the scope of previous sanctions by adding new individuals to the sanctions lists. 36 natural persons and 39 legal persons were added to the specially designated persons list, and 121 legal persons were added to partial sanctions<sup>509</sup>. Other countries such as Albania, Australia, Canada, Iceland, Japan, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Switzerland, and Ukraine have also followed the policies of the United States and the European Union and imposed similar sanctions against Russia.

- **Sanctions Imposed by the European Union**

The European Union has imposed sanctions on Russia, similar to those imposed by the US, due to the strong economic relationship between Russia and Europe. The first sanctions included a travel ban and asset blocking of 21 Russian and Crimean officials. The European Central Bank has also asked member states to refrain from financing

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<sup>505</sup> U.S. commerce department expands export restrictions on Russia. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/all-articles/107-about-bis/newsroom/press-releases/press-release-2014/710-u-s-commerce-department-expands-export-restrictions-on-russia> (date of access: 25.08.2023).

<sup>506</sup> Announcement of expanded treasury sanctions within the Russian financial services, energy and defense or related materiel sectors. Electronic resource. URL: <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jl2629> (date of access: 25.08.2023).

<sup>507</sup> Ibid.

<sup>508</sup> Ukraine/Russia related sanctions program. USA: Department of the Treasury, 2016.

<sup>509</sup> Treasury sanctions additional individuals and entities in connection with the conflict in Ukraine and Russia's occupation of Crimea. Electronic resource. URL: <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm0266> (date of access: 26.08.2023).

projects in Russia<sup>510</sup>. The European Union has canceled meetings with Russia, postponed regular meetings with Russian officials, and suspended talks on visa issues, with the Group of Seven meeting-taking place in Brussels instead of Sochi<sup>511</sup>.

Other economic sanctions have also been approved by the European Union against Russia, the most important of which are as follows: 1) Starting September 12, 2014, European Union member states and their subsidiaries are prohibited from buying and selling bonds, stocks, and financial instruments issued by major Russian state banks, energy and defense companies, and their subsidiaries<sup>512</sup>. 2) Natural and legal citizens of the EU members do not have the right to grant loans to the big state-owned banks of Russia<sup>513</sup>. 3) The import and export of weapons and related materials mentioned in the arms license are prohibited from or to Russia<sup>514</sup>. 4) The export of dual-use products and technologies for Russian military purposes or to the final military consumer in Russia is prohibited<sup>515</sup>. 5) The member states' competent authorities must approve the export of equipment and technologies in the energy field<sup>516</sup>. 6) Providing services related to oil exploration and production in the deep waters of polar regions and salt marshes in Russia is prohibited<sup>517</sup>. The EU sanctions against Russia, shaped by the EU's reliance on Russian energy and trade, strategically target specific sectors to pressure the Russian government while minimizing harm to the EU economy. These sanctions have notably impacted Russia's economy, prompting the country to adopt new diplomatic strategies in response to the increasing pressure.

### **The Impact of Sanctions on Russia**

The most important economic indicators that represent a country's macroeconomic situation are the economic growth rate, inflation rate, and exchange rate. In 2014, the

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<sup>510</sup> Consolidated text: Council Regulation (EU) No 269/2014 of 17 March 2014. Electronic resource. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/269/2023-02-08> (date of access: 26.08.2023).

<sup>511</sup> EU restrictive measures against Russia over Ukraine (since 2014). Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/#diplomatic> (date of access: 26.08.2023).

<sup>512</sup> Council Regulation (EU) // Official Journal of the European Union. 2022. P. 30.

<sup>513</sup> Ibid. P. 34.

<sup>514</sup> Ibid. P. 28.

<sup>515</sup> Ibid. P. 29.

<sup>516</sup> Ibid. P. 32.

<sup>517</sup> Ibid.



value of the Russian ruble fell sharply, and it lost 19 percent of its value in just one day, the biggest daily drop in the last 16 years.<sup>518</sup> Inflation in Russia has reached its highest level in three years, primarily due to a sharp drop in oil prices and sanctions imposed. The causes of these changes being investigated further.

- **The economic growth rate**

Russia's economic growth rate decreased from 4.3% in 2012 to 3.1% in 2013 and 0.6% in 2014, attributed to decreased oil prices and low foreign direct investment<sup>519</sup>. In the September 2014 report, the World Bank predicted Russia's 2014, 2015, and 2016 growth rate as 0.5%, 0.4%, and 0.3%, respectively<sup>520</sup>. On June 1, 2015, considering more optimistic forecasts than the target price, the World Bank predicted a growth rate of -2.7%, 0.7%, and 2.5% for 2015 to 2017 in Russia<sup>521</sup>. The sanctions on Russia, despite their economic impact, are estimated to have reduced its real GDP by less than 1% between 2014 and 2015<sup>522</sup>. The growth rate in Russia showed mild recovery in 2017, reaching 1.8% by year-end. In 2018, it reached 2.7%, and then declined to 2.0%. In 2019, it fluctuated around 1.5%. In 2020, it dropped to nearly -8% due to COVID-19<sup>523</sup>.

### **Exchange rate and interest rate**

The dollar exchange rate in Russia experienced a sharp decline in value by the end of 2014, reaching around 72 rubles, (from 33 rubles) the sharpest drop since 1998. The financial sector of Russia was the primary target of sanctions, limiting its access to international markets and causing a liquidity crisis risk<sup>524</sup>. Figure 3 shows exchange rate fluctuations between the US dollar and the Russian ruble from 2014 to 2020. In 2014, the ruble depreciated significantly, reaching 70 rubles per dollar due to geopolitical tensions and sanctions. In 2015, it reached a peak of 80 rubles due to oil price drops and sanctions.

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<sup>518</sup> Safuatovna D. Course of the Ruble as an indicator of the state of Russia's economy under sanctions // ESPACIOS. 2018. Vol. 39, № 18. P. 1-11.

<sup>519</sup> Паршутнич О. А., Мартынюк Д. А. Кризис РФ 2014 Года и его связь с ценами на нефть // Экономика и социум. 2015. Т. 15, № 3. С. 1100-1103.

<sup>520</sup> Russia economic report 32: Policy uncertainty clouds medium-term prospects. The World Bank, 2014.

<sup>521</sup> Russia economic report 33: The dawn of a new economic era. The World Bank, 2015.

<sup>522</sup> Simond G. Year of sanctions against Russia-now what? London: Center for strategic & international studies Europe program, 2015. P. 25.

<sup>523</sup> Russia - annual GDP growth rate // Federal state statistics service. Electronic resource. URL: <https://fa.tradingeconomics.com/russia/gdp-growth-annual> (date of access: 11.03.2024).

<sup>524</sup> Комаровских Я. И. Влияние санкций на финансовые рынки России // Экономика и социум. 2015. Т. 15, № 2. С. 1144-1147.

From 2016 to mid-2018, the ruble showed signs of recovery, but its weakening reached a peak around 70 by 2020.



Figure 3: The exchange rate, US dollar Russian ruble from 2014 till end of 2020.

In 2014, the Russian government raised interest rates to prevent capital outflows and maintain the ruble's value, resulting in an 18% decrease in foreign reserves from \$475 billion in June 2014 to \$360 billion in 2015<sup>525</sup>. The central bank gradually reduced interest rates to around 10% by 2017, reaching nearly 7.25% by 2018. In 2019, it continued to decrease to 6.25%, aiming to support economic growth. In 2020, it was further lowered to 4.25%, aligning with global monetary responses to the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>526</sup>.

### ● Inflation

The annual inflation rate in 2014 reached 9%, the highest in three years. Sanctions tightened, increasing to 17%. After stability, it decreased to below 8%. Food inflation pressure was higher due to Russia's ban<sup>527</sup>. As shown in the Figure 4, in 2014, inflation in Russia rose sharply, reaching 16.9% in 2015 due to economic sanctions, global oil price decline, and ruble depreciation. It then fell to 5.4% by 2016, stabilizing near 2.5% in 2017, and hovering below 5% through 2018 and 2019. In 2020, inflation climbed to over 4% due to COVID-19 economic impact.

<sup>525</sup> Ibid. P. 1141-1143.

<sup>526</sup> Russia - Interest rate // Central Bank of Russia. Electronic resource. URL: <https://fa.tradingeconomics.com/russia/interest-rate> (date of access: 10.03.2024).

<sup>527</sup> Ковтунова Ю. В. Особенности инфляции в России 2014-2015 года // Экономика и социум. 2015. Т. 14, № 3. С. 608-611.

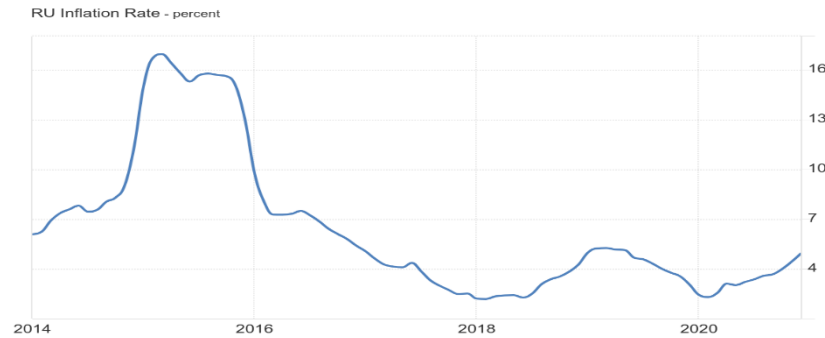


Figure 4: The exchange rate, US dollar Russian ruble from 2014 till end of 2020.<sup>528</sup>

Russia's economy is facing significant challenges due to financial sanctions and food import bans, increasing inflation rates. To mitigate these effects, Russia has employed various diplomacy and strategies, addressing Western pressure and reducing its impact.

### **Russia's measures against sanctions**

Russia's anti-sanctions policies, including banning the voluntary exit of parliament members and imposing an embargo on food imports, have significantly impacted European economies. The country's large economy and anti-sanctions measures have led to a 30% decrease in trade volume between Europe and Russia in the first six months of 2015, resulting in a total decrease of about 80 billion dollars<sup>529</sup>. Russia's diplomatic strategies against Western sanctions began in 2014, with no increased embargoes from the USA and EU. However, continued sanctions and pressures prompted Russia to adapt its approach.

- **Development of bilateral monetary agreements and strengthening of secure bilateral banking channels**

Since sanctions against Russia, China has reduced intermediary currencies like the dollar and euro in foreign trade, leading to a 700 percent increase in local currency trade between Russia-China<sup>530</sup>. One of the key axes in the negotiations of high-ranking Russian

<sup>528</sup> Russia - Inflation rate // Federal state statistics service. Electronic resource. URL: <https://fa.tradingeconomics.com/russia/inflation-cpi> (date of access: 10.03.2024).

<sup>529</sup> Gros D., Mustilli F. The economic impact of sanctions against Russia: Much ado about very little // Centre for European policy studies. 2015. № 4. P. 1-4.

<sup>530</sup> China and Russia signed new bilateral local currency settlement agreement. Electronic resource. URL: <http://www.pbc.gov.cn/english/130721/2852842/index.html> (date of access: 26.08.2023).

officials with other countries has been using national currencies in trade<sup>531</sup>. The President of Russia has specifically addressed this issue in his meeting with his counterparts from India, Turkey, Egypt, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Argentina. Another measure Russia is taking to reduce the share of the dollar and euro in the energy trade is to ask the European Union to pay for gas imports in rubles<sup>532</sup>. Russia is also trying to define a new ruble-based oil and gas price index to replace well-known indices such as Brent.

- **Changing the export destination of energy from Europe to Asia**

The Russian government strictly follows the policy of turning to Asia and South America after the increase in sanctions. The President of Russia said in this regard at the Moscow Economic Conference in October 2014: “Our conditions have become more difficult. However, this motivates us...One of our priorities is to improve trade and investment partnerships with Latin American countries, the Pacific Rim countries, and countries such as China and India<sup>533</sup>.” Russia tightened sanctions to reduce export dependence, signing the world's largest energy contract with China in 2014, aiming to reduce dependence on gas exports, local currency payments, and dollar demand<sup>534</sup>. Gazprom signed a contract with China National Petroleum Corporation for 38 billion cubic meters of natural gas annually for 30 years starting in 2018. In 2015, Gazprom also signed a gas pipeline contract with Turkey, exporting 16 billion cubic meters of gas in 2016<sup>535</sup>.

- **Establishing tax exemptions to prevent capital outflows**

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<sup>531</sup> Clinch M. What Russia-China relations mean for the dollar? Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.cnbc.com/2014/05/27/what-russia-china-relations-mean-for-the-dollar.html> (date of access: 27.08.2023).

<sup>532</sup> Gallucci M. Russian energy giant Gazprom wants Rubles, not US Dollars, for its arctic oil exports amid Western sanctions. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.ibtimes.com/russian-energy-giant-gazprom-wants-rubles-not-us-dollars-its-arctic-oil-exports-amid-1672302> (date of access: 27.08.2023).

<sup>533</sup> Заседание международного дискуссионного клуба «Валдай» [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46860> (дата обращения: 27.08.2023).

<sup>534</sup> Keck Z. China and Russia sign massive natural gas deal. Electronic resource. URL: <https://thediplomat.com/2014/05/china-and-russia-sign-massive-natural-gas-deal/> (date of access: 27.08.2023).

<sup>535</sup> Топорков А. Путин и Эрдоган запустили газопровод «Турецкий поток» [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <https://www.vedomosti.ru/business/articles/2020/01/08/820188-putin-gazoprovod-turetskii-potok> (дата обращения: 27.08.2023).

As a result of the financial restrictions created following the embargo, capital outflows from Russia in 2014 amounted to 152 billion dollars. On December 4, 2015, Putin announced tax exemptions for assets returned to Russia to prevent this process from continuing. In this regard, the bill to facilitate the declaration of assets was submitted to the Russian Duma in March 2015. According to this bill, the assets declared by the investor with the clear mechanism specified in the law and with the approval of the relevant institutions will enjoy a one-time tax exemption at the beginning of the investment<sup>536</sup>.

- **Reforming the domestic banking payment system**

In response to the financial sanctions that limited the services of five Russian state-owned banks by the Western counterparts and the possible subsequent actions of the West that may lead to the banning of these banks' access to the international interbank communication system, Russia has taken serious steps to Development of the national payment system<sup>537</sup>. On April 1, 2015, a new national card payment system “MIR” was introduced, and large companies active in credit cards, such as MasterCard and Visa, were required to settle their transactions in this system<sup>538</sup>. Russia imposed sanctions on the EU and revised economic plans to mitigate sanctions, focusing on agriculture, manufacturing, and technology, and extending trade with Asia and the Middle East.

### **The Duration of 2021 - 2023**

Western states did not impose any specific sanctions on Russia until the end of 2021. However, the US and the EU did not stop their pressure. In this period, we can mention the four most important pressures from the West. 1) The West accuses Russia of domestic and foreign meddling, intensifying allegations before 2020 US and EU elections, leading to targeted sanctions<sup>539</sup>. Allegation without proof is a West's strategy

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<sup>536</sup> Belozyorov S. A., Sokolovska O. Economic sanctions against Russia: Assessing the policies to overcome their impact // *Economy of region*. 2020. Vol. 16, № 4. P. 1115-1131.

<sup>537</sup> Белоусов А. Л. Альтернативы международной межбанковской телекоммуникационной сети SWIFT для российской банковской системы // *Финансы и кредит*. 2016. № 16. С. 19-26.

<sup>538</sup> Payment card MIR and commemorative coin. Electronic resource. URL: <http://www.cbr.ru/press/event/?id=80> (date of access: 28.08.2023).

<sup>539</sup> Treasury escalates sanctions against the Russian government's attempts to influence U.S. Elections. Electronic resource. URL: <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0126#:~:text=WASHINGTON%20%E2%80%94%20Today%2C%20the%20U.S.%20Department,leadership%20of%20the%20Russian%20Government>. (date of access: 28.08.2023).

to damage a target country's image, manipulate public opinion, and justify actions against perceived adversaries. 2) Western countries always raise an issue about Western values in other countries, and using this tool, they want to somehow pressurize the target country. The objective of this strategy is the same as the previous one. However, the values of the other countries differ so there must be some respect for the other countries' values and understanding by considering their cultural context. It is important to recognize the idea that human rights are not universal and that it varies in different societies<sup>540</sup>. Imposing the Western values to other nations could be a root cause of cultural imperialism and can obstruct genuine dialogue and understanding between two nations. 3) As for the EU, the Western world, following sanctions in 2014, sought to decrease its dependency on Russian energy by diversifying sources; this could place pressure on Russia. Then again, this has always been a politician's talk and political rhetoric. There were logistical and financial constraints, among other limitations, to the actual implementation of such diversification measures<sup>541</sup>. The result of the overall consequence in the global energy market will prompt nations to cooperate with each other, ensuring that the markets are not turbulent and that it is sustainable in the long run. 4) The COVID-19 pandemic added an extra layer of complexity to Russia. Russia was the first country to manage to develop and distribute its vaccine;<sup>542</sup> however, the West, due to political concerns and not the importance of lives, initially showed skepticism towards the Russian vaccine. This led to a fragmented approach to addressing the global health crisis, with some countries prioritizing their vaccine development and distribution efforts<sup>543</sup>.

Russia maintains diplomatic engagements with the West, including the EU, despite political differences. It remains the EU's top trading partner, despite sanctions. Russia's

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<sup>540</sup> Timofeev I. N. Russia and the West: Are values the problem? // *Russia in global affairs*. 2021. Vol. 19, № 3. P. 156-163.

<sup>541</sup> Мастепанов А. Энергетическая безопасность по-европейски [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <https://energypolicy.ru/energeticheskaya-bezopasnost-po-evropejski/gaz/2023/15/16/> (дата обращения: 29.08.2023).

<sup>542</sup> World's first' Coronavirus vaccine: What we know so far about Russian injection. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/08/11/worlds-first-coronavirus-vaccine-what-we-know-so-far-about-russian-injection-a71113> (date of access: 29.08.2023).

<sup>543</sup> Singh B., Kaur J., Chattu V. K. Global vaccine inequities and multilateralism amid COVID-19: Reconnaissance of global health diplomacy as a panacea? // *Health promotion perspectives*. 2022. Vol. 12, № 4. P. 315-324.

“special military operation” was initiated due to West's disregard for security concerns, and NATO expansion.<sup>544</sup> In this regard, Western countries, including the USA, have imposed sanctions on Russia, causing diplomatic tensions. The EU, imposing economic measures, acknowledges the potential negative effects on its own economies. From February 23, 2022, to June 23, 2023, the EU imposed the eleventh package of sanctions against the Russian Federation. The Table 5 shows the most significant sanctions imposed by the EU on Russia:

<b>Economic Sanctions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prohibition On Trade in Arms</li> <li>● Prohibition On Public Financing or Financial Assistance for Trade with or Investment in Russia</li> <li>● Prohibition On Investment and Contribution to Projects Co-Financed by The Russian Direct Investment Fund</li> <li>● Prohibition On Exports of Dual-Use Goods as Well as Advanced Technology Items That Can Contribute to Russia’s Defense and Security Capabilities</li> <li>● Prohibition On Exports of Quantum Computing, Advanced Semiconductors, Sensitive Machinery, Transportation and Chemicals</li> <li>● Prohibition On the Broadcast in The EU of Certain Russian State-Owned Media Outlets</li> <li>● Prohibition On Exports of Goods for Use in The Oil Industry</li> <li>● Prohibition On New Investments in The Energy Sector</li> <li>● Prohibition On Certain Operations in The Aviation Sector</li> <li>● Prohibition On Russian Freight Operators</li> <li>● Prohibition to Access Edu Ports and Locks</li> <li>● Prohibition On Exports of Maritime Navigation Goods</li> <li>● Prohibition On Exports of Luxury Goods</li> <li>● Prohibition On Imports of Coal</li> <li>● Prohibition On Imports of Iron and Steel</li> <li>● Prohibition On Imports of Cement, Rubber Products, Wood, Spirits, Liquor, High-End Seafood</li> <li>● Prohibition On Imports of Seaborne Crude Oil and On Providing Oil Transport Services</li> <li>● Prohibition On Imports of Gold</li> <li>● Prohibition On Exports of Goods Contributing to The Enhancement of Russian Industrial Capacities</li> <li>● Prohibition On the Financing of the Russian Government and Central Bank as Well as Banning All Those Transactions Related to The Management of the Central Bank’s Reserves and Assets</li> <li>● Prohibitions On a Range of Financial Interactions, Financial Rating Services, And Transactions with Russia, As Well as Prohibitions On the Provision of Banknotes and Sale of Securities</li> <li>● Decoupling of Certain Russian Banks from The Swift Messaging System</li> <li>● Prohibition On Providing High-Value Crypto Services and Trust Services</li> <li>● Full Exclusion of Russia from Public Contracts and European Money</li> <li>● Prohibition On Providing Trusts</li> <li>● Prohibition On Accepting Deposits</li> </ul>

Table 5: The Main Economic Sanctions of the EU against Russia<sup>545</sup>.

<sup>544</sup> Обращение Президента Российской Федерации [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67843> (дата обращения: 30.08.2023).

<sup>545</sup> Sanctions adopted toward Russia. Electronic resource. URL: [https://finance.ec.europa.eu/eu-and-world/sanctions-restrictive-measures/sanctions-adopted-following-russias-military-aggression-against-ukraine\\_en](https://finance.ec.europa.eu/eu-and-world/sanctions-restrictive-measures/sanctions-adopted-following-russias-military-aggression-against-ukraine_en) (date of access: 30.08.2023).

The EU is implementing economic sanctions against Russia, restricting financial transactions, including banknotes, securities sales, and decoupling Russian banks from the Swift messaging system. However, the EU's dependence on trade and energy cooperation with Russia makes it difficult to completely sever financial ties.<sup>546</sup> Efforts to diversify energy sources and strengthen domestic financial systems are underway, but achieving complete independence from Russia remains a long-term goal for the EU. The US and its allies have imposed sanctions on Russia, including asset freezes, asset bans, and restrictions on key sectors like energy, defense, and finance, limiting their access to international markets. The points mentioned above are further elaborated in annex number 1<sup>547</sup>. Russia faces the most severe and extensive Western sanctions, with 11,000 additional sanctions added in one-year post-crisis, surpassing 2,500 before the Ukraine crisis<sup>548</sup>.

The USA and Europe's calculations regarding sanctions on Russia made a mathematical error, with President Biden predicting a 50% reduction in Russia's economy and a 15% shrink by March 2022<sup>549</sup>. However, sanctions against Russia have not been as fruitful as expected. Russia's GDP decreased by only 6% in 2022, and the country's economy shrunk by 2.1%. The sale of energy by Russia has provided a surplus of 265 billion dollars for Russia, the second foreign currency surplus in the world after China. Although the GDP of the West is not comparable to that of Russia, no one is trying to deprive themselves of Russian gas at the moment. Even the European countries suffered nearly one trillion dollars in losses due to the Russian energy embargo during this period<sup>550</sup>.

Russia's financial system has stabilized after going through difficult conditions and has found new suppliers like China for some of its imports, while Europe is facing an

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<sup>546</sup> Pobedin A. A., Fedulov D. V. International economic sanctions: structure and implementation scenarios // Management issues. 2023. № 4. P. 20-32.

<sup>547</sup> See annex one: Nikoladze M. Russia sanctions database. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/econographics/russia-sanctions-database/> (date of access: 29.08.2023).

<sup>548</sup> Snegovaya M. Russia sanctions at one year // Center for Strategic and international studies (CSIS). 2023. Vol. 7, № 2. P. 01-15.

<sup>549</sup> Russia; From facing sanctions to the possible F.A.T.F. Electronic resource. URL: <https://irna.ir/xjMHyH> (date of access: 30.08.2023).

<sup>550</sup> Ibid.



economic recession caused by the energy crisis. It turns out that the blade of the sanctions was slow, and the biggest reason for the ineffectiveness of the sanctions is that more than 100 countries whose gross domestic product is 40% of the world's gross domestic product are not willing to sanction Russia completely or partially. Ural oil continues to go to Asia<sup>551</sup>. It should be noted that before the start of the conflict in Ukraine, the Russian government predicted a 3% GDP growth in 2022. Manufacturing industries and wholesale and retail trade were among the sectors that declined in 2022, while agriculture, hospitality, construction, and mining all grew<sup>552</sup>. Russia's economy has largely remained unaffected by sanctions due to its pre-prepared measures, including trade diversification, domestic industry development, and investment in agriculture and technology sectors<sup>553</sup>.

The main measures taken by Russia toward Western sanctions are: 1) 200% increase in the share of gold in Russia's foreign exchange reserves during the last decade; 2) The threefold growth of Russia's foreign exchange reserves since 2015; 3) Reduction of more than 90% of US Treasury bonds in its currency reserves and their replacement with gold since 2017; 4) Decreasing the ratio of debt to GDP; 5) Designing the local financial transaction network as an alternative to Swift with a smaller communication circle called SPFS and strengthening this financial communication network by developing its connections; 6) The development of investment in commodities, including oil and gas, makes Europe increasingly dependent on Russian gas<sup>554</sup>. Russia's long-standing policies, including de-dollarization in foreign trade and strengthening bilateral relations, have reduced the effects of sanctions, but their impact on economic bottlenecks

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<sup>551</sup> Why did the flood of Western sanctions not paralyze the Russian economy? Electronic resource. URL: <https://mehrnews.com/xZCHM> (date of access: 30.08.2023).

<sup>552</sup> The growth of the embargoed Russian economy, beyond the forecasts. Electronic resource. URL: <https://shorturl.at/uyHJ2> (date of access: 30.08.2023).

<sup>553</sup> Connolly R. Western sanctions and the Russian response // Russia's response to sanctions. Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 2018. P. 56-77.

<sup>554</sup> Shkahi Nasab H. How did Russia win the game of "sanctions" against the West? Electronic resource. URL: [mehrnews.com/xYmqK](https://mehrnews.com/xYmqK) (date of access: 30.08.2023). (In Persian)

and the escalation of sanctions by 40 countries and over 11,000 sanctions is not as sharp and successful as anticipated.

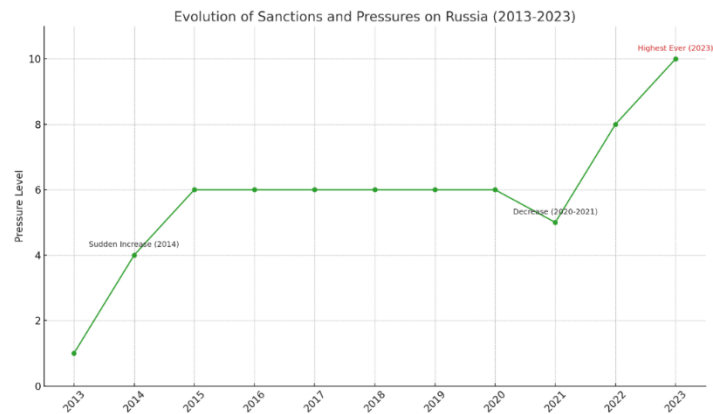


Figure 5: Evolution of sanctions and pressures on Russia created by the author.

Figure 5 outlines the evolution of these sanctions from 2013 to 2023, showing an initial escalation in 2014 with sustained pressure through 2019, a temporary easing between 2020 and 2021, and a sharp increase in 2023. This fluctuating pattern underscores the dynamic use of economic sanctions as a tool of foreign policy, reflecting ongoing geopolitical dynamics. The interplay between Western sanctions and Russia's countermeasures highlights the complex, multifaceted nature of current international relations, indicating a shift towards a more multipolar global economic order. This sub-chapter analyzed Russia's diplomatic responses and strategies aimed at countering international pressure from Western sanctions imposed in connection with the conflict in Ukraine. These sanctions, initiated by the US and the EU, evolved from targeting individuals to comprehensive measures affecting Russia's financial, defense, and energy sectors. From 2014 to 2023, the sanctions intensified, resulting in significant economic consequences such as currency devaluation and inflation. In response, Russia utilized adaptive strategies such as economic diversification, bilateral trade agreements, and a marked “pivot to the East” with a focus on the Greater Eurasian Partnership and Corridor Diplomacy. These strategies, especially in the area of energy contracts and alternative financial systems, emphasize Russia's shift toward Asia. In addition, long-term strategies such as devaluing the dollar, investing in foreign exchange reserves, and strengthening regional alliances show resilience. The analysis highlights the complex interplay of

economic and diplomatic maneuvers, signaling a shift toward a more multipolar world order and the multidimensional nature of contemporary international relations.

### **3.3. Challenges and opportunities in development of Iran and Russia relations in the frame of global sanctions.**

The victory of Hassan Rouhani and the moderate discourse in the 2013 elections in Iran, with the promise of de-escalation in relations with the US and the West and the resolution of Iran's nuclear issue, once again increased Russia's attention towards Iran<sup>555</sup>. During this period, which coincided with the escalation of the Syrian crisis and the increasing desire of Russia to play a role in the Middle East, the issue of regional cooperation became the focus of Tehran-Moscow cooperation<sup>556</sup>. The common approaches of the two countries on the issues of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria caused Sergey Lavrov to call Iran a “natural ally” of Russia in September 2014<sup>557</sup>. Russia's problems with the US and Europe regarding the Ukraine issues affected these relations, especially after they sanctioned Russia; most relations between the two countries were affected.

In the developments known as the Arab revolutions, the closeness of Iran and Russia became more prominent in the face of the US's interventions in the internal affairs of West Asian and North African countries. Russia has strongly opposed the democratization process supported by the US in Western and Central Asian countries<sup>558</sup>. At the same time, many developments occurred in both Iran and Russia, including the formation of the Ukraine crisis and the sanctions against Russia by the West, the

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<sup>555</sup> Mohammadian A., Rezaei A. Explanation of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran during the Hassan Rouhani period from the perspective of James Rosena's theory of continuity // Crisis studies of the Islamic world. 2012. Vol. 6, № 4. P. 1-19. (In Persian)

<sup>556</sup> Kozhanov N. Russian-Iranian relations through the prism of the Syrian crisis // Insight Turkey. 2017. Vol. 19, № 4. P. 105-124.

<sup>557</sup> Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе ежегодной пресс-конференции по итогам деятельности российской дипломатии в 2014 году, Москва, 21 января 2015 года [Электронный ресурс]. URL: [https://mid.ru/en/foreign\\_policy/news/1581948/?lang=ru](https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/1581948/?lang=ru) (дата обращения: 10.03.2024).

<sup>558</sup> Косов А. США и «Арабская весна»: оценки российского экспертного сообщества // Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Серия: Международные отношения. 2016. № 3. С. 473-479.

conclusion of the nuclear negotiations, and most importantly, Russia's entry into the operational scene of the Syrian war, led to the formation of a new stage in the relations between Tehran and Moscow and the relations between the two countries in different dimensions; such as political, economic fields, regional cooperation started to grow.

For the first time after Vladimir Putin and Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei met again in Tehran in 2015, the leaders of Tehran and Moscow announced their readiness that after 25 years since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the relations between Iran and Russia will become strategic links by expanding in all areas<sup>559</sup>. With all the will and necessary measures, the volume of commercial exchanges between Iran and Russia in 2016 reached a little more than one and a half billion dollars, which was not commensurate with the capacities and capabilities of the two countries<sup>560</sup>.

Due to the reduction of political and economic barriers, the value of exchanges between the two countries is expected to increase. According to Russian officials, trade relations between Moscow and Tehran increased by 80% in the first 9 months of 2017, reaching one billion and 600 million dollars<sup>561</sup>. According to estimates, this figure still keeps Iran's share of Russia's foreign trade at less than one percent. According to the Ministry of Industry and Mines statistics from the first ten months of 2015 and comparing it with the statistics for the ten months of 2014, the Russian Federation has been ranked seventh among the exporting countries to Iran with an increase of 179%<sup>562</sup>.

Meanwhile, more agreements have been made between Iran and Russia in large government projects, which can increase the value of trade relations between the two countries. In the meantime, agreements in transportation and visas, customs and tariffs, provincial relations, and exhibitions in small and large industries provide the conditions for increasing commercial exchanges in the private sector<sup>563</sup>. In the same way, it can be

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<sup>559</sup> Ivanov I. Russia-Iran partnership: An overview and prospects for the future // Russian international affairs council & institute for Iran-Eurasia studies, 2016. P. 111-119.

<sup>560</sup> Ibid.

<sup>561</sup> Нойбахуш Х. Эволюция и перспективы развития отношений Ирана и России // Вестник Московского государственного лингвистического университета. Общественные науки. 2021. № 4. С. 218-221.

<sup>562</sup> Ibid. P. 222-225.

<sup>563</sup> Скрыбина А., Скрыбин А. Развитие Российско-Иранских отношений: состояние и перспективы // Россия в глобальном мире. 2023. № 2. С. 16-32.

said that based on the road map formed in the economic relations between Iran and Russia, the agreements also include the two parts of establishing long-term strategic economic relations and strengthening the current and commercial relations.

For Russia and Iran, the US withdrawal from the JCPOA has major ramifications. Russia has been a major contributor to Iran's nuclear program and has benefited from extensive economic, military, and nuclear strategic cooperation with Iran<sup>564</sup>. However, the US withdrawal raises questions about the future of this cooperation and puts more pressure on Iran. Nonetheless, Russia has faced criticism for its collaboration with Iran and has voiced doubts regarding Iran's nuclear arsenal<sup>565</sup>. Tension with the international community, especially the United States, has arisen from Russia and Iran's cooperation in various sectors and potential strategic partnership in the future. Russia is under more pressure to distance itself from Iran's nuclear aspirations as a result of the US withdrawal from the JCPOA, which further complicates matters.

Russia may encounter difficulties in its interactions with its Western allies who are in favor of the JCPOA and its efforts to stop Iran's nuclear activities, as a result of the actions carried out by the United States. The enduring partnership between Iran and Russia has been evident in a wide array of areas, including energy and defense, further solidifying their connection in the current era. Even when the US dropping out of the deal presented serious difficulties, Russia has shown that it is ready to keep the strategic and economic ties with Iran at a reasonably high level. Russia's guarantee to strengthen the alliance in face of outside pressures and its partnership deepening role(s) during tough times are two key points that show great importance of Russian contribution at this juncture in Iran. This bond which resiliently survives through all hardship is an evidence to the closeness between two nations irrespective of problems and indeed significance attached to their association amid complicated scenarios.

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<sup>564</sup> Rezvani B. Legal and geopolitical implications of US unilateral withdrawal from the nuclear agreement // Forum of ethno geopolitics. 2018. P. 5-7.

<sup>565</sup> Paulraj N. The JCPOA and changing dimensions of the Russia–Iran relations // Contemporary review of the Middle East. 2016. Vol. 3, № 1. P. 95-110.

Moreover, the backup given by Russia to Iran could be explained also by its interest in having a say in the Middle East and reducing the dominance of the West in the region. One important reason that demonstrated continuation of cooperation between Iran and Russia was increase of anti-Russian sanctions in 2014 and Western pressures in subsequent years<sup>566</sup>. These factors gradually but surely changed diplomacy of Iran and Russia pushing them towards interrelated and cooperated activities. This happens through political and economic spheres as well as military field like joint military maneuvers and weapons exchange. Furthermore they have common concern on combatting terrorism which they both benefit from their current relation more than before<sup>567</sup>.

The global sanctions against Russia also helped in deepening and tightening the economic relation between Iran and Russia sometimes resulted in more than just a simple ally, they were able to coordinate their efforts when dealing with challenges posed by the Western hegemony<sup>568</sup>. This result was at times an implicit or explicit recognized partnering by both states regarding various regional issues. Moreover, both countries were encouraged to revive and activate the regional organizations by Iran's diplomacy towards the East and Russia's commitments in the non-Western world. Of further note is that cooperation within BRICS, as well as a multi-polar world order gradually taking shape helped solidify Russian-Iranian connections in a great extent. This joint work served to promote their diplomatic standing and made it possible for them to come up with new trade and investment proposals that benefit both sides economically.

The anti-Western tendencies of Iran's foreign policy during the past four decades have been quite clear. Some governments have tried to make preparations for normalization with the West, but generally, they have failed. The main cause of this failure is not ideology but the nature of the political structure. If Iran's relations with the

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<sup>566</sup> Самохина Г. В., Драганов А. А. Специфика Российско-Иранских отношений в контексте современной геополитической ситуации в мире // Общество: политика, экономика, право. 2016. № 3. С. 43-45.

<sup>567</sup> Садеги М. М. Ирано-Российское сотрудничество в сферах обороны и безопасности // Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Серия: Политология. 2020. № 2. С. 276-289.

<sup>568</sup> Geranmayeh E., Grajewski N. Alone together: How the war in Ukraine shapes the Russian-Iranian relationship // European Council on foreign relations. 2023. P. 1-15.

West are normalized, even with maintaining a degree of political independence like India and Indonesia, the current form and power relations will gradually fade<sup>569</sup>.

Iran's government's normalization of relations with the West was aimed at resolving the nuclear issue with the West through the JCPOA. However, the West struggled to address Iran's opposition to Israel and extensive regional activities. Instead, they focused on the nuclear program, which was not equally important from a Western perspective. The government failed to recognize that the West's nuclear issue with Iran reflected their other two problems, and a permanent solution to the third problem would be an illusion. Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA or the JCPOA's problems with the post-Obama administrations were predictable. Iran fulfilled its JCPOA obligations, but the JCPOA was an agreement with the Obama administration (U.S. Administration) and not a treaty with the U.S. government (State), which includes both the executive and legislative powers<sup>570</sup>.

Iran's government and sovereignty hoped that in exchange for the resolution of the nuclear issue, Iran's commercial, oil, and banking relations with the world would return to normal. The problems of the West with Iran are much wider than the nuclear program. It should be remembered that it took thirteen years to remove US sanctions after the fall of Saddam Hussein and the establishment of US forces in that country.

After the withdrawal of the Trump administration from the JCPOA and the disappointment of the possibility of understanding with the West, many preparations were started in Iran to maintain, strengthen, and integrate the power structure. The calculation of the government of Iran was to withdraw from the nuclear program for 10–15 years but not to make any changes in foreign policy, and in exchange for nuclear withdrawal, the West would completely remove economic sanctions<sup>571</sup>. Since Iran considers the most important lever to maintain the current power structure and relations the continuation of

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<sup>569</sup> Pourhosseini M. J. The impact of anti-Western discourse on the relations between Iran and Russia // *Political Science (Karaj Azad University)*. 2020. № 54. P. 209–228. (In Persian)

<sup>570</sup> America's predictable betrayal of Iran's nuclear agreement / the plan for America's withdrawal from the JCPOA was drawn in 2009. Electronic resource. URL: [mshrg.h.ir/1205902](http://mshrg.h.ir/1205902) (date of access: 31.08.2023). (In Persian)

<sup>571</sup> Румянцев В. П., Хакимов А. Ш. Реакция Исламской Республики Иран на выход США из совместного всеобъемлющего плана действий // *Izvestiya of Altai State University*. 2019. № 6 (110). С. 92-96.

its regional presence, it was not willing to revise its regional policy in any way because, in Iran, foreign policy is the same as national security.

Before the withdrawal of the Trump administration from the JCPOA, Iran's relations with Russia were sporadic. But after calculations and people and currents became aware of the real policies of the West, these relations have moved towards becoming strategic. Some factors may indicate this change of direction towards becoming strategic, such as Russia's right of veto in possible anti-Iranian resolutions of the West in the UN Security Council, purchase of military weapons, cooperation with the Russian air force and intelligence system in Syria, informing Iran about the movements of Westerners in Iran and around Iran, providing management software and hardware and community monitoring, cooperation in energy and railways, and knowledge exchange in the joint de-dollarization of the national economy<sup>572</sup>.

Iran's relations with Russia are primarily focused on maintaining and stabilizing Iran's structure and power relations, despite factors such as the region's uncertainty, the US presidential election, Israel's right-wing politics, and cooperation between China and Russia against US sanctions. Russia's non-regular changes to Iran's political system, constitution, culture, and foreign policy make relations safer and more reassuring. In the West, pressure groups and lobbies play a fundamental role in policy-making, while in the East, there is only one policy: the government's policy. Russia has had a single policy towards Iran during the Tsarist era, the Soviet era, and now in the Russian Federation: to remove Iran from the Western orbit. This policy is compatible with Iran's current power structure's horizons and goals. Russians generally interact with governments and do not seek to change the culture, beliefs, lifestyle, intellectual-philosophical system, or the constitution of countries. It is enough for Russia as long as the convergence of the axes and goals with the governments is formed and established. But surely, future bilateral relations can face challenges and risks due to the sanctions imposed on both countries.

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<sup>572</sup> Iran-Russia Relations: Signs of a new strategic realignment? Electronic resource. URL: <https://epc.ae/en/details/featured/iran-russia-relations-signs-of-a-new-strategic-realignment-> (date of access: 31.08.2023).



- **U.S. Additional Sanctions:** Despite the U.S. implication of Iran and Russia into sanction issue is one of the most important difficulties it posed to those two countries. Also, by leaving JCPOA, US adversely affected Iranian economic and strategical cooperation with Russia. These sanctions are able to put an obstacle in the way of development their economic bonds and apply tension on their political relationship.
- **Western Pressure:** It is Iran and Russia that have been under influence of Western countries' pressure with US and Europe at the top. Such arsenal was able to push them toward more interaction; yet, it also pokes on their one-to-one dialogues various affaires, consequently impeding development of a firm and self-standing interconnectedness.
- **Divergent Economic Capacities:** Trade has improved yet still the economic interaction between Iran and Russia reflects neither the capacities nor the capabilities of these two countries. An economic gap might impede the growth of their economic relationship and lead to conflicting expectations resulting in disparities<sup>573</sup>.
- **Geopolitical Factors:** Their relationship is significantly influenced by geopolitical factors. If Russia's goal to upend Western dominance in the Middle East conflicts with Iran's regional priorities and aspirations, tensions may arise<sup>574</sup>.
- **Shifts in Power Structures:** Both countries seek to stabilize and integrate their power structures. Although this is in line with their current interests, it could be upset by changes in either nation's leadership or policies<sup>575</sup>.
- **International Relations:** The increased cooperation within the BRICS group and the shift towards a multipolar world order may enhance their diplomatic standing, but it also means that their actions and decisions are under greater scrutiny. This can limit their flexibility in pursuing certain policies<sup>576</sup>.

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<sup>573</sup> Mahmoudian A. Economic incompatibility limits Russia-Iran ties. Electronic resource. URL: <https://www.stimson.org/2023/economic-incompatibility-limits-russia-iran-ties/> (date of access: 29.07.2023).

<sup>574</sup> Гончар Г. Ирано-Российским отношениям придали ускорение [Электронный ресурс]. URL: [https://www.vedomosti.ru/technologies/industries\\_and\\_markets/articles/2023/07/10/984547-irano-rossiiskim-otnosheniyam-pridali-uskorenie](https://www.vedomosti.ru/technologies/industries_and_markets/articles/2023/07/10/984547-irano-rossiiskim-otnosheniyam-pridali-uskorenie) (дата обращения: 31.08.2023).

<sup>575</sup> Ibid.

<sup>576</sup> Farjirad. The relations between Iran and Russia do not fit in a strategic format/the economies of the two countries are not complementary/Iran's place was empty in the Moscow meeting. Electronic resource. URL: [khabaronline.ir/xjCYy](http://khabaronline.ir/xjCYy) (date of access: 31.08.2023). (In Persian)

- **Long-Term Ambitions:** Normalizing relations with the West may be challenging for Iran, given its long-standing anti-Western foreign policy. The prospect for improved ties with the US, Europe, and other Western countries may be limited by this commitment to anti-Western policies<sup>577</sup>.

The bilateral relationship between Iran and Russia has changed as a result of mutual interests, changes in the world, and US sanctions. The different sanctions levels imposed on Iran and Russia from 1979 and 2023 are graphically depicted in Figure 6, which shows a stark contrast between the two nations. Iran experienced a steady increase in the intensity of sanctions, particularly in the early 2000s, reaching a peak level around 2012 before slightly decreasing due to the JCPOA. Following the US withdrawal from the JCPOA and the initiation of the maximum pressure campaign, sanctions on Iran increased again and stabilized at a high level thereafter. Conversely, Russia's sanctions intensity remained low and stable until 2014, after which it sharply increased, reflecting geopolitical tensions. The fluctuation in Russia's sanctions level since then indicates a more volatile sanction environment compared to Iran's more consistently high level. Notably, in 2014, both Iran and Russia experienced sanctions pressures at an equivalent level, marking a moment of shared geopolitical strain.

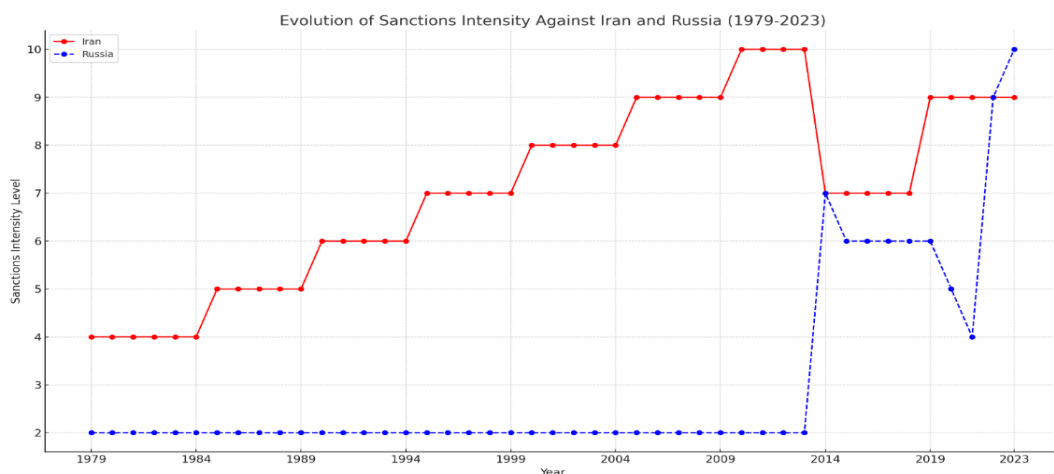


Figure 6: Evolution of sanctions intensity against Iran and Russia (1979-2023).

In the context of examining the strategies employed by Iran and Russia under significant sanction pressures, it is imperative to understand their diplomatic maneuvers and the subsequent ramifications on their bilateral relations historically, presently, and in

<sup>577</sup> Ibid.

prospective future scenarios. This comparative analysis aims to elucidate the challenges and opportunities that have shaped the geopolitical landscape of these nations over the decades. By scrutinizing the varying degrees of sanctions and diplomatic responses across different administrations, the analysis provides insights into the dynamic interplay between external pressures and internal policy adaptations. This approach not only deepens the understanding of Iran and Russia's strategic decisions but also highlights their evolving partnership in a complex international arena. The tables below succinctly summarize these aspects, offering a structured comparative view to enhance the discussion in this dissertation.

<b>Period</b>	<b>Presidency</b>	<b>Sanction Pressure</b>	<b>Diplomacy</b>	<b>Results</b>
1989–1997	Rafsanjani	7-8	Pragmatic	Strengthening the economy, improving relations with the West in a short time
1997–2005	Khatami	8-9	Dialogue of civilization	attempts at dialogue with the West, but limited success, Tehran Declaration
2005–2013	Ahmadinejad	+10	Confrontational	Deteriorating relations with the West, and world economic problems due to sanctions, More than 2000 sanctions
2013–2021	Rouhani	+10 till 2015, 3	Negotiations according to the “Win-Win” principle	Reaching a nuclear deal in 2015, which temporarily reduced plant pressure
2021–Current time	Raisi	3 - 9	“Look East”	Coming out of isolation (SCO, BRICS), non-Western partners, finding our place in the future multipolar world

Table 6: Comparative Analysis of Iranian Diplomatic Strategies and Outcomes Under Sanction Pressure (1989–Current)

According to Table 6, the evolution of Iranian diplomacy in response to ongoing sanctions and perceived unfulfilled commitments by the West is distinctly marked by

shifts in strategy across different presidential tenures. During the Rafsanjani era (1989-1997), Iran adopted a pragmatic approach aimed at strengthening the economy and improving relations with Western nations. This period was characterized by relatively moderate sanction levels, allowing for some economic recuperation and diplomatic overtures towards the West. Subsequent administrations under Khatami (1997-2005) and Ahmadinejad (2005-2013) oscillated between the "Dialogue of Civilizations" initiative and a more confrontational stance, respectively. Khatami's efforts resulted in limited success, such as the Tehran Declaration, which temporarily eased tensions but did not lead to lasting improvements. Ahmadinejad's tenure witnessed a sharp increase in sanctions and a deterioration in relations, underscoring the challenges of a confrontational diplomacy amidst escalating pressures.

As demonstrated in the later periods, particularly under Presidents Rouhani (2013-2021) and Raisi (2021-current), Iran's diplomatic strategies continued to adapt. Rouhani's negotiation of the JCPOA in 2015 appeared as a significant diplomatic victory, suggesting a potential shift in Western-Iranian relations. However, the subsequent withdrawal of the USA from the agreement underlined the persisting challenges. Raisi's "Look East" policy, aimed at reducing reliance on Western alignments, further reflects Iran's strategic pivot in response to sustained Western pressures. This historical overview highlights a recurring theme: irrespective of the diplomatic approach—whether conciliatory or confrontational—Iran's efforts have recurrently been undermined by what is perceived as the West's, particularly the USA's, strategic goal of regime changes rather than peaceful engagement. This analysis elucidates that the primary aim of Western sanctions and pressures has been less about addressing specific diplomatic disputes and more about effecting a change in Iran's political framework, thereby perpetuating a cycle of mistrust and unfulfilled diplomatic potentials.

Period	Presidency	Western Pressure	Sanction Pressure	Diplomacy	Results
1992–1999	Boris Yeltsin	High economic and political pressures	1-2	Defensive diplomacy, seeking negotiations and security assurances, expressing	Mixed results; managed to maintain dialogue but tensions with the West increased

				concerns officially	
2000-2008	Vladimir Putin	Escalating political pressures (NATO expansion), economic encroachments	1-2	More assertive and principled stance, challenging Western dominance, strengthening regional alliances	Strengthened Russia's global standing, but relations with the West became more strained
2008-2012	Dmitry Medvedev	Democratization pressures, human rights concerns	1-2	Engagement with the West on global issues, advocating for a balanced world order	Managed to maintain some cooperation despite tensions
2012-2018	Vladimir Putin	Extensive sanctions especially post-2014, economic and strategic pressures	2-6	Strengthened economic resilience, developed national payment systems	Significant economic challenges but also increased self-reliance and geopolitical influence
2018– Current time	Vladimir Putin	Intense sanctions and pressures following “Special Military Operation” in Ukraine	6-10	pivoted towards market of Asia and the Middle East, depolarization, challenging the Western hegemony	Increase of cooperation in SCO, and BRICS, non-Western partnerships, popularity of Multipolar idea

Table 7: Comparative Analysis of Russian Diplomatic Strategies and Outcomes Under Western Pressure (1992–Current)

Based on Table 7, the trajectory of Russian diplomacy in response to Western sanctions and perceived broken promises can be discerned through various shifts in its diplomatic stance over the decades. During Boris Yeltsin’s presidency (1992-1999), Russia adopted a defensive diplomatic posture, seeking negotiations and security assurances while officially expressing concerns. This period was characterized by high economic and political pressures, yet the diplomacy remained relatively conciliatory, aiming to maintain a dialogue with the West. This trend shifted under Vladimir Putin's first term (2000-2008), where Russia adopted a more assertive and principled stance, challenging Western dominance and strengthening regional alliances. Despite these efforts, the expansion of NATO and increased economic encroachments led to more strained relations, indicating a gradual disillusionment with Western intentions.

As tensions rose, particularly following the 2014 geopolitical developments, Russia's diplomatic replies were more focused on resilience and self-reliance. Under Putin's successive terms, notably after the outbreak of the crisis in Ukraine, Russia has dramatically shifted its focus to markets in Asia and the Middle East, promoting the concept of a multipolar world order. This shift indicates a strategic realignment in response to harsh sanctions and pressures, stressing a widespread Western objective of regime change rather than constructive engagement. Throughout the decades, Russia has sought various levels of collaboration with the West, ranging from participating in global issues to advocating for a more balanced international order. However, like the Iranian case, these initiatives have frequently been received with mistrust. The pattern of reaction, whether conciliatory or aggressive, appears to have little bearing on the overall Western approach, which continuously favors geopolitical power above meaningful diplomatic outcomes. This perspective emphasizes that, regardless of Russia's diplomatic strategy, the underlying goal of Western sanctions and pressures is to change Russia's political landscape, prolonging a cycle of mistrust and diplomatic impasse.

Iran and Russia have successfully navigated international sanctions and regional conflicts, forming a partnership that supports mutual economic, political, and strategic objectives. Despite challenges from U.S. sanctions, opportunities for further development exist through increased trade and strategic cooperation within SCO, BRICS, and EEU frameworks. Their future relations depend on skillful diplomacy and flexible adaptation to the international landscape.

## **Conclusion**

In accordance with the set goals and objectives of the dissertation research, the following main conclusions were made on the basis of analyzing a wide range of sources and literature in English, Persian and Russian on the problem of peculiarities of determining the diplomatic line of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation in the conditions of sanctions pressure.

The study argues for a comprehensive analysis of the multidimensional impact of global, regional and state sanctions on Iran and Russia, noting their significant economic, political and strategic implications, including for international relations. Despite the intention of Western countries and, in some cases, the international community to use sanctions as a means of influencing policy change within Iran and Russia, the effectiveness of these measures remains ambiguous. Sanctions have certainly put pressure on the economies of both countries, but they have also facilitated the adaptation of national development strategies to them through diversification of economies and foreign economic ties, diplomacy of inclusion in international integrations and regional partnerships, and recourse to the resources of the UN and other international organizations, which has mitigated negative effects. The resilience demonstrated by Iran and Russia, coupled with improved mechanisms for countering sanctions, underscores the strategic adaptation of their diplomacies to the complex landscape of international relations.

It is shown that the purpose and direction of the Western sanctions policy towards Iran and Russia were determined, in general, within the paradigm of neorealism in the theory of international relations. According to this approach, the main goal of sanctions policy is regime change in favor of a government that is in line with the values and interests of the sanctions imposing party, and the sanctions pressure strategy applied involves a gradual tightening of sanctions to increase pressure on the target countries in case of failure to achieve the expected result. This approach is evident in every stages

of sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation. In both cases, Western powers used economic sanctions as a mechanism to increasingly undermine the national economies of Iran and Russia. The basic logic was that by destabilizing the economies, they would generate growing public protest pressure that would eventually contribute to regime change.

Historical analyses reveal that both Iran and Russia have experienced three stages of sanctions, with the first and second stages comprising two distinct phases.

For Iran, the first stage spans from 1979 to 2004. The initial phase of this stage, from 1979 to 1994, marks the inception of nuclear and smart sanctions against Iran. Iran's "Dialogue of Civilizations" characterizes the subsequent phase, from 1994 to 2004, with the international community. The second stage for Iran, from 2005 to 2018, begins with the period of international sanctions and confrontational diplomacy from 2005 to 2014. This stage concludes with the second phase from 2015 to 2018, which corresponds to the period of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The third stage commences with the United States' withdrawal from the JCPOA and the initiation of the "maximum pressure" policy against Iran, a period that persists to the present day.

Similarly, for Russia, the first stage extends from 1979 to 1999, with the first phase encompassing the years 1979 to 1991, marking the end of the Soviet era. The second phase, from 1992 to 1999, witnesses Western pressures, including the Jackson-Vanik amendment. The second stage, from 2000 to 2021, has first phase that begins from 2000 ends in 2014 with the onset of Western sanctions against Russia. This stage concludes in the second phase with the period from 2015 to 2021, during which there is a notable shift in Western policies towards Russia and a gradual pivot by Russia towards the East. The third stage for Russia begins in 2022, characterized by intensified sanctions and pressures from the West. This stage, like Iran's third stage, remains ongoing.



The identified similarities in the application of sanctions policies against Iran and Russia emphasize the strategic consistency of Western foreign policy. This uniformity in approach not only reflects a common tactical scheme, but also emphasizes the importance of joint study of the Iranian and Russian experience of being under Western sanctions, and emphasizes the strategic need for Iran and Russia to unite their potentials to effectively counter the goals of Western sanctions.

It is proved that although the state strategies to overcome the sanctions pressure of Iran and Russia have some similarities, they differ in their rationale and implementation.

The IRI's fundamental response to the application of sanctions was the strategic idea of building a "resistance economy" to counter external pressure, the realization of which has both an intra-Iranian and regional dimension. This approach, initiated by Iran's Supreme Leader A. Khamenei, requires nationwide efforts, akin to jihad, to ensure the sustainability of the economy. Iran's transition from a theoretical framework to the practical implementation of a resistance economy during the 2013 tightening of sanctions was crucial. This economic philosophy argues that true progress depends on the well-being and engagement of the population, in clear contrast to Western definitions of development, which may prioritize macroeconomic performance over individual well-being. The concept of a resistance economy is not only an economic strategy but also a transformative social project in which every citizen participates, enabling Iran to sustain progress even in the face of serious external pressures. This approach underscores the fundamental belief of the country's leadership: a non-participatory economy is unthinkable within the Islamic Republic.

It is noted that Russia's response to similar Western sanctions demonstrates its focus on self-reliance and technological sovereignty. Russian leaders proceeded from the thesis of the country's independence and its ability to promote development and technological progress even in the face of economic sanctions. This stance reflects a strong national identity that is consistent with maintaining sovereignty over its

development trajectory. At the same time, this approach allows countries to complement each other's efforts to combat the common challenges posed by Western sanctions. This symbiotic relationship enhances their resilience by combining forces to mitigate the effects of economic restrictions.

The study presents a comparative analysis of the foreign policy orientations (diplomacy) used by Iran and Russia in response to sanctions, highlighting several key features and milestones. Both countries have demonstrated adaptability and strategic foresight in managing the complex international sanctions regime, albeit using different approaches reflecting their unique geopolitical and historical contexts.

Iranian counter-sanctions diplomacy has been shown to be characterized by the dual use of defensive and offensive diplomatic tactics. Defensively, Iran has sought to protect its economy by strengthening relations with non-Western powers, particularly Russia and China, and by seeking membership in international organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS. Offensively, the IRI has used its nuclear program as a bargaining chip and a means of asserting its sovereignty and regional power. The main stages of Iranian counter-sanctions diplomacy include the initial phase of isolation after the 1979 revolution, strategic defiance during the nuclear escalation in the early 2000s, the beginning of the economic jihad of resistance in 2013, attempts to re-engage with the West as part of the 2015 nuclear deal, and others. subsequent resolution after the U.S. withdrawal from the agreement in 2018, and finally a turn to eastern diplomacy.

Russia, in turn, has taken a global approach in its diplomatic relations, capitalizing on its status as a major global energy supplier and permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. Russia's diplomatic tactics were largely reactive and pragmatic in nature, aimed at disrupting or weakening Western efforts to isolate itself. The phases of Russia's counter-sanctions diplomacy can be divided into the post-Cold War perestroika, the 2014 post-sanctions confrontation, and the current phase of

deepening ties with China and other Eastern powers as part of its broader pivot strategy toward Asia and the Global South.

It has been shown that in the initial stages, the types of Iranian and Russian diplomatic responses to Western sanctions differed from each other, reflecting different geopolitical objectives and global and regional dynamics. Iran's strategy was mainly to use the factor of advancing its controversial nuclear program and intensifying regional mediation to offset Western pressure. Russia used its global energy resources and influence in the UN Security Council as its main countermeasures. However, the findings suggest a gradual convergence of their diplomatic approaches following key geopolitical changes: the imposition of tougher sanctions on Russia in 2014, the US withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018 and subsequent strengthening of sanctions on Iran, and further escalation of sanctions against Russia in 2022. These developments have been the catalyst for the framing of a more coherent Iranian and Russian posture, marked by a shared emphasis on forging strategic alliances with Eastern powers, minimizing dependence on Western economic systems, and collectively countering Western dominance in international affairs. This evolving synergy in diplomatic strategies underscores a strategic realignment in which both countries are increasingly replicating each other's tactics in response to increased Western sanctions by speaking with one voice, highlighting the complexities of global diplomacy in the current era of sanctions.

The analysis of Iran's and Russia's diplomatic maneuvers in response to the intensification of sanctions pressure has shown the high ability of these countries to strategically adapt to the increasingly turbulent landscape of international relations. Both countries have shaped new areas of foreign policy activity (Iranian diplomacies: “Look East,” “nuclear,” “resistance,” and “triangles”; Russian diplomacies: “Pivot to the East,” “Transportation Corridors,” and “Greater Eurasian Partnership”) and employed a range of diplomatic action strategies (from creating international integrations and strategic partnerships to participating in multilateral negotiation

formats). This adaptability underscores the importance of diplomacy as a tool of resilience, enabling Iran and Russia to maintain their positions in the world and pursue strategic goals despite significant external pressures.

The study of the strategies of diplomatic actions and responses used by Iran and Russia in the face of increased sanctions pressure showed the following differences.

Iran's diplomatic efforts under sanctions have focused on circumventing Western restrictions through a multilateral approach, which involved strengthening regional alliances, indirect warfare, and a nuclear program as influential factors in negotiating the lifting of sanctions. Iran has also effectively utilized these strategies to maintain its regional influence and negotiate from a position of strength, most notably in its ability to bring global powers such as Russia and China into its orbit to counter Western pressure. Russia has responded swiftly to sanctions, especially those imposed after 2014 due to the conflict in Ukraine, by strengthening ties with non-Western countries and introducing its own sanctions defense measures, such as the development of domestic industry and technology. In addition, Russia has actively engaged in strategically significant military operations, primarily in Syria, to strengthen its influence in the region and globally. These actions are part of Russia's broader foreign policy to restore its great power status and challenge the Western-centric structure of global governance.

It is substantiated that the mechanisms used by Iran and Russia to counter the negative effects of sanctions demonstrate a strategic turn towards self-reliance and greater regional interaction. By diversifying their economies, strengthening regional cooperatives, and pursuing diplomatic initiatives, both countries have developed a multifaceted approach to countering external pressures. These measures not only emphasize their ability to adapt to and resist the impact of sanctions, but also reflect a broader strategy to redefine their position within the global order. The pursuit of resilience in the face of sanctions is a testament to the strategic foresight of Iran and Russia, demonstrating their determination to preserve sovereignty, pursue economic

independence, and promote regional cooperation in the face of a changing geopolitical landscape.

In terms of long-term implications, Iran and Russia's strategic actions in response to global sanctions have laid the foundation for a strong alliance, indicating a strategic realignment where both countries are not just responding to sanctions, but are actively reshaping the system of their external relations to create a more favorable multipolar world order. The deepening of Iran-Russia relations against the backdrop of sanctions underscores the dynamic nature of international alliances, where external pressures stimulate partnerships that can change the regional balance of power.

In conclusion, although Iran and Russia have used different strategies of diplomatic action, there has always been a possibility of success in diplomatic relations with the West. However, such results were often unattainable due to the West's unfulfilled promises and prioritization of its own interests. The analysis suggests that regardless of the type of Iranian or Russian diplomacy, whether in accordance with Western interests or in spite of them, the results will usually be the same, and improvement of relations with the West and lifting of sanctions are unlikely to be achieved, since the West's main goal and logic is primarily related to regime change in both Iran and Russia.

Overall, in the early 2020s, for the first time, Iranian and Russian diplomatic actions in response to Western pressure show the highest degree of convergence that has not been seen before. This convergence of diplomatic strategies may portend the possibility of strategic partnerships in various sectors of bilateral relations and become a solid basis for building a counterweight to unilateral Western dominance and reinforcing the concept of multipolarity among other global players, thereby changing the dynamics of international relations.

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