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ALJARWAN MOHD HIER JARWAN
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IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM AS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS. PHASE ONE (FROM 1970 TO 2007)

The nuclear program implemented by Iran is currently one of the key aspects of the country's foreign policy doctrine, as well as the reason for the most serious foreign policy pressure on Iran from a number of world powers, in particular the United States. However, to date, little attention is paid to the historical and political aspects of the development of the Iranian nuclear program, in particular, its gradual development. The program was launched in the period before the Islamic revolution, by the forces of the monarchical regime of the Pahlavi dynasty. It is important to note that a number of foreign and domestic political factors at that time led to a situation where the demand for Iran's own nuclear program was fully supported by both the secular and monarchical regime of the Pahlavi shahs, and by Ayatollah Khomeini, who replaced it as a result of the Islamic revolution.

Key words: *the Islamic Republic of Iran's nuclear program, the IAEA, Treaty on the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons, the Middle East, USA, China, Russia.*

Starting in the 1970s, Iran's nuclear program began to be perceived as a certain problem in international politics, which in turn became an obstacle to the implementation of the country's foreign policy doctrine at that time. The Pahlavi monarchy was a conduit for American interests in the Middle East and therefore was under the US nuclear umbrella. That is why Tehran was one of the first states to join the Treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, signing it on July 1, 1969 and ratifying it on February 2, 1970. Nevertheless, there are some facts that suggest the possibility of conducting military-applied research in the nuclear field at that time. For example, since 1975, the Tehran Nuclear Research Center (TYANITS) has been conducting research on laser enrichment of uranium and the release of plutonium from irradiated (spent) nuclear fuel [3. P. 74].

In 1958, Iran established relations with the IAEA. On May 15, 1974, it signed an Agreement with the Agency on comprehensive safeguards for the non-nuclear states, parties to the NPT. Under the Safeguards agreement (initial code 3.1), the non-nuclear state undertook to inform the IAEA of nuclear materials that it imported or produced domestically and to report all locations of such materials.

The Agency's inspectors, for their part, conducted independent verification and assessed the completeness and accuracy of the state's statements regarding nuclear materials and their locations. According to code 3.1 of the Agreement, the states were required to inform the IAEA of a new nuclear facility 180 days before the appearance of a nuclear material on it.

At that time, the Agency could not even raise any claims against the American ally, although Tehran set a course for developing a closed nuclear fuel cycle (NFC) as a technical prerequisite for creating nuclear weapons and expressed interest in acquiring a possible plutonium creator in Canada: a heavy-water reactor, the likes of which were actively used in that country [8].

In addition, it was planned that by 1980, the French would build a facility for processing spent nuclear fuel in Isfahan. If this project was implemented, Iran would become a threshold nuclear state capable of releasing plutonium on an industrial scale. Therefore, in October 1976, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR made a presentation to France in connection with its plans to supply Iran with "sensitive" nuclear technology [11. P. 65].

The Islamic revolution of 1979 and the subsequent Iran-Iraq war suspended the country's highly ambitious nuclear program. This was also facilitated by the fact that the new Iranian leadership began to pursue a pronounced anti-American foreign policy. Relations with Washington and the West in general have particularly deteriorated after the seizure of the US embassy in Tehran. As a result, cooperation with Iran in the nuclear field was practically terminated. The construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant stopped in 1979. The reason for this was a significant debt of Iran for the previously performed works.

From this period until the beginning of the active phase of the Iranian nuclear crisis, which can be counted from 2002, no serious actions were taken by the IAEA against Tehran. It was believed that Iran was fulfilling its obligations under the agreement with the IAEA on the application of safeguards. This was facilitated by the following circumstance: until the mid – 1980s, the Iranian nuclear program was in deep stagnation, since the country's leadership did not see the need for its implementation. This was due to the economic crisis in Iran, the presence of other priorities and the lack of Western support, which led to the termination of funding for the nuclear program and the mass emigration of Iranian nuclear scientists. So, of the 120 employees of the chemical and physical departments of the University of Tehran, which housed the proposed research Institute of Iran for the study of atomic technologies, only 8 people remained [2].

The Iran-Iraq war convincingly showed Iran the capabilities of such a type of offensive weapons of mass destruction as chemical weapons used by the Iraqis in the course of hostilities. The Iranian leadership was particularly concerned about the military nuclear program implemented by Saddam Hussein's regime, which received a new impetus after the destruction of the Osirak nuclear research reactor in 1981. In particular, Saddam Hussein released from prison and rehabil-

itated prominent specialists in this field, increased the number of people working under the program 15 times and completely classified it [5]. However, all these efforts were not enough to restore the previous level of the nuclear program. In the context of the ongoing war, the sanctions regime and the lack of an experimental base, the project had to be gradually abandoned. Nevertheless, the very implementation of Baghdad's military nuclear program greatly worried Tehran.

In the mid – 1980s, the Iranian leadership began to consider the possibility of restoring its own nuclear program, apparently not excluding the military component. To this end, in 1987, Iran purchased technical documentation and components of two low-power gas centrifuges called P-1, the Iranian name is IR-1, using the black market network organized by the Pakistani scientist Abdul Kadirkhan. Such technologies are used for uranium enrichment and have a dual purpose, since they can be used to develop weapons-grade uranium. The decision to purchase equipment for centrifuge enrichment of uranium, according to the Iranian side, was then made by the leadership of the Atomic energy organization of Iran (OAEI). At the same time, a description of the technical processes for converting uranium from gaseous to metallic form and machining enriched metallic uranium into hemispheres was presented. Tehran has officially stated that it has never requested such technical documentation in any form [4. P. 3]. Nevertheless, this information can be used for military purposes, and unawareness on the part of the IRI top leadership looks strange. In addition, there is a letter from Ayatollah Khomeini, written in 1988, in which he points out to the need for Iran to gain access to the nuclear weapons.

The United States, concerned about the uncertainty of the goals of the Iranian leadership, began to pay special attention to those countries that continued to cooperate with Tehran in the nuclear field. The first to be hit was Argentina, which in the late 1980s not only replaced the core of the Tehran research reactor at TYANITS, which allowed it to be converted to the use of nuclear fuel with a degree of enrichment of about 20%, but also supplied 116 kg of fuel for this reactor [1. P. 120]. As a result of American pressure, in 1992, Argentina refused to continue supplying Iran with nuclear fuel and equipment, as well as training Iranian technical specialists, despite previous agreements.

In 1990, Iran signed an agreement with Spain to complete the work at the Bushehr nuclear power plant and supply nuclear fuel. However, under the influence of the United States, Iran's cooperation with Spain in the nuclear field was soon terminated.

In the mid-1990s, Washington exerted strong pressure on Beijing over the Sino-Iranian agreement concluded in February 1993 to build two small power reactors of 360 MW in Darhovin. As a result, Beijing has also had to abandon the profitable trades and minimize their cooperation with Tehran in the nuclear field. But by this time, Iran had already received technical documentation from China on the conversion of uranium that is the conversion from solid to gaseous form,

the preparatory stage before uranium enrichment, and the production of heavy water. Later, such technologies were mastered, which allowed the construction of a uranium conversion plant in Isfahan and later a heavy water production facility in Arak. China also sold Iran two test units that were already assembled in 1992, a miniature neutron source in 1994 and, in 1995, a zero-power research heavy-water reactor that allows production of up to 100 g of plutonium annually [7].

Under the influence of American economic sanctions and powerful political pressure, Brazil, India and Pakistan were forced to abandon cooperation with Iran in the nuclear field. Only Russia was able to defend its right to such cooperation, although it limited itself to projects that were not classified as "critical" nuclear products in strict accordance with all the requirements of national legislation and the Russian Federation's international obligations under the NPT. Thus, in the period 1995-2013, Russian specialists completed a nuclear power plant in Bushehr with a water-water power reactor VVER-1000 (VER-1000). Moreover, since December 2007, this facility has been subject to IAEA safeguards.

Until the mid-1990s, the leadership of Tehran tried to narrow the circle of people involved in the nuclear program as much as possible, in order to avoid any information leakage. At the same time, the bid was immediately made to create a closed NFC. As a result, in 1987-1993 all research and development (R&D) on the Iranian nuclear program was conducted only within the framework of the OAEI, without the involvement of technical universities and nuclear research centers [4. P. 3]. On the one hand, this increased the time required to carry out these operations, on the other hand, it allowed Iran to carry out such work quite secretly, gradually establishing its own production of gas centrifuge components.

Of particular interest is the fact that Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, President of Iran in the period from 1989 to 1997 approved, according to some reports, a secret Directive according to which Iran's nuclear status serves as a strategic guarantee of preserving the existing power. In order to achieve this status, the following measures were envisaged:

– use of all opportunities to acquire the necessary technology for the production of nuclear weapons;

– sending of Iranian specialists to various states to collect the necessary information;

– creation of secret nuclear centers and enterprises that could not only complement each other, but also carry out work in an autonomous mode [6].

In 1994-1996, in order to implement the senior management directives two containers of Pakistani uranium enrichment equipment were purchased through the Abdul Qadir Khan network for US $ 3 million, it was enough to load five hundred R-1 gas centrifuges. Apparently, that delivery was crucial for the full development by the Iranian specialists of the production technologies by 1999. By that time, Tehran was forced to expand the number of participants in the Iranian nuclear program at the expense of representatives of technical universities, as well

as to start manufacturing components at the enterprises of the military-industrial complex and conduct large-scale purchases abroad of vacuum equipment, special grades of steel and high-strength aluminum necessary for the production of gas centrifuges.

The success achieved in the late 1990s in the implementation of the uranium enrichment program and the accumulated reserves of necessary materials and components served as the basis for the Iranian leadership, already under President Atami, to deploy the corresponding pilot production at the Natanz nuclear facility, which was immediately created as a well- fortified and disguised as an agricultural enterprise structure with huge underground areas.

In 1996, Iran received full technical documentation from Pakistan for the improved R-2 gas centrifuges, which were two to four times more powerful than the previous generation and were more reliable in operation. According to the statement of the Iranian side, which was not confirmed by the IAEA, no work was carried out to develop the production of R-2 gas centrifuges until 2002. Only in March 2003, OAEI signed a contract with a private company that faced a serious problem of exporting a number of foreign-made components. The IAEA inspection of that company did not reveal any attempts to use centrifuge equipment for uranium enrichment.

At the same time, other nuclear infrastructure facilities were being created. In particular, the Iranians tried to develop uranium deposits in Yazd province, its reserves in the equivalent of nitrous oxide – uranium oxide amount to about 5 thousand tons with a sufficiently low content of this chemical element in the ore (less than 0.1%). Production of uranium ore was scheduled to begin in Sarande, and the production of uranium concentrate in Ardakan. However, the volume of annual production (about 50 tons of natural uranium) was clearly insufficient to meet Iran's own needs for nuclear energy, which led to the further desire of the Iranian leadership to continue developing the program, regardless of the difficulties that arise on its way, primarily of a foreign policy nature [9. P. 219].

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