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BASIC PRINCIPLES OF IRAN'S FOREIGN POLICY AT PRESENT STAGE

The Islamic revolution in Iran, which ended in victory in 11 February 1979, has led to fundamental changes in social and political life and in the state system of Iran. It has also cardinally revamped Iran's foreign policy which served to the interests of the Shah's regime for centuries. Having freed from the Shah's palace, from the narrow confines of serving to the interests of the family, it gained national significance, has become a political activity providing protection of national interests on the international scene. This update of Iranian diplomacy put the issue of development of conceptual and theoretical foundations on the agenda. This case was assigned to Ayatollah Behishti. Under his leadership, the basic law (constitution) of the Islamic Republic of Iran was prepared which approved the concept of foreign policy.

According to the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iran's foreign policy protests against any kind of exploitation and occupation. It is based on the principles of national independence and territorial integrity, protection of rights of all Muslims in the world in all areas, creation of a healthy relationship with the neo-colonial states. Provisions of this concept prepared in the Persian language, also coincide with the universal principles and norms of international law.

From the very beginning of the Revolution, Iran's foreign policy, before collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, has not taken neither eastern nor western concept. Bipolar world order formed after 1945, with the beginning of propaganda war (also called as «cold war») between two superpowers, the Soviet Union and the United States of America, has changed the status quo in international arena. But with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the existing world order has been subject to erosion.

In such circumstances, Iran was forced to make some changes in its foreign policy. The main reason for these changes was a fact of finding of a unipolar world order. Thus, many countries in the world, feeling the need to ensure their safety, have begun to seek a rapprochement with the United States of America. In other words, a unipolar world order has been established with the United States of America in its top, which identified itself as the only force capable of ensuring stability in any region of the world, including the Middle East. Exactly for this reason, after the collapse of the bipolar system, many of the former allies of Soviet Union in the Middle East, have begun to converge with the USA in order to preserve stability. This process also took place in other regions of the world.

As it was noted, after the victory of Islamic Revolution in Iran, the country has taken its course, which differed both from eastern and western concepts. However, first it must be mentioned that exactly how the principles of foreign policy have been developed.

From the first half of the 50s of the twentieth century, the official concept of Shah's regime was the concept of positive nationalism, and pan-iranism ideas based on it and, first of all, ideas of protection of the interests of Shah's regime. Due to the fact that it did not converge with the

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Islamic ideology and could not be as its basis, it was officially rejected by the new leadership of Iran. Thus, Iran's foreign policy was based on the concept of so-called concept of Ummah of prophet, which was adopted during the reign the prophet Muhammad. It should be noted that it differed from the doctrine of Arab nationalism (pan-arabism), which was adopted for the first time in 1949 in the BAAS Party in Syria and later became the official ideology of the Saddam regime in Iraq.

Under the new international environment, the Islamic Republic of Iran took the Islamic ideology as the basis of its foreign policy. Iran's foreign policy was formed on the principles of Islam, on a reciprocal responsibility to all Muslims and the principle of unselfish protection of all indigent people, especially in the Islamic world. However, it is clear that Iran can not lock itself from all the world and live with its life just because of the factors indicated above. On the contrary Iran, keeping the line of full independence, had to create political, economic, military and other relations with all countries of the world, irrespective of their system of government and political structure, and so, it has taken practical steps in this area. Iranian diplomacy has faced with numerous threats from neo-colonial states and opponents of Islamic revolution. But despite that, Iran managed to achieve positive results under the leadership of Ayatollah Seyyid Ali Khamenei. This logical policy also touched the relations with neighbors.

According to the principles of foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the main tasks of the Iranian diplomacy are: the protection of national independence of the country and the exercise of free activity, independent of any country and protection of the rights of all Muslims in the world.

These objectives are clearly defined in the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. First of all, the emphasis is put on ensuring of the independence of the country in various political, economic, military and other fields. Therefore, the Iranian constitution prohibited any activity that may promote the mastery of the potential and natural resources of Iran by neocolonial states. For example, Article 153 of the constitution forbade any agreement which may promote the seizure by foreign forces of natural resources, economic, cultural and other values of Iran. Ayatollah Khomeini, founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran said that «If, in the course of conclusion of a diplomatic agreement with any country in any field, you feel or imagine something that may harm Iran in the future, you should immediately abandon this treaty». In addition, under Article 152 of the constitution, foreign policy of Islamic Republic of Iran does not accept any exploitation by foreign states and any obligations to them, and insists on the establishment of relations with those states that do not seek hegemony in the world. And in the same article, Iran supports the struggle of all peoples who have been subject to violence and fight against expansion.

On the assumption of all above principles, foreign policy and diplomacy of the Islamic Republic of Iran has developed within the framework of national interests. Relations of Iran with states of the region have been expanded. Much has been done with a view to ensure stability and development in relations with countries of the region, bearing in mind their systems of government and political structures. In this regard, the work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran in the field of increase of political and other cooperation with countries of the region should be emphasized.

The main objectives and tasks of foreign policy of the Islamic Republic at the present stage may be described as follows: the unity of factors of strategic location and rich natural resources of contemporary Iran have turned this country into a field of global competition. This requires a serious approach to the problems of international relations. Leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran forms its foreign policy, taking into account, first of all, Iran's national interests in the

modern world. In this case, the Islamic government in Iran, basing on provisions of the constitution, build equal relations with all countries of the world, and in this respect, it does not give preference only to relations with large and strong states. Iran always makes a statement to create a mutual and friendly relations, even with those states with which Iran has political and ideological differences. For instance, all the presidents and senior Iranian officials have repeatedly said that if the United States of America will eliminate the mistrust to Iran, if they will respect the laws of our country, we stand ready to establish diplomatic relations. But, unfortunately, the USA's hegemonic policy, internal and external pressure on it, make it impossible to establish normal relations between two countries. At least, Iran has never sought to create tensions, on the contrary, it made great efforts to establish stability and peace throughout the world as well as in the region.

Relations with all Muslim countries, including the Republic of Azerbaijan are of great importance for foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This was reflected in the foreign policy concept of Iran. Iran and its northern neighbor Azerbaijan have deep historical, religious and cultural affinity. But two hundred years of domination of the Russian empire over Azerbaijan hinder the establishment of normal relations between two countries. Only after the collapse of the Soviet Union and gaining the independence by Azerbaijan, these relations were established on the basis of principles of international law and mutual benefit.

Iran acknowledged the state independence of Azerbaijan on 25 December 1991, the same day as the USA. Diplomatic relations were established on 12 May 1992.

Heydar Aliyev, President of Azerbaijan attached particular importance to the development of relations with Iran in all directions. And therefore, political, economic and cultural ties between two countries are being flourished.

As an example of this, one may bring an exhibition of Iranian products in Baku from 25 November to 4 December 1992. The exhibition was attended by over 300 companies of Eastern and Western parts of Azerbaijan, Zenjan and Gilan.

In December of the same year, Embassy of Iran commenced its activity in Azerbaijan. Simultaneously with the opening of the Embassy, a cultural center of Iran in Baku and Consulate General in Nakhchivan have been opened.

Trade relations between Iran and Azerbaijan are developing rapidly and the trade turnover usually takes place in the top ten.

Mutual official visits play an important role in the development of relations between two countries. Heydar Aliyev and Ilham Aliyev, Presidents of Azerbaijan and all presidents of Iran made mutual official visits. Hundreds of documents in many areas were signed.

List of used literature

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