

# **REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN**

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## **ABSTRACT**

of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

### **U.S. POLICY REGARDING THE NUCLEAR PROGRAM OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN IN THE 21ST CENTURY: GEOPOLITICAL ASPECTS**

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## GENERAL FEATURES OF THE DISSERTATION

**The relevance of the study and degree of elaboration.** For over 40 years, U.S.-Iran relations have significantly influenced America's regional policy. In 1979, Iran's ideologues implemented their project for an Islamic state, leading to the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI). Consequently, the U.S. began developing its policy toward this new state from scratch. In the 2000s, Iran increased its activity in shaping a new regional international architecture. The perception of the theocratic regime as an adversary solidified in the U.S., particularly after President George W. Bush labeled Iran as part of the "Axis of Evil" in 2002. The Iranian regime's hostile stance and aggressive rhetoric were viewed as explicit threats to American security. The relevance of this research topic lies in analyzing how American administrations approach U.S. policy formation and implementation toward Iran within changing international relations systems. The significance of this topic is linked to several key factors.

**Firstly**, there are security issues related to Iran's regional role. Iran's role as a controversial and influential state in the Middle East raises security concerns, particularly regarding its nuclear ambitions. The potential acquisition of nuclear weapons by Iran could alter the regional security balance and undermine global disarmament efforts.

**The second factor is** diplomatic approaches. U.S. policy regarding Iran's nuclear program has evolved, highlighting changing diplomatic strategies from Barack Obama to Joe Biden. The success or failure of these agreements is crucial for assessing U.S. negotiation capabilities with major powers like Russia and China.

**The third factor** is the impact of international sanctions and oil prices on energy security. Iran's position as a major oil exporter means that U.S. sanctions significantly impact global energy markets. The effectiveness of these sanctions is vital for maintaining U.S. influence in global politics.

**The fourth factor** involves U.S. geopolitical interests and global hegemony. Iran's nuclear program affects the strategies of the U.S., which seeks to maintain its global power, as well as those of other forces aiming to alter the regional order. The global relevance

of this issue is significant in terms of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons among major powers.

**The fifth factor** pertains to domestic political discussions. The differing views between Republicans and Democrats on this issue render the future direction of U.S. policy toward Iran unpredictable, reflecting broader ideological trends in U.S. foreign policy.

**The sixth factor** involves international law and multilateral approaches. Issues related to Iran's nuclear program are also connected to various aspects of international law. The responses of the U.S. and other states to nuclear proliferation are coordinated through institutions like the UN SC and other international bodies.

In addition to all these factors, the relevance of this topic intersects with key global issues such as regional security in the Middle East, international relations balance, and the effectiveness of diplomatic efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation. Understanding U.S. policy regarding Iran's nuclear program is essential for grasping future trajectories in U.S.-Iran relations and predicting changes in global power structures and regional security measures.

The situation surrounding Iran is primarily a product of the problems and mistakes characteristic of the initial establishment of the Non-Proliferation Regime (NPR). The Iranian nuclear crisis has allowed for a clear highlighting of these issues and mistakes, enabling an assessment of the full depth of the challenges faced by the international community. Therefore, the investigation into the geopolitical approach of the U.S. regarding Iran's nuclear policy in the early 21st century, as well as its geopolitical objectives in the Persian Gulf, the characteristics of international interaction and cooperation formats at both global and regional levels related to the NPR, and the main principles and development directions of U.S. foreign policy concerning Iran's potential acquisition of nuclear weapons, strengthens the relevance of this research.

The dissertation topic is being investigated for the first time in Azerbaijani scholarly thought. The problem also requires special analysis due to its insufficient scientific exploration in foreign political thought. Some characteristics of the topic are typical of various works by foreign authors with different volumes and content. Thus, several research groups related to the topic can be identified in

scholarly discourse. The analysis of the current state of the NPR regime and the study of the "Iran issue" are primarily undertaken by U.S. research institutes referred to as "think tanks"<sup>1</sup>.

Conditionally, theoretical works dedicated to the NPR can be divided into two major groups. The first group is represented by proponents of "technological determinism." According to its main element, the attempt by all countries to acquire nuclear weapons is conditional, and the only limiting factor is their technological proficiency<sup>2</sup>. The second group includes the work of the "motivation analysis" school. The conceptual foundation of this approach is based on the tenets of realism and neorealism in political theory, and the authors present a variety of theories<sup>3</sup>.

Among the works are highly specialized and extensive ones, such as the concept of rational deterrence, which takes into account some of the parameters that influence a state's willingness to join the "nuclear club." The research of V. Evseev and etc. is devoted to the "Iranian nuclear issue" in the context of the NPR, the protection, storage and circulation of nuclear materials, nuclear terrorism, and the problem of export control<sup>4</sup>.

The works of American scholars T.Shakleina, S.Rogov, A.Kokoshin, and others in the field of studying US foreign policy allow us to gain an idea of the characteristics of the balance of power in US administrations and the principles of developing and adopting foreign policy decisions and policies regarding Iran, these studies do not contain a comprehensive analysis of US-Iranian relations<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Institute for Science and International Security; <https://isis-online.org/>; Stockholm International Peace Research Institute; Williamson S. R., Reardon, S.L. and Rearden, S. L., *Origins of U.S. Nuclear Strategy, 1945-1953*.

<sup>2</sup> Buzan B., Jones C. *The Logic of Anarchy: Neorealism to Structural Realism* N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1993, 267 p.; Davis Z.S. *The Realist Nuclear Regime* // *Security Studies*. -1993. -21 p.; Waltz K.N. *Nuclear Myths and Political Realities*// *The American Political Science Review*. Vol. 84

<sup>3</sup> Davis Z.S. *The Realist Nuclear Regime* // *Security Studies*. -1993. -21 p.; Waltz K.N. *Nuclear Myths and Political Realities*// *The American Political Science Review*. Vol. 84

<sup>4</sup> Евсеев В.В., Сажин В.И. *Иран, уран и ракеты*. -М.: Ин-т БВ, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Шаклеина, Т.А. «Доктрина Клинтона» и будущее американской внешней политики // *США: экономика, политика, идеология*. 1997

The works of S. Zadonckiy, V. Sajin, and V. Evseyev<sup>6</sup> analyze the doctrinal basis of Iran's modern policy, the study of Iran's nuclear and missile programs as the basis of Iran's military power, the chronology of the Iranian nuclear crisis, and the positions of the main players in the "Iranian sphere."

The position of European analysts and experts, such as F. Barnaby, F. Jahanpour, M. Martellini, R. Redally<sup>7</sup> and others, is characterized by balanced and objective assessments of Iran's national nuclear program. The works of a group of researchers<sup>8</sup> provide a scientific analysis of Israeli-Iranian relations and the role of the United States in them. A distinctive feature of the scientific and analytical literature of the United States and Israel on Iranian issues is that in a significant part of the research, Iran is presented as a country that violates the international non-proliferation regime and seeks to create its own arsenal of nuclear warheads. Accordingly, the most effective method of combating this threat is considered to be a set of tools for the policy of combating NPR. Although the analysis of the scientific development of the topic indicates that a certain amount of work and research has been carried out on the state of the NPR regime, US foreign policy, and the theoretical and practical aspects of the Iranian nuclear program, the US policy on the Iranian nuclear program and its geopolitical aspects have not been practically developed. Taking this into account, the object, subject, goals and objectives of the study were determined.

**The object of the study.** The policy of the United States regarding the nuclear program in the 21st century. **The subject of the study** is the approach of the United States to the nuclear policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the 21st century.

**The aim of the research** is to comprehensively investigate the U.S. policy toward the Islamic Republic of Iran's (IRI) nuclear

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<sup>6</sup> Евсеев В.В. Военно-политические аспекты иранской ядерной проблемы. — М.: Ин-т проблем развития науки РАН, 2010

<sup>7</sup> Martellini, M. and Redaelli, R. "Towards a New Security Order in the Middle East and Towards a Strategic Role of Iran," Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS), Tehran, Iran, January 13, 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Özekmekçi, M. "Türkiye'nin Doğu Sınırında Yeni Bir Güç: Çin; Dennis, Ross. The Threat of War is Only Way to Achieve Peace with Iran. Сайт Washingt

program and its geopolitical impact in the 21st century. **To achieve this goal, the following key tasks have been identified:**

- Determine the evolution of U.S. foreign policy against the development of IRI's nuclear weapons during the first decade of the 21st century.

- Identify and analyze the place and role of IRI's nuclear program within American regional foreign policy strategy in the 21st century, as well as the U.S.'s geopolitical objectives in the Persian Gulf in the context of Iran's nuclear policy.

- Analyze the degree of influence of key factors on the formation of U.S. nuclear policy toward Iran across different administrations.

- Identify and investigate the visible aspects of continuity in American policy, as well as the individual characteristics of each administration's approach to the nuclear issue in U.S.-Iran relations.

- Reveal the effectiveness of Washington's economic sanctions against Tehran in relation to Iran's nuclear program development and support for international terrorist organizations operating in the Near and Middle East.

- Analyze the nuclear ambitions of Iran's supreme religious leader and presidents during the process of shaping Tehran's nuclear policy.

- Investigate the main directions of Iranian geopolitics in the context of its nuclear program.

- Analyze the different characteristics arising from U.S. foreign policy toward Iran since 2001.

**The scientific novelty of the dissertation** lies in the fact that the topic has not been comprehensively studied as a specific scientific research object in foreign academic thought, and it is being examined for the first time in Azerbaijani academic discourse. The scientific novelty is demonstrated by the following points:

- The evolution of U.S. policy toward Iran's nuclear program has been investigated during a period when certain geopolitical aspects of U.S. foreign policy have shifted from a globalist perspective to a regionalist one, identifying key problems in the development of U.S.-Iran relations during the examined period.
- A comparative analysis of the positions of key officials from the U.S. and Iranian governments regarding Iran's nuclear program has

been conducted, revealing differences in approaches to several issues related to the formation of U.S. policy toward Iran.

- It has been established that contemporary political processes occurring globally, particularly in the Near and Middle East, especially in Iran, have directly influenced American foreign policy.
- The internal political struggle between Congress and the White House in the process of shaping U.S. foreign policy toward Iran has been thoroughly studied and analyzed, revealing that Iran's foreign policy strategy significantly influences political disagreements among American Republican and Democratic politicians regarding U.S. policy toward Iran.
- A comprehensive examination of U.S. policy regarding IRI's nuclear program and its significant geopolitical aspects in the 21st century has been conducted, particularly demonstrating that:
- U.S. foreign policy aimed at promoting democracy, changing the ruling regime in Iran, and halting nuclear weapons acquisition did not yield the desired results within the specified timeframe.
- Although the primary complaints from Washington regarding the clerical regime it perceives as a "threat" remain, their qualitative components and priorities have changed: after the Cold War, most "threats" gained political significance and began to be associated with the nuclear program.
- The main issue in U.S. policy toward Iran is not its nuclear program but rather its role as a key factor in altering the balance of power in the Middle East and redistributing spheres of influence.
- The sanctions imposed by the U.S. against Iran have not significantly influenced the Iranian government's policies regarding international terrorism or its development programs for nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles.
- The ineffectiveness of sanctions applied around the nuclear program indicates a lack of adequate international legal methods to influence a country suspected of illegal activities. Such a situation could serve as a model and guide for future proliferating states.
- Although the P5+1 nuclear agreement was seen as another example of "soft power" among countries, it ultimately failed because Washington's principle of "soft power" could not prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.



- The failure of applying "soft power" in a political arena grounded in liberalism stems from its service to American hegemony and from the realist position established by Iran's supreme leader from day one. The Iranian political leadership assesses its geopolitical situation concretely, and strategic objectives in the region are becoming increasingly significant. The direct connection between regional changes and Iran necessitates considering Iran in solving political equations for those involved.

**The scientific significance of the research is determined by the following propositions presented for defense:**

1. During the studied period, three vectors were maintained in U.S. policy toward Iran: a fundamental understanding of the geostrategic importance of the IRI, the rejection of the political regime established there, and the recognition that the essence of the problem lies not in the nuclear program itself but in its role as a key factor in altering the balance of power and redistributing spheres of influence in the Middle East.
2. The "deterrence" policy aimed at weakening hardline supporters within Iran's leadership served as an important tool for achieving a more qualitative change in the nature of Iran's political regime and its transformation. Although this strategic orientation is shared by all factions within the U.S. political elite, they exhibited different approaches to tactical issues.
3. The implementation of the U.S. government's "deterrence" policy stemmed from its desire to establish pro-American forces in Iran and from the Iranian leadership's unwavering commitment to Khomeinism, its principle of "exporting revolution," and a steadfast adherence to policies regarding the stability and strength of the theocratic regime.
4. There has been no consensus among American leadership regarding policy toward Iran. U.S. "hawkish politicians" advocated for stricter sanctions and Iran's political isolation from the international community, while "peace politicians" believed in the negative consequences of interstate confrontation and argued that restoring U.S.-Iran relations should begin with direct bilateral negotiations without preconditions.

5. The characteristics of U.S. approaches to the Iran issue during 2001-2004 were defined by aggressive, predominantly unilateral, Israel-oriented foreign policy principles defended by neoconservatives, who played a significant role in shaping the White House's foreign policy concept.
6. The practical interests of American businessmen, as defended by President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney, were organically linked to neoconservative ideological postulates; this "symbiosis" of ideology and business interests became a distinctive feature of Bush's administration, conditioning increased attention to the vast region of the Near and Middle East.
7. Efforts by the White House to engage international public opinion regarding Iran's political and economic isolation were limited because leading states prioritized their own interests over those of America concerning IRI. A significant success in this area was the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1929 on June 9, 2010.
8. In the second decade of the 21st century, President Barack Obama and his administration initially favored diplomacy over military force and regime change options, emphasizing cooperation with the UN and leading global actors; however, as they failed to achieve expected results, they later aligned more closely with their predecessors' positions, prioritizing political pressure and sanctions in this context.
9. President D. Trump's decision that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) could not protect American national security interests and his unilateral withdrawal from it was deemed erroneous from a U.S. perspective, ultimately paving the way for Iran to achieve its nuclear objectives.
10. Although President Biden referred to JCPOA as a "dead" agreement, he did not exclude military action to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons; however, as hesitations continued in decision-making, acquiring nuclear weapons in Iran became merely a matter of time, indicating a defeat for U.S. efforts.
11. The hardline stance of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who repeatedly refused to create conditions for compromise and ensured that his country's president would continue to oppose

Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear agreement in May 2018, is viewed as evidence of his fundamental belief that it is impossible to trust agreements with the U.S., considering Tehran's nuclear program merely an excuse for American pressure, isolation, and efforts to weaken Iran while preparing for regime change.

**The theoretical and methodological foundations of the research** utilize works by K.N. Waltz, S.D. Sagan, Z.S. Davis, B. Frankel, B. Buzan, E. Solingen, G. Allison, P. Lavoy, Osipov, F. Barnaby, and F. Jahanpour<sup>9</sup>. The modern theoretical models of international relations and the terminological apparatus of the research are presented in a comprehensive manner.

In the analysis of the dissertation, a significant group of sources has been utilized that appear important for studying the political, legal, and factual aspects of the investigated topic.

Official documents, including materials from U.S. executive and legislative bodies, reflect the leadership's views on the objectives, tasks, and directions of American foreign policy, the structure of the modern world, and the positions of both the U.S. and Iran within it. This is primarily presented through the National Security Strategies<sup>10</sup> adopted by the U.S. in 2002, 2010, and 2018.

The US government's foreign policy statements from September 2001 to September 2023, including the 2002, 2003, 2006 National Strategy for Combating Nuclear Weapons, reports submitted to the Senate<sup>11</sup>, etc. They are part of the US legal system, also represented

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<sup>9</sup> Buzan B., Jones C. *The Logic of Anarchy: Neorealism to Structural Realism* (New Directions in World Politics) N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1993; Frank Barnaby. *Iran's nuclear activities*. OxfordResearchGroup. 2006; Waltz K.N., Sagan S.D. *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed*. New York: W.W.

<sup>10</sup> National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, September 2006; National Security, Strategy 2010; The Bush National Security Strategy: What Does 'Pre-emption' Mean // Strategic Comments. 2002; Project for the New American Century. last updated: October 16, 2019

<sup>11</sup> Sokolski H.A. "The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and Peaceful Nuclear Energy," testimony before the House Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation. Washington, DC, March 2, 2006; Iran: Weapons Proliferation Terrorism and Democracy: Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 109th Congress, 1st session, May 19, 2005. - Wash.: Gov. print, off., 2005

by the Executive Orders of the US President, are binding on all authorities of the American state, are not declarative in nature, and reflect the real policy of the US towards Iran. Presidential Executive Orders can be roughly divided into two groups. The first contains information on the imposition of sanctions against a group of subjects of international relations that are suppliers of nuclear and missile technologies, goods and services to the IRI. The second contains information on the extension of the country's policy of the US President regarding the IRI<sup>12</sup>. This group of documents includes official acts that enumerate the legal measures by which the U.S. president has extended the state of emergency regarding Iran. The uniqueness of the executive orders lies in their extraterritorial nature, meaning that the laws were applicable to foreign companies and governments involved in nuclear and missile technologies, as well as the supply of goods and services to Iran. This characteristic has caused significant discontent among countries that cooperate or wish to cooperate with Iran.

This group of sources is represented by reports from U.S. security and intelligence agencies, such as the Department of Defense, CIA, and the Director of National Intelligence. The information contained in the open sections of these reports allows for an analysis of U.S. security and intelligence agencies' positions on Iran's nuclear program, as well as tracking changes in the perspectives of representatives from these structures on the investigated issue over various years. The 2007 CIA report, "Iran: Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities,"<sup>13</sup> reflected the CIA's assessment of the specific issue. The report unexpectedly emphasized that Iran had no intention of acquiring nuclear weapons, noting that Iran suspended

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<sup>12</sup> Administration of Barack Obama, 2012 Executive Order 13599-Blocking Property of the Government of Iran and Iranian Financial Institutions February 5, 2012; Continuation of National Emergency Declared by Executive Order № 12170: Notice of the President of the United States, November 9, 1990; Notice of Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Iran: Extension of Executive Order 12170, November 9, 2005

<sup>13</sup> Trevorton, Gregory F. CIA Support to Policymakers: The 2007 National Intelligence Estimate on Iran's Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities. RAND Corporation.-2013; Iran: Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities, 2007

its nuclear program in the fall of 2003 and that the Iranian leadership had effectively ruled out the possibility of developing nuclear weapons. These assertions contradicted the continuous claims from the White House and the State Department regarding Iran's overt pursuit of nuclear weapons. This report from U.S. intelligence indicated that there was no reliable information confirming or denying Iran's desire to develop nuclear weapons.

Materials from U.S. legislative bodies are crucial for understanding the legislative stance on various aspects of the "Iran issue." The necessity of studying Congress's position arises from the role of the legislative branch in shaping and implementing the country's foreign policy. This group of sources includes bills, laws, amendments, congressional resolutions, reports, hearings, letters from members, and messages.

Congressional resolutions express deep concern regarding the Islamic Republic of Iran's non-compliance with the safeguards agreement with the IAEA and its involvement in activities intended for nuclear weapons development. This category of sources is an integral part of the U.S. legal system. U.S. congressional acts possess extraterritorial characteristics. There has been continuity in Congress's position regarding Iran's nuclear program development under both President Bush and his successors.<sup>14</sup> To determine the positions of individual representatives within Congress, materials from both the Senate and the House of Representatives have been utilized. Special attention has been given to reports from various committees and subcommittees dealing with the "Iran issue," as well as reports from the Congressional Research Service and members of the House Intelligence Subcommittee.<sup>15</sup> This publicly available document has ensured the assessment of the types of threats posed to

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<sup>14</sup>Iran Counter-Proliferation Act of 2007 (H.R. 1400), 110th Congress, September 25, 2007; URL:[www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov);URL:[www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)

<sup>15</sup> Nuclear Nonproliferation Issues, CRS Issue Brief for Congress, Updated January 2, 2002; Iran: Current Developments and U.S. Policy, CRS Issue Brief for Congress, Updated January 3, 2002; Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses. 18 May, 2012; Recognizing Iran as a Strategic Threat: An Intelligence Challenge for the United States: Staff Report of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence Subcommittee on Intelligence Policy, August 23, 2006

the U.S. by Iran. The authors of the document were unable to identify gaps in understanding the areas of intelligence that concern the U.S. regarding Iran's activities.

*U.S. Congressional Hearings.* Hearings held in various committees and subcommittees of the House of Representatives and the Senate play a significant role in the legislative branch of the government. Since parliamentary committees on international issues can track discussions on various aspects of the investigated problem, reports related to these hearings are important. Here, official representatives from executive structures regularly report on their activities and provide updates related to the "Iran issue" in the relevant parliamentary committees. The opinions of prominent U.S. experts<sup>16</sup> from different research centers and institutions with practical experience in the issues being studied at the CIA and the White House often align with the positions of officials during these hearings.

*Letters, messages from members of the US Congress.* This group of sources allows us to learn the personal point of view of individual members of the US Congress on the issue under study. This is represented by a letter from a number of congressmen to President George W. Bush dedicated to the "Iran problem" <sup>17</sup>.

*Materials of international organizations.* Materials from international organizations and their divisions, including official documents and intergovernmental agreements, resolutions from the IAEA Board of Governors, reports from the IAEA Director General, and resolutions from the UN Security Council, enable the study of the legal and technical aspects of the investigated topic and the assessment of how global trends influence various international processes. The official reports of the IAEA Director General are dedicated to the progress of Iran's nuclear program and the activities undertaken by the Iranian leadership in this area, as well as the implementation of safeguards agreements related to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)<sup>10</sup>. The resolutions of Congress express significant written

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<sup>16</sup> Safeguarding the Atom: Nuclear Energy and Nonproliferation Challenges: Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 110th Congress, 1st session, July 31, 2007

<sup>17</sup> Senators Say White House Must Seek Congressional Approval for Offensive Military Action against Iran, November 1, 2007

sources for the U.S., particularly regarding the application of various measures against the Islamic Republic of Iran. The preparation of such documents was necessary to determine the U.S. position concerning the development of the Iranian nuclear crisis and related issues at each stage. The U.S. has approached reports from the IAEA Director General, which noted that there were no clear indications of Iran conducting a secret nuclear program, with skepticism.

**Materials from UN Bodies:** In the dissertation, materials from UN Security Council resolutions 1696 (2006), 1737 (2006), 1747 (2007), and 1803 (2008), as well as the UN Charter, are represented. After the "Iran issue" was not resolved within the framework of the IAEA, it was referred to the UN Security Council. Resolution 1696 was precautionary in nature and recommended that Iran suspend all nuclear activities, primarily uranium enrichment. Following Iran's refusal to comply with this resolution, three documents were adopted that provided for the imposition of sanctions. Notably, these resolutions did not include military action as a form of sanctions and did not address the construction of a nuclear power plant in Bushehr.

*International Intergovernmental Treaties, Agreements, and Declarations.* This group of sources includes the NPT Treaty, the Concept for Combating Nuclear Proliferation, the U.S.-Iran Nuclear Energy Agreement, and the Iran Non-Proliferation Act, among others.

*Interviews, speeches, and reports from presidents;* reports from various years by the Chair of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; other reports and documents from the White House; as well as various analytical and statistical documents provide factual and numerical justification for the proposed theses and hypotheses.

*Media materials* reflecting the statements, speeches, and interviews of official figures have been considered in the analysis, as they allow for conclusions regarding various assessments. The methodological basis of the research employs general scientific principles and methods from political science. The comparative analysis method, which ensures the systematization and general analysis of data related to the problem, has facilitated the study and comparison of the conceptual framework of U.S. policy toward Iran in the context of its

nuclear program. This includes a detailed examination and comparison of various documents from the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Congress, CIA, Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the White House, and Tehran, as well as both countries' ministries of defense and their representations at the UN, along with resolutions from the UN Security Council and IAEA.

The research also utilized a problem-chronological method that involves breaking down narrow components and examining them in chronological order. This method has allowed for the distribution of material among different sections of the dissertation while isolating individual issues from the research subject and presenting a complete picture of the investigated topic. Using this method, policies of presidents and administrations regarding Iran's nuclear program have been analyzed across four different periods.

The historical-genetic method has enabled tracking changes in the assessments of both American and Iranian leadership regarding the nature of Iran's nuclear program and its peaceful use or threat to national security. This has proven useful for studying the U.S. position on "Iran's nuclear program" during the Iranian nuclear crisis and understanding the geopolitical ambitions of both states. To achieve this goal, the author has employed general scientific methods such as analysis and synthesis, which have provided a comprehensive understanding of the research subject. Additionally, methods of induction and deduction have been used to identify general patterns based on existing factual materials and to draw overall conclusions about specific issues related to the investigated topic.

The scientific-practical significance of the research lies in its practical recommendations and results that can be utilized in the scientific-practical activities of analytical centers and in scientific research. The materials from this research can be used in developing curricula for subjects such as international relations, theories of politics, political analysis, area studies, and forecasting international relations.

**Name of the organization where the dissertation work was carried out:** Baku Eurasian University.

**Approbation.** The main results of the research are reflected in the author's published scientific articles and reports at scientific



conferences.

**The structure of the dissertation.** The research work consists of an introduction, four chapters, ten paragraphs, a conclusion, a list of used literature and appendices. Introduction -30247, Chapter I - 71285, Chapter II -100206, Chapter III -101163, Conclusion -11054, total volume -283790 characters.

## MAIN CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

The introduction of the dissertation outlines the relevance of the research topic, analyzes the degree of problem development, and provides information about the research object, subject, goals, and tasks. It highlights the theoretical and methodological foundations, scientific novelty, propositions for defense, and the theoretical and practical significance of the work.

The first chapter, titled "**The Evolution of U.S. Foreign Policy Against the Development of the Nuclear Program of the Islamic Republic of Iran,**" consists of two main sections and two sub-sections. The first section, "U.S. Geopolitical Approach to Iran's Nuclear Policy and Geopolitical Objectives in the Persian Gulf," analyzes U.S. foreign policy doctrines and non-proliferation concepts at the beginning of the 21st century. This analysis allows for a geopolitical assessment of U.S. policy toward Iran's nuclear program and helps determine its developmental dynamics.

A historical overview of Iran's nuclear program is presented, along with an examination of changes in U.S. geopolitical codes in the 21st century and bilateral agreements regarding nuclear technology exchange and nuclear security cooperation between Iran and the U.S. The incorporation of non-proliferation into U.S. foreign policy is analyzed through documents from Presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton, as well as unilateral sanctions imposed on Iran following its designation as a "rogue state."

Regionalism gained prominence during Bush's presidency, shifting some aspects of U.S. foreign policy from a globalist to a regionalist perspective, with a focus on specific areas like the Middle East (ME) and South Asia (SA). Geopolitical contradictions

deepened with M. Khatami's rise to power in Iran and his proposal for "dialogue among civilizations," which did not alleviate tensions but highlighted international obligations in combating terrorism.

Following September 11, U.S. involvement in the ME intensified, revealing that geopolitical codes concentrated on regions like South Asia and the Middle East reflected a common perspective among U.S. leaders after the Cold War. Gradual positive changes in ME countries' relations with Iran stemmed from Tehran's cautious tactics regarding ME issues and hopes for normalizing Iran-U.S. relations.

Despite failures and fluctuations, by the end of the 2010s, long-term strategies in the ME were undergoing transformation processes. In this context, Iran pursues a cautious foreign policy to prevent conflicts with U.S. interests while leveraging its geopolitical capabilities to escape geopolitical encirclement.

**The subchapter “US policy towards Iran's nuclear program during the George Bush era” includes “US policy of conservatively based 'deterrence' towards Iran's nuclear program.** Defining the Boundaries of Pressure Instruments (2002 - Early 2005)," the focus is on the U.S. deterrence policy concerning Iran's nuclear program during the period from 2002 to early 2005. This analysis outlines three main phases of the Bush administration's strategic approach toward Iran in the context of the development of Iran's nuclear program from 2005 to 2008, as well as the establishment of pressure tools against Iran.

It is shown that the beginning of George W. Bush's presidency coincided with a structural change in the U.S. conservative program, overlapping with liberal programs in power systems. The "New American Era" project, presented under the leadership of neoconservative politicians defending a hard military-political hegemony, transformed into a government program for foreign policy, incorporating an analysis of defense planning with a list of targets and situations where nuclear weapons could potentially be used.

The approaches of key figures such as CIA Director George Tenet, K. Rice, head of the National Security Council overseeing U.S. foreign policy toward Iran, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, and Vice President Dick Cheney are analyzed. It is indicated

that the "flexible hegemony" concept implemented during Clinton's administration evolved into a notion of "hard hegemony" during Bush's term, while the fight against terrorism became a favorable tool for imposing U.S. values on other countries and peoples.

Bush's cautious approach to using force was primarily due to a lack of appropriate conditions and difficulties in Afghanistan and Iraq. He managed to avoid accusations of excessive liberalism, thereby preventing rising discontent among military ranks. By sanctioning the development of military operations against Iran, President Bush ostensibly followed the line of neoconservatives who were supposed to reduce pressure on the administration from that side.

**In the subsection titled "The Strategic Line of the Bush Administration Toward Iran in the Context of the Development of Iran's Nuclear Program,"** it is noted that by early 2005, the White House acknowledged the impracticality of overthrowing Iran's theocratic regime through military means in the near term. The U.S. aimed to engage Western allies in promoting "democratization" in the Middle East and sought to form an anti-Iran coalition, focusing on Iran's nuclear issue.

By early 2005, military options were deemed a "caution," with a preference for diplomatic resolution of Iran's nuclear program. The administration recognized that while military options existed, utilizing force could be politically damaging and undermine alliances. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice proposed a strategy requiring Iran to accept comprehensive inspections, cease support for radical groups, and warned of potential military action if Tehran maintained its hardline stance. In response, Iran indicated it would resume uranium enrichment activities if its proposals were not accepted.

In early 2006, following Ayatollah Khamenei's assertion that Iran would not abandon its nuclear program, seals were removed from the Natanz facility under IAEA oversight. A proposed joint uranium enrichment venture in Russia failed due to U.S. insistence on referring Iran's nuclear file to the Security Council. The U.S. policy was criticized as a failure, with claims against Iran viewed as politically motivated.

Iran defended its pursuit of peaceful nuclear energy as a respon-

se to changing conditions, while the U.S. increased pressure to compel a strategic reconsideration. In 2006, Washington allocated \$75 million to support Iranian opposition groups, and the UN Security Council imposed sanctions against Iran in resolutions 1737 and 1747. By mid-2007, Khamenei announced intentions to continue what he deemed "illegal" nuclear activities in response to sanctions.

Realizing that aggressive military rhetoric was ineffective, the Bush administration shifted toward softer measures; however, these lacked thorough analysis of Iran's internal politics and did not yield positive results. Iran maintained its hardline rhetoric and took steps to stabilize its regime while rejecting U.S. conditions. Consequently, by the end of Bush's presidency, U.S.-Iran policies reverted to those reminiscent of the Shah's era.

Overall, U.S. policy during Bush's presidency can be characterized as oscillating between "soft power" and "hard power," ultimately integrating both approaches.

**The second chapter, entitled “Continuity and Change in US-Iran Relations: From Barack Obama to Joe Biden to the Iran Nuclear Deal,”** consists of two subchapters. The first subchapter analyzes **“Changes in Washington’s Tehran Policy on Iran’s Nuclear Energy Development During Barack Obama’s Presidency.”** It is shown that with the election of B. Obama as president, new lines of communication between Washington and Iran have emerged. From the very first day, he has accepted a soft power strategy for Iran as the best policy, and in his 2009 Nowruz message to Iran, he uses the phrase “Islamic Republic of Iran”. The Obama administration has announced that it will not impose any preconditions for sitting down at the negotiating table with Iran on the nuclear issue, and its imitation of the “Hot Dog Diplomacy” strategy to start the negotiation process has been successful. The Geneva Agreement, signed in 2009, provided Iran with a golden opportunity to demonstrate the legality of its nuclear program. Although Obama went to the UN SC to demand amendments to the resolutions banning Iran from exporting nuclear energy, Iran soon reneged on the terms of the deal.

In the 2010 Nuclear Review, the objectives of U.S. nuclear policy are analyzed, highlighting the task of reducing the role of nuclear weapons while recognizing the objective increase in the

capabilities of non-nuclear weapons provided by new technologies. Concurrently, a strategic decision is made regarding the "shift of the center of gravity to Asia." This new course is openly declared by President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at the end of 2011. The political-military implications of this "shift of the center of gravity" are articulated in new documents—Strategic Defense Directives. The review reflects that the deployment areas for weapons are closer to potential targets, indicating a transition from a global to a regional conceptual framework, which is considered an important element of "effective regional security architecture."

By the end of 2009, due to a lack of results from diplomatic efforts Obama shifted to strategies of increase political pressure and sanctions against Iran, culminating in the adoption of Resolution 1929 in 2010. Although the White House makes concessions to gain support from Russia and China for Resolution 1929, both countries oppose the imposition of more severe sanctions.

In November 2011, the IAEA's report in Vienna explicitly links Iran's nuclear program to nuclear weapons for the first time, igniting discussions in the West and Israel. The failure of sanctions to alter Iran's foreign policy raises doubts about their effectiveness; Iran manages to increase its export and import figures each year and employs methods that indirectly neutralize sanctions. The confrontation between the two countries continues until 2013, culminating in President Hassan Rouhani's election.

In March 2013, it is reported that the U.S. begins a series of bilateral negotiations in Oman with Iranian officials regarding possibilities for a significant agreement on Iran's nuclear development. In 2013, a phone conversation occurs between Obama and Rouhani, during which both parties share several policies based on a "quid pro quo" strategy. Obama reconceptualizes the military route of hard power into a more coercive diplomacy based on soft power, "punishment," and "deterrence." As a result, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is signed on April 2, 2015, in Lausanne by diplomats from the U.S., Iran, France, Germany, the UK, the EU, China, and Russia to achieve a comprehensive framework regarding Iran's nuclear program. This agreement, which firmly reaffirms commitments, leads to the easing of previously imposed economic

and financial sanctions by the UN Security Council, the EU, and the U.S. against Iran. The most severe sanctions are lifted, and Iran gains the right to export oil, its main source of foreign currency. The agreement becomes one of the key diplomatic successes of Obama's foreign policy aimed at resolving the crisis.

As a result, it is concluded that the Obama administration prioritizes security and economic interests over promoting democracy in its foreign policy toward Iran. Although it somewhat successfully engages Iran in negotiations, it fails to change the regime's perception. The policy power of the Obama administration is characterized more by coercive diplomacy through sanctions than previous administrations. While the sanctions imposed by the U.S. and the international community partially paralyze Iran's economy, Iran does not abandon its nuclear program or its imperative to become a regional power capable of influencing decision-making in the region.

The ongoing "deterrence" policy under sanctions does not isolate Iran from pursuing its self-defense strategy or from influencing other countries' internal affairs; rather, it remains determined to empower itself in making decisions about the future of the region.

**In the second subsection, the U.S. policy regarding Iran's nuclear program during the administrations of Donald Trump and Joe Biden is analyzed.** It is shown that Trump and his team took a firm stance against Iran, focusing on neutralizing Iran's destabilizing influence and limiting its support for terrorism as part of their strategy to combat the nuclear threat. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is sharply criticized by Trump, who claims that the lifting of sanctions after the agreement led to a 40% increase in Iran's military budget, which was used to create chaos both within the U.S. and beyond its borders. Despite the agreement involving \$150 billion in funds and \$1.8 billion in cash, Trump evaluates it as one of the worst and most unilateral operations signed by the U.S., announcing on May 8 that the U.S. would withdraw from the agreement.

The P5+1 members attempt to maintain the agreement without U.S. participation. Although Mike Pompeo sends a letter to the UN Security Council President informing him about the initiation of "snapback" sanctions, this call goes unheeded. Tehran views this

event as Washington's "historic defeat," strengthens its position, and achieves its goals at this stage. The U.S., on the other hand, begins to impose sanctions on Iran, which proves ineffective in resolving issues related to Iran's nuclear program. In response to a deep economic crisis, Iran violates the terms of the agreement a year later. Allies express dissatisfaction with this decision, while China announces it will continue its cooperation with Tehran to ensure the integrity of the agreement.

The key points that forced the U.S. to withdraw from the JCPOA are analyzed in this subsection. It is indicated that Trump believes the JCPOA agreement was inadequate in addressing the Iranian threat in the U.S. He criticizes the agreement for having an 8-15 year limited duration and demands full access for inspectors to Iranian military sites, prohibits Iran from accumulating and testing its missile arsenal, and requires Tehran to cease its "malign activities" in the region. In response, Iran insists that it will not accept any law passed by the Senate declaring that it is unacceptable for the US to withdraw from the nuclear deal and insists that the US must first lift all sanctions imposed by Trump before returning to negotiations with Iran.

In April 2020, negotiations begin in Austria to ensure compliance with the terms of the agreement; however, after hardline President Ebrahim Raisi is elected in Iran, this process comes to a halt.

In 2021, President Biden faces numerous domestic problems, making Iran policy less of a priority. Meanwhile, his foreign policy team explores various options for extending JCPOA negotiations and adding preliminary conditions for rejoining the nuclear agreement. The administration indicates that resuming nuclear talks is intended alongside addressing additional non-nuclear issues. It shows support for maintaining a "nuclear deal" with Iran. This approach is positively received in Iran, as reflected in various messages sent to US.

After the election, the administration does not take any real action regarding this matter, and uncertainty in foreign policy continues to prevail. It is shown that Biden's foreign policy toward Iran emphasizes multilateral relations and institutionalization in regulating relations with Iran, focusing on liberal internationalism while highlighting joint efforts and "smart power." In February 2020, allies warn that an opportunity window for resolving conflicts with Iran is

closing and state that Iran continues to expand its nuclear program.

An examination of statements from senior officials in Biden's administration reveals that there is no serious intention to return to the original JCPOA; rather, there is a focus on achieving a new agreement and conducting negotiations. Although both sides initially propose a "step-by-step" approach as a symbol of compromise in restoring the agreement, Ayatollah Khamenei excludes this "step-by-step approach" in 2021, declaring that there will be no phased return and that Iran will only comply again after all US nuclear weapons are completely dismantled.

Similar to Trump's presidency, during Biden's term as well, Iran responds to the "maximum pressure" campaign with "resistance" and manages to achieve success. Experience shows that internal and international coalitions must also be considered in US policy toward Iran. If the issue of nuclearization with Iran is not resolved, nuclear proliferation in the region will become inevitable, with countries like Turkey, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia potentially seeking their own nuclear capabilities.

**In the first subsection of Chapter III titled "Geopolitical Aspects of Iran's Nuclear Program,"** the activities of Iranian officials regarding the nuclear program are examined, and the significance of nuclear energy for Iran is analyzed. It is shown that Iran's political interests, the effective maintenance of "balance of power" and "deterrence" policies, and the use of nuclear energy for defensive purposes are crucial for addressing changing regional and extra-regional threats. Ayatollah Khamenei views possessing nuclear knowledge as a strategic economic goal and a key factor for economic progress, making efforts to acquire nuclear energy "inevitable."

The subsection analyzes the changing perspectives of Iranian leaders toward the nuclear program.

Khatami found himself in a difficult position as the other side refused to recognize Iran's right to acquire nuclear energy as a strong country in the Persian Gulf and its economic and technological needs. Although negotiations with the West remained incomplete, during Khatami's presidency, agreements such as those in Sadrabad, Brussels, Paris allowed Iran to gain various opportunities from technical, practical, and security political aspects while facing the



West's hardline policies.

President Ahmadinejad enters the political arena from a very different position based on the use of nuclear weapons: he declares that Islam is against weapons of mass destruction and states that Iran has no intention of producing such weapons. He emphasizes Iran's "right not to give up" on acquiring nuclear technology and expresses a desire to share Iran's nuclear secrets with other Muslim countries, inviting other states and private companies to assist with Iran's nuclear program. He attempts to seize the initiative from Europe and elevate it to a legal-political level while advocating for including the UN Security Council's "Asian wing" in nuclear negotiations. By challenging the West's stance on Iran, he aims to prevent significant sanctions and military intervention decisions against Iran in the Security Council.

During Hassan Rouhani's presidency, the ban on dialogue between Iranian and U.S. leaders is lifted. By establishing close connections with P5+1, he shifts conditions from a political direction to a legal one, achieving success in negotiations through this political understanding.

Khamenei rejects the notion that economic problems stem from international issues; he maintains that solving economic difficulties lies within reducing Iran's dependence on foreign factors through a resistance economy. He views significant concessions related to nuclear and long-range missile programs as essential for regime survival amid deepening economic crises and rising public protests.

Whenever the administration seeks additional concessions from Iran, it fails to guarantee that sanctions will not be reinstated in the future even if they are lifted. Recognizing this unpredictability from the administration, Tehran does not yield to demands for changing its returning to negotiations.

The semi-chapter analyzes the specific points, demands, and proposals in the rules put forward by President I. Raisi in the Vienna talks. During Raisi's visit to Beijing in February 2023, Xi Jinping assured Raisi that he would support Iran in the negotiations on the nuclear deal. While this and Omar Sultan's expected visit to Tehran may indicate that efforts to revive the BHFP talks are ongoing, the potential of these efforts is still unclear, as formal BHFP talks have

not resumed since March 2023.

Analysis shows that Iran's nuclear program is the most advanced in the country's history, and Iran aims to acquire nuclear weapons and may soon have them. The death of I. Raisi and other high-ranking officials accompanying him in a helicopter crash in 2024 did not change Iran's nuclear policy. Although the newly elected President Pezeshkian has expressed a softening of relations with the US in Iran's foreign policy, he has not yet put forward any significant position that would change the direction of nuclear policy.

**The final subsection titled "Key Directions of Iran's Geopolitics in the Context of the Nuclear Program"** examines the geographical coordinates and strategic position that condition Iran's geostrategic relevance. It is noted that the U.S. Department of Energy's latest report designates Iran as having the second-largest natural gas reserves and the third-largest oil reserves in the world. Iran's gas reserves have increased by 3 trillion cubic meters, holding 12% of global oil reserves and 24% of U.S. total oil reserves. In 2021, Iran was the fifth-largest crude oil producer in OPEC. Therefore, Iran's recognition by global powers is vital in current international relations.

The subsection analyzes the main directions of Iran's geopolitics in the context of its nuclear program and how these intersect with the interests of the U.S., EU, Israel, China, Russia, and other regional states. It concludes that the structure of competition shaping the geopolitical landscape of the Gulf makes regional diplomacy challenging; it is not static but undergoing profound changes, creating both new opportunities and new diplomatic and strategic problems for Western governments.

For Beijing, Tehran serves as a beneficial platform for developing great power competition with Washington. China's recent support for the JCPOA can be seen as a response to Israel's growing military capabilities amid real international fears regarding an increasingly assertive Iranian nuclear deterrent.

It is highlighted that one of the issues to be resolved amid strengthening geopolitical rivalry among the U.S., Europe, Russia, and Iran is the demilitarization of the Caspian Sea basin.

The subsection analyzes Iran's relations with Israel, one of the opposing actors in Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons. It investigates

the factors that have intensified the enmity between the two countries. Against the backdrop of Iran's continued support for the Palestinian national resistance movement, mutual threats of destruction from Tehran and Tel Aviv have led to both sides being perceived as irreconcilable rivals. Israel's objective is to prevent the emergence of a new nuclear player in the region and to halt any activities by Iran related to nuclear technology. In November 2022, they simulated an airstrike on Iran's nuclear facilities, which aligns with the official U.S. stance on the issue. Following an attack on U.S. bases in Syria by Iranian-backed forces, President Biden stated in March 2023 that he would "act with force" to protect his people.

The key directions of Iran's geopolitics in the context of its nuclear program encompass a complex interplay of economic, political, and military consequences for both the region and the broader international community. Economically, the U.S. and its allies have imposed economic sanctions on Iran to pressure it into halting its nuclear activities and returning to negotiations. Politically, the nuclear program has affected regional stability.

The geopolitical implications of Iran's nuclear program are linked to broader international security issues and are viewed as a potential threat to international efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation. Specifically, Iran's nuclear program impacts regional power dynamics in the Middle East. Ultimately, despite comprehensive pressures and indirect interventions, Iran is already at the beginning stage of converting its acquired nuclear materials into nuclear weapons. In February 2023, international atomic monitors in Iran detected uranium enriched to 84% purity—just below weapon-grade level (90%)—which could be seen as a test aimed at paving the way for final production of weapon-grade uranium.

*As a result, the research concludes with proposals and recommendations of theoretical and practical significance based on the summarizations.* It is concluded that since 2001, one of Washington's political activity directions has been to use the existing Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as a tool for pressuring and promoting cooperation with several countries and as a pretext for intervening in the internal affairs of regions, which is related to U.S. national interests. The fight against terrorism has transformed into "a new

organizational principle of American foreign policy" and has effectively become a favorable means for global expansionist policies and for imposing American values on other countries and peoples.

U.S. policy toward Iran has fundamentally recognized the geopolitical significance of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI), rejecting the existing political regime, and has maintained that the essence of the problem lies not in the nuclear program itself but in its role as a key to changing and redistributing the balance of power in the Middle East. While there have been ongoing complaints from U.S. leadership regarding the "threat" posed by the clerical regime's policies, their qualitative components and priorities have changed: after the Cold War, most "threats" gained political significance and were subsequently linked to the nuclear program.

The diplomatic and economic pressure strategy applied by the U.S. to halt Iran's nuclear program has largely been unsuccessful, failing to prevent the development of Iran's nuclear program. Bush's strategy for combating nuclear proliferation was directed at preserving America's status as the sole superpower, categorizing countries into "reliable" (India, Pakistan) and "unreliable" (Iran, North Korea) and prohibiting the development of nuclear technologies by the latter. This collectively pushes non-nuclear countries toward forming a "multipolar power" concept, suggesting that only significant military capability can guarantee influence in international arenas. Based on this logic, possessing a deterrent weapon capable of fulfilling that role is necessary to feel secure in dialogue with the U.S.

The Obama administration's decision to engage in negotiations with Iran regarding its nuclear issue without preconditions, employing "smart power" diplomacy, resulted in positive outcomes by separating nuclear negotiations from discussions about Iran's internal affairs, defense capabilities, and regional activities, focusing solely on Iran's nuclear activities.

During Trump's presidency, Iran responds to the "maximum pressure" campaign with "resistance," achieving success. The factors that compelled Trump to withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) include the lack of a sufficiently strong mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the agreement, failure to grant international inspectors full access to Iranian military

sites, the inability to allow inspections at any time and place, and the absence of demands regarding Iran's ballistic missile program, which it had developed over decades.

An analysis of Biden's statements in Congress reveals his real objectives, indicating a departure from Obama's foreign policy and security successes. The escalating conflict surrounding Iran's nuclear program demonstrates the ineffectiveness of unilateral sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council and several states against Iran, highlighting a lack of adequate international legal methods to influence a country known for its illicit activities. Such a situation could serve as a precedent and guide for future proliferating states.

In disarmament, countries like India, Pakistan, and North Korea do not hold official nuclear status despite possessing nuclear weapons; they remain outside the regime and show no intention of participating in disarmament processes, thereby calling into question the necessity of the non-proliferation regime in its current form. Israel remains committed to its "bomb in the basement" stance and has no intention of taking steps toward nuclear disarmament. While Iran is a powerful actor in the Near and Middle East region, it can never feel secure against the ongoing threat posed by the aggressive policies of the U.S. and its ally Israel. Therefore, Iran is insistent on acquiring nuclear weapons.

The failure to implement "soft power" in a political arena based on liberalism stems from its service to U.S. hegemony and from the realist position articulated by Iran's supreme leader from the outset. The Iranian political authority assesses its geopolitical situation concretely, with strategic objectives in the region becoming increasingly significant.

The direct connection between regional changes and Iran necessitates considering Iran in solving political equations. The U.S. geopolitical approach to Iran's nuclear policy in the 21st century encompasses energy security, nuclear proliferation concerns, regional stability, counter-terrorism trends, strategic alliances, and complex combinations of diplomatic-economic tools. This paradigm reflects the complex geopolitical mosaic of the Persian Gulf, where energy reserves, regional stability, non-proliferation demands, counter-terrorism imperatives, and strategic alliances inform U.S. policy de-

cisions. Navigating this geopolitical quagmire presents a complex challenge that shapes the contours of the global strategic environment.

**The main content of the dissertation was reflected in the following scientific works of the author:**

1. XXI əsrdə ABŞ-ın Mərkəzi Asiyadakı geosiyasəti və İran faktoru// Sivilizasiya, № 4, 2021, s.43-54
2. Corc Buş administrasiyası dövründə (2001-2008) ABŞ-ın İran siyasəti //3-cü Beynəlxalq Elmi Araşdırmalar Kofransı.15-16 oktyabr 2021, s.1238- 1249
3. US policy towards iran during the George W. Bush administration (2001-2008) 3. International Baku Scientific Research Congress.October 15-16, 2021/ Baku, Azerbaijan Baku Eurasia University, p.562-565
4. ABŞ-ın İsrail-İran münasibətlərinə təsiri: Obama və Tramp dövründə İsrailin İran siyasətində nüvə proqramının yeri//Qafqazşünaslıq, № 1, 2022, s.71-86
5. İranın xarici təhlükəsizlik siyasətində nüvə proqramının yeri və rolu: ABŞ və İsrail faktoru// Sivilizasiya, № 2, 2022, s.52-63
6. İranın nüvə siyasəti: beynəlxalq amil və təsirlər// Sivilizasiya, № 3, 2022, s.27-37
7. ABŞ və İran arasında nüvə sazişi / “Müstəqil Azərbaycan: gerçəklik işığında” Respublika Konfransının materialları. Bakı: 25- 26 may 2022.- s.177-182
8. US-Iran relations in the XXI century: Obama administration`s policy towards Iran"/Uluslararası Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Dergisi, 2023, Cilt 6, №3, p.74-86
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