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TURKEY AND THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This article examines Turkish-Iranian relations in the context of Iran's nuclear program. The following matters will be analyzed:

- improved Iranian and Turkish relations after 2002 (AKP government);
- pragmatism versus rifts between the two states;
- different attitudes towards Iran's nuclear program;
- Turkey's role as a mediator between Iran and the West.

Relations between Iran and Turkey have long been defined by mutual suspicion and competition, despite a 312-mile border that has remained unchanged since 1639. The oldest fixed boundary in the Middle East, the Turco-Persian border, was established in 1639 by the Treaty of Kasr-i Shirin, also called the Treaty of Zuhab. Both states may treat each other as rivals and competitors for regional leadership. Both are descendants of empires with hegemonic histories. Persia converted to Shiite Islam, to distinguish itself from the Sunni Ottoman caliphate. During the Pahlavi monarchy, Iran and Turkey had good relations, both economic and political. Problems arrived with the Islamic revolution in Iran. On one hand, Turkey felt threatened by Iran's Islamic fundamentalist ideology, on the other, for many years Iran perceived Turkey as a secular pro-Western state.

The Islamic revolution in 1979 and removal of the Shah, and additionally their fierce anti-American attitude, profoundly reshaped Iran's foreign policy toward America and its regional allies.

Turkish-Iranian relations since 1979 can be broken down distinctly into several aspects:

- (1) The predominantly secular character of the Turkish Republic, which has for decades been pro-Western, and the ambitions of Iran's clerical leadership to export fundamentalist ideology to Turkey, among others, especially in the 1980s. Exporting the revolution was a key factor of Tehran's foreign strategy. The first Iranian Supreme Leader, Grand Ayatollah Khomeini, shortly after taking power, declared: "We should try hard to export our revolution to the world ... we [shall] confront the world with our ideology" (Ehteshami, 1995: 131).
- (2) In the early 1990s, Turkey's secular elite blamed Iran for supporting religious extremist groups in Turkey. They also held Iran responsible for a series of assassinations that claimed the lives of a number of prominent secular intellectuals who had pointed out the dangers of the Iranian mullahs' designs on Turkey (Olson, 1997: 871–890).
- (3) The competition between Turkey and Iran over 'leadership' within the sphere of influences of the former Soviet republics in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

- (4) Iran's nuclear program as a challenge to the power balance in the Middle East.
- (5) Syria's civil war, toward which both states assumed contradictory positions, Turkey supporting the anti-Bashar forces and Iran heavily supporting the Syrian regime. Iran and Turkey are afraid of Syria's disintegration (Demirtaş, 2013: 111–120).

Despite years of rifts following 1979, both states are pragmatic in their relations with each other. Iran perceives economic and trade collaboration with Turkey as an important factor, especially after sanctions were imposed by the United States and European Union. Iran has become more isolated both politically and economically, and has sunk into a deep economic crisis, Turkey, in turn, is a vibrant economy with a rapidly growing GDP over many years, and is fully integrated with the global economy. Both governments have collaborated on energy and the Kurdish issue. Relations improved after the 2002 election of Turkey's *Justice and Development Party*, which has Islamist roots. For Iranian authorities, Turkey, especially as ruled by the AKP, is seen as an important regional player that is now more distanced to the West, playing an important role in Middle East policies. Turkey's visible Islamic identity and its difficult EU membership application have dramatically increased skepticism surrounding the relationship between Turkey and Europe, generated a critical attitude to US policy, especially after the US invasion of Iraq, and led Turkey to a reorientation of its policy on the Middle East.

Turkish Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu, in his seminal work *Strategic Depth (Stratejik Derinlik)*, underlines the connections between Turkey's past and present and among its relations in the Middle East (Aras, 2009). Davutoğlu argues that Turkey should give up its past as a peripheral country and instead provide security and stability, not only for itself, but also for its neighbors. This would imply a more active, constructive role to provide order, stability and security. This new Turkish foreign policy is built upon five principles:

- (1) "If there is not a balance between security and democracy in a country, it may not have a chance to establish a zone of influence in its environs." The Turkish authorities did not declare state of emergency, elections were not postponed, and the election results did not influence the process in a negative way. Turkey a reliable and stable democracy has strong soft power. These results support the notion that Turkey's most important soft power is its democracy (Davutoğlu, 2008: 80);
- (2) a "[z]ero problem policy towards Turkey's neighbors". For example, Turkish–Iranian relations did not face difficulties during the sensitive period of Iran's nuclear crisis. Turkey created a channel for discussion of the nuclear issue;
- (3) "Develop relations with the neighboring regions and beyond." Turkey's active role is increasing in the region. Foreign Minister Davutoğlu explained Turkey's role in the Middle East as follows: "Why are Turkey's prime minister, president, and minister of foreign affairs paying continuous visits to the Middle East? Because they are the only leaders who can contact the Middle Eastern leaders. If, for instance, there were no diplomatic relationship between two powerful countries such as Iran and Egypt, and if their leaders did not meet, there would be little possibility for establishing order in the Middle East. Would it be possible to establish order in Europe if France and Britain did not have any relations? In such a case, a country like Germany or another important third actor would have to intervene and set up channels for political dialogue, just as Turkey has done and continues to do in the Mid-

dle East. Order in the Middle East cannot be achieved in an atmosphere of isolated economies” (ibidem: 83–84);

- (4) “Adherence to a multi-dimensional foreign policy. Turkey’s relations with other global actors aim to be complementary, not in competition. [...] Turkey considers its strategic relations with the United States, through the two countries’ bilateral ties and through NATO, and its membership process for the EU, its good neighborhood policy with Russia, and its synchronization policy in Eurasia as integral parts of a consistent policy that serve to complement each other” (ibidem: 82);
- (5) [transition to] “Rhythmic diplomacy”. This relates to Turkey’s serious and sustained development in the field of diplomacy and its visible role in international organizations.

Ahmet Davutoğlu’s doctrine was confronted with the Arab Spring. Crises followed the Arab Spring in Egypt, Libya, Yemen and other Arab states, and showed up the difficulties in accommodating Turkish diplomacy to the rapidly changing situations. The best example is Syria’s civil war. Before 2011, Turkey supported the Assad regime, but when the civil war erupted, Ankara changed its policy. Turkey became one of the principal supporters of the Syrian opposition groups, then renamed and reshaped as the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces.

In spite of difficulties, it is significant to note Turkish soft power policies are more multilateral, cooperative, and diplomatic than ever before (Hale, Özbudun, 2010: 120).

Davutoğlu’s strategy is well illustrated in Turkish policy towards Iran. However, there are potential difficulties and pragmatism has prevailed in relations between these states. In spite of differences between Iran and Turkey, their relations have improved distinctly. Turkey–Iran relations entered a new phase after the US invasion of Iraq. Similar concerns about the probable consequences of developments in Iraq may have motivated the two countries to merge their political stances with respect to regional political issues. Additionally, the mentioned rise of the AKP meant an important change in Turkish foreign policy towards its Middle Eastern neighbors and a new opening in Turkish-Iranian relations in particular. For Iran, the AKP’s victory was welcomed warmly as a chance for developing better relations with Turkey. In the table below, of high ranking diplomatic visits between Iran and Turkey since 1979, the intensification of diplomatic relations since 2002 is clearly visible.

Table 1

High ranking diplomatic visits between Iran and Turkey 1994–2012

Date	Iranian Leaders	Turkish Leaders
1	2	3
Jul. 1994		Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel visits Iran.
Aug. 1996		Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan visits Iran and signs a \$23 billion natural gas deal.
Dec. 1996	President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani visits Turkey.	
Jul. 2002		President Ahmet Necdet Sezer visits Iran.
Jul. 2004	President Ahmadinejad visits Turkey.	Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan visits Iran.

1	2	3
Aug. 2008	Speaker of Parliament Ali Larijani visits Turkey and meets with President Abdullah Gul.	
Jan. 2009	President Ahmadinejad visits Turkey for a one-day summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. He meets with Prime Minister Erdogan.	
Nov. 2009	President Ahmadinejad visits Turkey for a one-day summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. He meets with Prime Minister Erdogan.	
May 2010		The presidents of Turkey and Brazil, who attended the Group 15 summit in Tehran, announce an agreement with the leaders of Iran regarding its nuclear program; it is subsequently rejected by the United States.
May 2010		Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu visits Iran.
Dec. 2010	President Ahmadinejad attends the ECO summit in Turkey and meets with Turkish leaders.	
Feb. 2011		President Abdullah Gul visits Iran.
May 2011	President Ahmadinejad meets with President Gul in Istanbul during a UN conference on Least Developed Countries.	
Jan. 2012	Speaker of Parliament Ali Larijani visits Turkey to discuss the Syrian uprising and Iran's nuclear program.	
Jan. 2012		Foreign Minister Davutoğlu visits Iran to discuss Syria and Iran's nuclear program.

Source: R. Habibi, *Turkey and Iran: Growing Economic Relations Despite Western Sanctions* (2012), "Middle East Brief, Crown Center for Middle East Studies", No. 62, p. 3.

The most important factor in the improving diplomatic relations is both Iran and Turkey's complementary economic resources. Iran is the third largest exporter of oil and gas to Turkey, which is entirely dependent on oil and gas imports. Turkey's increasing energy imports from Iran went from 1.9 billion (2 percent of total imports) in 2004 to 6.9 billion in 2011 (3.9 percent of the total import). According to the latest Turkish government data, 1,470 Iranian firms were operating in Turkey by the end of 2010, compared with only 319 firms in 2002. The entry of Iranian firms into Turkey accelerated in 2011 as their total number rose by an additional 41%, to 2012 (Kurtaran, 2012). The total volume of annual trade between Iran and Turkey increased from USD 1.05 bln in 2000 to USD 10.69 bln in 2010 and 16.05 bln in 2011 – it accounted for 4.27 percent of Turkey's total foreign trade (Jenkins, 2012: 22).

The trade imbalance between Iran and Turkey is caused because Iranian sales of hydrocarbons have ensured Tehran's favor, additionally, Turkish companies exporting to Iran continued to be faced with steep customs duties, a huge fuel levy on transportation by Turkish trucks, and an opaque and frequently complicated bureaucracy and legal system that is not clear for companies.

Table 2

Turkey's foreign trade with Iran 2000–2011 (USD mln)

Year	Exports	Imports	Total Volume	Balance	Exports/ Imports (%)
2000	235.78	815.73	1,051.52	-579.95	28.90
2001	360.54	839.80	1,200.34	-479.26	42.93
2002	333.96	920.97	1,254.93	-587.01	36.26
2003	533.79	1,860.68	2,394.47	-1,326.90	28.69
2004	813.03	1,962.06	2,775.09	-1,149.03	41.44
2005	912.94	3,469.71	4,382.65	-2,556.77	26.31
2006	1,006.90	5,626.61	6,693.51	-4,559.71	17.90
2007	1,441.19	6,615.39	8,056.58	-5,174.20	21.79
2008	2,028.97	8,199.68	10,229.45	-6,170.71	24.74
2009	2,024.55	3,405.99	5,430.53	-1,381.44	59.44
2010	3,043.41	7,644.78	10,688.20	-4,601.40	39.81
2011	3,590.41	12,461.36	16,051.77	-8,870.95	28.81

Source: G. H. Jenkins, *Occasional Allies, Enduring Rivals: Turkey's Relations with Iran* (2012), Silk Road Paper, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program. A Joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center, p. 54.

Turkey did not join the EU embargo on oil from Iran. As observed on February 26, 2012, Turkish Energy Minister Taner Yıldız testily replied: “[s]ince Turkey is not an EU member, the EU’s decisions are not legally binding for us” (*Iran Sanctions*, 2012). The Tabriz-Erzurum pipeline will alone ensure that Turkey remains at least partly dependent on Iran for energy. In spite of Iranian and Turkish trade relations improving since 2002, there are several issues which can damage relations between the two nations. Turkey and Iran due to their size, location, populations, economies and historical heritage play the role of regional powers in the Middle East. The almost invisible competition between Iran and Turkey may in future be more problematic and initiate tensions between them.

An almost invisible problem in the relations between the two nations is the Iranian nuclear program. The AKP government is reluctant to deal with this issue. It is a significant fact that Iran’s nuclear program is not negatively perceived by Turkish public opinion (Kibaroglu, Caglar, 2008: 64). The Turkish government is not supportive of developing nuclear weapons in its territory. Turkey became a signatory of the non-proliferation regime in 1969 by signing the treaty on January 28, 1969, and subsequently ratifying it on April 17, 1980. Late ratification did not mean that Turkey had a covert nuclear military program (Kibaroglu, 1998: 161–193).

QUESTIONS ABOUT IRAN’S NUCLEAR PROGRAM AND POTENTIAL CRISIS

Iran’s nuclear program did not begin with the onset of the Islamic revolution in 1979. Their nuclear program started in the 1950s under the Shah, with the assistance of West Germany and France. The United States accepted and also assisted in Iran’s nuclear ambitions.

Iran signed the *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons* (NPT) in July 1968, making Iran's nuclear program subject to *International Atomic Energy Agency* (IAEA) confirmation, including using the benefits of peaceful nuclear technology. The NPT has three main pillars: nonproliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Officially, the Shah's declared desire was to build twenty reactors for nuclear energy in Iran. Unofficially, there were suspicions Iran had a concealed military nuclear program. Indeed, the Shah's former foreign minister, Areshir Zahedi revealed the real Iranian intentions years later: "[t]he Iranian strategy at that time was aimed at creating what is known as surge capacity, that is to say to have the know-how, the infrastructure, and the personnel needed to develop a nuclear military capacity within a short time without actually doing so. But the assumption within the policymaking elite was that Iran should be in a position to develop and test a nuclear device within 18 months" (Takeyh, 2006: 136). After the Islamic Revolution, the Iranian nuclear program was suspended for five years. For Ayatollah Khomeini, the indiscriminate nature of such weapons was seen as inconsistent with Islamic canons of war. In 1983, the Iranian authorities decided to restart their nuclear program (Quillen, 2002: 19).

Iranian authorities found several arguments in favor of Iran's nuclear program:

- 1) in 1983, during Iraqi-Iranian war, Iraq attacked Iran using chemical weapons. The international community did not react properly and Iranian appeals were treated with skepticism and nonchalance. Iran was largely isolated during the war, in part because of the Islamic Republic's anti-Western stance, its holding of US Embassy personnel as hostages, and its attempts to export the Iranian revolution to surrounding countries. Most Western nations and world powers, including the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union, supported the Iraqi military (Hiro, 1991). One of the most important lessons for Iran from the war may have been the need for military self-sufficiency;
- 2) Iraqi plans in the 1990s for developing weapons of mass destruction;
- 3) the US's more visible presence and involvement in the Persian Gulf since 1990 and regime change in Iraq in 2003;
- 4) from Iran's perspective, nuclear weapons could serve as the ultimate form of deterrence against all potential adversaries and preserving the existence of the regime;
- 5) national pride, and as a symbol of modernization and scientific development.

Iran's nuclear crisis erupted in 2002, when the *National Council of Resistance of Iran* (NCR), the political wing of the Iraq-based Iranian dissident group, *Mujahedine-Khalq* (MEK) helped expose Iran's undeclared nuclear activities by providing information about nuclear sites at *Natanz* (uranium enrichment) and *Arak* (heavy water production). In three years of intensive inspections, the IAEA has revealed significant undeclared Iranian efforts in uranium enrichment (including centrifuges, atomic vapor laser and molecular laser isotope separation techniques) and separation of plutonium, as well as undeclared imported materials. Following the NCR's revelations, the IAEA Director General visited Iran in February 2003. After this visit, IAEA reports concluded that: "Iran has failed to meet its obligations under its Safeguards Agreement with respect to the reporting of nuclear material, the subsequent processing and use of that material and the declaration of facilities where the material was stored and processed" (*IAEA Reports*, 2003, 2007).

Iranian authorities agreed to sign an Additional Protocol, which allows more in-depth inspections by the IAEA to verify that Iran is not pursuing nuclear weapons. Iranian officials claimed that their country was in full compliance with the NPT. They argue that in the early 1990s Iran, “was the only member state to voluntarily invite the IAEA safeguards inspectors to visit all sites and facilities at their discretion” (Bahgat, 2006: 310). These inspections found no evidence of illegal nuclear activities. In late 2005, the confrontation between the international community and Iran reached a new, more volatile phase when the *IAEA Board of Governors* adopted a resolution that paved the way for Iran to be referred to the UN Security Council over its nuclear ambitions and the difficult collaboration with Iran.

In the 2000s, the international community was divided between two attitudes towards the Iranian nuclear program: the US, opting for imposing more sanctions on Iran, and other states, such as China, Russia or Turkey, opting to maintain dialogue with Iran and search for a negotiated agreement which would allow Iran to develop its civil nuclear program. The option of maintaining the dialogue was difficult, because Iranian president Mahmud Ahmadinejad’s nuclear diplomacy rested on framing the entire debate as an issue of nationalism: focusing on independence and resistance to foreign aggression, and Western double standards. His declarations of erasing Israel from the map of Middle East were provocative, and made negotiations with Iran on the nuclear issue difficult.

IRAN’S NUCLEAR PROGRAM – FROM CRISIS TO THE US, UN AND EU SANCTIONS

- August 2002: Alireza Jafazadeh, a leading critic of Tehran, revealed the existence of two unknown nuclear sites, a uranium enrichment facility in Natanz and heavy water facility in Arak.
- June 2003: Mohamed El-Baradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency stated that inspections revealed that “Iran failed to report certain nuclear materials and activities.”
- October 2003: Iran began to hold negotiations with IAEA members with respect to a more stringent set of nuclear inspections.
- December 18, 2003: Iran signed the Additional Protocol to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty.
- July 27, 2004: Iran broke seals placed on uranium centrifuges by the IAEA and resumed construction of the centrifuges at Natanz.
- July 31, 2004: Iran stated that it had resumed building nuclear centrifuges to enrich uranium, reversing a voluntary pledge to the UK, France and Germany to suspend all uranium enrichment-related activities.
- September 21, 2004: Iran announced that it would continue its nuclear program, converting 37 tones of yellowcake uranium for processing in centrifuges.
- October 24, 2004: the European Union made a proposal to supply Iran with civilian nuclear technology if Iran terminated its uranium enrichment program permanently. Iran rejected this proposal, reiterating that it would not renounce its right to enrichment technologies.

- January 10, 2006: Iran began removing IAEA seals at enrichment-related locations and later announced that it had resumed its nuclear research program.
- May 2006: the Security Council adopted a resolution endorsing an offer of diplomatic and economic incentives and demanding that Iran suspend all uranium enrichment programs by August 31st.
- December 2006: the UN's Security Council imposed sanctions on Iran's trade in sensitive nuclear materials and technology. Following the IAEA's offer to Tehran of a 60 day grace period where halting of the country's uranium enrichment would be exchanged for suspension of UN sanctions, which Iran did not take up.
- Security Council passed Resolutions 1737, 1747 and 1803 requiring Iran to suspend uranium enrichment, prohibiting the transfer to Iran of missile, nuclear, and dual use items, except those for use in light water reactors, prohibiting Iran from exporting arms or WMD useful technology. They froze the assets of 40 named Iranian citizens and entities, including Bank Sepah, and several Iranian companies. They required countries to exercise restraint with respect to the travel of 35 named Iranian citizens and banned the travel of 5 others. They called on states not to export arms to Iran or support new business with Iran. They called for vigilance with respect to the foreign activities of all Iranian banks, particularly Bank Melli and Bank Saderat. They called on countries to inspect cargo carried by Iranian Air Cargo and the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines if there are indicators they are carrying cargo banned for carriage to Iran.
- Resolution 1929 UNSCR (2010) calls for the prevention of the provision of financial resources or services, including insurance and re-insurance, that may relate to the supply of arms or contribute to the Islamic Republic of Iran's ("Iran's") proliferation of sensitive nuclear activities. Furthermore, the Resolution requires vigilance from institutions when doing business with entities incorporated in Iran, to avoid engaging in transactions which could contribute to Iran's proliferation-sensitive nuclear activities. Finally, Resolution 1929 (2010) prohibits new joint ventures, ownership changes or establishing or maintaining correspondent relationships with Iranian banks, as well as opening representative offices or subsidiaries or banking accounts in Iran if they have information that provides reasonable grounds to believe that these activities could contribute to Iran's proliferation-sensitive nuclear activities or the development of nuclear weapon delivery systems.
- January 23, 2012: the EU decided to refrain from new contracts to purchase Iranian oil and to wind down existing contracts by July 1, 2012, after which all EU purchases of Iranian oil were to cease. Collectively, the EU bought about 600,000 barrels per day of Iranian oil in 2011, about a quarter of Iran's total oil exports.
- SWIFT (Society of Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications) cut off the sanctioned Iranian banks from the network (Jorish, 2013). Sanctions now include a European oil embargo, exclusion from the SWIFT international banking system enabling Iranian banks to transfer money, and US measures that target Iran's central bank.

In spite of the sanctions, Iran seems not to have halted its nuclear program, arguing it is for civilian purposes. Iran is motivated to pursue its nuclear program. The right to develop nuclear power is a matter of national pride, where the population is largely

united behind the regime and its achievements in this field. Iran's attachment to nuclear development is rooted in its own tumultuous history. The Iranian authorities perceive Iran as a great civilization that has been deprived of its 'rightful' status as a regional power by the machinations of foreign powers, such as the United States and, in the past, Great Britain and Russia. This deep sense of victimization has been reinforced by Shiite history. For most of Islamic history, Shiite minorities have been persecuted by Sunni majorities. In 1979, a unique political system in the Islamic world was created in Iran (clerical government) – a combination of khomeinism with Shiite Islam.

At present, the crisis with sanctions, which is harmful to Iranian society, may be reinforcing this sense of victimization. Iraq is an example – even severe sanctions which were very harmful to the Iraqis failed to stop the Saddam Hussein regime from continuing, and possibly even strengthened its support at home. To overcome the deadlock, not only the US and EU should reopen dialogue with Tehran, but also the Iranian government should change its narrative regarding Iran's nuclear ambitions and be more open to collaboration with the IAEA. In this evident deadlock, Turkey's role as a reliable mediator is desirable. For the West, Turkey may be seen as more pro-Iran and uncritical towards Iran's nuclear program, but ultimately for Turkey, Iran with a nuclear arsenal would challenge security in the whole region.

TURKEY'S SUBDUED ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM

Turkey has a long history of supporting international policies focused on preventing nuclear proliferation. The state has adopted strong nonproliferation policies, due in large part to its NATO membership, its location at the apex of the Middle East and its front-line state status during the Cold War. Turkey is firmly against the proliferation of WMD, favors the establishment of a regional nuclear weapon free zone, and advocates the eventual disarmament of nuclear weapon states. Turkey is a signatory of the NPT, the *Chemical Weapons Convention* (CWC), and the *Biological Weapons Convention* (BWC) – the three most comprehensive Treaties governing the spread of WMD. Turkey is not against a civil nuclear program in Iran, but the possible acquisition by Iran of nuclear weapons would endanger the balance in the Middle East.

However, the nuclear program of the Islamic Republic of Iran is not so visible in Turkish debate. There is no sense of an urgent threat. Ankara argues that negotiations and non-coercive measures still have time to succeed. The Turkish government does not perceive the Iranian nuclear program as an immediate threat to the regional balance. Therefore, Ankara is against imposing sanctions on Iran without UN Security Council approval. As former US official Elliot Abrams observed, Turkey should stand firmly behind the UN Security Council, as well as the IAEA resolutions, and urge Iran to comply with them (*Interview*, 2010).

Turkey does not support the US and EU unilaterally imposing sanctions on Iran, and is against military solutions related to Israeli attacks aimed at Iranian nuclear plants. As Scott Sagan observed, the 1981 Israeli attack on the Osirak nuclear reactor in Iraq may have delayed Iraq's progress, but similar air strikes are unlikely to disable Iran's capaci-

ties, since its uranium-enrichment facilities can be hidden underground or widely dispersed. Imposing economic sanctions through the UN Security Council is clearly a preferable option. But as Washington learned with India and Pakistan in the 1980s and 1990s, sanctions only increase the costs of going nuclear; they do not reduce the ability of a determined government to get the bomb (Sagan, 2006).

In May 2010, Turkey, with the support of Brazil, negotiated and signed a Joint Declaration with Iran. In it, Iran agreed, among other things, to store some 1,200 kg of its LEU in Turkey for 12 months; at the end of this time, the Vienna Group, composed of the United States, France, Russia, and the IAEA, would give Iran 120 kg of uranium enriched to 20 percent to be used in the Tehran Research Reactor to create medical isotopes (Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2010). In the same vein, it was also declared that, based on this point, the nuclear fuel exchange is a starting point to begin cooperation and a positive constructive move forward among nations (*ibidem*). The Turkish-Brazilian proposal was accepted by Iran, but was unfortunately completely ignored by the US, EU, Russia and China. From Washington's perspective, Iran accepted the Joint Declaration because it needs time to develop its nuclear capabilities. Soon after, in June, UNSCR 1929 was passed, imposing broader sanctions on Iran. Turkey and Brazil voted against the resolution and Lebanon abstained, the arguments for doing so including that sanctions were not an effective tool in the case of Iran and would undermine diplomatic progress, and that they would result in the suffering of the general population.

As M. Kibaroglu observed: "Western view: The EU-3 argue that Iran cannot be trusted to control the whole nuclear fuel-cycle even under international supervision. They fear that technology developed under a pilot scheme could be used in a secret military project. They argue that Iran's history of pursuing a covert program for 18 years means that it cannot be given the benefit of the doubt. Therefore, the only way Iran could provide a satisfactory guarantee would be to announce a permanent end to all uranium enrichment activities, to be verified by international inspections" (Kibaroglu, 2010: 102). Any such defined proposal would automatically be rejected by Iran. There are contradictory attitudes between Iran and the West. More restricted sanctions have not forced Iran to stop its nuclear program. Accepting Western demands of no uranium enrichment would be humiliating for Iran. From the Turkish perspective, Iran with a civil nuclear program is an acceptable solution, but it would not be tolerable if Iran acquired nuclear weapons. For Ankara there are several questions related to the Iranian nuclear program: What should be done if Iran announces it will enrich uranium to a level higher than 20 percent U-235? What should be done if Iran attempts to export nuclear technology, materials or knowhow? What should be done if Iran, encouraged by the example set by North Korea in 2003, states an intention to expel IAEA inspectors and leave the NPT, or worse, if it demonstrates a nuclear weapon capability? Apart from these questions, Turkey is aware of the scenario in which a nuclear Iran provoked proliferation in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and opened the nuclear debate in Turkey.

Turkey, after the rejection of the Joint Declaration from 2010 by the US and other powers, is now not so active in dealing with the Iranian nuclear crisis. At present, the Iranian deadlock and completely contradictory attitudes between the West and Iran are the most difficult impediment for overcoming this deep crisis. The Turkish role is to establish a channel between Iran and the Western powers. The "Zero problem policy to-

wards Turkey's neighbors" has improved relations between Ankara and Tehran. The Turkish attitude and mediation efforts are perceived positively by Tehran, as was visible in May 2010. An important task for Turkish diplomacy is pursuing negotiations with Iran and working on a new deal acceptable to Tehran and the US and EU. An isolated Iran with sanctions imposed on it is not a good solution. The worst scenario is an Iran with a covert nuclear program with a military component and nascent nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. Ideological stances, political differences and stereotypes are real barriers to building such a channel. Convincing both sides that Iran should ratify the Additional Protocol and be more open to collaboration with the IAEA, and the US should accept the Iranian right to develop a civil nuclear program, is not an easy task, because Iran's nuclear program is not transparent to the international community and the US and EU consider Iran as a threat.

However, the first step is Washington's acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the current leadership, the recognition of the right to an independent nuclear fuel cycle, and a measure of respect for the nation's long-held history as a regional power, and of an Iran with a more transparent nuclear program for civil purposes. Such a desirable result can be achieved through negotiations and Turkey's active role as mediator.

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ABSTRACT

In the article was analyzed Turkish policy to Iran. In the last decade Turkey established regular relations with increasing trade exchange volume. In 2010 Turkey and Brazil proposed a plan for solution Iran's nuclear deadlock. Although, a plan was not accepted by the Western powers at present in dealing with Iranian nuclear crisis Turkish role as a reliable mediator should be greater.

TURCJA WOBEC IRAŃSKIEGO PROGRAMU NUKLEARNEGO. WYZWANIA I SZANSE

STRESZCZENIE

W artykule przeanalizowano turecką politykę wobec Iranu. W ostatniej dekadzie relacje irańsko-tureckie dynamicznie rozwijają się. W 2010 r. Turcja wraz z Brazylią zaproponowały plan rozwiązania irańskiego kryzysu nuklearnego. Mimo, że plan z różnych względów nie powiódł się, stanowił jednak przykład, że Turcja może odegrać jeszcze istotną rolę w negocjacjach z Iranem.