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**РЕГИОНАЛЬНОЕ ЛИДЕРСТВО:
ОПЫТ ИСЛАМСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ
ИРАН**

**THE REGIONAL LEADERSHIP:
THE EXPERIENCE OF
THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN**

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Аннотация

Основываясь на статистических данных, авторы проанализировали конкретные меры объединенного Запада против Исламской Республики Иран по применению санкций в ответ на создание ядерной программы. Определено, что, опираясь на принципы «экономики сопротивления», Иран сумел переориентировать свою промышленность, решить проблемы развития технологий, наладить национальную платежную систему, изменить ассортимент и объемы экспорта и импорта. Автор констатирует, что антисанкционный опыт Исламской Республики Иран позволяет претендовать на роль регионального лидера.

Ключевые слова: экономические санкции, Исламская Республика Иран, экономика сопротивления, региональное лидерство.

Abstract

Based on statistical data, the author analyzed specific measures of the united West against the Islamic Republic of Iran to apply sanctions in response to the creation of a nuclear program. It is determined that, based on the principles of the "economy of resistance", Iran has managed to reorient its industry, solve the problems of technology development, establish a national payment system, change the assortment and volumes of exports and imports. The author states that the anti-sanctions experience of the Islamic Republic of Iran makes it possible to claim the role of a regional leader.

Key words: economic sanctions, Islamic Republic of Iran, economy of resistance, regional leadership.

Introduction

2023 was marked by the official visit of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Ebrahim Raisi to the People's Republic of China, the first in the last twenty years. On the eve of the visit, the Iranian president published an article in People's Daily, the official newspaper of the Communist Party of China. The Iranian President writes that "both countries oppose unilateralism and coercive measures, such as repressive sanctions, as the main causes of crises and insecurity, and that they must work together to achieve genuine multilateralism in addition to global justice, international equality and a stable world order. The goals of this trip are strategic both in political and economic terms" [11]. The two leading states should establish relations.

Materials and methods of research

The theoretical basis of the study was statistical data, as well as publications of specialists in the field of international relations who studied bilateral interstate relations. The author analyzed normative legal documents and official foreign policy doctrines, speeches of heads of state and heads of foreign ministries, as well as representatives of the diplomatic corps of the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The methodological basis of the research was the general scientific methods of cognition, involving the study of social laws and phenomena in development and interrelation: analysis, synthesis, deduction and induction, analytical comparisons.

Results and discussion.

At present, in the XXI century, as in the XX century, the Islamic Republic of Iran has remained for almost forty years a country under sanctions.

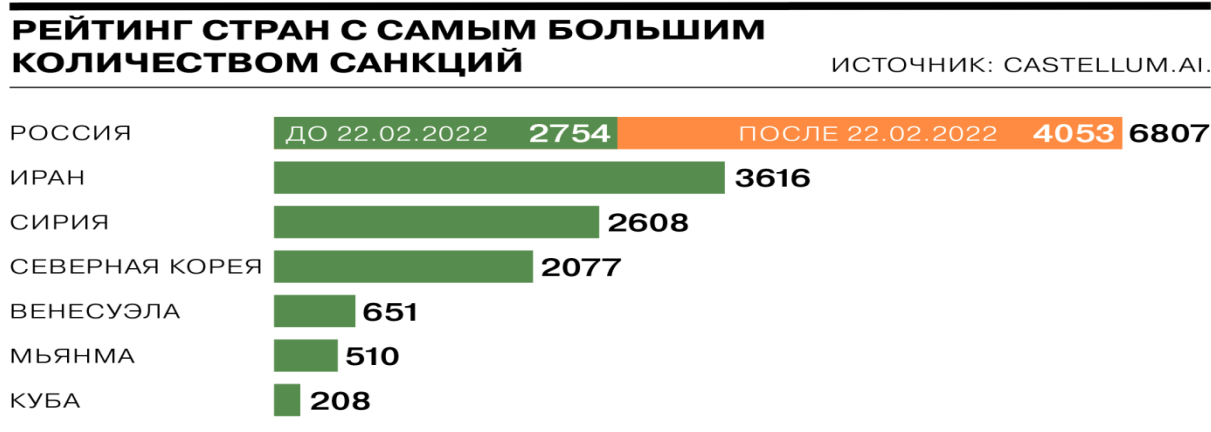


Figure 1. Ranking of countries with the largest number of sanctions [9].

The sanctions were imposed on the basis of the UN Security Council resolution of 2006 (the beginning of the application of sanctions in 1979) in connection with Tehran's nuclear research, which threatened the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In March 2007, the Security Council adopted a second sanctions resolution. The sanctions applied to the assets of individuals and legal entities associated with the nuclear program and restricted the supply of materials and technologies for it. This was followed in 2010 by tougher sanctions. This was due to Iran's reaching the level of uranium enrichment of 20%. The new sanctions were aimed at exporting technologies and investments in the petrochemical industry, and it was recommended to "be vigilant" in the sphere of Iranian banks.

On the basis of the resolution, individual countries have taken concrete measures. The USA showed the greatest initiative. Any economic activity between Iran and the United States was legally restricted, but in practice prohibited, and the re-export of American goods by third countries was prohibited. Countries were threatened with punitive measures for investing in the oil refining industry and for providing financial services. In July 2012, the EU stopped the import of Iranian oil and banned its companies from insuring tankers providing oil exports from Iran. Due to the European embargo on Iranian oil, its exports decreased by about half — from 2.4 to 1.3 million b/d. "Before this decision, about 34% of Iranian oil imports were sent to Europe. At the same time, the share of Iranian oil in European imports was not significant: in 2010 it was 5.4%, in 2011 - 4.4% (the main oil suppliers to the EU are Russia, Norway and Libya until 2011)" [1]. From 2011 to 2013, revenues decreased from \$118 billion to \$53-56 billion in 2013. China, South Korea, and India began to demand significant discounts when buying oil.

In the financial sphere, a disconnection from SWIFT followed. Before the shutdown, Iranians used the services of intermediary banks in foreign economic transactions. Now there is only cash or barter left. Dollar deposits were banned, but the cash turnover of the currency was not limited. Due to high inflation (up to 45% in 2012), the demand for gold coins has increased. They were also used for accumulation purposes.

The fall in the share of oil exports in the economy from the average post-war level of 78% [2, p. 4.] to 73% [3] in 2015 reduced the dependence of the economy on it. "The share of oil and gas revenues in the budget decreased from more than 60% in the early 2000s [3] to 30% in 2015" [4]. In parallel, there was a sharp decline in GDP (for example, in 2012 the decline was 6.6%, and in 2013 – by 1.9%, in 2014 by 4.3%.



Figure 2. The change in the GDP of the Islamic Republic of Iran [10].

As we can see, the decline in dependence on oil was accompanied by a sharp drop in GDP. Temporary growth turned out to be unstable.



Figure 3. Oil and gas exports of the Islamic Republic of Iran [10].

At the same time, slowly but surely, Iran began to increase oil and gas exports. Sanctions forced to make the country's economy "closed" and focus on its own industry. So, the production of cars has sharply increased, up to 1 million per year. In recent years, Iran has reached the 7th place in the world in cement production - about 65 million tons per year [6]. For steel production — on the 14th: 6.1 million tons in 2015 [7].

However, Iran's industry is focused almost exclusively on domestic demand and cannot compete even with Turkey. Iran's exports continue to be dominated by oil and gas.

The softening of relations with the West was outlined after the victory of the pragmatist Hassan Rouhani in the presidential elections in 2014. Within a few months, Rouhani was able to reach an agreement with the 5+1 group (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council: Russia, the United States, France, Great Britain, China + Germany), which had been negotiating with Iran since 2006 to no avail. On July 14, 2015, a document was already adopted, the so-called "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action" (JCPOA, or "nuclear deal").

According to Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, if sanctions are lifted, production will immediately increase by 0.5 million b/d, and within a year — by 1 million b/d. In 2016, the current production is 3.7 million b/d. To increase the figures by another 2-3 million b/d, the help of Western companies that left Iran in 2010-2012 (Total, Eni, Repsol, BP, Shell and others) is needed. Although there are companies that already intend to return to Iran.

In 2018, US President Donald Trump decided to leave the JCPOA and return US sanctions against Iran. He not only withdrew the United States from the JCPOA, but also imposed anti-Iranian sanctions. They were much tougher than those that acted against Iran in that first sanctions period from 2011 to 2016. In response to Trump's sanctions actions, Tehran violated almost all the points of the JCPOA agreement. Biden's team, which replaced the Trump administration, initiated new negotiations to restore the JCPOA. They began in April 2021, where all the same negotiators from the 5+1 group worked, in addition, the European Union is also actively involved. Throughout 2021, the nuclear deal and the processes accompanying it, to one degree or another, influenced the foreign and domestic policy of Iran, the economic tactics and strategy of the Iranian leadership.

External pressure on the economy through sanctions has not stopped the development of the Islamic Republic. Based on the concept of the "economy of resistance" put forward by the head of state, Iran is successfully developing its technologies, its own national payment system has been created, internal and external investments have been attracted to establish production. These are household appliances, medicines. Despite the sanctions regime, a number of multinational corporations (TNCs) continue to operate in Iran. In local shops on the shelves you can see well-known brands of mineral water, carbonated drinks, baby food, household chemicals, and the factories that produce it are located on the territory of Iran. Moreover, a striking example of the fact that sanctions are not an obstacle to development is that the Islamic Republic has developed its own vaccines against COVID-19.

2021 is the year of the coming to the presidential power of E. Raisi – became the defining strategy of Iran's foreign policy. Being a close associate of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei, President Raisi fully supports the foreign policy concepts of Rahbar (leader, Persian). Ali Khamenei has repeatedly stated: "One of our priorities in foreign policy today is to prefer the East to the West, neighbors to distant countries and peoples, and countries that share our characteristics to others" [8].

In March 2021 Iran and China have signed an agreement officially called the Comprehensive Program of Cooperation between Iran and China. This document is often referred to as the "Iran-China Strategic Pact". The main thing in it is the Chinese investment of \$ 400 billion. to the Iranian economy for 25 years in exchange for continuous supplies of Iranian oil, as well as military and military-technical cooperation, which gives Beijing great rights in Iran and in the Persian Gulf zone. However, it is not yet clear to what extent this agreement is being implemented in practice.

In September, Iran achieved admission to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which includes India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan. By joining the SCO, Iran will increase its prestige and create conditions for strengthening its positions in the region. In November, at the summit of the Economic

Cooperation Organization (ECO) in Ashgabat, President Raisi held fruitful talks with colleagues.

Conclusion

There are many problems in the foreign policy sphere of Iran. Iran's relations with regional rivals — Saudi Arabia, as well as other Arab monarchies of the Persian Gulf — remain strained. The confrontation between Saudi Arabia and Iran periodically escalates. This includes unpredictable relations with Taliban Afghanistan, complex relationships with Turkey, Iraq, and illusory prospects in Syria and Yemen. It is impossible not to mention the ambiguous relations with the Arab states, first of all, with those who concluded the "Abraham Agreements" with Israel, as well as a dangerous confrontation (if not to say, a "hybrid war") with Israel itself and the United States. Tehran is concerned about the problems of the South Caucasus, the victory of the Azerbaijani-Turkish coalition with Israel's tacit participation in the Karabakh war. However, in conditions extremely unfavorable for Iran in the Near and Middle East (for many reasons), the new government of Iran seeks to neutralize and minimize their negative impacts. A lot of work is being done with the Taliban (banned in the Russian Federation), and with the Caucasian republics, and with Turkey, and with opponents in the Arab world.

The anti-sanctions experience of the Islamic Republic of Iran shows that the country has not only "not been torn to shreds", but has managed to rebuild its economy, increase production and domestic consumption, and remains one of the main contenders for regional leadership.

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