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**IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME: AUSTRALIA'S AND GERMANY'S
OFFICIAL POSITIONS**

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**ИРАНСКАЯ ЯДЕРНАЯ ПРОГРАММА: ОФИЦИАЛЬНЫЕ ПОЗИЦИИ
АВСТРАЛИИ И ГЕРМАНИИ**

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***Abstract:** The article represents an analysis of the official positions of such major regional and global actors as the Commonwealth of Australia and the Federal Republic of Germany on Iran's nuclear programme. It goes without saying that the possibility of Iran obtaining nuclear weapons has been considered as a serious challenge for regional and global security. The paper contains basic background information on the stages of Iranian nuclear programme development, covering the historical aspect in the bilateral relations of Australia and Germany with Iran in the nuclear field (including, for instance, the contribution of Germany to the buildup of two Iranian nuclear reactors back in the 1970s). The research also embraces Australia's and Germany's positions and initiatives on the problem within the United Nations, IAEA and other international organisations and groups, statements and*

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opinions of Australian and German officials, the understanding of Iranian nuclear programme by Australian and German politicians, prominent experts' points of view, bearing in mind so-called 2015 Iranian nuclear deal. Finally, the author draws a comparison between Australia's and Germany's approaches and stances in terms of the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran, taking into account internal political situation in these countries as well as the current state of affairs on the international arena.

Keywords: *Australia, Commonwealth of Australia, Germany, Federal Republic of Germany, Iran, Islamic Republic of Iran, nuclear nonproliferation.*

Реферат: В статье представлен анализ официальных позиций по иранской ядерной программе таких важных региональных и глобальных акторов, как Австралийский Союз и Федеративная Республика Германия. Безусловно, возможность обретения Ираном ядерного оружия считалась серьёзным вызовом региональной и глобальной безопасности. В работе представлена основная информация о стадиях развития иранской ядерной программы, исторический аспект формирования двусторонних отношений Австралии и Германии с Ираном в ядерной области (включая, в частности, вклад Германии в создание двух иранских ядерных реакторов в 1970-е гг.) Исследование также охватывает позиции и инициативы Австралии и Германии по проблеме в ООН, МАГАТЭ и других международных организациях и форумах; высказывания и мнения австралийских и германских официальных лиц; восприятие иранской ядерной программы австралийскими и германскими политиками; точки зрения выдающихся экспертов, в том числе по так называемой “ядерной сделке” 2015 г. Наконец, автор проводит сравнение подходов и внешнеполитических линий Австралии и Германии в отношении ядерной программы Исламской Республики Иран, принимая во внимание внутривнутриполитическую ситуацию в этих странах, равно как нынешнее состояние дел на международной арене.

Ключевые слова: Австралия, Австралийский Союз, Германия, Федеративная Республика Германия, Иран, Исламская Республика Иран, ядерноенераспространение.

Iran's Nuclear Programme: Overview

In the first place, it is necessary to scrutinise the gist of the Iranian nuclear programme issue. To begin with, this problem is considered to be one of the two major threats to the modern nuclear non-proliferation regime (along with the situation on the Korean Peninsula) [1]. As for the background seen from the historical retrospective, the origin of the question dates back to 1967, when the United States gave the 5 MW research reactor together with more than 5.5 kg of highly enriched uranium as a fuel source to the Shah government (in some sense, first steps in this direction can even be traced back to the late 1950s, when the Iran announced its willingness to cooperate with the U.S. within the framework of “Atoms for Peace” project). Iran also developed its

nuclear programme later, in the 1970, with the further assistance of West Germany and France. The Shah, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, planned to construct at least 23 nuclear power plants with the closed fuel cycle by late 20th century with the help of the U.S. and European countries (including France and West Germany), as an alternative to the fossil fuels as a source of energy. Still, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been a party to the 1968 Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to the present day, having signed it on July 1, 1968 (on the first day it was open for signature) and ratified it on February 2, 1970 [2]. Needless to say, it is the basic document for the nuclear non-proliferation regime, formulating its foundational principles. Thus, Iran agreed to the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) system of safeguards and inspections. The

agreement on the application of safeguards between Iran and the IAEA was signed and came into force on May 15, 1974. 1974 was marked by the joint proposal made by Iran and Egypt to work closely on the establishment of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East (although it was only a declaration). During the 1970s, Iranian government tried to purchase the joint stock company Eurodif specializing in the uranium enrichment. Such collaboration in the nuclear field between Iran and the Western partners lasted till the late 1970s. The key point here is, after the events of 1979 (commonly known as the Islamic revolution), when the Shah regime was overthrown, new leader of the country, Ayatollah Khomeini refused to continue the developments in this field (on religious grounds). But in 1984 it was West German intelligence that claimed the possibility of Iran gaining nuclear weapons (although even in the 1970s, in accordance with CIA's reports, Iran had the physical opportunity to develop the military

programme in this field). In the 1990s, Iran predominantly cooperated on the international arena in the nuclear area with the Russian Federation.

In 2002, Iranian opposition (based in Iraq) published data that Iran possesses certain amounts of enriched uranium that had not been reported to the IAEA. It was in 2003 that concerns of the international community began to grow in this regard, with the reports of IAEA on Iran that the officials of the country had not declared enrichment of uranium. But Iranian government kept claiming that uranium enrichment has only to do with the peaceful nuclear programme and is done with the purpose to provide nuclear reactors with the fuel. In any case, the IAEA Board of Governors decided to transfer the case to the United Nations Security Council. Since 2006, the Security Council has passed six resolutions against the Islamic Republic of Iran (1696, 1737, 1747, 1803, 1835 and 1929); four of these resolutions have imposed sanctions against the country.

Bushehr nuclear power plant was planned as early as in the 1970s (with the direct participation of a German company), but since 1992 Iran has been cooperating with Russia (Rosatom corporation, in particular). It was launched in September 2011. The Power Unit 1 began operating at full capacity in August 2012. Russian Federation, despite supporting corresponding resolutions of the UN Security Council, backed the right of Iran to peacefully use nuclear power (however, as Russian Ambassador to the UN Vitaly Churkin highlighted, Iran has to develop its peaceful nuclear programme only under IAEA safeguards). Another problem was the uranium enrichment that takes place at Isfahan (Nuclear Technology Center) and Natanz (Fuel Enrichment Plant). But the mass media has been concentrating on the underground uranium enrichment facility at Fordow, officially disclosed in 2009. The state of affairs became aggravated by the fact that the Islamic Republic of Iran has not ratified Comprehensive

Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, nor is it a party to the 1994 Convention on Nuclear Safety. This situation definitely has had implications on the regional security and is perceived by analysts and politicians as a direct threat to stability in the region and globally, not to mention Iran's ambitions to take the leading position in the region (and the whole Islamic world, according to some experts).

As for the recent developments, the longstanding negotiations with the Islamic Republic of Iran in P5+1 (or E3/EU+3) format (see below for more details) eventually resulted in signing of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between Iran and the P5+1 and EU, often briefly denoted in media as Iranian Nuclear Deal. The deal was concluded on July 14, 2015, having been preceded by a series of official meetings during spring 2015 that were followed by Joint Statement made by EU High Representative Federica Mogherini and Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif [3] and defining the Framework of the future

agreement. Simply put, JCPOA was connected with the obligation of the Iranian party to confirm refusal from pursuing nuclear weapons programme, eliminate its medium-enriched uranium stockpile, significantly reducing its low-enriched uranium stockpile, convert its nuclear facilities and accept IAEA Additional Protocol in exchange for the lift of economic sanctions that have been imposed by the international community (namely, certain countries and international organisations). The outcome of the parley was positively evaluated by both practitioners and experts [4].

Commonwealth of Australia and Iran's Nuclear Programme

Before proceeding to the analysis of Australia's official stance on Iran's nuclear programme, one should take into consideration its position in the nuclear sphere. The Commonwealth of Australia is a non-nuclear weapon state, being a part of the South Pacific nuclear-free-zone under the Treaty of Rarotonga. As for national security guarantees, Australia remains under the

American nuclear umbrella. There are considerable uranium deposits on the continent (according to some information, around 30% of the world uranium's reserves), although still there is no nuclear power generation capacity in Australia, namely, there are no nuclear power plants and just one research reactor (High Flux Australian Reactor was replaced in the mid-2000s by the state-of-the-art Open Pool Australian Light-Water reactor).

Historically, the diplomatic relations of Australia with the Islamic Republic of Iran were established in the late 1960s and early 1970s. However, the principles of tight bilateral cooperation did not apply to the nuclear field. As evidenced by Nader Entessar [5, p. 26-38], Arya Abbas Amirie (the executive director of the Institute for International Political and Economic Studies in Iran) visited Australia in 1970s, and in the process of consultation with the chairman of the Australian Commission on Uranium he was asked why Iran intends to build the nuclear

power plants neglecting its reserves of oil and natural gas.

In the 2000s, Australia strongly opposed the Iranian plans to develop its nuclear programme, supporting the respective UN Security Council resolutions. This included participation in sanctions against this country (namely, 1737, 1747, 1803 and 1929). Australia undertook prohibition of the supply of dual use items, participation in the travel bans and asset freezes of the Iranian citizens and organisations involved in the nuclear proliferation sensitive activities. On top of that, there has been a whole set of autonomous sanctions that have been imposed on Iran by the Australian government since 2008. Most of them (such as travel and financial restrictions) were adopted in 2010 and 2011, following UN SC Resolutions 1835 and 1929. In January 2012, after yet another aggravation, Australia (as well as Japan) confirmed its commitment to provide aid to the U.S. in the event of military operation against Iran. In January and February,

Australia made its participation in the anti-Iran sanctions more palpable (for example, through the ban on oil imports from the Islamic Republic of Iran). On that occasion, Australia followed the example of the European Union (that also extended sanctions previously imposed by Resolution 1929). One of the restrictions (imposed on March 1, 2012) was connected with the prohibition of financial transactions of \$20,000 or more with Iran without prior authorisation from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Most importantly, Australian sanctions regime towards Iran was updated in 2015 to reflect the latest resolution on Iran, adopted by UN Security Council 2231.

Australian politicians consistently expressed the view that sanctions would be an instrument to make Iran comply with its obligations under the international law. For instance, Kevin Rudd, former Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs claimed in his official statement made in December 2011 that the

additional sanctions underline Australia's concern about the Iran's proliferation activity [6]. Former Foreign Minister, Bob Carr, said in 2013 that the new suggested additional sanctions are "broadly aligned" with those implemented by the EU [7]. John Carlson, who formerly served as the head of the Australian Nonproliferation and Safeguards Organisation, suggests that Iran represents a challenge to the IAEA safeguards rather than to the NPT itself. Nevertheless, Carlson stresses that it does not necessarily imply that Iran is fully compliant with the nuclear non-proliferation regime principles. Thus, the attitude of Australian politicians and nuclear experts is rather unanimous in this case.

As of now, according to the official website of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Australia supports efforts by the five permanent members of the Security Council and Germany (the "P5+1" or "E3+3") to engage Iran in a sustained process of dialogue with a

view to ensuring the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme" [8]. Australia expressed continuous support for the multilateral efforts that were capped by the JCPOA in the long run.

Federal Republic of Germany and Iran's Nuclear Programme

The Federal Republic of Germany, like the Commonwealth of Australia, belongs to non-nuclear weapon states. However, U.S. tactical nuclear weapons (some 20 B61 bombs) are deployed on the territory of Germany within the framework of NATO's nuclear sharing policy. Nuclear energy has been actively used for the generation of electricity over the last decades. But in the 2000s, nuclear power plants phase-out was planned, in accordance with the law bills adopted in 2002 and 2011. Germany possesses a number of research reactors as well; one should not underestimate Germany's active participation in the peaceful nuclear research and development projects in the European and global organisations.

Then, it is essential to dwell upon the evolution of the bilateral relations between Germany and Iran in the past and especially attend to the role of Germany in the development of the Iranian nuclear programme. In the 1970s, German companies that have been famous for their involvement in the development projects in the area of nuclear energy, such as Kraftwerk Union and Siemens, signed contracts with the Shah's government, under which they obliged to participate in the buildup of the Iran's nuclear power plants.

Participation of the Federal Republic of Germany in the six-party talks (so-called P5+1 format, with Germany being the only state which is not a Permanent Member of the Security Council) can serve as the main proof of the interest that Germany takes in it. In 2003, Germany was one of the three states (along with the United Kingdom and France) to submit a draft resolution to the Security Council. Interestingly enough, this draft resolution was later used in the

first UN SC resolution on Iran's nuclear programme adopted in 2006 (see below). Technically, this was a joint statement issued on October 21 by the Iranian government and Foreign Ministers of the UK, France and Germany, according to which the Islamic Republic of Iran agreed to cooperate with the IAEA and sign the Additional Protocol. In the future, this format (also called EU-3) remained an instrument in the negotiations between the Western community and Iran. But as for impact on the bilateral relations, since 2005 the German government no longer exported any nuclear equipment to Iran. Moreover, the costs of such equipment sold to Iran in 1980s were no longer reimbursed.

In early 2006, the proposal to report Iran to the UN Security Council (made by several countries, including Germany) was adopted by the IAEA Board of Governors. As a matter of fact, the initiatives of the Federal Republic of Germany and five permanent member states of the Security Council were included in the

first UN SC Resolution on Iran's nuclear programme, Resolution 1696, adopted on July 31, 2006.

Next Resolution, 1737 (December 23, 2006) was in fact sponsored by three states: apart from France and the United Kingdom, it was Germany. The countries made a reference to the Article 41 of the UN Charter; the efforts of the P5 plus Germany were evaluated in a rather positive way. This document, like the previous resolution, was aimed at the stoppage of uranium enrichment held by Iran, but also foresaw the ban of nuclear materials and technology exports to Iran as well as a freeze of certain Iranian companies and individuals, taking part in the nuclear programme development.

In one of the following Resolutions, 1747 (passed by the UN SC in March 2007) the joint proposal of the five nuclear-weapons-states and Germany to establish a framework of practical steps was successfully adopted. In general, this set of measures was rather comprehensive

and well-balanced and was aimed at the dialogue with the Iranian establishment (offering economic incentives to Iran). This resolution had the same three sponsors as the previous one (UK, France and Germany), commending the initiatives of P5 plus Germany.

The Federal Republic of Germany was also mentioned in the Resolution 1803 that was adopted on March 3, 2008, as one of the six countries, seeking to establish the dialogue with Iran in order to find the solution for the problem. Foreign ministers of these six countries (supported by the representative of the European Union) agreed on a joint statement expressing concerns of the global community about the threat to the non-proliferation regime that Iranian nuclear programme represents. Draft resolution, previously submitted by France, Germany and the United Kingdom, turned out to be one of the sources of the Resolution 1803.

On September 27, 2008, the UN Security Council passed one more

Resolution concerning Iran's nuclear ambitions, 1835. This time, the Resolution was offered by six countries (P5 plus Germany). Again, the main goal of the resolution was the compulsion of the Islamic Republic of Iran to refuse from uranium enrichment.

One more UN SC Resolution on Iran 1929, was adopted on June 9, 2010. It also emphasised the importance of the joint diplomatic efforts undertaken by the Russian Federation, PRC, United Kingdom, United States, France and Germany. In September 2012, the same six powers came up with another resolution in the IAEA Board of Governors that expressed the intention to resolve the problem by peaceful means.

Iran deal concluded on July 2015 much as UN SC Resolution 2231 were adopted thanks in no small part to Germany's inclusion into the process of negotiations. The Resolution envisioned step-by-step plan of lifting the sanctions, nonetheless, in March 2016, the U.S., UK and France together

with Germany issued an open letter to the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, stating that missile tests conducted by Iran were defying the Resolution [9].

In the late 2000s German Foreign Minister Frank Walter Steinmeier reassured that the creation of the nuclear bomb on the part of Iran should be prevented. Some years later, in 2015, his personal involvement appeared a significant contribution into the process of talks [10]. Last years were marked by the initiative proposed by the Vice Chancellor and Minister of Foreign Affairs Guido Westerwelle to further broaden the sanctions against Iran (Westerwelle claimed that it is impossible to compare Iran and Israel on that occasion). Furthermore, in 2006 Merkel made rather categorical statements regarding Israeli-Iranian relations and Iran's nuclear programme, but later did not pay enough attention to the coworking of certain German companies with Iran in the nuclear field (this accusation has been widely used by the German

opposition in the internal political struggle) [11].

Thus, one can draw an inference that the participation and involvement of the Federal Republic of Germany in the process of negotiations on Iran was very active, both in the Board of Governors of the IAEA and in the Security Council, not to mention P5+1 format.

Conclusion

Comparing the official stances of the Commonwealth of Australia and the Federal Republic of Germany in respect of Iran's nuclear programme, one can come to a conclusion that all in all, they do fall in line with the general trend of the reaction of the West on the developments in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Both countries, being non-nuclear-weapon states, undertake steps in order to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons, jointly participating in the initiatives of the IAEA Board of Governors [12, p. 465] as well as sanctions against Iran. The solutions made by the establishments in both countries thereupon are both connected

with the internal political situation in Australia and Germany and influenced by global environment. The situation makes prospects of Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone establishment rather vague (in their time, both Australia and Germany spoke in favour of it).

As for the differences, on the whole, Germany tends to be more active in this regard (which can possibly be explained by the geographical component) Australian government prefers to stick to sanctions (imposed by UN SC resolutions and autonomous), whereas Germany makes proposals of its own, within the IAEA Board of Governors and United Nations Security Council. Such activity could also be related with striving of German elites to win a permanent seat in the Security Council. It is unlikely that the situation changes in the near future, that is why one can expect both countries to follow the selected path in terms of the new initiatives and sanctions implementation.

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