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Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the positions of Iran and the USA

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Abstract---The long-standing conflict between Israel and Palestine has gone far beyond the Middle East region and thus involves both internal and external political actors. Iran and the United States of America stand out among them. These two countries have sharply different positions and interests concerning the mentioned conflict. Both Iran and the US are trying to use the conflict between Israel and Palestine in the Middle East region for their own political interests. In particular, Iran aims to reinforce the position of the leading country in the region. The US is trying to strengthen its positions in the Middle East and therefore supports its strategic partner - Israel in this region. The opposing positions of these two countries towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, along with the other reasons, hinders the process of resolving the said conflict in a peaceful way.

Keywords---Israel, Palestine, conflict, region, USA, Iran, politics, interest.

Introduction

The conflict between Israel and Palestine remains one of the most important challenges to peace and stability in the Middle East region. This is a conflict involving both external and internal regional actors. At the beginning of the conflict, the West tried to establish order in the Middle East, contrary to which the Arab countries aimed to stir up Arab nationalism.

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Research Methods

The article is based on comparative, retrospective and structural-functional analysis research methods.

Research Results

In the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the positions of Iran and the USA are clearly underlined. Iran supports Palestine and supports the idea of establishing their independent state. As for the position of the USA, it is unaltered. The US is a supporter of Israel in diplomatic, military and financial terms. All of the above delays the stabilization of the situation in the region.

Discussion

The position of the Arab countries towards the State of Israel is distinguished by non-uniformity. A part of them agrees to coexist with Israel, while the other seeks to destroy Israel. Some of them are ready for negotiations with this state. However, their ally Arab countries view this readiness as a means to destroy Israel*.

Since the establishment of the State of Israel, they have had their own interests in Palestine. Some Arab countries do not acknowledge that Israel is a sovereign, independent state. They view it as an illegal imperialist element invading the Middle East region and consider Palestine an Arab territory. Therefore, they consider it unacceptable to give it up to the Jewish people. The resistance led to four wars with Israel, where military superiority of Israel was clearly demonstrated.

On May 15, 1948, the military units of five Arab countries (Egypt, Transjordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq) entered the territory of Palestine and the "War for Independence" began. A war that should have decided on the existence of Israel†. From the very beginning of the first war with Israel, the Arab countries acted only in their national interests‡.

Apart from the Arab countries, Iran has a different position towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which differs from other countries in the region with its highest sense of national identity and a state management system based on national interests§.

The Islamic Republic of Iran plays an important role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, even though it is not an Arab state. Iran has great political influence over Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, etc. Due to its geographical location, it occupies a land corridor from Iran to the Mediterranean Sea. It is influenced by Russia and China. Both of these countries are trying to weaken the US position in the Middle East region. This poses a threat to the state of Israel, because it loses a non-regional strategic ally in the region - the United States of America. The nuclear program of Iran is unacceptable and dangerous for Israel.

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* Kissinger, Henry. World Order (New York: Penguin Books, 2014), 102.

† სანიკიძე, გიორგი, ალასანია გიული, გელოვანი ნანი, ახლო აღმოსავლეთის ისტორია და მისი ურთიერთობა სამხრეთ კავკასიასთან (XIX ს.- XXI ს.-ის დასაწყისში) (თბილისი: ილიას სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი, 2011), 467. / Sanikidze, Giorgi, Alasania Giuli, Gelovani Nani, History of the Middle East and its relations with the South Caucasus (XIX century - early XXI century) (Tbilisi: Ilia State University, 2011), 467.

‡ ჰერცოგი,ხაიმ. ისრაელ-არაბების ომები, პირველი გამოცემა, მთარგმნ. ლელა ფიროსმანაშვილი და ქეთი ქანთარია (თბილისი: ბაკურ სულაკაურის გამომცემლობა, 2007), 75. / Herzog, Chaim. The Arab-Israeli Wars, First Edition, translated by Lela Pirosmanashvili and Keti Kantaria (Tbilisi: Bakur Sulakauri Publishing House, 2007), 75.

§ კისინჯერი, ჰენრი. მსოფლიო წესრიგი მთარმნ. მაია ფანჯიკიძე. (თბილისი: გამომცემლობა „ინტელექტი“, 2020), 216. / Kissinger, Henry. World Order. Translated by Maia Panjikidze. (Tbilisi: "Intelekti" publishing house, 2020), 216.

In the Middle East, the State of Israel is a country with Western values and the main strategic ally of the USA. It has a great influence on the implementation of the US foreign policy course in the region. It should be noted here that Iran has an important geostrategic location within the Persian Gulf. It controls the northern coast of the Strait of Hormuz and therefore can block the passage of ships through the strait if necessary. This can pose a threat to the economic well-being of the US and its allies, the member states of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council[**].

In 1947, Iran was against the creation of the state of Israel. It did not support UN Resolution No. 181 of November 29, 1947[††]. However, since 1948, relations between these two states have become complex. Turkey was the first Islamic country (September 1948) to recognize the independence of Israel. After this, Iran recognized the independence of Israel (July 7, 1951)

Close relations of Israel and Iran during 1951-1978 changed radically as a result of the Islamic revolution. For Ayatollah Khomeini, the head of the Islamic Revolution and the spiritual leader of Iran, the main enemies of Iran were the United States of America and Israel. The arrival of the regime of the Ayatollahs in Iran changed not only the state structure, but also the purpose, idea and connections of this country[##].

Even today, Iran claims to be the leader of the Middle East region. It maintains a prominent position in the Middle East and is the main geopolitical adversary of Israel and, therefore, of the United States. The policy of Iran is against the national interests of Israel. Therefore, it has its own interests in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is confirmed by indirect participation of Iran in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Iran also supports Lebanon's Hezbollah and Palestine's Hamas[§§]. By funding these organizations and arming their fighters, it indirectly participates in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Its main goal and interest are to remove Israel from the leadership of the Middle East at the hands of these organizations.

The relationship between Iran and Hamas is special[***]. These relations developed during the 1990 Persian Gulf crisis. In February 1992, Hamas opened an office in Tehran. Which indicates that Iran recognized the special role of Hamas in the opposition of Palestine. Israel, as well as the US and the West, opposed cooperation between Iran and Hamas. Israel was accusing Iran of financing terrorism. In 1992, Yasser Arafat, the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) accused Iran of funding Hamas. For Iran, Hamas is the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and for Hamas, Iran was its strategic partner.[†††]

As we mentioned, the nuclear program of Iran poses a threat to Israel. The international document "Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons" was developed by the UN Committee on Disarmament in 1968, which entered into force in 1970. [###] The Islamic Republic of Iran signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons on July 1, 1968.[§§§] According to the Treaty, the

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[**] Примаков, Евгения. Конфиденциально: Ближний Восток на сцене и за кулисами (Москва: Центрполиграф, 2016), 355. / Primakov, Evgeniy Confidential: The Middle East on Stage and Behind the Scenes (Moscow: Centerpoligraph, 2016), 355.

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[##] https://www.ijl.org/justicem/Mag%20No.5%20May1995.pdf(06.04.2023)

[§§] კისინჯერი ჰ, მსოფლიო წესრიგი, მთარმნ. მაია ფანჯიკიძე. (თბილისი: გამომცემლობა „ინტელექტი", 2020), 216-225. / Kissinger H, World Order, Translated by Maia Panjikidze. (Tbilisi: "Intelekti" publishing house, 2020), 216-225.

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[###] United Nations, Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of NuclearWeapons (NPT), Text of the Treaty, https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/npt/text (06.04.2023)

[§§§] United Nations, Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of NuclearWeapons.Status of the Treaty. https://treaties.unoda.org/t/npt (06.04.2023)

International Atomic Energy Agency is tasked with checking whether states are illegally developing nuclear weapons.

It should be noted that Iran started working on the nuclear program even during the Shah's period in 1967, when it built a 5-megawatt reactor in Tehran with the help of the US. [****] In addition to the USA, the West also helped Iran in the implementation of its nuclear program. By taking this step, they did not consider why oil-rich Iran needed nuclear weapons and what results this program would bring to the region in the future. The Islamic revolution soon changed the situation and the USA and Europe were replaced by Russia. Even though, in 1995 an agreement was reached between the USA and Russia, based on which Moscow had to stop supporting Iran, it still continued to cooperate with Iran in this direction. [††††]

In 2006, an agreement was reached between the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany against the nuclear program of Iran. Since 2006, the UN Security Council has adopted seven resolutions: 1696 (2006); 1737 (2006); 1747 (2007); 1803 (2008); 1835 (2008); 1929 (2010).[###] The comprehensive and long-term diplomatic effort on the Iranian nuclear issue ended with the agreement (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, JCPOA), which was signed on July 14, 2015 by the High Representative of the People's Republic of China, the Republic of France, the Russian Federation, the United States of America, Great Britain, the Federal Republic of Germany, the European Union and between the Islamic Republic of Iran. On July 20, 2015, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution No. 2231.[§§§§] Before that, however, Iran produced nearly 20,000 centrifuges at Natanz and Fordo. [*****] The stages of the mentioned resolution were written in a timeline. In October 2025, Resolution No.2231 was terminated and the nuclear program of Iran was closed. [†††††] The benefit of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) for Israel would be the fact it would have years of free breathing, as well as more time and energy to fight other dark threats.

In 2018, the United States withdrew from the JCPOA and reimposed sanctions on Iran. It should be noted that unlike the sanctions imposed before 2015, the new sanctions, imposed by the US President, Donald Trump, are more severe. Despite sanctions, Iran has restarted work on its banned nuclear program. In 2019, the US blamed Iran for an attack on Saudi Arabian oil refineries and imposed new sanctions. [####] In 2023, Tehran reached the 84% uranium enrichment level. The main question for experts now is how far is the uranium enriched in order to become a nuclear weapon. [§§§§§]

In the Middle East region, after Great Britain, the USA assumed the role of the hegemonic state, which is still trying to maintain this position and determine the political development of the region. During the Cold War, the main interests of US foreign policy in the Middle East region were: oil, stopping

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[††††] Khan. Saira. Iran and NuclearWeapons: Protracted Conflict and Proliferation (New York: Routledge Global Security Studies, 2009), 143.
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[*****] BBC, "Iran nuclear deal: What it all means", https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33521655 (06.04.2023)
[†††††] Arms Control Association. "The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)at a Glance", https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/JCPOA-at-a-glance (06.04.2023)
[####] CNN, Liptal, Nicole Gaouette, Kevin and Kylie Atwood, "US to send troops and air and missile defense to Saudi Arabia as Trump announces new Iran sanctions after oil attack", https://edition.cnn.com/2019/09/20/politics/trump-announces-iran-sanctions/index.html (06.04.2023)
[§§§§§] The Jerusalem Post, "Iran pledges to cooperate with IAEA investigation, re-installs cameras", https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/iran-news/article-733390 (06.04.2023)

communism, and Israel. ****** Nowadays, its only main interest is Israel and ensuring of its security. The US is helping Israel, both financially and diplomatically, to maintain its identity in the world's most volatile Middle East.
Four US presidents: Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump have presented the role of the US in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict differently. Bill Clinton's foreign policy was based on the struggle for superiority and power in the Middle East region and the growth of US prestige. The foreign policy of the presidential administration was characterized by multilateralism. The US considered international cooperation as a necessary condition for security. This, of course, considered Israel as well. †††††

On September 13, 1993, with the help of Bill Clinton, Israel reached an agreement on setting principles with the Palestine Liberation Organization in Oslo, which the president called "peace of the brave". The "Oslo Principles" Agreement clearly stated that the peace process of the Middle East was one of the main foreign policy priorities of the Clinton administration. The Oslo Agreement, which is a continuation of the 1991 Madrid conference, included two stages: I. The parties (Israeli and the Palestinian Administration) officially recognized each other's right to exist, II. Israel would agree to the withdrawal of military forces from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, which would contribute to the creation of a Palestinian transitional self-government. ‡‡‡‡‡

The peace process and negotiations were suspended by the tragic incident of February 25 in 1994. In Israel, 29 worshipers were killed in the Ibrahim Mosque, which led to unrest in the occupied territories and the Arab population of Israel.§§§§§§ The stalled talks resumed in 1995 at Taba, where the discussion matter concerned the sharing of control over the West Bank between the Palestinians and the Jews.

One of the most important negotiations in the history of Israel is associated with the name of Bill Clinton. On July 25, 1994, King Hussein of Jordan and Prime Minister of Israel Yitzhak Rabin met in Washington, D.C., after which an agreement was reached between Israel and Jordan. *******

During the presidency of George W. Bush, in 2006, the US provided military aid to Israel during its war with Lebanon's Hezbollah. Namely, on July 14, 2006, the Pentagon informed Congress that it would supply Israel with up to $210 million worth of jet fuel and guided bombs. ‡‡‡‡‡‡ The analysis of Bush's foreign policy revealed approaches such as the struggle for superiority and influence in the Middle East region and the growth of its prestige. ‡‡‡‡‡

Like the Clinton administration, the goal of the George W. Bush administration was to support Israel and the Palestinian leadership to refuse resorting to terrorism. §§§§§§§ George W. Bush, like Bill Clinton, recognized the need for the creation of the state of Palestine. According to him, the day would come

****** Drysdale, Alasdair and Gerald H. Blake, The Middle East and North Africa; A political Geography (New York: Oxford University press, 1985), 33-34.
†††††Clinton,Bill. My Life (New York: Knopf Publishing Group, 2004),498.
‡‡‡‡‡Clinton Digital Library, Oslo Accords Signing - Collection Finding Aid. https:// clint on .presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/36268 (08.04.2023)
§§§§§§ Cossali, Paul. A Sourvey of Arab-Israeli Relations (London and New York: Europa Publications,Taylor&Francis Group, 2004), 74.
******* United Nations Peacemaker, Treaty of peace between The State of Israel and The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan https://peacemaker.un.org/israeljordan-peacetreaty94 (08.04.2023)
†††††† The United States Department of Justice, Migdalovitz, Carol. Israel: Background and Relations with the United States, (CRS Report for Congress, 2006),
‡‡‡‡‡The White House President George W. Bush. Bush, George W. The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, September 17, 2002. https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archiv es.gov/nsc /nss/2002/(08.04.2023)
§§§§§§§ გაჩეჩილაძე, რევაზ. ახლო აღმოსავლეთი გეოპოლიტიკა, ტომი II (თბილისი: ბაკურ სულაკაურის გამომცემლობა, 2019), 95. / Gachechiladze, Revaz. Middle East Geopolitics, Volume II (Tbilisi: Bakur Sulakauri Publishing House, 2019), 95.

when the two states - Israel and Palestine would coexist within safe and recognized borders. ******** With Bush's active actions, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process was renewed. On May 1, 2003, the so-called "Road Map" was published, the "Quartet" (USA, Russia, European Union and UN) participated in its design. The mentioned plan included three stages. Its goal was to create an independent state of Palestine. Although the "Road Map" was approved by the UN Security Council on November 19, 2003. The parties did not fulfill the demands outlined in there. The "quartet" failed to put pressure on the parties, and the split between Israel and Palestine reappeared again.

The next US president, Barack Obama, actively pursue the path to maintain the role of the United States of America as the main actor in the Middle East region. According to the 2010 National Security Strategy of the United States of America, the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remained the main priority for Washington, which could be achieved through close cooperation with Israel and utilizing the "two states for two peoples" principle. According to the strategy, the US would recognize the existence of two states that would ensure the security of Israel. Washington considered that a wider involvement of the world's Muslim communities was necessary in the negotiation process. Ultimately, Israel would achieve long-lasting peace with all of its neighboring countries through this agreement. †††††††

It should be noted that during the presidency of Barack Obama, the issue of disagreement between Israel and the US was the return of the State of Israel to the pre-6-day war borders of 1967 and the recognition of East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine. ‡‡‡‡‡‡ Also, one of the unresolved issues was the Jewish settlements in the Palestinian territory, which the Obama administration demanded to conserve. In 2016, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution No. 2334, declaring Jewish settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory illegal.

When adopting the said resolution, the USA refrained from voting and did not use the right of veto. §§§§§§§§ In 2014, the relationship between Washington and Israel was further strengthened. The Strategic Partnership Act was signed, according to which the USA would ensure military advantage of Israel compared to its neighboring states. ********* The active involvement of US President Barack Obama yielded results and the attempt to solve the Iranian nuclear issue in a comprehensive and long-term diplomatic way ended with a comprehensive plan (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, JCPOA), which was concluded on July 14, 2015. ‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡

Unlike his predecessors, Trump did not choose to play the role of "mediator". ‡‡‡‡‡‡‡ He fulfilled the promise made during the 2016 election campaign and recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel on

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§§§§§§§§ United Nations, "Israel's Settlements Have No Legal Validity, Constitute Flagrant Violation of International Law, Security Council Reaffirms" (December 2016). https://www.un.org/press/en /2016/sc1 2657.doc.htm(08.04.2023)

********* United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014.https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/938 (08.04.2023)

†††††††† Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, JCPOA (July 2015) https://2009-2017.state.gov /docum ents/ organization/245317.pdf (08.04.202

‡‡‡‡‡‡‡ გაჩეჩილაძე, რევაზ. ახლო აღმოსავლეთი გეოპოლიტიკა, ტომი II (თბილისი: ბაკურ სულაკაურის გამომცემ3)ლობა, 2019), 94. / Gachechiladze, Revaz. Middle East Geopolitics, Volume II (Tbilisi: Bakur Sulakauri Publishing House, 2019), 94.

December 6, 2017. §§§§§§§§§ He called this the end of "failed policy".********** Iran, Turkey and other Muslim countries most boomingly condemned the fact of moving the American embassy to Jerusalem. Hundreds of Palestinians came out into the streets. There were rallies also in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. Trump's decision was based on his political alienation from Palestine. He needed the support of the Jewish lobby for the presidential election. ††††††††† Such policy implemented by Trump significantly prevented the achievement of a peace agreement between Israel and Palestine.

Conclusion

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict once again reached beyond the Middle East region. Again, the positions of the USA and Iran are unaltered, which somewhat hinders the parties to the conflict from sitting at the negotiating table. How things develop depends on the 2024 elections in the USA, where the election programs of the presidential candidates show certain outlines for resolving the conflict.

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