

SUMMARY

Subject of the graduation research paper: Contemporary Iran's foreign policy in the Middle East.

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Topicality of the research subject: Currently Iran is going through a transition period in political and strategic terms. The arrival of new political leadership in mid-2013 led to a significant change in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The shift in the Iranian foreign policy led to the use of alternative tools to achieve the national interests of Iran both within the international arena and in the Middle East region in particular. In this regard the current transformation of Iran's foreign policy requires a comprehensive study.

The goal of the research is to identify and analyze the trends of modern Iranian foreign policy in the Middle East.

Tasks of the research are to:

- Conduct a theoretical analysis of the foreign policy of modern states;
- Identify mechanisms for implementing the foreign policy of modern states;
- Identify national interests of Iran in the Middle East;
- Determine the main directions of the foreign policy of Iran in the Middle East.

Scientific novelty of the graduation research paper includes:

- The analysis of the transformation of the Iranian leadership perceptions related with the foreign policy, national security and measures to ensure and promote the national interests of Iran;
- The research of a strategic approach of the Iranian political leadership to conduct foreign policy and ensure national interests during the presidency of H. Rouhani.

Practical applications of research findings. The paper can be used by the political leadership of Russia to:

- Understand fundamental sources of the Iranian foreign and security policies during the presidency of H. Rouhani;
- Make informed decisions with regard to the Iranian foreign policy and international security issues in the region of Middle East and Central Asia.

Texture includes introduction, two chapters (two paragraphs each), conclusion, literature list and appendix.

Summary. The first chapter is devoted to the review and analysis of major research approaches to foreign policy and mechanisms of its implementing.

The author concluded that foreign policy is a strategically framed set of state actions, undertaken to establish and maintain relations with a diverse number and types of actors in the international community, and aimed to protect state's national interests and to expand its influence within the system of international relations.

The author scrutinized mechanisms of foreign policy implementation through the lens of power, which means the ability of a state to persuade other actors in the international community to do what it wants. The author analyzed three major types of power hard (military and economic measures), soft (cultural and ideological measures) and smart (a combination of hard and soft measures).

The second chapter identifies current national interests of Iran in the region of Middle East and identifies key outstanding specifics and the main directions of the Iranian foreign policy during the presidency of H. Rouhani.

The author concluded that the presidency of H. Rouhani significantly weakened the position of conservative political leaders who perceive the international relations and world politics through the lens of "zero-sum game". H. Rouhani and his foreign policy team are adherents of a "win-win" strategy who are keen to strike a grand deal with the international community (primarily with current Great Powers) in order to bring Iran back in the world economic and political universe.

Regarding the Middle East H. Rouhani focused on the restoration of Iran's positions in the region through diplomacy, political detente and the restoration of confidence between Iran and Arab states, which has been severely undermined during the presidency of Ahmadinejad.

The author emphasizes that despite all major transformations within the political landscape and shift of foreign policy tools, Iran's national interests remained constant and include the ensuring of national security and build-up of Iran's political and economic power in Middle East.