



“The conundrum of S-300” in the Russian-Iranian relations

The destiny of the Russian-Iranian relation has been one of the matters rousing interest after decision of the UN Security Council to apply the embargo against Iran on June 9, which was sixth in order. It has a serious important that how Russia, supporting the embargo decision number 1929 of the Security Council, will bear itself on the cooperation with Iran in the important projects, led by Bushehr Atomic Power Station and S-300 rocket complexes. Thus, it has been claimed that the Atomic Power Plant and S-300 rockets put on the agenda yet before the embargo decision, in the discussion the official Moscow conducted with the USA.

In the statements of Russia after the embargo decision of the UN, the stresses on both this decision and the cooperation process with Iran took a special place. The official Moscow noted that “the embargo was the diplomatic means to stop the nuclear program of Iran and didn’t aim to harm the Iranian nation.” And as it was expected the statement of the Russian authorities in the point of continuation of the cooperation was on the matters of Bushehr APS and S-300 rockets. In the statements of the official Moscow on Bushehr APS it was announced that the project would continue and would give in operation on August of this year as it was stated before. Taking part in the Asian summit in Istanbul, the Prime Minister of Russia Vladimir Putin in the statement given after the meeting with the Turkish colleague Rajab Tayyip Erdogan on June 8 stated that the embargo would not impede this process and they would implement the obligations. Even in the statement given on June 10, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov announced the new APS project with Iran being on the agenda yet.

But on the matter of S-300 selling it has been given by Russia the statements contradicting with each other. First on June 10, one of the officials of the Russian military industrial complex, which wanted to be unmentioned, said in the statement given to the agency Interfax that S-300 rocket systems would not be sold to Iran after the embargo decision of

the UN. But just the same day first the spokesman of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Andrey Nesterenko, and then the minister Lavrov said that those weapons were defense character and the embargo didn't impede selling of those rockets. Konstantin Kosajev, the chairman of the International Relations committee of the Russian Duma, also gave the statement similar to the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is interesting that in the statement given the next day the representative of the US Department of State Philip Crowley also stated the UN embargo not forbidding selling of S-300 rockets.

But from August 11, after the meeting of Russia's Prime Minister Putin with the French president Sarkozy in Paris, the French sources stated that Putin said selling of S-300 to Iran being frozen. At the same day with that statement not being rejected by Russia, the deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia Sergey Ryabov also announced that in weapon sale to Iran they would take as a basis the embargo decision of the UN. Yet the same day, one of the Kremlin representative, not wishing to be mentioned, also said S-300 not being sold to Iran. It was interesting that Konstantin Kosajev, the chairman of the International Relations committee of the Russian Duma, giving the statement a day ago in the direction of selling S-300 rockets to Iran, also stated his support to that decision. Lavrov also said that destiny of the treaty on S-300 selling would define by a decree of the president Medvedev on applying by Russia the embargo decision of the UN.

But some officials of Iran have been started to demonstrate the strict reaction against Russia, showing that new obstacle as a reason on selling of S-300. To mention that giving to the official Tehran 5 pieces S-300 rocket complexes, which selling to Iran by Russia is on the agenda since December 2005, has delayed denoting reasons of "the technical problems", as a result of the efforts of the USA and Israel. On November 2009 the brigade general Mohammad Hassan Mansurian, the deputy commander of the Air defense Troops of Iran, stated a possibility to claim against Moscow for not abiding by the treaty.

The French sources announced that in the meeting with Sarkozy too Putin said Iran's dissatisfaction from that decision and wishes to get material indemnity from Russia for not



abiding by the terms of the treaty. At last, Aladdin Borujardi, the chairman of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the Iranian parliament, emphasized that Russia would loss from freezing of S-300 selling and they were able to produce more modern weapons than those weapons. The vice-chairman of the committee Ismail Kavsari also stated that Russia should abide by the treaty. It is supposed that the matter of S-300 selling was one of the key points in the meeting on June 15, in which the deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia Aleksey Borodavkin discussed with the Iranian ambassador Mahmud Reza Sadjadi the future of the cooperation between two countries after the embargo decision. As seen, the different official bodies of Russia have given the contradictory statements on S-300 matter within 2 days. It is supposed that such situation is raised from three assumptions more: by the first supposition, some vital organizations in Russia, led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, offer opposition to the position of Medvedev and Putin towards Iran. But if to take under consideration the position of the president and the prime minister in Russia and their place in the foreign policy line, this supposition is very weak. According to the second supposition, among the state organizations of Russia, S-300 has created in conflicting coordination and as a result of incompetence. But the situation in the Russian state mechanism, especially qualification of the ministry of foreign affairs makes to think of poorness of this supposition as well. And the other third supposition is one that the business between Russia and the Western are still continuing and the adventure of S-300 card in last two days is also its result. The Russian officials may give these tactical statements for not getting what they wish from the Western in the discussion, which essence is not known yet. After the statements of Putin in the meeting with Sarkozy it is supposed that this issue may be to meet the losses of Russia in a result of freezing of selling of S-300. To mention that against the background of successful result of the discussions between Russia and the USA on reaching the embargo decision to Iran, the official Washington stated abolishment of the embargo applied to 4 Russian arms companies supporting the Iranian nuclear program. In consequence the deterioration in the Russian-Iranian relations of a few months has taken

a new impulse after the embargo decision of the UN. But if to take into consideration the certain common interests of these two countries at least in middle term strategic interests, it may be expected that the official Moscow and Tehran will take efforts not to increase this tension process more.