

The policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran towards Afghanistan in 2001-2014

The main topic of the study is the relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in 2001-2014, and in particular the influence of Iran, as a state with a certain potential for impact on developments in the region. The issues related to the Afghan-Iranian neighbourhood were chosen due to the need to describe aspects of the regional influence of the Islamic Republic of Iran, with particular emphasis on the eastern vector – that is, all issues related mainly to the neighbourhood with Afghanistan. This influence is presented in the work in broad political, as well as strategic and cultural aspects.

In the first chapter a modern Iran is presented as a state with the potential to impact the region. This chapter defines the Iranian government's foreign policy instruments, the main vectors of Iranian foreign policy influence, and briefly outlines the state of I.R.I.'s relations with individual states in the region and the United States. In addition, the chapter is accompanied by a description of *Look to the East* policy, which is important especially for the research topic presented here, although little known in the academic literature.

In the second chapter the characteristics of the Afghan state in the internal, international and strategic context is presented. The chapter places particular emphasis on showing the state as a place of international rivalry; it also points to significant internal problems related to the ethnic and religious diversity, which are largely associated with international issues. In addition to issues related to geographic determinism and the Afghan cultural diversity, the interests of the various international actors in Afghanistan are also briefly defined, as well as the consistency, or divergence, of their policies toward Afghanistan with I.R. Iran's actions toward this country.

The third chapter addresses Afghan-Iranian relations throughout history. Although, as already mentioned, the dissertation, as a whole, is a study in the field of international relations and most of all concerns the present day, specifically the period between 2001 and 2014, it is recognized that the historical background has an extremely important impact on the current relations between the two countries, which have the same political, linguistic and cultural tradition.

The fourth chapter, in the context of the topic of this dissertation, can be described as the title for the entire work. It characterizes in detail Iran's policy towards Afghanistan in the given research period, that is, from 2001 to 2014. Tehran's involvement in the various processes taking place in Afghanistan has been described and reported. The most important issues in this matter turned out to be the diplomatic activities of the I.R.I. and Iranian security policy (the degree of involvement in military activities, Tehran's relations with the Taliban, the fight against drug trafficking from Afghanistan, the

issue of terrorism in Baluchistan located on the Afghan-Iranian-Pakistani border, and other topics). The fourth chapter also examines the situation of the approximately three million Afghans temporarily or permanently residing in Iran, primarily characterizing the I.R.I.'s migration policy toward them. Another important issue discussed in chapter four is related to economic issues, the economy and the transit of goods in both directions, as well as Iran's involvement in the construction or reconstruction of infrastructure in Afghanistan – which has a significant economic, political or even strategic dimension. Another issue closely related to the economy is the extremely sensitive and hotly debated question of managing the water resources of Afghan rivers on the Afghan-Iranian border, as well as infrastructure projects, mainly in transport, carried out in Iran, which are to benefit Afghanistan (the expansion of the Chabahar port, road infrastructure and railroad lines to the border with Afghanistan). In this chapter a concept of Persian-Speaking Union is described, which is important, especially for the research topic presented here, and not widely known in the academic literature. Persian culture and language are presented as rarely analysed instruments of Iranian policy towards Afghanistan. At the end of the dissertation, the "Summary" presents conclusions and possible scenarios of developments in Afghan-Iranian relations, including a concise analysis of events that have already taken place in the period after 2014 and before the completion of this study.