

**RUSSIA-IRAN ARMS TRADE DURING PUTIN ADMINISTRATION SINCE
2012**

Luthfi Agung Wicaksono

International Relations

Faculty of Social and Political Science

University of Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta

Yogyakarta, Indonesia 55183

Luthfiagung47@hotmail.com

Abstract

This paper is intended to find out about Russia's efforts to strengthen its bilateral relations with Iran which has been challenged by America and several of opposite countries. This opposition has led Russia and Iran to be hesitant in collaborating on a nuclear development program. This paper focused on arms trade and nuclear programs carried out by Russia along with Iran. In line with National Interest and Foreign Policy of Russia through Iran, Russia is able to maintain Russia-Iran relations to be more integrated especially in the arms trade that has been carried out for a long time. This trade in arms trade is believed by Russia and Iran as a project that benefits both countries in the military and economic fields.

Keywords: Russia, Arms Trade, Threat, Iran

Preface

Russia's economy is among the lowest in the world because it has a low percentage among other countries. The majority of Russians in building their economies are still heavily dependent on raw materials and natural resources, but the defense industry is one of the most technologically intensive sectors in which Russia sees the position of international leadership.

Internationally, the Russian defense industry is a significant source of income. Because in each conflict area requires defense, the more conflict there is, the more they (client) buy from Russia. In fiscal 2008, oil and gas revenues peaked, accounting for half of Russia's federal budget. However, since the global financial crisis hit the country in 2009, the Russian economy has begun to experience a fiscal deficit. In 2012, 2013 and 2014, Russia experienced a budget deficit of -0.02%, -0.7% and -0.6% of GDP respectively. The exception is in 2011, when the Russian budget spent 0.8% of the GDP surplus (Economic, 2018).

The deficit happened because, in the Dmitry Medvedev era, Russia was carried away by the US economy, which was experiencing an economic crisis and then transformed into a global crisis. The crisis also resulted in a decrease in the number of requests, as well as the Russian currency, the Ruble also weakened. Many large companies reduce their investment. During Medvedev's tenure, not all of Medvedev's policies were in line with what Russia had done in the previous two periods. For example, the relationship between the country and Iran. So far, Iran has become one of the countries close to Russia and has a share in reviving the Russian economy. However, when Iran was criticized by the European Union and the United States for its nuclear development, Russia helped support sanctions against the nuclear development by the United Nations, so that relations between Russia and Iran had stretched.

The relations between Iran and Russia are strategic, and in addition to covering various military sectors, their relationship also covers the economic and political sectors. In those cases, Russia wants to strengthen cooperation with Iran during the Putin Era to solve the relations between Russia and Iran that had stretched. Iran's nuclear program is also a contentious issue in contemporary international politics by the United States, Russia, China, and Europe. Nuclear development in Iran received loud protests from Western countries, especially the United States. The United States accuses

Iran of having plans to build nuclear weapons so that the United States imposes diplomatic and economic sanctions on Iran. Contrary to what the United States did, Russia said that sanctions would not solve the problem or stop Iran's ambitions. Russia supports by supplying Iran with the latest weapons technology. Russia's foreign policy is outside of Russian geostrategic calculations and economic efficiency considerations because they do not consider changes in the concept of geopolitics that Russia has.

Indeed, in July 2012, Putin said that arms exports are “an effective instrument for advancing [Moscow’s] national interests, both political and economic” (Russia, 2012). Many are anticipating significant arms sales to improve ties with Iran such as Russian hardline politicians and generals who transfer ownership when Putin becomes president. Soon Moscow started helping Tehran's nuclear program. In October 2000, other important events can take place. Putin publicly abrogated the 1995 Gore-Chernomyrdin pact - limited conventional arms deal with Russia with Iran. According to press reports, in practice, the agreement gave Russia "a free pass to sell conventional weapons to Iran" until 1999 (wsj.com, 2000) Moreover, the public cancellation of the agreement indicates that Putin has an interest in closer cooperation with Iran (Borshchevskaya, 2017)

Research Methodology

This research was carried out by using qualitative methods, namely by elaborate on existing facts supported by previous facts, then a conclusion was drawn. The techniques used to collect data are using library research techniques. Where the data obtained comes from various sources, such as books, scientific journals, internet sites, newspapers, reports, online news, international agreement documents, and other sources both in printed and electronic forms that are relevant to this research.

Theoretical Framework

A country needs to formulate foreign policy. The policies implemented must fulfill all the interests of the community and the national interests of the country. Foreign policy is also a series of targets for how a country interacts with other countries in the political, economic, social, and military fields. For this reason, state actors carry out various kinds of cooperation, both bilateral, trilateral, regional, and multilateral cooperation. Usually, this foreign policy can be carried out in various ways, but there

are three of the most common, namely through war, peace, and economic cooperation (Holsti K. , *International Politics A Framework for Analysis* 6th ed, 1992).

The state often uses the concept of foreign policy as a strategy in dealing with other countries or other international political units to achieve national goals and interests. Based on the concept above, Russia is conducting military and weapons cooperation based on external sources based on conflict and cooperation with Iran, which has the potential of arms trades and nuclear technology. Russia also concerns about the changes in the international system in economic and military. In this case, Russia then decides to strengthen cooperation with Iran as based on the economic sector and focused on arms trade to more significant the Russia existence in that sector.

The World of International Relations cannot be separated from national interest. Because after all, the state is the main actor in International Relations. Where in a country there must be a national interest that must be achieved. In this case, is it a national interest? According to Oppenheim (1987), the current concept of national interest is still considered too vague to be studied in international political science. Oppenheim believes that it is not a complicated idea, it is proved by a brief explanation, for example, as a form of "value held by a person and even all layers of a social group," or normatively as a foreign policy objective.

The concept contains the inherent minimum meaning in the concept itself, which is to protect its physical, political, and cultural identity from the disruption of other nations. In other words, the essence of the national interest, according to Morgenthau, is power (influence, power, and power).

Russian has a national interest through Iran, which is negotiating to exchange oil supplies with construction buildings. Russian decision to cooperate with Iran is the right thing to do because the US bans Iran from cooperating with other countries, in oil and weapon transactions, Russia even helping Iran in forming a nuclear reactor in Busher, the West gives economic sanctions to Iran in nuclear development which is thought to be close to making atomic bombs.

Discussion

Russia or the official name of the country is Federatsiya Rossiyskaya (Russian Federation) is a vast country that stretches from Eastern Europe to North Asia. Russia is the largest country in the world whose total area of 17 million square kilometers, about the size even more than doubled from Canada who was named the nation's second largest country in the world (Britannica, 2019). Russia became an independent country since 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union as a superpower after the Cold War. Russia, led by Boris Yeltsin as Russia's first president who took office in 1991, which only lasted for one year because of infighting within the political bonds which are supported by the global crisis.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia experienced a prolonged economic crisis. Even the state of the Russian economy is at its lowest when the global world affected by the economic crisis in 1998. Coupled with state-owned enterprises controlled by the private sector to make profits, there is no longer enter the country where the income relied upon as one of the country's economic boosters factors. The economic crisis experienced by Russia does not stop there, and the incumbent president Yeltsin was subsequently resigned from his position as president.

Furthermore, Yeltsin was eventually replaced by President Putin to take steps of real change for Russia. Putin until now has served as three times as president of the Russian state. Russia itself is shaped country where the Czech Presidency of the supreme power is held by the executive branch, which is divided into two entities, namely the President who has the dominant force and the Prime Minister. Although standing as an independent country, but Russia in matters of foreign policy turned out to be the majority inherited a lot from the former Soviet Union where the ideology espoused were communists and then turned into a Republican form of government since Boris Yeltsin leads (Vasilevitskaya, 1993).

Vladimir Putin has a desire to create a new world order that is more powerful and balanced. Putin began to embrace many countries for this purpose for the creation of a stable and secure world, even started to improve its relations with the EU and also closer to the countries in Asia such as India, China and also became an official member

of the G-8. Putin believes that if domestic problems in Russia has been completed, then Russia could again become a superpower and will have an important role for other countries in terms of strengthening the self. Putin's foreign policy is more visible and seen quite successful compared to the previous period. The main priority of president Putin is to get closer to the neighboring countries to ensure the security of Russia's geographical and geopolitical. Russia, as part of the CIS, aggressively pursue cooperation with countries of the former Soviet Union and participate actively in solving the conflicts in the CIS countries.

In the past five years, a significant trend is that Russia's energy policy is starting to show its position as a cornerstone of Russian diplomacy. As soon as number one in Russia, Putin's first priority is to revitalize Gazprom, the Russian gas company. He immediately gets rid of the criminals of Gazprom and replaces them with managers who can put the interests of the country above their interests. Putin began to dismiss Chernomyrdin⁶⁰ in 2000 from his position as Commissioner of Gazprom and replace it with Dmitri Medvedev, now the President of Russia.

Foreign policy taken by Dmitry Medvedev reflected in the policy document issued by the wild country in July 2008. The Russian government is also thinking long about Medvedev on Russia's security strategy, and he made the policy to build Russia's security is becoming stronger by the year 2020. Moscow, as the Russian capital, was also deployed to build international cooperation and role in the world order to follow international law and abide by the Security Council (Donaldson & Noguee, 1998).

As the next leader, Medvedev in 2008 received the full support of Putin as the highest strength and raised Putin became Prime Minister. During his reign, Russia carried on in the current domestic economic crisis experienced by the United States, which later expanded into a global crisis. The economic disaster that struck the United States made a very sharp fall in oil prices. Oil prices, which reached 150 US dollars dropped to 40 dollars per barrel, while the source of the Russian economy dependent on oil export production abroad. Russia's currency also weakened as a result due to declining demand from other countries for the oil. Companies eventually reducing the salaries and number of employees, it then responds by the Russian government by using one trillion Russian rubles to rescue the country's banks, lent more than 50 billion US

dollars to the company in order for them to survive. Russia's economic situation stabilized in 2009, but economic growth only occurred in 2010.

The economic crisis made the Russian national income into tidal cause a state of the Russian economy decreased. Dependence on energy sources to be one cause. Finally, the Russians took control of the energy sector by raising the price of natural gas. The structure of the Russian economy as a benchmark of the country's economic growth and natural resources of energy into a force Russia to boost the country's economy because the energy possessed by Russia amounted to much and needed by neighboring countries. Despite the economic crisis hit Russia, but here, Russia took measures to reduce its dependence on energy and prefers an increase in natural gas prices and export activities. Here it can be seen that the foreign policy during the reign Medvedev focused on the benefits. Besides, cooperation with other countries has also become one of the factors increasing the Russian economy. Natural resources are owned by Russia and then be used as a tool for diplomacy enumerated by Russia to another country. Russia does cooperation with former Soviet Union countries, such as Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, and European Union (Freire & E.Kanet, 2012)

The Middle East owns natural resources is also a concern for Russia. There are so many countries that want to get involved and spread its influence in the Middle East in order to get power katas ha of natural resources in the region, Russia is no exception. Russia, in practice, has its overseas development policy for the Middle East. The policy is divided into two components, firstly Iran and then other Middle East regions. In Iran, the Russian government pursuing cooperation in the fields of energy and economics. Russian bilateral cooperation with Iran because it is driven their economic interests, while Iran to cooperate with Russia to improve its defense capabilities in order to stem the threat from other countries. Iran is a Middle Eastern country that has a highly developed economy, while Russia is a country with military technological capabilities and very strong. So that cooperation between the two countries is beneficial to one another. Russia has three main interests in this cooperation, namely economic interests to improve the state of the domestic economy, the security interests of the trade lane that passes through the area of the Caspian Sea, and interest in stemming the expansion of NATO in the area of the former Soviet Union (Kholis, 2010).

Many countries want to spread its influence in the Middle East in order to take control of natural resources in the region, and one of them is Russian. Russia has a foreign policy toward the Middle East, and the policy is divided into two components, there are Iran and other regions in the Middle East. In Iran the Russian government pursues cooperation in the energy and economic fields. Iran's nuclear program received a lot of rejection and condemnation of other countries, especially the United States and the West. This rejection is due to concerns about the development of nuclear weapons would do America stated that Iran's nuclear development undertaken by Iran could be used for acts of aggression and harm other countries. Nevertheless, Russia chose a place opposite to America. Russians prefer to continue to support Iran's nuclear program, which he believes is safe aimed at developing energy. Russia since 1992 has been agreed to help Iran to build a nuclear reactor at Bushehr, but its development was hampered because of pressure from other countries to halt the Bushehr nuclear project (Akbar, 2015).

In determining foreign policy, a state will consider five different sectors, here Russia taking "External Sources" include attributes that exist in the international system and on the characteristics and attitudes of a country in carrying it out. External Sources include changes that occur in the external environment, policies, and actions from other countries, both conflict and cooperation, threats, that directly or indirectly support affects foreign policy in a country. Russia is using the concept of Foreign Policy to achieve the goals and interests of his country to overcome the economic downturn by working with other countries, especially Iran. Iran is regarded as the country with the potential to help Russia out of adversity (Holsti K. , 1988).

Russia's relations with Iran have existed since long even since 1826 in which Russia invaded Iran. In 1990 before the end of the Cold War, both Iran and the Soviet Union conducted a dialogue on development cooperation nuclear program previously unfinished. As a country which has abundant energy resources, Russia and Iran finally agreed to form a partnership. Russia-Iran nuclear program into a partnership that includes the existing NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty) but is still getting opposition from other countries. The dialogue process was then performed again after the cold war has been completed, around 1995 after the Russian Federation was formed into a country.

Russia then formally declared itself to be helping Iran to complete Bushehr construction process and signed a cooperation agreement with Iran regarding the possible construction of three similar reactors at the same location. However, this agreement by Russia-Iran gets massive opposition from the United States for fear Iran would misuse it as a means to make weapons for destroying mass (Hoffman, 2005).

Both Russia and Iran became a member of the NPT and the IAEA. Both must comply with the rules set. The fourth chapter in the NPT states that member countries such as Iran may develop nuclear weapons for peaceful purposes. Even countries which have nuclear technology are allowed to assist countries that do not yet have these technologies. For this reason, Russia considers that the assistance provided to Iran is legal and following applicable regulations. To comply with Iran to the NPT, Iran has done its obligations and is considered to be entitled to possess and develop nuclear technology (D. Fischer, 1995).

Russia openly will assist Iran in building a nuclear reactor. Opposition comes from the United States and even states to impose sanctions on Russia. However, Russia said it would not halt its assistance to Iran because Russia will only help Iran in the manufacture of reactors and to report progress to the IAEA. The assistance provided to Iran would not be done free of charge. The crisis experienced by Russia before making Russia wanted to cooperate with Iran. Russia hopes that the assistance provided to Iran could help Russia to increase sources of funding in the economic sector. Besides, Russia and Iran have good relations in the economic sector with the win-win solution for both countries. Through the good relations of Russia and Iran, Russia also can have good relations with other countries in the Middle East era that can strengthen the existent in those areas (News, 2010).

In 2009, the US-Russia relations and Iran to the tension. At a meeting held in September 2009, Barack Obama as the United States wants Russia to participate in the program of support sanctions against Iran over its Efforts to develop a nuclear weapon. Medvedev said that sanctions would be given to Iran is can be forever to be avoided. This statement supports the efforts of the United States to increase international pressure on Iran to comply with the NPT treaty in assembled nuclear program. Russia has not been fully approved sanctions presented to Iran to comply with demands put forward by

the United States over its nuclear program. Medvedev told Obama said that for this problem is better solved with a better approach, Russia plans to renegotiate with Iran. The result will come out in proportion to the fact that Iran undertakes the development activities, whether to sanction or not (CNN, 2009).

Some Russian experts mention that Russia's relations with Iran on the verge of collapse in the leadership of Dmitry Medvedev. Routine activities of Iran caused it in order to remove the sanction on Iran. Iran several times to negotiate with the United States and show the right action over its nuclear program. Iran knew that the United States holds power in controlling the international public, including the UN Security Council. The process of self-Iranian approach to the United States allows the existence of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Iranian side also showed their attitude is not satisfied with the policy of Russia became a member of the P5 + 1, which often take care of other interests. Iran then tried to get into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which is this action not supported by Russia (Surkov, 2010).

Russian has a national interest through Iran, which is negotiating to exchange oil supplies with construction buildings. Russian decision to cooperate with Iran in oil and weapons transactions. Decision missile sales to Iran and Russia-Iran close relations and Middle Eastern countries reap protests from the West. The Russian decision was also met with resistance from the United States because they will endanger the existence of the United States there. Russia in a nuclear deal with Iran is influenced by several factors, among others, the national interest in terms of the Military Security and Economic Well-being. Russia's primary interest is to grow the economy in the country and its presence in the Middle East. Russia's national interests in maintaining an identity as a superpower country in the international glass are to implement a system of democratic government. Russia has changed the system of government from autocracy to democracy make Russia must choose the right step for all the people of various circles in Russia. As a country with a democratic system, Russia also maintains its existence in the international world because of Russia also one of the superpowers (Holsti K. , 1992).

Russia sought various ways to maintain the identity of the country in the international glass. Sales of the S-300 missile is also one way of Russia in restoring the

economic crisis that happened as a result of sanctions western countries. As a country which was once the world's superpower Russia, of course, will apply the balance of power to counterbalance the United States. Expanding relationships and influence in the Middle East is a fundamental principle of the Russian national welfare. Beside of that, explained that 'balance of power' is seen as a 'result' at the systemic and sub systemic level and also as a condition in the balance of 'power equilibrium' power, between key countries (Paul, 2004).

Russia later restored Russian-Iranian relations that were once damaged as the actor who proposed negotiations between the US-Russia-Iran. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs considers that the results of the negotiations achieved by them were a victory over the efforts to resolve the problems carried out by Russia politically diplomatically. Moscow stressed that this was what Russia had championed and hoped for. Russia also stated that after these negotiations, an agreement on the Iranian Nuclear Program could play an active role in resolving regional problems and conflicts in the Middle East. Another reason why Russia holds Iran's hand in cooperation is that some experts from Russia judge that relations between Russia and Iran can be destroyed at any time. It was marked by the activities of Iran which actively negotiated with the United States regarding sanctions against Iran. If Russia releases cooperation with Iran that has been built for a long time, then Iran could easily side with the United States or the European Union which can diplomatically and bilateral relations guarantee the next future of Iran (Surkov, 2010).

At the end of 2015, and Russia's cooperation with Iran has not been smoothly running marked with the construction of a power plant in Bushehr. Iran also offered to modernize the railway lines that have previously been designed. Russia is now on the verge of expansion of relations of cooperation in the military sphere. There is also the possibility to channel the military objects to the Navy, Air Force, as well as modernize the air defense system. Russia, together with Iran, are also planning their joint war maneuvers exercise, educating and training for soldiers of both countries (Gazeta, 2015).

Regarding national interest, Russia must restore its economic well-being after facing the crisis as a result of economic sanctions from the West. In this context,

Russia strengthens its relationships and agreements with Iran to exchange goods and crude oil "barter" for policy delivery and supply of equipment and construction material to Iran in exchange for oil under the deal. National interests of the Russian Military Security is a way to maintain the identity of the country amid international glass, particularly the United States and Iran that Russia has the quantity and quality of powerful weaponry. Russia is also taking advantage of its position in which Russia became -middle-man between Iran and the Western countries. It resulted in the first reactor should be completed in 2005 have gone back six years and was inaugurated in 2011. It appears that despite the many pressures from the outside, and there is no doubt that Russia had oscillated in taking a stance on Russia finally complete his promise to Iran (Martin, 2010).

Russia itself is an exporter of arms second most significant in the world after the United States with several arms exports by 26% in 2006 Russian import fighter aircraft multi-role Su-30 MK 2 Flanker and 18 helicopters, and export air defense systems Tor-1 to Iran (T.Milani, 2012). Russia also expects market share more fabulous oil in the Middle East. Because for Russia itself Iran is the gateway to the Middle East countries other. Related Iran oil purchases by Russia, initially the two sides discuss a considerable amount to the oil supply, to reach 25 million tons per year or about a quarter of Iran's total oil production. However, now the two sides agreed to cooperate in small amounts, i.e., between 2.5-3 million tons per year. Iran will sell its oil at a price that is slightly less than the price of Brent. The annual contract this cooperation reached 2:35 billion dollars. The efforts were undertaken by Russia solely to defend Russia's economic and political interests in Iran. Oil and gas sector is the primary commodity to meet its energy needs and activities of Russian exports. Russia maintains oil and gas interests for the realization of a managed democracy undertaken by Russia during his reign. It is reflected by the policies of Putin in the form in order to maintain its position on Iran (Barsukov, 2014).

Russia has military cooperation with Iran aim used to hold military aggression, conduct anti-terrorist operations, and fight transnational crime. The troops permanently based in Russia and under the command of the CSTO member states to contribute a particular military unit. The Russian government in Kyrgyzstan put up military units

about the size of a battalion and Russia set up a training center for military personnel of both countries. The agreement is valid for 49 years, and onshore automatically extended to a period of 25 years (Barbanov, 2009).

Conclusion

Russia strengthens the cooperation with Iran on shipping and supplying construction equipment to Iran, to achieve the best benefit and result for Russian economic. As well as for the national interests of Military security is the way Russia maintains it is country's identity amid international glass, especially the US and Iran, that Russia has a substantial quantity and quality of weapons.

Russia wants to be an actor with influence in the Middle East region in addition to the grounds for stability and also trade. Russia's foreign policy towards the Middle East based on the desire of Russia as a great country should play an active role in a relevant area such as the Middle East, Russia believes the constant conflict in the Middle East, Russia must build trade relations and mutually beneficial relationships with countries in the Middle East. The emergence of Russia as a player in the Middle East under the leadership of President Vladimir Putin to restore Russia's position as a superpower in the Middle East. Russia since 1992 has been agreed to help Iran to build a nuclear reactor at Bushehr, but its development was hampered because of pressure from other countries to halt the Bushehr nuclear project. Iran's nuclear program received a lot of rejection and condemnation of other countries, especially the United States and the West. This rejection is due to concerns about the development of nuclear weapons would do America stated that Iran's nuclear development undertaken by Iran could be used for acts of aggression and harm other countries. Nevertheless, Russia chose a place opposite to America. Russians prefer to continue to support Iran's nuclear program, which he believes is aimed at developing safe and energy.

There are three big reasons why Russia wants to strengthen its cooperation with Iran. First, Russia wants to challenge the United States who oppose Iran nuclear. Second, Russia's primary interest is to grow the economy in the country and its presence in the Middle East. Third, Russia sees Iran as the right partner because Iran is a source of energy for Russia, so it is obligatory to establish a good relationship, on the other

hand, Iran has nuclear cooperation with Russia. National interests of the Russian Military Security is a way to maintain the identity of the country amid international glass, particularly the United States and Iran that Russia has the quantity and quality of powerful weaponry.

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