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**АНАЛИЗ ПРОТИВОСТОЯНИЯ МЕЖДУ ШИИТАМИ
И СУННИТАМИ В БАХРЕЙНЕ**

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The political situation in Bahrain is an objective lesson for when people use political demonstrations in order to change internal policies run by the government. In 2011, the kingdom underwent a massive wave of protests and demonstrations by Shias. They demanded the expansion of their authority and functions in the government, but police arrested the majority of the oppositionists, and the revolt was stopped. In 2012, the law was amended, according to which the representatives of the Shia clan faced some difficulties in the rulemaking. Specifically, Shias insisted on the creation of single-chamber parliament because the king and Consultative Council can act independently from the parliament where Shias have the greatest part of seats. As the leader of Al-Wefaq, the main opposition group, declared, «The king remains the one to appoint and dismiss the government.» (Middle East Online, 2012.) This change in the Constitution only fanned the discontent, and the amount of rallies only increased. Not so long ago, on the 30th of October, the minister of Internal Affairs claimed that political demonstrations are forbidden, and participation in them would be punished (Ahram, 2012.) However, the citizens of Bahrain continue protests strikes illegally. In this paper, I will discuss this problem from three levels of analysis and explain the importance of the conflict for international relations.

To begin with, I will analyze the case of Bahrain at the systemic level, which considers the interconnection between global or regional actors. This particular conflict had regional importance because it took place in Arab world, which had a certain impact on Bahrain to wage war. The period from 2010 to 2011, when the citizens of the states situated in the Near East started to revolt against their governments, is called the «Arab Spring». During this time, people of twenty different countries fought for economic and political reorganization and even for the total replacement of the regime. Here we can see the implication of the snowballing concept, which claims that the unrest in one country may be a stimulus by the unrest in its neighbors' territories. There was no regional hegemon, which could control the increasing number of riots and preserve the status quo and security; therefore, Bahrainis were affected by the spirit of revolution and tried to organize their own revolution that might improve their political situation.

The country supporting Bahrain in its actions is Iran. «The oppressed people of Bahrain are a part of the Islamic world and the Islamic Republic of Iran feels obligated to support them» (Press Time, 2011.) In the latter, the population is also dominated by Shias. The difference is that Iran officially claimed Shia Islam to be a state religion, and the government has the majority of representatives from this Islamic branch. Iranian authorities share the feelings of protesting Bahrainis, and try to provide them with military aid (Press time, 2011.) In contrast, the USA does not support Bahraini pro-democratic movements. The US government is not willing to intervene to this situation, while it has naval forces in Persian Gulf. As one of the prominent activists, Said Yousif al-Muhafdah, said,

«We are victims because we have oil and the American 5th Fleet» (Eurasia Review, 2012.). The protesters claim that the USA does not support the movement because Bahrain serves as a good military base, and the government of the USA prefers to keep peaceful relations with royal family and ignore the development of the conflict.

The state level of analysis provides us with the ability to look at domestic policy as a key factor of this issue. In addition, Bahrain has a one-party system – there are no other parties allowed to participate in the policy-making process. The absence of multiple parties leads to social inequality, which can be based on religious, ethnic or national conflicts that exist in Bahrain society. As a constitutional monarchy, Bahrain is governed by a Prime Minister and the king. The power is inherited, and the office of Prime Minister is given to the person chosen by the king. Both of them, as well as the major part of the government are the representatives of the Sunni clan, while seventy percent of the population are Shias (Web Citation, 2011.) The dissatisfaction is based on religious grounds as well as these two branches of Muslim communities have had tension between each other long before. Sunnis and Shias interpret the Sharia law differently: the former believes that it is necessary to choose the governors among the members of the ruling dynasty, while Shias claim that only the descendants of Prophet Muhammad have a right to rule. Obviously, Shias disagree with the apparent domination of Sunnis because it is clear that there will not be a chance for them to govern the state until Al Khalifa dynasty exists.

Finally, political dispute can begin because of a particular person (or group of them) playing an important role in the state. This level of analysis is called individual. As previously mentioned, the two branches of Islam historically opposed each other, so it became a part of nature of Sunnis and Shias' generations to struggle for the power. Furthermore, the rebels in Bahrain believe that Prime Minister Khalifa bin Salaman Al Khalifa and the king Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa run dictatorial regime and are disrespectful to the rights and liberties of Shias. Nonetheless, despite all of the citizens' negative responses to the current political regime, the dynasty Al Khalifa did not negotiate with the Shia people in order to resolve the situation, which is gradually going out of the control. The main reason for this «inactivity» can be explained with political ambition theory. Shias require the introduction of democratic principles to the state, the right of voting, and the accountability of the government. All of these factors can undermine the power that now is concentrated only in the hands of the king and Prime Minister; therefore they are not totally interested in the victory of Shias and finding a compromise.

Thinking about the consequences of the recent amendment, it is unlikely that this change will work. The Bahrainis still organize uprisings, and are more punished for this as well, even after it became illegal. The leaders of the country tried to stop the revolt, but their methods were no less harsh. Security forces used tear gas on protesters, and when they managed to arrest rebels, the policemen literally tortured convicted activists of the movement (BBC, 2011.) From the period of the Arab Spring to the present, approximately 80 people have died in Bahrain, 700 were seriously injured, and dozens of opposition leaders are sitting in prisons (New Europe, 2012.)

Also, in order to understand how Shias' irredentism is dangerous for the whole state, we can consider another country that has also participated in Arab Spring events – Libya. This state underwent the most remarkable changes: its leader, Muammar Gaddafi, was overthrown and killed, the power was given to the National Transitional Council, and the international sanctions binding the state were weakened. Nevertheless, Libya suffered from huge losses of people in the amount of 25,000 (Sydney Morning Herald, 2011.) Bahrain, unfortunately, has also the potential for such a result.

In short, the current situation can be interpreted from two points of view. On the one hand, the leadership of Sunni Muslims in Bahrain deprives Shias of many political rights; therefore, the latter should struggle for their liberties. One of the most prominent examples is the recent citizenship revocation of some activists of the protests (BBC, 2012.) These actions of the government can stir up a new wave of unrest, and lead to the overthrow of the royal family. On the other hand, the victory of Shias may weaken international relations with the Western countries; for this reason it would be better both for the protesters and the government to relax tensions between each other to diminish the likelihood of war. In international relations this strategy is labeled as «détente» (Kegley and Raymond, 2012.) For example, the trade of oil between Bahrain and the USA could be broken because Shia Muslims consider that this type of economic relations is beneficial only for the latter. In other words, it could significantly harm the economic realm of Bahrain, and the state would lose such a powerful partner as the USA.

To conclude, the results of the recent events in Bahrain are difficult to predict definitely because the situation is totally depends on whether the sides, involved in the conflict, will seek a rapprochement. Discussing the issue from different points helps to understand the root of the problem better, and demonstrates that there can be more than one factor promoting the beginning of armed conflict. Each level of analysis provides us with the information about impact of global actors' interconnection, domestic policy, and the leader of the state. For this reason, the situation in Bahrain may serve as good material for further study in the international relations, and help conduct thorough investigation of how one country can be influenced by others and vice versa.

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БОРЬБА МЕЖДУ КИТАЕМ И ЯПОНИЕЙ ЗА ОСТРОВА СЕНКАКУ/ДЯОЮЙДАО

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The territorial issue between Japan and China over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands is a remarkable subject to study in the field of international relations. Situated in the East China Sea, the islands were given to the Japanese government by the USA in the early seventies; nevertheless, China considers the archipelago to be their primordial land and struggles hard for the conferment of Diaoyu. The discussion about this territory has taken place for more than a century, but the culmination of this question arose in April 2012 when Shintaro Ishihara, the Tokyo mayor, announced making a deal between the government and Japanese businessman Kunioki Kurihara, the owner of the islands for several decades. Later, in September of the same year, Japanese mass-media reported that 3 out of 5 islands have been already bought for \$26 million; the rest of them are rented (BBC, 2012). The response of China was obvious: they sent two warships for protecting the land, and directed 1000 fishing vessels to the waterfront of the islands (BBC, 2012). Such aggressive actions between two of the most powerful states not only in Eastern Asia, but also in the world as a whole, have captured global attention. In order to perceive this problem objectively, it is necessary to draw out the cause of the conflict, its impact, and consequences. In this paper, I will try to assess the current political situation using different international relations theories, and explain why this conflict has such remarkable implications for the world in general.

To begin with, it is needed to determine why the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands are so valuable and substantial for these powers. Firstly, the islands abound with precious natural resources, namely hydrocarbons. Gas is known to be one of the most important aspects of world trade; it can positively influence economic potential and foreign investments. Also, the water area around the islands is adapted for fishing, which is undoubtedly significant source of income both in Japan and China. Secondly, the conferment of the islands is politically beneficial affair as long as it can significantly influence the status on the global agenda, and authority of the winner-state among its citizens. For China, which is a contender to be a superpower and regional hegemon, the privatization of Diaoyu is a substantial point for maintenance of Chinese prestige. The area of the islands is not so vast to conquer, and if China cedes Diaoyu, the image of the republic can be damaged to a degree. Japan, in contrast, has been losing international influence with the nominal volume of its debt is now more than 230% of its GDP (BBC, 2012). The ownership of Senkaku can serve as a goldmine for its economic ratings, namely it will help to improve as a financial situation as to regain the status of leading state. Therefore, we can see that both China and Japan have well-grounded reasons for taking an ownership of the archipelago.

The situation is beginning to be extremely dangerous not only for external connections between states, but it also significantly influences domestic social and economic order. It can be clearly seen that this conflict is acquiring a character of two-level game. The win-sets, conditions making international agreement conceivable, are different, and I will discuss them a little bit later. First of all, it is important to say that the reason why the leaders of the states have not resolved this problem yet is a dependence on the reactions of their citizens. China has a one-party system, which way of making a foreign