

The US Geopolitical Codes and Its Influences on the US-Iran Relations: The Case of George W. Bush's Presidency

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Abstract

This paper attempts to explain the US-Iran political relations from the geopolitical perspective. It focuses on George W. Bush's presidency as a remarkable period in two states' relations. Concentrating on the US geopolitical codes, this work aims to study the political leaders' beliefs and also the influences of these ideas on the states' foreign policy. The research also stresses on some of the world's geopolitical changes in the geopolitical world order context. With the end of Iran-Iraq war, inimical relation of the US-Iran was promoting, and it even entered a more critical phase with the occurrence of changes in the US foreign policy towards Iran, when Bush was elected as the US president in 2001 and especially after September 11th attacks. At this point, Iran was introduced as an "axis of evil" and this asseveration strengthened hostility between the two countries. With the election of Ahmadinejad as Iran's president in 2005, Iran's political behavior also underwent drastic changes. As a result, both countries, based on their leaders' beliefs, pursued their policies in the regional and global level to access to different objectives, in line with the ideas that had been derived from their geopolitical-ideological assumptions.

Keywords: Geopolitical codes, leaders' beliefs, Foreign policy, Iran-US relations

1. Introduction

The geopolitical codes have always had a remarkable role in the formation of foreign policy. Such codes have been defined as geographical-political assumptions about interests of any country in the world, potential threats to these interests, suitable responses to these threats and justification for those responses as well (Gaddis, 1982; Taylor & Flint, 2000). Explaining the US geopolitical code, Dijkink (1998) believes that it is "a map with countries painted in different colours according to their degree of hostility/friendship vis-à-vis the US" (p. 293). These assumptions in fact are formed "either before or just after an administration takes office" (Gaddis, 1982, p. ix). Moreover, it emphasizes on the importance of the leaders' beliefs and its impact on the states' actions in every specific presidential term and for this reason they have been called "intellectual capital" and "operational codes" (George, 1969; Kissinger, 1979). Although such codes are usually defined for specific presidency term, they almost are not changed fundamentally and are relatively constant and basically their changing is done gradually within limits of a long historical period which is called geopolitical world order (Kolossoy, 2003). Existence of a strong relation between geopolitical codes and geopolitical world orders has been mentioned by Taylor (1993). He explicitly mentions in his work; 'Geopolitical World Orders' that such codes are the building blocks of geopolitical world orders. It will be understood when we pay attention to geographical scale of codes, also matching the different levels of such codes to each other and creating a relatively stable global pattern all over the world as a geopolitical order.

In addition, in the definition of geopolitical codes, there is an emphasis on a set of political – geographical assumptions which are foundation of foreign policy. From this point of view, geopolitical codes are thus, the political geography assumptions behind the foreign policy decisions of states (Flint & Taylor, 2007). Furthermore, these codes are the geographical frameworks which a government utilizes to deal with outside world. In this regard, "a national interest is defined and other states are evaluated in terms of whether they are real or potential aids or obstacles to that interest" (Taylor, 1993, p. 36). On the other hand, in order to define the geopolitical codes the geographical distance or "geographical scale" should be also recognized (Taylor, 1993); because it refers to the ability and power of every country as global power, regional power or even as a state. Here, geopolitical codes are formed of three different levels: First; the local codes which are defined for all countries and cover the state's immediate neighbours as either friends or enemies; Second; the regional powers that "define their national interests beyond the narrow confines of their borders" (Taylor, 1993, p. 37) and are called as regional codes; The third section

is related to world powers, those which their codes are in the global scale and are called as global codes. It is important to note that, the governments of these countries define their interests across the world and also define the potential threats to those interests as well as practice in opposite of threats as suitable response. These kinds of states are great powers which are able to keep their presence and practice all over the world. In this respect, there is an important role for world leaders as the primary agents so that it is a requirement to respond to any challenges to their authority anywhere, and essentially “any attempt by another country to create a global geopolitical code is interpreted as a challenge to the world leader”(Taylor & Flint, 2000, p. 59).

Another important point is that although there are three different levels of geopolitical codes, it is false to separate them from each other. In fact the geopolitical codes in the local level correlate to global geopolitical context (Flint, 2006). This is what Taylor defines as a hierarchical relation between codes. For him, “the local codes of small states have to fit into the regional codes of medium states which in turn should fit into overarching global codes of world powers”(Taylor, 1993, p. 38). A more illustrated explanation of this hierarchical relation between different scales of codes is that “the more powerful impose ideas and assumptions on the less powerful.

In particular, the so-called ‘great powers’ have had an excessive influence on the geopolitical codes of other members of the system” (Taylor & Flint, 2000, p. 63). In fact, it refers to the strong relation between geopolitical codes and geopolitical world orders, so that these tendencies towards fitting ultimately create a single dominant pattern which we call as the geopolitical world order. In general, geopolitical codes “are the content and assumptions behind the foreign policy decisions of states; occur at three geographical scales; combine to form a global pattern of politics we have called a geopolitical world order”(Flint & Taylor, 2007, p. 46).

This paper examines some behaviour of the two countries -Iran and the United States- terms of their leaders’ ideas which have been reflected in their speeches and some documents. This kind of geopolitical analysis is performed in the geopolitical codes framework and reveals some assumptions and underlying ideas behind the countries’ foreign policies, especially those of the United States. This work also reviews some distinct phases of the US-Iran relations particularly during the George W. Bush’s presidency and seeks the relationship between his administration’s ideas, the US actions and Iran’s reactions in the post-cold war geopolitical era.

2. A Background of the US-Iran Relation Until 2001

From the geopolitical perspective and for this research, the background of the US-Iran political relation can be divided into three distinct phases: before Islamic revolution of Iran, from revolution to 1989, and from 1989 until beginning of the George W. Bush presidency.

The US-Iran relation, before the Islamic revolution in 1979, is placed in the Cold War era and is related to the period of the sovereignty of Mohammad Reza Shah, when Iran became a close partner of the US in the Middle East and desired a high position in the Persian Gulf region. In this time, the United States was the most important foreign power that supported the regime of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who ruled Iran from 1941 until 1979. The United States considered Iran as a bulwark against the expansion of the Soviet Union influence during the Cold War era. It prevented access of Eastern superpower to the important geopolitical area from Caspian Sea to the important strait in the Red sea, the Bab al Mandeb. Moreover, in the cold war bi-polar system, the Pahlavi regime was as an important pillar of the US interests in the region, where under the Nixon Doctrine and Kissinger global design, the United States needed a “regional super-power” to defend its interests in the Middle East and particularly Persian Gulf against the Soviet Union and within an economic competition with Japan and Western Europe (Falk, 1979, p. 45). In addition, “keeping Iran within the mainly Western controlled oil-rich region of West Asia was a vital US objective.

In 1953, the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and British intelligence services (MI 6) played a major role in strengthening the Iranian monarchy by orchestrating the downfall of the nationalist Prime Minister, Mohammad Mosaddeq, who not only challenged Shah’s authoritarianism, but also was instrumental in the nationalization of the Iranian oil industry, thereby greatly undermining the hold of Western oil companies in the country.” (Yazdani & Hussain, 2006, p. 268).

2.1. Political Relations from Islamic Revolution Until 1989

With the outbreak of the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, although one of the main slogans in this time was ‘*neither East, nor West but Islamic Republic*’, only the United States missed the best opportunity and the best partner in the Strategic region of the Middle East. Perhaps for this reason, in February 1979, President Carter announced his wish to work with new rulers in Iran (Rubin, 1980).

Obviously, Iran was the “most formidable barrier between the soviet Union and the Persian Gulf” (Hunter, 1987, p. 78), and it was able to break the US containment policy against the Eastern superpower as well as to untablize the

global geopolitical system and equilibrium of “two geostrategic realms” (Cohen, 1991). In this time, the United States constantly pursued the containment policy and extended it towards the Persian Gulf as the vital region to US, especially when it coincided with invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union, as a strategic threat for the US geostrategic realm, so that it was stressed as ‘Carter Doctrine’ in the State of the Union 1980 by President Carter (*J. Carter, 1980*).

The next US president, Reagan also referred to the importance of the Persian Gulf’s oil fields, which had been threatened by Soviet Union (Reagan, 1983). Therefore, due to the importance of Iran and Persian Gulf region, the US interventions, which had started from 1953, were remarkable in its unsuccessful military operation (Operation Eagle Claw) in “Tabas”, to rescue 52 American hostages from the US embassy in Tehran on April 24, 1980. It was a response to militant Islamic students’ storm, occupation of the US embassy, and also hostage taking of more than 60 people hostage on November 4, 1979. Students requested the Shah of Iran, who had fled the country, to be extradited from the US, where he was receiving medical treatment for cancer (B.B.C news, 1979). It lasted for 444 days, and after that, the embassy of the US, as Ayatollah Khomeini declared, was known as “a den of spies” (American Experience, 1979). Significantly, it was the most important starting point for the unfriendly confrontations in the US-Iran relations.

On the other hand, supporting Iraq during the war against Iran was another scene of Iran-US dispute. The 8-year war with using various western and eastern weapons against Iran imposed so much physical and human damages to this country. In this context, the estimates show that damages due to this war to Iranian economy was around “US \$644 billion” (Harris, 1999, p. 18). The Iranian people have not forgotten the comprehensive support of the US and its allies, even the Soviet Union, against territorial integrity of Iran. In addition, killing of all 290 Iranian passengers including men, women and children in an irritant incident, was another obvious threat and warn to Iran, when an Iranian passenger plane was shot down by a US Navy warship in international airspace in July 1988 (Yazdani & Hussain, 2006). These measures strengthened hostility between Iran’s nation and the US for a long time.

2.2. Two Countries Relations from 1989 to 2001

The year 1989 was the beginning of a transition period in the world’s geopolitical developments (Taylor, 1992). It also coincided with the fundamental changes in Iran’s interior and foreign policies, which were started with death of Ayatollah Khomeini. This point marks the commence of an Iranian transition period from the primarily revolutionary principles to the more rational thoughts in confrontation with the world, and clearly, the Iran’s foreign policy was changed towards the national interests rather than ideological priorities (Marschall, 2003, p. 100). Indeed, President Rafsanjani wished to do so “by pursuing a ‘good-neighbor’ policy rather than by exporting the Iranian revolution” (Joyner, 1990, p. 231).

Iran also started their political and economic activities immediately beyond its Northern boundaries, where were forming the new 15 independent countries as new neighbours. The given region also became a new area of conflict between Iran and the United States, so that the Iran-US relations were converted to the new form. There also appeared some new competitions, with the new and old competitors, due to existence of natural resources, especially the Caspian Sea energy resources. Simultaneously, Washington started reinforcing the absorption of oil companies and investors in the Iran’s new northern neighbours, and rolled as the decision maker in the region (Mirheydar, 2001), particularly to by-pass Iranian and Russian territories (H. Carter & Ehteshami, 2004). Obviously, the most remarkable point of contrast between Iran and the US in this region was related to energy resources of this region. Evidences show that, the US policies in Caspian Sea region have been based on ceasing Iran from its role of developing oil and gas resources exploit in its neighbour countries, and also preventing the construction of major new oil and gas pipelines across Iran (Allison & Janson, 2001; Naji, 2004). But on the other side, Iran stressed on a ‘North-South strategic axis’ in opposition to the ‘East-West strategic axis’ to prevent the US presence in this region (Amineh, 2007, p. 165).

In addition, responding to some allegations about Iran’s development of weapons of mass destruction, as well as supporting the terrorist groups especially about conflict of Palestinians –Israel caused some more sanctions on Iran in 1990th by the Clinton administration, regardless of the Iranian government itself had been a target of various anti-government elements, such as “monarchists” and “Mojaheddin Khalgh”, which were supported by the US (Tarock, 1996b, p. 159).

In this decade also, and immediately after cold war, the most notable American policy was toward the Middle East, particularly, the Gulf war (Nijman, 1993). It was the most important event in the early 1990s. Perhaps, nobody supposed that, a regional policy be able to create a global response. Collapse of one superpower in the bipolar world system, caused the leadership of the only remaining superpower in the great military operation, which was called “Persian Gulf War”. In this time, the ‘New World Order’ posed as a global idea by President G. H. W. Bush, but one

of the most important reasons that also was mentioned by him, returned to importance of the Persian Gulf's Oil reserves as the "vital economic interests" (G. H. W. Bush, 1990). In this context, although Iran, as a Muslim country and neighbour of Iraq, kept its neutral stance in this war, in 1992 the Iran non-proliferation Act was passed by the Clinton administration (Tarock, 1996a, p. 49).

Clinton moreover, founded the "dual containment" policy towards Iran and Iraq (Gerges, 1999). This policy pursued isolation of two Middle Eastern strong countries politically, military and economically. Obviously, it was related at least to remaining of Saddam in power despite of the Persian Gulf War, and to the Palestine- Israeli conflict, and the support for Hamas and other anti-Israel organizations by Iran (Bowen & Kidd, 2004; Rakel, 2007).

However, perhaps in this time, the closest relations between two countries were shaped, which was related to the first term of Khatami's presidency. He emphasized on creation of a "crack in the wall of mistrust", and "contact between Iranian and American citizens" (CNN, 1998), and referred to which thoughts about confrontation between Islam and West civilizations. It was this idea which for the first time was published by American political scientist Samuel Huntington (Huntington, 1993), and influenced the US decision makers so that, become an important part of geopolitical discussions in any international relations or political science seminar (Murphy, Bassin, Newman, Reuber, & Agnew, 2004). Khatami, afterwards, in November 1998, proposed the theory of "Dialogue Among Civilizations" as a response to "Clash of Civilizations", which became famous, after the United Nation determined the year 2001 as the "year of Dialogue Among Civilizations" (Henrikson, 2002). Iran, furthermore, clearly changed some ideological priorities in its foreign policy, which had remained from Ayatollah Khomeini's period. For instance, in September 1998 President Khatami declared that the Selmán Rushdie affair is "completely finished" (B.B.C News, 1998). The trend of relation between two countries was improving so fast that the US president, Clinton on April 12, 1999 explicitly declared that:

"I think it is important to recognize that Iran, because of its enormous geopolitical importance over time has been the subject of quite a lot of abuse from various Western nation" (Bill, 2006, p. 30; Hiro, 2001, p. 244).

Nonetheless, the United States continued its inimical policy against Iran, particularly in insisting on its accusation concerning the human rights affairs, terrorism and improvement of WMD capacity by Iran, which were obstacles to promote the Iran-US relations (Yazdani & Hussain, 2006).

3. The US Geopolitical Codes and the US-Iran Relations from 2001 to 2009

With the end of the cold war, the period of containment policy against the Soviet Union was also ended. It was the US geopolitical code in the long period of cold war, and the US needed to define a new code. The new era indeed, was as a "dramatic opportunity" for the US to redefine its global role, and determine a new strategy in changing global system (Coll, 1992). It refers to this fact that, the US had to redefine the purpose of its foreign policy (Nijman, 1993), and as O'Loughlin (2000) stated, the US tended to reorder the post-cold-war world, what seems is based on the continuation of the US hegemonic power (Wallerstein, 1993a). In this regard, what has been introduced as the US global code is, that the US world leadership (Flint, 2006), and in this regard, has been stressed that, the US attempts to maximize its hegemony (Harvey, 2005; Iseri, 2009; Taylor & Flint, 2000; Wallerstein, 1993b). Indeed, it can justify the US practices, as well as its interventions, in some parts of the world, in particular, in those regions that have the vast energy reserves (Klare, 2001; Le Billon, 2004), such as Persian gulf and its countries.

In general, reviewing the US geopolitical codes shows that, the general view of the US leaders during post-cold war era, had concentrated on the specific regions, such as the Middle East and Central Asia. In fact, studies show that the regionalist perspective has been more important, particularly, in two Bush presidencies (Flint, Adduci, Chen, & Chi, 2009). Some writers have evaluated it, regarding to access to the vast energy resources, and insuring energy flows security to the industrial countries (Peters, 2004; Klare, 2001; Le Billon, 2004), which has been introduced as an important perspective, in the US geopolitical codes, and its grand strategies (Flint, 2006; Iseri, 2009).

3.1. The US Geopolitical Code in G.W. Bush's Presidency

With the election of George W. Bush as the 43rd president in 2001, some aspects of the US foreign policy were changed. Some scholars believe that, the US measures in this time was due to this change -from the multilateralism to unilateralism-, which transformed the United States into a "rogue superpower" in world affairs (O'Tuathail, 2006). Some others however, say that it was as the consequence of changing the US geopolitical codes, from globalist perspective to a regionalist one. Globalist in fact, "reflects a geopolitical code that sees all parts of the globe as equally important", but in regionalist perspective some particular parts of the globe are more important. On the basis of this opinion, in this time, "the US geopolitical code is targeted towards particular regions at particular times" (Flint et al., 2009, p. 613).

Although changing the US codes in this period started towards the Persian Gulf and some similar regions, due to energy resources, it showed itself remarkably after September 11th attacks, particularly against a few specific countries such as Iran. At this time, it was targeted as war on Terrorism, which resulted in invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq (Flint & Taylor, 2007). That was what could justify geopolitical actions, and also would form an opportunity for the US, in pursuing its global objectives in the new era. Therefore, some have defined the “War on Terrorism” as the US geopolitical code which was a war against “terrorist of a global reach” (Flint, 2006).

Obviously, the September 11 attack was one of the most significant events after cold war, and caused great changes in the US codes, and subsequently in its foreign policy. It also influenced the trend of geopolitical developments all over the world. Iran sent a condolence Message immediately after incident. President Khatami said he felt “*deep regret and sympathy with the victims*” (CNN.com, 2001b). It is important to note that, he recognized trying to undermine terrorism as an international duty. With the outbreak of Afghanistan war in Iran’s Eastern neighbour, however, this country faced another consequence of the geopolitical developments in the new era. After 8 years bloody war with Iraq as well as undergoing the Persian Gulf War in its neighbouring countries in 1991, it was the third war which reinforced insecurity of Iranian eastern boundaries. Anyhow, although in this case, same as the Persian Gulf War, Iran kept its neutral position during the war (CNN.com, 2001a), this reaction didn’t have any positive result. Almost less than four months from beginning of Afghanistan war, on January 29, 2002 the US president in his state of the union address applied the term “*axis of evil*” to describe governments, which were accused of helping terrorism, and attempting to produce the weapons of mass destruction. He mentioned Iran, along with North Korea and Iraq, as the axis of evil. President Bush said:

“Our second goal is to prevent regimes that sponsor terror from threatening America or our friends and allies with weapons of mass destruction. Some of these regimes have been pretty quiet since September the 11th. But we know their true nature.... Iran aggressively pursues these weapons and exports terror, while an unelected few repress the Iranian people's hope for freedom. States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. (G. W. Bush, 2002).

It was the official announcement of the US hostility against Iran that was posed in one of the most important speeches in the US; the “*state of the union*”. In this time, the Bush administration also tried to encourage factionalism and separation of ruling circles, as well as to separate Iranian government and people, to weaken the government of Iran. Simultaneously, the US pursued sanction policy to limit Iran’s military capability, as well as its technological activities. On the other hand, these statements completed the prior sentences of Bush, which had been already announced on November 6, 2001 to define the separate line between their friends and enemies in the war against terrorism. He had explicitly said that: “*you are either with us or against us in the fight against terror*” (CNN.com, 2001c). In September 2002 also Bush presented the National Security Strategy (NSS) paper, which stressed on applying a strategy of pre-emptive military strike against any state or non-state enemy, which could be as a threat to the US security (Yazdani & Hussain, 2006). This strategy would allow to the US statesmen to use the US army in the different geographical places around the world, although it was specifically aimed at ‘*rogue states*’ and ‘*terrorists*’ (The White House, 2002). These sentences were clearly derived from the US geopolitical codes in that time. Such codes try to define the US enemies and friends, and refer to ideas of the president and his administration. This is what is called as “*mental maps*” (Henrikson, 1980), and is closely related to what Gaddis called “*geopolitical codes*” (Gaddis, 1982), Which they are “*the set of strategic assumptions that a government makes about other states in forming its foreign policy*” (Taylor & Flint, 2000). In his previous speech, President Bush had emphasised that he would not point out any specific country, but in his speech in January 2002, he directly referred to three countries as axis of evil.

These geographical-political assumptions, eventually, formed an inimical policy against Iran, and led to an inauspicious war against Iraq, which began on March 20, 2003. Although downfall of a dangerous regime and a dictator in Iran’s neighbourhood could be very favourable for Iran, the military presence of the US troops in the western boundaries of this country, however, had some specific ominous messages to Iran, and in the first step indeed, the US settled Iran in a geopolitical impasse; the NATO’s movement towards east, the friendly presence of the US and Israel in Azerbaijan (Lewis, 2006), the US military presence in the Central Asian countries, the military intervention of the US in Afghanistan, the military presence of the US in its military bases in the Persian Gulf’s countries, and eventually, the military intervention in Iraq. This is the condition that has continued until now. Therefore, “*Geostrategically, Iran is surrounded by many US-occupied or US-controlled states*” (Yazdani & Hussain, 2006, p. 283).

Iran by contrast, has adopted a cautious foreign policy in order to prevent any possible conflict of interests with the US and its allies (Yazdani & Hussain, 2006). Of course, it does not out of the inability of Iran in the balance of power in the region. In this respect, Iran, as a result of its geopolitical capabilities has been able to break this

geopolitical siege; Iran was host of millions of Afghan refugees during so many years, and hundreds of thousands of Afghan who once had resided in Iran over years, still have their social and political relationships with Iranian people. Moreover, close resemblances in language, religion and civilization between the two nations. In case of Iraq also, Iranian and Iraqi people have had their strong relations, especially from the religious perspective, over a long time. About sixty per cent of Iraqi people are Shi'ite, and the holy shrines of six Shi'ite Imams have are located in different cities in Iraq. Furthermore, Najaf city has always been as one of the most important centres of Islamic science around the world, and many of Iranian jurisconsults have stayed many years in Iraq, and subsequently there are strong religious relations between them and Shi'ite people in Iraq.

3.2. Iran's Nuclear Program; a "Justification" for The US Measures

Since only introducing Iran as a 'terrorism supporter' was not enough to gain a consensus against Iran, Iran's nuclear program became the most challenging subject in the US-Iran relations at this stage, and the US considerably focused on this issue. In June 2003, President Bush had said that Washington would not "tolerate the construction of a nuclear weapon" by Iran (Fox News.com, 2003), although some believe that locating Iran within an axis of evil, and even occupation of Iraq by the US encouraged Iran to deter a US attack (Taremi, 2005), and subsequently to reinforce itself.

On the other hand, however, with the outgrowth of Iran's activities and persistence of Iran on its nuclear program, all powers with their hegemonic aspirations, worried about forming a prominent actor in the region, and sought a dependent and weak Iran (Moshirzadeh, 2007). They also pursued their global objectives in regard to post-cold war geopolitical world order developments. In fact, the polarization within the "5+1 group" indicated that, although this issue was a global and regional security issue, it was applied as a powerful instrument by great powers to obtain higher position in the global rivalries in the new era, especially, other states against the US. In this respect, almost all cooperations among Iran, Russia and China could also be analyzed in this context. On the other hand, Iran, beside military cooperation, needed Russian assistance to complete the construction of Bushehr nuclear power plant, and for this reason, the two countries signed an agreement worth US\$ 800 million in January 1995 (Cordesman & Al-Rodhan, 2006, p. 179). China also, beside its needs to energy resources, supplied the dual-use technology for Iran, which could be applied for making nuclear, chemical and biological weapons (Bowen & Kidd, 2004; Rakel, 2007). Perhaps, one of most remarkable tri-lateral political relation was concerned with their cooperation in the framework of "Shanghai Cooperation Organization", which was an attempt to form a multi-polar world-system, in opposition to the US unilateralism. It was formed in the Eastern hemisphere and reminded Cohen's "two geostrategic realms" (Cohen, 2003). From this point of view, the axis of "China-Russia-Central Eurasia-Iran" was able to act against "the United States and the US-Japan-Europe" axis. But anyhow, it was predictable that Russia and China pursued their national interests in Iran's nuclear issue, and would not stay as reliable allies for Iran. For instance, a few years later, both countries signed the fifth UN Security Council resolution against Iran, which was supported by the US. In this regard, after "Tehran Declaration" to swap of nuclear fuel among Iran, Brazil and Turkey, and when Ahmadinejad protested to Russia's companionship with the US camping in May 2010, the Russia's response was very interesting. The top Kremlin foreign policy advisor Sergei Prikhodko explicitly said:

"Our position is Russian, it reflects the interests of all the peoples of Russia and thus it is neither pro-American nor pro-Iranian" (RNW, 2010).

As such, it is important to note that, based on a recent report, because of the UN sanctions against Iran, this country can't be as a full member of "SCO" at this time (Tehran Times, 2010). This report also indicates the true role of Russia and China in Iran's nuclear issue. It also clarifies their global objectives in the new geopolitical world order to prevent formation of the US global and regional hegemony, especially in the Eurasia and Middle East regions.

3.3. The US and Iran Leaders; Opposition of Ideological Interests in the Global Context

From the geopolitical code perspective, when Ahmadinejad was elected as new president of Iran in August 2005, the confrontation between the two countries' foreign policies was remarkable. In this time, Iran clearly announced its notion versus pressures and threats of the US, while it was expanding its relations and ideology in different geographical regions, from Middle East and Africa to the US backyard in the South and Latin America. Iran's foreign policy was veered to a kind of aggressive policy. Iran re-established its foreign policy based on some revolutionary policies according to revolutionary principles, which had been posed by Ayatollah Khomeini as founder of Islamic revolution, in the first decade after 1979. Hostility with the US government, and illegitimacy of Israel, have been as two most remarkable Iranian government's slogans in this time, so that, in the first year of Ahmadinejad presidency he announced that: "As the imam [ayatollah Khomeini] said, Israel must be wiped off the map" (The New York Times, 2005). In October 2005 he also said:

"And God willing, with the force of God behind it, we shall soon experience a world without the United States and Zionism" (CNN.com, 2005).

This policy extremely pursued Ayatollah Khomeini's approach, that introduced the United States as *"the Great Satan"*, and announced in 1980 that, *"America can't do a damn thing"* (Ganji, 2002, p. 111). It should be considered that, this policy was also a response and reaction to the threatening policies of the US during the past years. Following the Bush's *"axis of evil"*, his Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, overtly, denounced the Iranian government as *"loathsome"*, in February 2005 (Yazdani & Hussain, 2006). She also mentioned Iran as one of the six *"outposts of tyranny"* in the world, in January 2005 (B.B.C news, 2005). As such, Israel has always considered Iran as a threat, particularly when the world confronted to improvement of the Iranian nuclear program. For instance, in the annual intelligence assessment presented to Israel's Knesset (Parliament) on July 21, 2004, the Iranian nuclear program has been clearly introduced as the biggest threat to Israel (Radio Free Europe, 2004). It is important to note that, Iran has been enumerated as an enemy to both Israel and the United States, and preventing Iran's nuclear program is their common strategic goal, a fact that has been understood by Iran. On the basis of this view, Bush in August 2005 declared that, the United States and Israel *"are united in our objective to make sure that Iran does not have a weapon"* (USA TODAY. com, 2005).

On the other hand, in this time, Iran's nuclear issue has opened the world gates for development of Iran's relations with other states in different geographical parts around the globe. That policy began when Iran started its trans-regional activities in all those countries which are in opposition with the US. The frequent visits of Iran's president to Venezuela, which is located in the backyard of the US, have been a response to the geographical and geostrategic siege of Iran by the US and its allies, as well as an opportunity to globalize the issue of Iran's nuclear and expansion of its global ideas. In this context, Iran's statesmen pursued trans-national objectives, which were based on the primary principles of Islamic revolution and some globalist Shi'i thoughts in opposition to the US objectives. This similar opportunity, but from other perspective, was provided for the US leaders, when the September 11th attacks happened. In fact, the US was able to find a justification for its global objectives and practices. It was a good opportunity to pursue its *"grand strategy"* (Iseri, 2009) and global geopolitical code, which has been defined as *"world leadership"* (Flint, 2006). It is interesting to note that, both countries' leaders had global ambitions and their efforts had been defined based on their ideological thoughts, so that both pursued the global objectives for global peace, global blissful society and so on. For example President Bush, in January 2004, introduced his country as a nation that has a mission for a democratic peace:

"America is a nation with a mission and that mission comes from our most basic beliefs. We have no desire to dominate, no ambitions of empire. Our aim is a democratic peace a peace founded upon the dignity and rights of every man and woman. America acts in this cause with friends and allies at our side, yet we understand our special calling: This great republic will lead the cause of freedom" (CNN.com, 2004).

A few years later, similar to this idea was stated by Ahmadinejad about the global role for Iran's nation. In May 2010 he declared:

"The Historical Iran's nation is not only for the geography of Iran and the role of Iran's nation is a global role and it is to establish a blissful society all over the world" (Fars News Agency, 2010).

Bush, in the United States in 2004, declared *"the world without Saddam Hussein's regime is a better and safer place"* (CNN.com, 2004), and Ahmadinejad, in Iran in 2005, stated that, *"we shall soon experience a world without the United States and Zionism"* (CNN.com, 2005). Both leaders stated their objectives in the global level and for glob.

Although it seems that presenting the global ideas by Iran's leaders is due to referring to their ideological-revolutionary thoughts of Islamic revolution and is a reaction to the US threats, it is clear that pursuing global goals and defining global strategies are directly related to power and position of states in the international system. That is what form differences between two countries, namely Iran and the United States, and settle every country in its specific place in hierarchical geopolitical system in the world. According to Cohen (1991), in fact, the position and ability of every country is related to its *"level of entropy"* and its *"military-strategic strength"*, what is measured by some criteria such as saving rates, agricultural yields, manufacturing productivity, debt repayment, percentage of R&D exports, scientists and engineers, capital flow, diplomatic relations, overseas military bases, and so on. Based on his opinion, the US and Iran have two different position with different function in the first level for the US and a position of *"symmetrical state"* for Iran. It indicates that while Iran should consider the US highest position in the world geopolitical system, the US should also pay attention to Iran's ability to play a special role in the *"regional personality,"* which cannot be ignored. Therefore both countries will try to gain the higher position in the new geopolitical world order via fitting their codes with other countries codes. The United States, particularly, by

means of using Iran's nuclear issue as a global threat, will attempt to impose its global code on other countries, and also will prevent to form a regional hegemony, namely Iran.

4. Conclusion

As a main result, Apart from the impact of geopolitical developments and due to the end of the cold war and also in the occurrence of unrests and instability across the world, it is manifested that different leaders with the different beliefs have had different approaches to foreign policy.

Almost from the end of Iran-Iraq War until the end of the 20th century, the Iran-US relation was progressing with the influence of the doctrine of Khatami in Iran, as well as that of the US leaders. Almost, in the begging of 21st century, an important change was seen instantly in the US dialogue and its practice with election of George W. Bush as the 43rd US president. That change was remarkable with the outbreak of the September 11th attacks, when the US president drew a line between “us and them”, as well as calling Iran along with two other countries as “axis of evil”. Defining the “War on Terrorism” as the US geopolitical code and also recognizing Iran as an enemy, strengthened hostility between Iran and the US again. On the other hand, realizing the US threats, Iran strengthened its defensive position until Ahmadinejad was elected as Iran's president in 2005. From about this time, there started a clear confrontation between the two countries especially around Iran's nuclear program. Both countries considered each other as “enemy” and tried to create their coalitions around the world what could be analyzed in the geopolitical codes context. Obviously, the two leaders' political-geographical assumptions have altered the political space between the two countries toward obscurity and deteriorated the condition. For the second important point, it is interesting to note that the two leaders presented their aims in the global level and declared a “global mission” or “a global role”, and pursued “a democratic peace” and “a blissful society all over the world”. It is important, of course, to note that there was this kind of thought in the US previous leaders, because it had remained a superpower from the Cold War era and has attempted to keep its hegemony and even maximize it in the world, which has been pursued by every powerful country in the new era. For Iran –however- the Islamic revolution started with some global ideological thoughts and it was the first time to pursue this kind of strategy explicitly and practically. Pursuing these ambitions in recent years, to some extent, is due to the impact of Ahmadinejad ideological thoughts. Finally, this kind of assumptions by the two countries created a specific kind of foreign policy towards each other, so that there have been speculations about the beginning of a possible War between the two countries for several times; a war for which both Iran and the United States should pay a broader political price (Kemp, 2003). It indeed, shows the impact of beliefs, imagines and assumptions of states' leaders in formation of a specific kind of political behaviour.

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