

In the Name of God



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Thesis Title:

**The Issue of US Sanctions against Iran
in US-China Relations during Obama's First Administration**

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Abstract:

China and the United States have complicated and multifaceted relations. On one side they are trade partners and cooperate on common security and economic interests; on the other side they are competing and confronting over many economic and strategic issues. Since the referral of Iran nuclear dossier to the UN Security Council in 2006 and especially during President Obama's first administration the Iran factor emerged among the top challenges between Washington and Beijing. For the United States an Iran with nuclear technology was regarded as the worst scenario since it would change the balance of power in the oil rich Middle East. Furthermore, according to Western discourse a nuclear Iran threatened the security of the US and its allies in this region. China followed its own interests in relations with Iran and had none of these concerns about Iranian peaceful nuclear programs. Beijing even had some interests in a powerful and resistant Iran to challenge US hegemony and secure the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf. Unlike his predecessor, President Obama put the military option in the margin in dealing with Iran and concentrated on the sanction policy. In order to make sanctions effective the Obama administration required the cooperation from China as the first trade partner of Iran and used the policy of bargaining and pressure to make Beijing cooperate with the sanction policy. This study in the theoretical framework of neorealism and neoliberalism and through "documentary and archival analysis" and "Critical Discourse Analysis" methods tries to clarify the strategies which the Obama administration used to achieve China's cooperation. In conclusion, although Obama's carrot and stick policy worked to make China limit relations with Iran, Beijing is not the loser of the game; because China's bold policy made US achievements costly and abortive. As long as there is a resistant Iran that challenges US policies in the Middle East, on one hand the United States cannot move to East Asia to fully concentrate on the grand policy of containment of China, on the other hand an independent resistant Iran makes the US hegemony over oil resources incomplete so Washington cannot use the oil weapon to make China withdraw from its stances on a variety of issues.

Dedicated to:

To my wife F. Nikookar for her Support, Kindness, Compassion, Encouragement, Understanding and Sacrifices that helped me write this thesis. And to my daughter Sara who with her nice stories inspired me to be honest and to work hard.

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Definition of Key Terms

Anarchy is the concept that the world system is leaderless: there is no universal sovereign or worldwide government. There is thus no hierarchically superior, coercive power that can resolve disputes, enforce law, or order the system like there is in domestic politics.

CISADA or The Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act, signed into law on 1 July 2010, expanded US sanctions against Iran and amended the Iran Sanctions Act (ISA). CISADA/ISA applies to all persons (including non-US businesses) doing business with Iran's petroleum sector.

Complex Interdependence is the idea put forth by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye that states and their fortunes are inextricably tied together.

Critical Discourse Analysis or CDA is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that views language as a form of social practice and focuses on the ways social and political domination are reproduced in text and talk.

Discourse Analysis is a general term for a number of approaches to analyzing written, vocal, or sign language use or any significant semiotic event.

Hegemony is an indirect form of government, and of imperial dominance in which the hegemon (leader state) rules geopolitically subordinate states by the implied means of power, the threat of force, rather than by direct military force.[]

Shanghai Cooperation Organization or SCO is an intergovernmental mutual-security organization which was founded in 2001 in Shanghai by the leaders of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Iran is currently and observer member in SCO seeking full membership in this international organization.

List of abbreviations

CCP: Chinese Communist Party

CNPC: China National Petroleum Corporation

SINOPEC: China Petroleum & Chemical Corporation

NPT: Non-Proliferation Treaty or

SEATO: The South East Asia Treaty Organization

SCO: The Shanghai Cooperation Organization

CISADA: The Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act

ITRA: Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act

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Chapter 1:

**Theoretical framework, Methodology
and Literature Review**

Introduction

The quality of relations between the United States and China as the first and the second economic powers of the world is not only important for the two countries but also for the rest of the world; because these relations are essential in determining the rules governing the international system. US–China relations are complicated and multifaceted and vary from cooperation in some areas to confrontation in some others. The two powers are economically interdependent and have a lot of common interests to cooperate. On the other side there are diverging interests that make the two powers compete and confront over strategic and economic issues.

Access to reliable sources of energy is an area of competition between the United States and China as the world first and second importers of energy and. So the oil rich Middle East is an area of rivalry between the two powers. As Henry Kissinger argued, the competition over energy resources will be the most likely cause of international conflicts in the coming years (Daniel, June 2, 2005). In particular, the Islamic Republic of Iran as an independent regional power controlling huge deposits of oil and gas is important for China which strives for reliable energy markets which are not under the influence of the United States. Common economic interests have made Iran-China relations close and deep. As Ali Akbar Salehi -then the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran who later became Foreign Minister- said that the two countries “mutually complement each

other. They have industry and we have energy resources” (World Tribune, August 31, 2007). But the relations between Iran and China go beyond trade and economy to the strategic realm. Both Iran and China stand against US unilateral policies and challenge US hegemony.

The emergence of Iran nuclear issue in 2003 made Washington concentrate on Tehran to prevent a nuclear Iran which was in sharp contrast to US interests. The peaceful nuclear technology would give credibility to Iran and could change the balance of power on the expense of US and US allies like Israel and Saudi Arabia. Furthermore as the consequence of the 9/11 terrorist attack, security concerns emerged among top priorities for US authorities and according to Western discourse the threat of a nuclear Iran was placed among the most serious threats. According to John Bolton U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, a nuclear Iran is “Just like Sept. 11, only with nuclear weapons this time” (NBC News, 15 Mar 2006).

China didn't share US concerns over the emergence of a peaceful nuclear Iran, so Beijing tried to resolve the issue inside the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in order not to endanger China's economic and strategic interests in relation with Iran. The referral of Iran to the UN Security Council in 2006 put China as a member of the UNSC in a dilemma to vote for or against Iran. On one side there was the United States a major trade partner of China with common interests in global security and safeguarding the NPT. On the other side there was Iran as an independent and reliable energy partner for China that was not under the influence of the West and had common interests with China in standing against US unilateral policies and undermining US hegemony. In response to its complicated interests Beijing resorted to a dual policy of cooperation and confrontation with Washington and Tehran to safeguard China's interests with both partners.

Research Question

Unlike his predecessor George W. Bush, President Obama put the military option in the margin and tried to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue through face to face dialogue as he had promised in 2008 presidential election. Since Obama's initial dialogue attempts failed to make Iran withdraw from its peaceful nuclear stance, Washington concentrated on the only remaining option "the sanction policy" to make Tehran overlook nuclear plans. In order to make sanctions effective the Obama administration had to deal with China as the first trade partner of Iran. China rejected the US sanctions policy against Iran to maintain Chinese economic and strategic interests in relations with Tehran. This thesis tries to answer this major question:

What strategies did the Obama's first administration follow to make China cooperate with the US sanction policy against Iran?

In order to clarify the background to answer the main question, there are minor questions which this thesis tries to answer. In each chapter one or two questions are presented and analyzed: questions such as:

Why has the United States followed the sanction policy against Iran? And what has been Obama's policy in dealing with Iran?

What strategy has China followed in response to the US sanction policy?

What are the impacts of US sanctions against Iran on US-China relations?

Did US sanction policy against Iran fail or succeed? And can we call china the loser of this game or the winner?

Hypothesis

As the temporary answer to the main question of this dissertation, the hypothesis is as follows:

The Obama's first administration used the "bargaining and pressure" policy to make China cooperate with the US sanction policy against Iran. On one side Washington bargained

with Beijing by considering China's interests and offering China something in return to cooperation on sanctions. On the other side the Obama administration pressured over China to make Beijing withdraw from Tehran. In other words, the United States used the "Carrot and Stick" policy to make China cooperate with the US sanction policy.

Theoretical Framework

In this dissertation the foreign policy of Obama's first administration in dealing with China and Iran is studied in the theoretical framework of neorealism of Kenneth Waltz and neoliberalism of Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye.

I. Neorealism

Neorealism stemmed from realism which was the dominant school in international relations for decades after the Second World War. Basically realism was developed in response to the incompetence of liberalism of the 1920s and 1930s. Liberalism had a positive view toward the human nature and the possibility of international cooperation as well as the role of international organizations such as the "League of Nations" to establish peace among nations. The Second World War ruined the liberalist school and pushed it to the margin in academic studies of international politics (Grieco, 1988:491).

Unlike liberalism, realism claims it is concerned with the world as it actually is rather than what it ought to be. Realism is pessimistic about the possibility of international cooperation and focused on the role of power which is demonstrated in rivalry, conflict and war. According to the realist school, peace is only possible through the balance of power between major powers. All branches of realism including neorealism consider state as the principal actor in the international affairs (Waltz, 1979:103).

Following new developments in the international environment of the 1960s and 1970s, realism was not responsive to new international changes such as the emergence of new

international organizations, new international coalitions and growing economic interdependence between states. In response to these problems, Neorealism was developed by Kenneth Waltz in his 1979 book “Theory of International Politics”. In fact Waltz saved realism and adopted major features of the realist school to be applicable in the new international environment (Powell, 1994:314-15).

Unlike classical realism that believes the roots of international wars go back to the imperfect human nature, neorealism believes that “anarchy” is the source of war and conflict between states. In the anarchic international system there is no formal central authority to govern over states to establish peace and order. Therefore, all sovereign states seek their own security and interests to ensure survival through the logic of “self help”. According to neorealism all states act in the anarchic international system and have to deal with similar challenges to follow their own security and interests; so anarchy makes states behave similarly in the international system(Waltz, 1979:109-111).

According to neorealism the structural distribution of capabilities limits cooperation among states because of the fear of “relative gains” that may change the “balance of power” which shapes international relations. Yet states are rational actors and may actively work to maintain their own security. They may resort to internal balancing by growing their own power through increasing economic growth and/or increasing military spending. Or they may resort to external balancing by joining coalitions, alliances and organizations to keep the balance of power against more powerful states (Waltz, 1979:132-3).

As the three state actors of US, China and Iran are involved in this dissertation, the theoretical framework of neo-realism is applied on each of the three actors to study the general behavior and the implied intentions behind behaviors. Neo-realism framework presents a grand perspective that is helpful in understanding what this dissertation is planning to study. Why the United States is following the sanction policy against Iran?

What grand policy the Obama administration is pursuing in dealing with China and Iran? Which Chinese interests are involved in the struggle between the US and Iran? What are Iran's interests and challenges in this international context? Here a general perspective is presented through applying neo-realistic perspective.

✓ **The United States**

According to neo-realism the United States as a rational actor in the anarchic international system and as the hegemon power is trying to maximize its security. Washington in one side is concerned about the emergence of a nuclear Iran which is regarded as a security threat and may alter the balance of power in the oil rich Middle East on the expense of the United States and her allies. On the other side the United States is concerned about the "China threat" and is pursuing the grand policy of containment of China to safeguard US superiority and prevent a new balance of power. Both of these concerns are involved in the US response to the nuclear issue of Iran.

Tehran-Beijing close economic and strategic relation is regarded as an area of concern for Washington because both powers are competing with the US on many issues. Possible membership of Iran in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is as the worst scenario for the Washington because any alliance between Iran, China and Russia seriously undermines US hegemony and changes the balance of powers; so the US policy makers do their best to prevent such an alliance (Mohammad A. Mousavi and Esfandiar Khodaei, 2013:205).

✓ **China**

China is dependent to the flow of oil in the Persian Gulf. As far as there is an independent and anti-American Iran in the Middle East, the United States cannot use the oil weapon against China or to bargain oil security for making China withdraw in other issues; other

Arab oil exporters are US allies and in the case of Washington-Beijing conflict, they will be closed to China. Many Chinese analysts put the US sanctions against Iran in the broader context of US-China rivalry in the 21st century and conclude that these sanctions in the long term are targeting Beijing according to the grand policy of containment of China to keep the current balance of power (Garver, 2011:80; Global Times, Feb 11, 2010). On the other side as far as the US is involved in the struggle with Iran, it cannot concentrate on China, and China can keep economic growth and expand economic and political influence on neighbors to maintain its security (Garver, 2011:79).

✓ **Iran**

The United States and Israel repeatedly and explicitly threaten Iran with military attack (Kershner, April 18, 2013; Landler, March 2, 2012). While Israel has made many nuclear weapons without joining to the NPT or any UN inspection (Guardian, Dec 4, 2012), Iran which has signed the NPT and welcomes any UN inspection, is deprived of peaceful nuclear energy. According to the neo-realism perspective in the anarchic international system, Iran as a rational actor is pursuing its own security to ensure survival and tries to keep the balance of power. On one side through internal balancing, Iran resorts to self-help and is developing its military and technology (including nuclear technology) to safeguard its security. Having a peaceful nuclear capability is very helpful for Iranian security because it removes the risk of military attacks from the United States and Israel. On the other side through external balancing Iran is actively expanding relations with independent powers such as Russia and China and organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

Limitations of neo-realism theory

There are limitations to neo-realism theory of Kenneth Waltz. According to this theory the anarchic international system defines the behavior of nation-states as the main international actors; so neo-realism ignores the role of other agents such as leaders, political parties and social movements. In general, neo-realism has a holistic approach toward nation-states and ignores what happens within the borders of nation-states. Furthermore as this theory considers states as rational actors, so the roles of cultural values, religions, idealistic approaches and revolutions are neglected. For example according to neo-realism no matter what regime is governing in Iran, the Iranian foreign policy is the same; while we can see a huge shift in Iranian foreign policy after the 1979 Islamic revolution. Yet -as discussed above- neo-realism as the dominant school in international relations is very successful in explaining most behaviors of nation-states.

II. Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is a response to neorealism which has a generally negative view about cooperation among states. According to neoliberalism in the international system states are, or at least should be, concerned first and foremost with “absolute gains” rather than “relative gains” to other states. Neoliberalism emphasizes on the possibility of mutual win and the role of institutions which can manage cooperation and compromises in the international system(Cai, 2011).

The debate between neorealism and neoliberalism is an intra paradigm one because both theories are positivist and focus mainly on state as the main unite of analysis. Both theories agree on states as the central subject of analysis while neoliberalism has a wider conception of actors in the international system and their interests. Neorealism does not deny the anarchic nature of the international system which is discussed in neorealism. Yet, neoliberals believe that the importance and impacts of anarchy has been exaggerated and

the possibility of cooperation in the decentralized system has been underestimated in neorealism(Graham Evans, 1998: 11).

Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye in response to neorealism developed neoliberalism. They accept the three assumptions of neorealism: First, states are coherent units and are the dominant actors in international relations; second, force is a usable and effective instrument of policy; and finally, the assumption that there is a hierarchy in international politics (Keohane Robert and Joseph Nye, 1989:23-24).

According to Keohane and Nye terminology, interstate relations are those channels assumed by realists; trans-governmental relations occur when one relaxes the realist assumption that states act coherently as units; transnational relations applies when one removes the assumption that states are the only units. It is through these channels that political exchange occurs, not through the limited interstate channel as championed by realists(Graham Evans, 1998: 30).

Keohane and Nye pay special attention to complex interdependence of states. They believe military force is not exercised when complex interdependence prevails. For countries that have complex interdependence [as in the case of US and China] the role of military in resolving disputes is negated(Keohane, 2002). Joseph Nye used the term “soft power” to describe strategic competition among nation-states in the new international environment (Nye, 1990).

Neorealism can be successfully applied on the US-Iran relations, because the economic ties between the two states are very limited. But in the case of US-China relations, realism can not explain many aspects because of the interdependence of the economies of the two countries which ultimately leads to many political impacts. Neorealism ignores the political outcomes of economic interdependence while neoliberalism can successfully consider the new international environment.

In 2012 US-China bilateral trade was beyond \$536 billion in 2012 (Census Bureau, 2013a). On one hand China is dependent in the US wealthy market to sell Chinese goods and keep the current rate of economic growth; on the other hand the United States is depended to the Chinese cheap goods to keep inflation low in the US market. Chinese economic failure may have negative consequences on the US market and any recession or economic crisis in the United States will have grave consequences on Chinese economy.

According to neoliberalism this economic interdependency has made authorities in both countries refrain from radical decisions over various economic and strategic disputes. They have established many channels for negotiation and compromise to settle disagreements through negotiation and compromise. So we should expect bargaining and compromise over various challenges between Washington and Beijing including the challenges over sanctions against Iran.

Methodology

This thesis applies “documentary and archival analysis” and “Critical Discourse Analysis” methods to answer the questions and to examine the hypothesis.

I. Documentary and Archival Analysis Method

Documentary and archival research is the primary method for this dissertation. This method involves seeking out and extracting evidences from original archival documents such as government records, newspapers, articles and personal diaries. Studying these sources may leave political researcher “feeling very much the second rate historian” (Peter Burnham, 2008:165). While some political scientists believe that there is an absolute separation between history and politics, the majority see politics as a “field of study in which history can make a contribution” (Peter Burnham, 2008).

According to the “SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods” the first step in historical and archival research is having a clear question which is researchable and important to be answered. The researcher should have a hypothesis and a theoretical framework to guide him/her through other steps including the second step of gathering data which is essential in historical and archival research. If the researcher has a clear and good question he/she will find collecting data an easy work; otherwise the researcher may get lost in details which are not helpful in finding the answer to the questions. The third step is analyzing the collected data to check the validity and the reliability of the data. Finally the researcher should critically analyze the data in their historical context to answer the research question (Lisa Given, 2008:396).

The sources and documents that are studied in documentary and archival research can be put in three simple categories: Primary sources which consist “only the evidences that were actually part of or produced by the event in question”; secondary sources consist of “other evidence relating to and produced soon after the event”; and tertiary sources consist of “materials written afterward to reconstruct the event” (Lichtman and French, 1978:18).

It is clear that primary sources are preferred over secondary and tertiary documents. But in all fields of study and especially in the political sciences the researchers do not access many of the primary sources due to security and political motivations. In all political systems some documents and records are closed to public access for confidentiality. In the United States despite the Freedom of Speech Act, the National Archive and Record Administration (NARA) generally releases records after 30 years closure period (NARA, Dec 2009).

Documentary and archival research was a daunting task in the pre-internet era. It was very difficult to find pertinent sources; furthermore there were many risks that threatened documents; for example most of the books, painting, letters and other documents were destroyed by water and fire. But in the internet age many of these problems have been

solved and researchers can easily access plenty of documents and archival texts. But in the internet era the archival researcher should be careful about new risks that may mislead him/her in understanding documents. When a particular event happens different sources present different analyses through interviews and other ways; so the researchers should be very cautious not to lose the real event.(Allen-Robertson, 2011:10)

Documentary and archival researcher should be very careful about the reliability of sources and in particular he/she pay attention to the material interests that may have driven the author of the document (Peter Burnham, 2008:165). Documentary and archival research is a qualitative method and does not claim that the findings can be applied on a larger population of documents or people. Although qualitative methods do not have very clear guidelines and depend on the researcher, they require full attention and hardworking. Similar to other research methods, archival researcher can use triangulation to testify the results of his study to whether his findings correspond to the findings of other research methods or not (Wesley, 2010:6).

Primary, Secondary and Tertiary sources of this thesis

Primary documents include “only the evidences that were actually part of or produced by the event in question”. In this dissertation the text of the UN Security Council resolution 1929, Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability and Divestment Act (CISADA) passed by US congress in June 2010, Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act (ITRA) passed in August 2012 are closely studied as primary sources. But in this study there are many other primary sources which are closed to public access. There are political agreements, bargains and many other types of confidential negotiations between China and the US which are closed to public. So in these cases the secondary and tertiary sources become more important.

Secondary sources consist of “other evidence relating to and produced soon after the event”. In this thesis related news published in newspapers, News agencies, and websites are studied as secondary documents. BBC, CNN, Press TV, Xinhua, Shargh newspaper, New York Times and Reuters are examples of secondary sources which have reflected the news related to the nuclear issue of Iran and US-China challenges in dealing with the sanctions against Iran.

Tertiary sources consist of “materials written afterward to reconstruct the event”. The nuclear issue of Iran and US sanctions against Tehran are regarded as an important international crisis; so many analysts have commented on the issue and many academic studies, books articles and analyses have studied it. These tertiary sources are closely studied in this dissertation. These resources can be divided in three categories of American and Western sources, Chinese sources and Iranian sources.

In this thesis the action and reaction of related actors of American, Chinese and Iranian authorities are studied firstly through using primary sources of governmental documents, then the news and analyses published and broadcasted from the closest references are studied; for example if the US Vice-President Joe Biden interviewed with the CNN the most reliable source is the CNN website; and if the Iranian President commented in a special issue in his speech the best reference is Iranian sources which are closest to him such as IRNA, Mehr News, Shargh newspaper and Press TV. For the Chinese authorities the best sources can be China Daily and Global Times and Xinhua. As most newspapers and the content of other sources such as news agencies and data bases are achieved in websites, this study used internet to access the closest sources. The internet address and websites of almost all primary, secondary and tertiary sources are presented in the bibliography of this thesis.

II. Critical Discourse Analysis Method

In this dissertation critical discourse analysis is used to explain the power relation of the dominant American discourse in dealing with the Chinese and Iranian discourses as non-Western and non-democratic states which follow their own interests and may resist against Western pressures and the hegemony of the US discourse. Critical discourse analysis as method can “produce insight into the way discourse reproduces or resists social and political inequality, power abuse or domination”. In other words this method does not “limit its analysis to specific structure of text or talk, but systematically relates text and structure of the sociopolitical context” (Fairclough, 1995:55).

What is Discourse Analysis?

It is difficult to present a single and exact definition of discourse analysis. Generally, it is a method for analyzing written, vocal and sign language. Discourse analysis is helpful in revealing the hidden meaning behind texts. Through using this method the researcher can interpret the messages and discover the covered intentions and motivations behind the formal languages (Moses, 2007:29).

Discourse analysis does not limit itself to studying the surface language like words and the grammatical structure and the simple meanings used in ordinary conversations. This method tries to break down the text framework through deconstructing social and political structures to see what is hidden inside the written, vocal or sign language. Traditional Linguistics stands on the surface to study the meaning from words and sentences. But discourse analysis goes “beyond the sentence boundary” and puts the text in the social structure to deconstruct it and to discover the hidden motivations and intentions behind the written and spoken words and signals (Wiśniewski, 2006; Yatsko, 2013).

For example this dissertation, through discourse analysis method tries to analyze what President Obama said in regard to Iran prior to visiting Beijing in November 2009 and

why he changed the literature in the final media conference with Chinese President in the same visit, and what may had happened in the private sessions that made Obama change the literature? As another example, why President Obama cancelled meeting with Dalai Lama on October 2009, why a few months later he changed his decision and met Dalai Lama on February 2010. Was this meeting related to the sanctions against Iran to make China withdraw from its stance and vote for UN resolution 1929 on increasing pressures over Iran?

The term “discourse analysis” was first used by Zellig Harris in 1952. According to his writing “relations among the sentences of a coherent discourse are made explicit by using sentence transformation to put text in a canonical form” (Ahmad, 2009). The socialist Garfinkel the founder of ethno-methodologist used the term “conversational analysis” which is close to discourse analysis (Zeitlyn, 1991).

But Michel Foucault is the key theorist in using and explaining the concept of “discourse analysis”. In his work “archaeology of knowledge” Foucault used discourse to refer to institutionalized pattern of knowledge rather than formal linguistic aspect. He especially focused on the relation between knowledge and power. For example Foucault noticed the power of the doctor-judge and his associates who because of the knowledge discourse decide the way of living for ordinary people, what they can eat and what should be forbidden legally. The doctor-judge gains this power from the knowledge discourse (Henderson, 1994:935).

What is Critical Discourse Analysis?

Critical Discourse Analysis became known through the writings European linguists during the late 1980s, including Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak, and Teun van Dijk (Lisa Given, 2008:145). Critical thinking and analyzing texts and situations is not new in human history. But the tenets of Critical discourse analysis can already be found in the “Critical

Theory” of the Frankfurt School and Marxism. Gramsci used the notion “hegemony” which is close to what Critical Discourse Analysis studies; he argued that hegemony is “intellectual and moral leadership used by the dominant groups to maintain their dominance by securing the ‘spontaneous consent’ of subordinate groups and by persuading them that the relationship of domination is natural and inevitable” (Cui, 2010:19).

The role of ideology is essential for keeping the dominant group peacefully in power. According to Fairclough, “Ideologies are representations of aspects of the world which contribute to establishing and maintaining relations of power, domination and exploitation. They may be enacted in ways of interaction and inculcated in ways of being identities (Fairclough, 2003:218).

Discourse analysis is generally perceived as the product of postmodern period according to which there is no single true interpretation of the world. According to postmodernism the world is inherently fragmented and heterogeneous and any belief or claim is merely a subjective interpretation conditioned by its social environment and the dominant discourse. Marginalized discourses other than the dominant discourse are deprived to be presented. Foucault defined discourse as a set of statements that have a constructive role. For example the medicine discourse produces objects such as “bile” and “HIV” which are distinct and countable (Lisa Given, 2008). In the context of human societies, meanings can be understood in a complex of power, knowledge and identity. According to Laclau “The way in which the speaker put sentences together... [is] determined by the way in which institutions are structured, by what is sayable” (Laclau, 1993: 433; cited from Moses, 2007).

The significant difference between Discourse Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis is that CDA is not interested in investigating a linguistic unit per se. In other words CDA has an interdisciplinary approach and studies social phenomena which are complex and

require a multi-disciplinary and multi-methodical approach (Wodak, 2008). Fairclough, used the term discourse “to refer to the whole process of social interaction of which a text is just a part” (Fairclough, 1989).

Teun van Dijk as pioneer in this field defines Critical Discourse Analysis as follows:

“Critical Discourse Analysis is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality” (Dijk, 2002:352).

Critical Discourse Analysis in politics and international relations

Critical Discourse Analysis through a holistic approach try to critically analyze and deconstruct the background social context to reveal the hidden power and to discover other deprived discourses. The term “deconstruct” was first used by Jacques Derrida to question the foundation of truth and the authority of “is” through the process of “double reading” and deconstructing, dislocating, displacing, disarticulating, disjoining, putting out of joint ‘the authority of the “is” (Derrida, 1995:25; cited from: Moses, 2007).

Political discourse analysis focuses on discourses in political forums such as speeches, debates and hearings. It uses several other branches of knowledge to discover the hidden motivations and intentions behind the formal languages used by politicians (Johnson, 2000).

According to Critical Discourse Analysis studies, after the collapse of the Soviet Union the international system was dominated by the Capitalism of the Western liberal democracy discourse which created a literature that justified the ideology of the dominant discourse and marginalized other discourses (Berger, 1995; Dijk, 1995:27). Francis

Fukuyama in his book “The End of History and the Last Man” wrote: “What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War ...but the end of history, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government” (Fukuyama, 1992:58).

The dominant Capitalist discourse justified intervention in Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, Serbia and Eastern Timor in the 1990s. According to this discourse the civilized world came to fight against the barbarism in the quest for a democratic and peaceful world order. After the 9/11 terrorist attack, again the same dominant discourse continued to justify its aggressive intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq in terms of human rights promotion and democratization (Moses, 2007:21-23).

In regard to the nuclear issue of Iran both administrations of President George W. Bush and President Obama used the privilege of the dominant discourse and securitized the issue and treated it as a major threat against the global security (Pour-Ahmadi, 2012:170). They used the elements of democracy and human rights of the dominant Western discourse to justify increasing sanctions and even threatened to military attack against Iran. They also used the 9/11 discourse of fighting against security threats to achieve world cooperation in dealing with the new risk of a nuclear Iran.

The emergence of the rising China which is regarded in neorealism as a possible threat against the current balance of power led to an aggressive discourse of containment of the “China threat”. As many analysts believe the grand strategy of the United States is containment of China and the real motivation behind the military actions in the Middle East and even the challenge against the peaceful nuclear Iran, finally should be interpreted in the grand strategy of containment of China (Garver, 2011:80; Klare, 2006).

The dominant Western discourse regards nondemocratic Communist China as the major threat against democracy and human rights. It is in this context that the Western powers get united to stand against the rise of China to save the Western democratic liberalism.

In this dissertation through Critical Discourse Analysis the policy of Obama's first administration is studied to discover how the US is making China cooperate with US sanction policy against Iran. The speeches, interviews, messages and signals used by US authorities including President Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, spokesmen and spokeswomen of US foreign affairs, influential members of the US Congress and other American sources and decision makers are studied to reveal the cards which they have used to make China cooperative. Israel card, Saudi Arabia card, Taiwan card and Dalai Lama card are examples of sources which the US authorities have used to achieve China's cooperation.

Review of the Literature

The rise of China has provoked numerous studies which try to explain the new international environment and analyze US – China relations. The emergence of Iran nuclear issue and especially the referral of Iran to the UN Security Council in 2006 put China in a dilemma to choose between the US and Iran. Some analysts regarded the Iran nuclear issue and the consequent sanctions as the third factor in US – China relations since 2006.

As far as the title of this dissertation is concerned no study has been conducted to exactly examine the “Issue of US sanctions against Iran in US China relations”; yet there are studies which discuss this issue among other issues and with different perspectives. The majority of these studies are conducted in the theoretical perspective of realism as the main stream perspective in international politics. These studies can be placed in three

main categories of Washington based studies, Beijing based studies and Tehran based studies.

One may reject putting scientific studies in three categories based on three nation-states of US, China and Iran. But a review of the studies done in the neorealism framework reveals the fact that each of these three categories of studies considers the issue on a specific perspective and tries to answer an especial sort of questions. American and Western studies are concerned about how to deal with the rising China as well as the security dimensions of a nuclear Iran and how to make China and other world powers cooperate to dissuade Tehran from following nuclear programs. Chinese studies focus on Chinese strategic and economic interests in dealing with the struggle between US and Iran since both sides are China's partners. Finally Iranian studies try to answer the question of how to deal with the Western pressures including sanctions and military threats.

Washington Based studies

As it was discussed above "Washington based" studies consider the rising China and the nuclear issue of Iran from the US and Western perspective which considers nondemocratic and nonwestern China and Iran in the dominant Western discourse and try to answer the questions of how to deal with the "China threat" and the security and political aspects of Iranian nuclear issue (see: Garver, 2011; Harold, 2012; Kemenade, 2010; Mearsheimer, 2010; Wuthnow, 2013).

Professor John Garver of the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs at the Georgia Institute of Technology in the United States has many works about China and Iran some of which are concerned with the title of this thesis. In his article "Is China Playing a Dual Game in Iran?" professor Garver concentrates on the motivations of China in playing a "dual game" in dealing with the nuclear issue of Iran (Garver, 2011). According to this study China on one side cooperates with the United States and on the other side is Iran's

first trade partner and has filled the void after the European withdrew from Iran. A powerful Iran which stands against the United States would “force Washington to keep large military forces in the region, limiting the ability of the United States to concentrate forces in East Asia, where China’s core interests lie” (Garver, 2011:79). In studying the motivations of China, Garver found out that China reject the proposition that cooperating with the United States will secure the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf (Garver, 2011:80). In understanding the behavior of China in dealing with Iran Garver at the end comes to this conclusion that economic explanation for China’s behavior is not incompatible with its strategic explanation (Garver, 2011:86).

John J. Mearsheimer the prominent professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago in his article “The Gathering Storm: China’s Challenge to US Power in Asia” studies the impacts of rising China on the balance of power in the Asia Pacific (Mearsheimer, 2010). Mearsheimer compares the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union to the US-China competition. As China is dependent to the Persian Gulf oil, the Middle East is an area for competition between China and the US. He considers Iran as the possibly main strategic ally for China; Tehran may ask Beijing to station Chinese troops on Iranian territory in the future (Mearsheimer, 2010:390-392).

DjallilLounnas in his 2011 article “China and the Iranian Nuclear Crisis: Between Ambiguities and Interests” studies Chinese policy in dealing with Iran nuclear Issue. The hypothesis is that “Beijing’s policy towards Iran reflects its relationships with Washington”. Through historical analysis method, Lounnas analyzed the 1997 China’s withdrawal from nuclear cooperation with Iran was due to bargaining between Beijing and Washington. As a part of this bargaining, China withdrew from the nuclear deal with Iran and Washington cooperated on the issue of Taiwan. Again in the second decade of the

21st century “China is using Iran as a bargaining chip with the United States on, among others, two key security issues, i.e., Taiwan and the oil supply” (Lounnas, 2011:227-253).

Willem van Kemenade the Renowned Sinologist in his article “China vs. the Western Campaign for Iran Sanctions” in the Washington Quarterly studied the challenges between China and the US over sanctions against Iran. In this study Kemenade analyzed the policies that the Obama administration followed to make China withdraw from Iran. Policies such as using the Israel card according to which Israel threatened to attack Iran, China regarded this attack as a threat against its energy security because this possible war would endanger the flow of Persian Gulf oil in which China is heavily dependent (Kemenade, 2010:103-104). Kemenade finally concludes that the nuclear issue of Iran will continue for a few more years because Iran does not seem to withdraw and China and Russia do not seem to cooperate with US sanction policy (Kemenade, 2010).

Scott Harold and Alireza Nader in the article “China and Iran: Economic, Political, and Military Relations” in RAND Corporation studied the roots of convergence between Iran and China and the possibility for the United States to alter this relations (Harold, 2012). They found China-Iran relation stable because of the common economic and strategic interests of both sides. Iran is a reliable source for Chinese increasing demand for energy and China is the best trade partner for Iran in the shadow of US pressures; and both countries are concerned about US hegemony and collaborate against it. At the end of this article the authors conclude that this stable relation will continue in the future because the United States can not change the interests of China or Iran. Although currently there are frictions caused by US pressures but this relation will only change in the case of regime Change either in Beijing or Tehran (Harold, 2012:25-27).

Beijing based studies

Beijing based studies consider the nuclear Issue of Iran and the struggle between Tehran and Washington from the Chinese perspective and especially focus on impacts of this crisis on strategic and economic interests of China (Liu Jun and Wu Lei, 2010; Penghong, 2012; Zhen, 2009).

Jiang Zhen of the center for Iranian Studies and the Institute of Middle Eastern Studies of Northwest University in China in his article “Impacts of Iran’s Nuclear Issue on China-U.S. Relation” reviews the history of Iran nuclear programs, the US motivations in sanctions against Iran and their impacts on US-China relations. China and the United States had a different definition of the nuclear issue of Iran which stemmed from their different national interests. Jiang Zhen especially analyzes the strategic interests of China in regard to Iran. Observer membership of Iran in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization shows the long term policy of China and Russia in undermining US hegemony and influence in the region. At the end Zhen concludes that China and the United States do not trust each other and both sides should take more confidence building measures and deepen cooperation in order to maintain stable relations (Zhen, 2009).

Liu Jun and Wu Lei in the article “Key Issues in China-Iran Relations” study the economic and strategic importance of Iran to China. In the strategic realm, Iran, China and Russia are building closer ties to offset the geopolitical dominance of the United States. Liu Jun and Wu Lei analyze the impacts of Iran nuclear issue and the consequence US pressure on the relations between Iran and China. The growing dependence of China to the Middle East oil has increased the importance of the Iran for China; because Iran is the only state in the Middle East which is not a US ally and boldly stands against US unilateral policies. For China energy security is among the top priorities and this issue should be put on the agenda of US-China Strategic Dialogue (Liu Jun and Wu Lei, 2010).

Professor CaiPenghong at the Shanghai Institute for International Studies in his article “US Sanctions against Iran and their Impact on China” studies new US sanctions against Iran. According to this study under US unilateral sanctions China decreased oil import from Iran in 2012 and postponed the start date for projects like Yadavaran oil field. As new US sanctions including NDAA (the National Defense Authorization act for Fiscal Year 2012) were implemented, China was entangled in a dilemma to lose US financial market or gradually withdraw from Iran. China decreased oil import from Iran and the United States granted waivers to China to encourage more cooperation (Penghong, 2012). At the end of his article, CaiPenghong presented three suggestions to Chinese authorities: First to confer with the US to find a solution for reducing China’s damage; second China should make it public that it has already begun to reduce oil import from Iran; third China should transfer its state owned enterprises in Iran to private businesses (Penghong, 2012:85).

Tehran based studies

Tehran based studies view the peaceful nuclear issue, US sanctions and China’s response from the Iranian perspective; many of these studies try to answer the question of how to deal with the Western pressures including sanctions and military threats (Izadi, 2013; Mohammad A. Mousavi and Esfandiar Khodaei, 2013; Pour-Ahmadi, 2012; Shariatinia, 2011).

Mohsen Shariatinia a China analyst at the Center for Strategic Research in Tehran in his article “Iran-China Relations: An Overview of Critical Factors” studies the impacts of US sanctions on Iran-China relations. Shariatinia puts the elements of Iran-China relations in two categories of conducive and constraining factors (Shariatinia, 2011). The Conducive factors include cooperation in the fields of energy and economy and their common strategy of standing against US unilateral policies which stemmed from similarities

between foreign policy outlook of Iran and China. One of the main constraining factors is the relation between China and the Western powers including the United States. According to Shariatinia China's trade with Iran is not comparable to China's trade with the United States and allies including the EU and Japan (Shariatinia, 2011:76). This comparison can explain the behavior of China in voting for UN sanctions against Iran. At the end he concludes that the nuclear issue and the consequent US sanctions are the most important factors which have a lot of impacts on Iran-China relations. Yet this relation will continue and both sides will maintain their relations for their economic interests as well as their international motivations (Shariatinia, 2011:82).

Professor Mohammad Ali Mousavi and EsfandiarKhodae in their article "Iran and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization" study the motivations and obstacles of membership of Iran in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). China and Russia as key members of this organization along with other members accepted Iran as an observer member in 2005. The same year SCO members rejected observer membership of the United States and revealed their common policy of standing against US influence in the region. Yet despite Iran's application for full membership in the SCO, due to the nuclear struggle, membership has been blocked. China and Russia on one side challenge US hegemony and on the other side they are close US economic partners. At the end the authors conclude that although membership of Iran in the SCO seems remote in the shadow of US sanction, it depends on the international environment and the future events which can change calculations (Mohammad A. Mousavi and Esfandiar Khodae, 2013).

Professor Hossein Pour-Ahmadi from ShahidBeheshti University and SajadMohseni in their article "The Obama and Securitization of Iran's peaceful Nuclear Energy Program" study the Obama's policy in dealing with Iran nuclear dossier in the basis of conceptual pattern provided by the Copenhagen School (Pour-Ahmadi, 2012). The Obama

administration considered Iran nuclear program as a threat against the security of the Persian Gulf and the international community and through media portrayed the nuclear Iran as a threat against energy market that would increase the costs for the industrial world (Pour-Ahmadi, 2012:170). The Obama administration assured Russia and China that sanctions would be a substitute for war and this policy of securitization of Iran nuclear program led to China and Russia's acceptance to vote against Iran in the UN Security Council. In response to Obama's securitization policy, Iranian authorities tried to de-securitize the nuclear programs by resorting to peaceful use of nuclear energy for electricity and other fields of medical and agricultural fields (Pour-Ahmadi, 2012:167).

The structure of the thesis

This dissertation is divided into six chapters to encompass major aspects concerned to this study. In chapter one the theoretical framework, methodology and literature review is presented. In the second chapter the US sanction policy against Iran is studied to clarify the roots of the core issue of the thesis. Chapter three reviews the relations between China and the United States. China's Iran policy is the title of the fourth chapter which analyzes the strategy of Beijing in dealing with Iran nuclear issue and the US sanction policy against Tehran. Chapter five tries to answer the main question of this study and analyses the issue of US sanctions against Iran in US-China relations. Finally a conclusion is presented in chapter six.

Chapter 2:

US Sanction Policy against Iran

Background

The 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran led to the overthrow of the US backed regime of Shah and established the Islamic Republic of Iran. On October 22, 1979 the Carter Administration permitted the exiled Shah to enter the United States for apparently medical treatment (New York Times, October 25, 1979). Iranians remembered the 1953 coup of the CIA which overthrew the democratically elected nationalist Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh and returned Shah to power. So the admission of Shah to the United States intensified Iranian anti-Americanism and spawned rumors of another U.S.-backed coup and re-installation of the Shah (Kinzer, 2008).

In response to the threat of another US backed coup on November 4, 1979 a group of Iranian students took over the American embassy in Tehran and held fifty two Americans as hostages to Pressure against the United States in the case of any US intervention. Imam Khomeini the great leader of the Islamic Revolution approved the seizure of the US embassy. For Iranians who remembered the 1953 coup of the US and UK against Mossadegh, the seizure of the US embassy was a defensive action to prevent US interference in the Iranian affairs. But for Americans who viewed the events from outside, could not understand the motivations of the Iranian Students and considered it as a barbarian action (Shoamanesh, 2008).

In response to the Hostage Crisis President Jimmy Carter in November 12, 1979 through Proclamation 4702 banned all imports from Iran and two weeks later through the executive order 12170 blocked all properties owned by the Central Bank and the government of Iran within the jurisdiction of the United States. On January, 1980 President Carter through executive order 12205 put embargo on US exports to Iran. Again the same year in April, Carter issued the executive order 12211 and imposed a ban on oil

imports from Iran and prohibited US citizens from travelling to Iran or conducting financial transaction there. On January 20, 1981 after 444 days, Iran released hostages and the crisis ended, but the relations between the two countries never improved.

Following the bombing US embassy and Marine barracks in Lebanon in 1983, President Ronald Reagan accused the Islamic Republic and declared Iran a sponsor of terror. Designating Iran as a sponsor of terror triggered substantial sanctions against this country. During the Iran-Iraq war, Iran was Under US arm sanctions. On October 29, 1987 in the hot day of Iran Iraq war, Through Executive order 12613, President Reagan prohibited importation and exportation of any goods and services to Iran.

After Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990 the Dual Containment policy against Iran and Iraq was followed by President George H. W. Bush and President Clinton. On April 8, 1992 President H. W Bush signed the “Iran Iraq Non Proliferation Act” which imposed sanctions on any entity that helped Iran and Iraq acquire or develop weapons of Mass Destruction (Hildreth, 2012 :25).

President Clinton Expanded further unilateral sanctions against Iran. On March 1995 Executive order 12957 prohibited any American firm or individual from investing in or developing Iranian oil industry. On May 9, 1995 Executive order 12959 broadened sanctions to encompass a total trade and investment embargo. In 1996 the US Senate and House of Representative passed the Iran and Libya Sanction Act (ILSA). ILSA extended US sanctions over foreign firms that provided investment over \$20 million for the development of petroleum and resources in Iran (S. Wright, 2007).

US unilateral sanctions against foreign companies investing in Iran raised a lot of criticism from other countries especially the Europeans. They continued trade and investment in Iran and threatened counter action if the United States sanctioned their companies (Katzman, 2007:6). The election of the reformist president Khatami expanded Iran’s ties

with the Europeans and other industrial countries. Due to international non-compliance with the ILSA, the United States withdrew from practicing sanctions over European companies investing in Iran in return. “Given that several European companies were doing business with Iran, EU governments expectedly opposed ILSA and adopted or threatened to adopt counter legislation to prevent their companies from complying with ILSA, including taking action against US firms” (Rizvi, 2010:7).

Following the improvement of Iran’s international position during Khatami Presidency, the Clinton Administration not only withdrew from several previous restrictions, but also put several step forward for normalizing the relations. In 1999 Clinton permitted American traders to export food products and drugs. In November the same year Boeing Company was exempted from sanctions to present services to airplanes sold previously to Iran. In 2000 Madeleine Albright, U.S. Secretary of State regretted US's involvement in Coup against Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh in 1953 and said that intervention by the U.S. in the internal affairs of Iran was a setback for democratic government (CNN, 19 April 2000).

As another step in normalizing process during Khatami and Clinton period, the export of some Iranian non-oil goods to the United States was permitted. The Clinton administration announced, on 28 April 1999, that “it had decided to ease its sanctions policy to permit the sale of food and medical supplies to Iran” (New York Times, 29 April 1999).

The improvement in US-Iran relations moved to the point that a debate in US Congress on whether to allow the expiration of Iran Sanction Act (ISA) or to renew it. Some members of the Congress Believed ISA hindered bilateral ties. Other members rejected the expiration of the ISA. This debate ended in August 5, 2001 with the renewal of the Congress and the new President George W Bush signed it into law (Katzman, April 2013:10).

In February 2004, the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) stopped editing articles from Iranian researchers and asked OFAK to clarify guidelines related to publishing and editing Iranian works. In April 2004 OFAK responded that no licenses were required for publishing articles from Iran and they were exempted from sanctions (The Scientist, 7 April 2004).

Post 9/11 Events

Two weeks after the Terrorist attack of September 11, 2001 against New York and Washington DC, President George W Bush through Executive order 13224 froze the assets and banned U.S. transaction with entities determined to be supporting international terrorism. This list included dozens of Iranian individuals and organizations and financial institutions (Katzman, April 2013 :27).

On January 29, 2002 President George W. Bush in his State of Union Address called Iran, Iraq and North Korea “Axis of Evil” and accused them of supporting terrorism and seeking Weapon of Mass Destruction”. This speech was a blow to the US – Iran relations and damaged the normalizing course which had been initiated by President Khatami and President Clinton.

The Emergence of the Nuclear Issue

On August 14, 2002 a spokesman of Mujahedeen Khalq or MEK (an Iranian armed dissident group officially considered to be a terrorist organization) in a press conference exposed two nuclear facilities in Natanz and Arak (Borger, Feb 22, 2007; J. W. Parker, 2007:21). The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) immediately asked Iran for access to these sites and for further information and co-operation from Iran. “The investigations undertaken since by the IAEA have shown that Iran has for years pursued a

“policy of concealment” and violated its reporting obligations numerous times. While the IAEA has found no evidence for a nuclear weapons program” (CSS, 2008 :1).

The United States and Western allies accused Iran of following nuclear weapon plan and threatened to refer Iran to the UN Security Council for economic sanction and other measures. Iran claimed it was a peaceful project and invited the International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors to visit the Natanz site and agreed to co-operate with the IAEA. On 18 December 2003 Iran signed an Additional Protocol as a voluntary, confidence-building measure and agreed to act as if the protocol were in force, suspended uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities during the course of the negotiations with the EU3 (IAEA, 21 October 2003).

On June 28, 2005 President George W. Bush through Executive Order 13382 intended to freeze the assets of allegedly proliferators of Weapons of Mass Destruction and their supporters. Eight Iranian entities and organizations were believed to be supporting Iranian WMD programs, were sanctioned including the Iranian banks Melli and Saderat and the Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps or (IRGC).

In 2005 Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected as the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He lifted suspension of uranium enrichment that Khatami administration in negotiation with the EU3 had voluntarily and temporarily accepted. In response the IAEA reported Iran's non-compliance with its safeguard agreements to the UN Security Council. Despite some resistance from China and Russia, finally the Iran nuclear issue was referred to the UN Security Council.

On September 9, 2006 the US Treasury Department prohibited any indirect U-Turn transaction (meaning transaction with non Iranian foreign banks that conduct on the behalf of Iranian bank) with Iranian Bank Saderat which they claimed provided funds to

Hezbollah (Kessler, 2006). The Treasury Department extended U-Turn restriction to all Iranian banks on November 6, 2008 (Katzman, April 2013 :26).

On September 30, 2006 US Congress Passed the Iran Freedom and Support Act (IFSA). President George W. Bush signed it and applauded the Congress "for demonstrating its bipartisan commitment to confronting the Iranian regime's repressive and destabilizing activities" (White House, September 30, 2006) Iran Freedom and Support Act appropriated \$10 million and directed the President of the United States to spend that money in support of groups opposed to the Iranian government. Many opponents criticized IFSA as a first step toward intervening in the internal affairs of Iran (Sheehan, 2006).

US sanctions during President Obama's first Administration

Barack Obama won the 2008 US Presidential Election. At the beginning of his administration according to his "Change Policy", Obama used a different literature in dealing with Iran nuclear program to come to a peaceful compromise. In the early month of his administration Obama sent a Nowruz message and congratulated the New Year to Iranian people and addressed Iranian leaders with these words: "We have serious differences that have grown over time. My administration is now committed to diplomacy that addresses the full range of issues before us." (Guardian, March 20, 2009). But soon the page turned and following the uproar after the Iran presidential election in June 2009, Obama supported the protesters and condemned Iran government for dealing with the demonstrators. As Iran did not withdraw from its nuclear position and continued uranium enrichment, Obama Changed the "Change Policy" and followed the previously dominated policy of confrontation.

During the decades of 1990s and 2000s US restrictions against Iran mostly involved US firms, US citizens and people located in the United States. Foreign companies could conduct business with Iran free of US regulatory scrutiny. The ISA of 1996 was the only

exemption in the pre 2010 sanction regime against the Islamic Republic of Iran. ISA threatened foreign companies investing more than \$20 million in Iran oil industry. But the new sanctions continued the same path of ISA and targeted foreign firms investing in Iran. Furthermore President Obama improved US–EU relations which had damaged during George Bush and could have the support of the Europeans in new sanctions against Iran.

Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability and Divestment Act (CISADA)

On June 24, 2010 the US Congress passed the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability and Divestment Act (CISADA) and President Obama signed it into law On July 1, 2010 (Scott, 2011).. CISADA greatly expanded sanctions and broadened restrictions to target all aspects of Iranian economy including Iranian banking system and foreign firms investing in Iranian oil industry, energy export and gasoline import. In practice through CISADA the United States moved from “smart sanction” which targeted only the Iranian nuclear program to “comprehensive sanctions” which targets Iranian economy in general and affects the life of ordinary people (Economist, August 18, 2012).

Due to lack of cooperation from the Europeans and other industrial countries in the 1990s, ISA had minimal impacts on Iran oil industry. After the emergence of Iran nuclear issue in 2003 and especially after the Iran referral to the UN Security Council in 2006 and improvement of US relation with European Union and other major powers during Obama administration, the United States used the new atmosphere against Iran to achieve international cooperation in dealing with Iran.

CISADA extended restrictions of its previous version Iran Sanction Act (ISA) of 1996 in two areas. First, CISADA triggered significant limits on foreign financial institutions access to the US financial system if they engage in specific relations with Iran. Second, CISADA moved beyond ISA regulations over foreign companies investing in Iran oil

industry. CISADA added an array of comprehensive sanctions addressing Iran's access to refined petroleum products including gasoline (Economist, August 18, 2012).

In order not to hurt American interests in dealing with companies and countries violating US restrictions against Iran, designers of ISA and CISADA in US congress gave waiver authority to the president in conducting sanctions. Under the original version of ISA of 1996 the President had the authority to waive sanctions over companies investing in Iran oil industry if he certifies that doing so is "IMPORTANT" for US national interests. CISADA of 2010 changed the ISA waiver standard to "NECESSARY" to the US national interests (Katzman, April 2013:9).

According to ISA the president had the waiver authority if the parent country of the violating firm joined a sanction regime against Iran. CISADA presented a more detailed standard and provided a six month waiver if doing so is vital to the US interests and if the parent country is "closely cooperating" with US efforts against Iran's Weapon of Mass Destruction program (Katzman, April 2013 :8).

On March 20, 2012, the Secretary of State announced the first group of 11 countries that had achieved an exemption for significantly reducing oil purchases from Iran: Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, and Britain. These exemptions were all renewed (for 180 days) on September 14, 2012, and again on March 13, 2013 (Reuters, March 13, 2013).

On June 11, 2012, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said waivers were granted to seven more exemptions based on reductions of oil purchases from Iran of about 20% in each case: India, Korea, Turkey, Malaysia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and Taiwan (BBC, June 11, 2012,). All seven exemptions were renewed on December 7, 2012, for another 180 days. On June 28, 2012, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton announced the

waivers for China and Singapore, two remaining major Iran oil customers (New York Times, June 28, 2012).

CISADA expanded the list of ISA sanctions, and required that the President impose three of nine available sanctions, rather than two of the six that previously were available under the 1996 ISA. To date (February, 2013), fourteen companies have been sanctioned under the ISA as amended by CISADA, as announced by the Department of State in notices dated October 13, 2010; April 5, 2011; September 14, 2011; January 27, 2012; and September 14, 2012. The companies are located in Belarus, China, Iran, Jersey, Liberia, Monaco, Singapore, Syria, the UAE, and Venezuela (Steptoe, 2013).

September 28, 2010 President Obama issued Executive Order 13553 to block the property of those responsible for allegedly Human right abuses related to the Presidential Election 2009 of Iran. On November 21, 2011, President Obama signed Executive Order 13590 expanded sanctions on Iranian petroleum industry by identifying the following activities as sanctionable acts: the provision of any goods, services or technology above \$1 million that could help Iran develop its petroleum resources (a far lower threshold than under ISA or CISADA. Executive Order 13590 also designated the entire Iranian financial sector as a “primary money laundering concern” under the USA PATRIOT Act (Steptoe, 2013).

National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012

The Fiscal Year 2012 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), section 1245 concentrated on Iran and imposed unilateral sanctions against the Central Bank of Iran, effectively blocking Iranian oil exports to countries which do business with the United States. Through 2012 NDAA the US planned to force every country in the world to choose between significantly reducing purchases of Iranian oil, or having its banks shut out of the international financial system (K. J. C. E. Lee, January 4, 2012).

According to 2012 NDAA the President has the authority to grant waiver to a foreign firms, if he determines that the parent country has substantially reduced the purchase of Iranian oil in a period of 180 days. It was according to these provisions that Obama granted waivers to major customers of Iranian oil such as China , India, Japan and South Korea (New York Times, June 28, 2012).

The FY 2012 National Defense Authorization Act requires the President, pursuant to the IEEPA, to block all property of Iranian banks and financial institutions. The impact of this sanction is similar to listing all Iranian financial institutions as Specially Designated Nationals List (SDN) Sorted by OFAC Sanctions Program. US financial institutions were previously not allowed to perform any transactions with Iranian financial system, this 2012 NDAA goes even further by blocking their properties (Steptoe, 2013).

The FY 2012 NDAA also designated the entire Iranian financial system including the Central Bank of Iran as a primary money laundering concern under the USA PATRIOT Act (Steptoe, 2013), codifying the Executive Order 13590 which was discussed before.

Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act

On August 10, 2012 President Obama signed into law the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act (ITRA) which expanded US sanctions against Iran. ITRA imposes penalty on a US company if its foreign subsidiary knowingly engages in any transaction with the government of Iran or any designated Iranian person (Steptoe, 2013).

ITRA was built on ISA of 1996 and CISADA of 2010 and extended the list of regulations and sanctions against Iranian financial system and petroleum industry. Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act adds the following actions to the sanction list: “(1) participating in certain joint ventures that may benefit Iran's petroleum sector; (2) providing goods, services, technology or other support that could contribute to the maintenance and enhancement of Iran's ability to develop domestic petroleum resources,

refined petroleum production, or petrochemical products production (with certain transaction value thresholds); (3) transporting crude oil from Iran to another country; (4) concealing the Iranian origin of crude oil or refined petroleum products transported on vessels” (Steptoe, 2013).

Under the ITRA the President has the authority to grant waiver to firms that violate regulations when necessary to safeguard US national interests. Compared to ISA and CISADA these waivers are limited and more detailed. According to ITRA the President in required imposing five out of twelve available sanctions; whereas CISADA required him to impose three out of nine and ILSA required the President to put in effect two out of six provisions (Steptoe, 2013).

President Obama’s Executive Orders in 2012

President Obama issued 5 Executive Orders in 2012: 1) Executive Order 13599: Blocking the Entire Iranian Government and Financial Sectors. 2) Executive Order 13606 (GHRIVITY): Blocking Entities in the IT Sector Linked to Human Rights Abuses. 3) Executive Order 13608: Targeting Foreign Sanctions "Evaders". 4) Executive Order 13622: Targeting National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), and the Central Bank of Iran (CBI). 5) Executive Order 13628: Initial Implementation of ITRA Foreign Subsidiary Rule. Most of these Executive Orders overlap with each other and also with CISADA, ISA, ITRA and other Congress acts.

President Obama worked very hard in 2012 to extend sanctions and to put more pressure against Iran. Due to the Presidential election he was under pressure to present a more tangible result to American media and voters who expected to do something serious against the so called threat of Iran

UN Sanctions against Iran

In comparison to the US unilateral sanctions, UN sanctions are limited but because of their international dimension they are very important. In fact these sanctions provided the background for more unilateral sanctions and multilateral sanctions from the US and EU.

The first UN Security Council Resolution 1696 passed On July 2006 did not put any sanction over Iran. It demanded that Iran suspend all enrichment related reprocessing activities and threatened to future sanctions. The second Resolution 1737 passed on 23 December 2006 for the first time imposed sanctions against Iran. This Resolution banned Iran' import and export of "sensitive Nuclear materials and equipment and froze assets of those involved in Iran nuclear activities and demanded that all countries should prevent the supply or sale of equipment and technology that would help Iran's nuclear program (Katzman, April 2013).

On March 24, 2007 UN Resolution 1747 banned Iranian arm exports and imposed a freeze on the financial assets of 28 individuals and entities related to Iran nuclear activities. A year later on March 2008 another UN Resolution 1803 extended the asset freezes and called upon states to monitor the activities of Iranian banks, inspect Iranian ships and aircrafts, and to monitor the movement of individuals involved with Iran nuclear program through their territory.

UN Security Resolution 1929 passed on 9 June 2010. Banned Iran from participating in any activities related to ballistic missiles, tightened the arms embargo, travel bans on individuals involved with the program, froze the funds and assets of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines, and recommended that states inspect Iranian cargo, prohibit the servicing of Iranian vessels involved in prohibited activities, prevent the provision of financial services used for sensitive nuclear activities, closely watch Iranian individuals and entities when dealing with them, prohibit the opening of Iranian banks on their territory and prevent Iranian banks from entering into

relationship with their banks if it might contribute to the nuclear program, and prevent financial institutions operating in their territory from opening offices and accounts in Iran (UN Resolution 1929, June 9, 2010).

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1984 passed on 9 June 2011 extended the mandate of the panel of experts that supports the Iran Sanctions Committee for one year. Resolution 2049 on 7 June 2012 again renewed the mandate of the Iran Sanctions Committee's Panel of Experts for 13 months.

EU sanctions against Iran

On 23 January 2012 the Council of European Union released a report in which it restated its concern about Iran nuclear programs. The EU council decided to embargo Iranian oil exports. And declared it would freeze the assets held by the Central Bank of Iran and banned trading of precious metals and petrochemical products from Iran (Greene, 2012). These new regulations replaced and updated the previous regulations that were published on July 2010. These new sanctions put restriction on financial services, foreign trade, energy sector and included a ban on provision of insurance and reinsurance by EU insurers to Iranian companies (Torbat, 2012).

The European Union accounted for 20 percent of Iran's oil export in 2011. Most of the remaining exported oil of Iran goes to Asian contractors such as China, India, Japan and South Korea (Marcus, 2012). In response to the sanctions, Iranian foreign ministry spokesman RaminMehmanparast, stated that the embargo would not significantly affect Iranian oil revenues. He further said that "any country that deprives itself from Iran's energy market, will soon see that it has been replaced by others" (Aljazeera, 24 Jan 2012).

On March 2012 EU Council decided to disconnect all Iranian banks from the SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication) electronic banking system. It was the first time that SWIFT, a consortium based in Belgium and subject to

European Union laws, had taken such a drastic step, which severs a crucial conduit for Iran to electronically repatriate billions of dollars' worth of earnings from the sale of oil and other exports (Gladstone, 2012).

Impacts of sanctions on Iran

Iran is potentially a rich country and despite huge pressure from the United States and allies after the 1979 Revolution, Iran has successfully moved through many difficulties such eight year war with Iran and numerous sanction regimes. Let's first review the economic impacts of sanctions over the United States, European Union and other industrial countries. Iran has 136.3 billion of proven oil reserves (the third largest after Saudi Arabia and Canada) and 940 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. According to a new BP report in 12 June 2013 Iran's gas resources surpassed Russia and Iran ranked first for gas reserves (Press TV, June 19, 2013; Reuters, June 12, 2013). Putting Iran aside from the energy market is very costly for the United States and the Western allies as well as other great energy importers of Asia such as China, India, Japan and South Korea.

According to a study by Dean A. DeRosa and Gary Clyde Hufbauer of US National Foreign Trade Council in Washington DC, normalization of US relations with Iran at that date (2008) could reduce the world oil price by 10 percent, saving the United States annually \$76 billion at the proximate oil price of \$100/bbl(Hufbauer, 2008). After the implementation of CISADA and tightening sanctions in 2010-2013 which led to the reduction of at least 1.5 million barrel per day of Iran's oil export we can estimate that if Iran returns to the oil market the world price of oil will decrease fundamentally saving billions of dollar more than what DeRosa and Hufbauer had predicted in 2008. Furthermore opening the Iranian oil fields to foreign investment can create great opportunity for competitive US and European companies.

Despite great negative impacts of sanctions over Iran economy, in some cases these sanctions have had counter effect of protecting Iran in some ways. For example in 2007 sanctions made Iranian financial system immune to the emerging global recession (Parsi, 2010). Iranian authorities argue that in long term sanctions have had some positive impacts on Iranian economy because it had created new business opportunities for Iranian companies to develop in order to fill the gap left by foreign contractors (Barden, 2011).

On the other side, one can not ignore the huge destructive impacts of sanctions over Iran's economy. DeRosa and Hufbauer in 2008 estimated that over the medium term (up to five years) the lifting of US sanctions from Iran would result in \$61 billion (at the 2005 crude oil price of \$50/bbl.), or about 32 percent of the country's GDP (Hufbauer, 2008 :16). Considering current oil price of about \$100/bbl, And the additional sanctions in 2010-2012, we can conclude that lifting sanctions today will far more than what DeRosa and Hufbauer had estimated in 2008.

Data published by the Iranian Central Bank show a declining trend in the share of Iranian exports from oil-products (2006/2007: 84.9%, 2007/2008: 86.5%, 2008/2009: 85.5%, 2009/2010: 79.8%, 2010/2011 (first three quarters): 78.9%) (Central Bank of Iran, 2011). Iranian oil Minister on January 7, 2013 acknowledged the impact of sanctions. He indicated that oil sale had fallen 40 percent (Iran Diplomacy, 2013).

Conclusion

Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution that overthrow of the US backed regime of Shah, the United States has always followed the strategy of containment against the Islamic Republic of Iran to keep the balance of power in the oil rich Middle East. The collapse of the Soviet Union left the United States as the only hegemon power to expand restrictions against other independent countries including Iran. In 1995 Iran opened doors to foreign investment in Iranian oil industry (see:Katzman, April 2013:2). The United States under

the title of Iran Sanctions Act (ISA) of 1996 tried to sanction firms which invest in Iranian oil industry. But ISA failed in the face of Iranian active diplomacy during Khatami Presidency which changed the atmosphere in the favor of Iran. The European power and other industrial countries confronted the United States and ISA could not attract international cooperation.

After the 9/11 attack and especially after the emergence of Iran nuclear issue, the United States used the new atmosphere and could successfully refer Iran to the UN Security Council. When Obama came to power in 2009, he tried to improve the relations with the EU, and other great powers such as China, India and Russia which damaged during George W. Bush administration. Obama used the new atmosphere especially the emergence of the nuclear issue and the UN resolutions against Iran to make other major powers cooperate with US sanction policy and join UN sanction regimes against Iran.

In 2010 the Obama administration changed the course of smart sanctions which targeted Iran nuclear program and a group of Iranian political elite related to nuclear programs. CISADA of 2010 followed the same path of ISA of 1996 which unsuccessfully targeted the oil industry of Iran. Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability and Divestment Act (CISADA), the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of the Fiscal Year 2012 and the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act (ITRA) triggered sanctions against Iranian economy in general and in contrast to the UN smart sanctions these unilateral sanctions targeted the life condition of ordinary people of Iran. The overall “economic” impact of these sanctions against Iranian people may have been significant but the “political” impacts have been minimal to achieve the original ambition of sanctions.

Chapter 3:

US – China Relation

Introduction

US – China relation is complex and multifaceted. Generally as it was discussed, this relation can be explained in the theoretical framework of neoliberalism, because complex interdependency has made decision makers in both countries cautious and conservative. Neorealism can also be useful in explaining some aspects of US-China relations as they confront on some issues and resort to balance of power in strategic challenges. US-China relation varies from cooperation in some aspects to competition and confrontation on some other areas. In one side they are major trade partners and have common concerns in dealing with terrorism and nuclear proliferation (Kan, 2013 :13). On the other side they are challenging competitors over trade issues, the issue of Taiwan and in the Middle East. Due to economic interdependence the authorities in the two countries refrain from radical decisions in order not to threaten their own stability and the stability of the world order. The two countries are the largest consumers and importers of oil and the greatest emitters of greenhouse gases (USC, 2010).

In this chapter, first the history of relations between China and the United States is reviewed, and then the top challenging issues between the two powers in the twenty first century are studied; Challenges such as Chinese opposition against US unilateral policies and US hegemony, the issue of Taiwan and the human rights issue.

History of US – China Relations

According to “Berkshire Encyclopedia of China” In August 1784 for the first time a US trade ship arrived Guangzhou China to trade furs, ginseng and specie for Chinese popular goods such as silk, tea, cotton, porcelain, and furniture. For decades prior to that date Europeans had already dominated trade in China. American trades similar to their European counterparts had few commodities to trade in the self sufficient Chinese

developed market. Britain had earlier initiated a solution for that problem by selling opium which was produced abundantly in the British colony of India. American traders turned to Turkish opium and in 1820 achieved a profitable monopoly in trading Turkish opium (Grasso, 2009:2351-2).

The Qing dynasty which ruled over China tried to stop opium sale by foreign powers. The Opium War of 1839-1842 led to a great victory for the British side. Consequently the unequal treaty of Nanking permitted foreign merchants and missionaries in the Chinese coastal cities (Tsang, 2007). American traders worked in the shadow of the British power under the term of this treaty. Yet the British influence threatened further American business in China. In 1844 President Tyler secured the Treaty of Wangxia to put American trade on par with British trade and opened new opportunities for American trade in China (Liu, 2003 :152).

After China's defeat in the Second Opium War by the British and French, the Treaty of Tianjin forced the Qing rulers to establish foreign embassies in Beijing and opened this city to foreign residence (Liu, 2003 :152). In 1861 President Abraham Lincoln sent Anson Burlingame to China to follow US interests by defending China's territorial integrity and helping China stand against European colonial expansionism. In 1867 in an unusual decision China's Foreign Office appointed Burlingame as the head of the first Chinese delegation to the United States; a mission that lasted for three years and led to the Burlingame Treaty in 1868. According to this treaty the two sides agreed over immigration and free trade between the two countries. The US asserted that it will not follow territorial designs in China and would support Chinese territorial integrity (Grasso, 2009 :2352).

Treaty of Burlingame opened the United States to mass immigration of Chinese workers during the California Gold Rush to work in mines and in railroad projects. In response to Chinese mass immigration, in 1882 US Congress passed "Chinese Exclusion Act" which

suspended further Chinese immigration to the United States for a decade. The Chinese exclusion law was renewed for several decades up to 1943 (Liu, 2003 :154).

Open Door Policy

In 1899 the United States defeated Spain and annexed Philippines and Guam. This victory expanded American realm of influence to the neighborhood of China. At the beginning of the 20th century the United States emerged as a great world power while at the same years China experienced its worst and weakest status. The Qing dynasty had lost its control over China and European powers France, United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Russia and Japan had divided Chinese territory to follow their own imperialist intentions. Historians call these days for China as "Slicing the melon" (Grasso, 2009 :2352).

The United States as the youngest and newly emerged power wanted a share of China. In 1899 US Secretary of State John Hay issued diplomatic letters to Britain, France, Germany, Russia and Japan. In those letters He asked for their acceptance of free market in China to be open for all sides including the United States. World Major Powers evaded presenting clear responses to American request saying they could not agree anything until the other powers had consented first. John Hay Skillfully used this ambiguity as their agreement to the "Open door Policy" (Sugita, 2003:8).

Open door policy dominated US diplomacy in regard with China for more than three decades. In 1911 the Qing dynasty collapsed. The United States through open door policy supported independent China and did not recognize annexation of Manchuria to Japan and some parts of northern China to Russia (Grasso, 2009 :2353). During the First World War China stood in the side of allied forces especially to defend its independence and integrity from Japan.

During the 1930s Japan invaded China at that time the United States did nothing against Japan unless the policy of non-recognition and a protest. At these years isolationist

dominated US Congress and American public opinion. In 1941 when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor the situation changed and the United States formally entered the World War Second by declaring war with Japan.

After the United States entered the war, China formally declared war against Japan and Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek traveled to the United States and asked for American support against Japan. During the war Chiang faced another rising challenge from the Chinese Communist Party and tried to suppress this new opposition front along with fighting against Japan. On the other side Chiang Kai-shek did not trust Americans. He opposed Roosevelt request to put American General Stilwell in command of Chinese ground units in the war against Japan and the relation between Roosevelt and Chiang cooled (Grasso, 2009 :2355).

The World War second ended and again China stood in the victorious side. But this victory was ignored because of the civil war against the Communist party which was supported extensively by the Soviet Union. Finally the nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek withdrew from the mainland China and fled to the Taiwan Island in 1949. Chinese Communist Party successfully dominated over China and established a communist regime and made close relations with the Soviet Union.

Relations Frozen

The loss of China was a severe blow to the administration of President Harry Truman. In response Truman more seriously followed his containment doctrine to control Communism. The United States did not recognize Communist China and supported Taiwan regime as the representative of China to occupy Chinese seat of permanent member of the UN Security Council. Later the Korean War put China and the United States in a more hostile position and disappeared any chance for improving bilateral relations (Grasso, 2009 :2355).

In 1950 Communist North Korea with the assistance from the Soviet Union invaded South Korea. The United States under administration of Harry Truman which has already experienced the loss of China, decisively and directly entered the war with North Korea. Communist China sent huge troops to stand against the United States. “The defeat of the US Eighth Army resulted in the longest retreat of any American military unit in history” (Cohen, 2005 :175). The Korean War ended in 1953 with great losses from the both sides. But this war deteriorated the relations between China and the United States. Again in the Vietnam War China indirectly stood against the United States and played a major role in the greatest defeat of the United States during the 1960s.

In December 1950 the United States imposed total trade embargo against China. “The embargo originally stemmed mainly from Washington's frustration with the "loss" of China” (Zhang, 2001). These sanctions lasted for more than two decades. From the establishment of the Communist regime in China in 1949 up to 1970 the relation between China and the United States was frozen and nobody expected any shift in this relation in any near future.

Rapprochement

In 1969 the relation between China and the Soviet Union faced a critical crisis because of several conflicts in borders. The crisis moved forward to the point that Russia the previously ally of China turned to be the number one threat for this country (Ryabushkin, 2007 :82). China got diplomatically isolated and vulnerable. Gradually Chinese leader Mao Zedong and Premier Zhou Enlai concluded that improved relations with the United States would be a useful counterbalance to the increasing Soviet threat (Grasso, 2009 :2356).

On the other side in the United States under President Nixon after withdrawal from Vietnam, main challenges in regard with China has been removed and the American

authorities were prepared to accept the reality of a Communist China. Being aware of the Chinese serious border conflicts with the Soviet Union, Nixon looked at China as a possible opportunity and concluded that Chinese alignment with the United States, would lead to a major redistribution of global power against the Soviet Union. On the economical aspect, China with a huge market could be a great unexpected chance for the United States.

Nixon authority sent positive signals to China through relaxing trade restrictions and several other impediments to bilateral contacts and china responded. In 1971 china invited US table tennis team to China. The tennis players were the first Americans to officially visit China from the Communist revolution of 1949. These interactions between China and the United States that finally led to fundamental improvement in their bilateral relations, is called Ping-Pong Diplomacy (Chinese Pod, 2012).

In 1971 Henry Kissinger as National Security Advisor of President Nixon secretly traveled to Beijing to reestablish relations (Burr, 2002). In October 1971 China received UN Security Council permanent membership seat back from Taiwan. In 1972 President Nixon officially traveled to China and the relations between the two world major powers improved. After Nixon resigned President Gerald Ford continued the détente policy and visited China. Then President Carter and President Reagan followed the same path toward China (Grasso, 2009 :2357).

In June 1989 the People Republic of China violently suppressed civil protesters in Tiananmen Square. The United States and other Western powers condemned PRC's violation of human rights. The United States imposed limited economic sanctions against China (Lum, 2011 :30). Tiananmen disrupted US – China trade relations. while “Congress threatened to terminate China’s most-favored-nation (MFN) status” (Kan, October 10, 2001 :25). Later President Bill Clinton and President Bush gradually lifted trade sanctions against China (Drury, 2003 :6).

On May 1999 during NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, the United States bombarded the People's Republic of China embassy in Belgrade and again US – China relation experienced another shock. President Bill Clinton later apologized for the bombing stating it was accidental. In October the same year the two sides reached an agreement on humanitarian payment for families of those who were killed or injured (Grasso, 2009 :2356).

On April 2001 a Chinese fighter jet collided with a US spying aircraft in the Hainan Island. The Chinese jet crashed and its pilot was killed. The American spying aircraft despite great damage was able to land in the Hainan Island. This incident again shocked the strained relations between the two countries (Kan, October 10, 2001 :2).

US – China Relations after 9/11 Attack

China's huge potentials such as large population, abundant natural resources, vast geography, high sense of nationalism, great history and civilization and the non democratic and non Western Communist regime of Beijing led to the notion of "China Threat" and the view that China's rise would bring challenges to US interests. So the containment of China found a special place in the literature of American politicians. Bill Clinton used the China card in 1992 presidential election campaign and accused George H. W. Bush of being too soft on China. Again in 2000 presidential election campaign, the Republican candidate George W. Bush criticized Bill Clinton's administration for being too soft on China, arguing that China was a "strategic competitor" rather than a "strategic partner" (Carpenter, 2012).

During the early months of Bush's Presidency, many frictions emerged in US – China relations. President Bush announced that the United States would do "whatever it took to help Taiwan defend herself" He criticized China's intensifying attacks against religion freedom targeting Christians, Muslims and the followers of Dalai Lama. Other frictions

include U.S.'s planned missile shield and China's proliferation of missile technology (Mufson, 2001). President Bush's visit with Dalai Lama in May 23, 2001 brought angry China's response (Fei-chiao, 2006 :56).

The terrorist attack of September, 11, 2001 placed the radical Islam and the threat of terrorism at the center of American foreign policy and consequently the "China Threat" was marginalized to the corner of U.S. concerns. The initial response to the 9/11 attack from China was a message of condolence from President Jiang Zemin to President and families of the victims. China condemned the terrorist attack and supported U.S. plans in the war against terrorism.

The United States needed China's cooperation as a veto owner in the war against Al-Qaida and Taliban in Afghanistan. China endorsed 2001 and 2002 UN resolutions 1373, 1378, 1386, 1390 and 1441 (deLisle, 2011). Furthermore China took part in the war of Afghanistan; following the defeat of Taliban, China contributed assistance in reconstruction of Afghanistan and supported the new Afghan government (Huasheng, 2012 :4).

In order to achieve China's cooperation, President Bush had to ignore or at least put less emphasize on differences with China. 9/11 attack and the consequent crises entangled the United States in the Middle East and created a great opportunity for China to continue high and expand its relation and influence in the Pacific region and other parts of the world.

Many American analysts criticized George W. Bush for ignoring China and the Far East (deLisle, 2011; Xinbo, 2012:80). In fact Bush's response to the 9/11 terrorist attack was a serious blow to the long term containment policy of the United States against China. 9/11 and the aftermath wars of Afghanistan and Iraq, improved the relation between China and the United States on the expense of marginalizing the containment policy.

US – China Relations during Obama Administration

In 2008 U.S. presidential election Republican and Democrat candidates McCain and Obama extensively discussed about China. Both candidates favored peaceful cooperation on main issues. McCain referred to the transformative impact of free trade on China and noted that despite common interests with the U.S China didn't share American values. Obama expressed concern about the value of Chinese currency being set law deliberately in favor of China's export and at the expense of the United States (USC, October 2008b). During the presidential election campaign, Barack Obama repeatedly criticized George W. Bush administration for ignoring China and accused this country of manipulating the value of Chinese currency (USC, October 2008a).

On November 8, 2008 Chinese President Hu Jintao in a telephone call congratulated Barack Obama on his election victory. Both Presidents agreed that the development of the US – China relation is not only in the interests of both nation, but also in the interest of the world (Hunan, November 9, 2008). Obama's Presidency was welcomed from the Chinese side and fostered more cooperation between the two nations to the point that some commentators like former US National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski suggested creating a G-2 (Chimerica) relationship to work out solutions to global problems. Brzezinski viewed the informal G-2 as helpful in finding solutions to the global financial crisis, Iran's nuclear program, North Korea's nuclear program, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, UN peacekeeping, nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament and other major issues (Wong, January 2, 2009).

“The Strategic Economic Dialogue” initiated by President George W Bush and President Hu was broadened by Obama administration and was renamed to the “US-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue” led by US Secretary of State and Secretary of the Treasury and Chinese Vice Premier and Chinese State Councilor (USC, August 29, 2009).

President Obama through his “change Policy” tried to change the US concentration from the Middle East toward the Pacific. Obama withdrew American troops from Iraq and improved U.S. relations with E.U. which has damaged by George Bush’s unilateral policies. Due to several setbacks Obama’s China policy at the beginning wasn’t too much different to that of his predecessor George W. Bush. The 2008 global financial crisis and it’s aftermath on American economy made Obama refrain from making tough decisions against China. Chinese fast economic growth during the past three decades had expanded its trade relations and consequently Chinese influence on its neighbors in Asia and even on the United States.

With the return of US focus from the Middle East to the Far East and the improvement of US-EU relations, it seemed that China’s “honeymoon” had finished. US – China relation faced several serious challenges in 2010. In January the United States proposed a \$6.4 billion arm sale to Taiwan. In response China threatened to impose sanction on companies supplying arms to Taiwan and suspend cooperation with the US on some issues (BBC, January 30, 2010). On February 2010 President Obama met Dalai Lama the spiritual leader in exile of the people of Tibet. In response China summoned US ambassador in Beijing (Macartney, February 29, 2010).

President Obama withdrew American forces from Iraq in December 2011 as he had promised to American voters. This helped Obama to set new strategy for US military presence in other parts of the world including the Far East and the Pacific region. “US 2012 defense strategy raised China's protest. Many analysts saw Obama’s defense strategy as the US military response to the rise of China (Lawrence, 2012 :93). Chinese leaders viewed Obama's strategy aiming to isolate China in the East Asian region and to follow a containment policy against China (M. Lee, 2012).

In February 2013 the United States accused China of more than 100 attacks against US government department, American companies and other websites (Phillips, February

2013). China refused the accusations as flawed and unreliable claims and accused the United States of being the origin of attacks against Chinese military websites (Spegele, May 27, 2013)

Major Issues in US – China Relations

The Rise of China, a Strategic Challenge to the US Hegemony

In 2010 China overtook Japan to become the world's second largest economy. The chief economist of the World Bank, Justin Lin predicted that China may become the world's largest economy in 2030 overtaking the United States if current trend continues (Taipei Times, 2011). The Standard Charter Bank predicted even a closer date and suggested that the China may have the first economy in 2020 (Rapoza, 2011).

China's economic development naturally involves a more advanced military industry, more powerful army and a more powerful China in the political aspect. The time that China was limited in its geographical border has gone. Today Chinese goods are found in nearly every shop in the four corners of the world. This active economy and the accumulated wealth by Chinese companies require a more powerful policy to safeguard its development.

According to the official statistics by the government, in 2007 China spent \$45 billion on defense (Dube, 2007b). US authorities doubted about this official figure and believed China conceals real military spending (BBC, April 7, 2010). Some US based analysts estimates China's military budget between \$85 billion and \$125 billion (Dube, 2007a). In comparison to the US, even the exaggerated figure of China's military spending is not comparable to the UD military budget. In 2008 the United States spent \$623 billion for the military, 123 billion more than the combined official military budget of all the countries in the world (Global Security, 2011).

Professor James R. Holmes of the U.S. Naval War College believes although China spends far less than the US on military, China's investment is closer than what it seems; because China understate military spending, the internal price structures of China is lower than that of the US, and the Chinese only need to concentrate on projecting military force a short distance from their own shores. Considering current double digit growth in US economy, China should be taken seriously (Holmes, 2013).

China's large population, broad geographical capacity, high economic growth and proficient management have given this country the potential to challenge US hegemony in East Asia. The dominant view for American decision makers is that the United States foreign policy should try to contain the economic and political growth of China (Xinbo, 2012 :93).

The containment policy was first used by the Truman administration in what called the "Truman Doctrine" against the Soviet Union and Communist expansion in Eastern Europe (Soddu, 2012 :2). After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States continued that strategy to contain China. Through containment policy the United States used its influence and hegemony in the region to create alliances with and among China's neighbors in order to contain the economic growth and the influence of China in the region. Mearsheimer the prominent American professor of Political Science compares the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union to the US-China competition. As China is dependent to the Persian Gulf oil, the Middle East is an area for competition between China and the US. He considers Iran as the possibly main strategic ally for China; Tehran may ask Beijing to station Chinese troops on Iranian territory in the future (Mearsheimer, 2010:390-392).

From Bush Doctrine to Obama Doctrine

In the shadow of 9/11, President George W. Bush administration concentrated on the Middle East and the wars against terror in Afghanistan and Iraq and for that purpose

needed China's cooperation. Therefore, the Asia Pacific region and the containment policy fell in the margin of US grand policy during Bush's administration (deLisle 2011; Xinbo, 2012 :80). The "Bush doctrine was generally defined as "a turn in the US foreign policy marked by a full-scale militarization and unilateralism meant to defend the US national security and vital interests by imposing the US hegemony in the world [even through preemptive wars]" (Dimitrova, 2011 :2).

President Obama followed a much different path. According to the Obama doctrine the United States as the leading power of the world needed the cooperation of other countries and instead of unilateralism and militarization, Obama tried to improve relations and use other powers in solving security problems and dealing with challenges. As Secretary of State Hillary Clinton presents the new doctrine in these words:

"No nation can meet the world's challenges alone. The issues are too complex. Too many players are competing for influence, from rising powers to corporations to criminal cartels; from NGOs to al-Qaida; from state-controlled media to individuals using Twitter. Second, most nations worry about the same global threats, from non-proliferation to fighting disease to counterterrorism, but also face very real obstacles – for reasons of history, geography, ideology, and inertia. They face these obstacles and they stand in the way of turning commonality of interest into common action"(Dimitrova, 2011 :3)

Obama changed the focus of American diplomacy from the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific. He followed a "Forward Deployed Diplomacy" to change the course and continue the traditional Asia Pacific policy and the containment of China. According to "Forward Deployed Diplomacy" the Obama administration tried to "involve diplomatic resources in every country and every corner of the Asia-Pacific region" (Xinbo, 2012 :81).

In order to follow the traditional containment policy, Obama renewed alliances and partnership with China's neighbors India, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Australia, Vietnam Indonesia and other countries. Obama's foreign policy studied the challenges and concerns of these countries with China and among themselves and used the US hegemony to manage challenges; Challenges such as dealing with the nuclear issue of North Korea, territorial disputes and barriers to trade and investment (Xinbo, 2012 :83).

A major difference between Obama and Bush administrations in regard to the Asia-Pacific region is that Obama moved beyond bilateral relations between the United States and allies. Obama's strategy included interconnection between allies and partners. As an example in July 2009 the United States joined the "Southeast Asian Friendship and Cooperation Treaty" and became eligible to participate in the East Asian summit and in October 2010 for the first time the US President Participated in the East Asian Summit (Xinbo, 2012 :87). This policy of President Obama in one side increased US presence and influence in the region on the other side it put the burden of containment of China on the shoulder of US allies and partners (Logan, 2013 :22).

US trade deficit with China and currency disputes

Following the normalization policy by President Nixon, the United States and China resumed trade relations in 1972. In 1978 the reformist leader Deng Xiaoping came to power in China. He led China to market economy and opened this country to foreign investment. This policy helped China to be one of the fastest growing economies of the world for the last three decades and improved the standard of living for more than a billion population of China (Evans, 1993). Several factors helped China's economy grow fast; huge population and a wide domestic market, great geographical expansion, huge natural resources, a sense of nationalism and a stable political condition made China an ideal place for investment. Due to domestic oil demand, China became a net oil importer in

1993. Chinese oil import has increased continuously and because about half of this oil comes from the Persian Gulf the importance of this region has increased for China (Daojiong, 2005a :49).

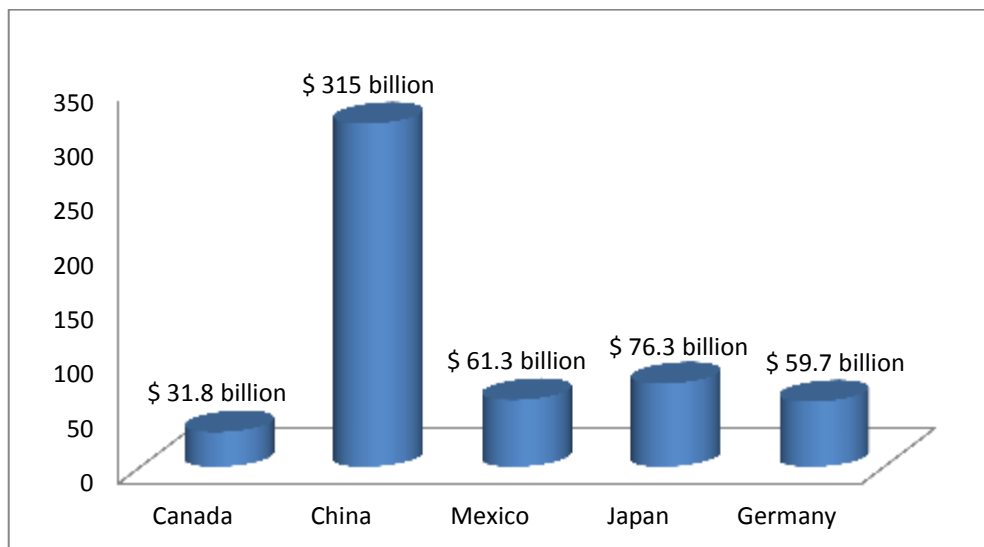
In 1989 the Communist block collapsed; but due to Deng Xiaoping's reforms, the Communist China stood firmly and successfully moved forward. In 1995 when the World Trade Organization was established, China tried to be a founding member of this organization. But The United States and Japan requested changes including tariff reduction and open market to the Chinese economy before accepting it. The required changes were difficult steps and did not match with the Chinese planned system of economy. Finally in 2001 China successfully joined the WTO and this was considered as an enormous multilateral achievement (Economist, December 5, 2011).

Due to several factors US – China trade relation led to huge US deficit in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Chinese industry enjoyed a wide cheap labor force, while in the United States labor wages are much higher. Many manufacturers prefer investing in China rather than the United States and European countries. China's stability, efficient management and huge domestic market, made this country attractive for many Western investors and helped Chinese economy experience an extra ordinary of ten percent growth in GDP.

In 2012 the US trade deficit with China was more than \$315 billion (Census Bureau, 2013a). In response to the great deficit some American trade experts claimed China's under valued currency as the main reason. They argued that if China increased the value of its currency, a large portion of US trade deficit with China would be removed (Cline, 2010:3). On the other side some analysts rejected this claim because "Chinese Currency Rise Will Have a Negligible Effect on the Trade Deficit" (Ikenson, 2010).

China is the second trade partner of the United States after Canada. But the amount of US trade deficit with China is not comparable with any of the other US partners. According to the US Census Bureau the total trade of the top five US partners and their trade deficit in 2012 is as follows:

1. Canada - \$616.6 billion traded with a \$31.8 billion deficit.
2. China - \$536.2 billion traded with a \$315 billion deficit.
3. Mexico - \$494 billion with a \$61.3 billion deficit.
4. Japan - \$216.4 billion traded with a \$76.3 billion deficit.
5. Germany - \$157.3 billion traded with a \$59.7 billion deficit.



Graph 1: US trade deficit with the top five partners in 2012 (Census Bureau, 2013b)

Low value currency has helped Chinese companies to access cheap labor and other input resources inside China; therefore Chinese products are cheaper than American products which are produced in companies that have to pay higher wages and more expensive input resources. Therefore, American goods lagged behind Chinese goods in the market. If the value of China's currency increases the Chinese goods will be finished with a higher price; and this makes them more expensive and consequently American products can compete with Chinese goods in the markets inside China, the United States and other parts of the world.

American manufactures and the US Congress have pressured Obama administration to compel China raise the value of its currency. President Obama in his both presidential campaigns of 2008 and 2012 referred to the issue of undervalued Chinese currency as a major source of US trade deficit and promised to deal with the issue (New York Times, October 15, 2008, October 22, 2012).

In September 2009 the United States imposed tariffs of 35 percent on Chinese tire imports. In response Chinese government accused the United States of a “grave act of protectionism” (LeVine, September 13, 2009). In March 2010 some 130 members of US House of Representative from both Democrat and Republican parties sent a letter to Geithner, the Secretary of Treasury. They demanded for immediate action against China, including declaring China a currency manipulator and imposing tariffs and other punitive pressures to make China raise the value of its currency (Sharma, 2010 :100).

On 10 June 2010 the US Senate members criticized Geithner and the Obama administration for their inaction in dealing with the so called mercantilist currency policy of China. Senator Schumer noted: “Billions and billions of dollars, millions and millions of jobs flow to China simply because their currency is manipulated.” He warned that the US Congress is working on legislation that would impose sanctions against Beijing” (Sharma, 2010 :114).

According to Washington Post, in response to the US Congress threat Chen Deming Chinese Commerce Minister accused the United States of making the issue political and exaggerating it. He frankly noted:

“If [the Treasury Department’s] reply is accompanied by trade sanctions and trade measures, we will not ignore it... If some congressmen insist on labeling China as a currency manipulator and slap punitive tariffs on Chinese products, then the [Chinese] government will find it impossible not to react... If the United States

uses the exchange rate to start a new trade war, China will be hurt. But the American people and US companies will be hurt even more” (Pomfret, 2010).

Some experts reject the idea that US trade deficit with China is the result of the undervalued Chinese currency. Pascal Lamy the Director-General of the World Trade Organization believes:

“The statistical bias created by attributing commercial value to the last country of origin perverts the true economic dimension of the bilateral trade imbalances. This affects the political debate, and leads to misguided perceptions. Take the bilateral deficit between China and the US. A series of estimates based on true domestic content can cut the overall deficit by half, if not more” (Lamy, 2011).

Yukon Huang a senior associate in the Carnegie Asia Program believes “to focus on China’s currency is to miss the real story behind the country’s trade surplus” (Huang, 2012). According to another analyst “Chinese currency rise will have a negligible effect on the US trade deficit” (Ikenson, 2010).

China the first creditor, US the first debtor

Another major issue in US – China trade relation is that China is the world first creditor, while the United States is the world first debtor. In 2008 China surpassed Japan to be the largest foreign holder of the US government debts. China is holding more than \$1 trillion US debt which is about 42 percent of the total debts of the US government (Capaccio, 2012). This made China to be deeply concerned about the future of US economy. Although the two countries are economically interdependent, Beijing is planning to loosen the bonds of interdependence with the world’s largest debtor, the United States (Sharma, 2010 :100).

American policy makers consider the debt issue as an ominous sign; because Washington’s dependence to Beijing gives China an extraordinary influence over US

economy. If China for some political or strategic intention decides to move bonds out of the US government, this may make other investors to pull out the shares and consequently the US government may fail in managing the nation's economy. On the other side if China decides to sell US debts, it will rapidly raise interests on a variety of loans in the United States (Sharma, 2010:105).

The Issue of Taiwan

In 1949 the Communist People Liberation Army moved south and completed its conquest of mainland China. Chiang Kai-shek withdrew to the Island of Taiwan. The US embassy followed the Chiang government and moved to Taipei. Following the Korean War (1950-1953) any chance for normal relation between US and the Communist People Republic of China ruined and therefore the United States did not recognize the communist China. For more than twenty years the Republic of China in Taiwan, controlled China's seat in the United Nation as a permanent member of the UN Security Council having the veto right.

Following the normalization policy of President Nixon in October 1971 the United Nation recognized the Communist People Republic of China. In 1979 the United States officially established diplomatic ties with the Communist People Republic of China. The same year Congress of the United States ratified the "Taiwan Relation Act" according to which the US government had to unofficially maintain commercial, cultural, and other relations with Taiwan (Taiwan Relations Act, April 10, 1979).

China claims Taiwan as the 23rd province and has repeatedly threatened to take it by force. If Taiwan declares independence, China is very likely to resort to military attack against Taiwan; in that case according to "Taiwan Relation Act" the United States will get involved in a military conflict with China.

In the spring 1996 the Chinese army launched missiles in a military movement off the coast of China toward the shores of Taiwan in order to intimidate voters before the Taiwan

presidential election. In response the United States launched two aircraft carrier battle groups to the region. Consequently the relation between China and the United States reached the lowest point and the danger of War emerged (Rafique, 2009 :26).

Later the relations improved and Chinese President Jiang Zemin in 1997 visited the United States and in 198 President Clinton visited Beijing. Following negotiations embodied in the three joint communiques the “three noes” policy was issued by President Clinton. According to the “three noes” policy the United States 1- will not support the independence of Taiwan 2- will not support any form of “two China policy” 3- will not support the entrance of Taiwan to any international organization (Kau, 1999 :16).

In January 30, 2010 President Obama decided to sell 6.4 billion worth of missile system, military helicopters, and other advanced weapons to Taiwan. In response China warned that China’s cooperation with the United States could suffer seriously over Obama’s decision to export weapons to Taiwan (Press TV, February 2, 2010). China even Threatened to impose sanctions on US companies supplying arms to Taiwan (BBC, January 30, 2010).

Considering current Chinese growth rate in economy some analysts predict that in the near future China will be capable enough to capture Taiwan. According to a 2008 study conducted by the RAND Corporation “U.S. air power in the Pacific would be inadequate to thwart a Chinese attack on Taiwan in 2020... Kadena is the only U.S. air base within 500 nautical miles of the Taiwan Strait, whereas China has 27 air bases” (Stillion, 2008).

The Issue of Human Rights

One of the main Challenges between the Communist China and the United States is the issue of Human rights. The Tiananmen incident is the most important historical event in this regard. In 1989 the People Republic of China violently suppressed demonstrators in

the Tiananmen Square of Beijing and according to New York Times between 400 and 800 protesters were killed (Kristof, June 21, 1989).

In response to the Tiananmen massacre the United States and several European countries expressed their condemnations and enacted a number of measures against the People Republic of China. In the 1990 summit of the G7 Western Industrialized countries called for political and economic reforms in China especially in the field of human rights (Moller, 2002 :18).

Tiananmen incident had a negative impact on US-China trade relations and the US investment in China dramatically declined (Wang, 2010 :191). The United States and European allies suspended weapon exports to China. US Trade and Development Agency suspended new activities in China and lasted from 1989 to 2001 when President Clinton lifted them (Rennack, 2005 :2).

In 1993 China signed the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It was ratified in 2001. In 1998 China signed International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which has not yet been ratified (Breslin, 2012 :33). In 2003 the United States declared that although there were positive signs from China that it was willing to cooperate with the US and international organizations on human rights, there were still serious backsliding (Dingding, 2005). China acknowledged that it had taken steps to make human right condition in China into conformity with international norms (Breslin, 2012 :55).

The US State Department publishes annual report on human rights and evaluates China's human rights condition. In 2008 it criticized PRC government on Human rights but dropped China from the list of countries with greatest violation to human rights (Lum, 2011 :30).

In response to the US State Department annual report, China has published “White Paper” annually since 1998. White Paper details human right violation and abuses in the United States and presents China’s progress in the field of human rights (Cho, 2011 :9). Since 2005 China has also published a White Paper on democratic progress in this country (China Embassy, October 19, 2005). The latest White Paper issued by the Chinese government in April 2013, emphasizes on “Chinese achievements in improving living standards and increasing room for citizens to express their opinions” (China Daily, April 14, 2013).

The Issue of US sanctions against Iran

Since the referral of Iran nuclear dossier to the UN Security Council in 2006 and especially during President Obama’s first presidency the issue of US sanctions against Iran emerged among the top challenges between Chin and the United States. This issue is exactly what this thesis is studying. In fact the US sanctions against Iran should be studied in the frame work of US-China strategic competition in the 21st century; as some analysts believe “if the West would impose restrictions on Iran’s oil exports, it would be tantamount to a disguised form of sanctions against China” (Global Times, Feb 11, 2010). China is dependent to the Persian Gulf oil and in this region Iran is the only source of energy which is not under the influence of the United States. If the United States achieves its ambition in toppling the Iranian regime, China will be the great loser because the US can use its full hegemony over Persian Gulf oil and will use the oil weapon to make China withdraw on a variety of issues. This issue and “China’s Iran policy” is discussed in the next chapter.

Conclusion

The relation between the United States and China as the first and second world powers is not only important for both sides but also for the stability of the current world order. The

United States and China are neither friends nor enemies. They have a complicated relation ranging from cooperation in some fields to competition and even confrontation in some other areas. In one side they are trade partners and cooperate on common interests in security and safeguarding current world order. On the other side they are rivals and compete or confront on many economic and strategic areas.

The most notable aspect in the relations between China and the United States is their extremely interdependent economy. In 2012 the total trade between the two countries exceeded \$535 billion (Census Bureau, 2013a). For China's export oriented economy the United States is a reliable and wealthy market. On the other side Chinese cheap goods keep inflation rate low in the United States and helps American's purchase power be high. Economic interdependence involves cooperation on other areas including stability in the market and security in the current world order in which both countries prosper. Economic interdependency makes the authorities in both countries be cautious and refrain from radical decisions in dealing with each other.

But can economic interdependency lead to a reliable and enduring peace and prevent destructive wars between the first and the second powers of the world? It is not easy to answer this question. Economic interdependence has a lot of impacts on the stability and peace, but for keeping a peaceful relation many other factors are involved including the human factor which makes the calculations difficult. So US-China economic interdependency can not by itself guarantee peace between the two powers.

We should remember that in US – China relation there are many areas of conflict including the challenge of hegemony in specific region like Asia-Pacific or world hegemony, challenges over scarce resources like energy, the issue of Taiwan, challenges over trade deficit and currency disputes and finally the human rights issues.

Chapter 4:

**China's Iran Policy:
Confrontation or Cooperation with the United States**

Introduction

The People Republic of China as the most populated country in the world and as the second economic power after the United States, with a great geographical expansion is playing an increasingly important role in dealing with international challenges such as the nuclear issue of Iran. The nuclear struggle between Iran and the United States has created challenges as well as opportunities for the China. In one side the United States is China's first trade partner and bilateral trade was beyond \$536 billion in 2012 (Census Bureau, 2013a). Furthermore China and the United States have common interests in safeguarding the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) (Bates Gill and Andrew Small, 2012 :27).

On the other side Iran as the world second source of energy deposits is a reliable energy partner for the Chinese rising economy; furthermore considering US – China rivalry Iran as an independent regional power with an anti-American policy located in a geostrategic position in the Middle East can be a strategic partner for China to balance US influence over the flow of oil in the Persian Gulf.

What strategy has China followed in response to the US sanction policy? Has China followed an impartial or passive policy? Has China chosen the US side on the expense of the Iranian side? Has China cooperated with Iran and confronted US unilateral policies? Or has China followed a dual policy? This chapter tries to answer these questions to analyze China's policy in dealing with the US sanctions against Iran.

In this chapter first the modern history of Iran China is reviewed, then economic, military and strategic aspects of Iran – China relations are studied, then the policy of China in dealing with Iran nuclear issue is analyzed, finally China's strategy in dealing with the US sanction policy against Iran is studied.

China – Iran Relation

The People Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Iran have a lot in common; both are the heirs of ancient civilizations and this feature is present in their look at the world and in their foreign policy. Both countries have experienced historical humiliating period of colonialism in the 19th and 20th centuries; China was divided between Imperial powers of Japan, Britain, France, Russia and the United States; Iran was divided between Russia in the north and Britain in the south and experienced US and Britain coup against the nationalist government of Mohammad Mossadegh in 1953. Both current regimes of Iran and China came to power in landmark revolutions against regimes supported by the United States and European powers. Even today Chinese and Iranian regimes do not correspond with Western norms and values and both are accused of violating human rights by the United States and Western allies. Finally both Iran and China have experienced American, European and even UN sanctions (Mohammad A. Mousavi and Esfandiar Khodaei, 2013:188).

Apart from these common features, there are differences in their ideologies and some interests; but in the shadow of common economic and strategic interests the relation between the two countries have moved forward to the point that some analysts believe this relation can only change in the case of regime change in one of the two partners (Harold, 2012 :27).

Historical background

China – Iran relations date back to thousands of years ago when Iranian Parthian and the Sassanid dynasties made ties with China. The “Silk Road” which connected China to Iran and Europe is a symbol of this historical relation. The relation between ancient Iran and China was beyond trade; there were cooperation between the two sides in guarding the trade routes of the “Silk Road” through Central Asia. Following the threat of encroachment from the nomadic Turk tribes in Central Asia, Iran and China collaborated to stand against their advancement to maintain the security of the Silk Road. Furthermore a large number of Sassanid coins have been discovered in the Southern China revealing the maritime trade relations between Iran and China through the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean (Gernet, 1996; quoted from Liu Jun and Wu Lei, 2010 :41-42).

The highly Persianized kingdom of Kushan was the main center for transmission of Buddhism to China. The first translator of the Buddhist sutras was a Persian prince from Kushan. Following the conquest of Muslim Arabs many of the Sassanid nobles took refuge in China and were granted high titles at a Chinese court. During the Islamic great civilization period the relation between Iran and China resumed and both sides established trade and cultural relations. Later Shah Abbas, the great had hundreds of Chinese artisans in the Persian Capital Esfahan and during this period the Chinese art considerably influenced Iranian art (Garver, 2007:41).

In the modern era Iran and China established ties after the World War Second; but the communist revolution in China interrupted it. This revolution coincided with the American backed coup against Premier Mohammad Mossadegh that restored Shah to power and Iran emerged as an ally of the Western block. Consequently Iran as an ally of the Capitalist block stood against the Communist China as well as the Soviet Union that supported the Communist Tudeh Party of Iran (Shariatinia, 2011 :60).

Iran did not recognize the People Republic of China and voted against China's admission in the United Nations; rather Iran recognized Taiwan and established ties with this this Island. Following the China – Soviet border conflict in the 1960s, the former ally of China emerged as the number one threat against the security of China. Isolated China was looking for allies to counterbalance the Soviet Union and gradually improved relations with the European powers, the US and Iran. In 1965 Iran refrained from voting against China's membership in the in the United Nations. The Shah of Iran concerned about the threat of Iran's powerful neighbor in the north that supported the Iranian Communist Tudeh Party, found an ally in China. Iran formally recognized China in 1967 and declared Iranian support for China's membership in the UN (Dorraj, 2008).

Following the alliance of the Soviet Union and India through the Soviet – Indian Friendship Treaty, China faced with a new source of threat in the new international environment; in response Beijing showed the green light to Washington through the “Ping-Pong Diplomacy”. The Shah of Iran who earned considerable income from the export of oil was struggling for more independence from the US influence and found China a good counterbalance against the influence of the United States and the threat of the Soviet Union. In 1971 Ashraf Pahlavi the sister of the Shah visited China and soon the diplomatic relations expanded. At the hot days of the Islamic revolution in 1978 Hu Guofeng the chairman of the Chinese Communist party visited Tehran. Consequently Tehran- Beijing relation expanded furthermore and in 1978 bilateral trade was 20 times

greater than 1971. Following the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, China quickly recognized the new government. According to some reports Hu Guofeng the leader of the Chinese Communist Party went so far as to apologize Iran for his 1978 visit to Tehran in the critical days of the Islamic Revolution (Huwaidin, 2002:160).

During the 8 year war of Iraq – Iran, China which was friendly to both sides worked as a source of weapon for Iran as well as Iraq. As Iran was under weapon embargo from the United States, Europe and the Soviet Union, China’s weapon market at those critical days was very essential for Iran. By the end of Iraq – Iran War in 1988 the new era of reconstruction was a new opportunity for China to provide technology as well as arms for the Islamic Republic of Iran.

During the 1980s the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic was defined under the slogan “neither East nor West” and unlike many other revolutions Iran stood against both the United States and the Soviet Union. This was exactly what China was following in the pursuit of its security. Despite ideological differences Iran and China had a common ideological background to cooperate for third world solidarity against Western and Eastern imperialism. In 1989 President Ali Khamenei visited China and met Deng Xiaoping and the bilateral trade increased to \$1.627 billion (Dorraj, 2008).

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union the security environment of both Iran and China changed. The emergence of new Central Asian states as a common security concern and the hegemony of the United States as the sole superpower made Iran and China more cooperative to deal with new challenges. Furthermore the double digit growth of China’s economy soon made this country a net importer of oil. As China’s economy expanded, oil dependency made this country more dependent in the Middle East and increased the importance of Iran as an independent regional power which not only was not under the influence of the United States but also actively defied US unilateral policies.

In 1995 China tried to join the World Trade Organization as a founding member but due to Japan and US opposition China had to take difficult steps to apply to WTO requirements and in 2001 successfully joined this organization. China's membership in the WTO was welcomed by members as a great multilateral achievement, later it was proved that China had more advantages than what predicted (Economist, December 5, 2011). Membership in WTO paved the road for Chinese rising economy and this economy needed energy sources abundant in the Middle East and Central Asia in both areas Iran was a reliable partner for China.

9/11 terrorist attack as a landmark event provided great opportunities for China to expand its relations with the world while the United States was fighting against terrorism in Afghanistan and the war of Iraq and aftermath challenges that made US decision makers focus in the Middle East and ignore China's rise (deLisle, 2011). During this period the relation between Iran and China expanded. In 2005 Iran joined the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and bilateral trade increased.

In 2002 Hu Jintao came to power in China. His "going out" plan encouraged Chinese three oil companies to look for sources of oil in the Middle East and Africa. The "going out" strategy was to secure long term access to world markets and reliable sources of energy for the Chinese rising economy. This strategy led to confrontation and competition with Japanese, European and American corporations in some areas including the Middle East (Dorraj, 2008).

In 2005 Ahmadinejad came to power in Iran and unlike his predecessor Khatami followed a more confrontational policy in dealing with the United States and Western allies in the nuclear issue; in the early days of Ahmadinejad's administration, Iran resumed uranium enrichment which had temporarily stopped for confidence making. Ahmadinejad's defiant policy in one side deteriorated Iran's relation with the West and increased tensions over

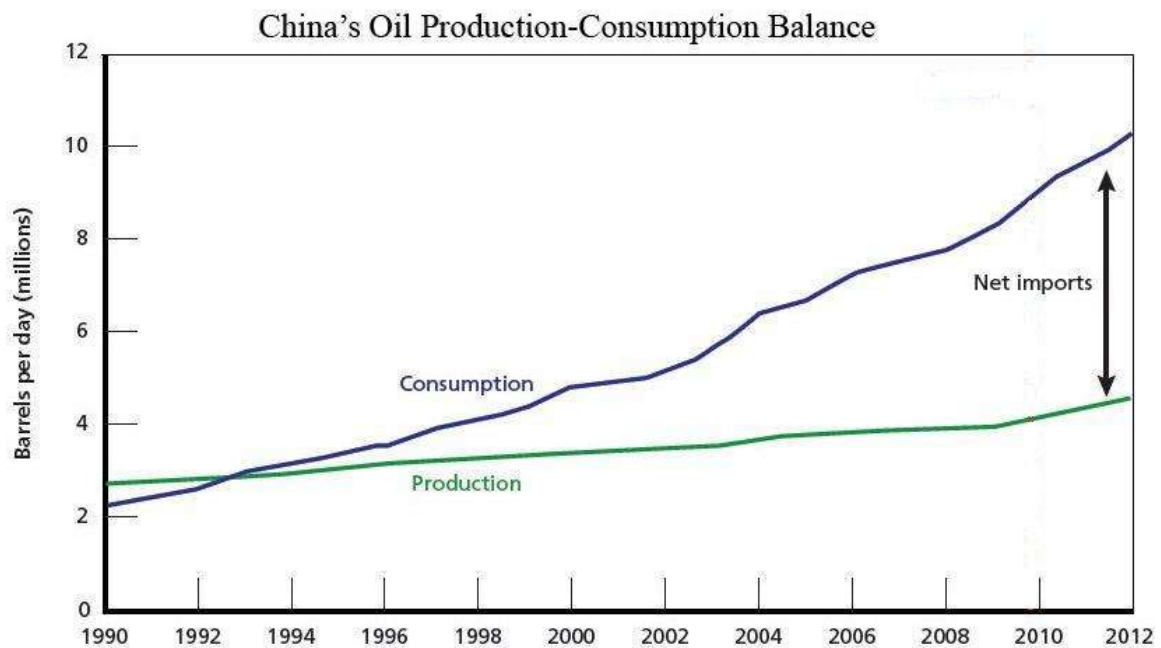
Iran nuclear programs; on the other side his “Look to the East” policy led to expansion of ties with China, Russia and other Asian powers. (Saghafi-Ameri, 2007 :8).

In 2009 Barack Obama came to power in the United States. He improved strained relations with American allies in the world and withdrew American forces from Iraq and unlike his predecessor; Obama concentrated more on China to contain China’s economic and strategic power. President Obama and US Congress constantly increased their pressures against Iran nuclear program and followed a sanction policy which involved China as the first trade partner of Iran. In the following section of this Chapter the energy economic, military and strategic relations between Iran and China are studied to analyze China’s strategy in dealing with the nuclear issue and US sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

China – Iran Economic Relations

The most important economic aspect of Iran China is energy relation, as Ali Akbar Salehi the Iranian Foreign Minister said the two countries “mutually complement each other; they have industry and we have energy resources”(R. Wright, November 17, 2004). Oil constitutes more than 80% of China’s import from (Simpson, 2010).

China is the second energy consumer after the United States and Iran is a major oil and gas exporter. China with about 20 percent of the world population has about 2 percent of the world oil reserves and 1 percent of total world gas deposits. These low energy resources were sufficient to meet Chinese domestic needs; even in in the 1970s and 1980s China was a net oil exporter. Double digit growth in GDP made this country a major consumer of oil and in 1993 China emerged as a net importer of oil and eleven years later in 2004 China surpassed Japan to be the world second importer of oil only after the United States (Daojiong, 2005b :40). The following figure depicts China’s oil production – consumption balance:



Graph 2: China's Oil Production-Consumption Balance

Source:(U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2012 "China: Analysis")

China is the largest consumer of coal 68% of China's electricity and about three-fourth of China's domestic energy consumption comes from coal (EIA, September 4, 2012; Nation Master Encyclopedia, 2013). But coal has great limitations including environmental pollution. The booming automobile industry is another factor that makes China search for oil and gas (IEA, 2010:53).

Iran with about 1% of the world population has 11 percent of proven oil reserves and more than 16% of proven world natural gas resources. According to a new BP report in 12 June 2013 Iran's gas resources surpassed Russia and Iran ranked first for gas reserves (Press TV, June 19, 2013; Reuters, June 12, 2013).

The Islamic Republic of Iran is an independent regional power which has followed an anti-American policy and this makes Iran a more reliable source of energy for China. Other major Arab oil exporters like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq and Qatar are US allies and the case of US-China conflict, these markets will be closed to China. In this condition Iran can be a strategic ally for China and can transfer energy both through sea borders in

the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean, and by overland pipelines through Pakistan a traditional ally of China (Nader, 2012).

In November 1995 Iran opened oil and gas sector to foreign investment (Katzman, April 2013: 2). This decision was welcomed by foreign oil companies mainly from Europe. In response the United States that was following the dual containment policy against Iran and Iraq, tried to block foreign investment in Iran's energy sector. A few months later in September 1996 US Congress ratified the ILSA sanction act that sanctioned all foreign companies that "provide investments over \$20 million for the development of petroleum resources in Iran" (Katzman, 2006). But this US policy failed due to lack of cooperation from European countries and open relations of the Iranian reformist President Mohammad Khatami. During these years foreign companies like the Total of France invested billions of dollars in oil and gas projects (Iran Daily, December 7, 2008).

In 1999 the giant Azadegan oil field was discovered; as the largest undeveloped oil reserve in the world estimated to have 26 billion barrels of oil. Iran wanted to diversify energy partners and was looking for a reliable partner in Asia to use this precious source. Which Iranian Asian partner should receive the lucrative exploration opportunity; Japan or China?

President Khatami decided to give this great opportunity to Japan which had far more advanced technology compared to China. The United States put Japan under pressure to forgo this lucrative suggestion. The emergence of Iranian nuclear issue in 2002 deteriorated the situation. When Iran signed onto law an additional protocol requested by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and halted uranium enrichment. Consequently Japan signed the contract on a pre-condition that Japan can cease cooperation if Iran and the IAEA come to a confrontation. When President Ahmadinejad came to power in 2005 and Iran resumed uranium enrichment, Japan under relentless

pressure from the United States in October 2006 withdrew the Azadegan project and in a new contract China was replaced (Dorraj, 2008).

In 2004 China and Iran made great historical agreements over investment and cooperation in the field of energy. Sinopec and Iranian National Oil Company signed a contract according to which China bought 250 million of LNG from Iranian Yadavaran oil field for the next 30 years. This contract is estimated to worth \$70-100 billion (China Daily, October 29, 2004).

In 2009 China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) took over from French corporation Total as one of the foreign partners of the major gas field which Iran shares with Qatar, including a commitment to invest \$4.7 billion (Reuters, Dec 5, 2009).

Date	Field/Project	Company or Companies	Value
May 2002	Masjid-e-Soleyman (oil)	Sheer Energy (Canada), China National Petroleum Company	\$80 million
January 2004	Azadegan (oil)	Inpex (Japan), CNPC agreed to develop North Azadegan Jan. 2009	\$200 million (Inpex) \$1.76 billion (CNPC)
October 2004	Yadaravan (oil)	Sinopec (China), deal finalized Dec 9, 2007	\$2 billion
June 2006	Garmsar bloc (oil)	Sinopec (China), deal finalized in 2009	\$20 million
July 2006	Arak Refinery Expansion	Sinopec, JGC (Japan). Work may have been taken over by Hyundai Heavy Industries (South Korea)	\$959 million (initial work; extent of Hyundai project unknown)
December 2006	North Pars Gas Field (offshore gas, includes gas purchases)	China National Offshore Oil Co.	\$16 billion
January 2009	North Azadegan	CNPC	\$1.75 billion
February 2010	South Pars: Phase 11	CNPC (drilling was to have begun in March 2010, still delayed)	\$4.7 billion

Table 1: Major Chinese Investment/Development Projects in Iran's Energy Sector

Source: (Katzman, July 26, 2013:75-61)

China rejected the binding nature of non-UN sanctions against Iran and despite US and EU pressures continued energy and economic relations with Iran (Zhou Wa, Sep 1, 2012). Between 2009 and the first six month of 2012 China imported about 11 percent of its oil imports (Harold, 2012:26). About 80% of China's import from Iran is oil and the rest is chemical products and minerals (Simpson, 2010). In 2011 China imported 555000 barrels of oil per day from Iran (Katzman, April 2013:39).

But economic cooperation between Iran and China is not limited to energy. More than one hundred Chinese state owned companies are active in Iran developing airports and railroads, building dams, cement plants, metros and ships. As the European and Japanese companies left Iran under pressures from US sanction, Chinese companies appreciated this opportunity and filled the void (Liu Jun and Wu Lei, 2010:43-44).

China – Iran Strategic Relations

China – Iran relation can not be fully explained in the economic context. There are some important strategic ties that stabilize this relation. Both countries are governed by regimes that do not correspond with Western democratic standards. Both regimes have come to power through revolutions against US supported regimes in Tehran and Beijing. Both regimes have experienced long history of sanctions and today both have similar challenges.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States expanded hegemony over the world. The 1991 Iraq War led to the US presence in the oil-rich Middle East. Iran and China as two independent powers, concerned about the new condition, established closer ties. During the 1990s China and Iran expanded relations in all areas of economic, military and strategic aspects. Politically Iran and china expressed their opposition against US unilateral policies including the 1991 war against Iraq (Garver, 2011: 81).

China is dependent to the Persian Gulf oil for more than 60 percent of its oil import (Downs, June 6, 2013). The United States is the hegemon power in this region and all major oil exporters except Iran are US allies. In the case of China – US conflict, Iran will be the only market that can be open to China. Furthermore Iran can transfer oil to China both through sea and overland by pipelines.

Iran is located in an important geostrategic position that connects the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea and it borders the Caucasus and the Central Asian states. Central Asia, Caspian Sea region and Caucasus are important for China especially for their oil reserves. Furthermore Chinese security is dependent to the security of Central Asian states. Iran as a major regional power has cultural and historical ties with these states and can be very helpful in this aspect. Tens of millions of Muslims live in the Xingjian province in western China and this country needs Iranian cooperation to keep this region stable.

On May 6, 2002 President George W. Bush in his famous placed Iran along with Iraq and North Korea in the “axis of evil”; two months after his speech Chinese President Jiang Zemin visited Tehran. His travel to Tehran right after Bush’s speech was a clear response to the United States that China would support Iran against US plans (Davis, 2013:9).

In 2005 Iran joined the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as an observer member. China, Russia and our Central Asian states of Tajikistan, Kirgizstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan founded this organization in 2001 for the initial purpose of border security and as stated in the SCO charter to fight against the three evils of terrorism, radicalism and separatism (SCO Charter, 2009).

Following the 9/11 terrorist attack, the United States and NATO attacked Afghanistan and on the pretext of fighting against terrorism established military bases in Central Asian states. China and Russia as key members of the SCO concerned about US presence in the region activated and expanded this organization. Iran along with Pakistan and India as observer members joined the SCO in 2005 and this organization found a world capacity. The same year the United States which didn’t want to be absent in this organization applied for observer membership. But this application was rejected (Mohammad A. Mousavi and Esfandiar Khodaei, 2013:204; Pikayev, 2008: 2).

Acceptance of Iran in the SCO in one side, and the rejection of US application on the other side irritated US authorities who followed the policy of isolating Iran. US Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld in the following words indicated US stance against Iran's membership in the SCO: "It strikes me as passing strange that one would want to bring into an organization that says it is against terrorism one of the nations that is a leading terrorist sponsor in the world – Iran" (Aljazeera, October 20, 2006).

In response to Rumsfeld, SCO Secretary General Zhang Deguang replied: "We cannot abide by other countries calling our observer nation, sponsor of terror. We would not have invited Iran if we believed they sponsored terror." (Asia Times, Jun 15, 2006)

In 2008 Iran applied for full membership. This application raised a lot of debates inside this organization and in world polity. Some Western analysts the political and economical dimension of membership of Iran, called this organization as the "NATO of the East" (Weir, October 26, 2005), others called it the "OPEC with bombs":

"The national interests of Iran and China are in clear contradiction to the presence of the American military forces in the Central Asia, and the support of China for Iran's membership—should be seen within that framework. An SCO incorporating Iran would essentially be an OPEC with bombs: an energy-rich geopolitical alliance stretching from the Taiwan Straits to the Strait of Hormuz."(Berman, 2006)

The United States in one side concerned about the political and economic capacity of Iran for the SCO and on the other side concerned about the failure of the long term policy of isolation of Iran used its influence over members of the SCO to block the way of full membership of Iran in this organization.

China supported observer membership of Iran Membership of Iran in the SCO in 2005. But when in 2006 President Ahmadinejad resumed uranium enrichment and Iran was

referred to the UN Security Council, the international atmosphere was deteriorated for Iran. When in 2008 Iran applied for full membership China and Russia did not support this application because “Iran’s full membership, despite its economic and security advantages, can drag SCO into the fight between Tehran and the West” (Karami, 2012).

Iran Nuclear Program: the View from Beijing and Washington

China and the United States have a different understanding of Iran’s revolution of 1979. The policy of the two powers in dealing with Iran and the nuclear issue depends on their definition of the 1979 revolution and the Islamic Republic of Iran. According to the US view this revolution toppled the secular regime of Shah and led to an autocratic and nondemocratic religious regime which threatens the security of the world and supports the terrorist groups in Palestine, Lebanon and other parts of the world and directly and indirectly endangers US interests in the Middle East. This revolution began with the Hostage Crisis of the US embassy in Tehran and in the post 9/11 era the US security is seriously threatened by Iranian government as the major supporter of terrorist groups. Now a nuclear Iran is the worst nightmare for Washington (Nebehay, Apr 22, 2013; Oren, May 24, 2013). According to The former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice: “We may face no greater challenge from a single country than from Iran whose policies would be 180 degrees different than the Middle East we would like to see developed” (BBC, Mar 9, 2006; Daily Times, March 10, 2006).

But according to the history created by the Chinese academics the 1979 revolution of Iran belongs to the anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism movement in the modern history. According to Chinese understanding Iran’s revolution was a mass rebel with the leadership of the clerical class that toppled the authoritarian and autocratic regime of Pahlavi dynasty which was supported by the Western imperial powers. According to this

view the confrontation between Imam Khomeini and the Pahlavi dynasty was not a confrontation of religion and secularism, but the confrontation of democracy and autocracy (Zhen, 2009: 6-7).

In their long history of relations, China and Iran have never had a military conflict. Even today there is no ground for conflict between the two countries. Then China does not share the West's concerns in regard to Iran nuclear program. Professor John Garver a specialist in Chinese foreign relations in the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs at Georgia Institute of Technology believes there are some interests in a nuclear Iran for China. A powerful Iran can be helpful for China both for the security of the Persian Gulf and for countering US hegemony in the region.

“A strong Iran resistant to U.S. dictates and at odds with the United States would also force Washington to keep large military forces in the region, limiting the ability of the United States to concentrate forces in East Asia, where China's core interests lie” (Garver, 2011:79).

During the 1988-1997 China actively took part in Iranian nuclear programs. In 1988 China helped Iran expand the Esfahan Nuclear Technology Center and provided this center with a small nuclear reactor. China also signed a memorandum with Iran according to which China was committed to train Iranian technicians and engineers to design nuclear facilities for conversion of uranium. Between 1990 and 1992 China expanded nuclear cooperation with Iran and sold natural uranium namely UF₄ to Tehran (Melman, 2007:101 quoted from Djallil, 2011: 236). In 1997 under US pressure and a compromise over Taiwan crisis, China suspended cooperation with Iran in the field of nuclear technology (Garver, 2007:115).

Similar to other nuclear powers, it is not in China's interest to see the number of nuclear powers increased; because in that sense the delicate balance of power will be altered.

Furthermore Chinese authorities know that smaller powers may not be “as responsible as” big powers both technically and politically (Crisis Group, 2010:3).

A nuclear Iran may lead to a nuclear race in the Middle East, so other countries in the region such as Saudi Arabia and Iraq and may follow the same path. This will endanger the security of the Persian Gulf and the flow of oil in which China is heavily dependent. Furthermore terrorist groups may find access to nuclear weapons through Iran and other nuclear Persian Gulf states and this will ultimately threaten the security of China as well as the United States and the European Union (Garver, 2011: 80-81). China as well as the United States has signed Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). But historical documents reveal the fact that neither China nor the United States has been fully committed to NPT. They have given priority to other interests and the NPT commitment has placed secondary position in their decision making. In the case of Pakistan, China helped this country be a nuclear power to balance against the nuclear India. Even the United States ignored the nuclear issue to have Pakistani cooperation in helping the Mujahedin in Afghanistan. Another example is Indian nuclear program which was ignored by the United States despite protests from China (Garver, 2011:80-81).

Iran nuclear program has created a great opportunity for China to follow its contradictory interests. In one side China does not want to see a nuclear Iran and on the other side a resistant Iran and possibly a nuclear Iran can lead to great interests including the counterbalance against the United States and making US keep military forces in the Middle East rather than concentrate in East Asia where China’s core interests lie. The 9/11 attack provided this opportunity for China and kept US forces away from China’s border to wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (Garver, 2011:79).

For the United States a nuclear Iran or a nuclear capable Iran is the worst scenario and a terrible nightmare. No matter whether Republicans or Democrats control the Congress or the White House, US decision makers strongly pursue the grand policy of confrontations

against Iran. The difference is in the methods and details of how to deal with this threat. A nuclear Iran leads to many challenges to the United States. First of all a nuclear Iran is in odd with the US interest as well as the interests of other nuclear powers to lose the monopoly over nuclear technology. China shares this concern with the United States.

But the United States has far more concerns that may not be shared by China. If Iran achieves nuclear technology, there is the possibility that Iran may transfer it to Iranian allies who naturally are not US friends; consequently the security of the United States and Western allies will be threatened. Furthermore a nuclear Iran will change the balance of power in favor of Iran and on the expense of US and allies such as Israel and Saudi Arabia.

The terrorist attack on Pentagon and the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 was a watershed event in the history of the United States. In the post 9/11 era the security policy of the United States concentrated on the threat of Weapons of mass destruction including biological and nuclear weapons that “constitute the greatest single danger to American security—indeed to world security—and a threat that is becoming increasingly less remote” (Shuster, 2002 :1-2).

China has none of these concerns. As it was mentioned even there are some interests in a nuclear Iran and the current struggle between Iran and the West. China considers the issue as a problem of the United States not a threat against global security as American policy-makers claim. Then China puts the Iran nuclear issue in the framework of US-China relation and bargains with the United States over cooperation in the nuclear dossier (Lounnas, 2011:227).

China does not share American sense of urgency about Iran nuclear plans. According to General Zhang Zhaozhong of the National Defense University, “the enrichment technology of Iran is very primitive. ... Iran does not have large quantities of uranium ore.

... And it's a very long process from processing nuclear materials to actually developing nuclear weapons. Iran does not have the required facilities, equipments or technology”(Zhaozhong, 2010)

China does not regard Iran nuclear program as a real threat against world security. According to China's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Hong Lei:

“As a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Iran possesses the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes while following relevant international obligations” (Lei, Apr 11, 2013).

According to China's view the United States is using NPT as a tool at the service of American interests and not in the sake of world security (Crisis Group, 2010:5). According to Article IV of the NPT:

“Nothing in this Treaty shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes” (NPT Treaty, 1995: Article IV).

China sees hypocrisy in US policy of lack of criticism against Israel which has a great nuclear arsenal but has not signed the NPT despite many requirements from the UN and IAEA to join NPT (Arms Control Association, April 2013).

China also perceives the double standard policy of the United States in the U.S.-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act (2008); while India is a non-NPT country with declared nuclear weapons (Arms Control Association, April 2013). US policy is generally based on US interest and not the interests of the world in general. The United States blames China for normal trade with Iran while and at the same time Washington is selling sophisticated weapons to Taiwan (Zhen, 2009:12).

Most Chinese scholars believe that the nuclear issue is a pretext to pressure against Iran and when weaken to use military in order to come up to regime change ambition as the

ultimate policy of the United States similar to the case of Iraq which on the pretext of weapons of mass destruction the United States put Iraq finally under severe sanctions and then resorted to military attack and could finally topple the independent regime of Saddam Hussein (Garver, 2011:78).

China experienced sanctions from the United States and Western allies in the 1950s and 1960s after the Communist Revolution, after the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989 China was targeted by Western sanction which have continued up to now. “China views economic sanctions as a tool that strong, typically Western countries use against weak, typically non-Western countries” (Garver, 2011:81).

If the US unofficially mentioned policy of “regime change” takes place in Iran and an Iranian regime aligned with the US policy comes to power, China will be the greatest loser and China’s interest in the Middle East, Central Asia and the Persian Gulf will be in danger. Especially China will be dependent to the United States and US allies in the Persian Gulf for energy resources and the United States will use China’s dependency to energy as a leverage to impose US instructions over China (Zhen, 2009:9).

China’s long-term policy is partnership with Iran whether a nuclear Iran or a non-nuclear Iran. But a nuclear and powerful Iran can be more useful to move toward a multipolar world.

China’s Strategy in Dealing with US Sanctions against Iran

In order to understand China’s strategy in dealing with US sanction against Iran, China’s grand strategy should be studied. In 1979 Deng Xiaoping came to power and China experienced fundamental reforms that changed China’s priorities both in internal and external policies. China put aside ideological ambitions and embraced Western liberal

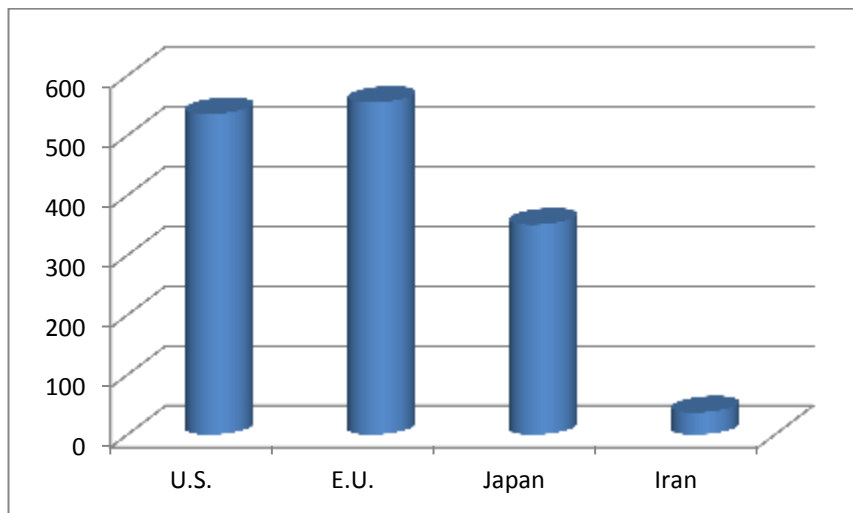
system of economy and opened China's market to foreign investment. Reforms in the 1980s led China to a liberal society while paradoxically in the political aspect it remained centralized controlled by the Communist Party. Deng Xiaoping improved China's relations with great powers including the United States (Loren Brandt, 2005:58).

What has been priority for China in post- Deng Xiaoping era? In order to answer this question let's have look at Iran and US grand strategy and compare with China's. For the post-revolutionary Iran and especially during Presidency of Ahmadinejad the Islamic ideology and standing against the United States has been the main Iranian strategy in foreign policy (Soltani, 2010:204). According to Hal Brands during the Cold War the grand strategy of the United States was containment of the Soviet Union and making US powerful economically, militarily and politically. After the Cold War it changed to assert US as the only superpower of the world and especially after the 9/11 terrorist attack, security came in top priorities for the United States (Brands, 2012).

According to Avery Goldstein China's grand strategy in the post-Deng Xiaoping era has been "peaceful rise" which gives priority to economic growth and penetrating into the world markets while avoiding political struggles which hurt stability which is essential for economic growth. In order to safeguard a peaceful rise China needs to have a military and political power which corresponds to China's economic growth (Goldstein, 2001).

When Iran nuclear issue emerged in 2003, China – concerned about its economic and strategic interests in relations with Tehran – considered it as a problem that should be resolved within the IAEA and not the UN Security Council. When in August 2005 Iran resumed uranium enrichment, China again disagreed with the referral of Iran to the UNSC. As the atmosphere deteriorated against Iran, China consented to the referral but still appealed that the problem should be resolved by political and diplomatic ways (Zhen, 2009:6).

Considering the dominated Western discourse, China didn't veto UN resolution against Iran because in that sense China would be accused of standing in the side of Iran and confronting the United States and Western allies; and if China vetoed resolutions it was in contrast with China's grand strategy of peaceful rise. Furthermore the United States and the European Union as main economic partner of China are far more important than Iran in this aspect. In 2012 total trade between Iran and China was \$37 billion (ISNA, March 2, 2013); while at the same year total trade between China and the United States exceeded \$536 billion (Census Bureau, 2013a). We must add \$555 billion of EU-China total trade in 2012 and \$351 billion of China-Japan to that figure, because they have sided with the United States in the nuclear issue of Iran. The following graph shows China's total Trade with Iran, the United States and allies.



Graph 3: China's total trade with US, EU, Japan and Iran in 2012 (billions of dollar)

Source: (Census Bureau, 2013a) and (China Daily, Jan 10, 2013) and (ISNA, March 2, 2013)

As the above graph shows China-Iran bilateral trade is not comparable with the combined trade between China and the United States and allies. So it is natural for China to give priority to US and allies despite the strategic and economic importance of Iran for China especially in the field of energy.

It is misleading to compare China's trade with US and allies to that of Iran because this kind of calculation considers just the economic side of the issue. Strategically Iran is a very important element in China's foreign policy. It is through the leverage of Iran that China has pressured over the United States to limit military relation with Taiwan; in the energy aspect as far as a resistant Iran exists the United States can not easily use its hegemony over oil producing Arab countries to pressure against China (Lounnas, 2011:227).

During 2006-2008 three rounds of UN sanction were imposed on Iran; neither China nor Russia vetoed any of the resolutions. Because vetoing the resolution was a kind confrontation with the United States and allies, furthermore the UN sanctions were mainly symbolic and toothless rather than massive and severe; but they provided the background for the United States and the European Union to put stricter unilateral and multilateral sanctions against the Iran and foreign corporations which that cooperated with Iran; some of these corporations were Chinese. China protested that sanctions against Iran should not involve third parties (R. Wright, November 18, 2007).

After the referral of Iran to the UN Security Council, China followed a "delay and weaken" strategy to safeguard its interests in relations with Iran. According to this strategy China delayed resolutions to give Iran the opportunity to respond and resist pressures and on the other side through long negotiations China has tried to weaken the impacts of sanctions against Iran (Gregory, 2010:131).

China supported UN "smart" sanctions which targeted the elite that directly are involved in Iranian nuclear activities like the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps or IRGC and Iranian officials in charge of nuclear activities. But China protested against unilateral and comprehensive sanctions which targeted Iranian banks and public economy (Chunying, Mar 8, 2013).

Another element that should not be ignored is the role of Russia and its impact on China's policy in dealing with sanctions against Iran. China and Russia as two Eastern powers have a lot of common interests. Both powers are concerned about US hegemony in the Persian Gulf and Iran is politically important for both Moscow and Beijing. In regard to Iran there is an important difference; Russia unlike China is not dependent in Iranian oil or the energy resources in the Persian Gulf. Russia as an energy exporter has a sense of rivalry with Iran and has some interests in energy sanctions against Iran which keeps oil and gas prices high in favor of Russia as a major oil exporter (Iran Diplomacy, 2010). China's resistance to block or mitigate sanctions against Iran is more successful when Russia is following the same path. The history of China's using veto reveals the fact that China is more probable to use veto when it is in tandem with Russia (Pei, February 7, 2012). A good example is the case of Syria that China and Russia vetoed the UN resolution to support Bashar Assad (Harris, Feb 4, 2012).

Conclusion

China willingly or unwillingly is involved in the struggle between Iran and the United States. In one side of this conflict is the United States which is China's major trade partner and boldly follows the grand policy of containment of China; on the other side, Iran is a reliable energy partner for the rising economy of China and has common interests with China in challenging US hegemony.

According to neorealism school of international relations, nation-states are rational actors which in their calculation consider the role of international organizations and coalitions

and in the international anarchic environment follow their own security concerns through balance of power and then follow other interests. Neoliberalism has a positive view on the possibility of cooperation among states. Economic interdependence provides the background for mutual cooperation in the win-win game.

In Iran nuclear dossier China follows its own economic and strategic interests without directly involving in the issue to antagonize Iran or the United States. In answer to the main question of this chapter, China has not confined itself to support either side of the struggle. Rather it has followed an active, multisided, prudent and independent policy to follow China's grand strategy of peaceful rise.

The time that China's policy was limited into its own borders has passed and today China's trading ships are navigating in every corner of the world and Chinese goods are found in every house in the five continents of the earth. The Chinese huge economy needs access to raw materials, reliable sources of energy and markets to sell Chinese goods. There are many threats that endanger the China's enormous wealth which has been gathered through Chinese exceptional management, stable system of government, cheap labor force and great international opportunities. This great country needs a great political authority and military force that correspond with the economic wealth and the threats that endanger it.

Today the United States as the hegemon power can not easily deal with international crises such as the nuclear issue of Iran without international cooperation. With the rise of powers such as china, India, Russia and Brazil, the US proportion share of the world economy has

declined. Furthermore the economies of the world are highly interdependent that any radical decision can have horrible consequences even for the United States.

China aware of international limitations is using its own increasing capacity to play amore assertive role in the international environment to meets its interests and deal with threats and use opportunities. In the nuclear issue of Iran China has followed its economic and strategic interests which are neither in cooperation nor in confrontation with the US.

Chapter 5:

Obama Dealing with Non-Cooperative China

Introduction

In the previous chapter "China's Iran policy" was studied and it was cleared that China according to its grand strategy followed its own economic and strategic interests in dealing with Iran nuclear issue and the US sanctions policy against Iran. China used the struggle between Iran and the West as an opportunity to challenge US hegemony and as leverage to secure the flow of oil. Unlike the United States, China doesn't share US concerns over a nuclear Iran doesn't see Iran nuclear program as a threat against global security; rather Beijing views it as the problem of the United States that should be considered in the framework of China–US strategic competition. The US policy makers recognized China as the main source that made US sanctions abortive and ineffective, because China as the first trade partner of Iran has not cooperated with the US sanctions against Iran (Garver, 2011:75; Kemenade, 2010:108).

President George W. Bush and President Obama used a range of policies to make China cooperate with US policy against Iran. In this chapter through Critical Discourse Analysis method President Obama's strategy during his first administration in dealing with China is studied. So the main question is: What policies did Obama used to make China cooperate with US sanction policy against Iran during 2009-2012? In this chapter first the background history of US policies in dealing with non-cooperative China is reviewed. Then through a discourse analysis study the events and the literature used by both Chinese and American decision makers are studied and analyzed to see a clear view from both sides. Finally the policies used are extracted, clarified and organized in major categories to see what strategies Obama followed in dealing with non-cooperative China.

Historical background

US sanctions against Iran has a long history that goes back to the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran and the Hostage Crisis; but the 9/11 terrorist attack and especially the emergence of Iran nuclear program in 2003 put Iran among top priorities in US foreign policy. President George W. Bush's first administration involved in the two major wars of Afghanistan and Iraq sought China's cooperation in those wars and did not interfere much in China–Iran relations.

The second administration of President Bush coincided with presidency of Ahmadinejad in Iran. In 2005 Iran resumed the conversion of uranium and the nuclear struggle among Iran and the United States entered a new phase. President Bush seriously followed the Iran nuclear issue both through sanction policy and the threat of military attack, as he repeatedly mentioned that "all options are on the table".

In response to President Bush's unilateral and coercive policies, China resorted to multifaceted policy which was a combination of cooperation in some areas and confrontation in some other. For example China in one side supported US fight against Taliban in Afghanistan and at the same time when President Bush called Iran, Iraq and North Korea "the axis of evil", a few weeks later Chinese President Jiang Zemin visited Tehran (Chicago Tribune, April 19, 2002). President Jiang Zemin's visit to Tehran transferred this message to the world that China is going to stand against US unilateral policies.

After the emergence of Iran nuclear program in 2004, China tried to resolve the issue in the IAEA framework. In August 2004 China's ambassador in Tehran declared that China supported the absolute right of Iran to use peaceful nuclear energy (Garver, 2007:163).

In September 2004 the IAEA Board of Governors discussed the issue of referral of Iran to the UN Security Council. China's representative called on the international community to

respect the right of Iran to use peaceful nuclear energy. He said "uranium enrichment could be used to either generate electricity or make bombs. As such enrichment per se was not banned by the NPT" (Garver, 2007:163-164).

In November 2004 Iran suspended uranium enrichment as part of the deal with EU3 through the "Paris agreement". China used this opportunity to negotiate investment in Iranian energy industry; Sinopec and Iranian National Oil Company signed a contract according to which China bought 250 million of LNG from Iranian Yadavaran oil field for the next 30 years. This contract is estimated to worth \$70-100 billion (China Daily, October 29, 2004).

The United States which followed the long-term policy of isolation of Iran disagreed with investment of corporations from other countries in Iranian oil and gas industry. Under US pressure Japan withdrew from investment in Iran. But China as an independent and more assertive power continued cooperation with Iran even after the withdrawal of the European Union and Japan and filled the void (Liu Jun and Wu Lei, 2010:44). China cooperated with Iran not only in energy sector but also in other parts of Iranian economy including Tehran metro system, dam building, railway, shipbuilding and electricity (Ibid).

During 2003-2004 Iran nuclear issue was not considered as a major issue in US-China relations; because the United States was heavily involved with war in Iraq. Furthermore the Iranian reformist government headed by President Khatami was negotiating with the EU3 and an agreement was not remote. Finally in November 2004 according to the "Paris accord" Iran suspended uranium enrichment (Jahanpour, 2007).

In June 2005 Ahmadinejad came to power and two months later in August Iran resumed conversion of uranium at the Isfahan facility. In response the United States as well as European powers pushed for the referral of Iran to the UN Security Council. China and Russia tried to resolve the Issue in the IAEA framework. Chinese Foreign Ministry

spokesman Kong Quan expressed China's position in these words: "we believe that further applying diplomatic efforts, and diplomatic means to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue, remains a relatively suitable and better option" (NTI, Jan 17, 2006). In January 24, 2006 again Chinese foreign ministry stated his country's opposition to "impulsively using sanctions or threat of sanctions to solve problems" (Economist, Jan 27, 2006).

Iran nuclear Issue becomes a major challenge in US-China relations

Under US pressure Russia finally withdrew from blocking Iran's referral to the UN Security Council (Afna Linzer, January 12, 2006). As the international condition deteriorated and Russia withdrew, China consented to the referral of Iran to the UN Security Council. In February 4, 2006 the IAEA voted 27-3 to report Iran to the UNSC (Venezuela, Syria and Cuba voted against it. In response Iran announced to end voluntary cooperation beyond the NPT requirement and to resume uranium enrichment (Telegraph, February 5, 2006).

The referral of Iran to the UNSC was not an end to the issue; rather it was the beginning of an international crisis. It brought Iran nuclear program to the top of challenges between the United States and China. The referral of Iran nuclear dossier put China in a dilemma to vote for or against UN resolutions. In one side there was the United States a major trade partner of China and of course a powerful rival that blatantly followed the policy of containment of China. On the other side there was Iran as a reliable and independent energy partner for China's growing economy and a strategically important regional power which had common interests with China in challenging US hegemony.

In April 2006 Chinese President Hu Jintao for the first time visited Washington DC. In this visit the issue of Iran was comprehensively discussed. According to President Bush "he had raised the possibility of the Security Council passing a motion against Iran under chapter seven of the United Nations charter. That would allow action ranging from

economic sanctions to military strikes". In response President Hu after the meeting in the media conference reported that "Both sides agreed to continue their effort to seek a peaceful resolution" (Christine, April 20, 2006).

The People Republic of China didn't veto UN resolutions because the dominant Western discourse had securitized the nuclear issue of Iran and if China boldly stood against the UN resolution it would be interpreted as collaboration with Iran to threaten the security of the United States and the West. The United States, the European Union and other Western allies had a great stake in Chinese economy and China could not antagonize great partners and endanger its economic security. According to Condoleezza Rice "We may face no greater challenge from a single country than from Iran, whose policies are directed at developing a Middle East that would be 180 degrees different than the Middle East we would like to see developed" (Guardian, March 9, 2006).

Furthermore China didn't veto UN sanction resolutions against Iran because the US alternative for the sanction policy was the military option. The United States and Israel had threatened the use of military attack against Iran and President Bush had the military option on the table (Fletcher, Feb 23, 2005). In the case of military conflict the security of the flow of oil in the Persian Gulf would be at stake. China as the first importer of oil from this region would deal with the oil crisis.

At the start of a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, President Bush was asked if military action remained an option for dealing with Iran. He replied: "My position has not changed. All options are on the table. I would hope that we could solve this diplomatically," (Reuters, Jun 19, 2007). Reportedly the US military option was in its final stage when in November 2007 the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) released a report according to which Iran had halted its nuclear weapon program in the fall 2003 (Linzer, December 4, 2007).

The NIE report dissuaded George W. Bush administration to follow the military option and to continue the sanction policy. Israeli authorities disappointed on US military attack, decided to perform a military operation on their own account. But this attack required US agreement because the Israeli air attack could only be performed over the US-controlled Iraqi airspace (Kemenade, 2010:104-105). Afraid from consequences on Iraq crisis and possibly the rise of oil prices and dealing with the world financial crisis of 2008, President Bush disagreed. Yet the Bush administration and Israel used military threat as an alternative option to pressure Iran and to attract world cooperation for the sanction policy. China preferred the sanction policy over the military option. The US or Israeli military attack against Iran and the possible response from Iran including the threat of closure of the Strait of Hormoz would raise oil prices and block the flow of oil in the Persian Gulf in which China is dependent for more than 60 percent of its oil import (Downs, June 6, 2013).

2009 Obama's Change Policy

During 2008 presidential campaign Barack Obama criticized Bush's Iran policy and promised to lead US foreign policy out of the deadlock through directly engaging in face to face talk to Iran (Cooper, November 24, 2007; Izadi, 2013:12). Unlike President Bush's aggressive policy which repeatedly threatened Iran with the use of hard power and that "the military option was on the table" (Reuters, Jun 19, 2007), President Obama resorted to soft power of diplomacy combined with sanctions to make Iran withdraw from nuclear programs.

During his presidential campaign and at least for two years after his victory, Obama never talked about the use of military attack against Iran and it seemed that military option was

off the table. But a successful sanction policy requires the cooperation from other major powers including China as the first trade partner of Iran.

As his first decision in regard to Iran, in March 13, 2009 Obama extended sanctions against Iran and said "I am continuing for one year the national emergency with respect to Iran" (Reuters, Mar 13, 2009). A week later on March 20 President Obama in an unprecedented move sent a Nowruz message and congratulated the New Year to Iranian people and addressed Iranian leaders with these words: "We have serious differences that have grown over time. My administration is now committed to diplomacy that addresses the full range of issues before us." (Guardian, March 20, 2009).

During the same week on March 15 China signed a 3.2 billion liquid natural gas deal with Iran according to which The Chinese company would build a line to liquefy gas in Phase 12 of the giant South Pars Gas Field in southern Iran (Fox News, 15 Mar 2009). The Obama administration remained silent about this deal at that time.

The June 2009 presidential election of Iran and the aftermath crisis of the Green Movement protests ended Obama's honeymoon in relations with Iran. Obama supported the protesters (BBC, June 26, 2009) and consequently the traditional policy of confrontation prevailed in Obama-Iran relations. On the other side China concerned about its strategic and economic interests in relation with Tehran supported the Iranian regime and quickly condemned the Green Movement protesters because "a destabilized Iran is in nobody's interest if we want to maintain peace and stability in the Middle East, and the world beyond." (Bhadrakumar, Jun 20, 2009).

Obama used G-8 and G-20 to move China in the sanction policy

According to Denis McDonough, one of Obama's top foreign policy aides Iran was at the focus of President Obama's trip to Italy in the 35th G-8 summit "The issue of Iran will be front and center" (China Daily, July 3, 2009). At the end of the G-8 Obama said he hoped

Iran would enter negotiations on the issue and that leaders would review the situation again at a G20 meeting of developed and developing countries in Pittsburgh in September (Spetalnick, Jul 10, 2009).

French President Nicolas Sarkozy repeated what Obama had mentioned and stated that powers would review the situation at a G-20 meeting of developed and developing countries in Pittsburgh on September 24 and 25. "If there is no progress by then we will have to take decisions" (Emmanuel, Jul 8, 2009).

Obama used the diplomatic capacity of G-8 and G-20 to make other powers including China as the first trade partner of Iran to cooperate with the US sanction policy against Iran. As the deadline Obama and allies in the G-8 had put for Iran to withdraw from its position was closing US and allies were preparing the international atmosphere for more pressure on Iran. In the G-20 summit President Obama used the opportunity to make revelations on Iran's secret underground nuclear enrichment plant near Qom without reporting to the IAEA and accused Iran of "breaking rules that all nations must follow" (Spetalnick, Sep 25, 2009).

Despite diplomatic pressures which deteriorated atmosphere against Iran, China resisted and expressed opposition for further UN sanctions against Iran. Jiang Yu, China's foreign ministry spokeswoman stated that "We always believe that sanctions and pressure are not the way out... At present, it is not conducive to diplomatic efforts" (Jacobs, Sep 24, 2009). But on the other side according to Telegraph In private talks, Barack Obama, US president, has stressed to Hu Jintao, the Chinese president, "the centrality of the Iran nuclear issue to US national security interests" and China may support UN sanctions (Moore, Sep27, 2009). What is clear is that China's official response was opposition to new sanctions.

Obama-China Honeymoon

In order to attract China's cooperation in dealing with Iran, Obama first resorted to cooperation with China and considered some China's economic and security interests and used the carrots first. The Obama administration kept silence on the issues of Taiwan, Dalai Lama and other topics during 2009.

On October 2009 President Obama cancelled his planned meeting with Dalai Lama the exiled leader of Tibet (Spillius, Oct 5, 2009). According to Washington Post an Asian diplomat with direct knowledge, in explaining their reluctance to meet the Dalai Lama now, US officials told Tibetan representatives "that they wanted to work with China on critical issues, including nuclear weapons proliferation in North Korea and Iran" (Pomfret, October 5, 2009).

Considering the Tibetan uprising in 2008, Dalai Lama and the issue of Tibet is considered as an important security issue for China. China's active diplomacy succeeded in restricting Dalai Lama's meeting with European heads of states (Kemenade, 2010:107). In response to China's pressures and in order to have China's cooperation in major concerns of the United States including sanctions against Iran, Obama delayed meeting with Dalai Lama.

On the other side President Obama's administration took Chinese oil security concerns into account and encouraged the Arab oil exporters to boost oil export to China in order to reduce Beijing's reliance on Iranian energy and decrease China's resistance to extending new UN sanctions against Iran. In response to US request the United Arab Emirates recently agreed to boost oil exports to China to between 150,000 to 200,000 barrels a day from the level of 50,000 over the next six months. Saudi Arabia also agreed to offer China more oil to make up for any losses of Iranian oil (Solomon, October 20, 2009). Later it was revealed that Obama's senior adviser Dennis B. Ross traveled to Saudi Arabia in April 2009 to seek a guarantee that it would supply China with oil if Iran was sanctioned (New York Times, November 28, 2010).

The Israel Card

President Obama unlike President Bush didn't directly threaten Iran with military attack, but he used the Israel card to pressure Iran and to make China cooperate with the sanction policy. Dependent to the Persian Gulf oil, China was concerned about a military attack from Israel that might lead to a crisis in the Persian Gulf and threaten to disrupt the flow of oil and raise the prices.

On July 5, 2009 US vice President Joseph Biden in an interview with ABC News said that the United States would not stop an Israeli attack on Iran: "If the Netanyahu government decides to take a course of action different than the one being pursued now, that is their sovereign right to do that. That is not our choice." According to ABC News "When Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was here this spring, he said that he had agreed to give President Obama's engagement policy until the end of the year to bear some fruit. After that deadline passed, Israel would feel free to take on the "existential threat" posed by Iran with military force if necessary" (J. Parker, Jul 5, 2009).

In response to Israeli attack Mohammad Ali Jafari, Iran's Revolutionary Guards commander-in-chief, said that if Israel attacked Iran, Iran would strike Israel's nuclear facilities with their missiles: "Our missile capability puts the entire Zionist regime (Israel) within Iran's reach to attack," (Hafezi, Jul 25, 2009).

On November Dennis Ross and Jeffrey Bader, both pro-Israel senior officials in the US National Security Council visited China. According to Washington Post they told Chinese that Israel regards Iran's nuclear program as an "existential issue and that countries that have an existential issue don't listen to other countries". The implication was clear: Israel could bomb Iran, leading to a crisis in the Persian Gulf region and almost inevitably problems over the very oil China needs to fuel its economic juggernaut (Pomfret, Nov 26, 2009).

Obama's Honeymoon Ended

During 2009 the relation between the United States and China was calm and friendly. President Obama in his first Year of presidency reset US foreign policy and cooperated with China on many issues. For example Obama cancelled his visit with Dalai Lama and didn't follow a warm relation with Taiwan to have China's cooperation on other major issues including Iran nuclear programs. President Obama used the same "reset policy" in dealing with Iran. He sent a peaceful Nowruz message to Iranian leaders and people and required Iran to come to the negotiation table. He didn't use the aggressive war literature of President Bush.

Furthermore during Obamas first Year of presidency there were less US pressures on Chinese corporations dealing with Iran. China used this opportunity to follow Chinese economic interests and signed agreement to invest in Iran's energy sector. on March 15 China signed a 3.2 billion liquid natural gas deal with Iran (Fox News, 15 Mar 2009). "Between June and November 2009, China signed \$14.5 billion worth of contracts with Iran to help expand two existing oil refineries to produce more gasoline domestically and to help develop the giant South Pars natural gas field" (Kemenade, 2010:101).

Obama's mid-November visit to China revealed the dimension of difference between the first and second world powers. Obama openly and frankly criticized China for lack of cooperation in trade issues and in international issues including the nuclear issue of Iran. While Obama threatened 'consequences' if Tehran failed to show its nuclear program were peaceful; Hu said the differences with Iran –a major Chinese ally and oil supplier– should be resolved "through dialogue and negotiations" (Foster, Nov 17, 2009).

While the United States had threatened another round of UN sanctions against Iran if it does not abide by the year-end deadline, on December 24 Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman repeated China's stance on Iran once more; he said "We have consistently insisted that the Iran nuclear issue be properly solved through diplomatic negotiations, and

we think sanctions cannot solve the root issues" (China Daily, Dec 24,2009). As the year 2009 was ending there was a clear difference between China and the United States and it seemed that China would not easily cooperate with a new round of sanctions against Iran as it signed UN resolutions during 2006-2008.

2010: US – China Confrontation and Bargaining

According to New York Times President Obama was confronted, on his first visit, with a fast-rising China more willing to say no to the United States (Cooper, Nov 17, 2009). China rejected further UN sanctions against Iran in the last days of 2009 (China Daily, Dec 24,2009) and again in the early days in 2010 (BBC, Jan 6, 2010). This revealed the fact to American authorities that the carrot policy had failed to make China cooperate with the US sanction policy. But if the carrot policy is out, what about the stick policy?

But the 2010 China was more confident and more assertive than before (Swaine, 2010:4). In 2010 China surpassed Japan to be second economic power of the world. In the same year China was the first US Treasury bonds asset holder to \$868.4 billion (Bo, Oct 20, 2010). China and the United States had interdependent economies and both powers depended on the other side for economic security and prosperity. Any economic failure for either side could have grave consequences on the other side.

China successfully managed the 2008 global financial crisis (Lo, 2010:37) and this achievement along with European and American setbacks elevated Chinese self confidence and helped it follow a more assertive foreign policy. Many Chinese nationalist regarded President Obama's 2010 meeting with Dalai Lama as signs of weakness rather than strength (Small, February 8, 2010.).

On January 29, 2010 at a military school in Paris, US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton in an unprecedented literature frankly threatened and Warned China that Beijing

would face "economic insecurity" and "diplomatic isolation" if it did not sign on to tough new sanctions against Iran for its nuclear program (Landler, Jan 29, 2010).

The next day on 30 January according to CNN the Obama administration announced \$6.4 billion arms deal with Taiwan; including about \$2.85 billion in missiles, 60 Black Hawk helicopters (totaling \$3.1 billion), 114 advanced Patriot air defense missiles; a pair of Osprey mine-hunting ships; and dozens of advanced communications systems (Keyes, Jan 30, 2010). Furthermore it was reported that a decision about another multi-billion dollar sale of F-16s to Taiwan would be made later (Kemenade, 2010:106).

China responded furiously to the US arm sale to Taiwan and bitterly denounced the Obama administration decision and warned of severe harm to bilateral ties. According to China Daily Beijing also announced that it would curtail military exchanges with Washington and formally threatened to sanction the companies supplying arms to Taiwan (Xiaokun, Feb 1, 2010).

A commentary in the China daily stated that: " But a message has to be sent: From now on, the US shall not expect cooperation from China on a wide range of major regional and international issues. If you don't care about our interests, why should we care about yours?" (Xiangyang, Jan 31, 2010)

On 18 February President Obama met Dalai Lama the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader. According to New York Times in this meeting Obama expressed support for the preservation of Tibet's "unique religious, cultural and linguistic identity and the protection of human rights for Tibetans in the People's Republic of China" (Cooper, Feb 18, 2010).

In response to this meeting China's foreign ministry summoned the US ambassador to Beijing to lodge an official protest against Barack Obama's decision to meet the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, in the White House. China warned that

Washington risked damaging US-China relations if it went ahead with the meeting (Foster, Feb 19, 2010).

Did US arms deal with Taiwan and Obama's meeting with Dalai Lama relate to Iran?

Reviewing the context of the US – China relations and the literature of authorities from both sides during 2006-2012, reveal the fact that the Iran nuclear issue and sanctions against this country was among top challenges. President Obama in his November 2009 visit with Chinese President Hu Jintao in Beijing demanded Chinese cooperation for further pressure over Iran to support the new resolution and he placed the nuclear issue among "core interests" of the United States (Crisis Group, 2010:13).

A nuclear and even a nuclear capable Iran is a nightmare to the United States because it changes the Mideast balance of power in the expense of the US and US allies including Israel and Saudi Arabia. A nuclear Iran may transfer nuclear technology to states which naturally are not US friends. Furthermore after the 9/11 terrorist attack the security of the United States emerged as a top priority for US authorities. In the 2008 McCain-Obama Presidential Debate the word "Iran" was repeated for 17 times showing the importance of Issue on that time (McCain-Obama Second Debate, October 7, 2008). In 2012 Obama-Romney Presidential debate the same word "Iran" was repeated for at least 47 times showing the growing importance of the issue during Obama's first term of presidency (Obama-Romney Third Debate, October 22, 2012).

On the other side as the Chinese economy grows, its interests are expanded in a more geographical expansion and even out of Chinese borders. In 2012 China used Its UN veto to support the Syrian regime and to make western efforts abortive in the case of Syria. Compared to Syria, China has much more interests in supporting Iran. The independent Islamic Republic of Iran located in a geostrategic position with a huge oil and gas reserves is fundamentally important for China as a major world power in the 21st century. A forum

of think tank scholars agreed in the Global Times that "if the West would impose restrictions on Iran's oil exports, it would be tantamount to a disguised form of sanctions against China" (Global Times, Feb 11, 2010).

If the United States succeeds in attracting world cooperation against Iran it could move forward to follow the long term policy of regime change. If the policy of regime change be successfully operated in Iran the hegemony of Us over the Middle East and the oil rich Persian Gulf will be completed and in the case of China – US conflict the major oil exporters will be closed to China and consequently the United States can use oil as a leverage to make China withdraw from its stances on a variety of issues. Chinese interests in dealing with the Iran go beyond economic and energy ties to the strategic realm to the point that according to the Chinese Major General Professor Zhang Zhaozhong from the Chinese National Defense University if Iran is attacked, "China will not hesitate to protect the Islamic Republic even by launching the Third World War" (Press TV, Dec 4, 2011).

Discourse analysis of the literature used by both Chinese and American authorities used during 2009 and 2010 show that the United States extensively used pressure and diplomacy to achieve China's cooperation in expanding sanctions against Iran. China refused US demand and rejected signing another round of sanctions. In response the United States used the threatening literature and Hillary Clinton the Secretary of State frankly threatened China with "economic insecurity" and "diplomatic isolation" (Landler, Jan 29, 2010). The next day on 30 January US announced arms deal with China (Keyes, Jan 30, 2010) and a few days later President Obama met Dalai Lama (Cooper, Feb 18, 2010) in the same context to increase pressures against China to withdraw from its Iran stance.

Did China Succumb to US Pressures?

Despite US pressures, on February 4, 2010 Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi warned that threatening more sanctions against Iran will derail diplomatic efforts to resolve the dispute over Tehran's nuclear program. "This talk of sanctions at this moment will complicate the situation and stand in the way of finding a diplomatic solution" (Financial Express, Feb 5, 2010). The same day Wang Baodong, PRC embassy spokesman in Washington, DC expressed China's opposition to new sanctions and said: "we believe there's still room for diplomatic settlement of the Iranian nuclear issue and we don't endorse discussing sanctions for now" (Kessler, Feb 05, 2010).

US secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf oil exporters to win their cooperation with US policy to increase sanctions against Iran and to fill the market demand due to possible absence of Iranian oil (France 24, Feb 15, 2010). Both United States and China as the world's first and second oil importers support the low price of oil; the absence of Iranian oil could damage the US as well as China. Clinton's tour to the major oil exporter countries in the Persian Gulf can be interpreted as a movement to make China cooperate with the US sanction policy as well as to meet US interests in keeping the oil prices low.

On March 2010 China and Russia in a session of UN Security Council urged Iran to accept a plan to send nuclear fuel abroad for reprocessing (Charbonneau, Mar 23, 2010). When Iran rejected the proposal, Beijing and Moscow organized a "demarche" – a form of diplomatic rebuke that can vary in intensity – to make Iran alter its stance on the U.N. proposal (Global Security Newswire, March 24, 2010).

On March 31, 2010 Susan Rice, US representative to the United Nations told CNN that China agreed to negotiate possible sanctions against over Iran's failure to comply with international regulations involving its nuclear energy program (CNN, Mar 31, 2010). Yet China did not confirm the claim at that time. Two weeks later Chinese President Hu Jintao

visited President Obama on the first day of a nuclear security summit in South Korea. According to Jeffrey Bader, the senior director for Asian affairs on the National Security Council in the Obama Administration "China is prepared to work with us... The two presidents agreed that the two delegations should work on a sanctions resolution in New York, and that's what we're doing" (Wiswman, April 13, 2010). But the official statement from China after the meeting was different. The spokesman for the Chinese delegation at the summit said: "China hopes that various parties will continue to step up diplomatic efforts and actively seek effective ways to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue through dialogue and negotiations" (Wiswman, April 13, 2010).

On April 14, Independent reported that China is being privately reassured that its supplies of oil would be guaranteed in the event that it supports tough new UN sanctions on Iran (Independent, Apr 14, 2010). On April 20 after a long negotiation over the fourth round of sanctions, China voiced objection to the proposed sanctions and threatened to "water down punitive measures contained in the draft resolution" and demanded alteration to the draft (Global Security Newswire, April 22, 2010).

About a week later the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao participated in negotiations with other UNSC permanent members and said Beijing "does not oppose the twin-track strategy," of pursuing negotiations and sanctions simultaneously (Global security Newswire, April 30, 2010). Finally on 9 June 2010 China voted for the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1929 and it was ratified (Black, June 9, 2010). This resolution banned Iran from participating in any activities related to ballistic missiles, tightened the arms embargo and imposed limitation on the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL). This resolution recommended states to inspect Iranian cargo, prohibit the servicing of Iranian vessels involved in prohibited activities, prevent the provision of financial services used for sensitive nuclear activities, closely watch Iranian individuals and entities when dealing with them, prohibit the opening of Iranian banks on their territory and prevent Iranian

banks from entering into relationship with their banks if it might contribute to the nuclear program (UN Resolution 1929, June 9, 2010).

Why China backed UN resolution 1929?

During 2010 as challenges between Russia and the United States and allies gradually decreased, Washington–Moscow relations improved and Russia's foreign policy priorities changed (Pikayev, 2010). On the other side the relations between Tehran and Moscow suffered from setbacks during the same year. After negotiations between American and Russian authorities, President Medvedev decided not to deliver the S-300 missile which Iran had bought (Global Security, June 2010). This helped the Obama administration concentrate on China and focus pressures on Beijing. As the hegemon power the United States had a higher hand and much leverage to pressure China. Arm sales to Taiwan and Obama's meeting with Dalai Lama and diplomatic pressures made China withdraw from its Iran stance to maintain other interests. But for the Chinese side this withdrawal was not considered as a failure because:

1. Through negotiation China could alter the sanction dimension of the resolution and mitigated the impacts on Iran to safeguard China's interests (Global Security Newswire, April 22, 2010).
2. China continued relations with Iran even after the resolution and regarded it voluntary not mandatory and "managed to further boost her opportunities by taking the West for a voluntary sanctions ride" (Parsi, Jun 12, 2010).
3. China bargained with the United States and negotiated to alter US arm deal with Taiwan and could successfully prevent the sale of some advanced weapons including a new range of F16 aircrafts (Lounnas, 2011:252).

4. Through a dual policy China could block the possibility of a military conflict between Israel and Iran to maintain the flow of oil in the Persian Gulf which is vital for China (Bishop, Aug 16, 2010).
5. China has some interests in the continuation of the nuclear challenge between Iran and the West. This challenge makes US to keep an eye on Iran and not focus on China and the Far East (Garver, 2011:79). Furthermore US will be dependent to Chinese cooperation to deal with Iran and China can use it as a bargaining chip.

The Sanction card against China

The UN resolution 1929 by itself had a limited impact on Iranian economy. Yet the United States used it a political background to give legitimacy for much more unilateral sanctions against Iran. Two weeks after the UN resolution 1929, on June 24, 2010 the US Congress passed the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability and Divestment Act (CISADA) and President Obama signed it into law On July 1, 2010 (Baker, July 1, 2010).

UN sanctions are regarded as "smart" sanctions because they targeted only few Iranian institutions and the Iranian elite who were directly involved in nuclear and military affairs. While CISADA was a comprehensive sanction and targeted the whole economic system including investment in the Iranian gas and oil industries as well as the import of gasoline. According to CISADA foreign firms investing in Iran's energy sector were banned from dealing with the US economic system. In other words they had to choose between their interests in trading with Iran or dealing with the United States (Scott, 2011).

CISADA extended restrictions of its previous version of 1996 ISA which failed because it was not supported by the Europeans due to Iranian open diplomacy during President Khatami administration. But in 2010 the condition was different both for Tehran and for Washington. In the Iranian side the emergence of the nuclear issue and the presidency of Ahmadinejad since 2005 deteriorated relations with EU. On the American side President

Obama successfully improved the US-EU relations which had damaged during George W. Bush and his unilateral policies.

These new US unilateral sanctions first of all damaged China as a major trade partner of Iran and targeted Chinese corporation trading and investing in Iran. Mark Dubowitz and Laura Grossman in their studies identified 89 instances in which the U.S. government sanctioned Chinese entities (many of which were state-owned enterprises) for transferring restricted items to Iran between 1997 and 2010 (Dubowitz, 2010).

The same week that Obama signed the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability and Divestment Act (CISADA) in July 2010, China rejected these unilateral sanctions. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang said: "China supports the U.N. sanctions. China believes that countries should have correct implementation of the sanctions instead of expanding the sanctions," Qin Gang added that the United States and other countries should not expand on the latest U.N. sanctions imposed on Iran over its nuclear program (Fox News, July 06, 2010).

The new US unilateral sanctions targeted foreign corporations dealing with Iran. As China was the first trade partner of Iran, these sanctions could be interpreted as indirect sanctions against China (Global Times, Feb 11, 2010). Despite US pressures China tried to keep ties with Iran. Two month after voting against Iran Chinese authorities reiterated their political and economic commitment to Tehran. on August 2010 Vice Premier Li Keqiang reassured IRI Oil Minister MassoudMirkazemi that "China would honor its commitments to complete unspecified cooperation projects even in an environment of increasing international pressure on Iran" (Tehran Times, August 8, 2010).

According to Washington Post on October 2010 the Obama administration concluded that Chinese firms were helping Iran to improve its missile technology and develop nuclear weapons, and asked China to stop such activity. In response a spokesman for the Chinese

Embassy replied that "My government will investigate the issues raised by the U.S. side" (Pomfret, Oct 18, 2010).

2011, China in a Dilemma

Since the referral of Iran to the UN Security Council in 2006 to 2010 China could successfully manage relations with both Iran and the United States to meet Chinese complicated interests. As US and Western sanctions against Iran expanded during 2011–2012, pressures over China to end relations with Iran increased and put China in a dilemma. On one side, the United States and allies including the European Union, Israel and even the Saudi Arabia pushed for more and more sanctions. China could not ignore international pressures and the threat of isolation. European Union and the United States as China's first and second trade partners and Saudi Arabia as China's first energy partner pressured over China to end economic ties with Iran.

On the other side the resistant Iran was important for China both as an independent source of energy which was not under the influence of US and as a potentially strategic ally for China to stand against US hegemony and to leverage against US long-term policy of containment of China.

On January 2011 Chinese President Hu Jintao visited Washington to improve strained relations over conflicting issues including the US arm deal with Taiwan the Nuclear issue of Iran and the issue of North Korea as well as to negotiate trade and currency challenges. In the news conference President Obama said the leaders had discussed the issues "in a frank and candid way", "We have an enormous stake in each other's success and we will be more prosperous and more secure when we work together." President Hu said co-operation should be based on mutual respect, and they should respect each other's development paths (BBC, Jan 19, 2011a).

In an interview prior to that visit, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said some Chinese "entities" were not complying with UN sanctions against Iran over its nuclear program, and that the US was pushing Beijing very hard on this issue (BBC, Jan 19, 2011a). The same day that the two presidents visited in Washington Hillary Clinton presenting more details of that visit said "China and the US shared special responsibilities over such issues as the threat to world stability posed by nuclear programs in Iran and North Korea". She also said "the US is considering imposing additional unilateral sanctions against Iran over its nuclear program" (BBC, Jan 19, 2011b).

On February to May 2011 the Obama administration sanctioned several firms for doing business with Iran. Several of those firms had Chinese identity (USA Today, May 24, 2011). On September 2011 David Cohen, undersecretary of Treasury for terrorism and financial intelligence, visited China to discuss U.S. sanctions on Iran; he met representatives from several major Chinese banks including Bank of China Ltd., China Construction Bank Corp., Industrial and Commercial Bank of China Ltd. and the Agricultural Bank of China. David Cohen threatened that Washington could impose sanctions on China's biggest banks if they were caught doing business with an Iranian insurance company on the U.S. blacklist (the Wall Street Journal, Sep 29, 2011).

In the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting held in November 2011 in Hawaii President Obama used the opportunity to urge President Dmitry Medvedev of Russia and President Hu Jintao of China to support US efforts to pressure Iran. This was President Obama's first face-to-face meeting with Hu and Medvedev since the IAEA report came out in June 2011. According to Global Post Obama "failed to win endorsement from either man" (Global Post, Nov 13, 2011). New York Times reported that Obama deflected a question about his inability to win support from the presidents of China and Russia, Hu Jintao and Dmitri A. Medvedev, for tougher sanctions (Calmes, Nov 14, 2011). Aljazeera reported that Medvedev, for his part, was largely silent on Iran during Obama's remarks,

merely acknowledging that the subject was discussed and President Hu Jintao of China did not mention Iran at all" (Aljazeera, Nov 13, 2011).

The Saudi Arabia Card

Both Iran and Saudi Arabia are supposed to have a competition over the leadership role in the region and in the Islamic world. Saudi Arabia controls the world first oil reserves and has a historical and religious importance as well as a large geographical expansion. As a regional rival for Iran in the Middle East and as an ally of the United States, Saudi Arabia opposes Iran nuclear program. A nuclear Iran or a nuclear capable Iran may change the balance of power in the region and can lead to a more powerful Iran. Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Washington claimed that "the [Persian] Gulf states must acquire nuclear power if the efforts fail to persuade Iran to give up its nuclear program" (Avner, 2013; quoted from: Dagoni, June 22, 2012).

Saudi Arabia is China's first energy partner. In 2011 China imported more than one million barrels of oil from Saudi Arabia while Chinese oil import from Iran was 555000 barrels (EIA, September 4, 2012). Therefore China has a great influence over China which is dependent to the Saudi oil.

The Obama administration used the Saudi card to make China cooperate with US sanction policy (Lounnas, 2011:249). Dennis Ross the Obama's senior Middle East adviser visited Saudi Arabia in April 2009 to make this country increase oil production to compensate the absence of Iranian oil in the market without increasing oil prices. Then Ross visited China to ensure the Saudi cooperation to replace Iranian oil (New York Times, November 28, 2010).

According to Washington Post China didn't welcome the US notion to replace Saudi oil (Kemenade, 2010:109; Kessler, Feb 5, 2010; Rizvi, 2012:8). In understanding China's rejection of that request at least two political and technical reasons are involved:

1. Politically Iran as an independent and anti-American oil exporter is a more reliable source of energy for China. The Saudi Arabia is an ally of the United States and in the case of China – US conflict the Saudi oil market may be easily closed to China, or can be used as a leverage to make China withdraw from its stances on various issues. Also there is the possibility for China to establish pipelines from Iran to China through Pakistan as an ally of China. Furthermore China has followed the policy of diversification of energy sources in order not to be dependent on a limited number of sources. Saudi Arabia is already the first energy partner for China (Jian, 2011:11).
2. Apart from political motivations there were technical and economic reasons for China's rejection of the notion of replacing Saudi's oil for Iranian oil. The Saudi claim to fill the supply gap is questionable because increasing the Saudi oil production seems impossible; nine out of 21 Saudi oil fields are declining and "the largest oil field of Saudi Arabia and currently the largest conventional oil field in the world, Ghawar, which produced half of Saudi Arabia's total oil production over the last 50 years, is declining" (Pradhan, 2012; quoted from: Rizvi, 2012:8).

The "Ambassador Terror Plot" activated the Saudi Card

On October 2011 US officials claimed that American agents disrupted an allegedly Iranian assassination-for-hire scheme targeting Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the United States (CNN, October 12, 2011). Iran rejected the accusation and called it a "fabrication" by U.S. authorities. President Ahmadinejad said that this alleged plot was fabricated to cause a rift between Tehran and Riyadh (Aljazeera, Oct 18, 2011).

In response to the terror plot allegation the Saudi foreign minister, Prince Saud al-Faisal, said that Iran "was responsible" for the alleged plot and insisted the kingdom would adopt a "measured response" and as the first step the Saudi government reported to the United

Nations Security Council, a move that could lead to new sanctions (Al-Arabiya, October 16, 2011).

On October 13 President Obama used the terror allegation to expand sanctions against Iran and to attract world cooperation in dealing with Iran. He said The United States will apply the "toughest sanctions" to further isolate Iran over the alleged plan to murder the Saudi ambassador to Washington. Obama insisted that the US had evidence to back up the allegations, as he said he would not take any options off the table in dealing with Iran - diplomatic code for the possibility of military action (McVeigh, October 13, 2011).

On January 7, 2012 the Saudi Oil Minister, Ali al-Naimi, without directly referring to the US sanctions against Iran said that Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter, was ready to meet any increase in demand (Reuters, Jan 14, 2012). In response Iranian OPEC Governor Mohammad Ali Khatibi warned that "If [Saudi Arabia] give the green light to replacing Iran's oil these countries would be the main culprits for whatever happens in the region - including the Strait of Hormuz" (Mostafavi, Jan 15, 2012). In response to Iran's warning The Saudi Oil Minister, Ali al-Naimi said "We said that we are prepared to meet the increase in global demand as a result of any circumstances" (El-Tablawy, Jan 15, 2012).

As China's oil import from Iran decreased in January under US pressures (Hafezi, Jan 12, 2012), China moved to increase oil import from Saudi Arabia and other Arab oil exporters. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visited Riyadh and told Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Nayef, "China and Saudi Arabia are both in important stages of development and there are broad prospects for enhancing cooperation (Buckley, Jan 14, 2012).

Saudi Arabia as the world first oil exporter and as China's first energy partner is very important in Chinese foreign policy. So Riyadh can use this influence to make China cooperate with US sanctions against Iran. Yet oil is the main element in this Riyadh-

Beijing relation because Saudi Arabia as a an ally of the United States in the case of US-China conflict can not be a reliable energy partner for China unless there be a grand shift in Saudi foreign policy.

2012, Obama and Sanctions in the election year

The Iran factor was an important element in 2008 and 2012 US presidential elections which in both cases Obama emerged as the final winner. In 2008 Obama criticized George W Bush for his ineffective policy in dealing with Iran and claimed the war in Iraq strengthened “Iran’s influence in the region”. He promised “opening dialogue with Iran” along with “tough sanctions” (CFR, Sep 30, 2008).

In 2012 Presidential election the Iran factor was used by the Republican candidates as a criterion of judgment to criticize President Obama’s Iran policy. Mitt Romney accused Obama of not doing enough in dealing with the threat of Iran and said:

“This is a president who has failed to put into place crippling sanctions against Iran... He’s also failed to communicate that military options are on the table... It’s pretty straight-forward in my view, If Barack Obama is reelected, Iran will have a nuclear weapon and the world will change if that’s the case” (Rucker, Feb 4, 2012).

In 2012 under pressure from public opinion, President Obama increased attempts in dealing with Iran and gave priority to the issue. Considering his internal policy Obama faced a dilemma. In one side he had to keep the prices including oil prices low to satisfy voters and on the other side he was under pressure to increase sanctions against Iran and pressure oil importers to put Iran aside from the energy market. On his opportunity the oil price was low due to the world economic crisis including the European Union crisis (Alic, 30 May 2012). On the other side the Obama administration pressured over Arab oil producers including the Saudi Arabia to increase oil production and keep oil prices low (Reuters, Mar 13, 2012). In response the Saudi Arabia and other Arab states increased oil

production in 2012 and kept oil prices almost fixed during 2012 (Telegraph, Sep 19, 2012).

In order to make sanctions effective the Obama administration had to deal with China as Iran's number one partner and other major customers of Iranian oil. On January 12 the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced sanctions on China's state-run Zhuhai Zhenrong Corp, which was Iran's largest supplier of refined petroleum products. Reuters reported that this decision was largely symbolic, because Zhenrong didn't have much business in the United States, but that this decision sent a signal to Beijing and its state-run oil giants such as China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC), China Petroleum and Chemical Corp (Sinopec Corp) and China National Offshore Oil Corp which had abundant investment and trade in the United States (Quinn, Jan 12, 2012).

China protested to the US unilateral sanctions against Zhuhai Zhenrong. China's Foreign Ministry spokesman said "Imposing sanctions on a Chinese company based on a domestic (US) law is totally unreasonable and does not conform to the spirit or content of the UN Security Council resolutions about the Iran nuclear issue" (BBC, Jan 15, 2012).

According to the US unilateral sanctions acts against Iran, the President had the authority to waiver sanctions if it is "necessary" to US interests (Katzman, April 2013:9). President Obama used his waiver authority to exempt countries which reduce oil import from Iran. On March 20, 2012 The United States exempted Japan and 10 EU nations from financial sanctions because they had "significantly cut purchases of Iranian oil" (Myers, March 20, 2012).

China as the number one oil importer from Iran rejected that "Washington had no right to unilaterally punish other nations" (Business Week, March 31, 2012). On June 11 US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton announced that the administration had issued waivers to seven other major oil importers from Iran including India, Malaysia, South

Korea, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Taiwan. Again China was excluded (Landler, June 11, 2012).

Granting exemption to all major customers of Iranian oil and leaving the only China out, put a lot of pressures on Beijing and many analyst expected another period of challenge in US–China relations (Aljazeera, Jun 12, 2012). Finally After long negotiations, on June 28 the United States included China along with Singapore in the waiver list and exempted both countries from sanctions and gave them a six month reprieve to decrease oil import from Iran again. US secretary of State Hillary Clinton after announcing China's exemption said "the reductions by all 20 countries showed that Iran was paying a high price for its nuclear program" (Gardner, Jun 28, 2012).

On July 31 President Obama himself announced that China's Bank of Kunlun and the Elaf Islamic Bank in Iraq "facilitated transactions worth millions of dollars" for Iranian banks. He said this decision made it clear that the United States would expose any financial institution that allowed Iranian regime to retain access to the international financial system, "no matter where they are located" (Crawford, July 31, 2012).

China strongly protested American sanctions on the Chinese bank of Kunlun. Chinese foreign ministry spokesman said the United States "is seriously violating the norms of international relations and is damaging China's interests. China has regular relations with Iran in the fields of trade and energy, which have no connection with Iran's nuclear plans" (Economic Times, Aug 2, 2012).

Could US sanctions lead to China-Iran divergence?

Despite China and Iran common interests in energy cooperation and undermining US hegemony, there are differences between the two parties. The United States focused on these differences to split between the two partners and to isolate Iran. While Iran is

completely cut off from the US economy, China is a major trade partner of the United States and both countries heavily rely on each other (Harold, 2012:21).

US sanctions are based on this philosophy that "you are either with us or with our enemy" in other words according US unilateral sanctions a financial corporation should choose between Iran and the United States. As Chinese corporations have great interests in dealing with the United States, if they traded and invested in Iran they would lose their interests in trading and investing in the United States. This US policy seemed to work in 2011-2012 and many Chinese corporations withdrew from Iran in order not to lose their interests in dealing with the US economy.

Although Sinopec and the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) signed a preliminary \$70-100 billion agreement to develop the Yadavaran field in 2004 (China Daily, October 29, 2004), disagreement continued for years. Sinopec referred to difficult negotiations as the source of delay, while the Iranians said Sinopec's fear of sanctions caused the delay (Crisis Group, 2010:6). Sinopec again delayed the start date of the \$2 billion Yadavaran oil development in 2011 (Davis, 2013:71).

On June 17 the Iranian government warned China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) that Iran may cancel its \$5 billion contract to develop phase 11 of South Pars field if the Chinese side didn't accelerate its pace of exploration (Mehr News Agency, June 17, 2011).

Despite growing tensions between Iran and China as the result of US pressures over Chinese firms to withdraw from Iran, the relation between the two countries is deep and strong and goes back their common strategic and economic interests. Iran is a reliable major source of energy located in a geostrategic position for China; China is the best customer for Iranian gas and oil resources and both countries have common concerns over US hegemony try to stand against US unilateral policies.

Scott Harold and Ali Reza Nader from RAND Corporation in their study "China and Iran; Economic, Political, and Military Relations" conclude that it is unlikely for the United States to reshape either Iran's or China's interests. Considering "China's perception that it is moving toward an intensifying rivalry with the United States," US ability to fundamentally reshape Iran-China relation is limited. The only prospect to basically alter this relation is a regime change or a change in grand policy in either Iran or China. They conclude that China and Iran will "possibly even broaden and/or deepen relations in the future" (Harold, 2012:27).

Chapter 6:

Conclusion

During President Obama's first administration the US sanction policy against Iran was a major challenge in US-China relations. This thesis in the theoretical framework of neorealism and neoliberalism tries to discover the strategies that the Obama administration followed to make Beijing -as the first trade partner of Tehran- cooperate with the US sanction policy.

In this study three main actors are involved: the United States, China and Iran. According to neorealism nation-states are rational actors and in the anarchic environment of international relations calculate security threats and follow their own political and economic interests and may join regional coalitions and international organizations to safeguard their own security and keep the balance of power. In the nuclear issue of Iran,

each of the three actors of the United States, China and Iran has its own security calculation and is following its own political and economic interests.

For the United States a nuclear Iran is the worst scenario. Iran boldly and directly stands against US policies and US presence and influence in the Middle East and in the Islamic world. Since the 1979 Islamic revolution that toppled the US backed Shah of Iran, the United States has followed the policy of isolation and containment of Iran. A nuclear Iran is failure to this grand policy. A nuclear Iran may alter the balance of power on the expense of the US and allies in the region such as the Saudi Arabia and Israel. A nuclear Iran may transfer this technology to countries that obviously are not US friends and may stand against US policies. After the 9/11 attack, US security was placed in the first position among top priorities; a nuclear Iran is considered as a threat against the US security. So American authorities whether Democrats or Republicans, do their best to prevent the emergence of a nuclear Iran.

China has none of these concerns. It has a good relation with Iran and there is no background for conflicts in China-Iran relations. Of course China as a nuclear power does not want the number of nuclear powers increased; but for China there are some interests in a powerful resistant and possibly nuclear Iran which can challenge US hegemony and make US keep huge portion of US political and military focus in the Middle East to contain Iran away from the East Asia where China's core interests lie.

China willingly or unwillingly is involved in the nuclear issue of Iran. In one side there is the United States which is China's first trade partner and a powerful rival that is blatantly pursuing the grand policy of containment of China. On the other side there is Iran which has common policy with China in undermining US hegemony; and is a reliable energy partner for Chinese rising economy that unlike Arab oil exporters is not under US influence.

The nuclear issue of Iran due to its security dimension was among the top priorities in President Obama's first administration. During 2008 Presidential campaign Obama promised to resolve the issue through peaceful means and direct talks with Iran. Unlike President Bush who had the military option on the table, Obama put the military option in the margin. During the early days of his administration in 2009 President Obama used a peaceful literature in dealing with Iran and sent a Nowrouz message to Iranian people and leaders. But soon the page turned and following the uproar after the Iran presidential election in June 2009, Obama supported the protesters and condemned Iran government for dealing with the demonstrators. As initial attempts failed to dissuade Iran from following the nuclear programs president Obama concentrated on the only remaining option "sanctions". In order to make sanctions effective the Obama administration had to deal with Iran's major trade partners including China the first among all.

The first half of 2009 (the first year of Obama's presidency) is regarded as the honey moon in Obama-China relations. President Obama used a peaceful language of diplomatic negotiation in dealing with China to have China's cooperation on different international issues including the nuclear issue of Iran. As the initial attempts failed to make China withdraw from its Iran stance and Beijing resisted voting for another round of UN sanctions against Iran, bilateral relations damaged and the Obama administration turned to pressures against China and the US Secretary of State frankly threatened and Warned that Beijing would face "economic insecurity" and "diplomatic isolation" if it did not sign on to tough new sanctions against Iran for its nuclear program (see: Landler, Jan 29, 2010).

Through Critical Discourse Analysis this study reviewed and analyzed the literature used by American and Chinese authorities to discover channels through which the Obama administration pressured China over new UN sanctions against Iran. The Obama administration followed the multifaceted policy of simultaneous pressure bargaining and negotiations with China to achieve the intended result. On November 2009 President

Obama visited China and negotiated over China's cooperation in dealing with Iran nuclear issue. On January 2010 President Obama signed the \$6.4 billion weapon sale to Taiwan in order to increase pressures on China. Beijing protested and threatened to sanction the companies supplying arms to Taiwan (see: Xiaokun, Feb 1, 2010). In order to increase pressures over China on February President Obama met Dalai Lama the exiled spiritual leader of Tibet (see: Cooper, Feb 18, 2010).

Finally after pressures and negotiation China withdraw and on June 2010 signed the new UN sanction resolution 1929 against Iran. This resolution similar to other previous resolution didn't hurt China's economic interests in relations with Iran. Generally UN sanctions against Iran are regarded as "smart sanctions" and target only a special elite and institutions. But the United States used the provided international atmosphere against Iran and enacted new unilateral sanctions against Iran called "Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act" or CISADA which moved beyond smart sanctions to "comprehensive sanctions" and targeted Iranian general economy including oil export as the main source of income for Iran's government to reduce oil import from Iran.

During 2011 and 2012 the Obama administration increased sanctions against Iran and of course pressures over Iran trade partners including China to withdraw from Iran. The "National Defense Authorization Act of the Fiscal Year 2012" and the "Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act" (ITRA) increased sanctions and moved beyond oil and gas sanction to target Iranian banks and foreign banks cooperating with Iranian financial system.

The Obama administration's policy in dealing with China to withdraw from its Iran stance and to cooperate with the US sanction policy can be categorized in two main categories of bargaining with China and pressuring over China.

Pressure over China

US policy in dealing with China through positive means of bargaining and negotiations could only be effective when combined with negative policies of pressures. Obama administration's peaceful attempts of bargaining and negotiation failed to make China fully cooperate with the US sanction policy in 2009. Although China finally voted for UN resolutions against Iran, it continued close relations and followed economic and strategic interests in relations with Iran and expanded ties in the absence of European rivals which had withdrawn under US pressures.

But if the carrots are out, what about the sticks? Despite China's fast growing economy, it is not comparable to the US militarily, politically and even economically. In the military aspect the 2012 military budget of the United States was 6–7 times larger than the \$106 billion military budget of China, and is more than the next twenty largest military spenders combined (see: Shah, 2013). In the economic aspect despite recent decline in the US relative share of the world economy because of rising of other economies, American economy is the world largest economy. Also in the political aspect the United States has the upper hand and even most of the China's neighbors including South Korea, India, Australia, Taiwan, Thailand, Singapore and Japan are US allies and follow the policy of containment of China.

So in the Issue of sanctions against Iran, the United States has a lot of positive as well as negative options which can be used to influence China's behavior and pressure over Beijing to cooperate with the United States.

I. Diplomatic Pressures over China

As Obama administration's positive attempts in the early months of his administration failed to make China vote for the UN Security Council resolution against Iran,

Washington frankly and openly threatened Beijing with "economic insecurity" and "diplomatic isolation" to put China under pressure.

Critical Discourse Analysis of the literature used by the US authorities shows that the Obama administration securitized the nuclear issue of Iran and depicted it as a serious threat against global security. In order to dominate this discourse the United States enjoyed the numerous allies around the world as well as the world major media which are controlled by Washington and allies.

According to the dominant discourse China was represented as the major ally of Iran collaborating with Tehran to threaten the security of the democratic world. In response to this discourse China tried to represent a peaceful image of China which sought a peaceful solution for the nuclear issue of Iran. China recognized the peaceful nuclear right of Iran in the framework of the NPT under supervision of the IAEA. On the other side under further diplomatic pressure along with other measures China voted against Iran in the UN and depicted itself as a responsible stake holder.

II. Sanctions against China

Due to US-China economic interdependence economies, sanctions against Chinese firms is the one of the last options for American policy makers to put Beijing under pressure to cooperate with the US sanction policy in dealing with the nuclear issue of Iran. Economic interdependency has made authorities in both countries refrain from radical decisions in dealing with challenges because crisis in economic relation might lead to negative consequences on either side. In this regard neoliberalism can explain US-China relation because complex interdependency has made both side refrain even threatening each other with military force.

Historical analysis shows that US decision makers cautiously used sanctions against American partners dealing with Iran in order not to hurt US interests. In 1996 version of

US sanctions against Iran called Iran Sanction Act or ISI the congress granted the president the authority to waiver sanctions when it was considered “**important**” to US national interests. As sensitivity over Iran nuclear issue increased During President Obama’s first administration the CISADA version of sanctions in 2010 the waiver standard changed to what is “**necessary**” to US national interests. In the pick of the crisis in 2012 it was changed to “**vital**” to national interests (see: Katzman, April 2013:8). In other words the United States sacrificed some economic interests for political and security motivations.

In 2012 the United States sanctioned the Chinese state-run company Zhuhai Zhenrong for exporting gasoline to Iran. But this decision is regarded as symbolic since this company didn’t have great business in the United States but it was considered as a signal to other Chinese state-run oil giants such as China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC) and China Petroleum and Chemical Corp (Sinopec Corp) which had abundant investment and trade in the United States (see: Quinn, Jan 12, 2012).

On the other side economic growth is regarded as a top priority in China’s grand strategy. For Chinese decision makers US sanction against Chinese firms and the consequent economic insecurity is regarded as a great risk. So 2012 US sanctions against Chinese firms and banks was taken seriously in Chinese calculation and Beijing decreased oil import from Iran and in response Washington granted waivers to China as well as other trade partners of Iran which reduced oil import.

III. Pressure through Human Rights

The Western human rights discourse as the world dominant discourse is represented by Western media as major sources in controlling world public opinion which gives legitimacy to humanitarian intervention in the internal affairs of typically non-Western and

non-democratic states. President Obama's meeting with Dalai Lama in February 2010 and again in July 2011.

The Obama administration used the human right card in dealing with both China and Iran. The nuclear issue of Iran was the top priority in Obama's first administration and the China as the first trade partner of Iran was considered as the main obstacle in expanding sanctions. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton three weeks before Obama's meeting with Dalai Lama openly threatened China to face "economic insecurity" and "diplomatic isolation" if it did not sign new UN sanctions against Iran.

Generally the United States through the grand policy of "China containment has always supported Chinese anti-Communist dissidents and minority movements such as Muslims in Xing Jiang province and the Tibet movement and its exiled leader Dalai Lama. For this purpose the US authorities have use the privilege of the dominance of Western discourse which is represented through media and academic studies.

IV. Pressure through Israel card

Unlike President Bush who repeatedly threatened Iran with "the military option on the table", President Obama used a peaceful literature in dealing with Iran and put the military option in the margin and instead concentrated on the sanctions policy. In order to make the sanction policy the cooperation from China as the world second power and the first trade partner of Iran was required. As Obama administration failed in bringing China to the negotiation table over further UN sanctions against Iran in 2009, Washington used the Israel card according to which Israel threatened Iran with a military attack. In that case the region would face a serious crisis endangering the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf.

China imports more than 60 percent of its oil import from the Persian Gulf. Therefore, the security of this region is vital to China's growing economy. If Israel attacked Iran the war might find great dimension and last for a long time because the Iranian response was not

clear. Iran had threatened to close the Hormoz Strait cutting the flow of oil to pressure over US and allies which imported and exported oil from this region. If that war happened China as the first importer of the Persian Gulf oil would face a great crisis, the energy prices would raise to an unprecedented level while finding a substitute for the Persian Gulf oil would be clearly impossible for Beijing.

Since economic growth is considered as the top priority in China's grand strategy, Israel attack on Iran and the possibility of a great war was considered as a threat against China's energy security and of course as pressure tool from the United States to make China sign the new UN sanctions against Iran to prevent Israel attack and the consequent war. Generally China preferred the sanction policy over the military option.

Bargaining with China

Three decade of high economic growth has placed China in a position that the United States cannot easily ignore China's interests in international calculation. China does not share US concerns about the emergence of a peaceful nuclear Iran. For China the Iran's nuclear program is not regarded as a threat against the global security, rather Beijing considers the issue as the problem of the United States. Therefore, the United States should consider US interests and give China something in return for cooperation in dealing with Iran.

I. Bargaining over Economic Security

Economic growth is the top priority in China's grand strategy (see: Goldstein, 2001:837). The best thing that the Chinese authorities may expect from the United States is letting the current economic growth move forward. But in the realism dominated international environment the United States is concerned about the rising of China and the new balance of power; so containment of China is a grand policy for Washington in the 21st century.

President Obama tried to use China's cooperation over Iran as a bargaining chip for China's economic security. But considering the 2008 global financial crisis that lasted for more years and the interdependent economies of China and the US the Obama administration was not in the upper hand position in this regard. Any decline in China's economic growth would have negative consequences on US economy. However during Obama's first presidency the economic challenges with China were placed in the margin to have China's cooperation on other issues including the sanction policy against Iran. But we can not say that President Obama ignored China containment policy because the sanction policy against Iran can be interpreted in the broader framework of containment of China and even as indirect sanctions against China as the US main rival in the 21st century. In fact the Obama administration targeted China's strategic interests through sanctions against Iran as the only independent power in the oil rich Middle East and the only possible strategic partner for China in the case of conflict with the United States.

II. Bargaining over Oil Security

China is heavily dependent to the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf where more than 60 percent of China's oil imports come. In order to make China withdraw from Iran the Obama administration in one side pressured over China through sanctions against Chinese corporation and on the other side respected China's demand for energy and pressured over Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq to increase oil production to offset the absence of Iranian oil in the market and asked China to replace other sources of oil for Iranian oil. Of course the United States itself as the world first oil importers was concerned about the increase of oil prices and the motivation behind the policy of putting pressure over Arab states to increase oil production can not be limited to US policy in bargaining with China's energy security over cooperation in the case of Iran. Yet international decisions usually have multifaceted dimensions.

China didn't welcome the idea because of its strategic interests in relations with Iran (see: Kemenade, 2010:109; Kessler, Feb 5, 2010; Rizvi, 2012:8). Iran as an independent source of energy which is not under US influence is regarded as a more reliable energy partner for China. Furthermore China seeks to diversify its oil purchase options for security concerns (see: EIA, September 4, 2012). Saudi Arabia is already China's number one energy partner and China does not want to be more dependent to a sole source. Yet as pressures increased Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visited Riyadh and other Arab oil exporters to offset the missed oil from Iran (see: Buckley, Jan 14, 2012).

III. Bargaining over the Taiwan issue

Taiwan is the most sensitive issue in US-China relations. Historical analysis shows that there are relations between the issues of Taiwan and Iran in Washington-Beijing relations. In the 1990s when China cooperated with Iran in nuclear activities, the United States urged China to cut this cooperation. In the pick of Taiwan crisis in 1996-7 after negotiations between China and the United States, both sides came to a compromise. China withdrew from nuclear cooperation with Iran and the United States withdrew from its stance of independence of Taiwan.

Again in the 2010 as the Obama administration's initial attempt failed to make China join to the UN sanction campaign against Iran, President Obama signed the \$ 6.4 billion contract of weapon sale to Taiwan and put China under pressure. Discourse analysis of the language used by American and Chinese authorities show that after negotiation finally they came to a compromise according to which China withdrew and voted for the 1929 UN resolution and on the other side the United States cancelled the sale of some advanced weapons including new versions of F-16 aircrafts to Taiwan (see: Lounnas, 2011:253).

The last Word

In the theoretical frameworks of neorealism and neoliberalism many factors are involved in the relations between nation-states; factors such as balance of power, international coalitions, strategic competitions, international organizations and economic interdependences. In studying the relations between the United States and China all these factors should be considered.

The emergence of rising economies such as China, India and others has reduced the relative proportion power of the United States compared to a decade before. Today the United States cannot easily rely on its inimitable military power and successfully follow unilateral policies. Of course Washington may start a game, but it cannot end it without international cooperation. For example In the case of dealing with China as the economies of both powers are interdependent, any radical decision may lead to burdensome consequences for both sides.

The US sanction policy against Iran should be studied in the framework of strategic competition between the United States and China in the 21st century and the US grand policy of containment of China which is the first trade partner of Iran and has long term strategic and economic interests in the Middle East.

This study showed that the Obama administration through the policy of simultaneous use of bargaining and pressures tried to make China cooperate with the sanction policy against Iran and the hypothesis of this thesis is confirmed. Although this “carrot and stick” policy seemed work and was successful to a large degree to make China withdraw from its Iran stance and follow the US sanction policy, we cannot call China the loser of this game. Because China could contain US power in the Middle East to deal with Iran and made Washington pay great costs in bargaining with China and performing pressures over Beijing. Furthermore China could maintain its close economic and strategic relations with

Iran and US attempts failed to alter this relation. Generally it is in China's interests to keep ties with Tehran whether Iran is nuclear or not.

As long as Iran stands firmly against US unilateral policies in the Middle East and resists Western pressures, the United States cannot fully move to the Asia Pacific region to follow the grand policy of containment of China. This issue can be compared to the 9/11 attack which changed the US focus from China to the Middle East. China has used 9/11 and Iran nuclear issue as opportunities to follow its grand policy of economic growth and peaceful rise and to expand economic and political influences in the Asia Pacific where China's core interests lie and in other parts of the world while the United States is busy in the Middle East. Furthermore, as long as there is strong and resistant Iran in the Middle East, the US hegemony over oil producing countries cannot be complete and Washington cannot use the oil weapon against Beijing to make China withdraw from its stances on many other issues and challenges.

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چکیده

چین و آمریکا روابط پیچیده و چندوجهی دارند. آنها از طرفی شریک تجاری هستند و برای منافع مشترک اقتصادی و امنیتی همکاری می‌کنند و از طرف دیگر بر سر منافع اقتصادی و استراتژیک با هم رقابت می‌کنند و یا حتی مقابل هم می‌ایستند. پس از ارجاع پرونده هسته‌ای ایران به شورای امنیت در سال ۲۰۰۶ و بخصوص در دوره اول ریاست جمهوری اوباما، فاکتور ایران در صدر چالش‌های بین چین و آمریکا قرار گرفت. آمریکا نگران برنامه هسته‌ای ایران بود؛ زیرا چنانچه ایران به تکنولوژی هسته‌ای ولو صلح‌آمیز دست می‌یافت توازن قوا در منطقه به زیان آمریکا و متحدان آمریکا تغییر می‌کرد بعلاوه مطابق گفتمان غرب، ایران هسته‌ای یک تهدید امنیتی جدی محسوب می‌شد. چین خواستار حفظ منافع خود در رابطه با ایران بود و هیچکدام از این نگرانی‌های آمریکا را درباره برنامه هسته‌ای صلح‌آمیز ایران نداشت. بعلاوه وجود ایران قدرتمندی که هژمونی آمریکا بر منابع نفتی خلیج فارس را به چالش می‌کشید، منافی برای چین داشت لذا پکن با سیاست‌های آمریکا علیه ایران مخالفت می‌ورزید. برخلاف جرج بوش، اوباما گزینه تهدید نظامی علیه ایران را در حاشیه قرار داد و بر سیاست تحریم علیه ایران متمرکز شد. برای آنکه تحریم‌ها علیه ایران به نتیجه برسند دولت آمریکا نیازمند همکاری چین به عنوان اولین شریک تجاری ایران بود. لذا دولت اوباما با اتخاذ سیاست معامله و فشار و یا چماق و هویچ کوشید که به همکاری چین در تحریم ایران دست یابد. این پایان‌نامه در چارچوب نظری نواقع‌گرایی و نولیبرالیسم و با استفاده از روش اسنادی-آرشیوی و روش تحلیل گفتمان انتقادی می‌کوشد استراتژی‌های دولت اوباما برای جلب همکاری چین را مطالعه کند. به عنوان نتیجه‌گیری اگرچه سیاست چماق و هویچ آمریکا علیه چین موجب شد که پکن روابط اقتصادی خود با تهران را محدود کند، اما نمی‌توان چین را بازنده این بازی دانست؛ زیرا سیاست جسورانه چین دستاوردهای آمریکا را ناتمام و پرهزینه گرداند. مادام‌که ایران در مقابل سیاست‌های یک‌جانبه آمریکا ایستادگی می‌کند، واشنگتن نمی‌تواند بر شرق آسیا و سیاست مهار چین متمرکز شود و بعلاوه هژمونی آمریکا بر منابع نفتی خلیج فارس کامل نمی‌گردد و آمریکا نمی‌تواند سلاح نفت را برای اعمال فشار بر چین و عقب‌نشینی پکن در موارد مختلف به‌کار ببرد.



دانشگاه تهران
دانشکده مطالعات جهان
گروه مطالعات آمریکای شمالی

عنوان پایان نامه:

بررسی تحریم‌های آمریکا علیه ایران در روابط آمریکا و چین در دوره اول اوباما

نگارش: اسفندیار خدایی

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