

Role of the Persian Gulf's Oil in the US Geopolitical Codes during the Cold War Geopolitical Order

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Abstract

This paper, geopolitically, seeks to explain the role of the Persian Gulf's oil as the US vital interests in the US geopolitical codes, as well as its foreign policy towards this area. In this respect the US geopolitical codes during of the Cold War era, according to different presidencies, will be explained. Studying these codes helps to reveal the political and geographical assumptions behind of the foreign policy. Specific speeches, in particular the 'state of the union' in the United States and the US presidents' doctrines are considered as basic sources which this study relies on them. Analysis suggests that there is a strong linkage between the US political elites' geopolitical assumptions and the US foreign policy towards the Persian Gulf region and in this respect oil, of course, plays a unique role. Moreover, containment policy as the main US geopolitical code is pursued by the US presidents in different shapes during the cold war and in this respect the role of the Persian Gulf's oil is remarkable.

Keywords: US Geopolitical codes; American Doctrines; the Persian Gulf's oil, Containment policy

Introduction

This paper attempts to explore the role of energy resources of the Persian Gulf in the formation of the US foreign policy towards this area. This paper focuses on the US geopolitical codes during Cold War geopolitical world order because such codes generate the foreign policy of every state. These codes indeed are a result of the political-geographical assumptions and beliefs of the state's political leaders so that those are even called 'the geopolitical codes of US presidents' (Agnew, 2003, p. 110). These assumptions form the state's view about other countries so as these assumptions define the national interests and threats to these interests, also based on these geopolitical assumptions a suitable response to threats is defined and ultimately efficient justifications for that response will also be offered (Flint & Taylor, 2007).

From this point of view, in this work the speeches of the US presidents are considered as the primary documents which this research relies on them. Geopolitical codes also are, conceptually, counted as the main elements that form every geopolitical world order, and from this view those are building blocks to construct foundation of geopolitical order (P. J. Taylor & Flint, 2000), and for this reason the Cold War era as a geopolitical order is studied from the beginning of the US presence in this area until the end of the Cold War and disintegration of the old geopolitical world order. Therefore, to explore the reasons of the US presence in the Persian Gulf and conducting different policies towards this region, analyzing the US geopolitical codes are necessary. In this respect, with consideration of the US president's doctrines, chronologically, the US foreign policy regarding to containment policy against the Soviet Union during of different times will be explained. Moreover, the strong relationship between the US codes and the Persian Gulf's energy resources as the US vital interests will be explored.

The geopolitical identity of the Middle East; the Persian Gulf and Oil

The Middle East has been introduced as central of three linked continents; Europe, Asia and Africa, and has been formed where called by Mackinder (1968-1947) as 'World-Island'¹.

¹ Sir Halford Mackinder presented his world model on three occasions. His 1904 version introduced 'pivot area', where was refined after First World War in his 1919 version and became 'Heartland'. He also presented his third version in 1943. Most discussion of Mackinder's model, however, focuses on his 1919 work, which referred to 'Heartland', and 'world- Island'. His famous statement is related to this version that:

From the geopolitics of energy perspective, it is the joint axis of three most important economic regions in the world; the United States, the European Union (EU) and Asia Pacific. In fact, Middle East, in particular since the World War II has become the center of international attention and has always been the scene of competitions and conflicts among the regional and global powers (Anderson, 2000). Among various factors to highlight importance of this area possessing the main world's energy reserves and locating the Persian Gulf in this region are most remarkable, so that it has closely connected the fate of Middle East region, the world's geopolitics of energy and the Persian Gulf to each other. Basically, regardless of the controversial argument about geographical territory of Middle East, there is a nearly consensus that the term of Middle East which was coined by Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914), the American geopolitical historian in 1902 and main focus of his term is the Persian Gulf and its coasts (Anderson, 2000; Bilgin, 2005; Lemke, 2002; Lewis & Wigen, 1997). Indeed, the importance of Middle East in linking three continents, what is related to the Persian Gulf function. It links the Indian Ocean to Red Sea and Mediterranean Sea, also to Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. Obviously, the Middle East has been known as cradle of Islam civilization, where became the centre of Islam propagation around the world.

The important location of the Persian Gulf from Cultural, Political and economic aspects has attracted the attention of great powers and formed important conflicts and competitions to control of this area for a long time. The first western power that entered to this region was Portugal and it was result of the circumnavigation of the Cape of Good Hope in 1488, which was done by Vasco da Gama. After that Holland, then France and ultimately Britain and even the Ottoman Empire were other states that came to this area to pursue their colonial, political and commercial objectives in the region during sixteenth to twentieth century. In the early of the 20th century, however, the United States entered to region instead of Britain (Sajedi, 2009) and continued its presence in the Persian Gulf as the main external powerful player in region to date.

With finding Oil in Iran in the beginning of the 20th century, the new great developments in the Persian Gulf region also was started; developments in relations among regional states and the world powers, changes in interior social-political of states and in competitions among industrial countries. It was found in Iran in 1908 (Haggett, 2002) and then the Anglo-Persian Oil Company was formed to extract oil from this area. Finding oil reserves in other regions in the Persian Gulf resulted increasing the importance of this region day by day and it gradually formed more dependence of industrial countries to this area. It is true that this concentration of oil reserves in this area, about 65 per cent of world oil reserves, has been formed a deeply relation and independence between Persian Gulf producers and world consumers in the global oil markets, what has been not included gas reserves of the Persian Gulf due to capability of Russia in possessing mass gas reserves as a key source of geographic diversification, so that it can stabilize the global gas markets (Victor, Jaffe, & Hayes, 2006).

Geostrategically, the Persian Gulf is a half-closed sea, which is known as Indian Ocean's arm and Hormuz Strait is its key. According to Spykman's (1893-1943) comment, Hormuz Strait is one of the Rimland² keys (Dallmayr, 1999), so that it connects the northern, southern, western and eastern parts of Rimland to each other. Based on this comment, the control of Hormuz Strait means the control of earlier mentioned four parts. In this manner, there is this view that any state, which can control three straits; Bab-el-Mandeb, Hormuz and Malacca, it will control the world. It is interesting to note that, this theory is acceptable yet and based on this reality the Strait of Hormuz has more important position because it is geographically located between two other mentioned straits (Valdani, 2002).

'Who rules East Europe commands the heartland. Who rules the heartland commands the world-island. Who rules the world-island commands the World'. Here, the 'world-island' refers to Eurasia plus Africa, where included about two-thirds of the world's lands. For more information see(Flint & Taylor, 2007).

² Nicholas Spykman, a US scholar of international relations, had a global view about preventing the Germany's world domination through controlling the Eurasian coastal lands, including the Middle East, India, Southeast Asia, China and Maritime Europe. For him these regions or Rimland were the keys to world control due to their characteristics such as populations, rich resources and their use of interior sea lanes. He, indeed, rejected Mackinder model as land power doctrine and stressed on a combination of land and sea power. He said that "who controls the Rimland rules Eurasia; who rules Eurasia controls the destinies of the world". For more information see(Cohen, 2003, p. 22).

The Strait of Hormuz, indeed, has promoted strategic importance of the Persian Gulf. It is a narrow and curve channel with about 100 miles length and 21 miles in its narrowest parts that connects the Persian Gulf to high seas through Indian Ocean. It is worth noting that, width of each used new sailing lines from 1979 is about 1 mile and the lines are separated from each other by a security line with 1 mile width, while there are several strategic islands in entrance of the Persian Gulf that six islands among them have created a curve line, where have the most strategic position in the Hormuz Strait and thus because these islands have short distances between each other, a virtual line has been drawn along the islands (Mojtahedzadeh, 1995). It has become more important when the ample amount of Oil exportation to industrial world and also goods importation to Middle East transport throughout this strategic strait. This strait named as world's economic main highway because it injects oil to world's economy heart. It is, indeed, the main passageway to transfer about 15–16m barrels per day (b/d) of oil, roughly two-thirds of total world's oil trade and almost 20 per cent of total world's demand per day. Several countries; Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates export their oil and petroleum products through this strait. Moreover, Qatar exports the large quantities of liquefied natural gas (LNG) through this strait too (Barnes & Jaffe, 2006). These littoral countries, indeed, have a structure of mono-base economic based on oil and gas exports, so that oil includes over 90 per cent of region's exports.

The region's reservoirs, however, as the greatest global resources play a significant role in forming a geopolitical system in the region and even in the world. There is this view that, in 21st century existing energy resources as geoeconomic factors indicate importance and value of regions (Valdani, 2002), and nowadays, in projecting the foreign policies the geoeconomic logic is more important than geopolitical logic (Mercille, 2008). From this view, Since the Persian Gulf, due to the vast energy reserves, is most important such regions, which contains about two-thirds of the world's proven oil reserves (Pollack, 2003). Therefore, this region is one of the most important regions that plays main role to construct interstates relations in the new era. In this respect, ensuring regional security, oil constant production and the security of oil flows to consumer states has always become as a vital issue in their grand strategies (Elahi, 2000).

Statistically, the total oil reserves of Persian Gulf have been estimated over 751 billion barrels in 2009 (BP, 2009), which is about 60 per cent of the world's energy (Correlje & der Linde, 2006). At the end of 2008 also, the gas reservoirs of the region were equal to 75.5 trillion cube meters (BP, 2009). Nowadays, almost 25 per cent of the world's oil production comes from the Persian Gulf (Pollack, 2003) and among all countries, production of Saudi Arabia 21.39%, Iran 11.2%, Iraq 9.3% and Kuwait 8.29% are remarkable (BP, 2009). On the other hand, based on the reports the imports of consumer countries have included more than 17 million barrels daily from Persian Gulf (Tristam, 2006). Regardless of oil, although 30 per cent of known natural gas reservoirs of the world are located in Persian Gulf region - Only Iran has possessed the most amount of gas reserves in region with 12.9% - and of course, the region's countries produce only 3.5% of the world's usable gas (Mojtahedzadeh, 1995).

In sum, this region is called as world oil store due to existing of vast reserves of oil and gas. It is also considerable that Persian Gulf has several different advantages such as oil wells with high outcomes, low production costs, transit inexpensiveness, raw oil with high quality, locating possibility of new oil wells, and mass quantity of oil wells. It is interesting that There is between 250,000 to one million tons in each oil well of the Persian Gulf while they are about 20,000 tons in Venezuela and 600 tons in the U.S (Valdani, 2002).

Simultaneously, there are the numerous amounts of goods which are entering to the Persian Gulf and pass through the Strait of Hormuz, by far more than exports from this region. For this reason almost all the Persian Gulf countries are dependent on Hormuz strait for export and import of oil and goods and only 20% of region's oil is exported by pipelines because of high expenditures and security-political considerations. Only Saudi Arabia and Iraq have oil pipelines among region countries and use pipelines to transit some of their oil so. It is not an efficient way to export of oil overall and will cause problems similar to what Iraq faced, like problems of the pipelines which exported the Iraqi oil to Mediterranean Sea through turkey and Syria and both were closed in 1983 and 1991 (Taghavi-Asl, 2000). From this view, the world energy security, increasingly, depends on security of this strait in the Persian Gulf too.

Beginning of the US presence in the Persian Gulf region

Although formal presence of the United States in the Persian Gulf coincided with withdrawal of the Britain from region in 1971, this region and its oil had adopted an important position in the US leader's views, as President Roosevelt said to British ambassador in 1944 that "Persian oil...is yours. We share the oil of Iraq and Kuwait. As for Saudi Arabian oil, it's ours" (Yergin, 1991, p. 401). There is this view, also, that the United States of America had unwillingly assumed burdens of Britain in East of Suez after the Second World War, which were related to contain the Soviets, or development of Monroe doctrine for the Middle East, and to promote regional security (Little, 2008). Indeed, with the end of the Second World War in 1945 this region gained a special status in the US grand strategies due to its particular geopolitical characteristics to control the oil flows and also conducting the specific policies due to competitions of the Cold War duration in particular the containment of the Soviet Union, as during the second world war also this region as a connecting point among three continents (Asia, Europe and Africa), was a place for the great powers rivalries, and controlling the Persian Gulf had provided containing Germany in Africa, Asia and in particular in the Middle East, (Campbell, 1972).

Seemingly, until 1945, the United States was not dependent to foreign oil and was self-sufficient in petroleum production, Franklin D. Roosevelt administration projected to control other oil sources around the world due to the wartime requirements concerning the high consumption of oil as well as prediction of an ultimate decline in US production. By 1943, he had considered Saudi Arabia as the US main foreign supplier and in this manner by 1945, it had been determined that the United States must protect the prolific oil fields of Saudi Arabia. On that base, Roosevelt and Abdul Aziz had a meeting on 14 February 1945, and there is this view that establishing of a tacit alliance was result of this meeting, which alliance that would determine to protect the House of Saud against its enemies as the US responsibility as well as would provided the US access to Saudi oil. (Klare, 2006).

In line with this arrangement, President Harry S. Truman, on September 28, 1945, approved establishing the Dhahran air base in Saudi Arabia. He also made a contract with King Ibn Saud when the United States was committed to Saudi security in early 1947, and "as described in a state Department cable, the United States pledged that if Saudi Arabia were attacked by another power, or under threat of attack, Washington would take 'energetic measures under the auspices of the United Nations to confront such aggression'" (Yetiv, 1997, p. 48). But it was clear that the United States was unable to protect the Persian Gulf region as well as conducting its commitments, because it had no military forces in the region to carry out this objective, and while the responsible power for regional security was Britain, the United States had a secondary role. It was continued competing two powers in economic and political aspects to influence in the Persian Gulf area until 1971, the year that the United States entered to region formally, and Britain went out from this region. In this respect it is necessary a brief reviewing the most important the US leader's Doctrines with emphasizing the US geopolitical code during the Cold War with reference to their geopolitical orientations towards the Persian Gulf region.

Beginning of the Cold War and redefining the US geopolitical code

Following the George Kennan's Long Telegram³ in February 1946 and explaining why the integration between the USA on the one hand and the USSR on the other as a partner in the US 'one world' was impossible, the US President represented his famous Doctrine in March 1947 before the Congress member in order to support Greece and Turkey to prevent the Communism expansion, which was called Truman Doctrine. It was also a consequence of the Britain inability to continue maintaining its troops in Greece and Turkey, what was informed to the United States by Britain in 1947. It became the axis of Truman's speech and he requested economic and political aids for two poor countries to prevent the influence of the USSR.

³ Kennan's 'long telegram', which was sent from Moscow in 1946 emphasised that basis of American policy toward the Soviet Union after World War II had been wrong. It was an opposition for the universalistic thinking 'one world' policy, especially about Soviets, that was pursuing by the United States in 1945, so that the USSR had been considered as a partner in post war world order. Kennan explained why this policy namely 'containment by integration' was useless. There is also this view that this telegram became basis of new policy of the US during Cold War era, which became known as 'containment'. For more details see (P. J. Taylor & Flint, 2000) and (Gaddis, 1982).

In his Doctrine the USSR was clear target and indeed marked the formal beginning of the Cold War (P. J. Taylor & Flint, 2000). He referred to essential needs of Greece to bare subsistence: "Greece must have help to import the goods necessary to restore internal order and security, so essential for economic and political recovery", he Said (Truman, 1947). Ho also stressed to support Turkey and said: "Turkey now needs our support. Since the war, Turkey has sought additional financial assistance from Great Britain and the United States for the purpose of effecting that modernization necessary for the maintenance of its national integrity"(Truman, 1947). But what revealed beginning of the Cold War in his Doctrine was dividing the World implicitly to two different realms through introducing the freedom world against Communism and supporting 'free peoples everywhere'(P. J. Taylor & Flint, 2000), and it became what was explicitly referred in the National Security Council (NSC-68) as "the policy of 'containing' the Soviet system" (NSC-68, 1950, VI,A), or 'containment' policy. This policy was continued during the Cold War and was introduced in geopolitical studies as basis of the US geopolitical codes in different times, but as Taylor and Flint (2000) noted "there is no single 'containment code'; rather, there are a family of geopolitical codes to which the general term 'containment' has been applied"(p. 92). In this respect, indeed, each of "presidential pronouncements expressed a policy of containment of 'international communism,' but devised different methods of coping with it"(Lenczowski, 1979, p. 797).

Obviously, the immediate aim of Truman's speech, however, was determined the economic and military support to Turkey and Greece, But it indicated the US ability to withdraw its previous policy and moved from "peacetime isolationism" to "commit itself" (Gaddis, 1992, p. 23). It is important to note that, although it was expanded the America's international role in Theodor Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson presidencies, their policy focused on the western hemisphere. "But Truman's policy was global in scope. Beyond Greece and Turkey, it underpinned an array of Cold War initiatives: the \$12 billion Marshall Plan for European reconstruction, the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and an unprecedented peacetime military buildup in the wake of the Korean War. Indeed, it guided America's Cold War policies for four decades-from Berlin and Cuba to Vietnam and Afghanistan" (Merrill, 2006, p. 28). In this respect, that policy highlighted the US tendency to adopt the responsibility of a new world under its leadership. It was redefining the US geopolitical codes and indicated the US tendencies to specific regions around the world, so that "not all parts of the world were equally vital to American security"(Gaddis, 1982, p. 30).

The Middle East along with Greece and Turkey

Among those regions, which were vital to American security, the Middle East and the Persian Gulf were notable. It is interesting to note that, Truman, ties supporting to Greece and Turkey with stability of the Middle East. He addressed: "If Greece should fall under the control of an armed minority, the effect upon its neighbor, Turkey, would be immediate and serious. Confusion and disorder might well spread throughout the entire Middle East"(Truman, 1947). Concerning Turkey also, it was stressed preserving Turkey's national integrity as an essential element to keep order in the Middle East; "That integrity is essential to the preservation of order in the Middle East", He said (Truman, 1947).

It indicates the importance of the Middle East stability for the USA, what is related to the Soviet policy to access to the Persian Gulf and high seas as an ancient ambition⁴ on the one hand and the executing its global expansionism, to expansion its sphere of influence towards south as an ideological power in the world, on the other. According to Lenczowski (1982) "as a number of previous studies on the Soviet role in the Middle East show, in 1940 the Soviet government officially declared 'that its territorial aspirations center south of the national territory of the Soviet Union in the direction of the Indian Ocean.' This general statement was subsequently refined by Foreign Commissar V. Molotov's communication to the German ambassador to Moscow 'that the area south of Batum and Baku in the general direction of the Persian Gulf is recognized as the center of the aspirations of the Soviet Union'"(p. 309).

⁴ Isolation of Russia was a traditional problem because of its lack of access to the high seas and sea lanes. Peter the Great (1689-1725) as the ruler of state tried to improve Russia and enabled it to compete with the Western world through bringing the country out of isolation by expansion to Baltic and Black seas. Making a new relationship by him, between Russia and its Middle Eastern neighbours, also is analysable in this respect. For more information see (A. R. Taylor, 1991).

Clearly, dominating over the Persian Gulf as the strategic linking point of three main continents as well as the main basin of petroleum in the world could enable the Soviet to control the free world; Western Europe and the USA. Indeed, achieving some influence over the flow of oil by the Soviets in the Persian Gulf could erode the unity of the western alliance and consequently had a much more essential effect on global position of the US and could change the balance of power (Ross, 1984). From this view, that was very important for the US and its allies because the United States had assumed the assuring energy security to supply cheap oil flows from the Persian Gulf's fields to the industrial countries in the West, which was the task of Britain during pre-Cold War. That was, probably, what Truman and his advisors wanted signalled in 1947 (Gettleman & Schaar, 2003, p. 246). Indeed, "the united states had to control the Middle East and its oil.

That was the basis of the Truman Doctrine" (Klare, 2003, p. 52) and some other US presidents too. In this respect, it seems that the US geopolitical code in Truman Doctrine with regionalist orientation emphasized on the Persian Gulf and the Middle East as a vital region to conduct the US containment policy in the beginning of the Cold War era. And as mentioned it was directly related to the Persian Gulf's strategic location and in particular, its abundant oil reserves. In addition, although helping to any anti-communist movements anywhere, what was stated in President Truman's speech in 1947, and it stressing over American principles of free market and democratic societies manifested the prominent of 'noblesse oblige' paradigm (O'Loughlin, 2000), emphasizing on some specific countries and the Middle East region could be in order to the 'world of regions' as a second prominent paradigm at that time, which focused on important places to the US.

The Safe access to the Middle East's oil

President Eisenhower, however, addressed a joint session of Congress on 5th January 1957 to make a decision about a critical crisis in the Middle East, which was called Eisenhower Doctrine. "The doctrine marked America's emergence as the dominant Western power in the Middle East, a role the United States continued to play long after the policy itself had been abandoned" (Yaqub, 2004, p. 1). It was in some parts a consequence of Suez Crisis⁵, formation a vacuum of power in region in result of Suez War, when Britain, France and Israel failed to reverse nationalization of the Suez Canal Company in Egypt in late of 1956. At this time, the United States and western countries believed that absence of Britain in region could provide conditions for the Soviets' influence among the Middle Eastern nations via its economic and military aids, as had been occurred about Egypt and Syria. There is this view that, besides finding a peaceful solution for Arab-Israeli conflict, there were two other important challenges in front of the US policy towards the Middle East: "security of the area as against Soviet threats to its integrity and independence" and "safe access to its oil" (Lenczowski, 1979, p. 796).

It is interesting to note that, there always been a strong connection between two mentioned challenges, so that preventing the control of oil flows by Soviet Union has always been a main part of containment policy and that is clear in the US grand strategies in different times, what is reflected in doctrines. From this view, Eisenhower in following Truman, but explicitly, referred to the Communism and the Soviet Union as threat for the Middle East. For him, there was a great worry concerning the falling of region under the control of the Soviets and it was necessary to help all nations in this area to keep their independence. Based on this definition from threat, the United States had to increasing economic and military aid, and even ensuring the direct protection to those nations who were threatened by international communism. President Eisenhower expressed that "the nations of the Middle East are aware of the danger that stems from International Communism" and stressed also that "assistance and cooperation to include the employment of the armed forces of the United States to secure and protect the territorial integrity and political independence of such nations, requesting such aid, against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by International Communism" (Eisenhower, 1957).

⁵ The Suez Crisis began when the Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser announced the nationalization of the Suez Canal on July 26, 1956, where had been constructed in 1869 and was under authority of Suez Canal Company controlled by France and Britain. That canal had been linked Mediterranean Sea to Red Sea and had become much more important for Britain and France especially since the Britain had changed the Royal Navy's fuel from coal to oil in 1912. On October 29, 1956 Israeli troops invaded Egypt, which coincided with beginning of occupying the Canal Zone by British and French forces. Ultimately based on the United Nations view, Israeli forces withdrew in March 1957; British and French failed to control the Canal, and Egypt became a victor in that Crisis. For more information see (Varble, 2008).

He, to explain importance of this region, reminded some its geopolitical and geostrategic characteristics, what could be the main reason for the Soviets' interest in the Middle East; "This region has always been the crossroads of the continents of the Eastern Hemisphere. The Suez Canal enables the nations of Asia and Europe to carry on the commerce that is essential if these countries are to maintain well-rounded and prosperous economies. The Middle East provides a gateway between Eurasia and Africa. It contains about two thirds of the presently known oil deposits of the world and it normally supplies the petroleum needs of many nations of Europe, Asia and Africa. The nations of Europe are peculiarly dependent upon this supply, and this dependency relates to transportation as well as to production"(Eisenhower, 1957).

According to this doctrine joining Middle Eastern countries to communist bloc could create a serious jeopardy to all free world, either region or west. For Eisenhower "If the nations of that area should lose their independence, if they were dominated by alien forces hostile to freedom, that would be both a tragedy for the area and for many other free nations whose economic life would be subject to near strangulation"(Eisenhower, 1957). It is true that the Middle East and its strategic location has been strongly depended to ample oil reserves, in particular, in coastal countries surrounding the Persian Gulf, and based on this reality the Soviets' influence among these countries was equal to control those sources, which were vital for western industrial countries. Importance of Suez Canal and related conflicts also were related to crucial strategic location of this marine passageway, so that after the Second world war it became a main conduit for the shipment of petroleum and gradually transferring oil from the Middle East to consuming countries became a new role for this Canal and as Yergin (1992) noted "by 1955, petroleum accounted for half of the canal's traffic, and, in turn, two thirds of Europe's oil passed through it"(p. 480).

From the geopolitics of energy perspective, by 1960 the Middle East contained about 68 per cent of the proved crude reserves of the free world (Stork, 1973), and the Persian Gulf region was most important oil supplier. Although an inconsiderable amount of oil transferred by pipelines, the most important way to transfer oil was main marine passageway namely Hormuz Strait, which was located in the Persian Gulf, so that controlling this strait meant controlling the oil flows. Therefore, the US concerns about joining the Middle Eastern countries; either Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia and Iraq or Non-Arab countries such as Iran, to the Communism bloc meant losing control of the Persian Gulf area and ultimately declining the power and credibility of the US among its allies around the world. And for this reason some believe that controlling the Middle East and its petroleum was fundamental purpose of Eisenhower doctrine (Klare, 2003). This view is in conformity with what Eisenhower expressed to explain ultimate reason of the Soviets' desire to control the Middle East. He claimed that "the reason for Russia's interest in the Middle East is solely that of power politics. Considering her announced purpose of Communizing the world, it is easy to understand her hope of dominating the Middle East"(Eisenhower, 1957).

Based on this document and according to the US geopolitical codes, the Soviet Union and its allies -such as Egypt and Syria- in region had been defined as enemies and accounted as threat. From this perspective, the main response was containing of them through supporting free nations in the Middle East economically, politically and even military. Obviously, keeping the free world and promotion of freedom against communism expansionism had been defined as justification of the US actions in the region. Such geopolitical codes highlighted importance of controlling the rout of oil flow to the industrial markets.

A regionalist orientation in the US policy

It seems that, the Kennedy Doctrine was also based on the expansion of the former presidents' doctrines, which was anti-soviet and had defined the Soviet Union and international communism expansionism as main threat to free world and process of democratic development. He also similar to others emphasized necessity of the survival and the success of liberty. President Kennedy expressed that "Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and the success of liberty"(Kennedy, 1961). He defined the enemy and said: "as we have friends abroad, we also have enemies. Communism is struggling to subvert and destroy the process of democratic development, to extend its rule to other nations of this hemisphere"(Kennedy, 1963). He believed in to support friends and oppose foes, and from this view, it shows that the US geopolitical code had defined the US enemies and friends and Although, because of Kennedy's emphasis on defence of American values and support of freedom 'noblesse oblige' has been

defined as prominent paradigm (O'Loughlin, 2000), there was a regionalist orientation in his doctrine because geographically its main focus was the western hemisphere, in particular Latin America's states. He also referred to the US southern borders' countries to support them; "To our sister republics south of our border, we offer a special pledge: to convert our good words into good deeds, in a new alliance for progress, to assist free men and free governments in casting off the chains of poverty. But this peaceful revolution of hope cannot become the prey of hostile powers. Let all our neighbours know that we shall join with them to oppose aggression or subversion anywhere in the Americas. And let every other power know that this hemisphere intends to remain the master of its own house"(Kennedy, 1961). His emphasis was to prevent the establishment of any other government similar to Cuba in this geographical part of the world; "the American States must be ready to come the aid of any government requesting aid to prevent a take-over linked to the policies of foreign communism rather than to an internal desire for change. My own country is prepared to do this. We in this hemisphere must also use every resource at our command to prevent the establishment of another Cuba in this hemisphere", he said (Kennedy, 1963).

In May 1965, President Johnson delivered his Johnson Doctrine address, and similar to former president repeated similar words about necessity of preventing a second Cuba in the western hemisphere (Rabe, 2006). The US geopolitical code actually emphasized to continuing the containment policy in specific geographical regions around the world. Although the Latin America was focus of the US foreign policy, the Southeast Asia was also in the core of Johnson Doctrine before the US intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965, so that President Johnson, on 4 August 1964, stressed on "to take all necessary measures in support of freedom and in defense of peace in Southeast Asia"(Johnson, 1964). In this period the US geopolitical codes allowed to employ military force to reach objectives in different regions such as Dominican Republic and Gulf of Tonkin.

Importance of oil, although there was no explicit reference to Middle East oil, it does not mean ignoring the US oil problem by the US leaders. According to Zeiler (1990), "Kennedy's oil import problem stemmed from immediate post-war era...America in 1948 became a net importer of petroleum for the first time since the First World War. The Cold War was another catalyst for oil importers. For defense purposes, the United States hoped to keep this vital commodity available to its allies, conserve its own deposits by importing from foreign sources with secure access routes to America, and buoy the economies of oil-dependent Middle Eastern and South American nations"(p. 289). There were, indeed, the efficient role of oil in political and economic relations between the United States and the Middle Eastern oil-rich countries, but as it was mentioned the main focus was Latin America, and the Venezuela's oil had an important quota in the US oil imports, so that "oil was a main topic of conversation during Kennedy's visit to Venezuela in December, 1961, the first ever by a US president"(Zeiler, 1990, p. 293).

"Oil Crisis" and "Twin pillars" policy towards the Middle East

Reviewing the US geopolitical code concerning the Persian Gulf and the Middle East regions, Nixon's presidency included various efficient factors to reconstruct such code and formation of the US foreign policy. Generally, those factors contained the Vietnam War, Détente policy, Oil Crisis in 1973, Arab-Israeli conflict, Britain's withdrawal from the Persian Gulf and Twin Pillars policy. At first glance, there is this view that President Richard Nixon came to office when the United States was a nation in turmoil mainly due to the Vietnam War. Nixon believed that the lack of transparency in policies, in particular about war, was reason of interior unrests and said: "the American people cannot and should not be asked to support a policy which involves the overriding issues of war and peace unless they know the truth about that policy"(Nixon, 1969). In this respect, He sought "Vietnamization" of the war; a slow withdrawal of American troops coupled with a speeding up of the readiness of Vietnamese. It referred to Nixon's doctrine, where he excluded "the Primary responsibility"; "in cases involving other types of aggression, we shall furnish military and economic assistance when requested in accordance with our treaty commitments. But we shall look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower for its defense"(Nixon, 1969). Indeed, "its key principle was that the United States would call on its allies and friends to supply their own manpower to 'defend' themselves against 'Communist aggression,' while America provided only advice, aid, and arms"(Kimball, 2006, p. 59).

Although other components of the Nixon doctrine was in complete conformity with the prior doctrines⁶ (Lisiero, 2008), changing the geopolitical assumptions of the US political leaders constituted different geopolitical code and consequently formed different approach to implement the containment policy towards different regions such as Vietnam, China, The Middle East and Persian Gulf. In this respect Vietnamization was associated with Détente policy, which formed the longest constant period of regionalism during the Cold War. As Nijman (1993) pointed out, détente reduced the costs of Cold War for the United States as a means to strengthen American hegemony. For him, “the fact that détente had become part and parcel of the ‘imaginary war’ was also expressed in the enormous divergence between the direct and indirect dimensions of the superpower relation. This was supposed to be a time of peaceful coexistence between the superpowers, but it only applied to the direct relationship. On the indirect dimension, conflict continued as if nothing had changed”(p. 115).

In the Middle East due to the US supports of Israel, the soviet influence was increasing via giving military and economic assistance to Egypt, Syria, and Iraq. A cooperation agreement signed between the Soviet Union and Egypt in 1971 legitimated the Soviets presence in the Middle East. Interestingly, it was a result of role playing a geopolitical factor: blockading the Strait of Tiran by Egypt, which increased possibility of direct confrontation between two superpowers (Lundestad, 2010). Ultimately, the Middle East conflict of 1973 occurred and in following years Egypt returned to the United States as a pro-west state and ceased its relation with Soviet. It was the US strategy to eschew relations between regional states and soviets via pressuring the nationalist governments as well as to form alliance systems such as Iraq Pact or Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), to contain threats to western interests (Roberson, 2002). Indeed, the Nixon-Kissinger strategy pursued a kind of maintaining the global balance of against permanent threat, the Soviet expansionism, what was the main idea of containment in the US geopolitical codes. But, differently, it cooperated with some communists, China for instance, to control others and in this respect it pursued modifying the Soviet behaviour through negotiations (Gaddis, 1983).

The internal threats arisen from different sources in the region, War of 1973 and its horrible consequence namely ‘Oil Crisis’ strengthened the necessity of the United States’ presence in the region, which had been occurred with the Britain withdrawal from the Persian Gulf area. Indeed, once again oil played pivotal role in the US policies towards the Middle East, in particular, the US military presence in the Persian Gulf. Indeed, the US military presence in this region turned to Britain withdrawal from ‘east of Suez’ in 1971, when the United State as the successor of Britain undertook a direct actively role in this area (Klare, 2002). It was directly related to protect western countries interests; ensuring the security of oil free flow to the industrial states in especially Europe and Japan and preserving the US position in international rivalries. In this time, “the Persian Gulf accounted for more than 30 per cent of the total oil produced for the international market and boasted more than 60 per cent of the world’s published proved resources.

The producing companies in the Gulf were American, Western European, and Japanese... [and] no industrial state relied more heavily on Persian Gulf oil than Japan, which bought as much as 90 per cent of its crude from there...[and] western Europe as a whole was importing more than 60 per cent of its oil from the Persian Gulf” (Hurewitz, 1972, p. 107). In this condition, region faced a temporary power vacuum due to British withdrawal, and the United States as superior power had to assume responsibility of protecting western interests in the region, in particular, free flow of oil. It included continuing the containment policy through controlling the regional states such as Iraq, so that all was related to oil strongly. Kuwait as a powerful oil state was threatened by Iraq one week after British withdrawal, when Iraq had signed the treaty of cooperation with the Soviet Union in 1972. Probably, it was not accident visiting Iran by the US President, Nixon and his advisor, about one month later, so that based on a fateful agreement Iran accessed to the US weapons.

⁶ President Nixon stressed keeping the US previous commitments as well as defending freedom and keeping the US aids to its allies. He emphasises that for the future “First, the United States will keep all of its treaty commitments. Second, we shall provide a shield if a nuclear power threatens the freedom of a nation allied with us or of a nation whose survival we consider vital to our security. Third, in cases involving other types of aggression, we shall furnish military and economic assistance when requested in accordance with our treaty commitments. But we shall look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower for its defense” for more information see (Nixon, 1969).

Indeed, at the regional level, Iran would be used to balance Iraq, as well as it had an important position in protecting the oil flow due to dominating over the Strait of Hormuz (Yetiv, 2008).

It happened in order to a new policy which was called 'Twin Pillars Policy'. Indeed, the US engaging in the Vietnam, the Nixon doctrine, power vacuum in the Persian Gulf to protect western interests caused implementing this policy through strengthening the two rich-oil countries on the region namely Iran and Saudi Arabia. In this manner, the Washington responsibility about the Persian Gulf security was delegated to regional states. Despite of the existing concerns between both Iran and Saudi Arabia from each other, they were joined against communism and the Soviet Union influence on the region so that practically they helped the Sultan of Oman against a Maoist rebellion in Dhofar in early 1970s (Teitelbaum, 2010).

However, although Iran's measures to prevent the Soviets' influence and protect the US interests on the region, in particular its refusal to join to Arab oil embargo against the west in 1973 crisis, indicated efficiency of twin pillars policy, there is this view that this policy did not prevent two pillars from following up their political and economic interests so that Iran earned the leading role in OPEC to increase oil price as well as pursued nationalization of its oil industry in 1973, and Saudi Arabia became the driving force behind some the political actions on the flow of oil. These measures instigated passions in the United States seriously, so that applying 'oil weapon' by Saudi Arabia led to making decision about military intervention to cease oil embargoes. This view was fully endorsed by President Ford and ultimately highlighted limitations of the 'twin pillars' policy (Acharya, 1989).

An 'intimidation and ultimatum'

In international level, however, the Détente policy was continued by Ford administration and although the United States was engaged in solving the Southeast Asia's issues, President Ford and his Secretary of State Henry Kissinger stressed to resolve Arab conflict with Israel and oil crisis particularly. In this respect, the US President in his speech in the United Nations General Assembly on September 18, 1974 linked crisis of food to oil crisis and said: "The problems of food and energy can be resolved on the basis of cooperation, or can, I should say, [be] made unmanageable on the basis of confrontation... all nations must avoid the abuse of man's fundamental needs for the sake of narrow national or bloc advantage. The attempt by any nation to use one commodity for political purposes will inevitably tempt other countries to use their commodities for their own purposes" (Ford, 1974).

He, indeed, stressed to avoid oil producers in the Persian Gulf using the oil weapon against the west and Israel, which formed 'Oil crisis' in 1973. In this statement oil producers also saw "intimidation and ultimatum" (Ramazani, 1979, p. 64). Once again in history of the US foreign policy it was revealed importance of the Persian Gulf oil reserves as the US vital interest, so that it was a feasible solution implementing military force to ensure free flow of oil into western markets. It also indicated the US paying attention into specific geographical regions around the world and showed that the US geopolitical code prescribed 'Realpolitik' and 'Regionalism' for the US foreign policy during both Nixon and Ford presidencies with emphasizing the oil security.

An explicit announcement; the Persia Gulf as the US vital interests

Defining the Persian Gulf as the US vital interest, it was distinctly announced by President Carter in his state of the Union address on January 23, 1980. This state of the union address so-called Carter Doctrine and was first enunciated in which accessing to the oilfields of the Persian Gulf area recognised necessity for the America's economy and, for this reason, President informed congress and the American people that any antagonistic effort to prevent such access would be regarded an attack on the US 'vital interests'(Klare, 2006). It is significant to mention that, since the State of the Unions are taken into account as a geopolitical act with a pivotal role for the president at the foreign policy agenda, as well as those speeches "identify particular threats or dangers, and classify regions and countries in colourful terms that imply particular necessary, if not inevitable, actions" (Flint, Adduci, Chen, & Chi, 2009, p. 605), thus those are an important element to analyze the US geopolitical code. Here and in this state of the union address it has, explicitly somehow that had never stated before that, been referred to the Persian Gulf as the US interest, and hereby it has demonstrated the close connection between the US geopolitical code and the significance of the Persian Gulf region. President Carter reminded that this area "contains more than two-thirds of the world's exportable oil" and declared:

“Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force” (1980).

It indicates, at the first glance, the essential demands of the US and its western allies to oil of this area. As it has been written by Levy (1980), the United States depended to the Persian Gulf oil for over 30 per cent of its oil imports, Western Europe also depended for over 60 per cent, and Japan for over 70 per cent. In this manner, the Soviet expansionism has been recognised as main threat to the west geostrategic realm and its interests, as it had been operated during past years after the Second World War to date, under title of containment policy. The Soviets’ dominance over the crucial regions such as the Persian Gulf had always been an important anxiety for the US policymakers, in particular, after taking place of two significance events in 1979: the Soviet Union invasion of Afghanistan and the Islamic revolution in Iran. Indeed, Carter doctrine was interpreted regarding to confront with occupation of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union and controlling of any hostile nation in the region such as Iran (Klare, 2006).

It is clear the strong connection between the Persian Gulf’s resources and the US containment policy within Carter statement, where he declared: “The region which is now threatened by Soviet troops in Afghanistan is of great strategic importance: It contains more than two thirds of the world’s exportable oil. The Soviet effort to dominate Afghanistan has brought Soviet military forces to within 300 miles of the Indian Ocean and close to the Straits of Hormuz, a waterway through which most of the world’s oil must flow. The Soviet Union is now attempting to consolidate a strategic position; therefore, that poses a grave threat to the free movement of Middle East oil” (Carter, 1980). It included both major anxiety: the Soviet Unions’ expansion as a global rival in the cold war geopolitical world order on the one hand, and its danger concerning to control of the main oil-field in the world and free oil flows toward west on the other.

In addition, emergence of Islamic Republic of Iran in this vital area as a hostile nation would threaten the US interest in the region, which had been started with the “hostage crisis”⁷ in Iran on November 4, 1979. In this respect there also was possible the Soviets influence in Iran as another important anxiety for the US leaders, what was reminded by Carter: “the real danger to their [Iranian] nation lies in the north” (1980). Carter administration, however, to protect the US oil interests in the Persian Gulf pursued managing region with assist of petro-Islamicist regimes through the control of any possible threat (Shohat, 1992). Strengthening of military presence in the region, however, was a response to mentioned likely threats, which had been predicted in 1979 and was introduced under title of the Rapid Deployment Force⁸. As Klare (2006) argued, Carter to implement his policy “established the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) and deployed a permanent US naval presence in the [Persian] Gulf. And while they may have employed different language, all the presidents who succeed Carter have reaffirmed the basic premises of his 1980 doctrine and have taken steps to enhance America’s capacity to project military force into the greater Persian Gulf region”(p. 32).

In this period the Persian Gulf’s oil as the US vital interest was distinctly placed in the core of the US political leaders’ geopolitical assumptions. Defining this geographical area as a vital region for the United States, introducing the Soviet Union and any hostile nation such as Islamic Republic of Iran as threats as well as projecting military response to possible threats in this region reveals the structure of the US geopolitical code in the Carter’s presidential term. Such code clearly with a regional orientation emphasised specific geographical regions, in particular, Middle East and Southeast Asia.

⁷ Early in November 1979, fifty-two US diplomats were held hostage for 444 days by some Iranian students, who took over the Embassy of the United States after victory of the Iranian Islamic revolution. The US army attempted to release them through Operation Eagle Claw on April 24, 1980, which was unsuccessful and led to destruction of two aircraft and the deaths of a few American soldiers. It was an unlucky defeat for Carter administration and hostages were released just in the beginning of the Ronald Reagan’s presidency. For more information see (Bowden, 2006).

⁸ The Rapid Development Forces (RDF) was introduced by President Carter on October 1, 1979, and was constructed in 1980-1981. That included those forces which could operate independently. It was able to cover geographical areas Korea, the Persian Gulf and the Middle East with emphasising on the Persian Gulf because of oil as the US vital interest. This force was promoted to the United States Central Command (USCENTCOM) in 1983, and Southwest Asia and Northeast Africa was designated as its area of operations. For more information see (Miglietta, 2002).

Reagan's policy; different way, same purpose

Reagan, however, although criticized his predecessors' policies and never accepted the policy of détente, he continued containing the Soviet Union with emphasising on the rolling back idea and also supporting specific anti-communism movements in different geographical areas. From this view, Carter strategy had caused the Soviet expansionism and had formed its efforts to attain military superiority, although in practice the Reagan administration kept the covert arms assistance to the Afghan mujahedin, what had been begun during the Carter administration (Pach, 2006). In addition, it was pursued protecting the US interests in the Southwest Asia, in particular, the Persian Gulf through to strengthen the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) to the US Central Command (CENTCOM) in 1983, what had been established by Carter in 1980 (Delucchi & Murphy, 2008).

In fact, the Carter doctrine was given a fresh force by President Ronald Reagan. He charged CENTCOM with the mission of defending the flow of the Persian Gulf oil to the Western markets. The adherence between Carter doctrine and Reagan policy was revealed when the "reflagging" of Kuwaiti oil tankers with the American ensign approved by Reagan and they were protected by US naval forces during the Iran-Iraq War in the Persian Gulf area. That action was mentioned as the US commitment to the flow of oil through the Persian Gulf (Klare, 2006). Scott (1996), generally, referred to the role of American decision makers in the Reagan doctrine who believed to "resource wars" against the Soviets' efforts to gain control over vital strategic resources and transit routes, and in this order the United States needed responding the Soviet strategy in regions such as the Persian Gulf and Red Sea. This policy had been linked with the important components of the Reagan Doctrine.

President Reagan and his key administration officials saw good and evil as two main camps in the world and from this view the Soviet Union was the reason of all trouble. According them, the Soviets were expanding into the developing world in all regions and advocated more active efforts to "roll back" Soviets by supporting anti-communist movements around the world. Reagan in his state of the union address delivered on February 6, 1985 declared: "we must not break faith with those who are risking their lives—on every continent, from Afghanistan to Nicaragua—to defy Soviet-supported aggression and secure rights which have been ours from birth (Reagan, 1985).

Prior to that, in 1983, Reagan had approved National Security Directive (NSDD) 75, which had defined containing Soviet expansionism and had prescribed helping "democratic movements and forces" against those developing nations who had aligned with Soviets. This document stressed that "the US objective is to keep maximum pressure on Moscow for withdrawal" from Afghanistan, also, "in the third world, Moscow must know that areas of interest to the US cannot be attacked or threatened without risk of serious US military countermeasures" (NSDD-75, 1983). Based on this strategy, the United States acted across a broad area from Latin America to Asia and Africa, especially in Granada, Libya, Angola, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Iran, Laos, Lebanon, Nicaragua, Vietnam and Afghanistan (Lisiero, 2008). Among these regions, in this research, Afghanistan was very important, and indeed, assisting to mujahedin kept the US interests, because, as Lagon (1992) noted, that area had been adjoined to Pakistan and the Persian Gulf and the United States prevented presence of the soviets in Southwest Asia and the Persian Gulf area for keeping free flow of oil toward the US and its allies, in particular, in the western Europe and Japan.

At that time, therefore, there clearly was an evil; the Soviet Union who must be deterred from expansionism in different places by more effective than containment strategy what was called rolling back. Moreover, the US geopolitical code, had a globalism tendency, but simultaneously, it was acted in the specific geographical regions politically and military. Indeed, it states prominent of 'noblesse oblige' and 'world of regions' paradigms together (O'Loughlin, 2000), and concurrent with stressing on the US values such as Freedom and Democracy, the US vital interest pursued extremely. According to Nijman (1993) "globalism returned again towards the of the decade and reached its post-war zenith in the last stretch of Cold War, during Reagan's presidency...under his leadership, the realist and idealist logics were temporarily reconciled...there was no discrepancy between American ideals and American interests,...America's tough stand and roll-back of communism was the right thing to do, and served America's geopolitical interests at the same time"(p. 133). In sum, the US geopolitical code stressed on spreading the American values, while it recognised the Persian Gulf and free oil flow towards the western markets as the US vital interests.

Conclusion

The History shows that oil of the Persian Gulf has been significant for the United States even before the Second World War, but the US official presence in this area has been started from 1971, when withdrawal of Britain from this region was begun. Beginning of the Cold War as well as starting the ideological and strategic tensions between two victors of the War highlighted some specific geographical regions. One of the most important regions was the Persian Gulf in the Middle East because of its geostrategic location and more importantly its oil, in particular, for the United States and its western allies. On the other side, the Soviet Union attempted to access this area because of accessing to high seas and its expansionism policy. Perceiving the Soviets' threat by the President Truman administration lead to defining the containment policy, what became known as the US geopolitical code during Cold War era. From that time preventing to access the Soviet Union as the main enemy to the Persian Gulf became the main basis of different policies in different presidencies towards this area, so that one main geopolitical code or containment was applied throughout the Cold War by using the various methods. President Carter explicitly declared this area as the US vital interests and the US military presence was strengthened from that time. That was due to importance of the Persian Gulf's oil and its free flow to the capitalist world as well as keeping the US hegemony, in particular, in the western hemisphere against the challenger communist world and its expansionism policy.

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