

War and the Conquest of Eurasia: Iran's "Green Wave" Opposition and its Ties to Global Geopolitics

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The Russian and Chinese need for a strategic Iranian partner is a component of any defensive strategy or viable alternative against American and European Union encroachment into their geopolitical spheres of interest.

In 2009, the Russian and Chinese need for having a government in power in Tehran that would be allied to them became apparent during the 2009 period of post-election restlessness in Iran. Moscow, Beijing, and many other capitals worldwide all kept close eyes on Iran when riots and protests spilled into Iranian streets.

The "Green Wave" or Green Revolution pertains to the riots by a segment of the opposition after Iran's 2009 presidential elections. The movement gets its name from the colour of the Iranian flag that presidential candidate Mir-Hussein Mousavi selected. This event could have become a geo-political coup against the political entity of *Eurasia*. It very well could have become a bona fide geo-political threat to the interests of Russia and China. Inversely, the Green Wave was welcomed by America, Britain, France, Germany, Israel and their allies.

In order to understand the Sino-Russian need for Iran, the geo-political dimensions of the Green Wave need to be discussed, as well as how these factors are linked to Iran as a geo-strategic pivot and its policy options as a political player on the international stage. A related dimension is the cohesive development of a unified order in Eurasia that the U.S. and its allies are trying to halt. Iran is crucial in the process of Eurasian cohesion which involves a core triple alliance consisting of the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, and Iran.

The Green Wave and the political riots that broke out in Iran emerged for a large number of inter-linked reasons. There were different motivations amongst its members and organizers. There are different explanations and perspectives on the causes and motivations of the Green Wave. All these factors are part of a broader understanding of the relationship between internal Iranian politics and global geo-politics.

Amid the descriptions of the Green Wave as a democratic struggle or a fight for greater civil liberties, however, is the fact that it reflects an element of in-fighting amongst the Iranian elites. This point is crucial. For all intents and purposes, this key feature of the Green Wave is what must be kept in mind when discussing it at the geo-political level.



Utilitarian Geo-Strategy and the War Preparations of Eurasia

It is easy to overlook the impact of geographic factors in historical, political, social, and economic development.

Most scholars and analysts correctly try to avoid the simplistic fallacies of geographical determinism. Yet, the role of geography should not be overlooked in the course of human development. For example, energy production is tied to the physical reality of a land and in the past a people living on a coastline would be oriented towards the sea and fishing in most, if not all, aspects of their collective lives, from the economic to the socio-cultural. By the same token human actions should not be attributed to geography alone. Human agency has always had a role to play in the developmental path of humans and their societies.

In regards to the matters at hand, they are inescapably tied to a geographic reality that is too strong to be ignored. The drive to control Eurasia by the *Periphery* is part of this. This drive, which has been pushing inwards towards the Eurasian Heartland, has been framed in many different ways throughout modern history. The *Periphery* is a conceptual term applied to the U.S., Britain, the E.U., Japan, Australia, and their allies, which are essentially states outside of Eurasia or on its outskirts.

A new term must also be applied at this point: *utilitarian geo-strategy*. Utilitarian geo-strategy, a term coined herein, is the application or projection of utilitarianism or utilitarian values to geo-politics. The term is new, but this mode of thinking is not. This term captures both the spirit and the basis of modern geo-strategy and gives it a tangible form. Today it is utilitarian geo-strategy, with its materialist basis, that is the dogma behind the march to war in the Middle East and the rest of Eurasia.

Halford J. Mackinder also understood this reality in terms of what he called *strategic geography*. Mackinder stated that every organized state, which he called a civilized nation, was related to the physical land that it occupied in two ways: "Whatever the exchanges

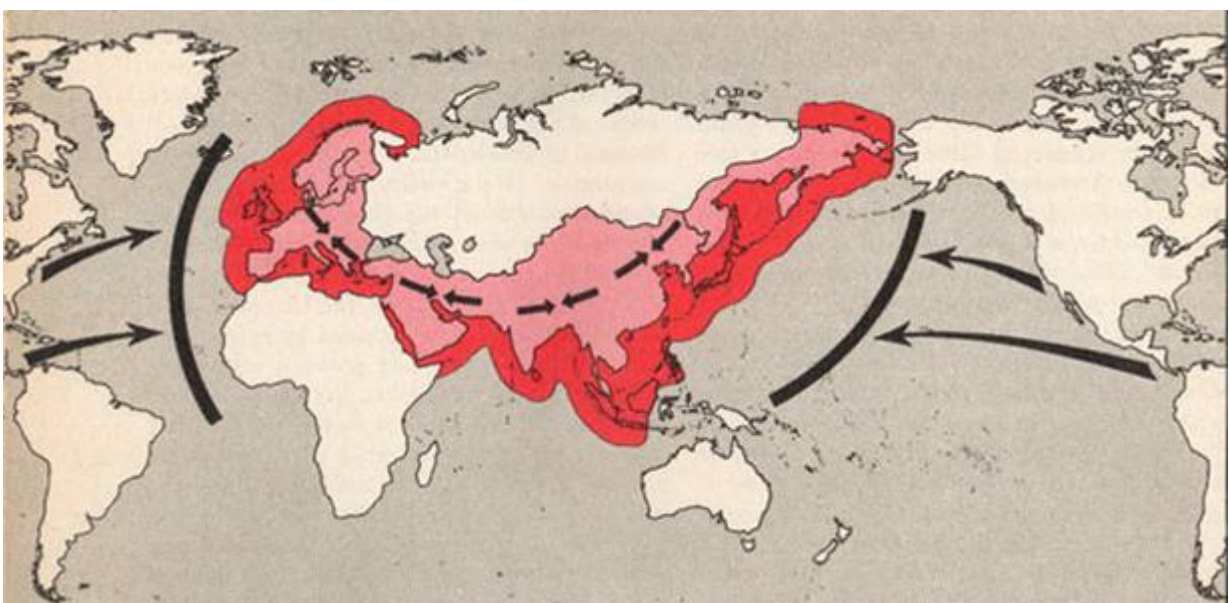
effected by trading, [a country] is (1) ultimately dependent upon the past and present [products] of its own territory, and (2) [a country] must be prepared to defend that territory against the intrusion of covetous neighbours.”[1] It is precisely in preparation for these phenomena that Eurasia’s countries are preparing themselves for; they are preparing to defend their territories against intrusion in all its forms, ranging military occupation to economic colonization.

The basis of the matter is clearly economic and pedestalled on utilitarian values. Mackinder too recognized this economic nature. He wrote as follows on the subject: “The two groups of ideas involved may be roughly indexed under the terms economic and strategic. We may describe economic geography as concerned with raising and distribution of commodities, and strategic geography as dealing with the larger topographical conditions of offence and defence. But the problems to be solved are closely inter-related, for defence is essentially the protection of the means of economic subsistence...” [2]

The planet Earth’s largest spatial entity is Eurasia and it has the longest coast, largest population, a tremendous wealth of natural resources (from energy to minerals), the largest work force, and the largest share of global economic activity.

If the nations of Eurasia were to unite as one player they would in all respects be unmatched. Preventing Eurasian cohesion has been one of the primary aims of the U.S. and its allies. Above all, this preventionist policy practiced by the U.S. has targeted four Eurasian states: Russia, China, India, and Iran, as well as the entire post-Soviet space.

What we are dealing with is the framework of geo-political and geo-strategic manoeuvres by the U.S. and its allies in Eurasia on the one hand and the counter-manoevres of Russia, China, and Iran, on the other. It is also at this point where a Eurasian alliance comes into discussion. India has managed to guard itself from the geo-political firing line and has kept a sheltered distance from a Eurasian alliance or entente. Russia, Iran, and China – the other three Eurasian states mentioned – in all practical terms have formed a real alliance through various formal and informal agreements, understandings, ties, and organizations.



What sets Iran aside from Russia and China?

Although very influential, Iran is not as large a power or nation as China, Russia, and India.

Nor is Iran as strong as these other Eurasian states, but the Iranian role in this Eurasian equation is very significant.

Moreover, Iran is characterised by “geo-political flexibility” in contrast to the other big Eurasian states. Almost all countries are to some extent geo-strategic pivots, but the degree to which they are a geo-strategic pivot varies. Iran is a heavy geo-strategic pivot, which simply means that all geo-political players must adjust their policies, behaviours, and strategies on the basis of Iranian behaviour. In other words, Tehran’s behaviour is a global game changer.

Iran is also distinguished by another important attribute. Unlike Beijing and Moscow, Tehran essentially can strike a long-term deal with the U.S. and its allies. Any agreement struck between the U.S. and its allies with the Russians and Chinese can only be a short-term arrangement. In the long-run China and Russia are the ultimate targets of American encroachment in Eurasia. It is the survival of Russia and China as independent nations states which is at stake.

Both Moscow and Beijing are major economic rivals and threats to U.S. hegemony. Due to geography the vast influences, resources, markets, and territories of Russia and China are the ultimate prize for the U.S. and its allies. India too, in the long-term faces real jeopardy. For America, the elimination of all rivals and potential rivals are part of this policy.

In line with the utilitarian geo-strategy being used by the U.S. and its allies, Washington can afford to make a compromise or deal with Iran and co-opt Tehran, unlike Beijing and Moscow. This statement, however, has to be qualified further; the U.S. can afford to make a compromise or deal with Tehran that is if the Iranians were not a real threat to American control and interests, which Israel also represents, in the Middle East. In the late 1990s, Zbigniew Brzezinski warned that “[I]t is not in America’s interest to perpetuate American-Iranian hostility.” [3] Brzezinski warned that Iran should not be antagonized by America into a position where Tehran would ally itself with Russia and China.

This U.S. willingness to deal with Iran is primarily due to the geographic scale or size of Iran, which is much smaller than either Russia or China. Iran can manage to exist with a smaller share of global resources and influence due to its smaller size and population, but both Russia and, more specifically, China are not able to do so in the longer term. Brzezinski argues in this regard: “Any eventual reconciliation [between America and Iran] should be based on the recognition of a mutual strategic interest in stabilizing what currently is a very volatile regional environment for Iran.” [4]

What Brzezinski means by this statement is that joint Iranian-American cooperation and *control* should be pursued in Iran’s immediate neighbourhoods, which are the Middle East, Central Asia, and possibly the Caucasus. He further qualified his statement: “Admittedly, any such reconciliation [by America and Iran] must be pursued by both sides and is not a [favour] granted by one to the other.” [5] What Brzezinski means is that Iran must be bargained or haggled with and an understanding must be reached between the elites of both Iran and America.

This geo-strategic position puts Iran in a unique position, which enables it to detach itself from Russia and China and make a Libya-like arrangement with the U.S. and its allies. A Libya-like arrangement is as follows; Libya was in the cross-hairs of the Anglo-American war march before 2003, but Tripoli gave in to the U.S. and E.U. after it saw Baghdad fall.

Tripoli was also aware of what American and British leaders were planning; it started secret negotiations with the White House in 2001. Since then Libya has made major energy deals with the U.S. and its allies and its leader, Colonel Qaddafi, has since been welcomed back into the international community. This has been part of the policy course that in the past Brzezinski had recommended to the US administration in dealing with Libya, Iraq, and Iran.

Tehran can be used to Destabilize and Balkanize Russia and China

Iran could also seriously destabilize Russia and China through support to their separatist movements, which have ethno-cultural ties to Iran. Brzezinski states: "A strong, even religiously motivated but not fanatically anti-Western Iran is in the U.S. interest, and ultimately even the Iranian political elite may recognize that reality." [6] What he could mean is that if cooperation between Iran and America took place that both nations could work together to start dividing the republics of the former Soviet Union between them and that Iran's ties to Islam could be used to control Central Asia and the Caucasus and counter Russian and Chinese influence in both regions. In other words, Iran could effectively be used to counter Chinese and Russian interests in these regions as an arm of America.

In regards to understanding the Green Wave, what Brzezinski says about the Iranian political elites and their recognition of "reality" is key. He is referring to two things. Firstly, the geo-political flexibility of Iran, which has thus far been explained, and secondly, the pragmatist camp in Iran, which will be addressed, that wants cooperation with America in a global order which includes Iran.

In regards to co-opting Iran, Brzezinski also writes: "American long-range interests in Eurasia would be better served by abandoning existing U.S. objections to closer Turkish-Iranian economic cooperation, especially in the construction of new pipelines, and also in the construction of other links between Iran, [the Republic of] Azerbaijan, and Turkmenistan." [7]

What was being implied through this statement was the buttressing of Iran against Russian control of Eurasian energy routes and American support for Nabucco and Nabucco-like energy pipelines. Additionally, it may well be that the ongoing integration of both the Iranian and Syrian economies and markets with that of the Turkish economy and market would incorporate both Iran and Syria into the global economy and make them more susceptible to American and E.U. control. In other words, the end result could be that both Iran and Syria could find themselves inadvertently part of the American and E.U. global system.

Thus, the overall nature of this situation, with the utilitarian geo-strategy at its basis, leads to a paradox. In the *longer-term* the U.S. and its allies can negotiate with the Iranians, but in order to avert cohesion in Eurasia and to prevent Russia and China from appropriately preparing themselves or challenging U.S. hegemony in the *shorter-term* they can not negotiate with Tehran. This is why the Iranian nuclear issue, which is based on what the U.S., the E.U., and Israel have painted as a finite window of time, is the primary grounds for negotiations with Iran. Naturally, if there must be a shorter-term outcome for the U.S. then there can no longer really be a *longer-term* solution or understanding between the U.S. and Iran.



Using Turkey to Coax Iran away from the Eurasians?

The ties between Ankara and Tehran have been getting stronger. Both states are talking about a common market and regional free-trade in the Middle East. Already a series of free-trade agreements have been signed involving Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, and Iran. The Turkish government has also been pushing Libya to sign a free-trade agreement with Ankara.

The amicable relations Ankara has fostered with Iran and Syria can be used to (1) explain what appears to be a Turkish shift in foreign policy and (2) the public chill in ties between Israel and Turkey. This, however, could be part of (3) a U.S. strategy to coax Iran and Syria into its orbit and away from Iran's Russian and Chinese allies. The development of the so-called Iranian-Syrian-Turkish Axis should take place with caution, because things may end up being quite different than the establishment of a genuine regional alliance and bloc.



Neo-Conservatives at the Helm of American Foreign Policy: The Grand Blunder and Iran

Why has Iran refused to budge? There could be several reasons, including an Iranian calculation that the U.S. and its allies will succumb to the rising strength of Russia, China, and Iran if Tehran remains in the entente of Eurasia with Moscow and Beijing. Another reason could be because of the blunder of the neo-conservatives running American foreign policy. The Iranians will not trust the U.S. and its allies due to the strategic blunder of George W. Bush Jr. and his administration, which gave foreign policy control mostly to the neo-conservatives or neo-cons. [8]

While Zbigniew Brzezinski has been categorized as an American foreign policy realist, the neo-conservatives have not. Both the realists and the neo-conservatives share the same economic objectives, but how they go about doing it is different.

The neo-conservatives use ideology as a means to depict reality. Moreover, realists believe that wars should not be fought to further U.S. interests unless necessary, while neo-conservatives believe that military might must actively be used to shape the global environment. The realists are also pragmatic or opportunists in international relations, while the neo-conservatives are unrelenting in regards to policy with a black and white depiction of international relations.

While George W. Bush Jr. was in the Oval Office, the neo-conservatives had great influence over the Pentagon and foreign policy. It was under the neo-conservatives that the Bush Jr. Administration turned their backs on Tehran after the Iranian government helped America and Britain in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan and tried to make a grand bargain via the Swiss government.[9] Perhaps drunk with victory and hubris in what seemed like easy wins over Afghanistan and Iraq and with the surrender of Libya, the Bush Jr. White House thought that it could press forward in subduing Iran. It was at this point in time that senior members of the Bush Jr. Administration were enthusiastically saying: "Anyone can go to Baghdad! Real men go to Tehran!"

Iran was already the last nation on a list of countries to be subdued that also included Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Somalia, Lebanon, and Syria. In one way or another, the U.S. had directly or indirectly attacked or subdued each one of these countries since 2001. Moreover, it was also during this timeframe that the U.S. tried to accuse Syria in the same fashion as Iraq of having weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and even openly talked about invading Syria. Israel also tried to instigate a war with Syria, which Damascus said was part of a ploy to create a pretext for an American and British invasion of Syria.

Regardless of the reasons for the Bush Jr. Administration's decision not to deal with Iran, it was a major geo-strategic error for the United States. Not dealing with Iran was a massive blunder that could very well have cost the U.S. elites their objective of primacy over Eurasia. This U.S. blunder pushed Tehran further into the arms of Russia and China.

Pragmatic Iran: A Wild Card in the Eurasian Deck?

Iran is a regional power that *can* challenge the U.S., Russia, and China for hegemony in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Middle East.

In 1993, Brzezinski said that "Iran is clearly an aspirant to regional hegemony and it is prepared to outwait the United States." [10] He adds: "[Iran] has an imperial tradition and

possesses both the religious and nationalist motivation to contest both the American and the Russian presence in the area. In doing so, it can count on the religious sympathy of its [neighbours]. With both religion and nationalism conspiring against an alien regional hegemony, the current American supremacy in the Middle East is built, quite literally, on sand.” [11]

Even though China and Russia allowed United Nations Security Council sanctions to be imposed on Iran, both did so to keep Iran within their camp. Moscow and Beijing went along with U.N. sanctions in order to keep Iran, an independent ally and potential rival, in place. Their support of U.N. sanctions is limited and will only go so far as it serves their strategic interests. This is why both are against unilateral sanctions against Iran and are opposed to U.S. and E.U. sanctions.

Both China and Russia are well aware that the U.S. would rather co-opt Iran into its ambitious scheme for Eurasia as a satellite or partner rather than risk open warfare. The aim of Sino-Russian objectives is to prevent any rapprochement between Washington and Tehran. Iranian needs are, in this regard, far easier to accommodate for the U.S. than are those of China and Russia.

To keep a safe distance between the U.S. and Iran is one of the reasons why Beijing and Moscow have supported limited U.N. sanctions. As Iran is forced to draw away from the so-called Western World it further integrates itself with Russia and China. U.N. economic sanctions also oblige Iran to shift its economic ties away from the E.U. and towards Russia, China, the former Soviet republics, the Bolivarian Bloc, and Asian countries. This shift has resulted in the replacement of E.U. members like Italy and Germany by countries like China as Iran’s main trading partners.

According to the European Commission, in 2004 the E.U. accounted for 35.1 percent of the total market share of trade with Iran. [12] According to the same figures, in 2004 Iran was also ranked twenty-fourth in the European Union’s total trade volume and Iran was one of the top six suppliers of energy to the European Union. [13] As E.U. trade with Iran has started to decline Asian trade has inversely risen. Russia and China are moving in to fill the trade voids and thus securing Iran further within their Eurasian camp. In simple terms, Moscow and Beijing are removing the flexibility of Iran to leave the orbit of their Eurasian entente.

In regards to neutralizing Iranian rivalry, one set of U.N. sanctions against Iran are also directed against the Iranian defence industry and Iranian military exports. This is a means to eliminate competition from Iran, which has a growing defence industry that makes a wide range of military hardware from tanks to military aircraft and rockets. Iran was also exporting weapons to NATO states as clients before the U.N. sanctions.

The re-orientation of Tehran’s trade and international relationships is advantageous to Russia and China. As German banks like Commerzbank AG, Dresdner Bank AG, and Deutsche Bank AG sever their ties with Iran the financial vacuum is filled by Asian banks and investors. The Iranian banking sector has also become seriously involved with the banking sectors of Venezuela, Syria, Belarus, and several ex-Soviet republics.

The Iranian shift away from the E.U. towards non-E.U. and Asian states was also a foreign policy goal of the administration of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. This new foreign policy was dubbed in Iran as “looking to the East.” As a mixture of sanctions and the policies of

Ahmadinejad this shift is reflected in Iran's gravitation and attraction towards the SCO, the Commonwealth of Independent States (C.I.S.), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC).

The Differences between Iranian-Russian and Chinese-Iranian Bilateral Relations

Beijing is the most important player in the triple entente of Eurasia. Iranian and Chinese interests conflict less with one another than those of Moscow and Tehran. Overall, both Tehran and Moscow give higher priority and value to their ties with China than with one another.

Both Russia and Iran are exporters of energy, while China is an importer of energy resources. The Russians and Iranians also are interested in controlling many of the same markets. Both have intensive interest in the South Caucasus and in control of the energy corridors around the Caspian Sea Basin. For these reasons the Kremlin wants Iran to be strong enough to challenge and resist America and its allies, but not strong enough to challenge Moscow over influence in the republics of the former Soviet Union. This can also be used to explain why Moscow has pressured Tehran to enrich uranium through Russia or on Russian territory the tensions between Tehran and Moscow under President Dmitry Medvedev.

The People's Republic of China has a vested interest in a strong Iran, albeit a strong Iran that is unfriendly with America. Chinese-Iranian bilateral relations are mutually beneficial. Chinese strategists see Iran as one of the four re-emerging centres of global power; the others are Russia, China, and India. Brazil is an emerging (and not re-emerging) centre of power. On April 9, 2008 during a visit to Tehran the Chinese Assistant-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zhai Jun, stated that Iran's growth of power in the Middle East and globally is in Beijing's interest, while meeting with Iranian officials. [14]

Fortress Eurasia is Vulnerable without Iran: Moscow and Beijing need Tehran

Beijing and Moscow are both aware of the ramifications of a major American-led war against Iran and its allies in the Middle East. The Russians are aware that if Iran were to fall then the U.S. and NATO would focus on Russia as next in the firing line.

Iran is best described by what the German geographer and scholar Georg Stadtmüller called, in reference to Albania, as a "*Durchgangsland*" (gateway state). [15] Iran is the *Durchgangsland* into the former Soviet Union and Russia's soft underbelly.

If Iran were to shift its orbit, Moscow would be in jeopardy. Russia would lose an important ally and the U.S. would open a major gateway into the Caspian Sea, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. The doorway to Russia's "Near Abroad" would be swung open through Iran. Iran is also the cheapest and most ideal route for exporting the oil and the gas of these regions.

The Russian military-industrial complex would also be weakened because of the closure of a lucrative market if Iran were to enter the Anglo-American and Franco-German orbit. Russian plans, in partnership with Iran, to create a powerful gas cartel similar to OPEC that would also involve Turkmenistan, Venezuela, Bolivia, and Algeria would also be shattered. On the other hand, China is aware that its energy security would be threatened further and the Chinese economy would be held hostage to foreign edicts because of Chinese energy

needs.

Due to all these factors a tactical and strategic understanding has been cautiously paved in Eurasia between Moscow, Beijing, and Tehran. What initially started due to necessity has become a Eurasian triple entente. A major attack on Iran therefore will be an attack on Russia and China.



The Green Wave and its ties to Global Geo-Politics

So with all these factors at play in regards to the Iranian equation, what effect do they have on the Green Wave? Nationalism, geo-political speculation, capital, and demands for civil liberties have been facing off in Iran; the clashes that resulted from the 2009 Iranian presidential elections, that were held on July 12, are a result of these dynamics.

The geo-politics of confrontation between Eurasia and the Periphery became evident in the streets of Tehran and other Iranian major cities, like Tabriz and Shiraz, through the chants of the Green Wave. Not only did they oppose the re-election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and accused his side of rigging the presidential election through fraud, but made accusations against Russia and China.

Their chants included: "Down with Russia and China!" and "No to Lebanon and no to Gaza!" The street chants of the Iranian opposition suggest a correlation between the regional theatres in the Middle East (Lebanon and the Palestinian Territories) and the broader theatres in Eurasia involving Russia, China, the U.S., and NATO.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was also congratulated by Russia's President Dmitry Medvedev and China's President Hu Jintao in the Russian city of Yekaterinburg during an SCO meeting on July 16, 2009. President Ahmadinejad arrived in Russia after the Iranian elections. Beijing, Moscow, and the SCO collectively threw their political support behind Ahmadinejad. The welcomed treatment of Ahmadinejad, even as an observer, at the Yekaterinburg Summit shows the Russian and Chinese attachment towards advocates of the Primakov Doctrine in Iran and an Iranian government opposed to U.S. policy.



Internal Divisions Amongst Iranian Elites

While the conditions in Iran existed for political dissent, it was powerful internal actors in Iran that helped unleash them after the re-election of Ahmadinejad. In part, the events behind the riots in Iran were fuelled by internal divisions amongst the ruling class in Iran. Mehdi Karroubi, one of the presidential candidates, also alluded during the presidential debates that there would be a post-election struggle.

These divisions are linked to Iran's "flexibility" in the geo-political chess match for Eurasia. The fact that Iran can negotiate with the U.S. in the short-term has a bearing on its internal divisions. The pragmatic nature of certain elite circles in Iran is also part of these internal divisions.

Behind the scenes in Tehran, state price controls, manufacturing regulations, the removal of regulations on the Iranian finance and banking sector, and privatization have been issues at play. Large portions of state infrastructure and state assets have been sold and privatized. Iranian citizens for years enjoyed state subsidies, which contributed to keeping the price of foodstuffs, fuel, electricity, and other essential commodities at levels significantly below international prices. The Iranian government, however, has slowly been removing these state subsidies.

Politics makes for strange bedfellows. Within the framework of the events leading to the Green Wave was a face-off within the Iranian elite between one side which wanted to preserve current policies and another that was formed by an alliance between Iranian business interests and civil liberties organizations. In the second camp of Iranian capital and civil liberties, the former group hid behind the latter group. This alliance between Iranian capital and groups demanding greater civil liberties may come as a surprise to some, but it is neither a historical nor political anomaly. Many movements and revolutions have been configured through such alliances.



Alexis de Tocqueville's work identified the French Revolution as a capitalist revolution. The goal of the French Revolution was not to destroy the state or organized religion, but to impose economic reformation and specifically the removal of restrictions on private property. In 1789 this was explicitly stated in Article Seventeen of the *Déclaration des droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen* (Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen): "Property being a sacred to and inviolable right, no one can be deprived of it, unless illegally established public necessity evidently demands it, under the condition of a just and prior indemnity." [16]

In its quest to remove economic restrictions French capital (business interests) aligned itself with the call for greater individual liberties and the ideas of the French Enlightenment. Under the new political order of the French Revolution, the bourgeois members of the Third Estate abolished state price controls, outlawed guilds (the forerunners of trade unions), removed restrictions on manufacturing, removed the regulations on finance and banking, removed the feudal rights of peasants, and finally appropriated and sold state and Roman Catholic Church lands as private property. [17] A massive wave of privatization consumed Revolutionary France. The French Revolution of 1848 also saw the same scenario unfold with an alliance between the working class and small capital. This historical scenario is in many regards relevant to the situation in present-day Iran.

On the other side of the divide is the political camp of Ahmadinejad and his political allies, which includes both fervent revolutionary ideologues and Iranian business interests. They want Iran either firmly entrenched within the Eurasian alliance formed with China and Russia or as part of a new regional order in the Middle East. The military leadership of Iran, in both the Regular Iranian Armed Forces and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, also supports these positions. On the other hand Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, his allies, and many of the business elite in Iran want a far more pragmatic or opportunistic course for Iran, like that of India. This latter group that Rafsanjani is a part of also does not want the window of time for negotiations with the U.S. and the E.U. to pass either.



Rafsanjani is a very wealthy individual, a former Iranian president, and a powerful political figure. He is chairman of both the Iranian Expediency Council as well as the Assembly of Experts. He personifies Iranian capitalism and the interests of the Iranian economic elite. Amongst his allies are Mohammed Khatami, the Iranian president from 1997 to 2005. Rafsanjani and his allies want the Iranian economy de-regulated; they embrace economic neo-liberalism, and want the Iranian economy to be fully integrated into the global economy. This camp is also willing to work against Russian and Chinese interests if it benefits them. Although the privatization of the national industries and state assets of Iran has continued into the second term of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, it was originally pushed forward by Rafsanjani, Khatami and their allies during Khatami's tenure as president.



In this divide amongst the Iranian ruling class, the advocates of civil liberties and freedoms are also mired and even being played as cards. These individuals have flocked to the banner of Mir-Hussein Mousavi, the last serving prime minister of Iran before the office was absorbed into the office of the Iranian president. Both Rafsanjani and Khatami have also put their support behind Mousavi. Greater civil liberties or the election results may be the concern of many of the protesters, but for most the ruling elites what is at stake is much different.

The divide within the Iranian political elites has caused a political rapture in Tehran. Both sides accuse one another publicly of corruption. On Iranian public television, one notable instance was during the Iranian presidential election debates when Ahmadinejad accused Rafsanjani and his family of high treason and corruption. There were also notable tensions about the Central Bank of Iran (CBI); the opposition argued that the Central Bank and banking should not be subordinate to political control.



Are the Threats of War directed at the Middle East or at the Eurasian Heartland?

American foreign policy realists and Iranian pragmatists have been working to bridge the gap between the U.S. and Iran and bring about a deal between Washington and Tehran. Yet, the U.S. and Iran both have allies that are opposed to this. Although Tel Aviv serves U.S. interests in the Middle East, it is against Israeli interests for an American-Iranian rapprochement and this is why there have been hostile reactions from groups lobbying for Israeli interests. Certain Arab rulers also fear that American-Iranian rapprochement could result in the U.S. not opposing Iran from removing these Arab leaders from power. Because of their own interests, Moscow and Beijing would also be opposed to a strategic partnership between the U.S. and Iran.



The U.S. geo-strategy in Eurasia is on thin grounds and the elites of America have invested far too much in it to see it collapse, including the configuration of the U.S. economy. This is why the situation is all the more critical. Desperate individuals can take desperate, hasty, and very reckless measures.

Several simultaneous pretexts for war have been carefully sculpted and prepared by the

White House and 10 Downing Street against Iran and its regional allies in the Middle East. This is part of a carefully crafted exposé for a broad regional conflict in the Middle East that will consume an area extending from the coastline of the Eastern Mediterranean to the mountains and valleys of Afghanistan.

Washington's move to label the Revolutionary Guard as a terrorist organization is part of the process of preparing pretexts and justifications for war and war crimes. This is not only part of the stylized approach of demonizing the so-called enemies in the "Global War on Terror." The Geneva Conventions and the laws of war would be suspended in regards to a future war involving the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. It would also provide a pretext for an U.S.-led attack against Iran on the grounds of fighting the "Global War on Terror." Because of this label the U.S. government began claims that Iran shelters a terrorist organization as part of its misinformation campaign against Tehran. The campaign to financially isolate Iran and to impose sanctions on it are also part of this.

Iranian military doctrine is defensive in nature, which does not mean that Iran is incapable of fighting back. Iran has significant military strength. As a nation, Iran can inflict significant losses on the U.S. and allied forces. It has the ability to repel U.S. attacks, except in the case of a massive nuclear attack. During the 2008 parliamentary election campaign, one of Iran's key political figures, Ali Larijani, stated that a U.S. attack on Iran, which he considered to be remote, would not only be a gamble, but would be conducive to a major American defeat in the Middle East. It would also be the end of the U.S. status as a global power. Syrian Prime Minister Al-Otri (Al-Utri), had also intimated that an Israeli attack on Iran would undermine Israel's status as a significant power in the Middle East, as well as bring an end to the Zionist project.

Iran and its allies have brushed aside what they call the hype and psychological warfare about the imminent danger of an American attack, saying that the U.S. is unable to execute such an attack. Tehran, however, has not ruled out operations to destabilize Iran or an American or Israeli attack, especially against Syria and Lebanon. Official voices from Tehran have also warned several times throughout 2010 that they expected attacks on their Arab allies.

How much of the march to war is part of a smoke screen or intimidation tactics and how much is real? In passing, there is a haziness in regards to international relations, but it is undeniable that there are war preparations that have been made across Eurasia. The U.S. missile shield is a testimony to this. Moreover, the Iranians and their allies are confident that Iran will not be attacked. There are also signs that can be read as a move towards establishing détente too; the discussions between the U.S. and Iran over Iraq, Turkish-Iranian cooperation, the engagement of Syria by the E.U. and America, the improvement of ties between Syria and the Hariri-led March 14 Alliance in Lebanon, and the public recognition of Iran by the U.S. government as an important player in stabilizing Afghanistan. These all, however, could be used in conjunction with U.S. policies to further the goals of the U.S. and its allies for control of Eurasia. Time will tell.

Notes

[1] Halford J. Mackinder, *Britain and the British Seas* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1969), p.309.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and the Geostrategic Imperatives* (N.Y.C., New York HarperCollins Publishers, 1997), p.204.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya, "The Sino-Russian Alliance: Challenging America's Ambitions in Eurasia", *Centre for Research on Globalization* (CRG), [August 26, 2007](#).

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Out of Control: Global Turmoil on the Eve of the 21st Century*, (N.Y.C., New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1993) p.162.

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] European Commission, *Bilateral Relations with Iran*, 2004 Statistics.

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] "Iran proposes forming Asian union", *Tehran Times*, April 10, 2008, [p.2](#).

[15] Georg Stadtmüller, "Landschaft und Geschichte in Albanisch-epirotischen Raum", *Revue Internationale des Études Balkaniques*, vol. 3 (1937-1938): pp.345-370.

[16] Frank Maloy Anderson, ed., *The Constitution and Other Select Documents Illustrative of the History of France, 1789-1907* (N.Y.C., New York: Russell and Russell, 1908), pp. 59-61.

[17] Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, trans. Stuart Gilbert, (N.Y.C., New York: Anchor Books, [1856] 1955).

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