

Sharing the Same Demons: The Venezuelan-Iranian Alliance and Their Anti-U.S Ideology

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How can we account for the formation of this alliance that provoked adoration and revulsion in equal measure?



Introduction

- Besides oil, Venezuela and Iran have little in common. Both countries differ in type of government, economic system, religion, and treatment of women.
- The relationship between Venezuela and Iran traced its origins to the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) establishment in 1960. Yet, it was not until Hugo Chavez and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad ascended to the presidency (in 1999 and 2005 respectively) that the relationship became stronger.
- Their partnership consisted of significant efforts in banking, energy, commerce, manufacturing, and infrastructure.
- Chavez and Ahmadinejad engaged in programs that aim to unify undeveloped countries by bilateral trade activities and to relieve them from American influence by boosting their economy through investments and development financing.
- The idea that two countries with more differences than similarities came together to create an alliance presents a puzzle.

Schools of Thought

•Two schools of thought explain the reasons for this union. One theory posits that the increase of international hostility in Iran, especially after Ahmadinejad renewed his nuclear program, forced the country to associate with Venezuela (Torbat 2005; Morady 2009; Carswell 1981; Chubin and Litwak 2003). Ahmadinejad close relationship with Chavez thus provided Iran with diplomatic solace and vehicles to revive its economy.

•An alternative theory postulates that a foreign policy based on the anti-imperialist sentiment brought both countries together (Gratius and Furtig 2009; Goforth 2012; O'Connor 2002).

Research Design

- It poses that the relationship between Venezuela and Iran was the manifestation of the joint efforts toward a common enemy, the American empire. My research focuses on the economic leaderships and political discourses as sources to promote their common anti-U.S. sentiment, sustain their popularity, and prevail in power.
- In addressing my research question, my study examines both the ideological and the economic factors that bring both countries to establish a union.
- In order to examine the ideological rhetoric, my work exposes and analyzes the circumstances and the number of times both leaders visit each other.
- Data from the International Trade Center and International Monetary Fund provide vast documentation necessary to evaluate the economic activities between both nations during the years between 2001 and 2011.



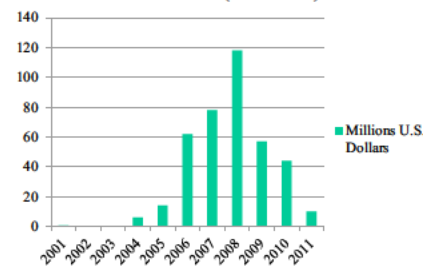
Results

Diplomatic Visits to Caracas and Tehran

Date	Times	Circumstances
2012	1	Ahmadinejad is on a visit to Cuba, Nicaragua, Bolivia, and Venezuela Chavez accused the U S and its allies of demonizing Iran and using false claims about the nuclear issue
2010	3	Chavez visit to Tehran was part of an international tour that aimed at strengthening Venezuela's economic ties with Eastern Europe and the Middle East
2009	4	In November, Ahmadinejad was in Latin America to boost ties with supporters of Iran's nuclear program In September, Chavez traveled to Tehran just after Ahmadinejad won a second term in office
2007	4	In November, Chavez visited Tehran after an OPEC's summit in Saudi Arabia In September, on a trip to strengthen ties with leftist in Latin America, Ahmadinejad visited Caracas In July, Chavez visited Tehran and launched the construction of a joint petrochemical plant with Ahmadinejad In January, Ahmadinejad visited Caracas for a second time
2006	4	In 2006, Ahmadinejad made his first trip to Caracas During his two day visit, Chavez and Ahmadinejad signed over 20 agreements and inaugurated the Iranian petroleum drilling operation of Petropars Chavez visited Ahmadinejad after the Iranian leader won the presidency of his country The trip was part of Chavez's world tour among twelve countries
2005 2001	8	Before Ahmadinejad took office in 2005, Chavez visited Tehran five times Mohammad Khatami made three official visits to Caracas

Source: HACER, The New York Times, Aljazeera, Washington Post, Foreign Policy in Focus, and LADDO

Total Venezuelan Exports and Imports to/from Iran (2001-2011)



Source: International Trade Center and International Monetary Fund

Results and Discussion

- Having the whole world listening, they were able to further their ideology, denounced the evil imperialism, and increased their popularity.
- The fact that both leaders have the capacity to stir up controversy and cause worry among the world through their defiant stance and provocative rhetoric is essential for attaining insight into their alliance.
- Their vociferous stance was what maintained them in power. Throughout their thirteen and eight years as presidents of Venezuela and Iran respectively, both leaders seized control of their own lucrative oil industry, consolidated government authority under the presidency, allowed basic government functions to weaken, oppressed political opponents, and courted regional and foreign alliances.
- The statistical analysis provides factual evidence that besides diplomatic visits, Chavez and Ahmadinejad consolidated their union through bilateral economic activities.
- The data from ITC and IMF exposes how the amount of imports and exports experienced a dramatic increase right after Ahmadinejad won the presidency of Iran. From \$1 million in 2004, bilateral trade surpassed \$50 million by the end of 2006. The amount registered that year doubled in 2008, when bilateral trade stood out at above \$100 million.
- Statistics on economic activities are vital means to analyze the phenomenon of how political ties result in economic cooperation.

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