

New Great Game in Central Asia: An Analysis of China's Interests

Manzoor Khan Afridi* Musharraf Iqbal† Sumbal Hussan‡

Abstract

The importance of Central Asia for China increased with the change in international power structure, growth of its economy, rapid industrialization and increase in population. China is regarded as the second largest energy consumer in the world while Central Asia has rich energy resources and raw materials complementary for its economic growth. It is interested in the energy resources of Central Asia for the security of its energy supply and a large market for its finished goods. Prior to Central Asian energy resources, China was importing oil from the Middle East. The route of oil supply from M.E to China was passing through Malacca strait, under the control of United States, a perceived rival of China in the world politics. In case of conflict this route may be blocked by United States. This situation worried the Chinese policy makers and prepared a comprehensive policy regarding the energy resources of Central Asian region. Energy is not the only concern of China in Central Asia; it is also worried about the security of its Xinjiang, sharing border with some Central Asian Republics (CARs). About 60% of the population of Xinjiang are Uyghur Muslims. The same ethnic community also exists on the other side of the border in the Central Asian Republics. China has an apprehension that in case of instability in the region, terrorists' organizations may instigate the China's Uyghur for independence. That is why, China is supporting United States in its fight against terrorism. Politically, it wants to reduce the influence of United States in the region by integration with the CARs (Central Asian Republics) through SCO particularly after US military penetration in the region in 2001. Applying a descriptive-analytical approach in the paper, the interests of China in CARs are surveyed.

Key Words: New Great Game, Central Asia, China, Power Politics, Geopolitics, Geo-economics.

Introduction

Central Asia, due to its unique geographic location and rich energy resources, has been one of the important regions of the world since long. It has been the battle

* Assistant professor and Head of the Department of Politics & International, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan. Email: manzoor.afridi@iiu.edu.pk

† PhD Scholar Department of Politics & International Relations, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

‡ Junior Research Fellow at HRC, Islamabad, Pakistan.

ground of power politics between Russian and British Empire, commonly known as “Great Game”. This game came to an end with the disintegration of one of the empire, Soviet Union in 1991. As a result of this disintegration most of the Central Asian states got independence. China along with other big powers such as Russia and United States got an opportunity to get advantage out of this region. The ensuing power politics among the big powers is known as “New Great Game”. Here in this paper the interests of China would be analyzed by using political realistic approach.

China’s involvement in the Central Asian “New Great Game” started soon after the collapse of Soviet Union. China was the first country which recognized the independence of the Central Asian Republics and in January, 1992 established diplomatic relations with them (Liao, 2006).

Following the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991 China re-established itself as a major factor in the geopolitics of Central Asia. China’s geographical proximity, security and economic interests in the region and the Central Asian states needs and dependent status have brought them closer to each other. China and Central Asian Republics relations began in 1992, when both the countries resolved their territorial disputes. In order to give effect to their bilateral relations they formed an organization known as “Shanghai Five” in 1996, which later on became Shanghai cooperation organization in 2001 (Zhuangzhi, 2004).

China’s Economic Interests in Central Asia

China has been self-sufficient in energy for several years since independence. However with the growth of its economy as well as population the demand for energy resources also increased. In the year 1993 the demand of energy, particularly oil and natural gas, increased than the domestic production could support. This made China an importer of oil and natural gas and within two decades she became the world largest energy consumer and by the year 2012 she had to import about 57% of oil. If this trend continued China would have to import 66% of its oil by the year 2012. China became the second largest importer of hydrocarbon resources after United States (Xuetang, 2006). Due to rapid industrial development in China the demand for energy increased. The oil demand increased from 1.7 to 3.4 million barrel per day from 1985 to 1995 and reached to 6.8 million barrel per day in 2004. Forty percent of this demand is fulfilled from external resources (Ionia, 2010).

This situation worried the Chinese authorities and initiated numerous strategies. Domestically, the government of China encouraged natural gas and oil production and exploration, conservation of energy and the renewable energy promotion and internationally, she focused on securing energy supply chain and transit routes (Stegen, 2015).

Energy Security

Central Asian Republics and china's interaction in the energy sector has increased since the exhaust of china's self-sufficiency in 1990s. The growing energy demands of China increased its interests in the Central Asian Republics. Presently, China is second in energy consumption and third in its production in the world. So in energy consumption it is second to United States. This has invited competition over the energy resources in the world at large. Majority of China's domestic energy resources are located in the north and north western regions of Xinjiang. This is why its security and stability is essential for Beijing's economic growth and development and its security is of prime concern of China.

The independence of Central Asian Republics was followed by China's negotiation with it regarding trade and energy for the establishment of strong hold over its energy market.

The total oil imports of china was 122.7 million tons, out of it sixty five percent were imported from M.E. and African countries passing through Malacca strait of Indonesia (Martin, 2003).

Presently, she imports about 2/3 of its oil from the region of Middle East. The energy policy makers of China are aware that the Middle East energy resources are vulnerable because of terrorism, military conflicts and other factors of instability. Mostly (about 80 %) China's oil and natural gas imports from African continent and Middle East region are passing through Sea route of Malacca strait, an area controlled by the perceived rival United States which may obstruct this sea transportation routes in case of conflict between China and United States or its ally in the pacific (Lin, 2011). Resultantly the Strait of Malacca has become a strategic weakness for Beijing. To cope with this situation, the Malacca dilemma, China is increasing its blue water naval capacity and capabilities, besides this it has focused on the construction of pipeline through Iran, Pakistan and Myanmar from Central Asian Republics particularly Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (Blumenthal, 2008). Due to above mentioned reasons China is in search of diversifying its energy supply imports and to reduce her depend on Middle East. In this regard the energy rich Central Asia can play an important role (Swanstrom, 2007). China's energy strategy is the diversification of it energy imports making it less dependent on M.E and African states and establishing strong hold over the energy transportation routes leading from Central Asia to China through Xinjiang. Along with the establishment of economic and political relations with CARs, it initiated its energy diversification strategy by signing energy agreements between the republic of Kazakhstan and China's national petroleum company. CNPC got 60.3 % shares in Kazakhstan's Akzubin project in 1993, which later on in the year 2003 increased to 85.6 % (Hawkins and Robert, 2006).

Alongside an agreement was signed between china and the republic of Kazakhstan for the construction of oil pipeline from Kazakhstan to China's Xinjiang region via mainland china, and its further distribution to eastern region of it. Besides it, it also entered into an agreement with the republic of Turkmenistan for the construction of natural gas pipeline from it to Xinjiang and also an oil pipeline from there to enter into Kazakh-China oil pipeline. China involved herself in the Central Asian oil and gas sector, developed oil pipeline from Kazakhstan and gas pipeline from Turkmenistan. To further secure energy supply China has increased its engagement in the Caspian and CARs (Stegen, 2015). Cooperation in energy sector between China and Turkmenistan started in the end of 20th century. Mitsubishi, a Turkmen gas company and CNPC in 1992 proposed for the delivery of the natural gas of Turkmenistan to Beijing. The two companies agreed on the feasibility study of the said project and in 1996 it was finalized (Lonela, 2010). Two years later the government of China and Turkmenistan arrived at an agreement of delivering 30 billion cubic meters gas from the republic of Turkmenistan to china in the ensuing 30 years (Niazi, 2006). Similarly in pursuance of its energy strategy in Central Asia, china's National Petroleum Company signed an agreement with the republic of Kazakhstan in 1997 for buying sixty percent AktobeMunay gas. Along with it in the next year it signed another agreement with Kazakhstan regarding the exploration of its western oil fields (Kaliyeva, 2004).After that China national petroleum company (CNPC) got fifty percent share in the Salejan oil field of Kazakhstan in 2002, thirty percent share in North Buzaiche in the year 2003 and sixty five percent in Chevron oil and gas. This was followed by signing an agreement related to production sharing with Turkmenistan for the exploration of gas in Bagtiyarlik located in the eastern part of it. China provided \$4 billion loan to the republic of Turkmenistan for the development of Yoloten gas field located in the southern region of Turkmenistan. Reciprocally, Turkmenistan increased 10 billion cubic meters gas exports to China (Succor, 2009).

Besides Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan china also made energy deals with Uzbekistan. During the Chinese president Hu Jintao visit to Uzbekistan made a contract for cooperation in oil sector of Uzbekistan with Uzbekneftegaz for the exploration and development of oil and gas on the shore of Aral Sea (Liao, 2006). Such like projects would provide China's direct access to the energy deposits of the Republic of Uzbekistan. China's technological services and its abilities of energy explorations further increased China's Uzbekistan's relations. Uzbekistan and china managed to establish long term cooperation in oil and natural gas exploitation and exploration, reciprocally; china provided a loan of \$ 600 million to Uzbekistan for the construction of oil and gas pipeline (Cohen, 2006). Regarding energy imports and energy security and its diversification Yang Yu wrote, "When oil imports exceeds 100 million tons, it must take diplomatic, economic or military measures for the security of its energy" (Hawkins and Robert, 2006).

China like other competitors in the region, US and Russia has strategic as well as commercial interests in the Central Asian Republics (CARs). Initially, China was concerned in Central Asia about the security of its Western borders adjacent to Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. For a long period of time China was not dependent on the others oil because she had sufficient oil resources which could meet its domestic energy demands. But with the growth in its industries and other machines particularly automobiles the oil demand increased. In 1993 she became the big oil importer and in 2003 she went further ahead of Japan and became the second largest oil consumer in the world and the third largest importer. Its economy was growing strongly and at a very quick pace. During this period she was transforming from coal energy to hydrocarbon energy. Now China is one of the three big competitors for the Central Asian energy resources. The energy diplomacy of China acting directly or in coordination with SCO has been successful in guaranteeing sound commercial and friendly ties with growing energy suppliers like Kazakhstan. In order to get firm control over the energy resources of the Central Asian Republics, China made energy cooperation agreements with energy rich Kazakhstan and Chinese petroleum companies started investment in Kazakhstan oil field with the aim to construct a new pipeline to convey Kazakhstan oil to China thereby diversifying energy imports of China (Akihiro, 2007). For the transportation of Central Asia's oil and gas the government of China invested Million Dollars on the construction of energy transportation pipeline connecting it with western province of China, Xinjiang (Pham, 2006). During the Turkmen president, Safir Murad Nyazove, s visit to Beijing both the countries signed an agreement for the construction of China Turkmenistan gas pipeline in 2006 (Niazi, 2006). The China-Kazakhstan oil pipeline "Atasu Alashankou" was made operational in the last of 2005.

China has been commercially active to ensure long term supply contracts with former Soviet Union hydrocarbon producing states and agreed on new oil and gas transportation pipeline constructed to transport energy resources into its bordering areas. New Turkmenistan China pipeline is an example of this success which became operational in 2009 December inaugurated by Chinese president Hu Jintao. China national petroleum company completed 7000 kilo meter long gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Beijing in the year 2009. Here it should be noted that Turkmenistan is biggest gas producer in the Central Asian region like Kazakhstan which is biggest oil producer in the region. This pipeline project was financed by china. It provides china an opportunity to get additional gas supply from other Central Asian Republics as well (Blank, 2010). China has resorted to all the means and measures at its disposal to secure its domestic energy resources from terrorism in the region of Xinjiang and has used economic and diplomatic means to secure its national interests in the Central Asian region.

Politico- Economic Interests

China for maintaining its economic, security and political interests in the Central Asian region signed several multilateral and bilateral agreements related to religious extremism, border disputes, arms control, terrorism, separatism, drug trafficking and illegal immigration and several other contracts (Chuffrin, 2001).

The important reason for China's involvement in Central Asia region appears to be an effort for her growing need of energy resources along with her security concerns on the Western border and Xingjian internal security, resting upon peaceful development in her Central Asian region's neighboring states and Beijing relations with them (Nikolas, 2002).

China considers Central Asia important for its cheap raw material and a large market for its finished goods. Due to these reasons China entered into "New Great Game". She established trade relations with Central Asian Republics particularly Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. She, in pursuance of her energy policy supported the development of oil and gas sector of the region. China looks this region important for its security, ethnic stability, trade enhancement and energy interests. For these mentioned interests China has developed pipeline for oil and gas, high ways and railways for transportation between China and Central Asian Republics (Wong, 2011).

China's dependence upon imported oil increased with the increase and development in its industries. She is desirous to construct Eastward pipeline from Central Asian Republics of Kazakhstan to China. China hopes to utilize Central Asian region huge market as a catalyst to fuel a new prosperity zone in Xingjian for international investment and reviving the old Silk Road, forwarding China's economic interests further then Central Asia to the Persian Gulf and even to the Western market.

On the politico-economic side China wants to develop economic and political relations with Central Asian region states. In order to develop economic and commercial relations with them a sort of geo-economic strategy was adopted to guarantee security and stability in the region. To give effect to this China improved bilateral relations with the three neighboring Central Asian Republics of Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan by solving border issues with them, allowing China to control Uyghur population in Central Asia in a better way, developing security cooperation and increasing trust reciprocally. New agreements were signed with Kazakhstan in 1994, the left over disputed zones were resolved in 1999, the border issues with Kyrgyzstan in 1996 here the left over disputed areas was resolved in 1999 as well and after the reconciliation process after the end of Civil War in 2002. The development of bilateral economic relations between China and Central Asian Republics was comparatively an easy task because their economies are complementary to each other. China needed raw materials provided by Central Asian Republics and alternatively Central Asian Republics need

finished consumer goods providing an opportunity for China economic growth and development.

Central Asian Republics have great potential for China's economic development particularly for its North Western region. Central Asia is situated rightly in the middle of Eurasian continent. It has been the part of traditional major trade route, known as "Silk Road" between the West and East. The revival of this traditional route between the West and East can overcome the development deficiencies of land locked North Western province of China. In 1992, after year of the collapse of Soviet Union trade between China's North Western region and Central Asian Republics increased 130 percent (Dorian and Wigdortz, 1997). Presently, Xinxiang province of China work as a bridge between China and Central Asian Republics.

All the three big powers, Russia, China and United States are struggling to attain, keep and enhance power and that energy resources are just a mean to this supreme objectives.

China in order to diversify its energy resources is interested in exploring oil and gas reserves of Central Asia. It has a potential relatively safe energy supply, having rare chance of blockade and threat such as faced by ships passing by the Malacca strait. Central Asia is not only energy supplier to China but it also provides transit route to China.

China is interested in the construction of pipeline from Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan to Bender Abbas, a city of Iran, situated next to Persian Gulf, allowing China to transport oil from Middle East to Xinxiang province of China (Swanston, 2005).

China is the world emerging economy, therefore its energy requirements are increasing with each passing day. In energy consumption it is the second in the world (Burls, 1999). China has a great appetite for energy. Uninterrupted supply of energy is essential for China's economic development in the time to come. This energy need and demand is the important aspect of China's interests in the Central Asian region (Barysch, 2011). It has always been the desire of China to have firm control over the energy resources of Central Asia, ensuring future energy requirements with clear intention of exploiting the energy resources and its location to determine its role outside its boundaries. The increasing control of the region gives an opportunity to China to have a significant and important geopolitical position in the world politics. China wants to have and establish multilateral relations with Central Asian states. She wants to establish partnership with Central Asian Republics in energy trade and its transportation (Fedorenko, 2013).

China is rapidly growing economy in the world. She became the second largest energy resources consumer in the world in 2004. The rapidly growing economy requires uninterrupted supply of energy and her requirement can be

fulfilled only the Central Asian energy reserves (Fu, 2010). China energy strategy and policy has two aspects. The first aspect focuses on the oil reserve of Central Asia. In order to meet with its oil demands China's national petroleum company has invested and signed agreements with Kazakhstan, the oil rich republics of Central Asia. This will pave the way for China to play active role in other oil projects in Kazakhstan, making way to the Caspian region energy resources, while the second aspect has concentrated on the natural gas reserves of the Central Asian region. China in order to fulfill these objectives is supporting the construction of gas pipeline to get access to the gas reserves of Central Asia. In the whole Central Asian region Turkmenistan has the largest natural gas reserves. China-Turkmenistan gas pipeline became operational in 2009. This is considered as one of the major success of China's energy policy in the geopolitics of Central Asia. China is also playing important role in other sectors as well, like security, trade and economy. China wishes economic integration of the Central Asian Region through the instrument of regional organization. This is why she plays active role in the SCO (Fu, 2010).

Xinjiang is an important region of China because of its geographic location, at the cross roads of five different geographical and cultural regions. The Chinese government sensitivity towards the increasing ethnic nationalism in the province of Xinxiang has been reinforced by developing economic, political and ethnic conflicts and the rise of militant Islam. The perceived destabilizing influences to come across Chinese borders and threats its pre dominant control over Muslim dominated province of Xinxiang is a Beijing major fear. Xinjiang geo strategic location along with China developing economic reforms has placed Xinxiang in an important position, becoming China's economic and political gateway to Central Asia. Recently its strategic significance has been increased by the exploration of oil deposits in Tarim Basin; Turfan, Zhungar, transforming China's economy (Christoffersen 1993). The challenges to Xinxiang control do not come only from any ethnic community or Islamic political group but from the various Central Asian states forming the part of "New Great Game".

Security Interests

China viewed an opportunity to develop relations with Central Asian Republics after the disintegration of Soviet Union and subsequent decline of its influence in the region. China's foreign policy in the Central Asian region is dictated by the following points, its position in the new strategic environment after 1991, economic needs, economic enhancement of inland regions, security and stability of its Western border adjacent to three Central Asian Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (Pelham, 2007).

In the first decade of the independence of Central Asian Republics China aimed at the achievement of the following three goals, security of its western

border, security of energy supply and a large market for its finished goods. The pivot of China's strategy in Central Asia since the disintegration of Soviet Union in 1991 has been the integration of Xinxiang with Central Asia and China mainland. She exposed this strategy through increased investment in the construction of infrastructure particularly in its energy sector and management and controlling minority ethnic cultural and religious practices. The foreign policy of China regarding Central Asian Republics reflected the pre-eminence of this goal of integrating its Xinxiang province, emphasizing the establishment of economic, political, and infrastructure connections with Central Asian Republics particularly Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan. The aim of this process has been the state's efforts of strengthening of integration and security of the Xinxiang and getting advantage of the increased political and economic opportunities created by the vacuum left by Soviet Union in 1991 (Clarke, 2005).

Security of energy supply is not the only concern of China in Central Asia but the security of its Western border, Xinjiang, is one of the basic reasons dragging China into Central Asian region soon after the disintegration of Soviet Union and the subsequent independence of Central Asian Republics. Security and stability has been the focal point of China and Central Asian Republics relations. The main focus of China's foreign policy is on the three Central Asian Republics of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. For the security and stability of Xinjiang, Beijing realized that the top priority of its foreign policy should be containment of Islamic radicalism, extremism and fundamentalism and the activities of Pan-Turkic by favoring secular governments in the Central Asian region (Rummer, 2003) China is sharing 3300 kilo meter long border with the three Central Asian Republics, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan. Due to this shared border it has security concerns regarding the stability of the border areas (Liao, 2006). This has linked the stability of Central Asian Republics with the security of china's province of Xinjiang. It has been the bases of all the five Central Asian Republics foreign policies till date. For the achievement of security objectives the initial step taken by china was settling border disputes with all the three Central Asian Republics sharing borders with china such as the republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan by entering into several bilateral agreements with Kyrgyzstan from 1994-1999 settling all long standing disputes among them (Allison and Johnson, 2001). It settled border disputes with Tajikistan under the agreement of 2002, whereby China returned 28000 square kilometers territory to the Republic of Tajikistan (Peterson, 2005).

The disintegration of Soviet Union offered China an opportunity to fully exploit the geopolitical location of Xinxiang to enhance China, economic, political, influence in the Central Asian region. Besides this it also offered ethnic minority opposition to Chinese government in Xinxiang (Starr, 2004). The disintegration of Soviet Union also coincided with Beijing economic reforms program having great

impact on states policy for Xinxiang. The underpinning of this strategy was the implementation of economic and political measures aiming to integrate Xinxiang with Central Asia as well as domestic economy (Clarke, 2001).

The next threat to china's stability was left over nuclear weapons of Soviet Union period owned by Kazakhstan after the disintegration of USSR and subsequent independence of the Central Asian Republics. in a several rounds of talks with the republic of Kazakhstan china, Russia and United States were able to convince the republic of Kazakhstan to give up nuclear weapons by securing guarantees from the big powers, Russia, china and united states in 1995 (Allison and Johnson, 2001a). It was agreed that Belarus and Ukraine, the communists' states would give their nuclear weapons back to Russia and nuclear issue was connected with economic development.

China shares 3300 kilo meter long border with the Central Asian Republics of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. The China's region of Xinjiang that borders with Central Asian region has 60% Uyghur Muslim population similarly Central Asian region has considerable amount of this ethnic group. These Uyghur Muslims of Xinjiang and the Central Asian region share common religion, culture and language. Due to this China fears that the Uyghur ethnic group of its Xinxiang province may be inspired by the independent states of its western borders to support separatist's tendencies claiming independence from the mainland China on the basis of its religious, ethnic, and cultural affinities with Central Asian Republics. Xinjiang province of China is one of the important regions of China. It is rich in mineral and energy resources considered essential for the economic growth and development. So the first goal of China's strategy in Central Asia was to guarantee and insurance of regional stability as well as security (Jafar, 2004). Since accession of Xinjiang in the year 1959, the Muslim Uyghur minority strongly resisted the control of China till 1950. When Chinese Hans population migration to Xinjiang started under a state policy for the establishment of government influence there. Hans's migration to Xinjiang instigated the Muslim Uyghur minority.

The government saw the re-emergence of Islamic values and believes during 1970s. During 1980s Islamic ideology spread in the region was so much quick that it became the region possessing the largest number of mosques in the world (Allison and Johnson 2001b). Since radical Islamic ideology emerged and large numbers of Islamic religious schools (madrasas) were opened and other Islamic rituals and activities were started without permission of the government. The promotion of radical Islamic ideology finally unified the Uyghur separatists with the organizations of terrorism like "Islamic organizations of Turkistan" and "Turkistan Islamic movement" collectively it took action against the government of china and several bombs were blasted in the Chinese province of Xinjiang since the latter half of 1990s till date. The government of China took serious military action against it. However, some external powers and terrorist's organization,

regional and trans-regional were providing safe havens to the separatist's elements from the government action. These organizations include Al-Qaeda and Taliban government in Afghanistan. When as a result of the disintegration of Soviet Union, Central Asian Republics got independence. China looked towards it as it would encourage the separatist movement of Uyghur inspiring it for independence just like Central Asian Republics.

Spread of extremism, separatism, terrorism is the greatest security concern of China in the Central Asian region. The Uyghur is the main Muslim ethnic group in the China's province of Xinxiang. The other ethnic groups of Central Asia like Kazaks, Tajiks and Uzbeks have established their own independent states. The Chinese government fears the Uyghur's may follow the other ethnic groups of Central Asian region to get independence from China (Swanston, 2005). Small minority of Tajiks, Kyrgyz and about a Million Kazakhs residing in Xinjiang along with seven millions Muslim Uyghur is one of the reasons that they are getting influence from the Central Asian Republics (Burles, 1999).

China is currently facing the challenge of Uyghur insurgents groups like Uyghur liberation organization, Xinxiang liberation organization, United Revolutionary Front of Eastern Turkistan (Ong, 2006). Approximately, there are 300000 Uyghur living in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. They are potential targets of Uyghur insurgent's political mobilizations (Swanston, 2005). A violent incident erupted Urumqi, the capital of Xinxiang on 5th July 2009. In the said incident 184 people were died and about 1600 were injured. China government thought this incident to be engineered by separatists and extremists outside China. In order to tackle with this problem China has to collaborate with Central Asian countries.

Besides the stability of Xinjiang the other security concern of China in the region is related to United States penetration into Central Asian region on the pretext of war on terror and her increasing influence in the region. China view it as a potential threat to its economic, political and security interests. Therefore she uses every possible means at her disposable to construct the influence of United States in the Central Asian region (Lin, 2011).

Drug trafficking is another nontraditional challenge faced by China in Central Asia. Drug trafficking activities are increasing day by day in Central Asia, having great implications for China. China, Russia and India have taken notice of drug related activities in Central Asia. About 90 percent of world heroine is supplied by Afghanistan (Li and Wang, 2009). The three countries China, India and Russia have formed security belt to eradicate drug trafficking from the region. These concerns are framing the real bases of China's security interests in the region, particularly regarding to Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. China wishes to establish political ties with Central Asian Republics and is backing the secular governments in the region against the three evils of extremism, separatism and terrorism (Peterson 2005).

Conclusion

The nature of China's historical presence in the Central Asian region has been economic growth, and internal security against the three evils of separatism, extremism and terrorism. With the disintegration of Soviet Union in 1991 and the subsequent decline of Russian influence in the Central Asian region, China established bilateral relations with the Central Asian Republics based on the five principles of peaceful co-existence in order to get strong hold in the region. She gave considerable concessions in resolving the long standing border issues in order to create trust in their minds. This resulted in the establishment of regional security organizations such as SCO and the promotion of China's "Grand Strategy" dragging the attention of the observers of the Western World towards the region. China's national interests in the Central Asian states are regime security, economic stability and development and energy security. Politically she wants to mitigate United States influence, so that it may have geo-strategic advantage over her.

However significance of Central Asia for Beijing increased with the shift in power distribution in world power structure, growth of its economy and rapid industrialization. China is regarded as the second largest energy consumer in the world while Central Asia has rich energy resources and other raw materials complementary for the economic growth, development and progress and prosperity of China. It is interested in the region's energy resources for the security of its energy supply for its industries and a large market for its finished goods. Prior to Central Asian energy resources, during USSR period, China was mostly importing oil from the Middle East. The route of oil supply from M.E to China was passing through Malacca strait, which is under the control of United States naval forces and is prone to instability due to terrorism and sea pirates, a perceived rival of China in the world politics. In case of conflict and controversy between China and United States, this route may be blocked by United States, thereby destroying the economy of china. This situation worried the Chinese decision makers and prepared a comprehensive policy regarding the energy resources of Central Asian region. Energy is not the only concern of China in Central Asia; it is also worried about the security of its Xinjiang, sharing border with some Central Asian Republics. About 60% of the population of Xinjiang composed of Uyghur Muslims. The same ethnic community also exists on the other side of the border in the CARs. China has an apprehension that in case of instability in the region, terrorists' organizations may instigate the Uyghur for independence. So China is supporting United States in its fight against terrorism. Politically, it wants to reduce the influence of United States in the region by integration with the CARs through bilateral and multilateral organizations particularly after US military penetration in the region in 2001.

References

- Akihiro, I (2007) *Eager Eyes Fixed on Eurasia*. Sapporo, Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, Pp. 41-63
- Allison, R. and Johnson, L. (2001) *Central Asia Security: the New International Context*” Washington, and D.C: Brooking Institute Press, p.164
- Bates, G (2003) *China's New Journey to the West: China's Emergence in Central Asia and implications for US interests*. Washington D.C. CSIS Press, P. 29
- Bates, G. (2003) *China's New Journey to the West: China's Emergence in Central Asia and Implications for US Interests*, Washington D.C. CSIS Press, p. 3
- Brzezinski, Z. (1997) *The Grand Chess Board, American Primacy and its Geo-strategic Imperatives*. New York, Basic Books, PP. 134-136
- Chuffrin, G. (2001) *the Caspian Sea Region: toward an Unstable Future*. Oxford University Press, P.334
- David, S. (2005) *Power Shift: China and Asia New Dynamics*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, pp. 205-227
- Jafar, M. (2004) *Kazakhstan, Oil, Politics and the “New Great Game”* New York Rutledge Curzon, p.192 Rummer, B. (2003) *Central Asia- A Gathering Storm*, Armonk, N.Y: M.E. Sharpe, P. 178
- Singh, G. (2010) *Geopolitical Battle in Kyrgyzstan over US Military Lily Pond in Central Asia*, New Delhi
- Starr, F. (2004b) *Xinjiang China's Muslim Borderland*. Armonk New York, M.E. Sharpe, PP. 101-119
- Blank, S (2010) *the Strategic Implications of the Turkmenistan-China Pipeline Project*. *China Brief, a Journal of Analysis and Information*, 10. (3) P. 10

- Blumenthal, D. (2008) Concerns with Respect to China's Energy Policy. US Naval institute press, pp. 418-436
- Burles, M. (1999) Chinese Policy towards Russia and the Central Asian Republics. Washington USA, Rand.
- Chein, P. (2004) Chun, the SCO, China's Changing Influence in Central Asia. *The China Quarterly*, p. 104-128
- Kristofferson, G. (1993) Xinxiang and the Great Islamic Circle: the Impact of Transnational Forces on Chances Regional Economic Planning. *The China Quarterly*, No. 133, p. 124-148
- Clarke, M. (2005) China's Post 9/11 Strategy in Central Asia. *Regional Outlook*, Griffith Institute, pp. 7-8
- Clarke, M. (2008) Xinjiang and China's Foreign Relations with Central Asia 1991-2001, Across the Domestic Foreign Frontiers. *Asian Ethnicity*, 4. (2) pp. 207-224
- Cohen, A. (2006) the Dragon Looks West: China and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Heritage Lectures. Accessed on 21 November, 2015
Source: <http://www.heritage.org/research/asiaandthepacific/hi961.cfm,4>
- Cooley, A. (2005) Difficult Engagements, Political Lessons from the K2 Experience. PONARS Policy Memo No. 400. Accessed on 3 January, 2016
Source: http://www.csis.org/component/option.com_csis_pubs/task/view/id,2191/,206
- Davis, J. and Michael, J. (2004) Central Asia in US Strategy and Operational Planning, Where do we go from here. Washington D.C. The institute for foreign policy Analysis, P. 3
- Fedorenko, V. (2013) The New Silk Road Initiative in Central Asia,
- Feng, Z. (2007) China's Regional Activism in East Asia, Gi-wook Shin and Daniel C. Snider, eds, *Cross Currents: Regionalism and Nationalism in North East Asia*, Stanford University, the Walter H. Shorenstein Asia pacific Research Center, p. 133
- Fu, J. (2010) Reassessing a New Great Game between India and China in Central Asia. *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, 8, (1) pp. 17-22

- Graver, W. John, (2005) China's Influence in Central and South Asia: Is it increasing.
- Hawkins, C. and Robert, R. (2006) the New Great Game- China Views on Central Asia. Fort Leavenworth, KS. Foreign Military Studies Office, pp. 87-89
- Ionela, P. Irina, (2010) Russia, EU, and the Strengthening of CSTO in Central Asia. *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, 3. (3). Pp. 245- 286
- Kaiser, R. (2002) US Plants Footprint in Shaky Central Asia, *Washington Post* 27 August. Accessed on 30 September, 2015
- Kaliyeva, D. (2004) the Geopolitical Situation in the Caspian Region. UNISCI Discussion papers, Enoro de, p. 1-6
- Li, Y, Hack and Wang, Z. (2009b) Assessing China's influence in Central Asia, a Dominant Regional Power, *Briefing Series Issue*, 53. The University of Nottingham, China Policy Institute, pp. 4-6.
- Liao, X. (2006) Central Asia and China's energy Security. *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, 4 (4) P. 42- 62
- Lin, C. (2011) The New Silk Road: China's Energy Strategy in the Greater Middle East. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, p. 1-22
- Lonela, p. Irina, (2010) China's Energy Strategy in Central Asia: Interactions with Russia, India and Japan" UNISCI Discussion papers, No, 24. P. 200-207
- Martin C. Spechler, (2003) Crouching Dragon, Hungry Tigers: China and Central Asia. *Contemporary Economic Policy*, 21. (2) p. 255-274
- Martin, K. (2005) Understanding the impact of the K2 closure. *PONARS Policy Memo* No. 41. (2005) Accessed on: 28 December, 2015
Source: http://www.csis.org/component/option.com_csis_pubs/task/view/id,2190/211

- Niazi, T. (2006) The Ecology of Strategic Interests: China's Quest for Energy Security from the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea to the Caspian Sea Basin. *China and Eurasian Forum Quarterly*, 4(4) P. 99-122
- Nikolas, S. (2002) China and Xingjian after September 11. *Nordic Institute for Asian Studies*, Vol, No. 2, pp. 21-23 Source: <http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/country/index/cfm>
- Ong, R. (2006) China and US War on Terror. *the Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, 18. (2) P. 99-121
- Oresman, M. (2013) Central Asia as the New Arena in Sino-US Relations. *China Brief Volume*, 4 (9) pp. 1-4
- Pelham, C. (2007) US and China Competition for Influence in Central Asia: a Comparative Analysis. *School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College Fort Leavenworth, Kansas*, pp. 27-29
- Peterson, A. Michael, (2005) China's Great Game in Central Asia: Implications to US Policy in the Region. Thesis, *Naval Post Graduate School*, P. 3
- Pham, J, Peter, (2006) Beijing's Great Game: Understanding Chinese Strategy in Central Eurasia, 28 (1) Pp. 57-58 Source:<http://proquest.umi/pdqweb?Did=155660731&Sid=1&fmt=3&clinted=417&RQT=309&VName=PQD>
- Socor, V. (2009) China to Increase Gas Imports from Economically Complementary Turkmenistan, *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 6. (125)
- Source:http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=35194&tx_ttnews%5BlackPID%5D=485&no_cache=1 accessed on 30 November. 2015
- Star, Frederick S. (2005a) a Partnership for Central Asia; *Foreign Affairs*, 84. (4)
- Stegen, S. (2015) Understanding China's Global Energy Strategy. *International Journal of Emerging Markets*, 10 (3) Pp. 18-22
- Swanston, N. (2005a) China and Central Asia, a New Great Game or Traditional Vassal Relations. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 14 (45) P. 576

Swanston, N. (2007) China's Role in Central Asia: Soft and Hard Power. *Global Dialogue* 9 (1)

Source: <http://www.worlddialogue.org/content.php?id=402> . Accessed on 9-12-2015

Swanston, N. (2015b) The Security Dimension of China–Central Asia Relationship: China Military Engagements with Central Asian Countries. Institute for Security & Development Policy, US-China Economic and Security Review, P. 1-18

Wishnick, E. (2004) Strategic Consequences of the Iraq War: US Security Interests in Central Asia. Thesis, Carlisle barracks, US Army War College, p. 5

Wishnick, E. (2002) Growing US Security Interests in Central Asia. Thesis Carlisle Barracks, US Army War College, P. 13

Wong, E. (2011) China Quietly Extends Foot Print into Central Asia. *The New York Times*.

Source:http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/03/world/asia/03China.html?_r=2&pagewanted=all. Accessed on: 19 January, 2015

Xuetang, G. (2006) The Energy Security in Central Eurasia: the Geopolitical Implications to China's Energy Strategy. *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, 4(4) P. 122-144

Zhuangzhi, S. (2004) New and Old Regionalism, the SCO and Sino Central Asian Relations. *the Review of International Affairs*, 3(4) pp. 32-53