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Regional Security and Energy Geopolitics of Central Asia

ABSTRACT

Proposed monograph discusses definitions, basic concepts and approaches of regional security with respect to Central Asia. Regional security is a very complex concept and geopoliticians have given it to different meanings in different times and places. In the present study it has been examined that how geopolitics has been affected and shaped by regional security theories and other factors. Generally, there are identified five major interdisciplinary factors (social, military, physical, environmental and political) which affect security of region, therefore, all these factors have also been analysed with respect to the study region. Further, four dimensions of the regional security and energy geopolitics have also been discussed in respect to the study region. Under the first dimension, the foreign powers intervention in the study region e.g. like 1973 Iran policy has been discussed. Under the second dimension, the intraregional ethnic clash because of unequal distribution of oil wealth the regional security of Central Asia has been debated. The third dimension includes a detailed study of militant attacks on oil and gas facilities as a result of ideological differences. This sort of analysis is helpful in identifying potential militants and terrorist threats. The fourth dimension of border dispute as the cause of regional conflicts and risk to the security of the region has been examined. In the present study four case studies i.e. the Iran's APOC oil embargo of 1973, Nigeria and Sudan ethnic conflicts over hydrocarbons resources, Iraq-Kuwait border dispute and Iraq war and militant attack in Saudi Arab and Iraq's oil and gas facilities have been taken to identify and correlate regional security problems and energy geopolitics. Adopting this methodology and in the light of these case studies, a scenario building exercise has been carried out related to the regional security and energy geopolitics of the Central Asia.

Key words: *Energy, Geopolitics, Central Asia, Security.*

Regional security is a complex concept which entails several fields of studies. According to Barry Buzan (1991), five major interdisciplinary factors, viz. societal, political, economic, military, and physical environment define the concept of regional security (Buzan, 1991).

SOCIETAL FACTORS

These factors deal with different identities of states such as religion, custom, culture, language and national identity (Buzan, 2004). In any country and region, societal factor do not always exist in one form. Many internal and external powers try to influence societal factor according to their needs and agenda. Central Asian society is not unique for having similarities with societies outside. In fact, Central Asian societies (CAS) have long historical relations with Iran, Arabian countries, Turkey and Russia and, therefore, they were also influenced by these societies. As a matter of fact, these countries are in a better position to influence CAS than other societies. Iran, Turkey and Russia are external forces but in Central Asian Region (CAR) they can affect CAS through their ethnic agenda. In internal forces Islam is the most powerful force to shape CAS in a different manner. In nature, Islamist forces are basically anti-West, anti-Russia, and anti-China. These forces want to establish Central Asia as an Islamic State based on Qur'anic principles (Naumkin). In future, the regional security system would depend on the social behaviour of the society. It would show ethnic and religious bond with Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan, if it behaved as a religious fundamentalist society. However, the situation would be different if it behaved as a secular society.

Central Asia is divided in different ethnic groups and there is a history of interethnic clashes in CAR. While no significant events of interethnic clashes have been observed after the independence of these states; the interethnicity would always be a threat to regional security because of social dynamics of the CAS. The table 1 given below exhibits the complex ethnic and religious composition of the Central Asian countries.

Table 1:
Ethnic and Religious Composition of the Central Asian Countries

Country	Total Population (000)	Russian (%)	Kazakh (%)	Uzbek (%)	Tajik (%)	Turkmen (%)	Kyrgyz (%)	Muslim (%)	Orthodox-Christian (%)
Kazakhstan	16,000.0	23	63.1	2.9	.2	NA	0.1	70.19	26.17
Uzbekistan	30183.46	5.6	3.0	81.1	4.0	NA	NA	90.0	5
Kyrgyzstan	5663.1	6.6	.5	14.4	.8	.7	72.3	85	10
Turkmenistan	5105.0	6	NA	4.0	NA	85	NA	91	9
Tajikistan	7564.5	.5	NA	13.8	89.3	.2	.8	90	10

Sources

For Kazakhstan, National Census 2009, preliminary

For Kyrgyzstan (2013 data), <http://state.kg/stat.files/din.files/cenecus/5010003.pdf>

For Turkmenistan total (2014 data), <http://data.un.org/countryprofile.aspx?crname=turkmenistan>

Population composition (2009), CIA Factbook

For religion: <http://pewforum.org/uploadedfiles/policies/demographic/muslim>

For Tajikistan: http://.stat.tj/em/iem/526b92e834fcaaceca26a22965ea2b_1355502192.pdf

POLITICAL FACTORS

Political factors deal with the stability of states. Political, social and religious ideologies, nature of states, political parties, and ruling elites are the major parts of political factor.

Since independence, each Central Asian state has been ruled by former communist leaders, with Tajikistan as an exception where Islamist parties were the part of the government. Control of governments by former communist party leaders was quiet natural because Central Asian independence was not the result of any freedom movement and also there was no political party or group who was claiming the independence of the country. Therefore, in an absence of a political alternative, all political powers were transferred to former communist party leaders. Communist leaders dropped the communist party and declared the states as secular. Though all former communist party leaders declared themselves as secular, they ruled their countries in the communist style and established an autocratic regime and acted like communist dictators. No opposition party was allowed to participate in political activities. Only loyal parties and persons were privileged to participate in political affairs. Despite the declaration of democracy and secularism, no religious groups, especially Islamist groups were allowed to launch their activities. Many opposition political and religious leaders were exiled, killed or detained (Briefing: Political Prisoners...). Many court cases were imposed under political motivation on the exiled leaders and their family members by government officials. According to many human rights activists and experts, current Central Asian regimes are one of the worst suppressive regimes of the world. Presently, opposition including Islamist forces is not a serious challenge to the current regimes. However, Islamist forces are emerging as most influencing anti-regime force all over Central Asia. Importantly, these forces are very active and have a strong support base in Uzbekistan, the most populated country of Central Asia. In Tajikistan, Islamists already share the power. These forces not only oppose the current rulers but also oppose Russian, Chinese and Western policies to gain control over Central Asia. Therefore, in the long run, these forces would be the biggest challenge to Regional Security of Central Asia (RSCA).

ECONOMIC FACTORS

These factors deal with economic security of a region or a country. According to Barry Buzan (1991), "economic security concerns the accessibility to the state of the major economic factors such as research, finance and market that are necessary to sustain the states desired level of welfare and power".

Right from their independence, Central Asian countries (CACs) were economically dependent on Russia owing to Russian control over all the economic resources. The major part of economy was based on agriculture and it was inadequate to fulfil the economic needs of the region. While in some regions, such as North Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan's Fergana valley, some industries were operative; however, they too were dependent mostly on Russian aid, technical expertise and skilled labour.

In order to overcome these problems, CACs started to privatise their economy. But because of financial crisis and lack of trained human resources, it was not possible to achieve the desirable goals. Energy resources development, in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, was a good possible option but it too was dependent on foreign investment. These countries worked hard and made required changes in their economic and energy policies and invited foreign direct investment (FDI) in energy sector. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan could not enjoy this advantage because of the absence of significant hydrocarbon resources. Both countries from the beginning are still facing deep economic crisis. Tajikistan is totally economically subjugated by Russia through economic aid. Thus, because of economic crisis, political decisions of these countries also depend on donor countries.

MILITARY FACTORS

Military factors deals with how military defends independence of the country or a region, and how it faces the external military threats and internal security crisis. CACs are dependent totally on Russia to face external military threats and internal armed struggles (Gorenburg, 2014). The borders of CACs are stable and there are no serious disputes with regard to border settlement that could lead to war with neighbouring states. Interregional borders are also stable and there are no ethnic clashes that may raise border issues. But some armed groups, like Islamists and pro-democratic forces, are challenging the present regimes ideologically and politically. These forces are not only trying to influence the populace but are also using arms to achieve their goals. Sometimes Central Asian military forces find themselves incapable to curb this internal strife and, therefore, are dependent on Russia. In future, these forces may prove to be the biggest challenge to RSCA.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

These are relatively new factors and are not considered as significant in regional security system of a region. Environmental factor became the topic of serious discussion only after the Cold War.

Global environmental degradation and its deep impacts on human society are underscored time and again by several scientists and environmentalists. After Cold War, some environmental geo-politicians declared that in future environmental factor would play an important role in violence and peace (Kaplan, 1994). CAR is facing an environmental hazard, especially, in Aral Sea and North-West Kazakhstan due to heavy irrigation and huge oil and gas developmental activities. But this environmental degradation is not an immediate threat to the regional security.

Here energy is not considered as a separate factor in the regional security, rather it is a part of economic factor. Nonetheless, in economy too, it is traditionally discussed as a demand option of the total energy need of a consumer country. With the growing competition between economies and emergence of new economic powers, energy can be considered as a sixth element in regional security. In the regional security complex theory, energy security is defined as the availability of sufficient supply of energy at a reasonable price. According to scholars from the Asia Pacific Energy Research Centre, "conventional definition of energy security, that of securing adequate energy supplies to sustain economic-oriented definition, again in a fairly conventional albeit less usually discussed direction, to include prices, that is – that of ... stable prices in order to sustain economic performance and growth." (Mammadli). This definition is for consumer countries/region, and there is no set criterion and definition for producer countries/region. So it means that energy supply affects the security of a consumer country/region in the same manner as energy reserves and production affects the regional security of hydrocarbon producer country/region.

First Dimension: Regional Security and Energy Geopolitics vis-à-vis the Policies of Producer Countries Against the Consumer Countries

In an energy-producing region, generally energy is the most important economic component which has a deep influence on region's political and economic, security, as well as foreign affairs. So big external powers try to control all spheres of economic components which can influence the energy policies of production and supply. Internal forces such as opposition parties, rebellion groups and business forces too focus on energy-related policies and try to influence as per their ideologies and objectives. These forces use every possible tactic to turn the situation in their favour. Similarly, at times

external forces also launch attack on energy establishment as part of their strategy to achieve their political and ideological goals.

Consumer countries/regions were highly affected by the oil embargo of 1973 during Arab–Israel war. Presently, economic growth of any region or a country greatly depends on undisturbed energy supply at a reasonable price. Internal conflict of oil– and gas-producing countries/regions sometimes also play important role in regional security. For instance, the first Gulf War was apparently a result of disputes between Iraq and Kuwait on some oil wells. Thus, the industrial revolution entered in the oil age and the competition amongst consumers increased as a result of it. Hydrocarbon-dependent economies try to secure their stake in global energy. For this purpose, these powers interfere with the producers' policies and even conspire against different producers. Sometimes, these forces use their army in the region to achieve their purpose. In order to understand various dimensions of the role of hydrocarbons in regional security of a producer country/region, some of the cases are discussed below.

The first dimension is the role of external powers/large producers in the stability of regional security of a producer country/ region. To understand this, the case of Iran's Anglo Persian Oil Company (APOC) and Arab oil embargo of 1973 is discussed here.

Case Study of APOC and Iran's Political Upheaval

Britain showed her interest in the discovery of oil in twentieth century. On May 28, 1901 Iran's king Mozaffar ad-Din Shah permitted Britain to discover hydrocarbons in Iran and signed a 60 years' concessions to provide its holder the exclusive authority to explore, exploit and export oil. In the concession, Iran also gave the right of transportation of oil (Bakhtiari, 2001). In 1908, Britain discovered oil in southern Iran and formed a company called the Anglo Persian Oil Company (APOC) to extract oil from Iran and transport it to London with two million pounds as initial capital investment (Curtis, & Hooglund, 2008).

In May 1914, APOC and British government signed an agreement to make British government the main operator of the company with 51% of shares (Marlin, 1968). According to this agreement, British government had rights to appoint directors in the board with veto power on any question relating to British national interests. Thus, British government has not only became the economic owner of the APOC but also got the political power to interfere directly in APOC affairs. In another agreement between British government and APOC, APOC guaranteed to supply oil for 30 years on a fixed price (Marlin, 1968). In the article 10 of the agreement, royalty of 16% of the net profit was allocated to Iran (Ferrier, 1982). Certainly, Iran was not happy with this situation but could not protest immediately. Iran protested for the first time in 1920 when Shah of Iran ordered his financial secretary to renegotiate with APOC about resettlement of the royalties. After the discussion APOC, paid one million pounds to settle royalties issue on December 22, 1920 (Kinzer, 2003).

In 1925, Qajar dynasty was replaced by Pahlavi dynasty (**Iran Foreign Policy...**). Pahlavi rejected 1920's settlement with former king's representatives and denied to accept it as it was not approved by the Majlis (parliament) and demanded APOC to revise the concession and renegotiated about the agreement (Oil Agreements in Iran...). Iran also introduced several other points for negotiation in the new proposal which are:

1. Iran government would award APOC a new 60-year concession if APOC agrees to reduce the area of concession.
2. To cancel all rights of APOC to transport oil.
3. To share in big blocks of oil. To register APOC in Iran with export tax being collected in London and Iran as well.

APOC did not show immediate positive response on the proposal of Iran and talks continued until 1928. In August 1928, Iran demanded 25% of APOC shares to be allocated; and in case of non-compliance, Iran threatened that in the new concession settlement Iran would demand 50% of the shares. To maintain pressure on APOC, Shah of Iran described angrily:

“The authority of the company must know that neither the Iranian government nor the Iranian people agree with the D'Arcy concession...now. I explicitly notify that the authority of the company that, they must rectify the matter and if they do not give it due attention, they would be responsible for any action which might result. No more can Iran tolerate the enormous profit from its oil going into pockets of foreigners which at the same time being disposed of its oil wealth” (Malek).

The British government rejected all demands of Iran; however, in response to 25% of concession, British cabinet agreed to give only 20% of shares to Iran. Again, to make pressure on APOC, Iranian representative in APOC, Teymurtash submitted a bill in Majlis to make provision for APOC to pay 4% tax of total profit earned in Iran from 1930. But this time, the demand was refused by APOC; nonetheless, it offered some slush money and also asked to sign new 60-year concession which was rejected by the Iranian government. Shah of Iran threatened to cancel the concession but after a long discussion, he agreed to sign a new 60-year concession with new conditions (Martin, 2009). These conditions were:

1. A minimum guaranteed payment of 750,000 pounds annually, plus a royalty of 45% of oil produced to be paid in the form of gold.
2. Four percent of tax to Iran with a minimum guaranteed tax of 2,30,000 pounds annually.
3. Iranian representative in APOC board payment of one million pounds by APOC as settlement of all past claims.
4. Employment of Iranians by APOC, so that this would minimise dependency on skilled foreign employees.
5. Reduction of area to 100,000 square miles.
6. Full cancellation of all exclusive rights of transportation of oil.
7. Twenty percent share to Iran.
8. Cheaper oil to Iran.

Through this agreement, Iran opened the doors for others for the investment in oil sector. Germany and United States also showed their interest in Iranian oil sector. In 1935, APOC was rechristened as Anglo Iranian Oil Company (AIOC). In January 1937, Iran granted a 60-year concession of 100,000 sq. miles to the US and also gave the rights to build a pipeline in the Sea of Oman (Malek). Later, US withdrew from this concession as it found more interest in Arab oil (Malek). Reza Shah Pahlavi was exiled (1942) from Iran by Britain and Soviet Union for not supporting allied forces and denied to give Iran territory to Russia against Germany (Russell, 2013). In the absence of Reza Shah, his son was permitted to assume the throne (Jessup, 1989). After the war, both Britain and the USSR withdrew from Iran, but in the meantime nationalist movement in Iran emerged significantly in Iranian national politics. They wanted to control the Iranian army and natural resources including oil and gas. In 1949, in the Majlis election nationalist parties made “nationalisation of oil and gas” as their election agenda. After majority in Majlis, nationalist movement continued their demand to nationalise Iranian oil and gas but Shah of Iran rejected this demand. Under the pressure of Majlis, AIOC agreed to give 50% of the profit to Iran, but Majlis rejected this proposal as well. On 7th of March 1951, Iranian Prime Minister Ali Razmara was assassinated by Khalil, a 26-year old boy and the member of Islamist party, Fada'iyan-e Islam for continuously opposing the plan to nationalise the oil of Iran (Zabih, 1982). On March 15, Majlis voted in favour of the plan to nationalise the oil of Iran despite opposition from AIOC and an offer of 50% share in profit (Painter). Mohammad Mosaddeq, the newly appointed prime minister by Shah, also supported the nationalisation of oil.

AIOC and British government reacted very aggressively to the nationalisation of Iran oil by Iranian Majlis. In reaction to it, British government imposed ban on all imports from Iran and frozen all sterling assets and called back all Britain oil technicians from Iran oil industry. Further, Britain challenged this nationalisation of Iran oil in the court of justice in Hague. International court gave decision in favour of Iran. Despite the decision, Britain did not accept the nationalisation. After the defeat in international court, Britain turned towards US to seek help and proposed a coup against Prime Minister Mosaddeq. But at that time the US president had the sympathy with Iran and denied to participate in any coup programme against the elected government (Painter). Yet Britain did not lose the hope. After the Truman presidency, Dwight Eisenhower was elected as the new US president and this time Britain successfully convinced US that “Mosaddeq was making probable a communist inspired take over”. Therefore, in June 1953, US declared its support to Britain’s proposed plan for a joint Anglo–US operation with the code ‘Ajax’ to overthrow Mosaddeq government. US appointed Kermit Roosevelt, a senior CIA officer to lead the operation. The US government declared military, economic, psychological and diplomatic help to make the operation a success (*Operation Ajax...*). To implement operation CIA defined two conditions:

1. Measures to be taken to support a non-Communist Iranian government in the event of an attempted Communist seizure of power.
2. Measures to be taken to prevent all or a part of Iran or adjacent area from falling under Communist domination in the event of an actual Communist seizure of power in one or more of the province of Iran or in Tehran.

US administration agreed on these conditions to support the Britain militarily, economically, diplomatically, politically, as well as psychologically to make the operation a success.

Interesting to note is that the US administration under Truman was not willing to participate in the coup against an elected government in Iran, but under the Eisenhower, US went ahead to launch a coup against the same government even without involving British government. In the decided plan the US described:

“The active cooperation of the British government is of major importance if any plan may be developed to meet this contingency. Even effort would be made through diplomatic means to secure this cooperation, but the failure to ensure UK support would not itself prevent the US from taking such measure as one possible to achieve our national objectives.” (NARA «Record group 59»). Operation director Kermit Roosevelt travelled secretly to Iran many times to have talks with Shah of Iran and pro-Shah military officers. US also trained many guerrilla groups and provided arms to rebel against the elected government of Iran. According to decoded plan Shah told Prime Minister Mosaddeq to step down and appoint Zahedi as new Prime Minister. But Mosaddeq denied to leave the position, rather suspended many pro-Shah military officers. Therefore, a clash started between Mosaddeq supporters and pro-Shah supporters who were heavily supported by CIA and MI6. A large section of Iranian army was Shah supporter and they brutally crushed anti-Shah and pro-Mosaddeq supporters. Ultimately after a 4-day clash and killing of more than 300 persons, Shah’s supporters overthrew Mosaddeq and appointed Zahedi as new Prime Minister. After the new government formation under Zahedi, a new agreement was signed to establish new consortium. In the new consortium 40% sharers were granted to AIOC and 40% shares were given to US companies and remaining 20% shares were allocated to other European oil companies. It was decided that Iran government would give 25,00,000 pounds to AIOC to satisfy the loss because of the nationalisation of Iranian oil. Control on oil production, pricing and export were also awarded to US and Britain (Abrahamian 2001:211; Faruqi 2003; Ervand, 2001).

Case Study of Persian Gulf Oil and Oil Embargo

Persian oil... is yours. We share the oil of Iraq and Kuwait. As for Saudi Arabian oil, it is ours.” (Roosevelt, 1946 to British ambassador)

US has always been eyeing on Persian Gulf and Saudi Arabian oil. The history of US interests in Saudi Arabian oil started in 1932 when Philby, an employee of Standard Oil, California (now Chevron) asked his close friend, king of Saudi Arabia, to permit him for a geological survey of Eastern Saudi Arabia. King Saud was not willing to give permission for survey, but acute financial crisis impelled him to give permission for geological study. Ironically, on 23 May 1933, a concession was signed between Saudi Arabia and Standard Oil California (SOCAL). In November 1933, SOCAL gave the right to California Arabian Standard Oil Company (CASOC) to manage the operation in Saudi Arabia (The Early Days...). In 1936, SOCAL established a joint venture with Texas Company (now Texco) to look after all marketing facilities. In 1939, Saudi Arabian government enlarged concession to about 440,000 sq. miles. Till 1938, SOCAL expanded eight wells, it also established pipeline up to al-Khobar port to transport oil by sea route to the Bahrain refinery. In August 1940, after the dispute between SOCAL and COSOC both companies separated and established themselves independently. COSOC established its headquarters in San Francisco and on January 31, 1944, renamed itself as Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO) (Our History).

The oil production was 20 thousand barrels per day in 1940 and it increased 25 times in 1949 with 500 thousand barrels per day. The production increased very slowly from there on and reached to 761 thousand barrels per day in 1960 (Saudi Arabian Oil Company History).

Thus, oil revenue boosted Saudi Arabian economy but simultaneously the economy became totally dependent on oil income. While Saudi economy was dependent on oil revenue, Saudi government had no control over production and prices. Therefore, to make their active participation and involvement in oil affairs, Saudi government pressed ARAMCO administration to accommodate their people in board of directors. Eventually two posts of representatives were allowed in ARAMCO’s board of directors.

On November 30, 1962, Saudi Arabia founded the General Petroleum and Mineral Organisation of Saudi Arabia (PETROMIN) to manage oil industry and to deal with ARAMCO (Mordechai, 1975). Besides participation in operational activities PETROMIN was also responsible for negotiation in different concessions with ARAMCO and other companies. PETROMIN was also running a refinery at Jeddah and a fertiliser plant in Dammam. In 1960’s, cooperation between Saudi Arabia and ARAMCO was going smoothly and during 1960–70 production was increased to 189 % (2.5 million barrels per day). This smooth cooperation turned into a bitter rivalry during Egypt–Israel war in October 1973.

In October 73, Egypt attacked Israel to recapture Sinai Peninsula which was captured by Israel in 1967 war (Busky, 2000). Syria also launched its military attack against Israel to capture its Golan Heights which were also captured by Israel in 1967 war. In the beginning of war, Egypt penetrated very fast whereas Israel had to embrace defeat. But at the decisive moments US and European countries came to support Israel militarily and diplomatically. Consequently, Egypt and Syria lost the lead and had to withdraw their armies. In response, Arab countries of the OPEC imposed an oil embargo against the US and European countries for supporting Israel in the war (Oil Embargo...). This embargo created an unprecedented situation before Israel supporters because a major part of their economy was dependent on oil. Moreover, a significant part of oil was imported from OPEC. This sudden and unexpected embargo increased the price of oil and gasoline. To end the embargo, US lessened its support to Israel and promised Arabs that it would resolve the conflict and would settle the issue of Palestine. This embargo alarmed the US and Europe as for the first time in history, producer nations used oil as a ‘weapon’ to resolve a political issue and it was quite possible that in future it might also be used in the same manner. Therefore, this embargo not only hit the economy of US and allies but also created the feeling of ‘energy insecurity’ in future.

Although embargo ended within a year on March 17th, 1974 (Bowles, 2010), during this period US took some serious steps at home to counter this type of situation in future. It introduced 'Emergency Petroleum Allocation Act' on November 17, 1973 and 'Project Independence' (Parra, 2009). US also gave some hard messages to oil producers. Saudi King Shah Faisal's assassination is seen widely in the context of embargo as a reaction of US to answer this embargo. British government unveiled to general public in 2003 that during the oil embargo in 1973, US was considering using military to capture oil fields of Saudi Arabia, UAE and Kuwait (Bowcott, 2004). According to 'UK Eye Alpha', "US could guarantee sufficient oil supplies for themselves and the allies by taking over the oil fields in the Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Gulf state of Abu Dhabi" (Posner, 2005).

According to this report, US wanted 'pre-emptive action' and two brigades were required to seize the Saudi Arabian oil fields and one brigade could take Kuwait and other Abu Dhabi. After opposition from UK and the fear of USSR's direct intervention in Middle East, US dropped the idea to seize Saudi Arabian oil. In February 1975, London based Sunday Times published a leaked report exposing the classified plan of US department of defence.

According to the report, Pentagon drew a plan with a codename "Dhahran Option Four" for invasion of Saudi Arabia for the oil reserves. Again in the August 1975, US analyst prepared a report '*Oil Field as Military Objective: A Feasibility Study*' for the committee on foreign relations. In this report analyst indicated Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Venezuela, Libya and Nigeria as the potential target for the US. Further, they explained that the militaries of these states are very weak and could easily be crushed (Hsu, 2004).

These two case studies of Iran and Saudi Arabia indicate that sometimes security of the oil-producing regions do not depend on their own decision but to some extent is directly affected by consumer's political and economic decisions and behaviour. Therefore, in regional security of oil-producing region, foreign intervention or decision of oil consumer region or country could endanger the security of oil and gas producer region.

Second Dimension: Regional Security and Energy Geopolitics vis-à-vis, Regional and Ethnic Conflicts

The history of hydrocarbon development is the history of regional and ethnic conflict. Except some countries like US and Canada, the hydrocarbon reserves have become the reason for the regional conflicts. Some of the case studies points out that how regional ethnic conflicts and regional security are directly related to hydrocarbon reserves of a producer region.

Case Study of Sudan

Sudan is one of the most horrible examples of the ethnic conflict and civil war because of uneven distribution of oil wealth. Since the discovery and production of oil in Sudan, the horrible conflict started between government and people of oil-producing regions. These clashes took thousands of lives. Many people had to be displaced to the neighbouring region and finally the country divided in two parts.

Sudan was the largest country in the region with 25,05,810 sq. km. of area and 40 million of population. Sudan was a Muslim-dominated country with 70% of total population. Whereas 5% were Christians and 25% are the followers of tribal religion. Sudan was very diverse with nineteen ethnic and 600 subgroups. In population structure, Arabs cover 39% and remaining 61% belong to Africa.

Since its independence (1956), Sudan is undergoing civil war like situation because of separatist movement in southern Sudan. This Civil war was basically started with more autonomy for Anyanya. Later, this demand turned in separatist movement in 1971. In 1971, former Army Lieutenant Joseph Logu organised all guerrilla groups and formed Southern Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM) (In Quest for a Culture...). First separatist movement or rebellion ended in March 1972 after the peace agreement with Addis Ababa agreement. After this agreement separatist threw away their arrows and in exchange Sudan government accepted to grant Southern Sudan as a single administrative region with more powers (Ottaway, & Sadany, 2012).

The oil story in Sudan began in 1974 when Sudan government granted concession to US oil major Chevron. In 1978, Chevron discovered oil in Western upper Nile (The Chevron Period). Western Nile is inhabited by many African tribes as Nuba, Dinka, Nuer, Boggara and Shilluk. As oil was discovered in this region, these tribes started demanding their share in the oil wealth. But the government refused to accept this demand and clarified that oil would be managed through the central government.

Chevron continued oil exploration in Sudan and in 1981 Chevron discovered another big oil deposit with estimated 236 million barrels of oil in Unity field in Southern Sudan. To develop hydrocarbon resources, in 1983, Chevron formed White Nile Petroleum Corporation with Sudan government, Shell and API Corp (Oil in Sudan...) and the same time in April 1983, Army commander John Gorang along with Arok Thon Arok, Kerubino Kuanyin and many others created Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) (A Chronological History). SPLA tried to control oil field in South Sudan; and because of it, second civil war began in Sudan. Despite rebellion, White Nile Petroleum Corporation did not quit their operation and built 1,420-km pipeline to transport oil from Unity and Hegli via Kasti to Port Sudan Suakin with an estimated cost of USD1 billion. Sudan government also signed with Trans-African pipeline of US to build 1,760-km pipeline across Sudan to Central Africa which never materialised (Sudan oil & conflict timeline).

In February 1984, SPLA attacked Chevron's establishment for the first time in South Sudan (The Chevron Period). SPLA also threatened to attack on operational units of Chevron. In response, government not only tried to curb SPLA but also provoked many anti-SPLA tribes to attack on pro-SPLA tribes and groups. This policy of government made the situation of interethnic war in South Sudan, especially in Darfur region.

To resolve the crisis, Sudan Prime Minister Sadiq Al-Mahdi took some steps and announced peace process and arranged constitutional conference with SPLA. Before the start of any peace process, in 1989, National Islamic Front (NIF) launched a successful military coup led by general Bashir (Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir). New government stopped all peace processes with SPLA and started new military campaign against SPLA and other anti-government guerrilla groups. In response of the government's policy, SPLA attacked oil establishments. Ultimately, after the disappointment from the South Sudan on account of fragile security situation Chevron decided to sale its venture in Sudan. On 15 June 1992, Chevron sold its 42 million acres concession to Sudan private oil company Con Corp International for USD23 million (Pigott, 1992). After Chevron, Canadian oil company 'Arakis Petroleum Corporation' showed its interest in Sudan oil and formed partnership with state petroleum corporations in block 1, 2 and 4. Arakis also announced to assume full ownership over the project and focused on increasing the investment up to USD1 billion (The Arakis Period).

In 1991 May, Sudan government launched new military campaign against SPLA and crushed them and captured all the land which was lost in previous wars (Kebbede, 1997). Nigeria tried to sponsor negotiation between SPLA and Sudan government but talks failed because of SPLA demand of secular democratic system and right of self-determination for southern Sudan. Bashir government also followed the policy of dividing the tribes into pro-government and anti-government factions. This policy created the clash amongst different tribes and this situation led to killing of many civilians and displacement of thousands of Sudanese. Government also displaced thousands of civilians from the oil-producing regions.

In August 1991, SPLA broke into two groups after the Riek Machar, an SPLA commander, failed coup against SPLA supreme John Gorang (The SPLA: fit to govern). Riek Machar formed a different group SPLM/A-Nasir. Riek Machar also agreed to sign a peace deal with government in April 1, 1997 in Khartoum (Peace from Within).

Chinese involvement in the Arakis increased after purchasing 40% stakes of Arakis' concession in December 1996 (Sudan Update). To counter China in Sudan, US and UK also jumped in and in 1996, US supplied military equipments of nearly USD20 million to Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda to support rebels and anti-government groups in Sudan (Nna, Pabon, & Nkoro, 2012). US also supported Chad which supports anti-government guerrillas in Sudan. Moreover, US supported economic sanction against Sudan and blamed the government for supporting international terrorism.

Despite economic sanction and pressure, international investors did not stop investing in Sudan oil. In February 1997, Sweden's International Petroleum Company (IPC), Peronas, Lundin Oil, and Sudpet bought concession Block 5A (The Legacy of Lundin...). Besides Sudan government's efforts to develop oil, simultaneously Sudan government tried to resolve conflict in the South. On 27th of April 1997, government signed a peace agreement with Riek Machar and some other small ethnic groups (Main Rebel and Militia Forces...). With the increasing involvement of in Sudan, US took steps to influence Chinese venture. On November 27, 1997, US announced to impose criminal penalties on US citizens if they are found involved in any sort of business activities with Sudan (Case Studies in Economic Sanctions and Terrorism). Therefore, in August 1998, under the pressure of US Canadian Oil Company Arakis decided to leave Sudan and sold its Sudan assets to Talisman (*A Troubling Talisman*). On August 20, 1998, situation grew worse after the US missile attack on Sudan pharmaceutical factory because of alleged presence of Osama Bin Laden in Sudan, the main accused in the attack on US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. US also imposed full-fledged economic sanction on Sudan. Even after economic sanction from the US, China and many others, oil companies were working smoothly. In April 1999, Chinese company, China National Petroleum Company (CNPC) launched Initial Public Offer (IPO) to start selling shares to collect more funds for the new projects (Human Rights Watch, 2003). On one hand, Sudan government was focusing on oil development in southern Sudan; and on the other, pressure from opposition was mounting on the government. To minimise the pressure and resistance in oil producers' region, Sudan government displaced thousands of people. Government especially focused on Dinka areas because of major oil field and pipeline routes and used helicopter gunship anti-tribe militia and burnt the properties of opponents. Talisman pulled out from Sudan under pressure from share holders (Johansson, 2000). But China and other companies were still working in good condition. Ludin successfully discovered big oil deposit in Block 5A, China too built an oil refinery in Khartoum. Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company (GNPOC) also started developing a pipeline from oil-producing region of Block-1 to Port Sudan (Oil Production in South Sudan...). For this purpose, government displaced thousands of people. After the completion of GNPOC pipeline, Sudan started, for the first time, export in the international market with 300,000 barrels per day to Singapore. But in the very next month, SPLA rebels destroyed the pipeline in Atbana to disturb oil supply. Again in November 1999, pipeline from Port Sudan to Khartoum was sabotaged by the rebels (Jemera, 2003). Rebel group 'Beja Congress' also destroyed a pipeline and attacked another pipeline in May 2000.

Because of US allies, Canada also pressurised its oil companies and accused them of human rights violation. In February 2000, Canada human rights report mentioned that Canadian companies are responsible for the increasing human rights abuse in Sudan. Talisman shareholders were also opposing Talisman policy to participate in Sudan oil sector. They also demanded to prepare an independent report on human rights violation and displacement situation in Sudan. Under this pressure, Talisman published "Corporate Responsibility Report 2000." (Sudan Operations, 2000). In this report, Talisman claimed that company had paid compensation to the displaced and affected people. In May 2001, Talisman had also shown the satellite images of Sudan project as 'part of non-displacement'.

Rebels did not stop their attacks on oil establishments. In January 2001, SPLA attacked GNPOC's oil installation (Chronology: Oil, Displacement, & Politics in Sudan, 2003). In this poor security situation and pressure from US and Canada, oil company Ludin suspended its operation in Sudan (Christian Aid urges, 2002). But in August 2002, Ludin again showed its interest in Sudan oil and imposed condition that if government signed agreement with rebellions, they would begin drilling oil. Besides pressure from its share holders, Talisman was facing pressures from US, UK and Canadian governments. Therefore, at last Talisman also sold its assets in Sudan to ONGC Videsh, India's State Oil Company (Verbeke, 2013). To improve security situation, Sudan government participated in many negotiations and signed many agreements with the rebels. In March 2000, Sudan government and South Sudan Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) signed an agreement to protect civilians from military operations. In February 2002, Sudan government signed 'Nuba Mountain Ceasefire agreement' with SPLA (The Nuba Mountains Cease, 2002). Again in November 2002, Sudan government signed a memorandum of understanding with SPLA/M. Through this MoU, both parties agreed on numerous aspects of government structure including power sharing, the Judiciary and human rights and revenue sharing (Sudan Country Assessment, 2003). In the series of cooperation and confidence building measurements in Kenya, Sudan government signed another agreement on 'Wealth sharing' on 7th of January 2004 (Agreement on Wealth Sharing during..., 2004). The speciality of this agreement was that for the first time SPLA/M and Sudan government agreed to share income from oil. In the article 2 of this agreement both parties talked on 'ownership of land and natural resources' and in the article 3, 4 and 5 parties especially discussed 'oil reserves' and in the fifth article 'guiding principles for sharing oil revenue' were discussed. Further, parties agreed on two important matters. According to article 5.5 the parties agreed that "at least 2% of oil revenue should be allocated to the oil-producing state/regions in proportion to output produced in such state/region". And in point 5.6 Sudan governments agreed to allocate 50% of the revenue to South Sudan government. According to this: "After the payment of the oil revenue stabilisation account and to the oil-producing State/region, 50% of net revenue derived from oil-producing wells in South Sudan would be allocated to the government of South Sudan (GOSS) as of the beginning of the pre-interim period and the remaining 50% to national government assets in North Sudan".

The Sudan government agreed to share oil revenue with oil-producing regions. Besides this, Sudan government signed many agreements with SPLA/M to normalise the situation and stabilise the political life of Sudan. Between 26, May and 26 July 2002 only, Sudan government signed 6 protocols and an agreement with SPLA/M (*The background to Sudan's...*). In January 2005, It signed 'Comprehensive Peace Agreement' and 'Declaration of the Principles of Resolution of the Sudan Conflict in Darfur' with SPLA/M and Justice and Equity Movement (JEM) (Sudan Peace Agreement Signed...). It specially focused on Darfur region to resolve the South Sudan problems. To show its commitment towards Darfur, Sudan government signed another 'Darfur Peace agreement' with SPLA/M in May 2006 (Adeeb, 2013). In this agreement, both parties discussed and set the norms of 'wealth sharing'. Through wealth sharing, Sudan government tried to ensure equal approach to Sudan resources to each Sudanese citizen. Sudan government also agreed to give six years autonomy to South Sudan and invited rebels to participate in unity government. Government also agreed that after 6 years of autonomy, there would be a referendum for independence.

Despite all these agreements and efforts, peace could not be restored in Sudan because of foreign powers' intervention. This intervention increased soon after China entered the game. US and UK also entered into the game to counter Chinese influence. Rebels many times attacked several oil fields and, in reaction, government too counterattacked rebels and civilians who were supporting guerrilla tribes.

On November 27, 2006, rebels attacked Sharif and Abu-Jbarah oil fields in south Khartoum and South Darfur region (Sudan rebels attack Kordofan

oilfield, 2006). In October 2007, JEM rebels attacked Darfur oil field and killed 20 government soldiers (Darfur rebels vow..., 2007). In this field, Chinese oil companies were the biggest partners. Rebels also warned China against giving weapons to Sudan government and also gave an ultimatum to foreign oil companies to close their operations in Sudan.

Later, these disputes became the cause of disintegration of Sudan and creation of South Sudan.

Thus, oil wealth proved a bane for Sudan's security because of the rivalry between government and many guerrilla groups to control oil wealth. Oil had become the reason for killing and displacement of thousands of civilians and disintegration of Sudan.

Third Dimension: Regional Security and Energy Geopolitics vis-à-vis Ideological-Based Conflicts

Western Europe, Japan, China, India and the US are some of the biggest economies of the world and they are highly dependent on hydrocarbon resources. These hydrocarbon resources are mostly located in Western Asia, Africa and Central Asia. Traditionally, most of these countries are Muslim populated. Presently, there are many Muslim extremist groups which clash with the governments and demand to change their pro-West policy. These groups also accuse oil consumer countries of working against Islam and Muslims all over the world. After the 9/11, the US launched military attack against Afghanistan and Iraq to remove these extremist groups and governments in the name of so-called 'war against terrorism,' to justify its action. The oil-producing countries suppressed these militant and extremist groups. In retaliation, these groups attacked the government as well as the establishments of oil production and supply installations. This phenomenon has created series of retaliation and counter retaliation. And ultimately, this caused much upheaval in the regional security of oil-producing region and countries. To understand this phenomenon, the case study of Saudi Arabia and Iraq will be helpful.

Case Study of Saudi Arabia and Iraq

After the Cold War, the US and its allies blamed Islamist movements to justify their global military and political domination. While there was no serious threat coming from Islamist movements, the first Iraq war and the declaration of war against terrorism after 9/11 changed the whole scenario. On the pretext of terrorism threat, the US changed its policy and made 'war against terrorism' as its important foreign policy slogan. In response to US policy, some Islamist groups also declared 'war against West'. These groups also blamed many Muslim governments for supporting US and working against the interests of their nation. In revenge, these Islamist groups started attacks against the interests of US and its allies all over the world, especially, in the Muslim world. In these attacks, oil and gas producers and supply centres were the main targets. These groups encouraged their supporters, followers and the members to attack on pipelines and oil fields in Muslim oil and gas producer countries. According to a website used by Al-Qaeda:

«One of the main causes for our enemies' gaining hegemony over our country is they are stealing our oil; therefore, you should make every effort in your power to stop the greatest theft in history of the natural resources of both present and future generations, which is being carried out through collaboration between foreigners and [native] agents», bin Laden said. «Focus your operations on [oil production], especially in Iraq and the Gulf area, since this [lack of oil] would cause them to die off [on their own]».

Ayman Al-Zawahiri, a second-rank leader of Al-Qaeda also ordered similar attack on oil establishments, he urged Mujahedeen to "concentrate their attack on Muslims' stolen oil from which most of the revenue goes to the enemies of Islam while most of what they leave is seized by thieves who rule over our country". October 19, 2004, Al-Qaeda messaged the supporters to attack on oil-related targets. According to a message to its supporters, Al-Qaeda said: "To strike all foreign targets and hideouts of a tyrant, to get rid the Arabian peninsula of the infidels and their supports, we call on the Mujahedeen to target the source of oil which does not serve the Islamist nation but serves the enemies of the nation" (*Saudi Oil Facilities...*, 2006).

The US blamed Al-Qaeda for attack on Saudi National Guard Training Base in Riyadh on November 13, 1995 in which five Americans were killed and 60 other were injured (Ambassador..., 1995). Again, on June 25, 1996 militants attacked US military housing facilities in Dhahran and killed 19 US soldiers and wounded 240 others very seriously (Hamdan, 2002). These attacks reached their height when on October 12, 2000, an Al-Qaeda suicide bomber hit US military destroyer USS Cole, killing 17 crew and injuring 39 others.

Al-Qaeda's plan to target oil establishments and pipelines came under scanner for the first time when Saudi police arrested 20 people for their alleged plot to destroy Ras Tanura, which is considered as world's largest offshore oil facility and pipeline (Scheuer, Ulph, & Daly, 2011). First successful attack on oil facilities by militants was launched on October 6, 2002. Militants also attacked French's very long cured container (VLCC), rented by Malaysian state oil company Petronas. The tanker did not sink in this attack; however, it was seriously damaged. Later, Al-Qaeda claimed this attack as a 'reaction and reciprocal' to the US atrocities (*The Achilles Heel...*, 2006).

On May 1, 2004, Al-Qaeda attacked Exxon/ Mobil office in Yanbu, a Red Sea port city. In this attack, six foreigners including two Americans were killed (Dakss, 2004). Al-Qaeda launched another major attack on two oil housing compounds in Al-Khobar killing 22 civilians and injuring 25 others (Al-Qaida timeline...).

On February 2006, Al-Qaeda directly attacked giant Saudi oil processing facilities at Abqaiq. Although this attack was made unsuccessful, two security guards and seven militants were killed. This attack showed the sensitivity of oil market and just after the attack, oil price increased by USD 2 per barrel (Security Threats to...). On March 28, 2006, militants planted a bomb in a residential complex of ARAMCO but Saudi's security successfully disposed the bomb off.

Although Iraq's case is different from that of Saudi Arabia, militants are following the same tactics in Iraq as they used in Saudi Arabia. As the security system in Iraq is very loose in comparison to Saudi Arabia, militants are more successful in Iraq. In Iraq war, Iraqi army was defeated by the US and allies, while militants and insurgents later played their role. In Iraq, militants chose many targets including Iraqi oil pipelines. In 2003 only, 37 attacks on pipeline network and oil-related facilities in Iraq were reported. In the next year, as many as 148 attacks were recorded. Attacks were continuing since then; and in 2005, there were 137 attacks recorded, while in 2006 they were as many as 101. According to *Pipeline Security*, an online journal on pipeline and oil security, between 2003 and 2007, militants launched 469 attacked on oil and oil-related establishments (Iraq Pipeline Watch...). Thus, anti-West or anti-US opinion and popular militant uprising in Muslim oil-producing countries are a new dimension of regional security of oil-producing region. So in the post-Cold War era, serious clashes were observed between Islamist militants and US along with the allies. Militants are trying to launch jihad against the US and allies in order to destroy their economic interests, and for this, militants use oil-related establishments as soft targets.

Hence, this factor of attacking oil and gas establishment owned by US and allies is one of the serious threats to regional security of the oil- and gas-producing Muslim countries.

Fourth Dimension: Regional Security and Energy Geopolitics vis-à-vis Border Dispute Between Producer Countries

Oil reserves are divided amongst many countries. The borders always play important roles in natural resources extraction if the natural resources are located across the borders of two or more countries. Sometimes it becomes the reason for clash and also leads to war between the two nations affecting the security of the whole region. For instance, Iraq invaded Kuwait and this became the reason for first Gulf war. This war not only changed the concept of security in Persian Gulf but also gave rise to a new security *order* in the world.

Case Study of Kuwait Invasion by Iraq

During the 9 years of war between Iran and Iraq, Kuwait was very important ally of Iraq and heavily financed Iraq against Iran. But it was oil, which played important role and subsequent invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. Though from the beginning there was a dispute between Iraq and Kuwait on Rumaila oil field which lies near the Kuwait and Iraq borders (Hayes, 1990). Iraq has always claimed Rumaila as part of Iraq. However, both the countries were extracting oil from Rumaila. After 1990, Kuwait extracted more oil from Rumaila through more advanced technology than Iraq (Agrawal, & Aggarwal, 1992). Iraq blamed Kuwait for extracting more oil and trying to reduce the oil prices in the international markets that could harm Iraq's economy. Iraq urged Arab league to interfere, but Kuwait denied to stop oil production and remained firm on the claimed area. Arab league failed to resolve the dispute. Thus, Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990. US came with its allies with the support of UN to protect Kuwait and launched war against Iraq. On the pretext of protecting Kuwait, the US not only destroyed Iraq but also established its permanent military bases in the region. Thus, a boundary dispute amongst oil-producing countries is an important factor to affect the regional security of any oil-producing region.

So, there are four main factors which can affect the regional security of oil-producing region:

1. Foreign intervention because of producing countries' policies against oil consumer countries. As US and UK intervened in Iran and planning to invade oil-producing countries during oil embargo in 1973.
2. Rebellion and interethnic clash due to unequal distribution of oil wealth, as it happened in the case of Sudan and Nigeria.
3. Factor of militancy in producer countries and region to hit consumer region. As militant attacks happened on oil facilities in Iraq and Saudi Arabia.
4. Borders disputes between oil- and gas-producing countries as Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990 because of Rumaila dispute.

Hence, foreign intervention and interference is invited on account of the factors mentioned above. The factor of rebellion and interethnic clash entails the situation that point towards unequal distribution of oil revenues and profit. Militancy and terrorism dimension hinges on the causes of militancy in the oil-producing region or countries; and the dimension of border disputes impacts regional security of oil-producing countries. The main question, therefore, is whether all these four factors exist in Central Asia and, if yes, then with what intensity these factors would influence the RSCA as an oil-producing region?

The Factor of Foreign Intervention and Energy Geopolitics of Central Asia

Basically there are two situations wherein the foreign powers and consumer countries of Central Asian oil can threaten the RSCA. Case study of Iran and Saudi Arabia clearly point towards the fact.

The First Scenario

If Central Asian hydrocarbon-producing countries impose any oil and gas embargo against the consumers—as Saudi Arabia did in 1973—then consumers or those who are dependent on Central Asian oil can invade the region, as US and UK planned to invade Saudi Arab after Egypt and Israel war.

The Second Scenario

If Central Asian oil- and gas-producing countries nationalise their oil and gas wealth and expel powerful foreign oil companies, foreign powers can intervene to resume their respective oil companies' profits and supply. Foreign powers can intervene using their military and can launch coup against the governments of Central Asia as UK and US plotted the coup against elected prime minister of Iran Mosaddeq because Mosaddeq nationalised the Iranian oil wealth.

Presently, there are four powers that can intervene in Central Asia because of the energy and other interests in CAR.

United States: Since many top US oil companies are operating in the region, the US is looking at CAR as an alternative for Middle East oil and seeks to reduce dependency on Middle East. The US has also security and strategic interests in the region besides oil.

European Union: As EU also seeks to reduce its gas dependency on Russia, EU, therefore, their eyes are on CAR as an alternative of Russia for gas. To promote pro-EU energy policies, EU with US can pressurise CAS to make policy in their favour and if the governments of CACs deny, they may create an Iran-like situation.

China: China is a fast-developing economy in the world and is dependent on oil import which is very costly and risky in the age of terrorism and rivalry with many countries. Thus, Central Asian oil is highly valuable for China. China, therefore, is deeply involved in Central Asian energy arena. If CACs do not fulfil the energy hopes of China, China can interfere to secure its interests.

Russia: Russia is using its energy as a political, economic and diplomatic weapon to deal with Europe. To maintain its hegemony on CAR energy, it is necessary for Russia to maintain its dominance for a better deal with Europe. Russia may, therefore, check anyone from entering CAR, especially EU, because Europe sees CAR as an alternative source for gas. Security is also a great concern for Russia, because if non-regional and anti-Russian powers become dominant in the region, it would directly hit the Russian security.

China and Russia: Both can come together to counter and reduce the combined influence of EU and US as they had shown their unity in Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) for the closure of US air bases in Central Asia.

Implications of These Factors in Central Asia

1. As regards the *first factor*, CAR security is less vulnerable because of the character and nature of the governments of Central Asian countries. Contemporary Central Asian Governments (CAG) are not anti-West, China or Russia. Therefore, there is no possibility that CAG would be acted upon like Iran and Saudi Arabia. Another point is that security situation of CAR is balanced as there is a competition among all big powers operating in the region. If EU and US interfere in the region, China and Russia would come to counter them and vice versa.

Situation can be changed if present governments are replaced by hardcore nationalists or the so-called Islamist forces. In the oil-producing countries of CAR, Uzbekistan is facing serious challenges and threats from Islamist forces. But there is a little possibility that hardcore nationalists or Islamists

would capture the state.

2. Central Asia has ethnic diversity and ethnic borders. All five countries are named according to their ethnicity. They do not intermix ethnically.

Taking into account the **second factor** of ethnic clash, presently, CAR is safe from this threat. In spite of the fact that considerable minorities inhabit each CAC, the demographic composition of ethnic population is not as such so as to produce situation like that of Sudan and Nigeria.

Distribution of Hydrocarbon and Ethnic Population in CAR

Most of the Uzbek population is inhabited in Fergana valley and fortunately most of the hydrocarbon resources of Uzbekistan are also located in this valley. Therefore, most of the oil wealth is used to develop this thickly populated area of Uzbekistan. Thus, there is no direct threat of public or any tribal rebellion against the government.

In Kazakhstan, most of oil and gas is concentrated in North and North–Western region of the country. However, the population density in the region especially that of Kazakhs is very low in comparison to Russian ethnics. More than 50% of the Kazakh population is living in urban areas and enjoying medium level of living standard without any discrimination. Though, in the oil and gas producer region Russian populace is in majority, the government is conscious about Kazakh population's sentiments and problems.

Thus, in Kazakhstan too there is no sign of rebellion or clash within the society on taking over oil and gas wealth.

In Turkmenistan, some minority groups are not satisfied with its government's discriminative policies. But these groups are not in a position to destabilise the country as happened in Sudan and Nigeria.

Therefore, in oil- and gas-producing countries of CAR, there is no threat of ethnic clash, rebellion and civil war and also no threat to RSCA because of hydrocarbon resources.

The **third factor** of Islamist militancy and extremism—is the most powerful one to endanger regional security because many powerful terrorists and militant groups are active in the region. These groups are not only opposing their regimes, but they are also opposing Russia, China, US and the EU. So far, no extremist and militant groups have become successful in attacking pipeline, as well as oil and gas establishments in Central Asia. However, the threat of clash between Central Asian governments and militants is increasing. Security situation has also changed very fast after 9/11 and due to the presence of NATO forces in Afghanistan. War against terrorism has also extended up to Central Asia and there are many groups which are on the target list of US and allies. Russia and China are also opposed to these militant and Islamist groups. These groups too oppose China, Russia and US for a slew of reasons.

There are many groups as IMU in all CACs which are a threat to CACs' security. At some places they are weak and some other places they are strong. The governments are very conscious and taking them in confidence by cooperating and signing many agreements to prevent this threat. China, Russia and the US are also providing logistic, financial and technological support to CACs to counter extremism and militancy. These countries are also providing training to the military and police of Central Asian societies to curb these groups.

Uzbekistan and Tajikistan militant organisations are most potential threat to RSCA. In Tajikistan, there is a long history of Islamist militancy and civil war but after participation in the government, Islamist militancy has ended, but in future these groups can react against Russia, China and the US. These groups have vast experience of guerrilla warfare and can offer various facilities to other organisations as well.

Uzbekistan is a hotbed of militancy in the Central Asia and many militant organisations are lurking in Uzbekistan. These groups are not only working in Uzbekistan but also working in Uzbek community of Kazakhstan, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan. According to Uzbekistan government sources, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Hizb-ut-Tehrir (HT) and Tabilighi Jamaat are active groups in Uzbekistan. But independent observers say that IMU is the only, militant organisation which is accused of some bomb blasts in Uzbekistan including attack on Uzbek president. IMU is also accused of having close relations with Al-Qaeda and Taliban. Many IMU members participated in Afghan war against NATO forces. Fergana valley is the most influential area of IMU in Uzbekistan.

Kazakhstan is still considered the most secular society in Central Asia. However, after the HT and IMU have become active in the Kazakhstan's Uzbek community and in other parts of Kazakhstan, there is an increased probability of terrorist attacks in Kazakhstan. This threat is more obvious in South Kazakhstan where more than 3 lakh Uzbeks exist and traditionally HT and IMU have their bases in this area. In August 2003, Kazakhstan police detained a group of people with pro-HT print material. In November 2003, police arrested HT members in the city of Baikanoor. To counter the militant and terrorist threat, Kazakhstan conducted and participated in anti-terrorist training exercise with China in 2006 and 2008.

Apart from IMU and HT, Jamaat of Central Asian Mujahedeen (JCAM) is also an emerging militant organisation in CAR. According to police source this organisation has also suicide bombers including women suicide bombers. In 2004, one of the Kazakh member of this organisation was killed in a suicide attack in Uzbekistan. Uzbek police has claimed to have arrested many JCAM activists and broke up their cells. Tabilighi Jamaat which has Indian roots is not found involved in any terrorist activities but Kazakh authority has blamed this organisation of keeping ties with Al-Qaeda.

Separatist ethnic Russians are also posing threat to Kazakh security. Although information about this group is not updated, but this organisation came in the limelight in November 1999 when Kazakh government arrested 22 people including 12 Russian citizens charging them of plotting to overthrow Kazakh government and to create an independent state for ethnic Russians living in Kazakhstan.

Turkish speaking people and Uighur community is also a problem for Kazakh security. A strong 250,000 Uighur population is living in Kazakhstan. Uighur are basically anti-Chinese because of a separatist movement in East China by Uighur; and Kazakh Uighur work against Chinese interest from Kazakhstan. China is the immediate neighbour and a close energy allies of Kazakhstan. China is working on different energy production and pipeline projects in Central Asia. These projects are in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Some pipelines that lead to China also pass through Kazakhstan. For instance, Turkmenistan-China pipeline passes through Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. In Uzbekistan also most of energy projects are located in militant-affected area of Uzbekistan. In Eastern China which is Uighur dominated region, all pipelines from Central Asia have to pass through Uighur autonomous region. This region is a platform of anti-Chinese sentiments because of separatist movements in this region. More than 162 people have died in different militant activities between 1991 and 2000 in the Uighur region. China is trying to suppress Uighur movement very harshly. According to Amnesty International, 190 Uighur were sentenced to death between 1997 and 1999.

Hence, there always exists a strong possibility of Chinese pipelines and oil establishments in Central Asia and Xinjiang being attacked.

Thus, the factor of Islamist militancy and extremism is the most influential factor to break the regional security order in Central Asia and neighbourhood.

The **fourth factor** related to boundary disputes is a potential one that can affect RSCA as discussed under Iraq-Kuwait boundary dispute.

Boundaries always play an important role in resource geopolitics. According to Colin Flint (2006) “Boundaries define the territorial extent of state’s sovereignty and sovereignty includes the right to extract and use resources. The course of political boundaries decides which states have access to which resources and which state does not.”

The present existing boundaries of Central Asian states were drawn in 1920 during Soviet rule. During demarcation of boundaries, Soviet planners avoided ethnic, geographical, linguistic, and other features of the region. So there are many points of conflicts and clashes over the boundary issues among the CACs.

After independence, all CACs accepted Soviet-era boundaries. Despite many disputes over the boundary in ‘Almaty Declaration’ in 1991 all signatories including CACs agreed to accept existing border as international boundaries. There were 140 points of border disputes between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan only. In the same manner, there are many points of disputes among other CACs. Despite that only a few events of firing by border guards have been reported and no serious clash has happened that could deteriorate the security order of CAR. All CACs tried to resolve border disputes peacefully and seriously, and formed various joint commissions and study groups to talk on border-related issues. On November 16, 2001, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan signed an agreement to settle down 96% of their border. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan established a joint commission for delimiting the frontiers. This commission completed the task in August 2000. So, in September 2000, presidents of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan signed an agreement to begin the process of demarcation of frontiers. Turkmenistan president also ordered the authority for fencing on the border with Uzbekistan till the end of 2001. Later on, the Turkmen Foreign Ministry released a statement on May 31, 2004 stating that disputes had been resolved.

Tajikistan has always claimed Samarkand and Bukhara as a part of their territory since, 1.25 million Tajik population was living in both regions during Soviet rule. However, the erstwhile USSR attached this territory to Uzbekistan in 1924. Insurgents from Tajikistan during Tajik civil war got support from Uzbek’s Tajik populations. Tajik militants, who had good relations with IMU, are also a cause for tension between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. To avoid any clash and tension related to border, both parties initiated dialogue and in July 2000 presidents of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan signed an agreement to initiate border demarcation. Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan also had many border disputes but resolved the 980-km frontier dispute by an agreement in December 2001.

Hydrocarbon Resources and Border Disputes

There are only two points in Central Asia where hydrocarbon resources are a cause for border disputes: 1) Turkmenistan–Uzbekistan border and 2) Uzbekistan–Kyrgyzstan border. Both are related to the lease of land of each other’s territory right from the Soviet era.

During Soviet era some of the land of Turkmenistan (South Eastern) near the Amu Darya basin was granted to Uzbekistan on lease. This land is very rich in hydrocarbon resources and Uzbekistan has established oil and gas facilities on this leased land. After independence Turkmenistan wanted this land back but Uzbekistan is not ready to return. This has affected relations between two countries. Turkmenistan expressed her displeasure on undecided long-term Uzbekistan lease in Turkmenistan’s territory. Turkmenistan has also claimed economic loss on account of this lease. In response, Uzbekistan demanded full ownership of this land. Due to this controversy, relations of the countries turned sour and they suspended rail, bus and air links in mid-1990s. Relations improved only after the meeting of presidents of both countries in 1996. Uzbekistan agreed to increase payment for leased land and also agreed to pay a portion of revenue generated from oil and gas from this disputed land. In exchange, Turkmenistan allowed Uzbekistan to own property in Turkmenistan. However, till date, this dispute remains unsettled.

The case of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan is also related to the Soviet-era exchange leases of land. Uzbekistan was granted a field on lease in southern Kyrgyzstan and in exchange Kyrgyzstan gained a pasture land in Uzbekistan’s territory on lease. After independence, Kyrgyzstan claimed its sovereignty over gas and oil fields located on Kyrgyzstan’s leased land to Uzbekistan. In 2001, during the discussion on border disputes, Kyrgyzstan not only demanded the leased land from Uzbekistan back but also demanded USD 180 million as lease rent of oil and gas fields. Uzbekistan, however, expressed unwillingness to discuss this issue at that time. Therefore, even after joint work of demarcation of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbek borders, this 406 sq km area still remains disputed.

In both these cases, Uzbekistan is accused of not returning the leased land of Soviet era. However, there is no sign of any clash and war on this issue among Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Because Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan are not powerful enough to challenge Uzbekistan and get back their land.

Hence, there are many border disputes amongst the CACs but economic and security situation do not allow them to engage in military conflicts. Thus, hydrocarbons are not a potential reason for disputes at the moment to provoke major military conflict and destabilisation at the regional security. So, border disputes with oil and gas are not a big threat to RSCA.

In a nutshell, it can therefore be argued that:

As far as the first dimension of regional security in the context of CARs is concerned it is of significant nature because in the past oil-producing regions had already experienced foreign interventions, i.e., interventions from the side of powerful consumer countries. The case of Iran has already been cited and is similar in nature. This intervention is still going on in different parts of the world. So, in future, CARs can also face the same situation. Oil embargo is already been used by West Asian countries during Arab–Israel war 1973. So it is quite likely that under special circumstances which are non-prevalent presently history may repeat itself and CARs individually or *on bloc* may use oil and gas as weapons against the powerful countries like China, Russia and the USA.

As far as the second dimension of regional security in the context of CARs is concerned, it is also less significant presently and highly confined. The regional and ethnic conflict as experienced in Sudan and Nigeria are unlikely to occur in the near future. However, it cannot be negated that such ethnic and regional differences are non-existing and cannot be exploited by super powers in future to earn their dividends.

As far as the third dimension of regional security in the context of CARs is concerned, it is of quite significant in nature since ideological movements in the name of religion are gaining strength, if not in the whole region of CAR but certainly in at least two or three countries, namely, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. Moreover, the separatist movements in the neighbouring powerful countries like China and Russia can also jeopardize the security of the region. Hence, it is of great significance to make such forces subdued tactically.

As far as fourth dimension of regional security in context of CARs is concerned, it seems it exists, particularly in the countries like Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan where land is leased out in favour of Uzbekistan from Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan during the Soviet era. The rich oil and gas reserves of this leased out land is the bone of contention between the said neighbouring countries. So these countries are yet to reach an agreement on this issue and, if unluckily, this issue remains unresolved, it may destroy peace of the whole region as has happened in the case of Iraq and Kuwait in 1990.

Conclusion

Oil has always been seen as an important tool for the security of the oil consumer countries and regions. Case studies made above also show that oil plays an important role in the regional security of producing countries and so is the case for CAR as oil and gas producer region. Energy is a part of economic factor. In CAR, oil and gas play much significant role in regional security as the case studies of Saudi Arabia, Iran, Nigeria and Iraq exhibited that the role of oil is something more than the small part of economy. The case studies also indicate that there are four dimensions how regional security is affected because of its energy resources. The first dimension is the threat of foreign power intervention. Case studies of Iran and oil embargo by Saudi Arabia in 1973 indicate that sometime security of oil-producing regions or countries do not depend on their own decisions but to a great extent it also depends on the decision of consumer countries and their behaviour. The US and the UK planned the coup against Iran's elected government because of the nationalisation of oil sector. They also planned to invade Saudi Arab, Kuwait and UAE against oil embargo in 1973. The second dimension is about the threat to regional security of energy producer region and countries because of unequal distributions of oil wealth profit. The case study of Sudan and Nigeria has proved that the distribution of unequal oil wealth may be the cause of ethnic clashes and conflicts at a large scale in oil-producing countries. Third dimension refers to the support of consumer countries to unpopular and corrupt rulers of oil-producing countries. Anti-government representations and militants attacks on the oil and gas establishment are to pressurise consumer countries not to support an unpopular and corrupt government. Sometimes reasons of opposition may be ideological and political as Islamist forces in all over the world are opposing the US and the EU policies in their countries. The case study of attacks on pipelines in Iraq and attacks on oil establishments in Saudi Arabia reveals this fact. This danger has further accentuated after 9/11 and the US declaration of the so-called 'war against terror'. The fourth dimension describes border disputes and regional security of hydrocarbon-producing region. The case study of Iraq-Kuwait border dispute pinpoints that unclear and disputed boundaries of oil-producing regions and countries may cause upheaval in the region as the Iraq-Kuwait border dispute became the cause of war which destroyed Iraq and changed geopolitical equations in the Middle East.

All these four dimensions of regional security apply on Central Asian regional security also because it is a hydrocarbon producer region with a most attractive geostrategic location. In all four dimensions, third dimension seems more important in the present situation in comparison to other dimensions.

As discussed, there are four dimensions, which are in general responsible for the regional security of hydrocarbon-producing countries. These four dimensions are foreign intervention, intra regional ethnic conflicts, militant activities against the government policies and border dispute among the neighbouring countries. These security dimensions in the case of CACs are discussed separately in the following paragraphs.

According to the first dimension (foreign power intervention), there is no serious threat to the security of oil and gas producers. The policies of CACs are very much supportive towards their oil and gas importers like China and Russia. Presently, security setup of the CAR is not like that of Middle East where oil embargo of 1973 was used against the US and European consumers. It appears that only China is increasing its dependency on Central Asian hydrocarbons. Russia is also an importer of Central Asian oil and gas but is not dependent on it. US oil companies are heavily involved in the region only in order to meet their strategic goals. These countries can intervene in the region if CACs suddenly change their energy policy and stop the supply of oil and gas to these consumer countries. Hence, there is no question of retaliation of these countries against CACs. Therefore, it appears that the said first dimension is of little significance in the context of Central Asian regional security.

According to the second dimension—that of the intraregional ethnic clash because of unequal distribution of oil wealth—the regional security of Central Asia is not in danger. In each country of CAR there is no report of any ethnic clash because of uneven distribution of hydrocarbon wealth as it was experienced in Nigeria and Sudan. The distribution of ethnic population is also not so complex that can create any conflict because of natural resources. Therefore, there is little likelihood of any ethnic clash at large level in near future because of uneven distribution of oil wealth. However, the present ethnic composition of CACs and the ongoing interethnic conflict, it is quite possible that in distant future ethnic clashes based on uneven distribution of oil wealth may emerge.

The third dimension of militant attacks on oil and gas facilities indicate most viable threat for regional security of Central Asia. Since independence, militancy has been on rise in Central Asia. China, Russia and the US are considered enemy by Islamist extremist and militants of Central Asian countries. If the oil importers and the countries which are involved in oil/gas excavation and drilling extend their support blindly to current corrupt and autocratic rulers, militants can attack on oil and gas facilities to disrupt the development and the supply of hydrocarbons as has happened in the case of Iraq, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and recently in Pakistan. TAPI project could not progress because of the fear of militant attack on supply pipeline. Presently, many militant groups are active in CAR which are anti China, Russia and anti-West for various reasons. As many type of conflicts on different levels are going on in the region, if these groups attack on oil and gas establishments in order to pressurise China, Russia and the US, in response these country can intervene militarily directly to protect their energy interests in the region. This intervention can escalate the conflict at large level. According to this dimension, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan are more sensitive because militants group like IMU are very active in these countries. According to many experts, this group is getting support of Taliban from Afghanistan. China is facing separatist movement in its Xinjiang province. Many groups in Central Asia have the sympathy with the Xinjiang's separatist and provide different types of support to these separatists. So, these militants can attack oil and gas facilities used by China in CAR. Militants can also destroy pipeline network which is going to China. So in response, China can also be involved militarily directly in CAR generally and in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan specially. China's direct involvement can disturb present regional security order.

The fourth dimension – that of border dispute – is a remote possibility. Presently there is no serious border disputes between CACs and neighbours such as China and Russia.

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