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PIPELINE POLITICS IN CENTRAL ASIA: PARADOX OF COMPETITIVE/ COOPERATIVE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES, RUSSIA AND CHINA

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Abstract

Energy rich Eurasia, since the breakup of former Soviet Union has been a battle ground for control over the vast regional energy resources' production and transportation. This reality leads to a competitive environment between the United States, Russia and China while on the other hand it also forces these countries to cooperate at different times of period since 1991. This competitive/cooperative paradox of relations has been an important aspect of energy and pipeline politics. This article focuses on the competition as well as cooperation between Russia, China and United States in energy pipelines in Central Asia as these pipelines are key to influence. The paper presents an overview of the policies of these three states regarding energy resources and the developments made in energy transportation since the breakup of Soviet Union. One of the main findings of the paper is that China has made major headway regarding the energy pipelines in Central Asia, cracks have appeared in Russia's historical influence in the energy sector of Central Asia while American influence is still limited and may decline particularly in the face of withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Key Words: Central Asia, oil, gas, pipelines, Russia, China, USA

Introduction

Energy consumption has increased globally. Different reasons such as population growth, industrialization, modern technology, are cited by the

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researchers. Four major energy consumption factors are population growth, improved living standards, modern science and technologies, and each country's unique conditions.[1] All nations of the globe, developed or developing, rich or poor, are desperate for energy because its availability and prices shape lives of common people. Energy rich countries are heavily dependent on its export to earn foreign exchange while the energy deficit states are equally desperate for energy to keep the economy floating. Major world powers are major energy consumers and therefore they are not only dependent on its imports but also desire to control its transportation to further global/regional influence and world-power status. As competition grows for increasingly scarce commodities like oil and gas, the strategic calculations of major powers and developing countries alike place more prominent emphasis on the extraction and transportation of energy products. According to International Energy Agency the global energy demand by 2030 will increase by 50 percent approximately.[2] Thus there will be global energy strains in the near future and supply will be depleted. The Shale boom also looking temporary. Arthur Berman, a geologist, as quoted by Alexi Crow, is of the view that Shale may provide the USA with only 14 years supply of natural gas.[3] Likewise with low international oil prices Shale energy becomes irrelevant as the production cost of Shale oil for instance is around $100/barrel in North Dakota's Bakken Shale and Texas' Eagle Ford Shale, in comparison to $10/barrel in Middle East.[4] This means new reserves must be discovered, controlled and developed. So the world has entered into a Geo-Energy Era where energy security mainly determines inter-state affairs and plays a decisive role in shaping competitive and cooperative relations among states.[5]

Region of Central Asia is undoubtedly rich in natural resources like oil, gas and coal.[6] Importantly the domestic populations of Central Asian Republics (CARs henceforth) are very low which means less consumption

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1 Shiro Kadoshin, Takashi Nishiyama, Toshihide Ito, "The trend in current and near future energy consumption from a statistical perspective", Applied EnergyVolume 67, Issue 4, 1 December 2000, retrieved from http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0306261900000337, accessed on 23/09/2014

2 University of TWENTE, retrieved from http://www.utwente.nl/mesaplus/nme/Introduction, accessed on 03/09/2014

3 Alexis Crow, "Falling Oil Prices Reveal America's Fracking Trap—And Saudi Arabia's Continued Energy Dominance", posted on 11/04/2014,retrieved from www.huffingtonpost.com/alexis-crow/america-fracking-saudi-oil_b_609142.html, accessed on 02/03/015

4 Ibid

5 Salman Rafi Sheikh, "Evolving Strategic Competition in the Indian Ocean", April 16, 2013, retrieved from http://www.iranreview.org/content/Documents/Evolving-Strategic-Competition-in-the-Indian-Ocean.htm, accessed on November 17, 2014

6 The two Central Asian Republics i.e. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are energy resource poor.

of energy resources' nationally and availability of huge surpluses for export. Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are well known for the large deposits of hydro carbon resources. Oil and coal are enormously found in Kazakhstan while substantial gas reserves in Turkmenistan and also in Uzbekistan. Oil reserves are tallied from 50 bbl to 200bbl by different sources. Daniel Yergin puts the Central Asian oil reserves at the bottom i.e. 50bbl. John Maresca, the Vice President of the Unocol, which has merged into Chevron, reports proven oil reserves of the region above 60bbl while Strobe Talbott the former Assistant Secretary of State projected the oil potential of Central Asia as far 200bbl.[7] Turkmenistan own 4.5% of world natural gas reserves, with 500 million of barrels of oil. Uzbekistan also holds substantial gas reserves with large deposits of uranium, gold, lead and copper. Kazakhstan has 3% of world's oil, 4% coal, 15% uranium with largest world reserves of chromites, zinc and lead and among top ten countries in the world that supplies, goal, copper, iron ore and manganese.[8] Turkmenistan ranks fourth after Russia, Iran, and Qatar in world as far as its gas reserves are concerned.[9] The Economist Intelligent Unit has estimated 10 trm of gas while Turkmenistan official statistics estimate 13 trm of gas reserves which put Turkmenistan on fourth position in the world regarding gas reserves.[10] In Kazakhstan, Eighty-three deposits contain natural gas, though only 17 of those are exclusive gas reserves and the remaining are oil and associated gas reserves.[11] Beside coal, gas and oil, the region is also rich in copper, zinc, silver, gold, uranium and mercury are only few to mention.[12] The importance of Central Asia region has increased not only because of energy resources but also due its location at center of Eurasia - linking Europe and Asia - and independent foreign policies of the regional states since 1991.[13]

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[7] Imran Khan, Central Asia: Energy Pipelines or Economic Lifelines?, posted in Asia, December 16, 2005, retrieved from www.gasandoil.com/news/central_asia/b8c080c0ee0b939bd84fa22508f785b2 accessed on 02/03/2015.

[8] The Scramble for Natural Resources in Central Asia, Money Morning, 19th January, 2012, retrieved from http://www.moneymorning.com.au/20120119/the-scramble-for-natural-resources-in-central-asia.html, accessed on 13/09/2014.

[9] James Fishelson, "From Silk Road to Chevron: The Geopolitics of Oil Pipelines in Central Asia", 2007, retrieved from http://www.sras.ogr/geopolitics_of_pipelines_in_centralasia, accessed on October 31, 2014.

[10] Ibid.

[11] James P. Dorian, "Central Asia: A major emerging energy player in the 21st century", Energy Policy, 34 (2006).

[12] Iraj Bashiri, Central Asia: An Overview, 1999, retrieved from http://www.angelfire.com/rnb/bashiri/CentAsia/CentAsia.html, accessed on 23/09/2014.

[13] Fahim Masoud, "Central Asia: A Region of Strategic Importance to China", International Policy Digest, March 12, 2014, retrieved from http://www.internationalpolicydigest.org/2014/03/12/central-asia-region-strategic-importance-china/, accessed on 25/09/2014.

Access and control over energy and its transportation has been shaping and re-shaping geo-political relations of Russia, China and USA in post-Soviet period while oil and gas have been used as tools for leverage in international politics. With the breakup of former Soviet Union, a vacuum created in the energy rich post-Soviet Central Asia and major energy consuming states started looking towards Central Asian hydrocarbons as a major supply source by filling that political space. All the major world powers, regional and extra-regional, in general and US, Russia and China in particular focused to expand relations with this region, keeping in view their own interests. This geopolitical competition of the troika: US, Russia and China and many other states have been termed as the New Great Game by a number of analysts and researchers. The term Great Game was coined by Arthur Connolly (1807-1848) for the 19th century diplomatic and intelligence warfare between Tsarist Russia Great Britain in Central Asia. However Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) fictionalized it in his famous novel Kim.[14] In the New Great Game or Energy Game America has replaced Great Britain while China has joined it with many other new players. Russia still hosting the Great Game as an old player and enjoying it with historical influence in the region. Besides, the forces interested in having access to the region's energy resources in this New Great Game also involve transnational corporations, cross-border carriers of political Islam, drugs, weapons, and NGOs interested in human rights and democracy on behalf of major powers (states).[15]

Since the breakup of former Soviet Union, mainly two groups have emerged for the geopolitical supremacy in shape of pipeline i.e. US and EU against the strategic rivalry of Sino-Russian partnership. During the last two decades except the Chevron and BP nominal shares in Kazakh oil field the rest is history of the competition between US and Russia on one hand and cooperation between Russia and China on the other. For Russia and China the Central Asian hydrocarbon resources loom large at the corner stone of their common initiatives even if they have competing goals in the region.[16] However there is a potential of disagreement between the US and EU as well as between Russia and China regarding the pipeline issues in the region and that's why there is no complete lack of scope for reconciliation and collaboration among competing states. Therefore the pipeline power game is characterized by a spectrum of competitive-cooperative relations between the three major players Russia, China and USA. According to Tazhin

[14] Abdul Hamid Khan, "The Great Game in Kipling's Works" PhD dissertation submitted to Area Study Centre, University of Peshawar, 2014.

[15] Amineh, M.P., "Globalization, Geopolitics and Energy Security in Central Eurasia and the Caspian Region". The Hague: Clingendael International Program. 2003.

[16] Vladislav Savin and Cherng-Shin Ouyang "Analysis of Post-Soviet Central Asia's Oil & Gas Pipeline Issues", Journal of Eurasian Affairs, 2013, retrieved from http://www.geopolitica.ru//en/article/analysis-post-soviet-central-asias-oil-gas-pipeline-issues#.VFifwqPxtkg, accessed on 04/11/2014.

"World powers and groups of states are active in developing a strategy of action toward the Central Asian states, as evidenced by the United States' ''Greater Central Asia'' concept and the Russian and Chinese concept of Central Asia as their backyard".[17]

In this New Great Game, the designs are same to further global domination, influence and power as were during the 19th century Great Game but the players are changed or roles of the players have changed. The global domination or influence in this case means control over the resources, supply lines, new transit routes, marginalize the rivals and cooperate with more friendly states. In this context the paper is an effort to provide evidence-based analysis from the available literature on the pipeline politics in Central Asia during the period of 1992-2014. Each of the three major players; Russia, China and USA, is discussed briefly in relation to its influence and role in energy transportation.

Pipeline Politics: Conceptual Frame Work

The concept of pipeline politics is derived from the political competition and cooperation particularly between Russia, China and USA over Central Asian energy and its transportation (pipelines) to major markets. Energy pipelines are definitely key to regional and global influence over foes and friends. In this energy centric world, power and influence reside with those who have control over energy resources and its distribution i.e. pipelines. Keeping in view the amount of current and future energy use, natural resources transportation through sea, road and rail is expensive, dangerous and almost unfeasible for mass quantity. Further there are landlocked areas like Central Asia which does not have any direct access to sea and most economical option available for energy transportation is through pipelines. For Central Asia, therefore the only technically viable mode of oil and gas transportation to global markets is pipelines. Pipelines are useful to transport liquids, gasses, bio fuels and oil to world distant markets which are cost effective and more reliable. Major energy consuming states have to import oil and gas from distant areas through thousand kilometers long pipelines. However such kind of transportation not only involves mountains, deserts and seas but also crosses many international borders at times and resultantly come across with social, economic, security and political issues. Therefore pipeline politics have been referred, in this case, to the activities of governments (Russia, China and USA) concerning political relations between them and other regional states regarding energy transportation from Central Asia.

[17] Marat Tazhin, "The Geopolitical Role of the Main Global Players in Central Asia", American Foreign Policy Interests, 30, 2008., p. 63, retrieved from http://ncafp.org/articles/08%20the%20geopolitical%20role%20of%20the%20main%20global%20players%20in%20central%20asia.pdf, accessed on 05/11/2014.

Paul Stevens identified three types of pipelines. According to him "there are three kinds of pipelines for energy transportation i.e. Domestic, Cross-border and Transit. The main factor of differentiation among these pipelines is the nature of governing jurisdiction. Domestic pipelines are under a single national jurisdiction. Cross-border pipelines directly link producer country with consumer state and the agreement on terms of trade is bilaterally concluded. Transit pipelines cross a third country for access to market and the terms and conditions including transit fee are enshrined in an agreement among the producer, transit and consumer parties".[18] The region of Central Asia encompasses all three types of pipelines which may be termed as domestic, regional or intra-regional and inter-regional.

According to Laurant Ruseckas "to be sure, the struggle for power and influence in Caspian region has taken many forms: military, diplomatic, economic and cultural. But for whatever reason, pipeline politics has emerged overtime as the central playing field for geopolitical competition in the area".[19]The pipelines diplomacy of Central Asian states have many barriers like its land locked geography, growing competition, dependency on transit countries, poor infrastructure, early investment and physical security of pipelines.[20] Energy policies of the troika i.e., Washington, Moscow and Beijing focus on access to oil and gas and construction of energy pipelines from Central Asia is central to their grand strategies. Grand Strategy has been defined as a state's role in the world.[21] The scenario is not as simple as it appears. In post-Soviet era, there are multiple decision making centers for pipeline issues in contrast to the single rule-setting authority during Soviet period. These multiple decision making sovereign states, their dependence on developed states for capital and technology and dependence on transit states for transportation all make the issue of energy pipelines more complicated.

Sander Hansen has mentioned two issues related to pipeline politics in the Caspian region: Firstly, "the uncertain legal status of Caspian sea"[22] where the littoral states, Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and

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[18] Paul Stevens, "Oil and Gas Pipelines: Prospects and Problems in Pipeline Politics in Central Asia: The Intersection of Demand, Energy Markets and Supply Routes", The National Bureau Of Asian Research, Special Report No 23, September 2010.

[19] Laurent Ruseckas, "US Policy and Caspian Pipeline Politics: The Two Faces of Baku-Ceyhan", no date, retrieved from http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/2263/us_policy_and_caspian_pipeline_politics.html, accessed on 6/11/2014.

[20] The Other Energy Superpower: Central Asia? (Part II of II) October 18, 2011, Energy In Asia, retrieved from http://energyinasiablog.com/2011/10/the-other-energy-superpower-central-asia-part-ii-of-ii/, accessed on7/11/2014.

[21] Thomas Ambrosio, Challenging America's Global Preeminence (England: Ashgate Publishers, 2005) p: 2.

[22] Sander Hansen, "Pipeline politics; The struggle for the control of the Eurasian energy resources". The Hague: The Clingendael, April 2003., p. 3.

Turkmenistan have no legal framework about the utilization of energy deposits in the Caspian Sea. The geographical boundaries of the sea have to be demarcated.[23] This can lead to any future escalation of conflict among the littoral states. Secondly, the dependency of Eurasian states on the developed countries due to the lack of funds and technology. As hydrocarbon exploitation sector needs advance technology, capital, expertise and transportation, which they can get from western countries.[24] On the other hand neighboring Russia and China have also accumulated vast experience and technology in oil and gas production and transportation and both are in competition with the West for the regional energy and its transportation.

PROPOSED BORDERS ON THE CASPIAN SEA

Source: "Storm in a precious teacup', The Economist, 2 August 2001 cited in Sander Hansen in Pipeline politics; The struggle for the control of the Eurasian energy resources. The Hague: The Clingendael, April 2003., p. 33.

[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid., p. 4.

Beside these the author has also mentioned some other related issues which do have impact on energy pipeline politics in the Eurasian region. Like, globalizations, connectivity between politics and economy, increasing role of non state actors, blurring of national and international politics, and growing interdependence. Furthermore the growing demands of oil and gas and potential for investment in energy exploitation sector.[25]

The so far emerged and emerging pipeline routes from the region are as following:

1. North-West Route: Favored by Russia: Traditionally energy resources from Central Asia moved in north-western direction through Russian territory. The Soviet Central Asia pipelines system has been developed by Soviet Russia when the area came under the control of former Soviet Union. The energy transportation structure was built in a North-west direction during the Soviet era. Pipelines infrastructure was built in such a way that all kind of pipelines, like electricity, gas, oil, rail and water make contact with Russia.[26]

2. Western Route: From Caspian to Ceyhan (Turkey) backed by US and EU.

3. Southern Route: Through Iran to Persian Gulf region opposed by US.

4. Eastward Route to China: favored by China.

5. South-eastern Route from Turkmenistan, Afghanistan to Iran, Pakistan and India.[27] Favored by USA.

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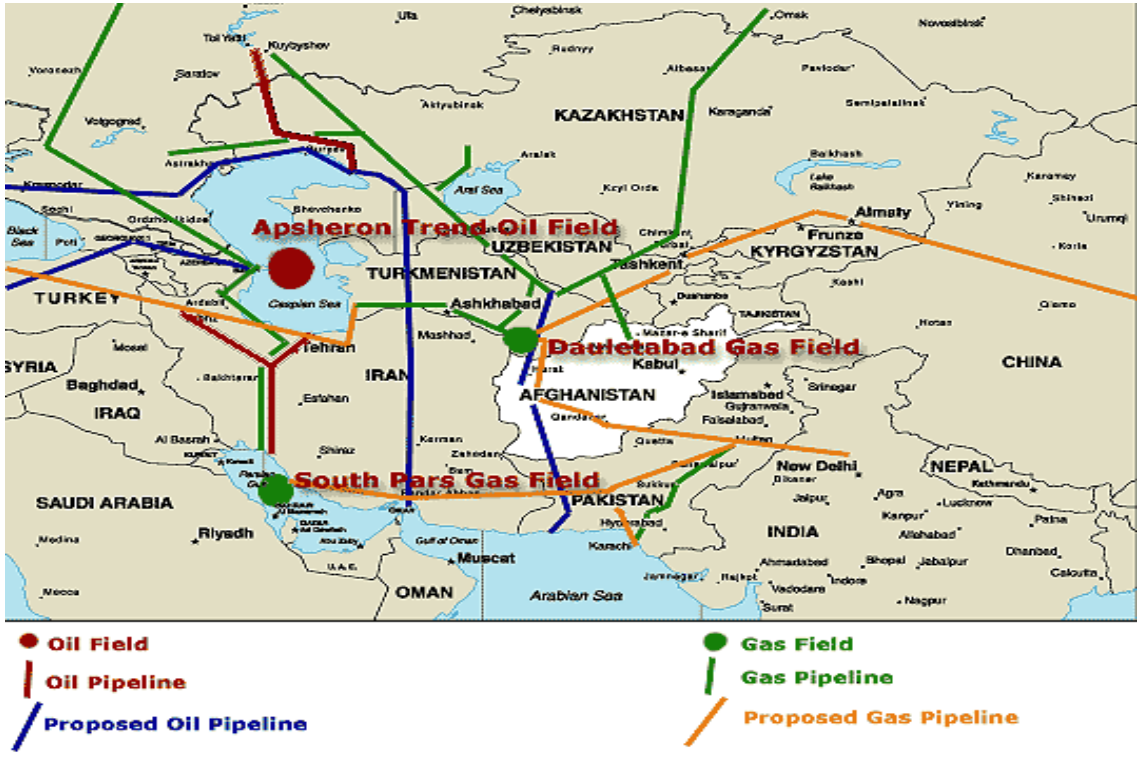
[25] Ibid, p. 6- 21.

[26] Leonard L. Coburn, "Central Asia: Pipelines are the New Silk Road", International association For Energy Economics. P.19, retrieved from https://www.google.com.pk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CBsQFjAA&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.iaee.org%2Fen%2Fpublications%2Fnewsletterdl.aspx%3Fid%3D113&ei=WFJcVMf_LNDvaLq3gOgF&usg=AFQjCNGRmq9nUhSvd0Dq5388cKrB-DOE9g&bvm=bv.79184187,d.d2s, accessed on 25/11/2014.

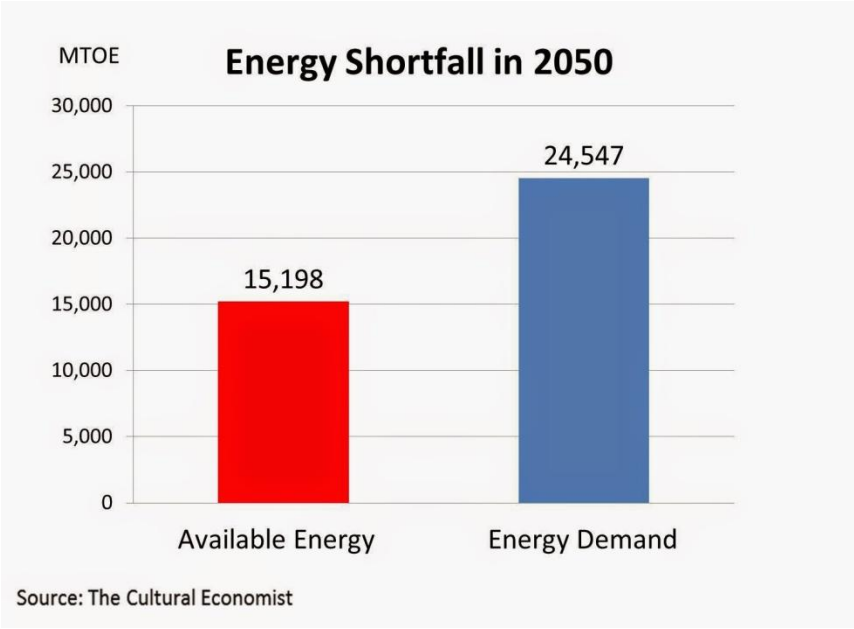
[27] "Pipelines Politics: Oil, the Taliban and the Political Balance of Central Asia", retrieved fromhttp://worldpress.org/specials/pp/pipelines.htm, accessed on 27/11/2014.



Source: Pipelines Politics: Oil, the Taliban and the Political Balance of Central Asia. http://worldpress.org/specials/pp/pipelines.htm

USA, China and Russia Energy Consumption in 2050

It is predicted that by 2050 there will be a huge gap between energy supply and energy demand. Following graph describes the energy shortfall situation.



Source: The Cultural Economist 6th May 2014.
http://tceconomist.blogspot.com/2014/05/peak-energy.html

Population Projections by U.S. Census Bureau				
2011 Rank	Country	2011 Population Estimate	2050 Population Estimate	2050 Rank
1	China	1,336,718,015	1,303,723,332	2
2	India	1,189,172,906	1,656,553,632	1
3	United States	311,050,977	422,554,384	3
4	Indonesia	245,613,043	313,020,847	5
5	Brazil	203,429,773	260,692,493	8
6	Pakistan	187,342,721	290,847,790	6
7	Nigeria	165,822,569	402,425,535	4
8	Bangladesh	158,570,535	250,155,274	9
9	Russia	138,739,892	109,187,353	16
10	Japan	127,469,543	107,209,536	17
11	Mexico	113,724,226	147,907,650	11
12	Philippines	101,833,938	171,964,187	10
13	Ethiopia	90,873,739	278,283,137	7
14	Vietnam	90,549,390	111,173,583	15
15	Egypt	82,079,636	137,872,522	13
16	Germany	81,471,834	71,541,906	21
17	Turkey	78,785,548	100,955,188	18
18	Iran	77,891,220	100,044,564	19
19	Congo (Kinshasa)	71,712,867	144,805,434	12
20	Thailand	66,720,153	69,611,256	26
21	France	65,102,719	69,768,223	25
22	United Kingdom	62,698,362	71,153,797	22
23	Italy	61,016,804	61,415,852	29
24	Myanmar (Burma)	53,999,804	70,673,160	24
25	South Africa	49,004,031	49,400,628	37

Source: Population Forecast: India to Overtake China by 2025 – June 29, 2011. http://www.2point6billion.com/news/2011/06/29/population-forecast-india-to-overtake-china-by-2025-9640.html#sthash.idsfMicm.dpuf

As far as US energy consumption is concerned, it is projected that coal, natural gas and oil will dominate the US energy mix in 2050.[28] In residential, industrial, commercial and transportation sectors, the use of coal, oil, natural gas, will increase and thus the gap between energy consumption and

[28] Bruce Tonn Paul Frymier, Jared Graves and Jessa Meyers, "A Sustainable Energy Scenario for the United States: Year 2050", Sustainability 2010, 2, p 3658.

production in US will rise by 46.43 percent in 2050.[29] While coal dominates the electricity and oil/liquid dominate the transportation sectors in USA in the years 2050.[30] China is the leading consumer of energy resources in the world. It is estimated that by 2050 China's population will rise to 1.41 billion. This means more houses, vehicles, food and other energy related services.[31] Furthermore it means China is more industrialized and urbanized with more consumption of energy resources. Russia's Energy sector plays an important role in the national development. It has second largest coal and eighth largest oil reserves of the world and ranked as third largest energy consumer country,[32] with world largest proven gas reserves. Oil, gas and coal are its major export items. Russia has surpassed Saudi Arabia recently and became world largest oil exporter. If one looks for the future demand of energy resources, it is clear that mentioned countries would be in a dire need to tap more energy reserves and it is believed that the energy issues of the present century can be overcome by the reserves in Central Asia and Caspian region. It is agreed upon that Russia, Iran and Central Asia would be the major energy supply sources particularly for the growing Asia in the current century.

Competition For Energy Pipelines In Central Asia

US in the Pipeline Politics

Central Asia is important to USA, because of its proximity with major world players like China, Russia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkey, Iran, hydrocarbon reserves of the area and security issues. Ariel Cohen identified three US interests in Central Asia, "security, energy, and democracy"[33] Further the energy reserves of Eurasian region can reduce US dependency on OPEC energy reserves. US desired to reduce the Russian monopoly over the energy pipelines system and also wanted to curtail the future growing

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid. p, 3659-3660.

[31] Nan Zhou, David Fridley, Nina Zheng Khanna, Jing Ke, Michael McNeil, Mark Levine, "China's energy and emissions outlook to 2050: Perspectives from bottom-up energy end-use model", Energy Policy, Volume 53, February 2013, Pages 51–62.

[32] EIA [Energy Information Administration], 2008: International Energy Outlook 2008, Energy Information Administration, U.S. Department of Energy, Washington, DC. cited in Sergey Paltsev, John Reilly and Natalia Tourdyeva, Russia and the World Energy Markets: Long-term Scenarios Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Cambridge, USA and Center for Economic and Financial Research (CEFIR), Moscow, Russia, retrieved from http://globalchange.mit.edu/files/document/Paltsev_GTAPconference_2009.pdf. p., 2. accessed on 27/2014.

[33] Ariel Cohen, "U.S. Interests and Central Asia Energy Security", Backgrounder, No. 1984, November 15, 2006. p., 1.

influence of China in the same sector. BTC oil pipeline which runs from Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey has been shepherd by US.[34]

Sir Halford Mackinder in 1904 delineated his famous Heartland Theory. He argued:"Control of the Eurasian landmass (Europe, Asia and the Middle East), which contained the bulk of the world's population and natural resources, was the major geo-political prize". [35] Nicholas J. Spykman modified this heartland theory in 1942 and said that who controls the Eurasian landmass controls destines of world.[36] Zbigniew Berzezinski who remained National Security Advisor to US government from 1977 to 1981 has also emphasized the importance of Eurasia in his book 'The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives' published in 1998.According to his theory control over Central Asia and Afghanistan is the key to have control over Eurasia.[37] This also means that the world actors who control the heartland will control the politics and economy of the world. The present century draw attention to the energy resources of the Eurasian land mass. Right now the term used is the New Great Game. It's the geopolitical competition between US, China, Russia and many other world powers to dominate the hydrocarbon reserves of the region because the pipeline routes selected from Central Asia and Caspian region would determine the region's orientation.

US apparently followed this theory to be physically present in the region, started freedom enduring operation in Afghanistan in 2001 to use it as a springboard to enter Central Asia and ultimately access to the regional energy resources.US with the European backing aimed at diversifying energy transportation routes from Central Asia to break the historical Russian monopoly over energy transportation developed during the Soviet era in north-south direction.[38] Western companies investing in energy sector of Central Asian region, like USA's Chevron and British Petroleum (BP) were eager to take advantage of the Central Asian energy but had to be dependent on existing Soviet pipelines infrastructure for oil and gas transportation.[39] US initially during the 1990s focused on eliminating or

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[34] Edward C. Chow and Leigh E. Hendrix, "Central Asia's Pipelines: Field of Dreams and Reality", The National Bureau of Asian Research, NBR Special Report No 23, September 2010, p. 33.

[35] "The New New Great Game: Geography, Energy, the Dollar and Gold", Strategy. December 2013., p. 3 retrieved from http://www.zerohedge.com/sites/default/files/images/user5/imageroot/2013/12/the%20New%20New%20Great%20Game.pdf, accessed on 25/11/2014.

[36] Shabir Ahmad Khan, "Dynamics of Trade Corridors and Energy Pipelines' Politics", pp: 71-90 in Pakistan's Strategic Environment; Post 2014, (Islamabad Policy Research Institute, 2014), p: 79.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Leonard L. Coburn, Central Asia: Pipelines are the New Silk Road, op cited.

[39] Edward C. Chow and Leigh E. Hendrix, Central Asia's Pipelines: Field of Dreams and Reality, The National Bureau of Asian Research, NBR Special Report No 23, September 2010, p. 31.

constraining Russian and Iranian influence in the Caspian energy pipelines.[40] The cooperation which US seek from regional states has been to link the regional energy pipelines to Western Europe bypassing Russia and Iran. This aim was to be achieved by supporting Turkey's policies and initiatives in the region. As a result some success was also achieved in the shape of BTC pipeline which benefited Turkey also but Turkey could not make any major headway in the region as was expected. Major success for the West (US and EU) since 1991 has been the BTC pipeline which totally bypasses Russian territory. However Russian influence in the region proved to be more lasting while US position and influence has been diminishing as withdrawal from Afghanistan has already started. Colour revolutions in former Soviet space including in Kyrgyzstan also increased suspicions about US objectives in the region As Edward C. Chow and Leigh E. Hendrix stated four years back in 2010 that:

> "*A common mistake is to believe that the central role for U.S. policy in Caspian pipelines will persist. To whatever extent this is a modern day Great Game—a truly inappropriate analogy to Russia and Britain's imperial competition over Central Asia in the 19th Century—the United States is the 'away team'. The traditional regional powers were in temporary decline in the 1990s. Russia was in political and economic turmoil after the collapse of the Soviet Union. China had just become a net oil importer in the early 1990s and had only started responding to the surprising opening in Central Asia, beyond securing its own borders and concerns over minorities in Xinjiang, after the Soviet Union's collapse*".[41]

US has made limited progress since 1992 when Chevron started investment in Tengiz (Kazkakhstan) oil field but still has to be dependent on Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) going through Russian territory and having largest shares of Russian oil companies i.e. Transneft and Rosneft though not operationally controlled by Russian oil giant Transneft. BP has also sold its shares in the consortium to Russian oil company Lukoil.[42] Other US backed gas and oil pipelines from Central Asian Republics of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan i.e. Trans-Caspian Pipelines initiated during the 1990s are far from materializing. The Trans-Caspian Gas and Oil

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[40] Richard Rousseau, "Pipeline Politics in Central Asia", June, 2011, retrieved from http://fpif.org/pipeline_politics_in_central_asia/, accessed on 31/10/2014.

[41] Edward C. Chow and Leigh E. Hendrix, "Central Asia's Pipelines: Field of Dreams and Reality", September 2010, retrieved from http://csis.org/files/publication/1009_EChow_LHendrix_CentralAsia.pdf, accessed on 21/11/2014.

[42] Brian Swint and Eduard Gismatullin, "BP Sells Stake in Kazakh Tengiz Field, Caspian Pipe to Lukoil", December 11, 2009 retrieved from http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=asjh2NgTMH6g&pos=6, accessed on 21/11/2014.

pipelines have to bypass Russia and Iran to supply gas to European markets. Kazakhstan plans to develop this Trans-Caspian oil pipeline from the port of Aktau via barge to the BTC pipeline.[43]

The apparently US backed Trans-Afghan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline from Daulatabad gas field of Turkmenistan also remains a dream. American and Argentinean companies did show interest in project during 1990s however the regional geo-politics have postponed its materialization till date. US lost the opportunity during its 12 years stay in Afghanistan to materialize the project. Its materialization would have played a significant role in stabilizing Afghanistan by creating economic opportunities to the people and US backed government in Afghanistan. It is still hard to examine the scope of cooperation between USA's Chevron and Russia's Gazprom on TAPI pipeline in future though it make sense as Chevron and Gazprom are in cooperation in CPC (Caspian Pipeline Consortium) in Kazakhstan so can be in this project too. It is important because in the presence of around 10000 US personnel in post withdrawal Afghanistan, US will desire to have its own flush of pound in the project if materializes.

China's Natural Leverages

The breakup of former Soviet Union and independence of Central Asian Republics coincided with the emergence of China as an economic giant in the neighborhood. During the decade of 1990s when Western oil companies like Chevron (US) and BP (British Petroleum) rushed into the region (1992 precisely), China focused on making ground for long-term reliable political, trade, economic and energy relations with Russia and Central Asia. China prudently went to Moscow and then moved into Central Asia. One of the main factors of China's 'Go West' Policy has been to create stable borders with Central Asia and develop Xinjiang for smooth energy imports from Central Asia. China achieved the aim of peaceful and stable borders with Central Asia by settling borders issues with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan through the 'Shanghai Five' mechanism which later on became Shanghai Cooperation Organization by joining of Uzbekistan in 2001. China achieved recently the goal of energy imports through pipelines from Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan without any provoking of the Great Game. On the other hand Central Asian Republics seem satisfied with the Chinese official 'Peaceful Rise' Policy.

China's energy demand steadily growing and has already become world leading energy consumer state. The growing energy needs of China can meet uninterruptedly with the Central Asian oil and gas available at the door step. Pipelines from Central Asia mean diversification of supply sources for China and less dependence on the vulnerable strait of Malaca. China inked

[43] Leonard L. Coburn, Central Asia: Pipelines are the New Silk Road, op cited.

first oil agreement with Kazakhstan in 1997 and the 2800 km long oil pipeline from Kazakhstan became operational in 2006.[44] Similarly Central Asia-China gas pipelines system originating from Turkmenistan via Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan to Chinaconsists of three lines going parallel, each 1833 km long. Line A became operational in 2009. Line B and C became operational in 2010 and 2014 respectively.[45] All the mentioned three Central Asian Republics feed gas to this pipeline for exporting to China which means a secured energy supply for China while diversification of markets for Central Asia. The route of Line D originates from the same gas field on Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan border and goes via Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Xingjian. This is the best example of regional cooperation which is imperative for regional growth. These pipelines have diminished chances of Turkmen gas for the proposed Nabucco pipeline or the Southern Gas Corridor which could bring Turkmenistan in competition with Russia for European market. That's why Russia seems to be satisfied with the eastward movement of Central Asian gas.

Source: http://www.japanfocus.org/-M_K-Bhadrakumar/3277.

China vis-à-vis USA enjoys the natural advantage of geographical proximity to the region as well as trustworthy relations with CARs. When USA blamed Uzbekistan on human rights issue after the Andijan incident in Ferghana Valley of Uzbekistan, China supported Uzbekistan's official stance on the issue and termed it as Uzbekistan's internal affair. Further

[44] Shabir Ahmad Khan &Nadeem Akhtar, "China's Policy Towards Central Asia: An Overview", pp: 61-73 in Central Asia. No. 69 (Area Study Centre, University of Peshawar, 2011) p: 66 .

[45] CNPC, "Flow of Natural Gas from Central Asia", retrieved from http://www.cnpc.com.cn/en/FlowofnaturalgasfromCentralAsia/FlowofnaturalgasfromCentralAsia2.shtml, accessed on 20/01/2015.

SCO also provided a forum to China, Russia and Central Asia for deepening their economic and political relations. Though China has been replacing Russia in many sectors of CARs, however Russia has not reacted in the way it reacted to the Western backed Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan (BTC)pipeline in shape of Russian-Georgian war and secession of Abkhazia in 2008 and to the Ukraine issue and annexation of Crimea in 2014.

Russia's Historical Monopoly Challenged

More than 50 percent of Russia's revenue comes from the oil. Russia meets 90 percent gas requirements of Western Europe along-with substantial amount of European oil imports.[46] Russia considers Central Asia its near-abroad and a historical sphere of influence where Russia has invested for more than a century and developed housing infrastructure, communication and pipeline infrastructure, industrial infrastructure and gave Central Asia almost 100 percent literacy rate. Through Russia runs all the oil and gas pipelines of former Soviet Union. Similarly the Central Asian oil and gas pipelines infrastructure avoid any physical connection with any country of the Central Asian Republics. Russia, even after more than two decades of time since the breakup of Soviet Union, still controls much of the Central Asian energy pipeline infrastructure. 80 percent of Kazakh's oil goes in Russian pipeline system of Central Asia while remaining 20 percent goes to China through Kazakh-China oil pipeline.[47]

Russia's policy focusing to ensure Russian companies' investment in development and transportation of hydrocarbon resources in Central Asia and to minimize US involvement in joint ventures and transportation[48].Russia operates the Caspian-Pipeline Consortium (CPC) from Tengiz oil field in Kazakhstan to the Russian port of Novarisiski at the Black Sea via Russian territory. It is the largest export route and pipeline of Central Asian which currently carries 34 million tons oil to world markets via the Black Sea.[49] Chevron and British Petroleum are also dependent on this route as both have shares in the Caspian-Pipeline Consortium. Likewise the Central Asia Centre Gas Pipeline System (CAC) includes a number of gas pipelines from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan to Russia and beyond. This pipeline system is controlled by Russia's Gazprom for further export Central Asian gas to Ukraine and Europe. Russia has also signed a 25 years agreement with Turkmenistan in April 2003 which stipulates to supply

[46] "A Bear at The Throat", The Economist, April 14, 2997, pp: 58-60.
[47] Vladislav Savin and Cherng-Shin Ouyang, op. cited.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Vladislav Savin and Cherng-Shin op. cited.

Turkmen gas to Gazprom until 2028, a total of 2 tcm over mentioned period.[50]

The Russian monopoly over the energy rich area has been challenged by US and China by supporting energy routes which avoid Russian dependency. Leonard L. Coburn, in article Central Asia: Pipelines are the New Silk Road mentioned the new multiple energy supply routes, which the US and China supported, have already developed cracks in the Russian historical hegemonic position. Following are the important oil pipelines and rail routes, which avoid Russian territory/ monopoly.

1. From Azerbaijan to Georgia to Black sea ports for shipments.
2. Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC), from Kazakhstan to Black sea passing through Russia, but it's not under the control of Russian state owned oil company, Transneft.
3. Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline from Azerbaijan to Mediterranean Sea.
4. Oil pipeline from Kazakhstan (Atasu) to China's (Alashankou) Xinjiang region.[51]

"All these new routes provide Central Asia with competitive and diverse routes undermining Russia's monopoly position. All the countries must continue to balance their relationships with Russia carefully since Russia still has a strong position in Central Asia, but Russia no longer dominates as in former times."[52]

[50]Martha Brill Olcott, "International Gas Trade in, Central Asia: Turkmenistan, Iran, Russia and Afghanistan" May 2004, retrieved from http://fsi.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Turkmenistan_final.pdf, accessed on 6/11/2014
[51]Leonard L. Coburn, "Central Asia: Pipelines are the New Silk Road", op.cit. p.19.
[52]Ibid. p. 19.

Source: Struggle for Central Asian Energy Riches, BBC NEWS Asia Pacifichttp://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10213892.

As far as natural gas transportation is concerned, the situation is also changed. Russia's old Soviet era monopoly over Central Asia's gas reserves in terms of gas pipelines' system connected with Russia has been challenged by China to a great extent. Iran is also connected to Turkmen gas through pipeline though Gazprom is actively involved in extracting and transmitting gas form Central Asia. Gazprom is working in collaboration with the gas companies operating in Central Asia and expanded gas transmission system Central Asia-Center (CAC). Presently Gazprom entered into bilateral agreement with Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan.[53] However the historical control of gas supply by Russia, like oil supply, has been challenged by the competitors through supporting diverse gas pipeline projects.

Shah Deniz gas field in Azerbaijan has been developed while South Caucasus Pipeline (SCP) also known as BTE pipeline started from Baku to Tbilisi to Erzurum (Turkey) and run parallel to BTC pipeline (Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan), avoiding Russian territory.[54] Now Azerbaijan did not import gas from Russia but rather export to Russia its own natural gas and is looking for other options like deal with Bulgaria.[55] Azerbaijan entered into an agreement to export gas to Bulgaria in 2019 via Turkey and Greece avoiding transportation through Russia.[56] In order to avoid Russia and transport gas from Caspian Sea to Europe through Nabucco pipelines has been cancelled but the Trans Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP), funded by Azerbaijan and Turkey, is expected to be operational in 2018.[57] Chinese National Petroleum Company (CNPC) the first foreign company that has started investing $4 billion in eastern Turkmenistan gas oil field, South Yoloten.[58] All these gas pipeline projects seriously undermine Russian monopoly of past over the Central Asian gas transportation and diversifying supply routes.

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[53] Gas Purchases strategy, retrieved from http://www.gazprom.com/about/production/central-asia/, accessed on 21/11/2014.

[54] Leonard L. Coburn, "Central Asia: Pipelines are the New Silk Road", op.cit. p.20.

[55] Ibid.

[56] "The War of Energy Independence: Central and South East Europe Warms to Russian Dependency," retrieved from http://www.naturalgaseurope.com/energy-independence-central-and-south-east-europe accessed on 11/11/2014.

[57] Clara Weiss European Union's Nabucco pipeline project aborted, 13th July 2013, retrieved from http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2013/07/13/nabu-j13.html, accessed 13/11/2014.

[58] Ibid.

Source: Gas Purchases strategy
http://www.gazprom.com/about/production/central-asia/

Cooperation for Energy Pipelines in Central Asia

James P. Dorian has mentioned that cooperation in the field of energy transportation has already being started between Central Asian states. He is also confident that in future the regional states will forge close cooperation in the field of energy transportation, because of the following reasons.

1. Economic growth will increase energy demand among the Central Asian states.
2. Central Asian States interdependence in term of uneven distribution of energy resources.
3. Energy shortage in resource poor Central Asian states forced them to import energy from regional states.
4. Low cost involvement in developing regional energy transportation network.[59]
5. Already established energy transport network during Soviet period.

Oil is exported from Kazakhstan to Turkmenistan and from Uzbekistan to Tajikistan. Gas pipelines export gas from Uzbekistan to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan Kazakhstan and from Turkmenistan to Tajikistan, Kazakhstan,

[59] James P. Dorian Central Asia: A major emerging energy player in the 21st century, op.cit, pp. 550-551.

Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan import coal from Kazakhstan.[60] The initial phase of competition for energy resources' has given a realization to the main actors that cooperation can also be the option. Russia as a strategy tried to avoid competition with China. As Heitor Romana mentioned: "in the energy field", Moscow intends that "the supply of Central Asian oil and natural gas to China continues to be conducted by the Russians, for the Russian companies to control in source the production of the oil and gas exported to China". This is the case of "Gazprom" and "Rosneft", which "seek to do this" though, for example, the creation of "joint ventures with local companies".[61]

Similarly the Chinese company China National Petroleum Corporation and Russian second largest oil company Lukoil are cooperating to develop oil and gas deposits in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Likewise both Russia and China are cooperating in Siberia and recently signed a $400 billion energy pipeline agreement. These companies are also involved in other combined oil and gas ventures.[62] Furthermore the energy interests of China and Russia gave birth to the formation of an Energy Club in Shanghai cooperation Organization in 2007. The main force behind Moscow idea is to 'harmonise' the energy strategies of Russia, China and Central Asian countries".[63] Dr Marcel de Haas explained the energy club in this manner "The regulations of the Energy Club – in which the SCO observers also take part– explain that the Club unites energy producers, consumers and transit countries in coordination of energy strategies with the aim of increasing energy security".[64] In 2013 Gazprom and CNPC entered in an agreement of worth $400 billion to construct jointly a gas pipeline. There are possibilities that SCO and NATO will collaborate in future.[65]

Why Russia is satisfied with growing Chinese influence in the region? There could be three probable answers to this question: Firstly, Russia could not control, counter or stop China-Central Asia close collaboration due to the nature of mutual beneficial relationship between China and Central Asia. Secondly, Russia and China have chosen each other as strategic partners' vis-à-vis US presence in the region. Thirdly the eastward direction of

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[60] Ibid.

[61] Romana, Heitor., Entrevista Pessoal, Lisboa. 2012. Cited in Paulo Duarte, "Cooperation and Conflict: The Dynamics of Oil and Gas in Central Asia", Austral: Brazilian Journal of Strategy & International Relations, Vol. 3, n.5, Jan-Jun. 2014., p. 212.

[62] Shamil Yenikeyeff, "Energy Interests of the 'Great Powers' in Central Asia: Cooperation or Conflict?" The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs 46(3), 2011, p:217, retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/03932729.2011.601115, accessed on 21/10/2014.

[63] Ibid, p: 74.

[64] Dr Marcel de Haas, "The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's Momentum Towards a mature Security Alliance", p. 25, retrieved from http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/20080100_cscp_haas_art_sm.pdf, accessed on 19/11/2014.

[65] Ibid., pp. 26-30.

Central Asian energy resources diminishes the chances of Central Asian energy competition with Russia for European market. China and Russia also thriving for a multi-polar world order to have different centers of power balancing each other for having a peaceful world. China can also become partner in IPI (Iran, Pakistan, and India) pipeline making it IPC (Iran, Pakistan, China) gas pipeline if India does not come a party to the project.

Initially US interests in Central Asia revolved around propagating its values of democracy, equality, rule of law, weapons of Mass destructions, and human rights. It was in mid 90s that US gave importance to Eurasian energy resources'. Keeping in mind the geo-political situation of the region, US main concern is to develop such energy export strategy that favored joint regional endeavor. For this US relied on Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. For further developing the cooperative environment in Central Asia US initiated Partnership for Peace frame work under NATO[66] US cooperative policies revolved around security. However US have been unable to foster any major cooperative initiative in the region of Central Asia. US after 2014 NATO forces exit from Afghanistan may be in a complex situation to develop a New Silk Road, with the idea to integrate Central Asia, Afghanistan and South Asia. This integration encompasses regional energy markets and trade and transport.[67]

Conclusion

As a result of energy pipeline politics in hydrocarbon rich Eurasian region, two trends are eminent; competition and cooperation between US, Russia and China. Competitive environment emerged immediately after the disintegration of the former Soviet Union. Among the three states, Russia and China seem more cooperative or less competitive as both considered the US presence in the region, which both term their backyard, as a long term threat. Richard Rousseau stated it in his words "projects benefiting US geopolitical and energy plans draw wary looks from Russia and China".[68] The emergence of SCO and initiatives taken by both the states Russia and China under its umbrella are indicative of the fact that US presence looms large over their competition in the energy transportation. Russian role in Georgian and Ukrainian crises signifies that Russia can ignite conflict and may use its military, Russian Diaspora and dominance over regional energy pipelines to assert her in former Soviet space. Energy has been used by Russia as an effective foreign policy tool in the 21st century particularly in its relations with Western Europe vis-à-vis Central Asian gas supply. China has been making major headway in the region and it seems that in the long-

[66] S. Neil Macfarlane, The United States and regionalism in Central Asia, International Affairs 80, p. 451-452.
[67] US Support for the new silk Road, http://www.state.gov/p/sca/ci/af/newsilkroad/
[68] Richard Rousseau, "Pipeline Politics in Central Asia", op. cited.

run China might replace the Russian historical role but not through physical occupation but through economic dominance of the region.

For USA the region of Central Asia is important strategically as well as economically. US is engaged bilaterally with the states of Central Asian region, but seems to be little successful in developing any regional cooperative infrastructure and institutions. For energy politics US encouraged friendly states to be more active in the region of Central Asia, that's why US didn't support any energy pipeline route either through Russia or Iran. After two decades of political maneuvering and pursuing a policy of regime changes in former Soviet space through color revolutions, US presence is still limited and in the post 2014 regional scenario US seems to be little effective while China and Russia seem to have major roles and say in regional structuralization. It seems that USA's non-Russian, non-Chinese and non-Iranian policies for pipeline routes are in decline. However the Sino-Russian cooperation in Central Asia is also guarded by the long-term divergent interests of the players and this may foster the competitive policies once the US presence is eliminated completely. New pipelines from the region have developed and been developing during the last two decades which have broken the Russian complete monopoly but Russia still enjoys a strong position and influence over the regional energy transportation.

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