COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE QUALITATIVE ENERGY DIPLOMACY OF THE US AND CHINA TOWARDS CENTRAL ASIA: BARRIERS TO PROTECT ENERGY INTERESTS

Arfan Mahmood
Assistant Professor, Centre for South Asian Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan. E-mail: arfanmahmood.csas@pu.edu.pk

Umbreen Javaid
Dean, Faculty of Behavioral & Social Sciences, and Director, Centre for South Asian Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan. E-mail: director.csas@pu.edu.pk

ABSTRACT
This study offers a critical analysis of how does energy impacts the foreign policy issues of the country. Its objective is to explores the dynamics of the US and Chinese energy diplomacy towards Central Asia in the context of interests versus ideology. It also provides imperative clue of pros and cons and limitations of preaching dogmatic ideology alone to secure energy interests abroad. The study adopted a well-structured analytical methodology to analyse their tactics of “Qualitative Energy Diplomacy” (QED) for advancing their energy and strategic interests. It is a qualitative study that utilizes content analysis approach. It concludes that tactics employed by the US and China to preach the dogmatic values in the region vary, with the efforts of the US relatively greater than the Chinese and when the dogmatic explanation of these qualitative tenets conflicts the same energy interests, both of them regard ideologies subservient to their interests.

Keywords: Dogmatic Ideology; Energy Security; Limitations; Qualitative Energy Diplomacy; The US; China and Central Asia.

INTRODUCTION
From Halford J. Mackinder, a British geographer, presented his landmark thesis about the geostrategic significance of “Eurasian Heartland” in 1904 that whoever controls the resources of this ‘great pivot’ will become ‘the empire of the world’ (Mackinder, 1962). Since the beginning of 21st century, competition for power and influence among major powers of the world over the vast world’s energy resources, particularly over Eurasia, has been intensified as a consequence of the rapid growth of economy, uninterrupted industrialization, and increase in population worldwide. All of these elements with geopolitical preferences have led the countries for securing and diversifying energy resources. Regarding this, Central Asia, owing to its huge untapped energy wealth, has offered an immense opportunity for the states of the world that cannot easily be ignored.

At the onset of 21st century, Central Asia has emerged as one of the strategically important energy centers of the globe. In order to compete for accessing the energy reserves of this region in a pragmatic way, all the key players such as the US, Russia and China found it imperative to rationalise their aims qualitatively, if not inevitably ideologically. Therefore, the US, in order to advance and procure its energy and strategic interests, adopted the notion of “liberal democracy and human rights above sovereignty,” while Russians advanced their own notions of “sovereign democracy” and China designed the platform of non-interventionist “responsible state” towards Central Asia.

This study reflects that the attempts and ways used by these players for advancing such qualities in Central Asia vary, with the efforts of the US relatively greater and least by Russia. More significantly, these characteristics, even if full of values, in general remain subordinate to their interests. For assessing the progress these players have made data obtained from both primary and secondary sources have been utilized to re-map the term “qualitative energy diplomacy” (QED). This paper is segregated into three sections to systematically approach this research inquiry. The first section of this study reviews the evolution of the QED from the actual realist-driven predecessor. The second section, the crucial part of this study, illustrates the approaches of QED employed by these
major players. Lastly, the two quite opposite approaches of “combine-and-rule” and “divide-and-rule” are elaborated as an explanation of the current stalemate.

**Evolution of Qualitative Energy Diplomacy (QED)**
As different scholars have proposed from the domain of international politics, foreign policy which is qualitative, value-ridden or based on ideology, in combination with conventional interpretations of realists constitutes a new paradigm called “constructivism” in international relation studies. However, this new great game’s rules are not completely spelled out yet. The following key rules help in strengthening the theoretical framework of “constructivism” which can be employed to analyse how the US and China maneuver in Central Asian region:

Most of the studies on politics of energy have two assumptions in common: first, contesters are “rational” and second, they are “realist-oriented.” Energy interests have now become increasingly significant as they are ‘second only to national security.’ So, states not pursuing energy interests would be naïve. But, only this, for the 21st century, is not enough either.

Since Soviet disintegration, realist notions have often been questioned by the emergence of values and beliefs that demand qualitative justifications for behaviors aimed at maximizing interests. Encroaching on foreign resources of energy might be viewed as a breach of some of, if not all, novel ideas like ‘peace’ and ‘conservation.’ States could face significant challenges both nationally and internationally if they try to rationalize their acts from high moral standings without offering values, norms, or ideologies (Yee, 1996).

From states’ perspective, qualitative norms are mostly, if not always, subdued by interests because to follow the rules blindly could result into deviating away from national interests. However, if the two comes into conflict with each other, values or norms in political context are mostly less significant than interests in economic context. Simply speaking, QED which involves carrot and stick phenomenon is quite different from ideological diplomacy.

The efforts made by various players on QED vary. Generally speaking, if a country is more pluralistic domestically, there is more likeliness that its norms will be taken more seriously on the front of diplomacy. Taking this premise in consideration, it is anticipated from this study that norms relatively play a greater role in the US policy than the Chinese towards Central Asian region. Following are the hypotheses that have been proposed after extensive review of literature for this study:

H1: The dogmatic values help protect the energy interests of both the US and China in Central Asia

H2: When the dogmatic values come into conflict with the energy interests, energy interests are given preference over values

The following section explores that how these principles of QED mentioned above have been opted by both Washington and Beijing in Central Asia. Three dimensions are reviewed for both the US and China: first, the officially sponsored qualitative norms adopted; second, how these characteristics support conventional energy diplomacy in Central Asia; and finally, how interests trump norms.

**Tactics of QED employed by the US and China**
The following section provides comparative analysis of how do the US and China employ the above mentioned tactics of QED to protect their national interests:

**The US: Advocating liberal democracy**
For a long period of time, the US has been highly skilled in pushing forward its national interests by advocating (national) values simultaneously. Contemporary strategy of the US can be described by liberal realism’s framework given by Ikenberry and Kupchan. This framework includes three propositions: “first, a prerequisite that the US must exercise its superior power in concert with other powers to make sure that it prevents rather than entices balancing behavior; second, the necessity to work for the secular diffusion of international power; and the most significant for QED, the dedication to retrieve its moral authority overseas, and making disaffected partners feel like stakeholders in global system (Ikenberry and Kupchan, 2004). John Ikenberry, to be more precise and specific argued that such a method embraced five principles of strategy and vision including “democracy and peace; free trade, economic openness and democracy; free trade, economic interdependence and peace;
institutions and the containment of conflict; and community and identity” (Ikenberry 2000, cited in Shen, 2011, p. 5).

From the perspective of the US, although these values (i.e. liberal democracy and human rights) demonstrate the general national ideology of the US, these values can also be applied naturally for facilitating its interests of energy in Central Asia. Immediately, after Soviet disintegration, in 1992, “FREEDOM Support Act” was signed by the Congress conditioning the aid’s provision with suggested values. The US intention behind advocating liberal democracy to the former Soviet states particularly was further illustrated in the “Silk Road Strategy Act” by the end of the 20th century, which “authorized enhanced policy and aid to support conflict amelioration, humanitarian needs, economic development, transport and communications, border controls, democracy, and the creation of civil societies in the South Caucasus and Central Asia” (White House, 1999). Immediately after 9/11, the U.S regarded liberal democracy’s promotion as its unique task in Central Asia. As illustrated by Lynn Pascoe, such values’ promotion in Central Asia is a major development to prove liberal democracy’s universality (Pascoe, 2002). This aspect is advocated both by the executives and legislative body of the US.

This very concept of foreign policy echoes liberal-realist paradigm given by Ikenberry. This paradigm survived the period of ‘neo-conservatism’ quite efficiently and also became as viewed by Joseph Nye, “the foundation of a Democratic (Party) foreign policy” (Nye, 2008). Albeit the Democratic Party seems far less unilateral compared to the administration of Bush, the very notion of employing qualified norms to support national interests of a state fits quite well with Hillary Clinton’s most recent “smart power” notion originally given by Suzanne Nossel in the following words: “US interests are furthered by enlisting others on behalf of US goals, through alliances, international institutions, careful diplomacy, and the power of ideals” (Nossel, 2004). An important query here is to ask how exactly has QED influenced, or supported, energy interests of the US in Central Asia.

**How values facilitate energy interests?**

There is much to attract the interests of the US in Central Asia. One of the key objectives of the US is to diversify its channels of energy imports by having access to the Central Asian energy resources. Though the exports of energy from Central Asia to the US are not much, but the significance of Central Asian region to the US does not rest primarily on the consumption of its resources by the US but more probably on other strategic fronts. For example, the US regards Central Asia’s strategic location as a kind of fortress against easy access of energy for both Russia and China and a heaven-sent region for monitoring the tug of war (rivalry) between the two. So, energy sources’ acquisition from Central Asian region remains a major concern of the US in worldwide competition, not to mention that these regional energy resources can also provide the regional allies of the US with a cheap supply of energy, which equips the US with an additional bargaining chip to deal with countries like India and Pakistan (Saeedi, 2008).

While the US advances its agenda of energy, it explicitly promises to offer help to both governmental and nongovernmental bodies that could possibly come to terms with its goals for liberal democracy. Dating back to President Clinton’s era, Central Asian republics except Tajikistan joined NATO’s “Partnership for Peace Program” (PfP) in 1994. A joint peacekeeping force known as “the Central Asian Peacekeeping Battalion (CENTRASBAT)” was established under the auspices of PfP program. The US Department of Defense established links with Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, and equipped these countries’ militaries with both military assistance and training. It may be doubtful that Kyrgyzstan’s famous (or infamous) Tulip Revolution and various similar efforts in both Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan were induced directly by the US. However, the proclamation of liberal democracy in Central Asia generally had inescapably created the atmosphere for these political shifts to have happened (Shen, 2011).

At different times, “stick” had also been employed by the US as a part of its QED. Going side-by-side to this chain of events, the US also put substantial pressure on the states of Central Asia to pledge cooperation on the deals of energy resources. The national energy policy document under Bush administration, which was released in May 2001, suggested that “greater oil production in the Caspian region would not only benefit regional economies, but would also help mitigate possible world supply disruptions and transmit liberal ideas” (National Energy Policy Development Group, 2001). The War on Terrorism, which was launched after 9/11, provided another opportunity to the US for reasserting its energy hunt in Central Asia. Maratha Brill Olcott interpreted this opportunity as the
“second chance” for the US and Central Asian republics as well for engaging with one another (Olcott, 2005).

To the leaders of Central Asia, QED is not just a “carrot” but also a “stick” as demonstrated by the ability of the US to refuse Kyrgyzstan regime (the “stick”), an energy scarce country, on the one hand and the US investments in other states of the region (the “carrot”) on the other. The US has been able to penetrate the Kazakh’s energy sector owing to the combination of both these elements. The belief that Washington made a deliberate effort for encroaching on resources of energy through promoting various versions of liberal democracy in Central Asia is circulated over a broad range in non-Western sources, particularly among the scholars from China (Wang, 2007). No matter whether the states of Central Asia welcomed the US owing to this, it still can be partly sketched as a prospering promotion of values of the liberal democracy of the US.

**Interests versus values: Confines to advocate dogmatic values alone**

As illustrated in section one of the study, states, mostly if not always, give preference to interests over values if the two come into conflict with each other. After the leadership of Central Asia agreed to conclude the conditions of cooperation with the US on the front of energy, the aim of advocating values of liberal democracy in the region was kept aside by the US, even though this very act of ignoring the preaching of liberal democracy by the US may not have been observed by the American nationals. The unrestricted promulgation of liberal democracy in the region of Central Asia inescapably weakens the authority of authoritarian regimes of Central Asia. However, the US seems to reflect no intention to replace the authoritarian rulers of Central Asian republics once it secured the energy deals; the exception in Central Asia is the case of Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan. Afterwards, the discomfort caused by the criticism of the US over human rights’ violations in Andijon Massacre by President Karimov resulted into closing of the US air base in Uzbekistan in November 2005. What has taken place in Kyrgyzstan, yet, has not been repeated again.

The following QED rule becomes crystal clear after Andijon Massacre: while propagating liberal democracy presents the US with legitimate groundwork to enter Central Asian region, these values end to be a goal in itself while coming into conflict with various other realist-oriented interests (Shen, 2011). Therefore, it could be employed both ways: to forestall friendly regimes, and to force unlike-minded regimes for cooperating on the front of energy. However, it is not an option to sacrifice energy interests by sticking to ideology. As Olcott sadly sums up, “While a percentage of US assistance is earmarked to promote the development of democratic societies in this region, in reality Washington has been content to do business with the existing ruling elite, no matter how insecure or grasping it may be. Part of the problem is that most US policy-makers give democracy as little chance of succeeding in the region as Central Asia’s rulers do themselves” (Olcott, 2005).

Consequently, Central Asian leadership gradually got aware of this essential priority, i.e. “interests above values,” within the US circles and major factors leading to their sustained hegemony. After Tulip Revolution, the US did not cause any significant change of regime in the region of Central Asia, although the ideals of the US might have strong impact among the highly educated public of the region.

**China: The non-interventionist “responsible state”**

While both the US and Russia compete by preaching “sovereign” and “liberal” democracy framework with each other, China stays somewhere in the middle. It asserts the duty of peacekeeping and arbitrator for itself to resolve regional conflicts. Although Chinese are equally concerned with the issue of sovereignty, China’s foreign policy no longer reflects sovereignty’s supremacy. The previous event when China showed concern over sovereignty’s supremacy was in 1999 when Chinese embassy in Belgrade bombed by NATO. Since Hu Jintao came to power in China, it instead has started demonstrating to the globe and picturing China as a responsible power that is rising to the international arena peacefully. Rosemary Foot, a British scholar, and Qin Yaqing, a scholar from Mainland China, both were among the first to proffer that China should assume the role of a globally “responsible state,” and carry on with its historical activism regarding fulfilling its responsibilities (Root, 2001). In 2003, the way China handled the crisis of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) can be viewed as a transformational landmark for Chinese to pledge its dedication to such a diplomatic aim (Shen, 2004). In addition, China’s efforts of becoming a ‘responsible state’ can be visualized by its role in the United Nations, where it abstained from casting its vote on contentious global matters.
In regard to its ideal world structure, China has adopted “peaceful development” as its both diplomatic and ideological (to some extent) guiding tenet. New mantra of “peaceful rise” (hepingjueqi) was adopted in the foreign policy of China in Premier Wen Jiabao’s first official trip to the US in 2003, according to which Chinese would remain engaged actively in global matters in a manner that “engaged, respected, and tolerated” other countries without damaging their “different social systems and cultural traditions” (Jiabao, 2003). This theory of “peaceful rise” was renamed as “peaceful development” (hepingfazhan) in 2004, but the former expression still remains more famous in daily usage.

Soon the propaganda of Party came up with a comprehensive justification for Chinese not to challenge the US, proclaiming that “China is one of a group of rising big powers, and any intervention by China also challenges the whole group of rising big powers” (Jiabao, 2004). Wen Jiabao, presenting his argument to the US in 2003, stressed China’s “peace-loving” posture calling it politically accurate and locally secure. Contrasting the intentions of the US to preach “democratic” norms, this notion of “peacefulness” was immediately juxtaposed with the Chinese pursuit to build a “harmonious society” (hexieshehui).

At the onset of 21st century, to China, preserving and supporting “multilaterally or mutually-beneficial” trade prospects in Central Asia would have accomplished their duty beforehand towards the region. Yet recently, the new leadership of China understood that to be acknowledged as a “responsible state” by the world, China, by preserving its tradition of non-intervention, must reflect several commonly acceptable characteristics accepted by the global society, especially in regard to non-conditionality and baseness in handling global roles, and transparency in reaching decisions that might affect the citizen’s well-being beyond its sovereign territorial boundaries. Good number of Chinese scholars from Mainland China, contrary to the US ‘realist-oriented’ policies, China sticks to the following moral obligations for formulating its Central Asian policy:

- Respect the unique civilization of other nations and not to interfere in their internal matters.
- Stay away from forging alliances with them or evolving an exclusive area of influence.
- Offer economic help without conditions.
- Reiterate equality in resolving border disputes.
- Give equal importance to region’s political and economic security (Zheng, 2007).

**How values facilitate energy interests?**

The above developing qualified tenets in China have deep influences on the realist stage of ties between China and Central Asia. As Andrew Kuchins points out, when the states of Central Asia regard the US as “too interventionists,” the new way presented by China to them has become highly attractive alternative (Kuchins, 2010). Compared with the values (ideologies) offered by the US to Central Asia, one of the major fascinations of Chinese version of values to the region is its offering of “multilateral networks” as substitute. Through the scheme of constructing a “harmonious society,” China advocates building multilateral connections in the region which most of the time present China with economic opportunities. As noted by Chien-peng Chung, “one of the hidden purposes of China in engaging itself in regional organizations like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is to safeguard its energy interests in Central Asia” (Chung, 2004). Regarding the possibility of energy alliance, some scholars anticipate that it could be advanced between China, Iran, and the permanent member states of SCO. Different from the confrontational principles suggested by both the U.S and Russia against each other, China’s “sovereignty-centric” and “noninterventionists” ideological framework makes several state-owned enterprises (SOEs) of Central Asia more ready to cooperate with Chinese state-owned energy companies.

Most remarkably, China-Kazakhstan energy cooperation was deepened after 1997, which was basically the immediate outcome of SCO establishment. For example, China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), Chinese energy giant, succeeded in acquiring 60 percent shares in Aktobemunaigaz, a Kazakhstan’s state-owned enterprise, in 1997, and firmed its hold over PetroKazakhstan, Canada-owned enterprise, in 2005. With the collaboration of CNPC and KazMunayGaz, state-owned company of Kazakhstan, China constructed 1000 km long pipeline for connecting Atasu, western province of Kazakhstan, to Alashankou in Xinjiang Autonomous Region. This pipeline project was completed in 2005. A new project of gas pipeline was initiated in 2007 by China and Kazakhstan with intended capacity of 30 cm annually (Yenikeyeff, 2008). Several other deals were
signed over energy cooperation between China and Central Asian states to construct a “harmonious neighborhood.”

Another attraction in which Chinese norms presented to the leaders of Central Asia is the presumption that it will not seek any kind of interference or put any conditionality on local issues when China strides to promote welfare of global society. Among the most remarkable energy achievements made by China through QED recently is the conclusion of a contract between China and Turkmenistan. Under this contract, Turkmenistan has promised to deliver 30 cm of natural gas to China per year for a period of 30 years in 2006/07 by a planned Central Asia-China gas pipeline to be constructed by CNPC. In the face of 2008 economic crunch, Russians slashed their natural gas imports from Turkmenistan violating the agreement between the two which ultimately enhanced the significance of economic deals between China and Turkmenistan. Turkmenistan had long been concerned about its over-reliability over Russia for its exports of energy. Chinese benevolent offers came to Turkmenistan when Turkmenistan badly needed that.

**Interests versus values: Confines of advocating dogmatic values alone**

Though China is still being regulated under an authoritarian system, various institutions of it have gradually evolved their self-interest already to meet the requirements of QED. Commerce Ministry, for example, will prioritize to reach as many deals of energy as possible with overseas countries, while Foreign Office will prioritize an incremental method for preventing doubts. Though local governments are in possession of some fiscal autonomy to invest in state-owned enterprises (SOEs), but they also depend on the revenues carried by SOEs to reinforce their political efficiency in the eyes of central government. However, China’s value advocating is less probable to breach the interests of SOEs as state’s interests of SOEs of China are already, to great extent, overlapping.

Keeping in mind the above observation, though Sino-Turkmen engagement might deserve marginal credit for the requirement of “harmonious ideal,” China’s role in Sino-Turkmen ties still deviates from its proposed duty as a “responsible player” in the global politics. Proclaiming its crucial role in efforts aimed at denuclearization of Korean Peninsula as a key success to assume such responsibility, Chinese never tried to convince Turkmenistan to get involved in international arena the way it did with North Korea. Turkmenistan showed disagreement with China over the proposal of joining SCO “as a formal member” by disagreeing with the notion of “concerted multilateral cooperation” which was advanced from the platform of SCO. While the energy cooperation between them is backed by the expansion of Chinese clout in Central Asian region, Chinese have little intention, in spite of the co-prosperity tenet of the organization, of sharing energy resources of Turkmenistan with other members of SCO-most remarkably Russia.

To many Chinese scholars from mainland with official links, oil diplomacy of China is interpreted as “not threatening” to the globe, because it is a state not challenging the status quo (Lai, 2007). However, to most of the non-Chinese analysts, China is utilizing its masks of “harmonious world” and “responsible power” quite brilliantly to enter the energy sector of Central Asia and engage both statesmen and businessmen of Central Asia to challenge other major players involved in the New Great Game in Central Asia. There are, indeed, local elements that voices to remind China that ideological values should, often if not always, go after national interest. Unlike Qin Yaqing, a Chinese scholar who back the idea of “responsible state,” there are scholars in China such as Yan Xuetong who see the US intention as that of proclaiming the global leadership in regard to politics, and propose that China has left with no option but to reply this US tactic with force and strength (Huetong, 2004). As we have observed, Yan’s advice is considered quite well. The thing to be observed here is the fact that not only Americans are cynical regarding the above mentioned energy deals between China and Turkmenistan, Russians are also skeptical about the advances made by China as such deals would jeopardize Gazporm’s interests.

**CONCLUSION**

Concluding the discussion in the light of preceding section, both the US and China observe an identical format of QED in Central Asian region, but the degree of their emphasis they place on state-sponsored agenda vary. Both have tried to embrace a state-sponsored ideology for answering both the national and international critics about their quest for Central Asian energy, and to varying extents have succeeded to push forward their realist programs through concurrently advocating their values in Central Asia. However, when the dogmatic explanation of these qualitative tenets conflicts the same
energy interests, both of them regard ideologies subservient to their interests. Consequently, both the US and China can maintain their respective areas of influence in Central Asia. In such circumstances, following questions arise: how do the US and China behave with each other in the theater of Central Asia? How do the republics of Central Asia reply to their interaction? Finally, the “combine-and-rule” and “divide-and-rule” tactics are elaborated in the following section to explain the current stalemate.

**Combine-and-rule**

In the interaction between great powers and the republics of Central Asia, there are efforts by some powers aimed at adopting “combine-and-rule” policy. By utilizing Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) framework, China has been putting efforts to build a strategic partnership with Russia despite their differences over Russia’s “sovereign democracy” and China’s “harmonious society.” The partnership’s nature is demonstrated by SCO’s initial formation: its organizational objectives, framework and mechanism were issue-oriented, not well institutionalized and often bilateral rather than multilateral respectively. The inward-looking function of SCO is mostly stressed in administering with common issues of the member states such as water problem, border tensions, ethnic minorities, drugs trafficking, extremist ideologies, intraregional trade etc. (Olcott, 2005). The focus of the organization is clearly multifaceted.

When the export of the U.S values into Central Asian region was on the peak, the SCO gradually became an association with enhancing value-driven posture. Out the values which were emphasized in SCO’s founding declaration, “security” and “stability” are remarkably similar to the five ethical obligations of China mentioned above. These values which are commonly known as “Shanghai Spirit” now-a-days were purposefully quite different from the values of the US from the very first day (Chung, 2004).

To date, in theory at least, the SCO’s organizational objectives have changed from issue-oriented to mission-oriented, emphasizing more on security of the region than border conflicts. Its mechanism of negotiation is becoming immensely multilateral hoping to reach collective consensus. To deal with “Three Evil Forces” has become SCO’s de facto norm officially (Shen & Peng, 2007). Under the guise of these slogans, there is an assumption that the member states of the organization should work more collaboratively for achieving co-prosperity by using their collective resources of energy. However, this “combine and rule” agenda encounters remarkable limitations because of the lack of trust in Central Asian against them.

**Divide-and-rule**

To a good number of observers, despite the advancements made by major powers in the region, the republics of Central Asia are employing a “multi-vector foreign policy” for protecting their valuable resources of energy. Kazakhstan’s president Nazarbayev, frankly remarked in 2005: “We are witnessing superpower rivalry for economic dominance in our region We have a choice between remaining the supplier of raw materials to the global markets and waiting patiently for the emergence of the next imperial master or to pursue genuine economic integration of the Central Asian region. I chose the latter” (Walker, 2005).

It has been found out that some half-hearted efforts have been made by the republics of Central Asia to form their own union or organization. For example, with the support of the United Nations, Kazakhstan, in 1997, started a regional economic agenda known as the “Special Program for Economics in Central Asia” (SPECA) for monitoring energy-related problems in Central Asia. All the five states of Central Asia including Azerbaijan were the members of this bloc, with Afghanistan hoping to join. Not a single major power was included in this bloc. Farkhod Tolipov’s comments sum up the wariness of Central Asian about the major power in the following words: “the strategic partnership between the states of the region is the best way to solve the strategic dilemma in Central Asia” (Maynes, 2003).

Collective behaviors, however, are difficult to forge even among the republics of Central Asia. As noted by Chinese scholar, lacking supplementary economic impulses among the republics of Central Asia forged a weak foundation for their mutual collaboration, leading to “formality-oriented” and “inward-looking” security policy in Central Asia. Now-a-days developments in Central Asia still validate his account. The acceleration in QED of both the US and China is indeed invoked by the diffusive nature in the Central Asian region, meaning that basically for their interests of energy, they are likely to advocate their values or norms to one or two, rather than all, nations in Central Asia.

1151
The educated elite from the west in Central Asian region should be the key targets for the US advocacy of “liberal democracy.” Consequently, the seeds from which “color revolutions” in the future in the society of Central Asians might sprout are sown in advance. On the other hand, China offers an apolitical and non-interfering stance to both the business elite and leadership of Central Asia saying that it has an obligation, as a responsible stakeholder, to preserve peace, security and order in Central Asia. Multilateral dialogues between Central Asian states and external players are mostly cited as a legacy of the efforts of China.

Keeping in view the above differences among the major powers and the republics of Central Asia, the continuous existence of competing QED interests of both the US and China is not surprising at all. The inclusion of a qualitative aspect has supported the major powers to seize Central Asian resources of energy, although any advice of furthering a dogmatic ideological value which hinders the hunt for energy is likely to fail. The power balance in Central Asian is still intact but the scale seems tiling more towards China than the US in the years to come.

REFERENCES


