

SINO-US ENERGY DIPLOMACY TOWARDS CENTRAL ASIA: INTERESTS VERSUS IDEOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a comparative overview of the energy diplomacy of the U.S and China towards Central Asia in the context of interests versus ideology. The study provides imperative clue of pros and cons and limitations of preaching dogmatic ideology alone to secure energy interests abroad. The research also provides insights into the opportunities and challenges to the Central Asian republics to better protect their energy interests from the major powers competition in the region. The study adopted a well-structured analytical methodology to analyze the tactics of “Qualitative Energy Diplomacy” (QED) of the U.S and China for advancing their energy and strategic interests. The findings of the study reflect that tactics employed by the U.S and China to preach the dogmatic values in the region vary, with the efforts of the U.S relatively greater than the Chinese. The study also finds that when the dogmatic explanation of these qualitative tenets conflicts the same energy interests, both of them regard ideologies subservient to their interests. The research also highlighted some of the impediments in the successful implementation of dogmatic values of the U.S and China to better protect their energy interests in a qualitative way.

KEYWORDS: Central Asia, China, Dogmatic Ideology, Energy, Qualitative Energy Diplomacy, U.S

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INTRODUCTION

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 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 factors such as the U.S, Russia and China found it imperative to rationalize their aims qualitatively, if not inevitably ideologically.

Therefore, the U.S, 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 U.S. 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 analyze how the U.S 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 U.S policy than the Chinese towards Central Asian region.

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 U.S 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 U.S and China

The U.S: Advocating Liberal Democracy

For a long period of time, the U.S has been highly skilled in pushing forward its national interests by advocating (national) values simultaneously. Contemporary strategy of the U.S can be described by liberal realism's framework given by Ikenberry and Kupchan. This framework includes three propositions: "first, a prerequisite that the U.S 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, *Liberal Realism: The Foundations of a Democratic Foreign Policy* 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 U.S, although these values (i.e. liberal democracy and human rights) demonstrate the general national ideology of the U.S, 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 U.S intention behind advocating liberal democracy to the former Soviet states particularly was further illustrated in the "Silk Road Strategy Act" by the end of 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 U.S.

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: "U.S interests are furthered by enlisting others on behalf of U.S 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 U.S in Central Asia.

How Values Facilitate Energy Interests?

There is much to attract the interests of the U.S in Central Asia. One of the key objectives of the U.S 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 U.S are not much, but the significance of Central Asian region to the U.S does not rest primarily on the consumption of its resources by the U.S but more probably on other strategic fronts. For example, the U.S 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 U.S in worldwide competition, not to mention that these regional energy resources can also provide the regional allies of the U.S with a cheap supply of energy, which equips the U.S with an additional bargaining chip to deal with countries like India and Pakistan (Saeedi 2008).

While the U.S advances its agenda of energy, it explicitly promises to offer help to both governmental and non-governmental 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 U.S 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 U.S. However, the proclamation of liberal democracy in Central Asia generally had inescapably created the atmosphere for these political shifts to have happened (S. H. Shen 2011).

At different times, "stick" had also been employed by the U.S as a part of its QED. Going side-by-side to this chain of events, the U.S 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 U.S for reasserting its energy hunt in Central Asia. Maratha Brill Olcott interpreted this opportunity as the "second chance" for the U.S and Central Asian republics as well for engaging with one another (Olcott, Central Asia's Second Chance 2005).

To the leaders of Central Asia, QED is not just a "carrot" but also a "stick" as demonstrated by the ability of the U.S to refuse Kyrgyzstan regime (the "stick"), an energy scarce country, on the one hand and the U.S investments in other states of the region (the "carrot") on the other. The U.S 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 U.S owing to this, it still can be partly sketched as a prospering promotion of values of the liberal democracy of the U.S.

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 U.S on the front of energy, the aim of advocating values of liberal democracy in the region was kept aside by the U.S, even though this very act of ignoring the preaching of liberal democracy by the U.S 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 U.S 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 U.S over human rights' violations in Andijon Massacre by President Karimov resulted into closing of the U.S 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 U.S 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 U.S 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 U.S 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 U.S circles and major factors leading to their sustained hegemony. After Tulip Revolution, the U.S did not cause any significant change of regime in the region of Central Asia, although the ideals of the U.S might have strong impact among the highly educated public of the region.

China: The Non-Interventionist “Responsible State”

While both the U.S 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 (Foot 2001). In 2003, the way China handled the crisis of SARS can be viewed as a transformational landmark for Chinese to pledge its dedication to such a diplomatic aim (S. Shen, SARS Diplomacy of China and Taiwan 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 it’s 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 U.S 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, Full Text of Speech by Premier Wen Jiabao at a Dinner 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 U.S, 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 U.S in 2003, stressed China’s “peace-loving” posture calling it politically accurate and locally secure. Contrasting the intentions of the U.S 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 U.S ‘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 U.S 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 U.S 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 “non-interventionists” 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, CNPC, Chinese energy giant, succeed in acquiring 60 percent shares in Aktobemunaigaz, a Kazakhstan’s state-owned enterprise, in 1997, and firmed its hold over Petro Kazakhstan, 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 U.S 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 U.S 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 Gasport's interests.

CONCLUSIONS

Concluding the discussion in the light of preceding section, both the U.S 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 U.S and China can maintain their respective areas of influence in Central Asia. In such circumstances, following questions arise: how do the U.S 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, intra-regional 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 U.S 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 and 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” (SPECAs) 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 U.S 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.

The educated elite from the west in Central Asian region should be the key targets for the U.S 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 U.S 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 U.S in the years to come.

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