After the Cold War, one of the most important foreign policy challenges for the United States was to secure adequate access to oil and natural gas resources. In the American perception, the routes for oil and gas reserves of Central Asian Region were expected to become the "Silk Road" which would connect China, Eurasia and America. This is evident from the study of the 1999 White House Paper on a new 'National Security Strategy' which called for the investment in the Caspian Energy resources and their export from the Caucuses region to world market in order to expand prosperity in the region. It was believed by the US policy makers that a stable and prosperous Caucasus and Central Asia will facilitate rapid development and transport to international markets of the large Caspian oil and gas resources, with substantial US commercial participation. Resolution of regional conflicts such as Nagorno-Karabakh and Abkaza was also seen as important for creating the stability necessary for development and transport of Caspian resources. The official rationale for many agreements that the US undertook in the region was that they would achieve several important goals such as the prosperity and independence of the Caspian States, support the development of their societies into democratic, stable commonwealths, and provide most environmentally sound approach to transporting oil resources from the Caspian region to world markets with Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline. Accordingly, the "Silk Road Strategy Act 1999" outlined three principal policy goals towards Central Asian Region. First, to ensure the democratic reforms within the newly independent states of Central Asian Region and resolution of conflicts, second, to develop friendly relation among the states in the region and with US and its allies and third, to ensure that the economies and the natural resources of the region are developed in a manner dictated by market rather than exploitation by regional hegemonic power.

Data depicting the oil and gas production in the Caspian Region provides that the bulk of the Caspian hydrocarbon is located in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.
As stated recently by the Secretary of Energy, “Kazakhstan has a critical role to play in advancing global energy security, especially in this region and we look forward to work with them to expand energy infrastructure and promote a transparent and stable investment climate that attracts foreign investors”. Turkmenistan despite internal cleavages has also demonstrated remarkable skill by turning great power rivalries that maximize its independence since 1991. US approach has both geopolitical and economic aims in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. At the geopolitical level, the US aims are to help these two countries to develop the oil and natural gas industries. At the economic level, the development of these oil industries will mean investment opportunities for American oil companies. Politically, the US would perhaps be in a position to control these new energy resources and diversify its own energy supply. Other US political objectives include containment of Iran, China, Russian influence and also reinforcement of the role of Turkey in the region. Finally the objective of the study is to examine the broad contours of US energy policy and the key drivers that have led to the fresh approach in US energy policy towards Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan

The Study on “US Energy Policy Towards Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan” is divided into five chapters dealing with subject matters as discussed under-

**Evolution of US Energy Policy**: This chapter briefly discusses the evolution of US energy policy and contends that it was at first based on the domestic consumption patterns and production. Later, as oil production levelled off, US dependency on foreign sources of oil began. By the 1970s, the oil import had crossed fifty per cent and thus began US search for a sustainable energy policy. This chapter examines the policy process in the US and its attempt to meet the oil crisis. This chapter mainly focuses on the following assumptions-

- There been a consistent US energy policy in the post Cold War period.
- The international and domestic developments influenced the formation of a coherent ‘oil policy’ in the United States.
US Energy Interest in Central Asia: This chapter deals with the contours of US energy policy in Central Asia and explain why it is based on a long-term and permanent response to politico-security and energy development of the region. The Chapter also analyses how US policy makers are consistently focusing towards the region for their ever growing energy need.

Determinants of Energy Policy Making towards Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan: This chapter provides a comprehensive description of the institutions which shape US energy policy towards Central Asia in general, and Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan in particular. The chapter will examine and assess the importance of domestic determinants such as the Congress, the Federal Bureaucracy and Interest Groups in shaping US energy policy towards these two nations. In addition the chapter will also focus on the impact of external developments on energy policy that have proved to be catalytic to the US policy in Central Asian Region. By examining the official documents, the chapter will explain why and how the US policy formulation is decisively influenced by both domestic and external factors. Further, the study suggest that while domestic factors in the shape of executive and legislative institutional interactions with interest groups shape and influence policy, the executive branch still remains the lead actor in foreign policy.

US-Kazakhstan Relations and Pipeline Politics: In this chapter an attempt has been made to provide an analytical framework to understand that US energy policy towards Kazakhstan is driven by large strategic and economic considerations. It raises questions such as what role does US policy play in the ‘pipeline politics’ of Kazakhstan and what are the incentives for Kazakhstan in allowing increased US presence in the region. In addition, this chapter focuses on US interests, programmes and the investments in Kazakhstan so as to link it to its energy resources. The constraints and restrains faced by the US in order to sustain its presence in Kazakhstan are also analysed.

US-Turkmenistan Relations and Pipeline Politics: The objective of this chapter is to examine the assumption that the US has both a geopolitical and commercial aim towards Turkmenistan. The argument advanced here is that the
US investments mean long-term engagement for the US and hence any pipeline politics resulting would have a strong US component in it. Apart from this, the chapter focuses on other political objectives of the US such as containment of Iran, China, Russian influence and also the reinforcement of Turkey's role in this region generally and Turkmenistan particularly. Finally the chapter analyses the reciprocation by the Turkmen government which impacted US investments in the country.

**Conclusion:** On the basis of the above observations, the study has concluded that in the present day world, a country's military is not the sole arbiter of her strength rather it has been supplemented with the economic might. This is due to the fact that all industrial economies and militaries run on oil and gas, and this is clearly manifested in US engagement in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.