CHAPTER-5

Conclusion

Afghanistan’s history is quite unique where it’s political internal and external affairs was always mired in the projection of regional and super powers. Since ancient time Afghanistan had always been the land of conquest for other powers. With its geography which settled in the heartland it remained as a buffer zone of many former empires. During Cold War time Afghanistan was a buffer zone of ideology war which plunged it into the ground of proxy politics of super powers. When the Cold War ended again it plunged into Civil War which was exploited by regional powers as their vehicle against their rival states. Even in the 21st century the wounds of Afghans’ who suffered from long history of battles are not yet better. After the event of 11/September 2001 once again Afghanistan became the military base/ground for a super power for hunting down terrorist base/groups with a long term plan to secure military base in order to promote their energy interest.

The US-Afghanistan relations had begun since the pre-World War II period. That time Afghanistan was under British rule and continued Russian expansionist pressure forced Afghanistan to forge close ties with the United States. Afghanistan hoped that making ties with the United States could enable British India and Tsarist Russia not to intimidate it. Since 1921 Afghanistan made the efforts to establish diplomatic relations with the United States but there was no major breakthrough at that time as the U.S. was aware of the fact that Afghanistan was still under Soviet influence. The U.S. also knew about Afghanistan-Soviet treaty of friendship of 1921, in which the two states recognised their mutual independence and agreed not to enter into any political or military accord with a third state. The period 1917-1933 was the period of U.S. hostility toward the Soviet government; as after communist revolution Russia had called for world revolution to destroy the capitalist economic system.

It was only in 1934, after the U.S. recognition of the Soviet Union, the U.S. came to strengthen the political and economic relations with Afghanistan. However, the U.S. yet did not set up diplomatic mission and still continued to deal with Afghanistan through British offices. That time the government of Afghanistan demonstrated its confidence in America by granting a 75 years concession to the Inland Exploration
Company of New York for the development of Afghanistan’s presumed petroleum deposits. But the agreement was done without consulting the Soviet Union which led to a quarrel between Afghanistan and Russia over the agreement because Soviet regarded that Afghanistan was still under its influence. However, later the Inland Exploration Company gave up its concession because of fearing possibilities of the outbreak of World War II. After the end of World War II the U.S. helped Afghanistan in importing its Karakul to American market as it got difficulty in finding market to export its Karakul.

However, in 1942 the diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Afghanistan was established at formal level. When the German advance on Stalingrad led to fears that the logistic link through western Iran would be denied to allies, eastern Iran or western Afghanistan were considered as significant locales for an alternate route. The presence of U.S. in Kabul was seen as an essential prerequisite for securing this route. In June 1942, the first U.S. ambassador was dispatched to Afghanistan. It seemed that the geo-strategic significance of Afghanistan was the main reason behind the U.S. decision to forge close relationship with it.

After the end of World War II the U.S. had emerged as the world leader. After World War II the containment of Soviet Union became the hallmark of the U.S. foreign policy. The U.S. had taken over Great Britain’s historic policy of curbing Russian expansion in the direction of the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf and the plains of India as it had a key position in any military advance toward the Soviet Union whether from Iran or from Pakistan. The U.S. got interested in Afghanistan more especially because its position was close to Soviet Union border. It was suitable for the post-war western policy of encircling and rolling back communism. After the end of World War II Afghanistan also came to realise that the power of Great Britain as a barrier against Soviet expansion had been replaced by the United States. During 1946-53 Afghanistan tried to maintain balanced relationship with Soviet Union and the United States. Afghanistan refused to join any chain of anti-Soviet alliances forged under American initiative.

During Cold War period the U.S. policy toward Afghanistan remained quite complicated as it needed allies to contain the Soviet Union. The United States and the Soviet Union entered into competition in the field of aid by providing assistance to Afghanistan via loans which focused on aid for communications, infrastructure, education, and agriculture. But the U.S. did not provide any military support to
guarantee Afghanistan’s independence while Afghanistan was badly in need to modernize its military equipments. The U.S. did, however, proposed to Afghanistan that if it wished to obtain American arms, it should join the military alliance (the Baghdad Pact) but Afghanistan ignored to do that as Afghanistan was determined to keep a position of non-alignment or neutrality in its relations with the super-powers. Afghanistan felt that the U.S. refused to provide Afghanistan with arms because it believed that such assistance was more likely to be used against Pakistan, as both Afghanistan and Pakistan were having clash over Pushtunistan issue. While the U.S. gave military aid to Afghanistan’s neighbours such as Pakistan, Iran, and some other countries such as Greece and Turkey all with the purpose of bringing them into their military alliance which could be an effective containment of the Soviet Union on its southern frontier. This incident made Afghanistan gradually to turn to Soviet Russia for military aid.

In 1978, a military coup put into power the Afghan communist party, which quickly signed treaties with Moscow when a popular rebellion threatened to topple the Afghan pro-communist regime. The U.S. worried that if the Soviet Union invades Afghanistan it could put its fighter bombers close to the oil jugular of the straits of Hormuz and could direct access toward the Indian Ocean from their newly acquired Afghan bases.

There were many events indicating that the Soviet Union was creeping into this region. In 1975 Soviet intelligence-gathering vessels were maintaining a constant surveillance of the straits of Hormuz. Soviet Mig 25 reconnaissance aircraft made a number of flights over Iran. And there were several occasions of troop movements along the Soviet-Iranian border. In 1978, Soviet Union airlifted twenty thousand Cuban troops into Ethiopia, not only to assist its communist government in its war with Somalia, but also to establish military facilities across the Red Sea from Saudi Arabia. Later that year, a pro-Soviet group in south Yemen took power, thereby giving Moscow a beach-head on the Arabian Peninsula. South Yemen soon launched an overt military attack on North Yemen. Terrorists launched operations against Saudi Arabia from South Yemen and guerrillas conducted attack in a border province of Oman and the same year Soviet had signed a friendship treaty with Turkey and some probing for an accommodation with Pakistan.

The U.S. was facing the anger of Arab world which was disappointed with its role over Israel-Palestine issue and the aggressive behaviour of Israel to its Arab
neighbours. In late 1970 Arab world decided to keep distance from the U.S. and tend to accept the role of Soviet Russia instead. This event was a set back to the U.S. effort to portray the Soviet Union as the chief threat to the region and to forge an anti-Soviet alliance with moderate Arab states. The fall of the Shah of Iran led to the collapse of the balance of power in Southwest Asia. These incidents forced the U.S. to create a new security framework and reassert its power and influence in the region. The U.S. also planned to establish its military bases in Middle East. Probably this plan was the seed of the U.S. decision to move its military forces to settle in Afghanistan after the event of 11 September.

To contain Soviet entry into Gulf countries the United States came to realise that Afghanistan’s location could be frontier area or buffer zone state of Gulf countries. To suck the Soviet into Vietnamese quagmire therefore, in 1979 the CIA developed a comprehensive plan for a secret war in Afghanistan by giving clandestine support to Muslim guerillas, ranging from indirect financial assistance to the weapon support and encouraging the influx of foreign volunteers from different countries to join with the Mujahedeen forces (Islamic guerilla). In 1989 the pressure of heavy arms that was supported by the United States and its allies to the Muslim guerillas (mujahedeen) caused Soviet Union to withdraw its military from Afghanistan.

However, the United States was aware of the fact that giving military support to these forces of Muslim guerillas (mujahedeen) would soon thereafter turn their fury on the United States. But the United States chose to give military supports to Mujahideen because Islam was a geopolitical reality in the region and the United States was in a difficult situation. At that time American policy makers still focused on the cold war threat of the Soviets communism that is why choosing to arm the Islamic fundamentalists fighting Soviet troops in Afghanistan was more important than worrying about the threats of those Mujahideen. The main goals of the United State at that time was only the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and if it could not do so at least made Soviet involvement as costly as possible.

After an accord (Geneva Accord in April 1988) was signed between Afghanistan and Pakistan, guaranteeing non-interference and non-intervention in each other’s affairs; a similar agreement was signed between the United States and the Soviet Union in what both had agreed on non-intervention in Afghanistan and promised to act as guarantors of the Accord. This Accord paved the way for Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, which was completed in February 1989. But a friendly
pro-Soviet government had remained in power in Kabul after Soviet troops had left. The United States and its allies still continue to support seven parties of Islamic guerrillas to fight jihad and root out Afghan Pro-Soviet government which finally caused to an end of pro-Soviet Afghan regime in 1992.

The withdrawal of Soviet forces and the fall of pro-Soviet Afghan regime in April 1992 put an end to the communist era in Afghanistan. The human tragedy of long traditional ethnic rivalry and its tribal tradition of the regional struggle for influence had come to ensure a power vacuum in Afghanistan once again. It turned to be the ground of civil war of ethnic rivalry within Afghanistan itself. And soon it became the ground of proxy war of regional powers. They exploited the factional rivalry in Afghan civil war as their vehicle to preserve self interest or against rival state. The discovery of large source of energy, oil and gas in the newly emerged Central Asian countries and the Caspian Sea also encouraged outside powers to involve with their favorite factional group in Afghanistan that could preserve its interest. The landlocked Central Asian countries were looking for the alternative of land-bridge to run pipeline for flowing their oil and gas resources to world market. From a geopolitical point of view Afghanistan formed a potential ‘land – bridge’ for bulk trade or oil and gas pipelines to be constructed from the Central Asian states to markets in Pakistan, India and elsewhere in the world via Karachi or another Pakistani port on the Arabian sea. Afghanistan’s territory could also provide Central Asian Countries an access way to world markets and could be an alternate to total dependence upon Russia’s monopoly on trade routes. But it depended which government was in place in Kabul, therefore peace and stability in Afghanistan was a prerequisite to run the project of oil pipelines construction.

Since the early 1990s the United States was impelled by the oil lobby to underestimate the consequences of the disintegration of the equilibrium in central Asia. The dismantling of Soviet power was perceived as the beginning of a lucrative period of exploitation, with U.S. oil companies controlling the vast energy fields of the region. These events made Afghanistan an arena in which regional rivals were competing to influence favorite group as stage to preserve its geopolitics and its interest in Afghanistan. While during 1994-1996 the battle of different factional group was heading on collision, Taliban was the factional group that U.S. believed that it could be most suitable government and had the capability to bring stability in Afghanistan so that the desired goal could be achieved. There was no doubt that the
U.S. administration and its oil companies appreciated the development when the Taliban captured Kabul in 1996.

The factional rivalry in Afghan civil war was also fit in the U.S. strategy of containing Iran. Since pro-American regime (Shah) was overthrown by an anti-American group in November 1979, Iran posed a frontal challenge to the United States’ hegemony in the region. In particular Iran’s defeat became the focal to turn factional group rivalries in Afghanistan as anti-Shiites. The United States (during Clinton administration) after the Gulf War focused on dual containment policy against Iran and Iraq. The Clinton administration was clearly sympathetic to the Talibans as they were in line with its anti-Iran policy, as Taliban forces were supported by many Arab militants most of them were strongly anti-Shiite. They contributed accentuating the common prejudice among Afghan Sunni against the Hazara Shia, which was backed by Iran with the aim to counter the Pushtun Sunni (Taliban) that was supported by the United States, Saudi, and Pakistan. Fight fire with fire was the U.S. reasoning: combat the militant Shi'ism of the Iranians with even greater militancy and violence by some groups which were considered as orthodox Sunni Muslims. From time to time the U.S. has been using the proxy war tactic against Iran. Besides backing factional rivalries in Afghan civil war, to contain Iran the US also used Iranian Kurdish ethnic group against Iran and we could also see during Iran-Iraq war, where the U.S. itself was willing to back radical Sunni Muslims as well as Saudi backed Wahabist movements against pan-Shiites Iran. There was no doubt that why Iran perceived the Taliban as a creation of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia with US support not just to contain the Iranian role in Afghan affairs, but the Taliban were perceived as a ‘trap’ set up by the U.S., Saudi and Pakistan to drag Iran into war with Afghanistan. A ‘conspiracy theory’ sought to explain that since the Gulf war of 1991, the U.S. was seeking to lure Iran into some war or the other that would serve as an opportunity to destroy its renovated military machine and further to exhaust its economy, with the over all objective of restoring Iran to its former status as a piece of US strategic chess board.

Apart from political aspect the Taliban was also utilized as a southbound route of the Central Asian oil and gas. A route that would be projected and promoted in line of the Iranian route, certainly the Taliban appeared to serve the U.S. policy of isolating Iran by creating a firmly Sunni buffer on Iran’s border and potentially providing security for trade routes and pipelines that would break Iran’s monopoly on
Central Asia's southern trade routes. In view of the U.S. determination to block the route through Iran, the Afghanistan-Pakistan corridor could emerge as the only alternative to unleash Central Asian energy potential.

Well behind the scenes of the U.S. backed factional group (Taliban) in Afghan civil war it was also perceived that the U.S. would serve as a bulwark against Russia's influence in the region. After the collapse of Soviet Union the U.S. was still active in the clandestine operations, supporting extremist Islamic group to wage war against Soviet communist or pro-Soviet regime anywhere around the world especially in the third world countries. The U.S. did some contrary things. It continued to supply arms and training extremist Islamic group (Taliban) in spite knowing well that in future these groups will turn against itself, but the U.S. regarded that the fall of the Soviet empire was more important than the extremism of Taliban. The U.S. also feared of the Russian ambition and determination to control the flow of oil and gas from Central Asian countries. Russian energy policy could also be a part of an overall policy which aims to keep the West out of the Central Asian states preserving it under an exclusively Russian sphere of influence. Russia also had supported a factional group that would deny to the U.S. to get foothold in Afghanistan's affairs. As President Boris Yeltsin said in 1998, by keeping the conflict in Afghanistan on the boil Russia kept the region unstable and has the excuse to maintain a military presence in the Central Asian States (CASs). As Russia feared that if Afghanistan falls under the control of extremist Islamic party (Taliban) which was sympathetic to Islamic insurgents in Central Asia and Chechnya, Afghanistan could be the place for prop up of this insurgent group. During the civil war (1992-97) between the neo-communist government and array of Islamist forces devastated the country of Tajikistan, especially Islamist fighter in Chechnya Russia found that the groups of this Islamic movement had link with Taliban. It was in the interest of Iran and Russia to keep the region unstable by arming the anti-Taliban alliance. Russia also reportedly had a hand in backing northern alliance when Taliban forces assaulted on the Shias of Hazara as they saw that Pakistan interference in Afghanistan through the Taliban provided an opportunity for American influence in the region. Russia and Iran were working together in supporting military supplies to northern forces. But eventually in 1996 Taliban could defeat its rival group and brought Kabul under its control.

However, the U.S. policy of making Taliban strong appeared broken down shortly after the seizure of Kabul. The U.S. found that Taliban had given hospitality to
the Saudi billionaire Osama Bin Laden, who was suspected by US agencies of having financed anti-American outrages, such as the bombing of a barrack in Saudi Arabia, in which US military personnel were killed. In addition it found that Bin Laden had been a significant source of funding to Taliban, and did not lessen the American mortification given Washington’s strong stance against sponsors of terrorism. Indeed the U.S. was not so happy with such type of extreme Islamist group to be the Afghanistan’s ruler. It could be the beginning of an integral part of the U.S. design that the Mujahideen (Taliban was a factional group of Mujahideen) could not form their own government after the eviction of the Soviets troops and pro-Soviet Afghan regime. The process also tried to moderate the Islamic tone of the Afghan resistance so that the government which would come to rule Afghanistan after the withdrawal of pro-Soviet regime would not be as extreme as that of the anti-American Ayatollah of Iran. The Taliban was suitable and had capability to bring stability to Afghanistan. Taliban was also serving the actual major U.S. interest, succeeded in evicting factional group of the Moscow-Kabul-Tehran nexus under the Rabbani - Massoud government in Kabul and eviction of the pro-Iranian warlords controlling Western Afghanistan. Even after the capture of Kabul in September 1996 the Taliban showed no signs at all of any internal disunity or disarray. The unity of their political and military command kept getting stronger day by day. Besides, their success in bringing peace and order to the territory under their control attracted volunteers from other factions including even the former communists. All these factors enabled Taliban to establish a durable government in the country.

During 1996-2001 the anti-Taliban became major U.S. foreign policy thrust, applying various modes of coercion and sanctions to pressurize Taliban into political subordination. The U.S. needed an Afghan government that is multi-ethnic, broad-based and observes international norms of behaviours especially which does not suppress women rights. But the actual split between the U.S. and Taliban was precipitated more by the presence of radical groups which Taliban had inherited the networks and training camps which had been established in the 1980s when collaboration between Islamic movements and the Afghan parties had been actively encouraged by the U.S. on Afghanistan soil. The secret development of Islamic radical camp was existed in Afghanistan following the defeat of the Soviets in Afghanistan in 1989. Afghan veteran (Mujahideen) saw the fall of the Soviet Union as a sign of total victory. They ignored the other international and domestic issues that
contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union, in the mind of the Mujahideen it fell by the hand of God. The Soviet retreat was a sign of God’s power, and if God had brought down the Soviet Union through the work of the Mujahideen, other evil nations were doomed to destruction. The next global primary targets of the Mujahideen were Israel, the United States and its interest which exist around the world. They regarded that the U.S. was most oppressive country in the world.

In the early 1990s after the defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan Bin Laden and his Afghan veteran (Mujahideen) friends returned to Saudi and then they came against Saudi regime by branding the Saudi regime as the great hypocrites as Saudi Royal family had allowed the United States to use holy ground for its war against Iraq. Bin Laden was also against the U.S. for maintaining such a regime and enabling Israel to maintain its occupation of Jerusalem (Islam third holiest city after Medina and Mecca) and its brutal suppression of Palestinian resistance. Consequently, he was stripped his citizenship by Saudi authorities and he first moved to Sudan but, by 1996, he had returned to Afghanistan again where at that time Kabul was already under Taliban’s control. From here Bin Laden forged an organic alliance with Mullah Mohammad Omar, to build up its Al-Qaeda base. While Bin Laden provided the Taliban with money and Arab fighters and the Taliban giving the Saudi dissident and his supporter’s sanctuary and all the basic support that they needed to set up terrorist training camps and expand Al-Qaeda into a trans-national network. This Islamist extremist from around the world including North America, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Central, South and South East Asia. They continued using Afghanistan as a training ground and base of operations for their world wide terrorist activities. The Taliban, which controlled most Afghan territory, permitted the operation of training and indoctrination facilities for non-Afghans and provided logistic support to members of various terrorist organisations. From Al-Qaeda base in Afghanistan in 1998, Bin Laden announced the creation of a new alliance of terrorist organisations, the international Islamic front for jihad against the Jews and crusaders, its interest which exists around the world, its allies and regimes, including moderate Muslim pro-western governments.

Since the defeated of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in 1989, and the returning of Afghan veteran (Mujahideen) to different countries around the world, the United States had gradually been under the attack of terrorist group several time whether in its homeland itself or in foreign countries and whether on its military and its civilian.
The attacks happened more frequently especially in Gulf countries and Africa. The mount of tension with several incidents of terrorist attacks on the United States till US embassies in Nairobi and of the Dar-es-salam, Tanzania was bombed in 1998, the United States alleged that Bin Laden was mastermind behind the scène. The United States demanded the Taliban to hand over Bin Laden to appropriate authorities but the Taliban ignored to do so. In November 1999 the United Nations imposed economic sanctions on Afghanistan in response to the Taliban’s refusal to hand over Bin Laden. The tension of the US-Afghan split over Bin Laden’s extradition issue was going on till terrorists strike in the United States on 11 September 2001, in which about 5000 people were killed. This incident confirmed that the U.S. homeland itself was vulnerable to the consequences of its foreign policies and that determined enemies could attack and inflict horrendous damage upon U.S. cities. Terrorism replaced communism as the source of fear and loathing the war the United States has been fighting abroad since 1947 had finally reached its shores.

The event of 11 September gave the U.S. a pretext to attack Afghanistan, root out Al-Qaeda base, replace hostile regime with pro-U.S. regime and set up its military base there. Such movement was perceived that there must be something that was covered by war on terror. It was not possible to plan and execute this policy within short time just after this event but it was happening since the beginning of the end of cold war. The event of 11 September 2001 in United States and the resulting conflict in Afghanistan signified not only the beginning of new epoch in world politics, but also a new stage in the struggle for influence in Central Asia. This event has involved the United States deeply in this region which was previously treated as marginal to core American interests. The U.S. policy focused on the energy security which was driven by a bitter experience where after the major disruption in oil supplies that occurred twice in the last quarter of the twentieth century. The Arab’s oil embargo of 1973 and the Iranian upheaval in 1979, the risks of overdependence on energy resources from an unstable and politically volatile region were driven home once again by Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990. In addition the oil reserves of the Persian Gulf countries are not inexhaustible as the current levels of production they are estimated to last up to the end of twenty first century at best. As Carter Said: "the U.S. will become perilously dependent on increasingly costly imported oil we could and anger our freedom as a sovereign nation to act in foreign affairs and we
would constantly live in fear of embargoes.” There was no doubt during Carter administration he has proposed a broad national energy policy.

The gaining independence of Central Asian countries from Soviet Union and following with the discovery of the huge energy resources in this region and Caspian Sea made the western to believe that it could make the region as the Persian Gulf of next century. It also could serve as a replacement once the oil reserves in the gulf start depleting seriously by the middle of the next century. It is in this context that Central Asia is again emerging as a murky battleground among big powers. The agenda is being set by geopolitics and oil. The plan of construction of a massive new oil and gas pipeline infrastructure stretching along an East-West energy corridor that linked Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and ultimately Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.

One of the key concerns for the American policymakers has been how to secure access to the oil and natural gas reserves in the first half of the 21st century, to establish friendly relations with the leaders of the Central Asian republics controlling the oil and gas resources and to secure alternative pipeline routes to world markets. The landlocked nature of the Central Asian states creates obstacles to proposals for creating new alternative routes. Afghanistan’s location could provide alternate route for energy pipeline to the world market through Pakistani or Indian port. During Afghanistan’s civil war the United States saw Taliban as suitable factional group that would bring stability to Afghanistan. But unfortunately Taliban which captured Kabul in 1996 turned to fire the United States’ hope as both plunged into split over extradition of US wanted Al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden till 2001. The events of 11 September provided opportunity to the United States to replace Taliban regime with pro-US government so that the project of running oil and gas pipeline from Caspian Sea and Central Asia to southward (Afghanistan-Pakistan corridor or could beyond to India’s port) would be easier.

The movement of the United States and NATO forces into Afghanistan after 11 September also was perceived that the U.S. setting up its military base there as a long term plan to monitor or secure the future threat of nuclear power of Pakistan. Nuclear issue is a factor which has influenced the course of international politics and diplomacy since the end of Cold War. The west has feared the threat which comes from nuclear proliferation by a number of third world countries, including the South Asian neighbors India and Pakistan. The U.S. perceives that the spread of nuclear
technology know-how and weapon capability to these countries would pose a threat to its own security and the world. The growing instability in Pakistan, where Islamist forces pose a challenge to Pakistan Government, is also cause of concern. If Pakistan’s government is captured by some party which opposes the U.S. and nuclear arsenal fall in this group’s hand or some group which has sympathy with Al-Qaeda or Taliban it will be danger to the U.S. interests in this region. In addition with the loss of Pakistan’s government control over nuclear proliferation of its scientist Abdul Qadir khan it could be sold to Iran, Libya or Al-Qaeda group. So what will happen if such lethal weapons fall in the hand of a U.S. enemy? That is the real worry of the U.S. today.

From time to time there has been suggestion that the U.S. want to be in a position to secure these nuclear weapons. The United States was likely to go in position to tackle any authorized proliferation in Pakistan. After 11 September events the United States also had persuaded western defence allies to agree to include India and Pakistan in the NATO’s Partnership for Peace Programme (PFP) and also planned to take control of several international military peace keeping operations under the UN mandate. Perhaps with the movement of NATO forces into Afghanistan after the terrorist attacks on the United States NATO invoked article 5 of the treaty relating to joint defence clause which was recognized by the U.S. as a coalition of the willing. The anti-terrorist operations started by the U.S. intensified the process of further NATO expansion, at the same time reinforcing the international evolution of the alliance in terms of building new capabilities to meet new security challenges of the 21st century. The United States is pushing NATO to deliver on an ambitious plan to extend its peace keeping presence beyond Afghanistan and created links with American led military operations in the South, in effort to rout the remnants of Taliban and Al-Qaeda.

The movement of U.S. military forces in Afghanistan after 11 September is a part of the so called project that is the Bigger Central Asia. This project was started slowly in period immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union which led to emergence of newly independent states in 1991. The core of this plan is to bring together Afghanistan and the Central Asian Republics in a single military strategic and geopolitical whole, making stabilization of the territory and bring them under dominant influence of U.S. and possibly include some other neighbouring regions. This project proposes implementation of a number of organizational-technical and
diplomatic measures to realize the American strategy. To strengthen the effective United States' role in the region it is necessary to strengthen the NATO role. Perhaps with the presence of large number of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan could be a U.S. instrument to coordinate and influence regional policies on continuing basis.

The movement of U.S. and NATO's forces in Afghanistan after 11 September was also perceived as a long term plan to contain Iran, and enhancing security in the Gulf and the Middle East. The United States is focusing on building its stronger military than ever that can deter war, project power and fight in defence of American interests in different field. This project would replace the cold war tactics which the United States focused on containment policy. During Afghan's civil war the United States used containment policy and proxy war tactics to threaten Iran as mentioned above. Since Iran revolution and overthrew of pro-US regime (Shah) in 1978, up to now Iran has disturbed the strategic balance in West Asia, and has been an obstacle to American's hegemony in the region. Various matters make the United States worry about the behaviour of Iran. Such as, it has been trying to get nuclear weapons which could create imbalance in this region. In addition, Iran has been backing Islamic groups (Hizbullah and Hamas) in this region to counter the aggressive Israeli behaviour toward Palestinians and some time Lebanon. Iran was perceived by U.S. as harmful to the political and economic interests that some of the Central Asian states have developed with Iran as Iran could provide alternate route for Central Asian countries to access the sea. They regarded that Iran is better route through which its gas and oil could be exported to world markets through Iran port. Moreover, the United States is more concerned about Iran playing vital role in its Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline (IPI) project to supply its energy resources to South Asia and probably would extend beyond to China. Iran and Russia are also playing vital role over energy of Caspian. Both of them are against the presence of outside powers in the region and more concerned with preventing the U.S. from straddling the Caspian and the energy flow from the region.

The United States worry is also about security strategy of oil flow in the Arabian Gulf water that is the Strait of Hormuz sea lanes through which the bulk of the global oil supply pass could be blocked by Iran one day if U.S. and Iran enter into serious conflict. The United States has been trying to do everything to prevent Iran from gaining nuclear weapons and dominating the region. Therefore the question of the United States setting up its military base in Afghanistan after 11 September was likely
to be a long term plan to contain Iran and preparing possibly to invade Iran or possibly U.S. would use forces to manage with Iran if the situation come to explode. Afghanistan which content with large of U.S. military forces could be viewed as apart of long term plan to circle Iran.

The United States is interested in Afghanistan particularly after 11 September in order to contain China. The clue of U.S. planning to contain China has begun after the end of cold war. Although the Cold War has gone but the basic structure of the international system did not change with the end of Cold War. From the decade 1991-2000 the security competition among the great powers was not obsolete, either in Europe or in Northeast Asia. The rise of China is the most dangerous threat to the United States in the early twenty first century. Although, Russia just was defeated from long Cold War but still trying to back China to be a super power state to counter balance the U.S. in this area. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and following with the emergence of newly-independent states (Central Asia) in 1991, the United States started creeping into this region with the objective to contain China. The U.S. policy focused on relationship with Central Asian countries. It was also perceived as a plan to quit China out of this region, through defence co-operation of 1994, with doctrine and training to pursue Central Asian countries to enter NATO Partnership for Peace Programme (PFP). Central Asian membership in the NATO PFP served as the main avenue for western security engagement. The U.S. approach to Central Asia was also driven by overarching geopolitical considerations, with an underlying goal of containing the influence of China, Iran, and Russia.

The tremendous growth in industry makes China aggressive in looking for energy resource to fuel its need. China came to replace U.S.’s import market in areas such as Iran and Africa. Some Arab countries started looking east over their oil export market, especially in Central Asia and Caspian Sea. China had made agreement to import energy from this region through its pipeline to west of China. Recently China signed an energy agreement with Iran in strategic energy cooperation which involved constructing an oil pipeline from Iran to the Caspian Sea, from there to link up with the planned pipeline from China into Kazakhstan. China also planned to build train railway to connect western China-Pakistan-Iran so that China could transport energy from Iran by land. As China has close boundary with Central Asian countries it makes China easy to transport whether by railway linkage or Pipeline. China also revived the
ancient Great Silk Route which would open up China’s northern land border for direct links with Europe and the Middle East via Central Asia.

The most important U.S. concern about China is its key role in developing the lethal weapons and civilian nuclear project of Iran. China-Iran cooperation threatened to diminish the military advantages the U.S. enjoyed vis-à-vis Iran and increased Iran's ability to threaten the Sea-lanes and oil supplying states of the Persian Gulf. This conflict between China and U.S. was manifested in the areas of nuclear energy, guided and ballistic missiles, and dual use goods relevant to production of chemical or advanced conventional weapons. China regarded that Iran could play key role to counter U.S. hegemony in this region. Such behaviour made U.S. aware about China’s role in this region.

Therefore, there was little doubt about the movement of the U.S. and NATO forces into Afghanistan after the event of 11 September. It seemed the U.S. centered on its security establishment and focused on the alleged threats from major rival states notably China and Russia. Moreover, the U.S. presence in this region could lock out China from the energy business as the U.S. feared that China could assist the Central Asian Republics in setting up their own oil companies.

After 11 September, 2001, behind or beyond war on terror U.S. sought to reassert its own overt influence on global geopolitical developments with a view to ensuring its own security. One of the major U.S. foreign policy goals after 11 September was to replace its influence in newly independent nations comprising the commonwealth of independent states (CIS) or Central Asia. The U.S. would maintain the new world order by rooting out and limiting Moscow’s influence in this region.

As Russia has a large reserved energy resources it can play a key role in European market by selling its energy to EU market while using its energy resources as a weapon against U.S. hegemony in Europe. Russia’s attempt to control the flow of oil and gas from Caspian Sea and Central Asian countries has been viewed in the west as an attempt by the Russian security establishment to impose a single direction for the pipelines via north Russian territory. This would give Russia tremendous control over the flow of oil and gas to western markets and will make the west vulnerable to Russia’s political whims. Russian energy policy could also be part of an overall policy which aims to keep the west out of Central Asian countries and preserving it under an exclusively Russian sphere of influence. Russia tried to establish monopoly over energy resources of this region and dismantle U.S. power position in the region.
Therefore, denying Russia the right to influence the regional economy and politics seemed to be the major concern of the United States in the 21st century. In addition the commitment to multiple pipelines was also perceived as the continuation of the policy of denying Russia any significant role in the region, such as U.S. signing of protocol on the construction of the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline for oil. The U.S. also attempted to assure Georgia that any oil shipped out of the Caspian through its ports should go in part to Ukraine to alleviate its energy dependence on Russia. The scrambling over energy resources in Central Asia and Caspian Sea once again made Afghanistan a proxy war ground. The U.S. was looking for the way to make Afghanistan as a landbridge to build pipeline route from Central Asia to world market through Afghanistan to Pakistan’s port or to India’s market. This development took place after few years of the end of cold war and the disintegration of Soviet Union. Once when Afghanistan plunged into civil war both the United States and Russia used proxy war tactics to back favorite factional group which could preserve their interest. While the battling of various factional groups in Afghanistan was heading on, that time a factional group (Taliban) was in the line of US’s interest but unfortunately the Taliban came to split with the United States over the issue of terrorism. Therefore, the U.S. invaded Afghanistan after 11 September to replace hostile regime with a pro-U.S. regime. It was perceived as a long term plan to secure oil pipeline route or at least set up the regime which would make the U.S. goal easier and deny any Russia’s influence in this region. Russia after the event of 11 September had given a green signal to U.S. of northern alliance support to hunt down Taliban. The northern alliance was Russia’s favorite factional group and was considered suitable to be Afghan’s ruler. Iran also agreed with Russia, as both of them had been trying to restrain the U.S. to step its foothold in this region.

Recently Russia has been moving spirit behind the idea of a gas OPEC - an organisation of natural gas producing nations. The new body was formalized at a meeting of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) in Doha, Qatar, on 9 April 2007. It will unite Russia, Iran and Qatar, which account for 60 per cent of global gas reserve, with Algeria, Venezuela and Central Asian gas exporting countries. Russia has swapped energy assets and developed joint upstream and downstream projects with all of these countries. The idea of a gas OPEC has rattled the U.S and Europe as it would shift the alignment of forces in the energy markets and leave them out in the cold. Russia believed that the gas OPEC could offset Western efforts to control the
energy markets. Russia is using energy resources and arms export potentially to project its influence across the world. Behind Russia's political objective to control Middle East petroleum is to deny to the members of the NATO and to Japan in a prelude to ordering a general conventional war, and in contriving interruptions in supply that could be turned to the Soviet advantage by splitting allies from the United States in a divisive tactic to create oil shortages as a means of weakening allied commitments to U.S. led security arrangements.

Apart from this recently Russia defied U.S. efforts to isolate Iran, by supplying $700 million worth of Torm 1 advanced air defence missile systems to Tehran last year (2006). It was the biggest of several defence contracts between Moscow and Tehran since 2000. Iran armed with Russian weapons and pursing a common energy strategy may emerge as Russia's strategic partner in West Asia. Russia also supported Iran to build a railway line along the Caspian linking Iran with Russia. It will be part of the north-south transport corridor, a joint project of Russia, Iran and India. The Russian railway, the state owned railway company of Russia, was already involved in a multinational project.

Recently world has witnessed rising tension between U.S. and Iran over nuclear weapon issue. The U.S. has also threatened to use military strike against Iran. In response Russia issued several stern warnings to the U.S and its allies against using forces in Iran and Russia vowed to challenge the U.S. policy of international dictates and unrestrained use of forces.

Thus the U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan after September 2001 attack on the World Trade Centre was probably a part of a long-term planning to ensure its presence in this region to contain Iran, Russia, India, and China. Afghanistan was well-known base of containment and buffer state for former powers. Afghanistan settles in the world’s heart land and has its borders on the north with the Soviet Union,(now Central Asian countries) on the west with Iran on the east and south with Pakistan and on the east with China (Sinkiang). In view of its geo-strategic significance Afghanistan would once again become significant for the U.S. strategy to control this region. As Nisar-ul-Haq wrote: “Afghanistan has become a symbol of monumental tragedy of geography. Its location has been the cause of misery for its people. Afghanistan lies in the region between the seats of historical empires in India, Persia and Central Asia. It has been a traditional invasion route for the subcontinent. It has been on the path of numerous invaders since ancient times.” During Cold War
time Afghanistan with the U.S. larger strategic interests created the ground for an emerging cold war (cold war era). This time it will not be over ideology but over economic interests. Unfortunately Afghanistan will once again become the battle ground for the emerging resources wars with the emergence of giant energy producers and consumers. Michael Klave calls it “energo - fascism” in which the Pentagon has increasingly become a global oil protection service.
### Estimates of Recoverable Oil and Gas Resources in the Caspian Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Proven Oil Billion Barrels</th>
<th>Possible Oil Billion Barrels</th>
<th>Total Billion Barrels</th>
<th>Proven Gas Trillion Cubic Meters</th>
<th>Possible Gas Trillion Cubic Meters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>163.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>178.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>9.3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Current and Future Pipelines in the Greater Caspian Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Capacity (Barrels day)</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIOC Early Oil (South-North)</td>
<td>Oil</td>
<td>Balaï Novorossiïk via Groznyï</td>
<td>120,000+</td>
<td>1,000 mi</td>
<td>Russian side inoperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIOC Early Oil (East-West)</td>
<td>Oil</td>
<td>Baku-Supsa via Tbilissi</td>
<td>120,000+</td>
<td>550 mi</td>
<td>Under construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIOC Main export pipeline (MEP)</td>
<td>Oil</td>
<td>Undecided, preferable via Turkey</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>2,000+mi</td>
<td>Decision pending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caspian pipeline Consortium (CPC)</td>
<td>Oil</td>
<td>Kazakhstan/Tengiz-Novorossiïk</td>
<td>1,340,000</td>
<td>1,500 mi</td>
<td>Contracts signed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan pipelines</td>
<td>Gas</td>
<td>Daulatabad gas field to central Pakistan</td>
<td>2 billion cubic feet/day</td>
<td>872 mi</td>
<td>The civil war in Afghanistan is stalling construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chardzhou, Turkmenistan to Gwadar, Pakistan</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>800+mi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan-China</td>
<td>Oil</td>
<td>Western Kazakhstan to China</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Approx 3,700 mi</td>
<td>Feasibility study pending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan-China</td>
<td>Oil</td>
<td>Chardzhou to China</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Approx 3,700 mi</td>
<td>Feasibility study pending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia-Turkey</td>
<td>Gas</td>
<td>Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Approx 1,300 mi</td>
<td>Pending decision on the status of the Caspian Sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran-Turkey</td>
<td>Gas</td>
<td>Northern Iran to eastern Turkey</td>
<td>10 bcm/yr over 23 years</td>
<td>600 mi</td>
<td>Contract signed, financing unclear</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Department of State, Caspian Region Energy Development Report (As Required by HR 3610), undated report attached to letter from Barbara Larkin, Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, to Senator Robert Byrd, April 15, 1997, p 3
Projected oil lines through Afghanistan

MAP-2

Proposed Pipelines from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan-Pakistan to India and Arabian Sea.

Figure of Energy Key in the new Asian Architecture

The contesting pipeline projects


281
Oil and Natural Gas Export Infrastructure in Central Asia and the Caucasus

MAP-7

Figure China's Southwest Corridor to the Sea

Adapted from: John W. Garver, China and Iran: Ancient Partners in a post-Imperial World, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006, p.290
MAP-8

Energy Pipeline Project- from Central Asia to China

BTC oil pipeline: Southern-western route from Azerbaijan to Georgia and onto the Mediterranean via Turkey

Europe's dependence on Russian gas

Russia's state-controlled energy giant Gazprom supplies around 25% of Western Europe's gas imports, with Germany as the largest consumer. In 2004, Gazprom earned more than two-thirds of its revenues, over $18 billion, from exports to 28 West and Central European countries.