



Pravesh Kumar Gupta

Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan Border Dispute: A Study



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Pravesh Kumar Gupta

Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan Border Dispute: A Study

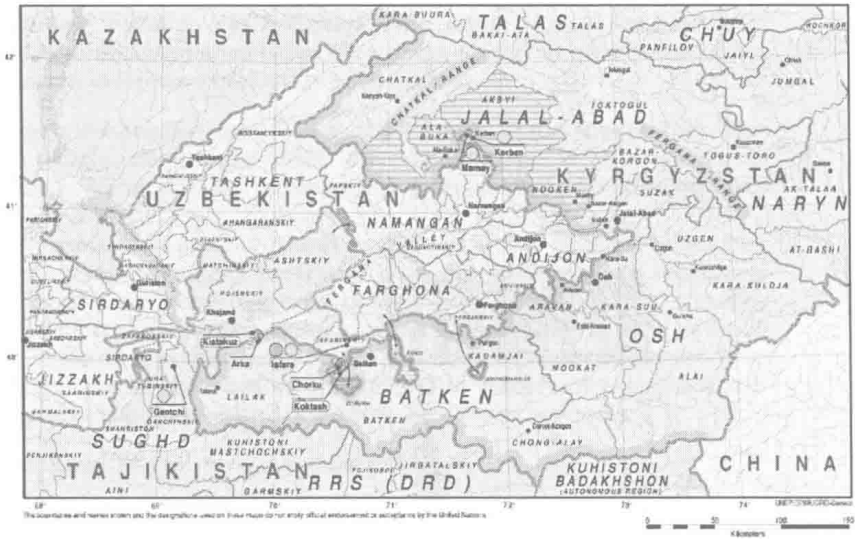
This work is dedicated to

MY PARENTS

&

ELDER BROTHER

Map of Ferghana Valley

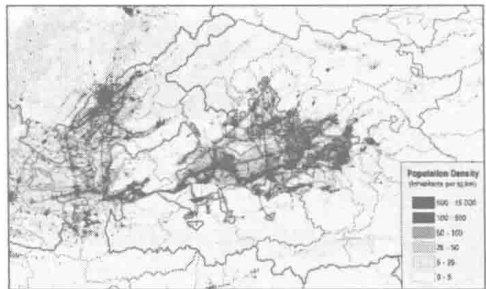


Land issues

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21 July, 2014

Pravesh Kumar Gupta

ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AO	Autonomous Oblast
CIS	Common Wealth of Independent States
DST	Daylight Savings Time
EU	European Union
GRM	Gunn Rural Management
HPML	Higher Priced Mortgage Loans
HT	Hizb ut -Tahrir
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICE	Inventory of Conflicts and Environment
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICWC	Interstate Commission of Water Coordination
IDU	Intravenous Drug Users
IHROU	Independent Human Rights Organisation of Uzbekistan
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
IMT	Islamic Movement of Turkistan
IRP	Islamist Revival Party
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks
IWMI	International Water management Institute
KIC	Kyrgyzstan Enquiry Commission

MAR	Minorities at Risk
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NTD	National Territorial Delimitation
NSC	National Statistical Committee
OSAC	Overseas Security Advisory Council
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
RFERL	Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
UNEP	United Nation Environment Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republic
UTO	United Tajik Oppositions

Preface

Kyrgyz-Uzbek border has been controversial since the Soviet period and it became more strenuous after the collapse of USSR. Soviet border delimitation had planted the seeds of border dispute between the Central Asian republics by demarcating border irrespective of ethnic and physical composition of the region. Due to the border disputes, various other problems have been aroused and complicated the relations between two Republics. Two major issues arising from the tense border situation between both the countries are religious extremism and drug trafficking. These issues have caused the severe damage to the people living in the border regions and pose serious challenge to the governments of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

All the issues and complications related to the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border are of primary concern for the governments of the respective republics. Due to their different political ideology, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have never been mutually involved with each other on the border demarcation process. Ethnic conflicts on the border region have been troubling the border negotiations since the Soviet period and until secure and prosperous lives are provided to the ethnic groups, these problems could not be solved.

In this research work, the entire questions related to the Uzbek- Kyrgyz border disputes are responded through both the primary and secondary sources. It is hoped that this dissertation helps in understanding the border dispute between both the Central Asian republics.

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Chapter-1

Introduction

Central Asia attained its independence from Soviet Union in 1991, and all five Republics started working out their individual growth and development. Economic and social conditions of Central Asian Republics were gradually deteriorating during late 1980s and when they became independent, the main challenges faced by these Republics were the improvement in the economic and social conditions of people. In the process of development, the most important aspect was demarcation of borders among these Republics as these borders were drawn during the Soviet delimitation process and until their independence, they accepted those as their boundaries, which after independence turned into their national borders. Those state boundaries were never demarcated on land but sometimes outlined or on maps. This situation created chaotic border dispute among all the Central Asian Republics and Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan border dispute is one of the ugliest in them. Both Republics have divergent form of political system as Uzbekistan has a sort of autocratic form of government, Kyrgyzstan is trying hard for its democratic form of government.

Soviet delimitation of Central Asian borders created disparity in natural resource distribution among the Republics. Water sharing and land distribution became cause of disagreement between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Land taken on lease by Uzbekistan before independence would not be returned to Kyrgyzstan. Because of border dispute between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, many problems are faced by their natives especially the people dwelling along the border. Many ethnic clashes have been witnessed between ethnic Uzbeks and ethnic Kyrgyz in border areas of the Republics. These kinds of clashes also affect the economy and daily living of the population. Uzbekistan sealed its border when IMU bombed Tashkent and it resulted into rigorous visa regime set by Uzbekistan. Because of the soft nature of Kyrgyzstan and majority population of Sokh enclave being Tajik, it became prone to IMU and other militant activities. Security concerns of both the Republics have been a major issue due to which Uzbekistan has tightened its border control and adopted authoritarian approach in controlling its border along Kyrgyzstan. Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan border dispute has been focus of research by various scholars who have analysed various factors responsible for this border turmoil, such as unequal distribution of resources, ethnic division, security issues and internal political situation. These issues have been the focus of

study because several violent incidents have taken place along the border, which resulted in +deaths and injuries and damage of wealth. Most of these conflicts have occurred due to assorted ethnic division across border. As a result undemarcated or unclear demarcation have paved the way for the disastrous incidents, in which border guards shoot the local people to counter militants and so on (ICG 2002a:15).

1.1 Geographical Setting and Historical Background:

The Ferghana Valley plays a critical role in the political and economic life of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Ferghana valley is not only beautiful and full of natural resources but it is also vulnerable to various problems such as border demarcation, distribution of natural resources and lack of regional cooperation among the countries which share this Valley. It is not a linear Valley defined by rivers, although it roughly corresponds to the basins of the lower Naryn and Kara Darya rivers and their confluence to form the Syr Darya River. Rather, it is a large and roughly oblong flat-land defined by no fewer than five chains of surrounding mountains, the Kuramin, Chatkal, Alai, Ferghana, and Turkestan ranges (Starr 2011:9). However, Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan border zone comprises of southern Kyrgyzstan and eastern Uzbekistan, which are located at the eastern edge of Ferghana Valley.

Ferghana Valley became an important region in Central Asia because of its strategic location and abundance of natural resources, which has led to conflict amongst the countries, which share borders along this Valley. The Valley is situated in a border region and there are cross-border issues, which increase the risk of conflict. These conflicts are rooted in the Soviet period, when Stalin drew the boundaries of the Ferghana Valley irrespective of cross-border ethnicities, natural resources and water sources. Stalin divided the border of Ferghana Valley implying divide-and-rule policy, which meant that ethnicities on the wrong side of the border would cause ethnic tensions so that the Soviet Union could easily control the region. The consequence of this border division was that borders became problematic with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Tensions regarding more and more access to undemarcated land and water resources increased, which often resulted in ethnic clashes along the borders. Furthermore, this region became vulnerable to this kind of conflicts and various others problems. With the tightening of borders; trade across borders became difficult and cross-border collective farms had to close down. Many villages were split in half by a border fence, so that the people were unable to visit their relatives on the other side of the border.

To study the Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan border dispute, it is inevitable to know the history of the region in which this border is situated. Central Asia was incorporated into the Russian crown in the first quarter of 19th century, which annulled British attempts to gain influence in the region. Penjdeh crisis in 1885 between Czarist Russia and British India in Afghanistan forced Russia to delimit its international borders with Britain and China in order to prevent such a border incident escalating into a full-scale war (Morris 1975:528).

KYRGYZSTAN-UZBEKISTAN BORDER



Although the process of Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan boundary demarcation began in October 1924, it attained its full functional structure after the disintegration Soviet Union in 1991. During the Soviet period, it was evident that presence of state boundaries was nil and even ethnic identities were not much prevailing. Before the disintegration of Soviet Union, there was no such international boundary, as Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan were not independent countries. Indeed, there were no Kyrgyzs or Uzbeks, as they are understood today though these terms were known in ethno-linguistic terms rather than as a cultural or ethno-political identity. Ferghana Valley, which comprises almost entire borders of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, has been conquered and determined several times by different groups. Greeks, Arabs, Mongols and Turks are the primary groups who ruled this region historically for greater or lesser time, and most important impact of their rule was that they all have affected the social and political geography of the region. It was the geopolitical phenomena of the region that made it inevitable for all the major groups of their times to maintain their hold in the region.