

**GEOPOLITICS AND VISUAL CULTURE:  
A STUDY OF  
SELECTED FILMS FROM THE WEST**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University  
for award of the degree of*

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**DECLARATION**

I declare that the dissertation entitled “**Geopolitics and Visual Culture: A Study of Selected Films from the West**” submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.

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**CERTIFICATE**

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

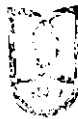
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**DEDICATED  
TO  
GOD AND FAMILY**

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## ABBREVIATIONS

BtB- BEYOND the BORDER

CIA- CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

CSIS- CENTRE FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

DoJ- DEPARTMENT of JUSTICE

EU- EUROPEAN UNION

GIS- GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

IMDb- INTERNET MOVIE DATA base

NATO- NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

NSPD- NATIONAL SECURITY PRESEDENTIAL DIRECTIVE

SOAR- SPECIAL OPERATIONS AVIATION REGIMENT

UAE- UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

UK- UNITED KINGDOM

UN- UNITED NATIONS

UNPROFOR- UNITED NATION PROTECTION FORCE

UNSC- UNITED NATION SECURITY COUNCIL

USA- UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

VCCLEA- VIOLENT CRIME CONTROL AND LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT

VTVPA- VICTIM of TRAFFICKING & VIOLENCE PROTECTION ACT

WMDs- WEAPONS OF MASS DISTRUCTION

WTC- WORLD TRADE CENTRE

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# **GEOPOLITICS AND VISUAL CULTURE: A STUDY OF SELECTED FILMS FROM THE WEST**

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION: GEOPOLITICS TO CRITICAL GEOPOLITICS**

#### **1.1.1 A BRIEF OVERVIEW**

With changing times the discipline of Geopolitics has evolved and has assumed a more unconventional form. Traditionally the term geopolitics was understood as the theory of state with reference to space. After the cold war, geopolitics again assumed a distinct form. Newman argues that scholars should grapple with the practical and ideological dimensions of geopolitics if they are to contribute to an understanding of real world problems. Geopolitics deals with the manifest reality of the political events happening in the world. As the geographical politics that encompasses all foreign policy practices, geopolitics is not a specific school of statecraft but rather can be better understood as the spatial practices, both material and representational of statecraft itself (Gearoid O Tuathail and Simon Dalby 1989). There are different variants of geopolitics that have emerged. one such theme is 'Popular Geopolitics'.

Popular geopolitics became increasingly widespread within the geographical literature in the 1990s and catered attention of different other disciplines. The term 'popular geopolitics' is used to explore how societies and states often attempt to represent the world and their position in consistent and regular ways (O'Tuathail 1996). Popular sources such as television, music, films, magazines, novels, cartoons etc are mediums which in some way influence and sometimes also construct vistas of political events occurring in the international arena. The above mentioned popular means inform about foreign affairs, political events and other international happenings. On any major international issue the role played by the internet, newspapers and television coverage is immense in creating awareness among the masses throughout the globe. Post world war the picture became very clear that world

politics is not only confined to governmental departments, international forums, international meetings and other such platforms but they also occur within the limits of not so formal channels too.

Cinema has had a very long relationship with political institutions, public opinions and national identity formation. It is used as geopolitical texts which support and subvert certain political practices and may also influence the attitude of the viewers to a considerable extent. Cinema is a medium through which everyday perceptions are transcended on the screen. The visual imagery associated with cinema helps in identifying different ways in which regional and global politics are structured. In the present times cinema is considered to be a form of art that is both expressive and both embodied. Cinematic representations convey to the audiences various geopolitical realities such as hegemony, imperialist intent, power politics, greed for power diplomatic games in political arena and the like. Geographical framings and associated ideas about power, danger and identity are embedded within what would come to be called geopolitical cultures. (J. Dittmer and K. Dodds 2008) Cinematic space is not only utilized as a platform of depicting geopolitical issues but are means that helps to explore, how such issues are moulded, reshaped and perceived around the world. This study is an attempt to examine how cinema which is a popular medium, projects social and political views to the audiences around the world.

### 1.1.2 POPULAR GEOPOLITICS AS A SUBSET OF CRITICAL GEOPOLITICS

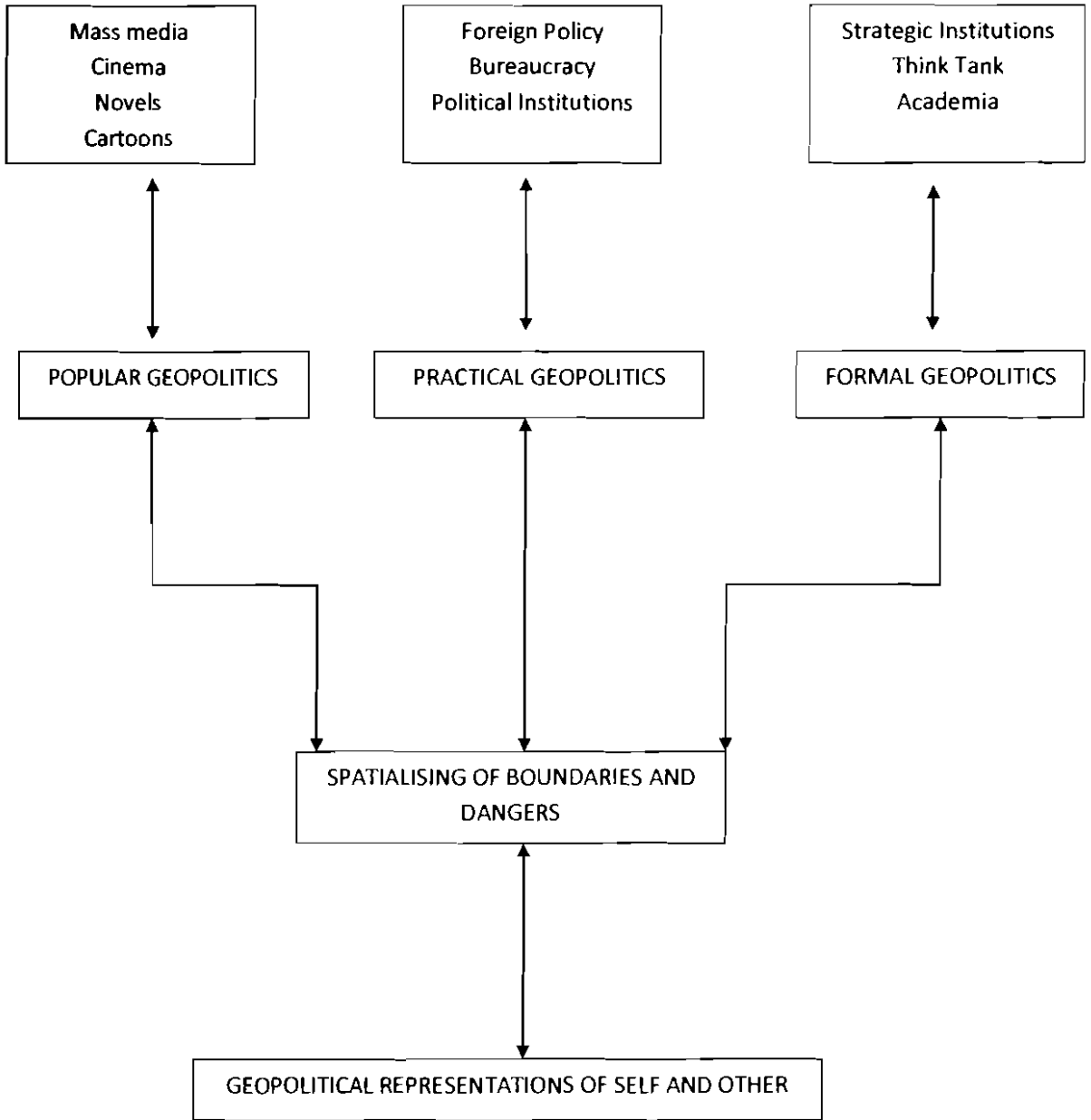
Geopolitics in fact is a product of time. A more nuanced approach to the study related to geopolitics that came into existence is 'critical geopolitics'. Critical geopolitics is a theme that emerged in 1990s at the interface between political geography and International Relations. It has some where rejected the classical geopolitical reasoning. It attempts to question the very roots of geopolitics itself by placing it in its historical context and highlighting the contradictions already at work. The intellectuals construct ideas about space and these ideas influence and reinforce their political behaviour, foreign policy, statecraft etc. Critical Geopolitics is said to have its roots in post structuralism (K.Dodds, M.Kuus & J.Sharp 2013). It is such an

exercise that requires interaction and contestation of geopolitical discourses. Critical geopolitics centres around four key issues namely- space, identity, vision and statecraft. Space is and shall always be an integral part of geopolitical reasoning. From a critical geopolitics' perspective, it is very important to understand the way in which space is made meaningful by plethora of geopolitical ideas and actors. Likewise, identities are formed and re-established. They are not something that geopolitical actors possess but are constantly re-negotiated. On the similar lines vision and statecraft are also dynamic in tandem with geopolitical discourse. Geopolitics which is practiced in present times is critically re-conceptualised as a discursive practice. Popular geopolitics is that theme which involves geopolitics that occurs outside of academic and policy making discourses. Thus 'popular geopolitics' has always been present actively but has gained recognition much later. Dittmer and Nicholas Gray call it an everyday affair. Popular geopolitics is characterised by dynamism as it is continuously moulding itself through current discourses of media, celluloid, internet, games etc.

It was Simon Dalby who presented the three fold typology of geopolitical reasoning namely-'practical geopolitics' practiced by political institutions, bureaucrats etc. 'Formal geopolitics' which includes contribution made by strategic institutes, think tanks, academia. 'Popular geopolitics' as Dalby puts in "is found within the artefacts of transnational popular culture, whether they be mass market magazines, novel or movies. Thus these different forms of geopolitics broadly constitute the modern critical geopolitics.

**Figure 1 A CRITICAL THEORY OF GEOPOLITICS AS A SET OF REPRESENTATIONAL PRACTICES.**

Source- ó Tuathail, Gearóid and Dalby. Simon (1989), "Introduction: Rethinking Geopolitics Towards a critical geopolitics", in Gearóid ó Tuathail and Simon Dalby *Rethinking Geopolitics*, London and New York: Routledge.



### 1.1.3 CINEMA AS A RHETORIC SPACE

The concept of popular geopolitics within the ambit of cinema involves a re-conceptualization of geopolitics in the visual form of cinematic representation. The dimension which this research ventures to take shall focus on how popular cinema addresses the geographical, geopolitical, geo-economic and geo-hegemonic assumptions and notions and become a part of modern geopolitical practices. Does reel correspond to real? Or the distinction is blurring. Films (in particular whose subject constitutes geopolitics) are the means that help in establishing and understanding the radically changing geopolitical world. They cognitively map the geopolitical imagery. Cinema has the ability to impact upon the sensory apparatus, cognition, and emotion and to a certain extent function the psyche of the audiences. Cinema in present times is largely distributed across space and time. In fact they are popular forms of expression that infiltrates through all societies and act as a medium through which identities are constructed. They are popular form of entertainment, and grab attention of mass audiences. They give the viewers the opportunity to watch, analyze and reflect on contemporary international politics and related issues. A well formed movie has the ability to create an understanding of events, national identities and relationships. According to Marc Lacy "the cinema becomes a space where commonsense ideas about global politics and history are reproduced and where stories about what is acceptable behaviour from states and individuals are naturalised and legitimised". Films are the media which reflects spaces through representational politics, power and identities. Cinema is undoubtedly powerful and effective way of narrating geopolitical events. Its power lie in the fact that it can depict or transcend on screen the forgotten history and other geopolitical events in few hours through which the viewers re-live the past events.

Films have the ability to shape and mould public opinions and debates. They are instrumental in sustaining social and geopolitical meanings. The films that largely comprise of geopolitical issues such as war, ethnic cleansing border disputes, humanitarian intervention and the like are not only capable of reflecting but can also challenge certain norms, structures and ideologies associated with security policies. Movies are also evolving, they are mutating in response to a wider array of historical,

cultural, social and political norms. In recent times, films have been one of the major genres within which the imaginaries involved in mapping the geopolitical world have been represented and reflected upon. Movies dealing with geopolitical subject are reproducing and retelling the stories of war, crime and other political issues from varied vantage points. Movies are cultural products they tend to play a representational role in society. Films and other forms public entertainment and information programmes play their part in bolstering morale and help to explain or account for dramatic events (Klaus Dodds 2003). Feature films are a significant source that write and rewrite the global space. Sometimes the portrayal of wars, military involvements, bombing etc in films extends well beyond cinematic fiction. Geopolitics of cinema not only deploys its framed and coded discursive and subtle prevailing influences over audiences but also knits a delicate web of interconnections between events and geopolitical codes of the state's geopolitical practices, between international engagements by the state and justification of its actions ( Carter and McCormack 2006; William 2002). Gerrad Toal argues that geopolitics is about the rearrangement of global political actors on the world stage where grand actors play out geopolitical dramas. Thus popular productions, particularly films represent a unique way of arranging these dramas and actors. Films involve audience's dispositions and emotional investments and they also provide a different way of solving geopolitical uncertainties.

## 1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The existing scholarship on Geopolitics is varied and vivid. There has been a great deal written about the subject across time. Critical geopolitics which is comparatively a new theme also has disparate scholarly work written under it. Majority of articles and books have revolved around the contemporary geopolitical discourses and its various branches. Critical geopolitical knowledge is diffused with popular geopolitical discourses in the form of formal, practical and popular geopolitics.

Basically the existing text pertaining to geopolitics emphasises the manner in which geopolitical issues are produced and reproduced through popular culture. The complexity of popular culture's relationship with formal and practical geopolitical

cultures has been studied with reference to a range of popular cultural products. These include studies of popular means such as newspapers, films, cartoons and magazines etc. If we closely examine these popular sources we find that they offer possibility to explore places, people and their representation within an array of national and cultural contexts. Magazines, cartoons, photojournalism, news coverage, and popular cinema all in some way or the other have contributed to international affairs, inter-state relations and geopolitical events occurring in the world.

Geopolitics is understood and used in a wide variety of ways. Accordingly, there are two broad categories which address this research. One set of literature constitutes the classical geopolitical readings, the ones which are deployed by the political geographers. The other set constitute the contemporary geopolitical studies and understandings practices by a wide array of scholars and researchers from different disciplines. Classical work on the subject was introduced almost a century ago as a deterministic body of literature. At the time of its inception geopolitics became the new science of state. Classical theories of Mackinder, Spykman, Mahan and others not only found relevance then but also helped in understanding geographical underpinnings involved in state's strategic destinies. The classical text forms the background for the build up of present form of geopolitical thought. It is not only fundamental but is significant in understanding the chronology of changing dynamics of geopolitics.

### 1.2.1 CRITICAL GEOPOLITICS

World society has been changing and with it the dynamics of politics. These changes have attached new meanings to the established concepts. In a world of perpetual speed and motion, convulsed by globalization, saturated by information, and entranced by ephemeral media spectacles and hyperbole, geopolitics seems decidedly old-fashioned and out of place. (Gearoid O' Tuathail and Simon Dalby 1998) The new practice that academia indulges into is critical geopolitics. Critical geopolitics envisages a much larger framework of contemporary social, cultural and political phenomenon.

The post cold war geopolitics which some scholars call as 'renaissance of geopolitics' was driven by the imbalance in the political sphere at that time. This led to the



transformation of the approach and the content of geopolitics. This new altered geopolitics is said to have been articulated by postmodern underpinnings. Scholars such as John Agnew, Gearold O' Tuathail, Simon Dalby and others have contributed largely on the subject matter of critical geopolitics. Agnew has talked about the conception of modern geopolitical imagination. He mentioned that 'a rethinking of geopolitics is long overdue, for the existing spatial ontology that informs and en-frames geopolitical thinking, is under erasure by post modernity' (Dalby and Tuathail 2002).

It was Dalby who argued that geopolitics is all about plurality. It is an ensemble of those 'representational practices' that are part and parcel of society. The geopolitical instances taking place in the world such as war, diplomacy and the like are some where linked with the everyday interactions between people.

Gearold O' Tuathail, an exponent of geopolitics, argues that "geopolitics does not have a singular, all-encompassing meaning or identity... It is discourse, a culturally and politically varied way of describing, representing and writing about geography and international politics."(Tuathail and Dalby 1998). Geopolitics is not a school of thought, but a mode of analysis, relating diversity in content and scale of geographical settings to the exercise of political power, and identifying spatial frameworks through which power flows. Further Dalby and Tuathail maintains that geopolitics is itself a geography and politics, that it has a con-textuality, and that it is implicated in the ongoing social reproduction of power and political economy.

It is argued that geopolitics is not a singularity but a plurality. This fact is established by integrating the three limbs of critical geopolitics together. When popular, practical and formal geopolitics are clubbed together, they form a distinct assemblage that defines the geopolitical culture of a particular region. Scholars have also recognised that geopolitics can never be neutral. This has been proved to an extent in the form of gendered nature of geopolitical writings.

## 1.2.2 POPULAR GEOPOLITICS

The theme that the research mainly laid its foundation upon is entirely focused on the popular geopolitical culture and popular cinema in particular. There is a crisis in present times. This crisis is related to the problem of identity and popular geopolitics. Scholars such as Sharp and Dodds explore the power of popular visual images in creating a geopolitical unconscious that helps to enframe and inform foreign policy debate. Films provide a ready vocabulary for representing geopolitical scenes, scenarios and subjectivities. At times a good script is powerful enough to remake the subjectivity of a politician. Mass media, cinema, novels and cartoons become means through which these daily interactions in the society take place. Understanding of the world comes not solely from the first hand experiences but also through popular media that is- cinema. Movies provide a myriad of images through which the geopolitical events, procedures etc reaches the masses. They give the viewers a sense; it frames their identities and alters their perspectives. In fact they enter into their cognition. Popular cinema has a wide range of audiences; it originates somewhere but might have an impact on entirely different corner. This is globalisation of popular media.

The relationship between geopolitics and visual culture is and has been the subject of an important body of work by critical scholars in the field of international relations, political science, cultural studies, media studies etc. Such scholarship examines how the geopolitical realities of war, cooperation, resources, energy etc are made known to the world through visual practices and images. Visual practices have been employed in number of ways to aid the depiction of geopolitical happenings. There are several versions such as poetry, literature, drama, theatre, cartography, paintings, sketches, photography, cinema, use of GIS (geographic information system) and also modern digital games which have been used as a tool to propagate geopolitics. Visual aid sometimes helps in understanding better by portraying the unseen of what is seen. It is an effective media through which general public attains a sense of the political world. It is noteworthy that visual geopolitical cultures do not simply record war crimes and other geopolitical events but at times they also help in structuring of such events. Popular media such as films involve sensory apparatus through which the

representation on screen affects the brain processes. Cinema is a complex space within itself. It is a window through which viewers\audiences could have a glimpse of society within which cinema and viewers are deeply embedded.

Klaus Dodds has contributed immensely to the subject matter of popular geopolitics and films in particular. In his readings there is an attempt to highlight the importance of visual culture and their relation with the geopolitical discourses. Cinema and geopolitics do not appear to have any direct relations but Dodds through his writings has managed to establish an effective linkage between the two variables. Cinema has the huge potential to hold the audiences. Such visual presentations are adopted by political and media elites as a powerful propaganda tool which could be used to screen epic tales of nation formation and identity politics. Movies have the capacity to shape and direct the discourse of the international agendas. The usefulness of films can also be gauged through the varied geographies of dissemination and distribution. They contribute to the communication of ideas and interpretation of world affairs along with specific places and peoples. Images and representations of world politics can be tremendously important in shaping patterns and responses to world political events. Dodds has also analyzed the popular film series- James Bond. James Bond as Dodds opines is the product of British imperial desires. There has been a consistent effort made on the part of the film-makers to maintain rhythm between changing geopolitical rhetoric and filmic depictions. However in these series exotic locations have their own significance. According to Jason Dittmer and Klaus Dodds popular geopolitical representation and discourse largely depends upon the responses of the audiences. Tabloid geopolitics is the result of the content of the popular culture which informs and in turn also gets affected by global political agendas and issues. These scholars, to a certain extent have also identified the role played by countries such as United States in sculpturing popular geopolitical discourses.

The modern day geopolitics is present in almost every day routine life. It assumes different forms- high and low. There has been an increase in past few years in the degree to which the geopolitical content is discussed, absorbed and understood by public. Irrespective of the site of production the spreading effect and the impact are striking. The geopolitical content, issues and processes have become so much saturated that they have become active part and subject of popular culture. It was Joanne Sharp who mentioned how popular magazines in America were used to show

nationalistic perspective during the cold war period. Magazines were used as an instrument to popularize national identities and create binaries between United States and Soviet Union. It was post cold war that popular geopolitics gained much currency. It was not only limited to developed and powerful nations but also practised by countries all around. Significance of cartoons and comics also increased substantially. It became a part of newspaper columns. A small comic piece or caricature with the aid of the visual imagery became a fashionable means of conveying strong rhetorical themes. The prominent reason of the very birth of popular geopolitics is discovered in the state itself. The whole system of states and International Relations is the main cause of geopolitical culture to emerge. Though there are several factors that structure this culture such as historical account, political status, geographical position, external affairs etc. According to Dittmer and Dodds "new media associated with the internet deserve greater scrutiny and need to be tied to the popular geopolitical corpus in the light of the growing importance of activities such as blurbs, blogging and threads using online platforms and other sites such as the Internet Movie Database (IMDb) around the world." The role played by latest technologies and wide use of internet has humungous share in popularising this type of geopolitical culture. These new technological innovations create an alternate space where in geopolitical ideas are exchanged and perceived.

Another noted scholar who has contributed enormously is Jason Dittmer. He has tried to highlight a very important dimension in the popular geopolitical studies which is gender. In his opinion "popular geopolitics has been complicit in propping up of politics as public actions through its focus on mediated (public) text while ignoring practices of consumption that often occur behind closed doors. Hence, the focus of popular geopolitics on movies, news media, and the like has a discretely gendered dimension- rendering consumers as passive and apolitical. However, they are yet more lessons for practitioners of popular geopolitics to learn." Another very important dimension raised by Dittmer is the role of audience in the study of popular culture. He asserts that through popular media audiences derive meanings in the narratives. As Dittmer writes that "the question of audiences is critical and there has been an acknowledgement that popular geopolitical studies have still to demonstrate in detail how and in what manner certain films, magazines and the Internet are indeed

consumed.” He also suggests the application of active audience model in place of propaganda model in geopolitical enquiry.

### 1.2.3 GEOPOLITICS AND CINEMA

In addition Dodds has also written specifically about the Hollywood. Given the widespread popularity of Hollywood productions both inside and outside the US, it is understandable that films have been viewed as an important contributor to America’s visions of its own standing and significance in the world. American popular culture certainly circulates in the world more than most through films. Globalization of popular media is very much evident in contemporary age. No matter where does such cinema originate, it is more important to know where they are delivered. Things are perceived and interpreted differently in different parts of the world. Hollywood films are all the more significant because many state owned agencies have given aid in production. Hollywood production companies were closely aligned to various organs of governments such as the state and defence departments in Washington D.C. (K.Dodds 2007). US Information Agency and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) conceived of films as a vital element in the public campaign to educate American citizens about the danger posed by the Soviet and to inform others outside the nation as well.

Apart from these, the material pertaining to film and media studies is also of great help. Nicholas Bill in ‘Film Form and Revolution’ has mentioned that film making does not involve mimesis or the realist representation of reality but on the ability of the creative team to give the audience a new level of understanding. An awakening to political consciousness remains to be completed outside the domain of film form by the audiences. Films have the power to shape national imageries. Cinematic construction of geopolitics not only involves social construction of space. They are instruments through which meanings and identities associated with certain geopolitical issue get established.

Michael J. Shapiro has investigated ways in which cinema when critically viewed can be used to extend generosity and challenge the episodes of violence deployed in official war policies and other modes of coercions and abjections. Shapiro in all the

chapters of his book 'Cinematic Geopolitics'(2009) has tried to analyze cinema in varying degrees so that he could bring out a sense of cinematic epistemic base. He has tried to locate violence and coercions in the dynamic geopolitical realities of the world. He opines that within a cinematic frame there is contribution of spatial trajectories. The book also emphatically discusses the function of cinema in creating awareness in the audience over the issues reported by media that eventually evades. Cinema relives those incidents on screen and by its power of depiction enters into the sensory perception of viewers. There is a unique relation established between the screen and the audience. A film articulates a world, and not alone the specific drama portrayed in it. The whole art of filmic representations when encountered by audience opens way for a new image of thought.

### 1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM\ HYPOTHESIS

There is an attempt to examine the movies that pertains to the subject of geopolitics from a critical point of view. Movies are the visual media through which there is a linkage established between the common masses and events portrayed. The geopolitical understanding of events and how closely do they correspond to reality is what shall be the focus of my enquiry. The point where geopolitical logic of the state system, security etc appears to fail there is an emergence of an issue. Such issue becomes the focus of the alternative popular geopolitical means such as media, cartoon and movies. The resurrection of the discipline of 'geopolitics' as 'Critical Geopolitics' has brought an intrinsic interest in the world of scholarship and academia. Critical Geopolitics involves binaries- the construction of self verses others. The geopolitics and the related dynamics shape the world order. A critical overview of such events is significant in contemplating the world.

Films are continually being re-imagined and redeployed to explore the most salient feature of contemporary geopolitical events. In many ways movies provide a language and imagery. It gives a popular understanding of the radically changing geopolitical world. They have the immense power to shape the national imaginaries. The study attempts to investigate the extent to which popular cinema is instrumental in framing these identities. It is very crucial to contemplate how cinematic representation of

world politics is shaping and affecting the masses and world political events at large. The study aims to look into various types of popular cinema pertaining to geopolitics. It takes into account selected movies from the year 2001 onwards.

Popular geopolitics includes several resources that constitute its subject matter and cinema is one such important resource. It is not always and not entirely that films are totally based on fictitious ideas. Reality does inspire film-makers to create and make an attempt to show how state and society functions in today's world? Sometimes films are more potent in giving the viewers a better sense of reality. Through films events of one part of the world are understood by people living in different parts. My enquiry focuses on whether cinema corresponds to reality or is entirely based on fictitious stories, and if cinema does correspond to reality then to what extent? Further there is an attempt to find out the role of state in creation of certain kind of cinema. The enquiry also attempts to investigate if there is any deliberate construction or portrayal to influence or mislead the viewers. To what extent is the cinema and its depiction neutral?

There are several levels at which an individual or mass can feel themselves to be associated and nation is one such level. At national level individuals feel associated and this is where identities are formed. Sometimes through cinema and its power of depiction identity formation takes place. Sometimes the existing identities or beliefs are either strengthened or dissolved also.

Hollywood cinema is very popular throughout the world. Its transmission, distribution, reception, market and viewership is largest. Hollywood gets aid from US state department, commerce department and other bodies of federal governments in promotion and distribution. Since the state promotes the industry, it also makes use of the industry's popularity. At times films are really set in such a fashion that they invoke resonance of American identity. The role played by films as national linguistic culture as means of communication is highly significant. The dialect also gives a sense of identity to the local audiences.

### 1.3.1 RESEARCH QUESTION

Even though the research is divided into several sub- themes for the sake of readability, the various issues that are addressed have commonality in terms of the broader framework of geopolitics. The augmentation and the link between these sub themes shall be established throughout the dissertation. To summarize, some of the basic questions this work aims to investigate are-

- How and to what extent popular geopolitics is informed through cinema?
- Does cinema act as a propaganda tool to project national identity?
- How far does popular cinema represent, reproduce and construct personal and collective identities?
- Does practical geopolitics of foreign policy finds expression in the popular geopolitics of cinema?
- Has Hollywood cinema helped in constructing American Identity?

The above mentioned research questions open a gateway for a multifaceted and comprehensive analysis of selected sample of cinema. The study is primarily interested in cinema as a politico-cultural representation rather than a form of art. There is a growing interest seen in the role of popular culture in informing and also modulating debates about global politics. Cinematic geopolitics is perhaps one such manifestations where-in a national identity is both created as well as projected.

### 1.3.2 HYPOTHESIS

Geopolitical agendas of the state are informed by popular cinema.

### 1.3.3 RESEARCH METHODS

The research will include rigorous analysis of selected movies. The selection of movies under study shall take place with the help of purposive sample. A sample of approximately 20 movies shall be drawn. Extra efforts shall be made while selecting



the sample so that the movies could be representative of different genres of geopolitical subjects. The most important source of this project shall rely upon the IMDb (Internet Movie Data base). IMDb is a movie database, an online repository of films and related information. It also contains reviews, comments, and other details about films. The selected sample of movies shall be divided into categories on the basis of region which the movie specifically deals in. Thereafter there would be thorough critical examining of films under study. Cinema that is produced in the west is so popular that it has wide array of audiences spread all over the world. This makes it essential to study and analyze such cinema in a transnational context. Since there are innumerable movies that are made in the west that directly address to geopolitical issues, the choice of selected films had not been easy. Many films that are or have been suitable for this dissertation have been left out because of the shortage of space and time. Some of the films selected are- In July (2000), Black Hawk Down (2001), No man's land (2001), Behind Enemy Lines (2001), Syriana (2005), Babel (2006), Charlie Wilson's War (2007), Lions for Lambs (2007), Frozen River (2008), The Shepherd: Border Patrol (2008), Hurt Locker (2009), Green Zone (2010), Argo (2012).

The films listed above are arranged in chronological order, yet they will be studied thematically, as case studies to be analyzed throughout the dissertation and with the aim of setting the critical focus on the particular issues within each chapter.

The chapters of my dissertation are based on certain themes such as the first chapter talks about the influence of the American statecraft in Hollywood cinema per se. Thus the key samples chosen attend to one or more of the major themes of this dissertation (Hollywood, political turmoil in Middle East, cinematic representation of borders). By close scrutiny of the selected sample it is clear that cinematic representations have a lot of meanings attached to them. Through their power of depiction and visual aid cinema not only portrays cultural dimension of their place of origin but in some ways also tries to represent their collective identities.

Further Primary methods such as data collection through questionnaire shall also be included. The questionnaire shall be drafted in order to understand the response of the audiences, their dispositions and reactions. The data collection through questionnaire shall target a particular population. This again will involve proper sampling

techniques taking age and education into consideration. After the data has been collected, there will be tabulation and statistical analysis of the same.

In between there will be scenes from particular films which shall be incorporated in the form of pictures wherever necessary to emphatically bring out certain meanings. Secondary methods such as collection of archival data, visits to libraries of various institutions and organizations will also be done.

## 1.4 TENTATIVE CHAPTERIZATION

In order to reach a comprehensive approach on geopolitical dimension of popular cinema, the thesis will be divided into five chapters. Together these chapters form a coherent study of cinematic representations and their relatedness with popular geopolitics. They address wide and varied geopolitical issues from a cinematic prism ranging from modern day warfare, terrorism, and inter-state affairs to contemporary issues of humanitarian interventions, human trafficking and the like.

- **CHAPTER ONE:-**

- **Introduction: Geopolitics to critical geopolitics**

The first chapter starts from the discussion of geopolitics in general laying the foundation for the debate on further concepts. The subject matter of critical geopolitics and the existing scholarship is discussed at length, literature is thoroughly reviewed, beginning from the early contributions to the present day critical and popular geopolitics. The two variables popular geopolitics and cinema were introduced and their relation and interrelations are clearly established. The methodology is formulated and the research problem and questions are mentioned. Further the subsequent chapters with a brief idea of the content are also mentioned in the introduction.

- **CHAPTER TWO:-**

- **Geopolitics and the US Statecraft through Hollywood Cinema**

After laying foundation of the major plot of the dissertation the second chapter is specific and is directed towards a particular theme. The main focus of this chapter is to bring out the link between Hollywood and the statecraft. Hollywood cinema and the US statecraft to a certain degree go in tandem with each other. Role of US in the international events cannot be denied. This chapter shall be an effort to establish a link between popular cinema of Hollywood and the internal\external political dynamics of the US. It shall also try to bring out the important theme of US identity formation- Individual as well as collective identity. Selected movies shall be used as a case study to investigate and establish the notions. In addition the role of intelligence agency and their depiction in films will also be looked at. Cinema has acted not only as an agent of social change but also a reflection of the nation in which it is produced. US national identity in Hollywood cinema could be seen reflected in the narrative and plot of the films which make use of American culture and history. In the global world, Hollywood is employed as an effective agent through which history and cultures are recognised and thus national identity imbibed, validated and propagated.

- **CHAPTER THREE :-**

- **Depiction of Geopolitics in Middle East & Central Asia on Screen**

The main focus of this chapter shall be to scrutinise the geopolitical discourses in the west Asian region. Some of the key issues addressed here shall revolve around Iranian revolution, Iraq war, and Israel- Palestine conflict etc. Popular cinemas which have dealt with the regional politics of West Asia shall lay the foundation of this chapter.

The sample selected for this chapter includes- *Syriana* (2005), *Lions for Lambs* (2007), *Hurt Locker* (2009), *Green Zone* (2010), *Argo* (2012).

There are a number of media outlets that have been addressing the political unrest in various parts of the region ever since they sprang up. They have also been active in showing the shifting attitude towards America's role in these conflicts. The audience worldwide to a certain extent has acquired perceptions regarding the unrest and also US involvement in these conflicts through popular movies.

- CHAPTER FOUR:-

**Portrayal of borders through cinema**

There are both degenerative as well as integrating forces operating in the world that defines the dynamic nature of its political boundaries. Geopolitical fragmentations results from various types of activities. On one hand processes such as regional integrations and associations are at play and on the other there are disputes and separations. Issues related to borders have always intrigued film makers. It has been an important subject in the movie making industry. The importance of this subject lies in the fact that such events have a very large impact: it affects individual, community, province and state, while the impact is also felt upon by the international community in some or the other way.

Selected movies which shall be focused in this chapter are- *In July* (2000), *No Man's Land* (2001), *Babel* (2006), *Frozen River* (2008) and *The Shepherd: Border Patrol* (2008). The selected sample is vivid and varied. There is an attempt to bring out the senses of places and border issues through them.

- CHAPTER FIVE :-

**Conclusion**

This shall be the last chapter of the dissertation. The whole study shall be summed up in this section. It shall conclude the results which are arrived at. There will be evaluation of the proposed questions. The study shall be validated on the basis of findings.

## CHAPTER TWO

# GEOPOLITICS AND THE US STATECRAFT THROUGH HOLLYWOOD CINEMA

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Although the two themes Cinema and geopolitics seem very different from each other but on close scrutiny they do establish an intricate link. The present chapter is an attempt to deal with these two distinct subjects in consolidation. Hollywood is the foremost entertainment industry in terms of films in the world at present. The popularity, grandeur and scale of Hollywood cinema are established and it is continuing to entertain the world since many years. Hollywood performs dual function; it is a source of revenue and it also provides the state with the opportunity to realise its cultural goals. Hollywood film industry has been popularized so much so that America which is an important nation in itself culturally is also identified with Hollywood to some extent.

Cinema in general is perceived as something which is a form of art and entails a lot of creativity in its production. As a form of cultural expression and a tool of entertainment, cinema has gained a lot of popularity worldwide. As an industry cinema is flourishing manifold and has expanded in terms of its scale. Cinema has become enormously diverse. Since cinema deals in varied subjects and has wide array of issues been addressed, it has become a multi-utility media. Cinematic representations have tried to portray all possible human emotions apart from fictitious manifestations. Films have a tremendous capacity to captivate the audiences, make them involved and later have certain impact on how the world is perceived by individuals.

Geopolitics on the other hand is a term which generally is perceived as having close association with high politics and political events occurring in the international arena. Geopolitics as an academic discipline, has a lot of relevance in the fields such as political geography, international studies, inter-state relations etc yet geopolitics also find its place in the practices of the common man. It is through things like Internet, advertisements, newspapers, cartoons, music, films and other popular means that the

geopolitics is part of the societal practices. No doubts about the fact that the impact of the geopolitical events is felt by the community. The decisions and actions taken at the level of state or region have sociological underpinnings. As Dittmer and Dodds mention that "Geographical framing and associated ideas about power, danger and identity are embedded within that would come to be called geopolitical culture (Dittmer & Dodds 2008: 443).

A substantial part of America is known to the world through the different types of cinema produced. Hollywood films in particular are not only the source of information but they also help the viewers to understand events, traditions, culture, sociology, politics, bureaucracy, human relations, psyche, lifestyles and world at large. Viewers watch, contemplate and they are even impacted upon by the depictions on screen. The public perceptions are at times formed through the magnificent art of cinematic renditions. Cinema also informs culture. At times there is repetitive portrayal of certain kinds of practices showing American style of living or working that it leads to the formation of identities. The intention behind making a film on a geopolitical issue or showing the power of statecraft does not always involves projecting certain group, event, party or nation in a stereotypical way. There is a large possibility that the viewers start deriving meanings from the on screen display. The understanding of the depiction involves the connection between the viewer and the screen. Films do not always attempt to directly educate the masses with strong political statements but they do influence the public and certainly make them opinionated. Cinematic representations are multidimensional. They convey multiple meaning at one time. The compact and compound rendition on screen is mixed, enmeshed with multitude feelings, sentiments and sensation with wide ranging responses and reactions by the viewers. They are powerful enough in creating an imprint, influencing, motivating or establishing certain values, ideas and emotions simultaneously. The audience gain or pick up different things, the combination of the existing beliefs and norms and that which are shown on screen results in creation of new sets of views. The acquired outlook reverberates through their minds and psyche.

Geopolitics has dual existence. The formal geopolitics is practiced not by masses but by certain class of people. While popular form of existence of geopolitics directly relates to the common man. On the platform which the cinema provides even the hyper politicised instances and events can be depoliticised and viewed from a

different angle altogether. There are a lot of sociological traits ingrained in the narrative form of art offered by cinema. The complexities and the geopolitical realities are depicted on screen in the most simplistic terms with close resemblance to reality and left for the audiences to analyze, comprehend and interpret. Geopolitical depictions and the perception of the audiences is an interactive process. There is an interaction of two scales involved in this process. The level at which the political and geopolitical events takes place is the larger macro level scale while the individual is the unit level entity. Through these popular sources the two levels form a connect. Thus there is creation of a distinct space where the two levels form an association. This space though may be temporary and short lived yet it succeeds in entering the human psyche and cognition. Since Hollywood cinema is popular worldwide, it has a very large viewership. The impact of the films produced in Hollywood per se is transnational in nature and is capable enough to produce diverse responses.

Politics has become ubiquitous. Events get politicised on the international platform. Geopolitical culture and its investigation involve close scrutiny of the events taking place in everyday life world-wide. The space which the Hollywood film industry provide with the aid of latest technology, equipments, artists, direction and the like helps produce work which although being virtual appears real. Such demonstrations results into investments, retaliations, reactions from the general viewership. Investment here refers to the emotional connect of an individual while retaliation and reaction are further elaborated forms of invested emotions. Since audiences could feel the message conveyed the effect of cinema becomes more absorbed in them.

The changing dynamics of the political arena have become subject of debate, discussion, contestations, arguments and questioning since time immemorial. Even the plays written by scholars in the olden times such as Shakespeare were to a large extent inspired by the politics and political events happening at that time. The contemporary issues do catch interest of scholars, columnists, novelists, writers, movie makers, story writers and the like. Similarly major political events cater interest and enter the entertainment industry as well. The art of film making makes cinema apolitical. The skill lies in the subtle manner in which political issues are underlined and shown on the silver screen. The nature of cinematic content differs from that of news coverage or a report on a similar issue. Though a film always has a disclaimer included but they are sometimes inspired by true stories and happenings. There is a

wide acceptance of films not only as a mode of entertainment but it has also been recognised as the source of information and knowledge. Films provide a lens to view a distant land, their culture practices and beliefs etc. Thus under the broad umbrella of cinematic representations geopolitical events and content are intricately woven within a plot supported by technology and other expertise to make it realistic. The understanding of popular culture through cinema is not restricted to elite population but involves a whole range of viewership all around the globe. Cinema is so full of art that it blurs the distinction between actual and virtual. Cinema articulates a real world on screen.

The present chapter deals with Hollywood and geopolitics. There is an attempt made to find out whether certain films produced in Hollywood are entirely neutral or they do have some role in establishing American identity and also popularising them. Are Hollywood films used as a tool to project certain kind of image which the state wants to establish in the world? Are films cogent enough in influencing the audiences? Does Hollywood films have role in influencing the masses? The selected movies for enquiring the aforesaid propositions includes- *Black Hawk Down (2001)*, *Behind Enemy Lines (2001)*, *Charlie Wilson's War (2007)*, *Argo (2012)*.

## 2.2 HOLLYWOOD AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY

The whole Hollywood entertainment industry is one of the cores of the capital which the United States of America generates. Cinema is the source of information in the American society. Hollywood has always experimented with its creativity and has become an expression of society. Some films have been created as a reflection of what the real world is all about. Films addressing the issues pertaining to international events at times succeed in creating propaganda. The content of the films might just impel the audiences and evoke the course of future geopolitical discourses. Hollywood films enable United States to enter into the sovereign space of other states and also to influence them through visual aid. There are two distinct ingredients at the disposal of film makers. They have a certain form of reality that affects a large section and they also have a virtual reality that exists on the basis of the imagination, creativity, motivation and interest which is depicted on screen. As a grand platform,



filmic representations have the potential to evoke rhetorical contestations and evaluation from varied corners. Films have been seen as a tool to legitimize certain actions, they with the power of visual imagery become successful in justifying acts. The viewers are made to have confrontations with certain type of perceived world that consequently shape the perceptions regarding the events and also the outlook of the people. Hollywood has always picked up issues and made films on such geopolitical subjects that have given a chance to the people to see and reflect on events happening in the world. The particularistic understanding of incidents and the interrelationship of various events provide people an opportunity to contemplate and develop an understanding. Major events occurring in the political sphere have an impact on the policies, procedures and overall political and social environment of the state. Events through popular means of cinema become transnational in nature.

Apart from having relevance at the local level films gives the event an avenue to acquire a worldwide recognition and acknowledgement. While giving the cinematic content a visual form there is an involvement of certain kind of biases on the ideological mindset of the creative team making the film. Rachel Hughes has mentioned that “visual (geopolitical) cultures do not simply record war crimes, they also structure such crimes as visual experiences and use the authority ceded to images to further additional political ends” (Hughes, 2007:77). Sometimes extreme events are incorporated in a film to bring out intense effect on the audiences and to strongly convey heroic valour and vindications. The effort made by the film team to fabricate events and emphatically bring out the atrocities and sufferings in front of the camera becomes part of the patriotic practice which is less questioned and criticised. Cinematic constructions provide platform where identities and interests are contested and projected. It is evident that Hollywood films specifically those that are made on geopolitical issues have succeeded in not only defending the political decisions and actions of United States but have also made a deliberate effort to resurrect the nation as the guardian of peace, protector of security, defender of freedom and custodian of world order. Such cinematic portrayals have tried to legitimize the actions taken by the United States at the global front. Such films do not lie outside politics but they speak of certain underlying ideologies that bring them under the domain of geopolitics. The concept of ‘national cinema’ is also not natural it is a political

propagandist tool that is strategically being employed to establish notions of value and allegiance towards the nation.

### 2.2.1 AMERICAN IDENTITY AND STATECRAFT

How do Americans perceive of themselves? What perceptions does the world have of the America and Americans? Is America created and constructed through mass media? American public sphere is dominated by intense debate and discussions on political, social, economic and ideological issues. Do such events taking place in the spatial space of America reflect (in the form of identity) American culture through popular media sources? This section attempts to investigate whether films help in re-establishing American identity in front of the world.

Identity is a relative term; it is something that is a result of cognitive exercise. It is used as a tool to draw commonalities and find affiliations. It is a social sphere where a given set of meaning exist. People be it bureaucrats, journalists, businessmen, corporate employees, governmental officials, film makers all are social beings and part and product of social cognitive system of their societies. Their understanding of the world and politics are embedded in the values and beliefs that are already established in their domestic and local socio- cultural context. An individual is rooted with certain beliefs while delivering goods that cater to a large audience, the message of the content is such which tends to reveal what the society at large thinks and not what the individual opines. Identity is created and recreated; it is acquired at every stage. Popular culture is one of the potent sources of identity formation. Films help to reaffirm, change and contest identity and its formation. Identity according to Karl K. Schonberg is a socio cognitive construction that acts as a limit within the confines of which people have opinions about themselves and of others (Schonberg 2009: 16). The process by which identities are constructed is continuous they help in identifying ourselves and those outside the domain. It is through identity that one has perceptions of self and the world. Identity has a tremendous role to play in political decisions and determines the course of foreign policy and inter-state relations. Construction of boundaries demarcating us and them, we and they lead to compartmentalization of space in the social and political sphere. Human has a tendency to form mental frames

which usually constitute positive image of self and the group to which it belongs. At the national level these affiliations and image becomes extremely strong. They can take form of loyalty, patriotism, nationalism and in the extreme form jingoism. Benedict Anderson propounded the concept of 'imagined community'; nation is an imagined community because in spite of lack of contact people in a country feel associated with one another (Anderson 1983: 45). Every citizen bears allegiance and has certain fundamental duties towards its country but this inclination for the motherland enters into varying degree in the mental constructions that is reflected in the decision and choices made. This proposition holds good for the contemporary scenario of international relations and also finds expression in popular geopolitical discourses.

In general United States of America is known by the world as a developed country which has one of the largest national economies. It is accepted as a powerful nation-state in terms of its political, military economic and technological capabilities. The state holds important position in major international organizations and other forums. With respect to strategic studies, foreign policy and international relations US has immense significance. The state is equipped well with not only traditional form of power but also what Joseph Nye calls 'soft power' (Nye 2004: 5). United States justifies its decisions and actions in the world by declaring itself responsible towards rest of the world. The deliberate effort made by US in Bosnia, Kosovo, Liberia, Afghanistan Iraq and many others areas signifies the preponderance of power and capabilities which the nation has over the years accumulated.

The foreign policy adopted by the United States is broadly classified into four categories as suggested by Walter Russell Meads namely; Hamiltonian (named after Alexander Hamilton, the first US secretary of treasury), Jeffersonian (named after President Thomas Jefferson), Jacksonian (named after President Andrew Jackson) and Wilsonian (named after President Woodrow Wilson) (Brown and Ainley 2005: 238). Hamiltonians are considered to be having close association with the lines on which realists work. Jeffersonian is the ideology where there is profound promotion of US culture, ideas through exchange in contrast to active involvement in great power politics and its dynamics. Jacksonian ideology preaches to be non interfering and prefer to abstain from world affairs. Wilsonian believes in active promotion of the American political values and ideology. The four categories could be seen reflected in

American world policies in varying degree and combination, though. In contemporary times the most dominant of them all is Wilsonian policy. Thus the use of popular sources to promote American values and indulgence in commercial interactions and subtly practicing the statecraft is part and parcel of American policy doctrine. The next sub-section of the chapter deals with the selected films chosen for analyzing the aforesaid ideas.

## 2.22 BEHIND ENEMY LINES (2001)

This film is directed by *John Moore* and was released in the year 2001. The film centres on an American naval officer, who is the central character of the play. The sight selected, that forms the background of the film is Bosnia and the related genocide. It is believed that the movie is inspired from a real life story of Captain Scott O'Grady US air force officer and the incident that took place in Bosnia, June 1995.

The film begins with the scene showing Bosnia where local Serb army is trying to cover the mass grave with tree litter and plants. A US naval team is stationed at the Adriatic Sea where they are on a reconnaissance mission on an aircraft carrier. The Army is assigned the work of collecting information and doing a general survey of Bosnia. It is noteworthy that NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) had been constantly working for Bosnia since 1992. The UNSC (United Nation's Security Council) had issued a resolution according to which the NATO officers were asked to comply by the order of not flying their jets and planes over no-fly zone in Bosnia. Two of the officers set out for patrolling in the region where they suspect some activities in the restricted areas and photograph the sights while flying over the territory. The Serbs soldiers spot the patrolling plane and target them with a surface to air missile. In spite of multiple attacks the two officers manage to land safely on the ground though their plane is totally damaged. The local Serbs kill one of the officers and set out in search for the other one who is on the run. A special task force sets out to rescue the officer. The US helicopter reaches the place and there is constant firing from the American and the Serbs side. In the end the task force team succeeds in

rescuing the officer and also manage the record of the pictures taken of the mass grave.

The film is based on the atrocities that happened during the Bosnian War though the film does not go into the geopolitical contextualization of Bosnian crisis. Since the film is centred on single character it focuses more on the officer and its rescue. Throughout the films the military strength of US is been maintained. Preponderance of the United States and its role in tackling the issue using satellite and remote sensing technology is also highlighted in the movie. In between the film is full of instances where the US flag, fighter jets with made in USA engraved are shown signifying the power of the country. Somewhere there is also a subtle attempt made to overshadow the role of NATO and highlight the efforts made by the US army. The film also tries to celebrate the heroic skills of the American soldier, how he is able to survive the adversaries in the conflict prone areas. The emphasis on the part of the film maker to depict the theme 'survival of the fittest' is also perceptible. There are also instances in the movie where the role of media is felt. It is evident that media coverage of conflict prone areas is of immense importance. There is also a shade of masculinity which we get to see in this action war movie and perhaps which is common to most of the war movies. From uniform, valour, fighter plane, firing, attacks to mass killing a major portion is dominated by traits that are typically masculine in nature. Another striking feature of the film is the stereotyping of the Serbs as the people with no respect for life, who indulge in killing of their own countrymen and score low on human values. The film certainly has geopolitical meanings attached.

### 2.2.3 BLACK HAWK DOWN (2001)

The movie *Black Hawk Down- leave no one behind* was released in the year 2001. The date of its release is of significance because it came just after the 9/11 WTC (World Trade Centre) attack. The WTC attack acted as a catalyst in catering reactions and responses worldwide. This film is said to be inspired by a book of the same name authored by *Mark Bowden*.

The movie is based on famine and civil war that took place in Somalia and the efforts made by United Nations (UN) peace keeping forces led by the United States to

control the situation. The local militia under the leadership of warlord Mohammad Farrah Aidid declared war against the UN and US forces. America's elite soldiers, Delta force, Army rangers and the 160 SOAR (Special Operations Aviation Regiment) mobilised to restore order and peace.

Somalia issue and the related peace keeping mission have much deeper geopolitical underpinnings than what we superficially see. Incidents like these have a huge and long term effect on security and development. *Black Hawk Down* clearly depicts that the power of UN peace keeping force is entirely contingent on the support given by US. The film underlines the fact that there is a deliberate effort on the part of US to lend out help in ensuring peace and security. Armed group in Somalia as shown in the film were rebellious with relative impunity. They killed their own people and deprived them from availing the assistance given by UN and Red Cross. The main emphasis in the film is on the soldiers fighting against the militia. The film indulges in the celebration of the heroic valour exhibited by American fighters and the dilemmas of how to safeguard the innocent population and at the same time protect local elements from abusing the aid. The savage spectacle of brutal killing, attacks, injuries, atrocities were majorly shown but a sense of stoicism was maintained throughout. The cost of being a part of peace keeping programme on a distant land falls on the people fighting and risking their lives. Another dimension which is quite pronounced is the emotional aspect, which is in contrast to the brave fighter image. The constant struggle of the soldiers, their dilemmas, loyalty, decisions, code, sufferings and willingness to give up their lives for their counterparts is aspect that focuses on the humanistic affective side. Simon Dalby talks about the morality and identity of warriors portrayed in such combat films (Dalby 2007: 4). The most complex part is where it becomes difficult to distinguish between the innocent common man and the militant. Events such as that in Somalia, there is a threat to civilization. The film also connotes to the themes such as 'war on terror' 'just wars' etc. Ensuring peace in a foreign land with extreme, complex and adverse environment is not easy. There is a constant struggle between peacemaking and peace keeping. The director has made an attempt to show on screen the geopolitical danger to mankind.

The movie provides the viewer with the very realistic encounter of how a battlefield really looks like. There is a bargain on the part of the UN task force to get Aidid because of which the soldiers were outnumbered. Sean Carter and Derek P.

McCormack argue that this film is an amalgamation of strategic recital and viscera that makes it an effective filmic intervention. (Carter & McCormack 2006: 365). The tag line of the film 'leave no one behind' convey the direct affective meaning that the soldiers that have participated in the mission have to ensure their own safety and also of their fellow comrades. Even those who have sacrificed their lives have to be taken back to their motherland is the message which is strong enough to evoke courage and motivates them so meet their ends. Towards the end the film also show how outsourcing of soldiers takes place where the Pakistani force is being used to assist the operation. Over all the intervention made by US army men in the movie failed it resulted in loss of around 1000 Somalis and 19 US soldiers and many badly injured. The film appears to be very strong and has the potential to fuse in the audience compassion towards American decisions and military intervention. Yet it becomes difficult to judge such military actions. One can argue that since the result of the mission was not very favourable so it was not a fruitful endeavour. On the other hand it can also be said that since the action prevented Somalia from any further major mass destructions and situation gradually pacified it was successful. Michael Shapiro has mentioned that post 9/11 attack United States got involved in 'proxy wars' on the groundless assumption that all Islamic ventures are antagonistic as a result of which the CIA began to covertly fund the Somali warlord (Shapiro 2009: 50). *Black Hawk Down* raises many fundamental questions. As a foreign body is it just to enter else's territory and interfere in their domestic affair? Is the consent of the native people a requisite before taking important political decisions? Or helping a nation to overcome its problems and restore its liberty becomes the responsibility of international agencies, organizations and the like. Thus the film *Black Hawk Down* beacons several contestations and debate over complex, in depth geopolitical meanings it entail.

## 2.24 CHARLIE WILSON'S WAR (2007)

*Charlie Wilson's War* is a film directed by *Mike Nichols*. It revolves around the story of a congress man Charlie Wilson who engineered and executed covert operation in Afghanistan during the war with Soviets.

The beginning of the film shows a Muslim woman offering prayers and after its completion she fires with arms. This scene signifies the courage of the woman and the role played by arms in combating invasions. The subsequent scene in the film shows Wilson being felicitated and conferred with the highest civilian honour by the government of United States. He is addressed as the hero who changed history and defeated the Soviets who were thought to be invincible.

The film is inspired from the life of 'Charles Nesbitt Wilson' a naval officer and a democratic politician from Texas. Charlie in the film is shown to lead an extravagant life. He is inspired and persuaded by his friend *Joanne Herring* (a political activist) to look into the problems of Afghanistan. In order to concretise and strengthen the plan Charlie meets President of Pakistan *Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq* and also Israeli counterpart. Charlie visits the Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan and understands the grievances of the people, as a reaction to such encounter Charlie requests the government and convinces them to allocate monetary help to mujahidin. The film portrays a very clean image of the mujahidin where they are shown to be the freedom fighters and warriors who are struggling to liberate Afghanistan from the Soviets. United States uses Pakistan's secret services to provide aids to Afghanistan. There is a scene in the film where in a television interview Afghani people beacon Americans to help them otherwise Soviets would even reach out to Gulf countries which shall pose a threat to the United States.

The CIA (Central Investigation Agency) and Pentagon collaborated to execute the clandestine mission popularly known as 'Operation Cyclone' in history under the leadership of Charlie. Charlie and his CIA friend *Avrakatos* bypass the formal constraints posed by the US government. The chief message one can derive after watching the film is the fact that the intention of the US to provide aid to Afghanistan was because they wanted to roll back Soviets. The anti communist ideology of US was clearly evident. The mission proved favourable to the US as the Soviets could not fight back the mujahidin and their acquired modern arms. On the other hand the Afghan suffered as freedom was not restored, the condition of the people continued to be deplorable. In one of the scenes of the film, on visiting Pakistan *Charlie* is been taken to the Afghan refugee camp, there he realises the agony and the sufferings of the locals, he and his secretary both are moved by the appalling state of the camp dwellers. This is the juncture where real life borders become perceptible. The



distinction between a highly developed urbanized America and the underdeveloped impoverished Afghanistan. *Charlie* led a fancy, luxurious and flamboyant life while the Afghan camp dwellers were devoid of the bare minimum needs. As Louise Amore has mentioned “the borders has historically figured not only as a site of security but also as a domain of dissent and a place of encounter where the visceral difficulties of political life are exposed and challenged” (Amore, 2011: 64). The realization of *Charlie* on the encounter with the refugee camp invokes sentiments for the people. Towards the end of the film *Charlie* asks the US government for some more financial assistance to build school in Afghanistan to which the government representatives say “*who the hell wants to build school in Pakistan*”. Such a proclamation plainly emphasise on the fact that the US selfish motive was not to help the destitute but to meet their ends of defeating Soviets.

The decisions of the US failed to justify the act of establishing wellbeing in the Afghan territory. The geo-hegemonic US policy is the surmounting theme in US statecraft. The diplomatic lobbying by deploying Pakistan and Israel governments to assist the mission is all part of the political game of the US. Post Afghan-Soviet war the availability of arms and ammunitions to the mujahidin proved to be perilous in the long run. The US government fail to see its farsighted ramifications on the world society. The film celebrates Charlie endeavours but does not talk about the serious consequences of the mission. The situation of the Afghans did not improve and the political structure also crumbled. Thus the close look at the film tells that the US attempts to realise its own diplomatic and strategic goals by making use of the problems of the less developed nations. They focus on meeting their own ends by disguising their intent within the dogma of interventions of this sort.

### 2.2.5 ARGO (2012)

This film ‘*Argo*’ by *Ben Affleck* is based on joint clandestine venture of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Canadian government to ex-filtrate six diplomats of United States from US embassy at Tehran, Iran that dates back in 1980 amidst Iran hostage crisis. The issue gained prominence after the authorities at Washington decided to declassify this caper in 2007. *Tony Mendez* American CIA agent, now

retired was the appointed head who took responsibility to rescue the six American working as consulates. Tony Mendez wrote several memoirs but *Argo: How the CIA and Hollywood Pulled Off the Most Audacious Rescue in History* (2012) includes in detail the above mentioned rescue operation.

The film is a combination of facts and fiction. It is strongly supported by the plot that succeeds in making the film highly effective in terms of its genre. The movie no doubt is a thriller and its impact is audacious in spite of no use of arms which usually is employed in such films.

The film begins with mass protest on the streets of Tehran in front of the US embassy. The revolutionaries were protesting as a result of asylum given to Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi by the US president after Shah was exiled. The outrageous mob intrudes inside the embassy and held the Americans hostages. Six of the American diplomats manage a narrow escape and flee to Canadian embassy where the Canadian ambassador agrees to help the six diplomats. The diplomats had to hide in the Canadian ambassador's house at a great risk. In order to get out of this menace CIA agent, Mendez who is an ex-filtrate expert is called to address the issue. The intelligence is unable to chalk out any concrete plan which could come to their respite. They think of impractical plans from use of cycles in snow clad roads to changing the identity of the diplomats into English language school teachers, but nothing seemed to work out. Mendez proposes an unconventional, vivid and strange plan, which involved the Irish film maker with his Canadian film crew who landed in Iran for two days to shoot some scene of a big budget Hollywood science fiction. After long negotiations the White House gave a green signal to this plan. Within very less time Mendez with the help of Hollywood friends makes all the necessary arrangements from production house to office, logistics, script, banner, advertisements, and press conference to passports, identity cards and visas. After concocting the desideratum and requisites Mendez heads for Iran to execute his plan. As per the plan Mendez happens to be the Irish film maker, and the six escapees were assigned other roles as crew of the film. Mendez manages to bluff the Iranians and take his fellow six Americans to the air flight. The disguised identity of the Americans helped them to escape the danger posed by hostile conditions in Iran.

The film '*Argo*' befits the geopolitical structure, though the story which the film narrates is more than three decades old yet its contemporary relevance still holds good. The world in today's time is divided on the lines such as 'axis of evil' and such divisions affect larger political decisions of peace, diplomacy, deterrence etc. On the political front the relations between US and Iran are not so cordial. Iran is placed under the category of 'rogue state'. The robust nuclear program in which the state is engaged is opposed by various states and international organizations including US. Strict action has been taken in this regard against Iran along with negotiations. White House decided to declassify the 'Canadian Caper' in 2007, such an act serves a dual purpose. They not only glorify the nation's success in an undercover operation that involves high risk, celebrates the efficiency of its intelligence, justify the unlawful act of forging fake documents like passport, visa also makes an attempt to show the rebellious hostile attitude of Iranians. Through this film the threat and danger gets circulated and thereby there is awareness among the masses. "Tabloid geopolitics is perhaps the latest manifestation of a growing interest in the role of public/popular culture in informing and shaping debates about global politics and the role of countries such as United States" (Dittmer & Dodds, 2008: 9).

Another underlining feature of '*Argo*' is the interstate relations between United States and Canada which is favourable. Without the Canadian help it was not possible for the Americans to rescue their people. The director of the film *Ben Affleck* who also happens to be playing the lead character of CIA agent Mendez has delivered a good job. Though it was said that the role of Canada was undermined and CIA was given the upper hand in tackling the issue. The film undoubtedly stands as a testimony to the international cooperation. The film became very popular and did a very profitable business at the box office the reason for the success is the fact that the audiences are more delighted to see espionage stories and scandals enmeshed in complex plot. It is noteworthy that on similar story line previously a television movie and a children illustrated book were also made.

Hollywood has provided masses with a particular way of looking at major political events. Such cinematic manifestations give a vision to the international political spaces. At times the nature and content of the films could be simply termed as propagandist when they attempt to establish certain notions. Rachel Hughes has pointed out that O' Tuathail one of the foremost exponents of critical geopolitics has

said that there are two ways in which the present day visuality has remarkably changed; first is through the technological innovation that transformed the cartographic imaging into GIS (Geographic Information System) and second is the manner in which geopolitical events transcends into society. In today's times the geopolitical drama is imagined and reproduced quite differently. There is modelling of reality through simulation which comprises of greater involvement of the viewers and repeated interaction with geopolitical events than in olden times (Hughes 2007: 74). Thus through contemporary visuality there is a tremendous increase in the delivery of geopolitical goods and content which entails larger participation of the masses. The dissemination of information takes place through various channels; they reach out to people and reiterates. They get ingrained in society and consequently shape the geopolitical imagination of every individual. In extreme form this framing of the geopolitical realities in the people evokes reaction as well. The cinematic stage and space both form a relation with global politics; political events cater a worldwide attention and thereby incorporated as the subject matter in films. The filmic depictions provide it a disguised yet powerful tone and flavour which the audiences absorb. Great powers make use of entertainment and voice their policy simultaneously justifying their decisions and deeds.

It is also noteworthy that the representation of CIA in Hollywood cinema has substantially increased; now CIA and its covert operations find their place more often in films than before. Earlier they had no direct mention in films because of security and defence related issues and if at all CIA had any reference in films they were put to censorship. It was a deliberate attempt of the US government to exclude CIA and its role being displayed and popularized specially in films that were made during world war period. The endorsements and the liaisons given to Hollywood by Pentagon and other state departments is also one of the reasons why Hollywood adheres to State's terms and conditions. There is an overlapping of cultural practices with statecraft. Thus it is evident that the strings attached between popular culture and governance are extremely strong, they counter support each other and go in tandem with one another in realising larger American political goals.

The films addressed in this chapter show the exaggerated and exuberant nature of diplomatic policies, intelligence agency and also produce a stereotypical image of the third world. By deploying governance, military, statecraft, and security related

concerns there is fabrication of realities in such a manner that the viewers perceive US to be the apostle of world peace and order. The imaging of third world people as being unwieldy and unruly on the contrary portraying the superiority of civilized Americans construct binaries between 'us' and 'them'. The intervention of United States in the problems and conflicts of other nations, their use of money, resources, and aids project US as the saviour, liberator, and redeemer thereby disguising the geo-hegemonic intent of them. Cinematic depictions through the power of visuality limit the boundary of viewer's interpretation, it manoeuvres and shape the course of the sequences in the film and thereby influence the spectator by advancing American interest.

In the trajectory of political phenomena both historical and contemporary almost all major incidents have been put to the subject of appraisal due to the attention given by the popular culture. The contribution of popular culture to reflect and document upon the geopolitical realities has become distinctively robust. In the past also cinema has been utilized by the west to showcase anti communist and anti Soviet Union policy for the simple reason that the ideology of powerful states such as US, U.K and others were starkly in contrast with the Soviets. The large scale changes that took place post cold war brought changes in the interstate politics and also on the outlook towards foreign policy. Dodds has included in his study that during the cold war, governments at the level of state indulged in creation of special bodies (such as the CIA- funded Congress for Cultural Freedom) in addition they also funded certain propaganda cinema (Dodds 2009: 28). Films are subjected to scrutiny not only to keep a check on the content but also keep intact their political code. This shows the interference and control of the state in cultural commodities.

The chapter discusses four movies and ventures to bring out their geopolitical underpinnings. First movie addressed at is *Behind Enemy Lines* followed by *Black Hawk Down*, *Charlie Wilson's War* and *Argo*. The first two movies revolve around war in African countries Bosnia and Somalia respectively. *Behind Enemy Lines* portrays war as spectacle while *Black Hawk Down* presents war as tragedy. Films that account for robust war or killing act has instrument that apart from giving an idea of the dramatic event also bolster the morale. The cinema that contains soldiers appeals

to the national identification; it gives a sense of nationalism, invokes patriotism and imbibes certain moral responsibility on the part of the audiences. Soldiers are directly linked to the symbolism of the nation; they are transformed into territorial heroes and legends. Paasi wrote about 'emotional bordering', in his opinion the national iconographic symbols such as military parades, celebration of independence day and republic day, representation of a country in an international events such as sport events, beauty pageants and other competitions helps in commemorating the nation through evocation of patriotic sentiments (Paasi, 2011: 63). They are admired by the public who is absorbed in the emotions of cinematic portrayal. Similarly through such films the viewers are bound to realise the love towards their nation and feeling of brotherhood. Generally in war movies, the act of violence exhibited by the soldiers are condoned by the fact that they are fighting for the rights of the people, their acts are justified on the grounds that they are working for their nation and against their enemy.

Hollywood operates inside some ideological circle. It is an assemblage of commodities that have a direct impact on public cognizance. The end product of Hollywood film industry is determined on the guidelines on which US government and its policies work. Films lead to conditioning of the minds and psyche of masses. Hollywood rests on this assumption that the United States' military forces are endowed with the right of entering into the sovereign space of any nation-state. The films directly convey the message to the viewers that US engagements in any crisis are propelled by the benevolent intention the country has for the rest of the world. Mainstream cinema is put into various uses apart from entertainment. Hollywood cinema is used as an effective tool; sometimes to reduce the impact of issues that directly target US and at other times to glorify US efforts in tackling international crises. Many scholars suggest that popular culture indulge in exclusionary practices (Johnson & Jones, 2011: 61). In the same vein exclusionary exercise can be figured out in the filmic manifestations of Hollywood cinema. One of the common features that can be easily identified in all the four films analyzed in this chapter is the distinction between us and them. US' enemy is unappeasably projected to be wicked and evil while on the other hand US is always shown to be ethical in its conduct and their policies are morally just and righteous.

Society is open to popular culture and such cinematic representations circulate and have an effect on even those who occupy positions in governance, bureaucracy, law

and statecraft. Needless to mention that the 9\11 attack has testified the fact that global terrorism has acquired a robust form, shape and size. The contemporary political problems have all the more started getting attention because of the worldwide recognition of its proliferation. The plot of the movies is being framed in such a manner that they happen to fit political agendas and look at the problem from the angle that favours the intention of United States. Cinema has voiced such issue and become a mode of expressing geopolitical anxiety.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **DEPICTION OF GEOPOLITICS IN MIDDLE EAST AND CENTRAL ASIA ON SCREEN**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Political events taking place in the Middle East have always made it to the headlines and have affected the international political atmosphere. Globally the region is perceived as volatile and conflict ridden. There are several issues that have taken place in the region which have catered a lot of attention world-wide. Media has played a major role in collecting, analyzing and disseminating the information to every corner. The politicized nature of the events attracted film makers to make them as the focal theme of their ventures and provided them with the opportunity to display the issues on a popular platform. The September, 11 2001 attack also gave impetus to the indulgence of popular culture in dealing with such issues. The present chapter attempts to critically analyze the political discourse in this region through the cinematic lens.

Hollywood has lately started bringing on the screen the involvement of United States in the political proceedings of the Middle East countries quiet often. These films as are a platform for the audiences to understand and reflect on the current political problems of the region. (Dodds, 2008: 1621). Such films have huge significance because they engage in the contemporary international politics, the issues addressed concerns the masses, policy makers, bureaucrats, academicians, students and from the entertainment point of view they have a strong plot which are receptive to audiences of all ages. The tragic events have affected the natives and the locals and dramatic portrayal of reality helps the people around the world to get a wider sense to understand the seriousness of the issues. The power of the cinema lies in its narration and films that address the political turmoil of this region demands effectual plot that could facilitate in establishing a strong theme throughout. When a film relates to or is inspired from the geopolitical events or an issue pertaining to strategy, diplomacy etc then the content is automatically laden with ploy, tactic, stratagem and other important ingredients of film making. The close resemblance of the films with the reality gives public a chance to contemplate on the issues. Filmic representations of



this sort maintain the geographies yet they succeed in creating the cognizance regarding the far reaching effects throughout the world.

A close examination of the film reveals the fact that the various aspects of statecraft, intelligence, diplomatic ties incorporated gives a practical sense of International Relations to spectators. The art of depicting the places and spaces, representation of current political scenario and articulating the negotiations and engagements on world stage involves careful and intricate effort. Everything is not perceived positively and accepted duly by the viewers. Certain issues might hurt the religious sentiments; others might be objected by the state departments for overtly revealing their policy. A film on political agendas not only involves risk but also calls for striking a neat balance between reality and fiction. The broadcast of film are channelled by multiple agencies from filmic and non filmic background. Often the movies reflect the dominant ideology of a nation from where it is produced. The content of the cinema is such that it is in tandem with the policy the state preaches and follows. If at all there is any deviance with the governmental norms then either the film is sent for editing or it entails controversy and condemnation. There is increasing fascination in film makers to indulge in political issues on to the screen. But often these cinemas are associated with deep patriotic feelings. Film that portrays a nation or its citizens as negative, evil, vile generally receives unfavourable response from the countrymen who and whose nation is projected as being so. One such film is *Valley of the Wolves* (Dodds, 2008: 1623). A 2006 Turkish movie directed by *Serdar Akar* depicts extreme atrocities done by the US army men during 2003 invasion of Iraq. The film is based on Abu Gharib Prisoner Scandal. Such a projection is antithetical to what we generally get to see in typical Hollywood cinema where the heroic spirits of the US army men is celebrated and their bravery established unlike what *Valley of the Wolves* shows. As a result this Turkish film catered negative response in the United States though it was widely accepted and appreciated in Turkey. Therefore we can deduce the fact that films often condition the political notions, ideologies, beliefs and way of looking at things. There is a sense of belonging or nationality also involved, a film that portrays ones country as brutal, negative or unjust shall always be opposed by the citizens of that particular country as such a depiction is more likely to hurt the sentiments towards their nation. On the contrary if a film is benign and benevolent in projecting a nation and its contributions then it is accepted and also popularized. The patriotic legacy has always

been a part of motion picture industry and it was strengthened more post the 9/11 incident.

One of the most important diplomatic tactic that help states in dealing with issues is 'public diplomacy'. There has been increasing use of this strategy; even President Bush stressed its importance. Public diplomacy is a tool, a self interest strategy used in projecting the national image and exercise control by influencing the audiences abroad. The role played by non-state actors in international politics has been widely recognised by the governments. Hollywood is employed as a propaganda transmitter that uses the potential power of cinema to propagandize robust public diplomacy to address ideological conflicts (Blackmore, 2012:296). In any large scale political move 'image making' acts as an important propaganda tool and help provide a support system in making the move stronger in its appeal to mass public. There has been growing importance of image and imaging in the globalized era and even foreign policy includes it in its purview. The close connection of Hollywood with federal government can be traced back during the times of World Wars. After September 11 attack the US state department officials held meetings at Beverly Hills with the people from the entertainment world to formulate *modus operandi* to contribute to the world wide revolution of war against terrorism (Dodds, 2008: 1621). There were series of meetings held between Pentagon representatives and Hollywood creative team. Power and Crampton write that White House advisors met Hollywood executives to discuss the role of Hollywood in getting the right ideological message not only in American society but also in rest of the world (Power & Crampton, 2005: 193). The popularity of films based on political drama and their reception from the audiences signify the fact that the people show interest in the international politics.

There were several films which were inspired by the 9/11 attack and worked onto its subject matter to bring out a cinematic manifestation. *11'09"1 September 11* is a film based directly on the attack. This film was made in seven different languages including French sign language, and released at seven different places in 2002. The most outstanding feature of the film is that film makers from 11 different countries have contributed in the making of short films in portraying different versions of the event on a common platform. Few other films on this theme are- *Fahrenheit9/11* by Michael Moore (2004), *United93* by Paul Greengrass (2006), *World Trade Centre* by Oliver Stone (2006), *Reign Over Me* by Mike Binder (2007), *Man On Wire* by James

*Marsh*, (2008), *Twin Tower by Dan Meth* (2011). Likewise there are in-numerous films been made that directly or indirectly address the themes to the attack.

The present chapter involves discussion of four films namely *Syriana* (2005), *Lions for Lambs* (2007), *Hurt Locker* (2008), *Green Zone* (2010). These films discuss on to various dynamics of the geopolitics in the Middle Eastern and Central Asian region, Iraq and Afghanistan in particular. There have been several other movies which have been made on the politics and the geopolitics of the Middle East but the above mentioned four have been selected and analyzed here in detail.

### 3.2 THE GEOPOLITICAL IMPLICATION SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 AND MAPPING OF UNITED STATES'S FOREIGN POLICY

The September 11, 2001 'bioterrorist' attack on the World Trade Centre, a symbol of global finance and the Pentagon (headquarters of US defence department) by the Islamic terrorist group Al-Qaeda was a direct strike on the security of a nation who was known to be a great power in the international arena. The egregious attack deconstructed the invincible image of the United States and also challenged its hegemony. The scale on which the perpetrators had planned this attack was massive. It was a first such attack on the American mainland, targeting New York and Washington D.C., two important cities of United States. The attack was a question on the security apparatus of a nation whose foreign policy and inter-state relation are all entrenched in the lexicon of security maximization. It was also a realization that weak states are more likely to execute such audacious attack and pose a greater threat than the established power blocks. The geopolitical implication of this act did not fall on US alone but has surpassed all and has eclipsed the entire world. The hijackers were from three different countries namely Saudi Arabia, Egypt and United Arab Emirates (UAE) and their driving licenses were from Lebanon, Germany and United States (Smith, 2009:293). Within no time the whole world through media and its repeated broadcast became aware of the incident. Thus, this catastrophic event was as much global as local.

In this interdependent world the impact of any major event is spanned across lager space. Space assumes a distinct place in defining the geographies of the political

events. The discursive practices involving spaces and territories have assumed a nuanced appearance. The 9\11 attack framed the global conflict and led to geopolitical segmentation of the world. Several states were viewed in the light of suspicion, and places and people were subjected to greater scrutiny and surveillance. The geopolitical representations discursively establish and mark out new regions of political instability. The attack led to the diversification and re-creation of the foundational geographical and geopolitical assumptions about the dynamics of world politics. The impact of the event was sociological as much as political. Post the attack several insecurities plagued the State authorities and transformed the outlook towards political realities. Many states such as Iraq and Afghanistan were results of the diversion of the global geopolitical landscape.

As a consequence of a shift in existing geopolitical assumptions the US brought several organizational changes in its security policy, diplomatic relations and dealings with the other states. There was a deliberate diplomatic effort made by the US government to lend out help in the form of development procedures and management plans to states such as Afghanistan. Such an endeavour by the US had long term objectives. There has been shift in the strategy from military to non military procedures. The reconstruction in the structural policies helped US to realize many of its immediate objectives and dealing in the aftermath of the terror attack. The Bush administration adopted military commitments which were never a part of US defence policy in the past. Major shift was seen from the preventive war strategy prior to attack to a leap towards pre-emption post 9\11. Preemption is defined as “the use of military force in advance of a first use of force by the enemy” (Arend 2003: 89). Even deterrence which was a popular US strategy during cold war was done away with in this case simply because it was assumed that such a policy would have not worked against Al Qaeda and its terrorist activities.

The most important factor that underlies the cause of transformations in defence policy of US is the need to curb the use and proliferation of WMDs (Weapons of Mass Destruction). It is evident that US adopted hybrid modes of political and diplomatic tools to fight back. Missions such as nation building and counter insurgency were launched thus amalgamating military and non military and developmental and foreign policy objectives. These were instrumental in dealing with domestic as well as international interest of United States. In fact, US adopted three

Ds – Defence, Development and Diplomacy. The Bush government came up with another change under the framework of National Security Presidential Directive 44 (NSPD-44). Under NSPD-44 various policies that ensure security to the United States were integrated for reconstruction in Afghanistan and Iraq (Waisova 2013: 74). US allocated huge funds for tackling these issues and special status was given to those regions that have high proneness to conflict. Political reforms were fostered by US in the Arab world in their most stringent form.

The attack has been registered as a major event in the political history of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It diverted a focused attention of the entire world on the problem of terrorism. The seeds of terrorism were sown long back but now it has spread and gripped the world and its obliteration is a humongous challenge posed to the world community. The attention given by the media and their role in conveying the gravity of the event was credible. Even entertainment industry took responsibility to educate the masses about the collateral damage posed by terrorism. The extreme nature of hostilities exhibited by the violent acts of terrorist towards innocent people mandates immediate action to be taken at all the levels.

### 3.3.1 THE FUTURISTIC MILITARY APPROACH

The twenty first century military strategy has assumed a new form which relies on futuristic speculation. The formulation of futuristic plans signifies the degree of insecurity that has swept across post the 9/11 attack. Some scholars argue that such far sightedness existed even during nineteenth century and can be traced back during World War. in Germany's strategy of 'long range planning' (Carr, 2010: 14 ). There were simulations conducted to replicate wars to analyze their outcomes so that the results could be verified. Similarly United States also practiced 'Scenario planning' which facilitated the US to foresee and predict the course of militaristic actions. The present geopolitical and international political events are unpredictable as well as uncertain in several respects. Drafting a full proof plan or agenda setting for such events requires farsightedness and forecasting and also preparedness to tackle them with immediate effect. The doctrine of 'Rethinking the Unthinkable' though originally proposed by Herman Kahn in 1963 (regarding nuclear war) forms the basis

of the United States foreign policy discourse. The 9/11 cannot be labelled as unthinkable but certainly it challenged US security and alarmed the world of the fanatic terrorist activity. The imaginative science fiction, comic books and popular cinema have been showing such devastations and casted the precarious nature of the villain. In order to curb the violent upsurge of international crime it became essential to device myriad means and ways to outmanoeuvre terrorist activities.

To counter balance this element of insecurity and uncertainties the US government appointed several departments to research and analyze the anticipatory activities and futuristic affairs which could jeopardise peace and security. US made all possible efforts to strengthen its security by accessing the terrorist activities and intention and preparing the infrastructure, defence, bureaucracy, technologies to safeguard national territory from external threats. The overall preparedness of the US is formulated keeping in mind the worst case scenario. Partly the technological innovation and rapid satellite communication is also responsible for visionary approach towards foreign policy like this. The contemporary nation-state and inter-related world system is more likely and vulnerable to political instabilities and insecurities. The state authority emphasised on maintaining US dominance and establishing a world order that is favourable for the nation. For the global security apparatus to be benign to the United State it was essential for the US to take stride and establish its geopolitical dominance. Matt Carr maintains that US military usually view themselves to be the bulwark of civilization against the eminent danger or mayhem (Carr, 2010: 18).

### 3.2.2 WAR AGAINST TERROR

The US responses to global terrorism also sometimes referred as 'new American crusade' was triggered post the September, 11, 2001 catastrophe. The underlying cause of United State waging a global war against terrorism in Iraq was Al-Qaida, (the terrorist organization responsible for 9/11).

Before 9\11 attack the interstate relations between US and majority of Middle Eastern countries were cordial. The friendly ties were maintained because of the economic exchange of oil taking place between the Gulf and the US. The US took the Arab oil from these states and in return guaranteed them security. Consequently the

monarchies became pro American and anti communist, which came as a benefit to the US government. After the attack things became topsy-turvy, Middle Eastern countries including Saudi Arabia were not given the same reception by the US. The reason was that majority of the perpetrators of the attack were from Saudi Arabia. Thus thereafter the friendly ties between the two countries came to an end. US pursued its policies in the Middle Eastern and Central Asian countries in two compatible strands: on one hand it launched an unrelenting war against terrorism and terrorist groups and on the other it opposed the lack of democratic framework and the derision towards human rights in the region (Yakub, 2009: 99).

There are several scholars who proclaim that the war against terror was in accordance with Huntington's 'clash of civilization' principle. Huntington's theory was suggestive of the fact that post cold war disputes and conflicts would result from incongruencies in cultural and religious identities. Religion plays a crucial role in defining identities. The geopolitical power accumulates in west and there exist an imbalance in the distribution of power across nations. This in-equilibrium leads to factions across cultures, regions and civilizations. Any conflict can be aggravated in the name of religion or through civilization reuniting. According to Virginie Mamadouh, "The clash of civilization is a script that emerged for formal geopolitics to serve practical geopolitics, and which became widely echoed in popular geopolitics" (Mamadough, 2003: 172). As a reaction to the attack US mobilised all its powers to retaliate, war on terror was widely welcomed by the rest of the world too. The deep roots of terrorism have affected the world society and therefore the stride taken by US was supported by most of the states. It is argued that is the war against terrorism anti Islam? The Bush administration has denied the allegation of its policies being anti Islamic. The preemptive war was fought by the US against Iraq on two grounds; first the links of Saddam Hussein with that with Al-Qaeda and second the possession of WMDs.

Owing to the politics and the situation, the Bush administration decided to necessitate democratization process in the Arabic world. There was though a doubt that if democracy comes to play in the West Asian countries then Islamic groups would inevitably come to power. Yet it was felt by the US that under the framework of liberal norms and policies terrorism will be impeded. Massive policy procedures were suggested to be fostered in the Arab world and major thrust was given to democratic

form of government. Since the existing rule of Saddam Hussein was undemocratic and there were allegation of Saddam's relation with the Al Qaida and his possession of WMDs, therefore the United States government decided to take stern action against the regime in Iraq. Yakub Halabi opines that the Bush led US administration decided that the Arab world has to be introduced with liberal political structures and in order to enforce it in the region both offensive as well as peaceful means were required. It is believed that Bush adopted a neoconservative policy in the west Asian region (Halabi, 2009: 110). United States intervention in the domestic policies of the region and states was opposed by the people. The basic flaw in imposing democracy was instead of a gradual shift in the governance, the states which were new to it were forced to practice it which could not benefit the people of the region. United States was deterministic in its view that the execution of democracy in the region is indispensable and of paramount importance. Bush declared every state that had terrorists as the terrorist state. Syria, Iran, Iraq and Libya were affirmed the status of 'Rogue state' (Halabi, 2009: 114).

Prior to attack the entire US territory was supposedly claimed to be secure. The nineteenth century strongly asserted the geographical privilege of being protected. But the entire notion of 'geographical exceptionalism' was debunked by this event. The entire 9\11 incident and war on terror undertakings became extremely popular in the entire world and its devastating effects been extensively spread across space and time. It constituted within itself not only US and few others but all the states of the world. The entire phase of war on terror could be understood with reference to political spaces and also in spatiality of politics (Elden, 2007: 320). Terrorism is an acute problem, a crisis whose brunt has been borne by the entire world. Political power assumes a significant stance in such a situation. US is taking the lead in this struggle because its own security has been jeopardised and also because it is one of the major powers with military and resources. In an attempt to reciprocate US formulated immediate policies, but terrorism did not emerge with 9\11, it existed much before that. The Al Qaeda had previously also attacked the United States. In 1998 with the attack on US embassy in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania the Al Qaida for the first time came to attention. While in the year 2000, the Al Qaida again executed attack on America. The US navy destroyer USS Cole was bombed by the suicide bombers in the Gulf of Aden. Both these attacks were planned and engineered



under the leadership of Osama bin Laden. But the 9/11 attack was a first ever terrorist strike on the American land, scattering the long maintained secure geographical imaginaries of isolationist notion.

The Bush led US administration was preparing itself entirely for retribution. Soon after the attack the US government declared that the deliberate act was not an act of terror but a war, war over the sovereign space of the United States. Therefore it became very important to respond to this war in the language of war. The branding of the retaliation of the US as the 'war on terror' helped US to mobilise nations throughout the globe because the roots of terrorism had spread to the entire world and it was not the US alone who was suffering. The war was not only targeted to the terrorists or the perpetrators of such deadly attacks alone but it was also directed towards those nations which harbour terrorism and its related activities. The spatial dimension of the political move was encompassing the whole world. An important realization that came to cognizance was the fact that the lack of proper governmental structures in many parts of the developing world was the places that harbour illegal, terrorist activities because of the absence of an effective control over their territory. They are ungoverned sites of open hostilities and unchecked illegal activities which pose greater threat. Scholars such as Rotberg and Cerny have also mentioned that failed states are havens for non-state actors such as warlords and terrorists and in order to fight the war against terror effectively it is necessary to strengthen the failed states (Elden, 2007: 324).

The extensive network of Al Qaida is not restricted to the third world countries but the organization has interwoven complex networking that transcends major portion of the globe. The Organizations such as Al Qaida are both transnational as well as deterritorialised. The failed states provide these terrorist organizations training camps, territorial bases and man power. US government felt the need to globalise the war against terrorism and to counter the activities by locating the locus of the terrorist activities in places such as Afghanistan, Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries. This labelling is suggestive of the fact that there is a spatial and territorial dimension of the act of terrorism and the perceived threats.

### 3.3 SYRIANA (2005)

The film *Syriana* is directed by *Stephen Ghagan*, the film is inspired by a book named 'see no evil' by Robert Baer. The central theme of the movie focuses on the energy geopolitics of the Middle East and the related conspiracies. The film features three different stories, all revolving around the politics of oil. There are three political blocks namely the United States, the Gulf and China. The other players are CIA, political Islam and the US department of justice.

The film's focal plot begins when the foreign minister (Prince) gives the charge of oil fields to Chinese company instead of giving it to US firm named *Connex*. United States has always allured for the oil and it is believed that it has an obsession for the oil since the oil was discovered in the region. This enchantment for oil has gradually spread to the rest of the world as well. Early the US made deal with the Arabic state according to which the Arabs would give US oil and in return they would provide them with security. The geopolitical interest of the US in the oil resources has been clearly depicted in the film. The US always made sure that the political authority in the 'monarchy of Arab world should always be pro-American and it made deliberate attempts to keep the oil prices low (Jones, 2012: 210). The balance of power in the region is highly delicate because of the possession of weapons by oil nobles. Thus the Middle Eastern land is a battleground to various internal as well as external political tussles which *Syriana* is all about.

In order to compensate for the loss *Connex* makes an attempt to collaborate with another oil company which has acquired drilling rights in Kazakhstan. The US Department of Justice (DoJ) is suspicious of the collaboration and sets to investigate the matter. The DoJ officials find out that the merger is the result of illegal means and bribery. The department people are of the view that corruption in business dealings is a way to competition in the world, and US always wins against the corrupt world. This scene shows the manner in which the non-Americans are looked at by the Americans.

The internal political chore of the monarchy in the Arab world is another aspect which the film throws light upon. Prince *Nasir* the foreign minister by favouring Chinese over Americans invites unwanted animosity from the US. In spite of Prince *Nasir's*

progressive and liberal political ideology, he is prevented to succeed his father as the king due to the trade off between US and *Nasir's* younger brother who is least versed with the political handlings. The influence of US in the domestic affairs of the country and the degree to which the great power invest its resources to set things favourable for its political interests to be realized is the underlining theme.

The film depicts the ramifications and the repercussions of the intersection of corporate and the political interest in oil, the dynamic political instability in and around the entire region along with the material interest and competition among the power blocks. The CIA's role in investigation of the illicit arms trade in the region is another geopolitical concern being highlighted. It is believed that the character of *Bob Barnes*, CIA official in the film is based on an ex-CIA agent Bob Baer. The meeting of the CIA with Lebanon based Islamic militant group and the assassination of the prince Nasir by drone attack are all strings attached with the oil politics. Another noteworthy highlight of the film is the portrayal of exploitation of the poor migrant workers who come to seek employment. They are been influenced by the Islamic fundamentalists and used for suicide bombing at the cost of their life.

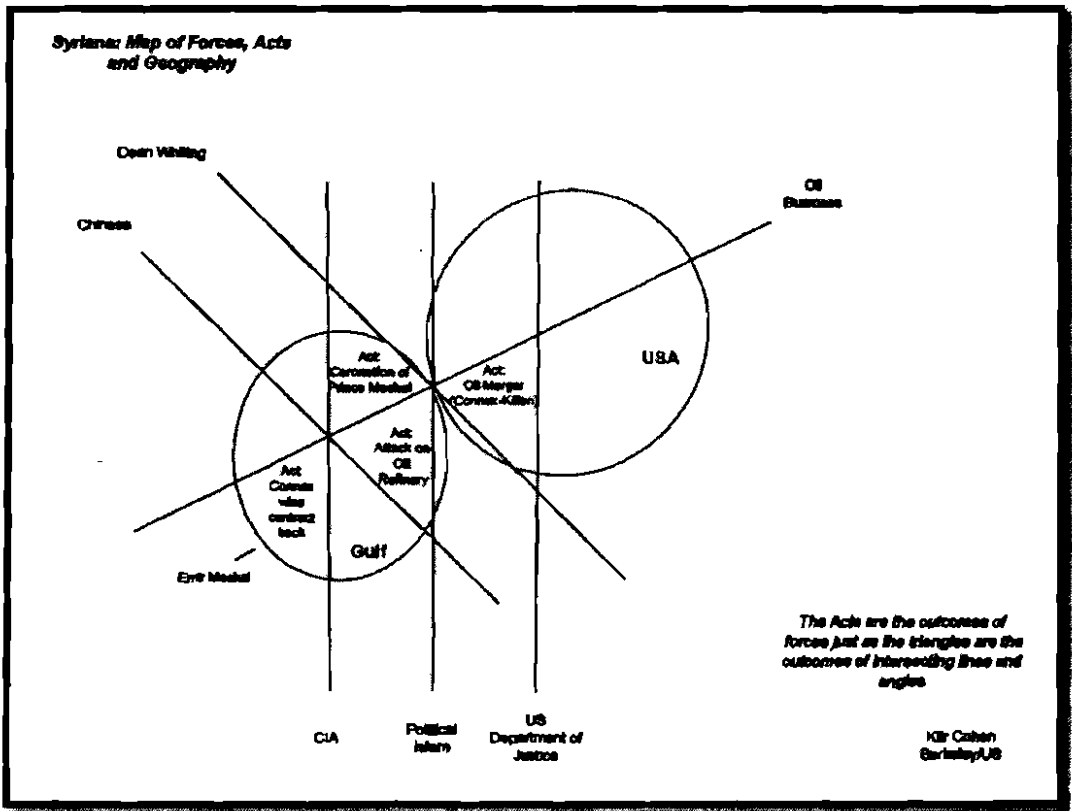


figure: Syriana: Map of Forces, Acts and Geography

Source:- Internet Source-

[https://docs.google.com/drawings/d/1ZvEH1OpQJvCQ\\_JgXHSJ5eD4YGhdKqkqSdejipa3k8tc/edit?hl=en\\_US/](https://docs.google.com/drawings/d/1ZvEH1OpQJvCQ_JgXHSJ5eD4YGhdKqkqSdejipa3k8tc/edit?hl=en_US/) by Kfir Cohen Berkley United States.

The above diagram is a pictorial representation of plots in the film *Syriana*. The two circles in the film represent the Gulf and the United States respectively. US is been denoted by a larger circle and the competing power Gulf by a comparatively smaller one. There are total six intersecting lines; the line that is common and passes through both the circles is 'Oil Business'. The entire film is centred around the politics of oil, and the struggle between powers to accumulate energy. The line that is transversal to the circles denotes *Dean Whiting* a character in the film. Dean Whiting is a lawyer who heads a Washington based law firm. He is been contacted by the US based energy market firm *Connex* to make the merger deal between *Connex* and *Killen* legally just. The line that cuts across the edges of the circle denotes *Political Islam*. Islam following people are said to have greater solidarity on religious grounds. It is an important factor that is taken into consideration in formulating foreign policy. The line that cuts across the circle denoting Gulf signifies CIA. CIA has great concerns in

analyzing the geopolitics in the Gulf region. The intelligence is highly active in contemplating on the political and economic proceedings and decisions. It is like a watchdog keeping an eye. The lines that intersect the circle denoting United States is the US Department of justice (DoJ). DoJ is investigating the loopholes and the corrupt means by which the two firms *Connex* and *Killen* entered into a merger.

There are four triangles created due to the intersection of the above mentioned lines; one denotes the conspiracy that prevented *Prince Nasir* to become the next successor that consequently results in coronation of *Prince Meshal* (the younger brother of *Prince Nasir*). The second triangle is oil merger between the two firms *Connex* and *Killen*. This deal was an under the table merger which was formed because *Connex* was denied the drilling rights by *Prince Nasir* and he preferred China over the US. The attack on oil refinery is the other triangle. The attack was though planned by other Islamic bodies but it was executed by two Pakistani suicide bombers who had come to seek employment in the Gulf. There were several people who were fired from the job at oil refineries because of the transfer of the drilling rights to China. The fourth triangle is the regaining of the contracts back by the *Connex* which is again interplay of the plots and conspiracy of killing *Prince Nasir* and making *Prince Meshal* the emir of the Gulf.

Thus the film *Syriana* is an effort to portray global petro politics on to the screen. How the resource of energy has been politicized and the inter-linkage of it to myriad of other political problems such as corruption, gunrunning, terrorism etc

### 3.4 LIONS FOR LAMBS (2007)

*Lions for Lambs* is directed by Robert Redford, the film is a collection of three interwoven stories based on the war on terror launched by the United State government.

The first story is about a college Professor (*Professor Malley*) who assails the apathy of the College students towards world events and, specifically, the War on Terror. The professor tries to invigorate the students and urges them to make use of their

knowledge to make difference. In a scene in the film he says “The problem is not with the people who started this. The problem is with us, all of us, who do nothing”.

The next part of the film is about the political discussion between a US senator and the television journalist. The senator introduces the journalist with the new military strategy which is to be launched in Afghanistan. The whole idea of such a meeting is that the senator wants the journalist to give a well drafted positive coverage of the soon to be launched military strategy so that the people get convinced of the plan and stand in support of it. The conversation between the Senator and the journalist help understand the two different aspects of viewing the new military strategy launched in Afghanistan. The rhetorical dialogue in defence of the military venture by the senator by using terms such as ‘apparent dangers’, ‘new axis of evil’ and his assertion that political condition like those in ‘hopeless Afghanistan’, ‘shattered Iraq’ and ‘nuclear Iran’ supplement calls for the practice of new strategy. In order to win the Senator vehemently proclaimed that he would do ‘whatever it takes’.

The other part of the film features two soldiers who risk their life and are fighting in extreme weather conditions in Afghanistan. They are finally shot down by the Taliban.

*Lions for Lambs* is quintessentially most suited film to the concept of Critical geopolitics. It discusses three variants covering the three tenets of the critical geopolitics namely- formal geopolitics, practical geopolitics and popular geopolitics. The formal part is portrayed by the interaction between the college professor and the students. How the professor tries to leave an impact on his student about the seriousness of the war waged against terror and terrorists in Afghanistan. Students through class presentation and discussion develop an insight of the geopolitics occurring around the world. Thus the geopolitical understanding through academic discussions practiced by scholars, students and academicians coming under the purview of formal geopolitics, has been used in the movie.

The practical geopolitics is that which is pursued by bureaucrats, governmental agencies and the like through statecraft, diplomatic ventures, strategic decisions and policy formulation. This strand in the film is depicted by the US senator and his robust policy. The policy of the senator to seize spots in the mountains of the Afghanistan to oust the Taliban exemplifies the practical aspect of geopolitics.

The popular version of geopolitics is shown by the use of journalism. The journalist is being called by the senator to discuss the new strategic policy so that it could be propagated in media and the cause, reasons and consequences of military decision taken by the senate be justified. Thus the use of media as a propaganda tool in disseminating state policy reflects the popular variant of geopolitics being shown in the film. Dodds has discussed that the narrative of this film gives an interpretative version of the 'Jacksonian foreign policy tradition' specially in the conversation of the Republican Senator and the journalist (Dodds, 2008: 1632).

### 3.4.1 MEDIA AS A GEOPOLITICAL TOOL

Media has an enormous impact on society. It is the most conventional source of information and a source of announcement, report, press release, scoop, scandals and the likes. Media products are infused in the society by the powerful means of popularity and propagation. It is one of the most effectual tools employed in the practice of geopolitics. This tool is utilized to manoeuvre political ambitions purposefully. The entire process of collection, compilation, editing, delivering and communication involves multiple levels and diverse actors across the network. The consumption of the information by the audiences takes place on the basis of the nature of the content being offered on the table. The outlook towards viewing a particular problem is shaped by the manner in which the information has been presented to the receptors. The modern day media includes technological innovations to formulate a creative mode of delivering the information so that the content is not mundane and is effective in catering attention of a wide array of audiences. The attractiveness of the form of information allows the formation of attitudes, beliefs, assumptions and theoretical dichotomies which further the promotion of desired political agendas (Adams, 2013:272). This is what *Lions of Lambs* has also reflected. The contemporary political events and their continuous coverage is instrumental in the construction of national identities, the use of various apparatus like visual language, publicity stunts and repeated telecast help in the affirm establishment of geopolitical attitude towards a particular crisis or event. The attempt made by the senator to justify his decision of sending platoons to Afghanistan and the preference of validation of his

political action at the domestic level signify the relevance and the linkage between the two levels (domestic and international).

Any political move is put to rigorous scrutiny and is critically analyzed by media. If media append the policy with negative comments then the impact of the act is far reaching. Another significant fact pointed out in the movie is that the domain of morality and ethics is detached from screen reality. The journalist in the film is reluctant in producing the senator's version while her boss insists to make it as the prime news or else the reporter would be fired. Such is the influence of political power on the media. Only permissible things, those which are in accordance with the governmental policies have the right to be circulated by the media rest are either suppressed or censored thus prevented from being conveyed to the public. This selectivity prevails in all forms of media circulated information wherein only desired is visible while undesired is veiled. Who decides what to be broadcasted; well the answer to this is power. State regulation prevails and the degree of exercising control varies, from sensitive issues to less sensitive ones. Media content after being produced undergo multiple levels of inspection and auditing by multiple actors before the final product is on the display. As P.C Adams writes- "the most powerful states clearly have an advantage in deploying information technologies to sustain power" (Adams, 2013: 274). There is an interdependence of statecraft and media; they both supplement each other and the proceedings of one overlap with the other leading to the power-play in the geopolitical dynamics.

### 3.5 HURT LOCKER & GREEN ZONE

This section of the chapter analyzes two movies collectively since both the films are built upon Iraq war. "The rush of the battle is often a potent and lethal addiction, for **war is a drug**". this line by Chris Hedges marks the opening of the film. *Hurt Locker*, a film released in 2007 is directed by *Kathryn Bigelow*. The film centres around the disposal of the explosives in Iraq by a special team from United States during Iraq war. This film provides the viewers the frame of reference of the Iraq War from a soldier's perspective.



*Green Zone* directed by *Paul Greengrass* is a 2010 American, British, French film which is based on Invasion of Iraq in 2003 with special reference to green zone. Green Zone was a zone located at the centre of Baghdad on the western side of the Tigris River. It was a seat of all the army bases and offices including embassies. The entire green zone was divided into three parts the central part, the north and the southern part. Telephonically green zone was a part of United States of America (USA). Green zone was surrounded by Sunni Iraqi people (Mowle, 2007: 28).

*Green Zone* pictures Iraq war in a close proximity to reality. The repeated failure encountered by the US army chief warrant officer in finding nothing at the sites suggested by the report of CIA to be suspected of WMDs compels the officer to investigate further on the matter. The officer realises that the report given to him by the state departments regarding the WMD suspected sites is faulty. He then further traces things through the journalist, later the officer finds out that the journalist had concocted the entire news coverage because of the pressure from the US governmental officials.

In the film the lack of coordination between the various arms of US government like US army, CIA and special operations force is also been shown. There was improper information which was given to the officials and again the role of journalism in propagation of propaganda is quiet clear.

Iraq war was tragic nine year of conflict (2003-2011). At first the United States invaded the territory and later the invasion evoked insurgency in the region. War is naturalised in the International system because it served as means to fulfil ends. The response of the US in the form of war against Iraq on alleged basis of Iraq's possession of WMDs (Weapons of Mass Destruction) which were never recovered later proved to be faulty. Iraq as a state became utterly backward and consequently was counted among the failed states. For any sovereign state to be stable and progressive it is necessary that its political order be maintained. Iraq was labelled as a failed state because neither its political institution were strong nor its government functional. The failure in providing security and promoting welfare of its citizens and a proper representation in international system of states rendered it collapsed in totality. Proper functioning of a state can be at times established by an external aid but to foster state and nation building mediating between national identity formations

does not require any external agent. The most important criterion for a political territory to qualify as a state is the centralised legislative and administrative organ (Milliken & Krause 2002: 762).

US is said to have not been totally successful in this political venture because of several reasons. There was least local support, the Iraqis were against the will of the US, and it was essential for the US government to collaborate with the locals and formulate plans that were synchronous to the demands of the people. The political decision of making an attempt to amend the collapsed political structure in poorly governed geographical regions and enforcing anti terrorist norms was not favoured by all. The undertakings to counter terrorism and attempts to seize further support to the terrorists and their organizations by regularizing policies in the failed states signify the extraterritorial venture made by the US. It took almost nine years for the US to end the entire conflict. Imposition of democracy was also one of the important causes of the failure of the US. Instead of forcing democratic norms it was advisable if the policy would have been gradually incorporated giving time for both the citizens and the political structure to adapt to it. Americans entered the territory of Iraq merely on the basis of 'imminent threat'. The cost of the war is always high and it was high in Iraq as well. There was a lot of loss and lives of both combatants as well as non combatants were lost during the entire coup. The terrorist activities as well as intervention such as those made by the US both question the territorial sovereignty but intervention differ from terrorism on the lines that intervention entails territorial preservation (Elden, 2007: 325).

There have been several contestations which question the Iraq war. How far was the Iraq war justifiable? Was it a moral and ethical move on the part of the US? There are various parameters which render a particular war as morally justifiable. The cause of waging a war should be a legitimate one, and the intention to be clear. The banner or the authority under which a war takes place should also be credibly recognised. The cost benefit analysis of war should suggest that harm posed by the war should be outweighed by the cost reaped. On the above criterion if we evaluate Iraq war then how just is it.

The just cause as given by the US is that the undertaking for enforcing disarmament and ensuring peace and security. Further the claim that Saddam owned biological and

chemical weapons and also he has ambitious desire to acquire nuclear weapon was imminent threat which the US perceived that could be detrimental to the mankind. Moreover the non cooperation by Hussein with United Nation's weapon invigilation team also posited a suspected threat in this regard. The fact that in the whole course of action of eight long years in Iraq, there was no proper attempt made towards state building. The adverse impact of this military move was that the situation gave birth to insurgency in Iraq. Again while fighting insurgency there were in-numerous innocent lives that were sacrificed

Iraq war undoubtedly is a failed war. There was insufficient just rationale which could validate that the war fought was just. The consequent of this is that a state as powerful as US failed catastrophically in its strategy and scheme. The long intervention of US could do no good to the state of Iraq in reconstructing its political structure. Iraq experience ought to be a lesson learnt on the part of US.

Every war is been justified by its perpetrators and even United States of America did the same. The difference is that US being a super power could make use of the rhetorical tools to justify its action which are not even accessible to the non powerful sates. The governmental actions of this sort demands justification not only at the international level but also at the domestic level. US employed both rhetorical as well cultural tools for the same. Hollywood is part of the cultural tool. Films reach varied viewers around the globe. They with their power of visuality and parallelism with reality are a subtle means to provoke and establish certain thoughts. Filmic version of the geopolitics provides a stage which calls for pedagogical political debate and dialogue (Shapiro, 2009: 400). The most common thread binding the above four movies is the extent to which the United States had intervned in other state affairs resting on extraterritorial reach. As a established hegemonic power not only project itself as the forerunner of world peace and security but is also the one who sets the standards for any sort of intervention. Regarding the Iraq war too US was supported by United Kingdom (UK), Germany and other powerful nations. Even against war against terror the world joined hands with US not only because eradicating terrorism is a just cause but also because it was the hegemonic US which was been attacked. Do films lack in appropriately assessing the acts of terrorism? Cinema is powerful enough to depict society with its minuscule detail.

The degree of cooperation and the level of tolerance from the rest of the world to the United States depend on plethora of factors. The economic relation of a country with US, a country's national interest and at times pressure from various international organizations of which a country is a part of etc hugely impact on the approval or dissidence in a particular matter. At times a mutual bargain is also a potential cause of the support. The Middle Eastern world has several interests with respect to the US and vice versa. Such trade off continues in the international system and agendas negotiated.

The Arab community is not able to vehemently raise its voice against the policy discourse of the United States and even if they do so they are often ignored or shown indifference from the other actors. The suppressed voice of Arab could be deciphered by the means of their print media and newspapers in particular. The Arab world believes that the compelling factor in involvement of US in Middle East is the greed for material resources and oil in particular. The silent protest of the Arabs could be seen in the popular means of the cartoons which appear in the newspapers wherein the Arabic media has tried to voice its views regarding the US.

There exist an unstable balance between the US and the rest of the world. The dominance of the nation is exercised anywhere and everywhere. The ways of exercising dominance is varied and culture is a not so conventional but an extremely powerful tool in this regard. Films at times even change the hermeneutics of the manner in which particular message\ content is perceived. The viewers engage in involvement with the character and simultaneously there is construction of American identity in the minds. The repeated exposure of the audiences with certain pictorial realities become instrumental in creating favourable outlook, movies not only frame or shape ideologies they also create the field of vision beyond which the sight of the viewer is automatically restricted. Film making involves careful manipulation of realities. The 9/11 event and the ensuing cinema incorporated within itself a new geopolitical script where all the essential ingredients of a popular cinema were available. The portrayal of 9/11 and related issues are consistent with the American idea and ideologies. Just as there is shift in the foundational assumptions in reality regarding US immunity, similarly films have also dealt with the subject of American exceptionalism. The geography of war earlier presented on screen has also shown corresponding change, yet the effort made by the film makers to restore American

might can be traced in films. The proceedings or attributes and peculiarity of other nations are created on the cinematic platform. They help establish certain views about the country and its citizens and help to view the world from the lens which the powerful provides. The depiction of terrorism and related issues automatically frames the audiences psyche and the viewers are subjectively placed in the place of the victim. There is a simultaneous construction of both American as well as terrorist identity from which the audiences derive meanings.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DEPICTION OF BORDERS IN CINEMA

**“The only true borders lie between day and night, between life and death, between hope and loss.”**

**-Erin Hunter**

#### 4.1 Introduction

Border in present scenario has multiple identities; they have over the years acquired metaphorical quotient. The long established concept of territorial boundary or political boundary of a state still has relevance but the entire concept of border and related borderland has evolved a great deal. In the opinion of sociologist T. K. Oommen the old as well as new borders exist concomitantly without dissolving the former (Paasi, 2013: 219). World system comprises of several interacting units and these interactions are situated within a definitive boundary. Border and boundary demarcation is intrinsic to any active system. They define a system's uniqueness and make them distinct from the others. The axiom that 'Borders are everywhere' was proposed by Balibar. This ubiquitous nature of borders and their existence and formation at every level and stage makes them significant in all fields of enquiry. The present chapter is an effort to study borders from a critical geopolitical perspective by establishing a link between popular form of art (cinema) and borders.

From the standpoint of political geography, borders denote the perimeter that limits the sovereignty of state in a territory. This concept of territorial boundary is traditional where borders were symbolic of lines that separate two domains. At several instances it is felt that states are no longer confined in the strict political boundaries and their borders have vanished in global cosmopolis. The erosion of existing boundaries and establishment of multiple new sub boundaries are resultants of the large scale social changes. The customary territorial boundary competes with multidimensional functional boundaries to sustain their continuance. The world is witnessing emergence of new political, social, economic spaces that are no longer restricted to political boundaries but is much beyond. Emanating from the socio-political juncture there is

existence of boundaries which facilitate interactions, negotiations and exchange. There are dichotomies at all the levels giving rise to binaries such as external and internal, inclusion and exclusion. In the twenty first century borders and boundaries are set into dynamism in its multiplicities and complexities. Contemporary borders entail an all encompassing polycentric understanding. Political landscape is continuously assuming distinct form and with it the dynamics of border. There is limiting or compartmentalization of zones, territory and organization of spaces which imparts ubiquity to boundary at national, regional, local and supra- national levels and sub-levels. The structure of social community of which every individual is a part is characterized by several domains, groups, sub-groups, circles these individual entities play a vital role in boundary drawing practices.

#### 4.1.1 BORDERS WITHIN BORDERS

Borders are cogent conceptual abstractions. Present day borders; do they have preordained existence or they are ascribed meanings and recognition through social interactions. The contemporary borders lie in the latter category, they are constructed socially and often they are constituted at unexpected sites. The prevailing interactions at the global level have given borders identity and their basis for existence. They are historically contingent assemblage of social practices and are continuously subjected to change vis-à-vis the growth, development and other societal advancements. The world is segregated not only politically but at several levels into differentiated units. Every social, political or cultural domain differentiates itself from others by circumscribing itself within a field. Borders have been (re)produced, (re)created, (re)conditioned, (re)established and (re)modelled spatially and temporally. In strict sense of terms the territorial borders have catered greater recognition and are institutional benchmark in the understanding of states and their territories (O' Dowd, 2010: 1031). Other borders which are created on the basis of caste, creed, language, culture, ethnicity, religion, trade relations, organizations, associations, civilization and other factors have less concrete existence; they are subjected to continuous dissolution and formation. The political division of the world is foundational, the world is perceived and conceptualised on the basis of political map and accordingly it is globally regulated. State borders are reference point to plethora of policy decisions,

inter-state, regional cooperation and negotiation. Yet, there is a complex network of other abstract form of borders that sometimes lie within the territorial limits or at times they even go beyond the territorial range.

The constituent units of which a particular group or organization is composed, are not mutually exclusive. One unit is part of varied groups, associations and category which leads to the overlapping of the border and bordering spaces. There are several sets in which the units participate in various permutation and combinations. The reconfiguration of various types of conceptual borders has not dismissed the state boundaries but their identity is maintained parallel to the functioning of other different borders.

There are many scholars who are of the opinion that the new era is characterized by the world that is beyond the nation-state. There is gradual shift from state centred approach to a more diverse perspective of viewing the world. The international system is witnessing the creation and development of new spaces. The complex interdependence and multiple platforms at which constituent units interact has multiplied manifold. This has resulted in the many lines on which the world comes together thereby creating multiple boundaries and borders. Issues and problems have a more diversified and global reach spanning across larger spaces that includes participation of actors across many states. Such mergers and joint ventures have benefitted the states. The sub-national authorities have assumed a visible form; they indulge in cross-border associations to tackle problems that have affected their respective governments (Häkli, 2008: 472). Such networking and alliances are prominent at global and regional level bringing state and also non-state actors together, thereby leading to reterritorialization of existing spaces.

#### 4.1.2 BORDERLESS WORLD

A lot has been said and written by academicians, scholars, policy-makers on 'borderless world'. Is the term a misnomer or is ontologically in existence? It is essential to ponder and investigate whether the spaces are actually deterritorialized or reterritorialized?



The overarching phenomena that forms the basis for 'borderless world' proposition is 'globalization', world is characterized by increasing connectedness and economic interdependence. The cross-border cooperation takes place not only at economic front but at plethora of political, sociological and cultural spheres. These multi-scale interactions have facilitated fluidity in terms of greater flows. With trade and other exchanges across nation-states the borders have become permeable giving rise to continuous struggle between regulations of economic flows and their increasing fluidity across state boundaries. Factors of productions and means of communication have created an intricate networking which has led the world to shrink. Globalization and global networking has no boundaries and borders. The existing state boundaries and geography do not necessarily coincides with the new economic mapping, giving rise to varied pattern of global city-region, state, regions all of which are linked together by common thread of integrated globalized economy (Agnew, 2008: 176). The functions performed by state territoriality are also transformed with respect to new economic orders, and these changes are caused due to function and process rather than form and location (Paasi, 2005: 246).

Cunningham (2001: 382) coined the term 'gated globalism' to describing the existing scenario of heterogeneous activities taking place between states across their borders. He ensconced that there is a shifting pattern seen in the political landscape but the characteristics of state sovereignty if not totally intact then retained to a large extent, there is also a simultaneous emergence of transnational state sovereignty that commands the global interactions (Coleman, 2009: 210). On the similar lines Dowd also argues that border studies and related scholarships have undermined the importance and paramountcy of state borders. He further opines that the 'borderless world' has opened a new gateway to the 'world of borders' (Dowd, 2009:1034). The foremost factor that has resulted in greater porosity of borders is 'trade'. Cross border trade is not something that could done away with, it is both elements of interdependence as well as asymmetries to it. The exchange of goods ideas and commodities across borders is in acceleration because in it the states see their national interest. They give extraterritorial avenues for national capital and through it larger market and other economic gains. Thus, border is looked at as a means to fulfil geo-economic concerns.

The rescaling of borders via interwoven global networks is best exemplified by the structure and working of 'European Union'. The edifice of the European integration and the subsequent union of European states began 1950 onwards which has influenced the overall bordering spaces (Häkli 2008: 473). Such supra-national political structures and transnational networking have gone beyond the ambit of nation-state. The state boundary between many states in Europe appears to be non-existent. There are differences across European states in terms of myriad socio-cultural parameters yet the cooperation amongst the nations exist in concrete institutionalised form. The cross-border linkages and flows in the European world have eroded the barriers posed by the borders at the regional level.

There are several other platforms where the nation-states have come together on common platform to either tackle a wide issue or to consolidate their powers to derive gains. Some of the forums of associations are International Organizations, Regional Organizations, International Regimes, Multinational Cooperations, Multilevel governance, Economic forums such as World Trade Organization and many others. These associations exercise some control on the member states and at times also breach state sovereignty. Amidst these large scale spatial changes, reorganizations and re-arrangements with respect to borders Newman argues that bordering spaces are getting reterritorialized instead of getting deterritorialized (Newman, 2003: 133). The increasing porosity and permeability is selective and is restricted to western regions. Though the wave of globalization has swept the entire world yet the going beyond borders and borderless world thesis is confined to the west. In fact it is evident that the reterritorialization has created more profound bordering spaces between the capitalist North and the less affluent Third world. These new discourses have further strengthened the existing wall haves and have nots. Thus, borders as an abstraction connotes different meaning to different beings it could be a gateway for some at the same time a barrier for the others.

#### 4.1.3 BORDER & SECURITY

Security from time immemorial has been on the highest pedestal of any state's agenda. State borders are vulnerable point of entry and hence their security a greater

concern. Borders are protected in order to put a check on illegal movement of goods, people, arms, drugs contraband etc to ensure safety of the territory and national sovereignty.

How to situate security and ensure sovereignty of the state in the era of escalating globalization is a major concern. The coexistence of territorial boundaries and cross border flows makes the issue of security more exigent. Just as trade facilitate fluidity across border, security related concerns make the border a barrier or in other words less permeable. The dominant geo-economic networking is so omnipresent across the globe that at times it undermines geopolitical practices in the border region. For a nation both security and economic gains and transaction are important factors determining the overall growth and development. The equilibrium between security and trans-border exchange of goods and commodities is a prime requisite. In fact free trade is a part of security as it guarantees economic security to a nation. Border patrolling practices and technologically advanced techniques of fencing and greater surveillance ensure safety of a country. Powerful nation such as United States of America (USA) has entered into mutual contract with its neighbour Mexico and Canada in building 'smart border'. These borders are administered with the help of technology-dependent equipments (biometric crossing card, border entry-exit database) to monitor cross border activities (Coleman, 2009: 218,223). While other states borders that have hostile relations such as that between India and Pakistan have perceptible territorial differences with security forces and their reconnaissance.

#### 4.1.4 BORDERS FROM THE LENS OF CRITICAL GEOPOLITICS

A nuanced way of looking at borders is studying them in the light of critical geopolitics. There are several borders other than state borders that can be seen in the everyday practices. Critical geopolitical scholars maintain that, such everyday borders that we encounter create binaries such as inclusion verses exclusion, us vs. them, foreign vs. domestic and so on (Paasi, 2013: 214. Walker. O'Tuathail, Dalby). The everyday bordering practices constitutes scholars and academicians not as bystanders but as active actors who are constantly engaged in boundary creation (Bauder, 2011: 1132). There are several asymmetries at the border and the relationship between

politics and spaces is not static. Present day borders find their place in the constant struggle between anarchic international system and organized state territoriality. Borders are both differentiating as well as consolidating factors that provide geographical concreteness to foreign policy decisions, strategies leading to objectification of geopolitical challenges posed to reality. Sharp argues that critical geopolitics has taken border and related issue at a different level which involves both state and non-state actors.

Bordering gives a sense of homogeneity with respect to the outside world. Borders mark the sight of identity formation. The geopolitical representation of self and others and perceptions regarding an imminent danger are instrumental in articulating subjectivity of the world through bordering spaces. At the perceptual borders the real territorial differences, dispositions, peculiarities are clearly highlighted. The geography of perception is instrumental in creating cognitive boundaries of class, distinctions, groups, heads, and other divisions.

The next section of the chapter discusses the links of border and representation of borders in popular culture by examining five films covering diverse subject and highlighting the efficacies of border and bordering practices. Films at times deconstruct the idea and concept of borders but at the same time they also try to bring out the significance of borders and related geopolitics through visual imagery and imagination. In fact there exist border in the film making processes as well. There are huge differences in the films made in west and other countries. The first film to be analyzed in the subsequent section is *Frozen River*.

## 4.2 TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME BETWEEN CANADA AND UNITED STATES

Organized crime can be defined as an illegal enterprise by a group or a gang who indulge in a range of criminal activity such as illegal drug trade, money laundering, human trafficking, trans-border illegal migration, smuggling and other economic crimes. The present section of this chapter attempts to analyze the cross border organized crime with special reference to Canada-US border. The section also

examines the problem of human trafficking from a popular geopolitical perspective by studying the film *Frozen River*.

Hatley and Leuprecht (2013) have attempted to discern the difference between organized crime and other types of crimes. According to them organized crime is like regular business activity wherein the perpetrators of the crime are utility maximizers.

The boundary between Canada and the United States along forty-ninth parallel is longest in the world. Most of this border is a land boundary and a part of it is also separated by the Great lakes and St. Lawrence River. The two nations have been sharing friendly ties and have entered in multistage agreement, association, mutual cooperation and interdependence. These cross border transactions benefit both the sides of the border but the serious repercussions of this linkage are varied illegal activities being practiced. Transnational activities have accelerated drastically and even crime in today's time has acquired transnational character to it. The economic integration between nations endangers the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the so called bounded political spaces. Borders that act as a gateway to flows and exchanges also have become corridors to criminal enterprises that jeopardize the security of the entire world.

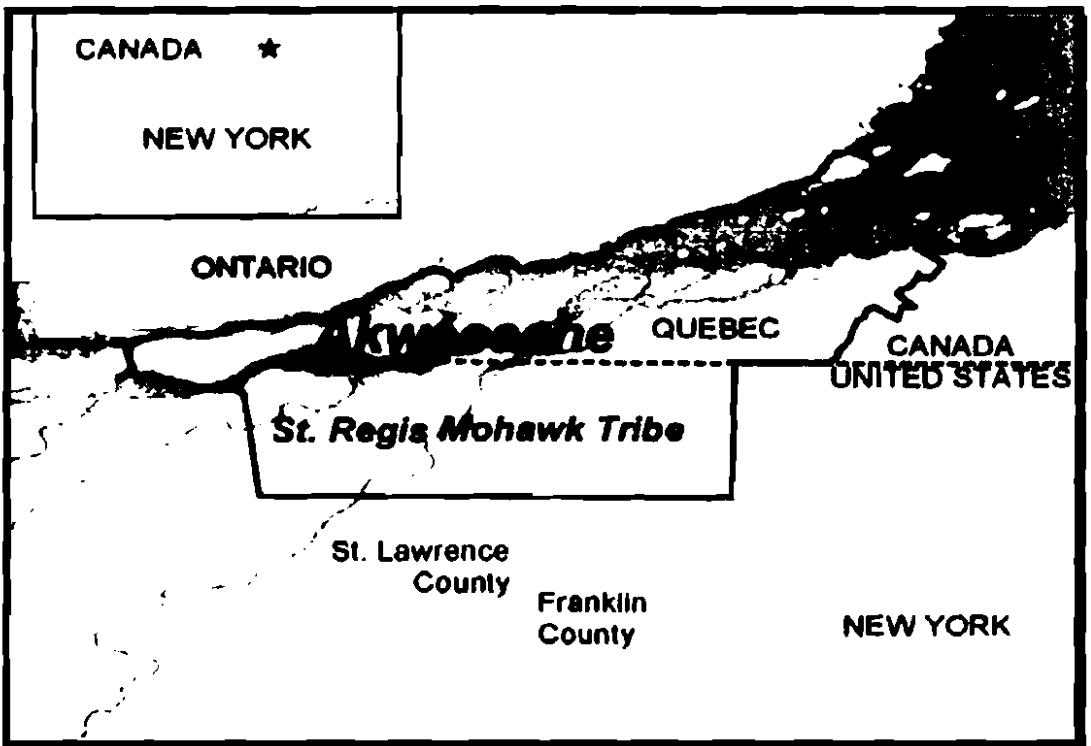
Given the fact that the boundary between Canada and US is militarily undefended and also the liberal policies of exchange, the organized crime and related activities see the border as an opportunity to realise the illicit intention. Geographically, the lengthy border between the two countries makes it extremely difficult to strictly inspect and scrutinize the cargo and cartels passing from one territory to the other. Both the governments of Canada as well as US have come to the common realization that these illegal pursuits dampen their economies and most importantly their security. Both these nations have formulated several policy procedures to tackle the aforesaid issues.

In the past there were several measures taken such as Canada Agreement (1893), United States-Canada Partnership Forum (1999), the Smart Border Declaration (2001), and Security and Prosperity Partnership (2005) and many others. In 2011, US president Barack Obama and Canadian counterpart Stephen Harper launched a policy 'Beyond the Border' (BtB), this undertaking was primarily focussed on security and safety of the borders and related economic pursuits ([www.borderactionplan.gc.ca](http://www.borderactionplan.gc.ca)). BtB is a multilayered and multi-structural policy framework that not only regulates

inter-border activity but is also keeps a check on away from the border activity. Such rigorous surveillance on away from border practices are collectively termed as ‘inland enforcement’ (Hatley & Leuprecht: 2013: 5).

#### 4.2.1 FROZEN RIVER

*Frozen River* is a 2008 film directed by *Courtney Hunt*, it depicts the illicit smuggling of migrants across Canada- United States international boundary.



**FIGURE 3: The Mohawk Territory of Akwesasne lying on either side of St. Lawrence River**

Source: Hataley and Leuprecht (2013) “Organized Crime Beyond the Border”, *National Security Strategy for Canada Series*.

The film is set in the in the Mohawk Territory of Akwesasne region. The geographical significance of this zone lies in the fact that it is connected to three major cities of Canada namely Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto and it also provides entrance to one of the most urbanized regions of United States (Boston, New York city, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington DC). The Akwesasne region is identified as ‘high trafficking corridor’ and also it has highest cases of illegal activities going on in the

region. The zone is often used for the transit of drugs, cigarettes, arms, people and other smuggled goods.

The film revolves around two single mothers; a White *Ray Eddy* and a Mohawk *Lila Littlewolf* both of them due to financial crisis indulge in trafficking of illegal immigrants across frozen St. Lawrence at \$1200 each per crossing. Mohawk is a tribal community, indigenous people whose settlement is mostly concentrated in the northern parts of USA and south east Canada, on both the banks of St. Lawrence River.

The film addresses the issue of unauthorized migration and depicts the act as a decentralized activity that involves both voluntary international and domestic actors and forced needy common man. Human traffickers who help unauthorized people cross borders are not same as smugglers. The line of distinction lies in the fact that they indulge in transnational, organized criminal acts and also the motivating factor involved in the two cases also differs. The US government enacted an act known as VTVPA (Victim of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000) (Public Law, 2000: 106-386) to combat the problem, punish the traffickers and also to ensure safety of the victims. Human trafficking is sheer violation of human rights. *Frozen River* depicts first stage trafficking which does not involve any criminal activity but the intention of the women (*Ray* and *Laila*) is financial gains. The need of money compels them to repeatedly take risk, cross the river with illegal migrants.

The film also touches upon the issue of 'sex trafficking' wherein *Ray* and *Lila* take Asian women from a strip club to be crossed across border. It is generally seen that organized crime such as trafficking targets women who relatively, have lesser avenues, are financially weak or either are unemployed or do not have access to proper education and other necessary amenities. The depiction of crime against women underlines the aspect of looking at borders as gendered practice. J.W. Scott (2012: 87) interprets such practices across borders as 'ethnosexual' frontiers.

Thus the film *Frozen River* brings forth a different aspect of looking at borders. The problem of refugee, migrants and trafficking are not restricted to US and Canada alone but borders are breached at several other places on similar grounds.

### 4.3 NO MAN'S LAND

The term 'no man's land' became popular during the military ventures of World War I. No man's land connotes an uninhabited disputed piece of land between two parties which are in conflict with each other. The zone is an abstract desolated area characterized by an element of uncertainty.

The film *No Man's Land* is written and directed by Danis Tanović which was released in the year 2001. The film is set in the Bosnia War between Bosnia and Herzegovina that took place from 1992-1995. The movie ascribes an entirely new perspective of looking at war and border. It clearly portrays the inconvenience posed by war ridden borders to everyday life and also the security consciousness of people emerging from the insecurities.

The film talks about the struggle of survival when two soldiers from either side of the border one a Bosniak and the other a Bosnian Serb are caught in a trench in the no man's land. The disrupted life at the militarized border and diverse emotions of a soldier associated with their land are also a highlight in the film. The soldiers on either side establish opinion of each other by experience, anticipation, prejudice and conditioning. The two sides at war have commonality in terms of language, local culture, values, histories etc. In one of the scenes in the film the two soldier enter into a conversation where one of them encounters that a girl he used to like was the other one's classmate in school.

The Bosnia War was a result of the territorial conflict between the two sides. Whether the War was a civil strife or an extended display of aggression from both the parties is still a contested issue. This War took such a robust appearance that the neighbouring countries of Croatia and Serbia also got involved in it. Since there was internal conflict in the region and either of the parties involve are equally at fault therefore some scholars have named it as Civil War. The other body of scholars call this war an act of external aggression because of the involvement of the two countries lying outside Bosnia and Herzegovina. Whatsoever is the nature of War but it created zero tolerance for people on either side, separating the two earlier united territories on the basis of sense of belongingness. It is noteworthy that amidst any war the essence and the importance of the place is lost between the 'us' and 'them' distinctions. The



no man's land reifies the differences and individual identity with respect to the side or group on is fighting for, it restricts the physical as well as mental perceptions and beliefs.

The conversation between the Bosnian soldier *Ciki* and Serbian *Nino* caught in the trench brings out the clear differences which they have in mind of us vs. them. The either of the soldiers count on to the atrocities done to them and blame each other on starting the war. The two talk about the burning of their villages, women being raped and other abominations and casualties. At gun point both the soldiers make the other accept that they started the war. Meanwhile the two also encounter that one of the soldiers who they presume to be dead is alive. He is been laid on a mine. The verbal tiff between the two soldiers still continues. The soldier lying over the mine interrupts and exclaims '*who cares who started the war we are on the same shit*'. It is evident from the conversation that both the sides are weary of the ongoing war. Still the two soldiers have imbedded revenge for each other.

The two men stand on the no man's land and signal their respective armies to be rescued. Such a sight makes the armies suspicious and UNPROFOR (United Nation Protection Force) is been heralded for the help. The French sergeant representing the UNPROFOR is being given orders by the high command not to intervene in this matter but the involvement of media and press reporters creates a pressure to take actions. The last part of the film shows that the UNPROFOR is unable to diffuse the mine, both Bosnian and Serbian soldiers are dead and the Bosniak lying over the mine is left in desolate in the no man's land.

The film is a dramatic portrayal of the Bosnia War through a different angle via the concept of no man's land. The dialectical frame in which the concept of border oscillates is exemplified through a number of practices and no man's land is another way of looking at border and bordering spaces. The physical barriers, be it natural such as lake, river, mountain or barbed wire, wall, iron gates, fences etc all can signify bordering practices (Bauder, 2011: 1129). No man's land is a straddling region; it denotes the vacuum, an ambiguous space whose individual identity and importance is lost in the wake of the war. Social communities have territorial affiliations; they have diverse emotions attached to their motherland which get accentuated in the times of war. The coming up of the two soldiers representing the two sides on a common place

blurs the distinctions and underlines the fact that the individual motive and intention is common. The factor of survival and freedom dominates any individual who is at war. The film also signifies that the governance and its various institutions, organs and related concept of freedom, equality, democracy etc find no place during war. This thus, reifying the notion that the overarching system is anarchic and lawlessness can only be done away within the territorial bounds of a state.

#### 4.4 BORDERS IN EUROPE: BINARY OF INSIDE\ OUTSIDE

Europe and its civilizations have been politically very active and European world has been in dynamism vis-à-vis border and bordering since time immemorial. All the major political events such as World Wars and Cold War have brought changes in the political map of Europe. The thing that remains stable with European borders is dynamism. European history is marked by struggle for territory and conflict for power and reign. The contemporary Europe is in stark contrast with the historical world. The present day European states are integrated and mutually interdependent.

The broad canvas that envisages the integrating processes in European land is 'European Union'. European Union (EU) is an internationally recognized intergovernmental association of European States who have entered into mutual cooperation with one another for shared benefits. The foundation of EU was laid in 1950s but gradually in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century EU took a robust form. At present there are 28 official members in this politico- economic union. The peculiarity of this association lies in the fact that keeping intact their state sovereignty the nation-states have accepted the permeability across borders. The heterogeneous nation-state have homogenised under the broad purview of EU. Owing to the disparate socio-cultural across European states EU has circumscribed these variations and has acted as an overarching regional apparatus.

EU provides a supra-national political structure to the member states, this pan-European idea has re-territorialized the political spaces and through multilevel governance and political decision at the regional level it has led to unification of the European states (Scott, 2012: 84). The policy and framework of EU has provided duality to the member states. EU supplements the states with new ideational,

structural collective representative identity keeping their respective pristine national identity intact. EU covers a wide range of subjects to ensure overall welfare of the people of member states. Some of the multifaceted and multifarious heads that EU looks at include- trade, transport, agriculture, maritime affairs, economic affairs, market, customs, education, culture, human rights, climate, energy, environment, development and others. The outstanding feature of EU is that the entire structure of this union is based on democratic apparatus that gives equality and also gives commonality in terms of shared values, interest, political beliefs, norms etc. EU has made European state borders part of everyday localised phenomena where crossing boundary is relatively less restrictive. EU has taken the inter-state relations at a new level; the political strength of it is the common and shared political space (Scott & Liikanan, 2010: 429). This socialization among nation-state gives freedom to the member that looks beyond regional cooperation and also acts as a powerful geopolitical tool in the international arena.

There are several areas in which EU has developed comprehensive integrated programs. At the economic front, the EU has constituted 'Euro', a common currency that is used as an official medium of economic exchange across eighteen out of twenty eight members of the EU. The common, multi-national currency has facilitated exchange and has eroded the economic barrier that distinctive national currency posed. Similarly the visa regulations applied across 'Euroregions' has apparently succeeded in creating a borderless or border free internal region. Similarly the Schengen visa provisions have reified the free movement of people in the Schengen territory. In 1980 five countries Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and Netherland decided to form an integrated territory with no restriction on free movement of people across state borders. By 1990, the treaty was completed and realized through a convention, at present there are twenty six states which come under Schengen area.

Under such liberal movement and policy the European Union and its member countries have also realized the obvious trans-boundary security threats to their territory. Hence, EU has developed wide-spread programs to tackle issues such as immigration, money laundering, trafficking and other cross border organized crimes. Though the internal Europe is characterized by free borders, the control of EU external frontiers is salient to the security of Europe. There were many efforts made

towards cooperation in areas such as asylum, migration etc. One such step towards greater security of Europe was through Frontex. Frontex is an agency that works for the border management of the EU frontiers, the external border of EU separates Europe from southern and eastern sides. However the border related issues with Eastern and Central Europe differ from that with Western Europe. The border issues of European countries with northern Africa area are all the more unfavourable. Häkli (2008: 473) states the example of Spain and Morocco's border disputes related to Ceuta and Melilla. The greatest threat from African side is of illegal migrants and drug trafficking that has tightened the security.

The European cross-border cooperation has given rise to collective diplomacy, the broadening and enlarging political structure and regional networking has given EU great prominence in the world. EU is a geopolitical vision towards Europeanization (Scott, 2011: 136). This visionary practice has re-territorialized the political as well as economical space of the EU member states. The trickledown effect of the mutual cooperation and its benefits are proliferating in the entire Europe. The international politics is multi-polar in nature; the emergence of European integration further creates geopolitical insecurities in the entire world.

#### 4.4.1 IN JULY (*IM JULI*)

*Im Juli* is a German film directed by *Fatih Akin*, this section of the chapter attempts to look at the film from an entirely different perspective. The perceptual geography of looking at border and bordering spaces of Europe denotes the fact that irrespective of the diversity pertinent across territorially bound spaces in terms of language, culture, ethnicity, norms, habit etc there is yet a consolidating element that exists beyond these differences. European borders are open to movement of people and goods but the delimitation of their political territory acts both as a zone of separation as well integration.

The film presents a unique coexistence of national identity and belongingness along with transnational mobility and movements. *Daniel* a trainee teacher is heading from Hamburg towards Bosphorus Bridge, Istanbul (Turkey) with a girl named *Juli*. The film portrays borders as a zone of cultural encounters, an entity that isolates, segregates and divides and also connects, conjoins and combines. Borders are put into

practice and materialized in a number of different ways (Johnson & Jones, 2011: 62). The film depicts the enactment of borders from an individual's perspective at a unit level. Border is shown as an intermediary between not only states of immediate vicinity but also beyond. There is a picturesque imaging of different countries like Germany, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey. Freedom of mobility across a region and intermediary restrictions posed by check post is another highlight of the film. The lack of proper documents and passport held Daniel and prevents him from entering Romania. Passport and visa are those bordering practices that are dislocated from the borders and still a requisite to cross them. Thus, borders have been eroded to a great extent in the world and more so in Europe but they still exist in varied form and practices.

The standards of living constantly discussed by the protagonist i.e. *Daniel* and the people of different nationalities he encounters during his journey are a certain form of bordering as that reinforces the stereotypes and the mental borders which persist in the human psyche.

The film as much as it is a representation of a borderless world, it also depicts the presence of borders through multiple symbols. Instances of hard bordering as well as the entrenchment of borders in the situational contexts is borne out in the film through changing landscapes and their pictorial association with certain established and popular symbols of particular national identities. For example- the Romania- Bulgaria border is depicted as a soft one though at the time of the production of the movie Romania was a part of the Schengen area and Bulgaria was not. Monuments and natural features such rivers are often designated as the symbols of cultural encounter and iconographic representation of national identities. Rumford writes about the use of monuments to assert spaces and to denote markers of distinction between immediate national domains (Rumford, 2012: 896). The film at several places has given reference to these imageries for instance the Bosphorus Bridge in Istanbul, Turkey, the Black Sea and the Danube River which is the longest river in European Union and passes through ten countries of Europe.

## 4.5 BABEL

The world is interconnected to the extent that the impact of one incident spans across places at different corners of the world. The integration of world through communication, transportation, technology has given world a unique singularity in discrete plural world. There are a lot of differences across borders yet there is integrating forces which operate and form an intricate connection between things.

The film *Babel* released in 2006, directed by *Alejandro González Iñárritu* is a trilogy, of interconnected events set in three different parts of the world coincidentally on the same latitude equidistant from each other. *Babel* is set in three distinct places namely U.S.A-Mexico, Morocco and Japan. The characters in the film are victims of fate; in the first part which is set in interior parts of Moroccan desert where an American woman tourist is accidentally shot by two children who are cattle herders. The investigation of the accident brings the herders and their family under suspicion. The rifle which has been used (.270 Winchester M70) is sold by a Moroccan guide *Hassan Ibrahim* to the goat herders. The further investigation in the matter reveals that the rifle has been originally acquired from Japanese man who during a hunting trip had gifted the rifle to *Hassan*.

The entire accident has been misunderstood as an act of terrorism and targeting of the US citizens in the foreign land. The film depicts cross-border disparities across the world. Japan is a highly developed country and is characterized by fast urban life. On the contrary, Morocco is relatively a very poor country that lacks proper basic amenities of infrastructure and health services. There are no proper doctors in the village and the injured American woman is been treated by a veterinary doctor. Another contrast of the lifestyle in two countries can be drawn in the fact that the Japanese man used the rifle as an object of leisure and his fondness for hunting as a hobby while on the other hand for *Hassan* and goat herders the rifle was a means of their livelihood. There is a stark difference in the developed and the developing\under-developed world, these disparities are quiet perceptible and continue to escalate. Thus the film underlines the *genre de vie* across different nations lying on the same latitude.

Theories of globalization propagate the notion that the world is closely united and greater flows have benefitted the entire world. Globalisation and its forces have not been able to improve the living conditions of people in backward areas like one shown in the movie. The political division divides the world on map but, there are other divisions where the borders are not visible but which still exist. These partitions compartmentalize the world into privileged vs. deprived.

The next part of the film is set across US- Mexico border and addresses the issue of cross border migration, border trespassing. Contrary to European borders the US-Mexico border is a hard one and strict in terms of movement of goods and people. The transnational social networking has opened up avenues for better employment due to which people migrate to other countries to earn their livelihood. While the threats posed by terrorism and illegal migration have made the state borders stringent putting a check on trans-border movements.

The cross- border landscape between the US and Mexico represents a paradoxical situation identified between asymmetries and mutual dependence. The border between these two states is a heterotrophic space characterized by politico-cultural and economic similarities and dissimilarities (Coleman, 2005: 209). The regulations in terms of goods, capital flows, tariffs, duty etc have become rigorous between the two nations. Informal activities and migration is the biggest threat that US perceives from Mexican border.

The dimension of the film focuses on the issue of undocumented migration. *Amelia* who is the governess to the two American children is a Mexican and has been illegally working in San Diego, California. She is arrested by the US border patrol officer for crossing the border without having the authority letter from the parents of the children. During the investigation and on being deported by the officer *Amelia* pleads and tells that for past sixteen years she has been serving in the US.

There exists policy dilemma in the US's south west border region, the geo-economic and geopolitical ambitions both have to be met with without keeping either of the interest at stake. To tackle the border security concerns US congress enacted IRCA (Immigration and Reform Control Act) in 1986. The manifold objectives of this act were formulated to keep the illegal migrants from entering the US territory at bay. Some of the tenets of the act are- it was illegal to recruit undocumented people, and

the immigration status of the employee was supposed to be attested prior to recruitment. America is a populous country and it is obligatory for it to safeguard the interest of its own citizens in terms of employment generation and opportunities.

The San Diego – Tijuana region which also been portrayed in the film is the most notorious, high risk area of illegal cross border activity in the south west US borders. The Mexican government formulated Border Industrialization programme (1965) to engage in the problem of unemployment in Mexico with special reference to the border region. Under this program the government established Maquiladora or commonly known as Maquila Zone in the free trade zone (duty and tariff free) as a part of liberalization policy. This venture was economically advantageous to the US from open market and free trade perspectives and opened greater opportunity in terms of FDIs (Foreign Direct Investment) and finding market for the US imports (Coleman, 2005: 220).

#### 4.6 THE SHEPHERD BORDER PATROL (2008)

Economic protectionism from cross border illegal trade is one of the major concerns for United States as well as Mexico. There is an unprecedented rate of informal practices that are taking place across borders of the two nations. The US border patrol agencies and their agents are constantly struggling to weed out the problem of organized crime in the region through constant risk assessments and cargo screening. The film *The Shepherd* is about the drug smuggling in the border region, it emphasises on the role played by border policing and patrolling.

US- Mexico border is designated to be one of the high risk regions for transnational trade of contraband. The networking and the degree of penetration of the organized Crime groups have created a web of interconnected activities which involves actors across the world. The film shows some link of drug and arms consignment with that with Kabul, Afghanistan, thereby emphasising the scale and transnational nature of the criminal activities. The networking of drug traffickers has reached an advance stage wherein they employ modern techniques to carry out the transit of illegal goods. Recently, a six hundred yard long tunnel with a temporary railway system was discovered under the US- Mexico border, it was found that the tunnel linked Tijuana



in Mexico to Otay Mesa area of San Diego in the United States (The Associated Press, April, 2014).

As per the report prepared by Centre for Strategic and International Studies, (CSIS), 2008, 8 % of the population of United States above the age of 12 has involvements with drugs (Sidney & Wood, 2010). The investigation of CIA reveals the fact that Mexico is the largest supplier of drugs such as cocaine, marijuana and methamphetamine to the United States (CIA World Factbook, 2012). *The Shepherd* also underlines the cases of deaths due to drug addiction. Cop *Jack Robideaux* from New Orleans who came for deputation to New Mexico as border patrol is himself a victim as his sixteen year old daughter died because of the illicit drugs.

The structural organized criminal practices across US- Mexico border are dependent hugely on the corruption at the border region. There are instances in the film where corrupt bureaucratic system is highlighted. *Billy* who is the fellow officer in charge at the border patrol turns out to be working for the drug mafia (*Meyers*). Similarly the local police of Mexico is also shown to be working for *Meyers*. Human input and multi-stage management is important to successfully execute large level criminal activity like these. The intricate linkages of cooperation provided to the perpetrators by indulging in corruption make the gang violence proliferate, creating difficulty for the administration to fight.

In 1994, the US congress worked on to a rigorous Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act (VCCLEA); under this act specialized enforcement provisions were drafted to overhaul the US –Mexico cross border security issues. This act was an extensive and elaborate policy procedure that focussed on to specific as well as allied border related problems that dampened the welfare of the United States. It included some compulsory measures that were strictly implemented by border controlling agencies.

Increasing economic expansion and escalating concerns to security both concern the cross border interactions between US and Mexico. Strict immigration norms and legislature dissolve in between free trade agreements and negotiations. There is a constant struggle and reestablishment of border security over economic exchange keeping state's interest at the highest pedestal. Thus it is evident that countervailing

processes operational at border pose a risk and United States walks a tightrope between them.

*The Shepherd* portrays border as spaces of violence and crime. Among several different societal operations and enactments there are some activities that interrupt the national boundaries and the cross border interactions. The contemporary cross border security structures are working on the assumption that the existing circulations should be left undisturbed while through filter mechanism illegal activities be prevented to grow. Borders are landscapes of unforeseen and unexpected encounters where one should be prepared with the protocols available at the disposal (Amoore, 2011: 64). US- Mexico border is porous to an extent but the human security risks make the border space susceptible to greater scrutiny and surveillance. Criminal activity, be it on sovereign political territory or at the border is a huge threat to the either side of the boundary. The security threats arising out of terrorist attacks such as September 11, 2001, lead to the hardening of borders and intensification in border security. To resolve the problem of borderland security issues, technologically furnished 'smart borders' were being used at the northern as well as southern borders of United States. The main thrust of these mechanized techniques was to resolve the discontinuity between trade and security.

The above discussed films have pointed out everyday bordering practices. These activities are carried out by state as well as non state actors (Parker and Williams, 2012: 729). There are certain activities that are restricted while others are considered to be integrating flows from one region to the other. There are several scholars who have opined that borders are markers of the national identity. Bordering practices are not only pertinent in or around the border but they are being performed beyond them in the everyday lives of the people. Biometric technologies, Identity cards, passport and other policy procedures all come under the purview of bordering practices.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

Post cold war with the end of power rivalries the discipline of geopolitics was given an opprobrious status by scholars and academicians. With change in the international political discourse the academia also restructured its ambit and thus, emerged a more contemporary field of enquiry known as 'critical geopolitics'. There are a plethora of entities that affect the political agendas and are instrumental in structuring the global political affairs. Critical geopolitical enquiry is an advance stage of academic indulgence that critically analyzes vivid and varied forms of discursive practices that impact on the proceedings in the international political milieu. Critical Geopolitics rests on the premise that geopolitics is not confined to orthodox traditional practices of state and state actors but on wider range of exercises and operations which involves diverse non-state actors as well.

Critical geopolitical approach also focuses on non- conventional mode and those peculiar sights where geopolitics is practiced but was not in the limelight. Thus it is a nuanced field which differs from mainstream established entities and observes those which relate more to open ended societal realities. The broadening of the scope of the geopolitical enquiry has provided it multidimensional and multispectral footings, giving analytical bend to the subject. International politics, negotiations and relations all are interplay between power and space. Power and space has always been the subject of enquiry of classical geopolitics. The contemporary exploration of the discipline continues to contemplate on the dynamics of power and space but with a different approach altogether. The present day critical enquiry is highly diverse and pays attention to even miniscule, disguised and concealed sights where geopolitics is being practised.

Another unique feature of critical geopolitics is that it is not restricted into any set norms or postulates or a theoretical framework for that matter (Dodds, Kuus & Sharp, 2013: 7). It is rather an expansive field that pays greater attention to both 'where' and 'why' of international political agendas. The discipline is involved in inquisitions that thoroughly probe and questions the existing frame within which the practicality of

international decision making, agenda setting, diplomacy etc revolve around. It focuses on the distinctions, variations and dissimilarity that exist in the form of dichotomies and binaries.

The present dissertation is an attempt to investigate geopolitical underpinnings that appear to be located outside the circumference of statehood and statecraft. This study comes under the domain of 'popular geopolitics'. The study argues that geopolitics is rooted in many unconventional disguised cultural practices that reify the geopolitical manoeuvrings without being noticed. The variant of critical geopolitics which this study has highlighted examines cultural product- 'cinema' and has tried to establish link between cinematic manifestations of geopolitical realities. Films are a mode of socio-cultural practices. They are reflections and expressions of the society and an art that manifest a wide range of human emotions, integrations, associations at different levels. Cinematic depiction in the form of political drama acquires meaning in the eye of the viewer when there is juxtaposition of political content with that with popular practice of cinema. These camouflages give rise to the distinct discursive outcome which has the essence of both politics and culture ingrained in it.

The underlying conjecture of all critical geopolitical studies is the thrust on 'everyday' practices. This study is also based on the tenet of 'everyday geopolitics' by illustrating the geopolitical relevance of films chosen for the study. Cinema and fandom are everyday cultural medium through which the masses not only get themselves entertained but also educated. For films the audiences need not have any special qualification or skills hence, movies are meant for all age groups. There is censorship in films that are imposed to avoid encounter of minors either from violence or from exposure to pornographic content. The study reveals the fact that through films the audiences internalize in themselves a range of attitude, outlook, emotions, perspectives and meanings that provide them a wide array of looking at the world politics and foreign policy. The added advantage of movies over other forms of popular culture is the fact that a filmic representation involves power of visual imagery, plot and close resemblance of real life happenings. Often films are not shot in real time and real space but they succeed in creating a real world for the audiences. Thomas Schatz writes- "In good cinema the narrative process renders the experience so seemingly real that the narrator seems virtually nonexistent" (Schatz, 1983: 46). The narrative of the film again is an idiosyncratic quality that helps in forming a link

between various scenes showing different things at different time. Films are also powerful instruments of creating the past in present by reflecting on the histories that have been forgotten in antiquity. The depiction of war, clandestine, interventions, arm conflict, attacks etc are instrumental in creating awareness of the events of the past. These characteristics help to form an association with the audiences and therefore are potentially a source that has a greater capacity to influence and impact upon. Films are a source of information; they give the worldwide audiences an opportunity to build understanding of events, turmoil, crisis, geographies of places, different cultures etc. When viewed from a different angle films tend to educate the masses. Interestingly films make the viewer get involved in the on screen portrayal; this involvement entails emotional as well as mental investments. The film and film viewing can be collectively termed as an inclusionary exercise, wherein the audience understand the content of the moving images on the screen not by being an external but being a part of it. Film viewing involves multilevel interaction of onscreen depictions and reality produced virtually and the inner reactions of an individual in the form of emotions, attentiveness, imagination etc.

The dissertation is divided into five chapters in all. The first is an introductory chapter that lays the foundation for the study by reviewing the literature and setting the agendas by highlighting the aims and objectives and also discussing the research questions. This chapter sets the tone for the subsequent chapters by emphasising on the critical and popular geopolitical thought and pointing out work done in popular field from geopolitical perspective.

The second chapter of the dissertation entitled 'Geopolitics and the US statecraft through Hollywood cinema' discusses how United States makes use of its soft power (via films) in foreign policy. It is recognized by the protagonists of critical geopolitics that the discipline focuses much on few actors like U.S.A and other major powers. Scholars such as Agnew, Dodds, Sharp and others have emphasised on the need to critique the existing lopsided structure of International system which is dominated by western powers and US in particular. There has been a lot of work on the influence of US political elites on popular culture and also on different ways in which US has projected their ideologies onto the world. The major thrust of the chapter is on how is American identity gets established and is propagated through popularity of Hollywood films.

The chapter is divided into several heads; the first section of the chapter broadly sets the tone for the entire research work. By highlighting the link between geopolitics and the cinematic representation the chapter further discusses the relevance and grandeur of Hollywood cinema and its viewership per say. There has been an attempt made to bring out the prominence of Hollywood cinematic ventures in the construction of American identity. It is not wrong to assert that Hollywood film makers are obsessed with portraying America's power and celebration of its democratic structure by over emphasising on the role of its military and intelligence. Hollywood provides America with a sense of cultural pride.

The first film discussed in the chapter is '*Behind Enemy Lines*'. The film draws attention of the viewers on the sacrifice of the American soldiers in the foreign land. It is a strong projection of the adversaries faced by army-men and also in some sense of protuberance of fighter spirit and warrior like attitude of the soldiers. *Behind Enemy Lines* as mentioned in the chapter is inspired by a real life experience of a US naval officer. The film is not only instrumental in imbining strong emotional quotient in the American audiences but also in overseas viewers. It also provided opportunity to the viewers to get a sense of war fought in Bosnia.

The next movie analyzed is *Black Hawk Down*. This film is about the civil war that took place in Somalia and the ensuing peacekeeping operation in which US army-men took the stride. This film also lays much stress on risk taken by the soldiers at the stake of their lives in the war. The sight of a war is always brutal and it is not just one side that suffers in a war. Scholars have claimed that both these films were projects that were endorsed and supported by the Pentagon (Alford, 2010, 39). The use of Fighter plane- Black Hawk in the film was provided by the aid of Government department. The study pinpoints that there are several cinematic projects that are conceptualised, promulgated and broadcasted on the policies of the US state department. The US government focuses its attention on comprehensive, all embracing coherent policy. US statecraft utilizes both the unconventional modes as well as the traditional methods to frame its policy and strategize its plan. Popular culture and the extent to which it impacts upon public is an established fact. The study reaches to the conclusion that there is interference of US state departments in modifying and influencing the filmic content of Hollywood cinema. Such an intervention is done to create a favourable image of US and its varied policy in the

eyes of the national as well as world audiences. Nothing other than films could provide a platform to reach out to a larger audience scattered around the globe.

*Charlie Wilson's War* is the next movie being taken into account. This film centres around intricate statecraft being practiced by the congress man *Charlie* during war with Soviets. The film is a pictorial and visual representation of the geopolitical reality of the US statesmanship and skilled diplomatic exercises. There is reference to many interrelated regimes and governments for instance- Pakistan, Afghanistan and Israel. The film is a close and realistic reflection of the present day geopolitical practices and inter-state negotiations. There is a slight indication towards proliferation of weapons in the Afghan territory and the consequent spread of terrorism. The film has a much deeper meaning attached to it. It also shows the difference in the living of a developed nation like USA and a developing or underdeveloped state like Afghanistan. There is a benign portrayal of the CIA in the film. The last part of the film is a subtle indication of the fact that the meddling of the US in the affair though was robust in nature yet it created disordered, disarrayed and adverse political conditions.

The last film of this chapter is *Argo*- a story based on the declassified clandestine operation of CIA to rescue six US diplomats from Tehran, Iran during the crisis of Iranian Revolution. This film dedicated to the CIA and is celebration of their intelligence and diplomatic strategy in successfully taking the American consulate employees to US amidst chaos and outrage of the Iranian public under the pretext of the asylum given to *Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi*.

The study also focuses on the relationship of the United States' government agencies with the Hollywood film industry. There are many departments such as Pentagon, The FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation), and department of homeland security etc that have strong links with Hollywood, it is asserted by several authors and their studies that CIA was comparatively late in collaborating with the Hollywood (Jekins, 2009: 489). The primary reason of CIA establishing a liaison with film industry was to transform the public image of the organization. Earlier the agency and its hidden activities have unfavourable public perception. The operations be-held by the agency were generally undercover and strictly classified for security reasons. The information of the operations and overseas missions were kept away from public popularity. Very

soon it was realised by the US government that image portrayal of Hollywood has a prolonged and stable impact on the public. No other popular tool of entertainment is as powerful as the films. In an interview held in 2008 at the CIA headquarter one of the officers have said that Hollywood has huge capacity to influence people, and it is the medium through which public acquire idea about the guarded agency and its activities (Jenkins, 2009: 490).

The cinematic depictions of geopolitical realities extrapolate the proceedings, schemes and internal affairs of state, its government and various governmental bodies. It is difficult to say that the on screen manifestations of are free from biases. They often portray a benevolent picture of the protagonists and a dystopian image of the others. This theme of image branding was common in the above mentioned films. The selected sample was varied the first two films discussed war. *Behind Enemy Lines* was based more on individual account of was while *Black Hawk Down* was a collective portrayal of the adversaries faced by the soldiers. *Charlie Wilson's War* concentrated on Congressman and CIA's role while *Argo* dealt with CIA.

Thus the second chapter is a comprehensive and disparate study of United State and its links with the Hollywood entertainment industry. The state departments have said to splurge financial support to the industry; this solves dual purpose. The first is the use of films as an effective geopolitical tool and second films as a means to enhance economic and financial gains. The concept of identity formation and public image of the government is discussed at length. The films analyzed, support the aforesaid assumptions and help in validating the hypothesis that 'geopolitical agendas are informed by popular cinema'.

The third chapter is entitled as "Depiction of Geopolitics in Middle East and Central Asia on screen". The region selected in this chapter is a hotspot zone of conflict and political instability which has had its trickledown effect on the entire world. There is an increasing attention of film makers interested in political drama to make films based on the politics of the region. Such films have huge contemporary geopolitical relevance, the issue addressed concerns a wide array of viewers. It is also an effectual means of reflecting upon the real geopolitical drama taking place in the international arena. Public diplomacy has assumed greater significance and is greatly been used by the governments in meeting their geopolitical ends. One of the major events that have



had tremendous impact on the world politics and related dealing is the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the territory of United States. This event changed the dynamics of the political atmosphere on the entire globe. The issue of security gained preponderance and every other issue became secondary. Post the attack, the Middle East and the Central Asian region came in limelight; there was greater scrutiny of the activities taking place in the region. The third chapter of the dissertation throws light on the major issues such as- implications of September 11, 2001 attack, the changing nature of foreign policy discourses, the futuristic military policy of the United States, the War against terror and the Iraq War etc.

To effectively bring out the essence of the themes of this chapter there is a detailed discussion of related films such as *Syriana*, *Lions for Lamb* and other films. *Syriana* is a political drama that deals with the energy geopolitics and geo-economic interests of states in the Arabic World. It touches upon the internal political culture of the monarchies of the Arab World. The movie also signifies the role of CIA and the agency's involvement in world political affairs.

The film is a trilogy of interrelated stories all interwoven across the global petro politics. It is suggestive of the fact that world politics is governed by the negotiations between economical and political interests. The film reifies the notion that international politics is based on realist assumptions and security maximization is the prime motive of the states. Power accumulation has always been and still is the foremost agenda of statecraft and mostly every political decision at world stage is documented on the basic realist tenets. The proliferation of terrorist activities and the use of poor migrants from places such as Pakistan as suicide bombers in order to fulfil ulterior motives are suggestive of the fact that the roots of terrorism have entered the everyday life. The degree of penetration of terrorism is so deep that it is inextricably difficult to distil it out from society. The interdependence of one event on the other knits a complex web of discursive political practices that produces serious repercussions in the world society at large.

The next film studied is *Lions for Lambs*, as mentioned in the chapter this movie quintessentially portrays the contemporary critical geopolitical thought. This film is also a trilogy that simultaneously enumerates three different take on war on terror. The illustrations in the film are instrumental in bringing out the essence of the three

basic tenets of critical geopolitics namely formal geopolitics, practical geopolitics and the popular strand of geopolitical enquiry. The uniqueness of this film lies in the fact that it represents the political problem of war on terror as a social, cultural and political practice rather than simply indulging in demonstrating the reality of the political moves. It is said by the proponents of critical geopolitics that the geopolitical activities have a spatial dimension attached to them that not only denotes representational practices of the statecraft but also focuses on the material aspect of it (O'Tuathail & Dalby, 1998: 3). ). The contemporary geopolitical imagination is based on the three variants of critical geopolitics. Together the three basic tenets are all encompassing and holistic in understanding the discursive and diverse nature of international politics. The film indulges in the multispectral examination of the war on terror thereby concretizing another chief principle of critical geopolitics which is 'plurality of political space construction'.

The chapter exclusively deals with the role of media in geopolitical proceedings. This section attempts to put across the propagandist facet of different media products. How media indulges into filtering and exclusionary practices under the influence of other powerful agencies to fabricate reality. The media has done away with its neutrality and has assumed a superficial robust form that acts on the principle of marketing. Media is a powerful device that could both hyper-politicization an issue or can also subdue the gravity of some issues. There are instances where there is careful manoeuvring of media content to realise certain political aspirations. *Lions for Lambs* has depicted the role of media in present day geopolitical policies.

The last section of the chapter deals with the Iraq War and analyzes the film '*Green Zone*'. This part of the chapter has critically scrutinized the war and has attempted to find out how far is it justifiable. *Green Zone* is a critique on the invasion of Iraq it also shows various levels at which CIA and other intelligence agencies failed in Iraq. The sites suspected of WMDs were all exposed as empty; this questioned the credibility of the reports prepared by the state departments. The deeper meaning which the film talks about is the politicization of phenomena and the erratic decisions on the name of world security.

The film provides an avenue for pedagogical debate and rhetorical dialogue on the invasion of Iraq, collapse of Saddam's regime, restoring democracy in Iraq and

intervention of the United States in the region. The super power status of the US does not guarantee it to take irrational decisions on behalf of a foreign country. There is in-equilibrium in terms of economic prosperity, stable polity, human and social security that segregate west from the rest. The 9\11 incident and the cinematic ventures on the themes related to it offered the audiences a new geopolitical script. There is a by default consistence of the filmic representation (those made in west) with American ideas and ideologies.

The third chapter dealt with controversies and turmoil of Middle Eastern and Central Asian regions, Afghanistan in particular. It attempted to bring out various aspects of political discourses in the region through the selected films.

The next chapter of the dissertation is on borders. There is a critical engagement of this chapter in dealing with border, borderland and bordering spaces. The chapter focuses on diverse themes that are much beyond the conventional, commonsensical understanding of borders. The chapter is entitled as 'Depiction of Borders in Cinema'. The initial section of the chapter discusses the multiplicity of borders and tries to bring out the evolving trends in border studies and bordering practices. The various themes which are discussed are- borders within borders, borderless world and borders from the lens of security.

The subsequent section deals strictly with borders by situating it in the broader structure of critical geopolitics. The everyday bordering in society and the constant struggle between the inside and outside of multiple borders and spaces is been discussed. When viewed under the lens of critical geopolitics, it can be deduced that borders and bordering practices does involves state actors alone but non-state actors also, these actors perform various activities that leads to dissection of communities, groups and spaces that leads to the creation of manifold borders with overlapping entities. Within this section there is a link established between the border and popular culture, cinema in particular. It is argued that films serve the dual purpose they deconstruct the idea of exclusions that sprang up from bordering practices and they also concretize the concept of borders by enumerating the differences and distinctions between two or more spaces by evaluating them on common grounds.

There are five different films analyzed in this chapter. These films bring out the discursive nature of borders and pinpoints at the peculiarities of borders. There are

diverse subjects being addressed at through these films which focus on the efficacies of borders in varying degree and at different levels.

The first film analyzed in the chapter is based on the organized crime taking place across Canada and US border. Crimes such as human trafficking is prevalent between the US Canada border and various laws have been enforced in this regard. The film *Frozen River* enunciates the trafficking of illegal migrants across St. Lawrence River by two women who are in need of money, the film is set in Mohawk territory of Akwesasne region. This zone has highest recorded cases of smuggling of people across border. The boundary between US and Canada is militarily undefended and the cross border trade is based on liberal policies, hence there are more chances of border breaching and other organized crimes. Similarly in another film of the chapter- *The Shepherd*, the issue of drug trafficking across US Mexico border is highlighted. The border between Tijuana region in Mexico and San Diego in United States is one of the most susceptible regions where organized crime is practiced. Both these films have commonality since they both deal with cross border issues across the borders of United States. Due to increasing economic activities it is difficult to shut down borders and cut all cross border relations. Both Mexico as well as Canada are important nations and their relationship with United States is favourable. The bilateral ties are centred on complex system of exchange with shared benefits. In such a scenario it is difficult to exercise strict control over the border area. Nevertheless security is an utmost important criterion to be met for any country. The organized crimes pose great threats and are detrimental in the growth of either side of the borders.

The chapter also deals with the borderless world of Europe. The integration of European states in the form of EU has given a supranational political structure to the member states. It is been argued that the idea of pan European world has re-territorialised the political spaces across Europe. The individual national identity, affinity towards one's nation and the sense of belongingness to the place is all kept intact in addition there is opportunity to have a collective ideational identity that represents the whole region. There are other European common agendas where there is unification of diversified nationalities and nations such as Schengen territory and Schengen Visa and the common currency of exchange-Euro. EU provides the member states a possibility to collaborate, assimilate and amalgamate different ideas, belief,

values and shared norms. This integration is advantageous from the economic, political and social perspective. Though there is diffusion of borders in Europe yet there is barricading from imminent threats. The southern and the eastern corridors have posed obstructions to unwanted entry of goods and people.

Under the head of binary between inside and outside there is discussion of a German film *Im Juli* (In July). The film is depiction of European borders and their transnational nature. The movie is a nuanced way of analyzing, and comprehending the phenomena of unity in diversity germane to the European region. There are several differences across nations in terms of language, creed, ethnicity, religion, lifestyle etc yet there are binding forces operative that gives a sense of belongingness to individual.

*No Man's Land* is also discussed in the chapter; this film speaks beyond the national spaces and denotes the dialectical frame within which the border swings back and forth. No man's land signifies a straddling region which becomes a vacuum space in times of war. Society and social orders imbibe in an individual certain territorial affinities, whenever there are clashes in these affinities between two set of people conflict is inevitable. War is always a savage sight, and either of the parties are sufferers during war. *No man's land* is a dramatic depiction of the fight between Bosniaks and Bosnian Serbs. The film talks about those borders whose boundaries are drawn without taking into account the cultural similarity resulting into separation and creating a wall between us and them.

Another important Film which gives a different sense of border is *Babel*. *Babel* is also a trilogy which talks about three different places situated almost equidistant from one another with approximately same longitudinal differences. The film shows Morocco, Japan and US- Mexico. Vast discernible differences in the lifestyles of the people of these three different places are marked out. One part of the film talks about the border trespassing between US and Mexico, the other part shows the miseries and substandard life of Morocco where the basic civic amenities are not met with. The story of Japan also signify bordering spaces, how a highly advance country like Japan is lost in the urban glamour. There are many invisible borders that cut across society. There are many exclusionary parameters that divide the world not merely by lines on maps but by dissecting spaces and partitioning havens with have nots. There is

increasing thrust on globalization and the advocates of this concept argue that it acts as an integrating mechanism. The real world depicts a contrasting image, globalization has also led to compartmentalization of privileged versus deprived, and this gap is widening.

Modern day imperialism commands that the entire world be casted in such a mould that the political, social and economic changes that are brought by interaction of various forces be congenial to the interest of the imperialists. The larger argument for such broad interest lies in the foremost priority which is- security. Security in this globalized interconnected world does not lie in the territorial limits of political boundaries but much beyond. Threats to security can sprang up in any space, time and place. Is it possible to strike balance between the international security of mankind and the national security of the great powers? It is little difficult to locate or find place for the security of the entire mankind in the security maximization axiom from a statist perspective.

Politics is a continuous process and so is geography and geopolitical realities. Many scholars assume that geography is static and geographical settings to be given. In fact the landscape is created by interactions between physical and human. There are both material borders and conceptual borders in the society. The lens of critical geopolitics provides a clear view of these dichotomies. The plurality of spaces and the meanings become more discernible from critical perspective.

Thus, the present study is an assemblage of plethora of political, cultural, geographical and social both material and conceptual notions. The popular geopolitical outlook of seeing geopolitical reality is a part of everyday practice. The dissertation forms a coherent study of the proposed propositions. Through analyzing thirteen different films the study infers that cinema is an effective popular media which is employed as a tool to practice statecraft. Cinema is a source of information to all strata of society. It directs public opinion and masses do get influenced by the cinematic representations. Hence the study establishes my hypothesis that popular culture is an important source of information and the geopolitical agendas are informed through cinematic ventures.

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