



Securitization of United States Energy Interests: The Guyana-Venezuela Dispute Narrative (2023-2025)

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Abstract: The territorial dispute between Venezuela and Guyana, enduring for over two centuries, escalated once more in 2023. This resulted in a self-claim through a referendum by Venezuela against Guyana's territory, specifically the resource-rich Essequibo region. This claim is considered a direct threat to United States energy interests due to the significant investments by U.S. companies, particularly ExxonMobil, in Guyana's offshore oil fields. Venezuela's aggressive stance and potential for destabilizing the region directly imperil the stability of these crucial energy supplies and the commercial operations of ExxonMobil. Therefore, the situation demands an energy securitization move from the U.S. to protect its strategic energy interests. U.S. energy securitization process during the Guyana-Venezuela war from 2023 to 2025 will be examined in this research. This research will examine U.S. energy securitization dynamics using constructivism and process tracing. Data comes from primary and secondary sources. The research uses energy interest, security, and securitization theories. The findings show that U.S. energy securitization during the conflict requires identifying rationale, processes, and enabling conditions. As an energy consumer, the U.S. can justify energy supply security interventions as critical to national energy security.

Keywords: energy securitization, energy security, securitization, Guyana, Venezuela, United States

INTRODUCTION

The territorial dispute between Venezuela and Guyana, enduring for over two centuries, escalated once more in 2023. Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro threatened to seize the Essequibo area, situated west of the Essequibo River and comprising two-thirds of Guyana, as Guyana Essequibo. This dispute originates from a historical context that commenced when the region was incorporated into the British colony of British Guiana, formed by the amalgamation of three Dutch possessions¹ in 1831 (Bethell, 2024).

¹In 1831, Guyana, then known as British Guiana, consisted of three former Dutch colonies: Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice. These colonies were united and established as a single British colony in 1831.

Essequibo is a disputed area of 61,600 square miles claimed by both Guyana and Venezuela but has been continuously administered and controlled by Guyana since the arbitration in Paris in 1899. The Essequibo region is part of Guyana's total area of 83,000 square miles. This region encompasses 6 out of the 10 administrative regions of Guyana and is inhabited by approximately 300,000 people out of the country's total population, which is nearly 800,000 (Griffith, 2021). The territory encompasses about three-quarters of the sovereign area claimed by Guyana. In 1962, Venezuela rejected the Paris Award, arguing that there were irregularities in the way the Paris Award was determined. As a result, Venezuela and the United Kingdom (representing British Guiana) signed an agreement in Geneva in 1966, resulting in an agreement that both parties would seek a peaceful resolution to the territorial dispute (Berg & Hernandez-Roy, 2023).



Figure 1. The Disputed Territory between Guyana and Venezuela
Source: Britannica (n.d.)

Figure 1 provides an explanation of the territorial dispute between Guyana and Venezuela over the Essequibo region, marked with shading as areas claimed by both countries and currently administered by Guyana. This disputed region encompasses most of Guyana's landmass and is adjacent to significant offshore oil fields, which are also the subject of overlapping claims related to territorial sea boundaries and exclusive economic zones, as indicated by the various disputed boundary lines on the map.

The Essequibo region has once again become the subject of dispute between Guyana and Venezuela since ExxonMobil announced a significant oil discovery. Based on a press release from ExxonMobil on May 20, 2015, ExxonMobil Corporation announced the discovery of oil in the Stabroek Block, located approximately 120 miles offshore Guyana (ExxonMobil, 2015). Venezuela has taken steps to assert its claim over the Essequibo region, including issuing Presidential Decree No. 1.787 of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on May 26, 2015, which was later revised on June 8, 2015. This decree asserts claims over all Atlantic waters bordering the Essequibo coast in Guyana, as well as disrupting Guyana's maritime territory (CARICOM, 2015). In an effort to strengthen its claim over the adjacent territory, on January 7, 2021, Venezuela announced Decree No. 4.415. This decree declares Venezuela's exclusive rights over the waters and seabed extending 200 nautical miles from the Orinoco Delta, establishing the "Region for the Development of the Atlantic Facade." This area is located northwest of the Essequibo River, near the maritime territory of Guyana, and includes areas where oil has been discovered (Griffith, 2021).

Venezuela's interest in the Essequibo territorial issue mainly arises from the discovery of substantial oil deposits in the region. Moreover, Essequibo possesses significant strategic importance and is rich in natural resources, encompassing quantities of gold, diamonds, bauxite, manganese, uranium, and several other minerals. This region is abundant in additional natural resources, including timber. The abundance of natural resources not only presents significant economic potential but also elevates the region's geopolitical and economic significance, rendering Essequibo a highly valued asset for Venezuela (Griffith, 2021).

Besides economic interests, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has political motivations in claiming the Essequibo region. In the midst of his unpopularity, Maduro uses the Essequibo issue as a means to stir up nationalist sentiment, aiming to solidify his position ahead of the 2024 elections and in an effort to gain international recognition (Walter, 2023). Venezuela has made significant changes to the dynamics of the Essequibo territorial dispute with the implementation of a speak referendum in 2023. According to Al Jazeera's report, this referendum was held on December 3, 2023, and presented five referendum questions to the Venezuelan citizens. One of the key questions was whether they agreed to form a new country called Guyana Essequibo in the Essequibo region, which would include granting Venezuelan citizenship and identity cards to its residents and integrating the new country into the map of Venezuelan territory (Melimopoulos, 2023). Following the results of the referendum, President Maduro ordered the formation of a new administrative entity named "Guayana Esequiba." In line with this decision, President Maduro also published a new map of Venezuela (Figure 2) that definitively integrates the disputed territory with Guyana (CNN, 2023).



Figure 2. Venezuela 2023 New Map

Source: Alba Ciudad, 2023

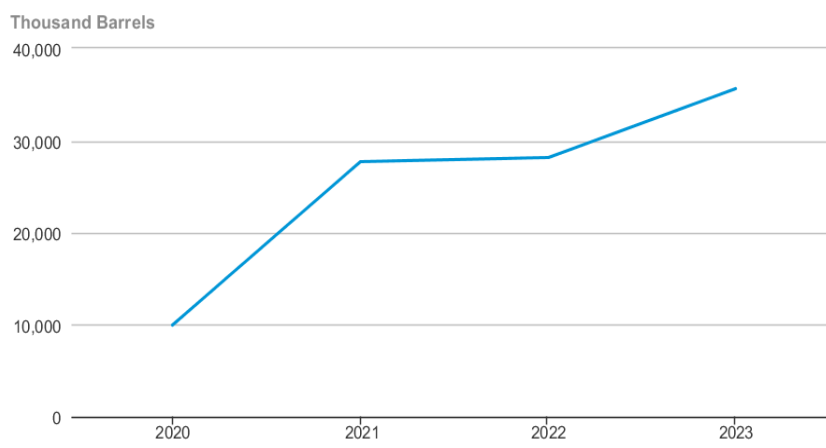
<https://albaciudad.org/2023/12/nuevo-mapa-venezuela-estado-essequibo-vectorial-pdf/>

The Government of Guyana previously filed an official objection with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against Venezuela's intention to conduct a referendum on December 3, 2023. The protest demanded that Venezuela cease the execution of the referendum. Guyana also implored Venezuela to refrain from activities that could exacerbate or extend the territorial conflict presently under judicial consideration or that could obstruct the dispute resolution process. The ICJ observed that Guyana is presently administering and governing the contested territory. In light of these circumstances, the ICJ resolved to give a preliminary order to

Venezuela's paranoia. Venezuela will refrain from undertaking any acts that could negatively impact the current situation (ICJ, 2023).

Alongside the ICJ, the United States (U.S.) also addressed Venezuela's referendum effort concerning the Essequibo region. U.S. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken engaged in dialogue with Guyana's President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali to reiterate the United States' unwavering support for Guyana's sovereignty. Minister Blinken reaffirmed the U.S. position advocating for a peaceful resolution of the dispute and adherence to the 1899 arbitration ruling that delineated the geographical boundary between Venezuela and Guyana until superseded by a new agreement or an authoritative legal entity. Minister Blinken and President Ali emphasized the ICJ's directive issued on December 1, 2023, which urged all parties to abstain from measures that could intensify or extend the conflict. Minister Blinken underscored that the United States anticipates collaborating closely with Guyana upon its accession as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council in January 2024 (US Department of State, 2023).

The U.S., as a country that holds significant influence in the Latin American region, also played an important role in the conflict between Guyana and Venezuela in 2023-2025. The diplomatic relationship between the U.S. and Guyana has been established since the recognition of Guyana's independence by the U.S. on May 26, 1966. (U.S. Embassy Georgetown, n.d.). The U.S. also has economic relations with Guyana. One form of this relationship is the import of crude oil and petroleum products from Guyana.



Graph 1. U.S. Imports of Crude Oil and Petroleum Products from Guyana (Per 1000 Barrels)
Source: US Energy Administration Information (2024)

Graph 1 above shows that there has been an increase in the import of crude oil and petroleum products from Guyana by the U.S. In 2020, the U.S. imported crude oil and petroleum products from Guyana amounting to 9,953,000 barrels and 27,728,000 barrels in 2021. In 2022, the import volume increased to 28,153,000 barrels and 35,657,000 barrels in 2023 (U.S. EIA, n.d.-a). The import volume from Guyana in 2023 accounted for only 11.45% of the total U.S. crude oil and petroleum product imports (U.S. EIA, n.d.-b). The U.S. Energy Administration Information states that Guyana has become a major contributor to the growth of the global crude oil supply. In fact, Guyana has become the third-largest crude oil producer among non-OPEC countries (U.S. EIA, 2024).

Following the Essequibo referendum sponsored by Venezuela, the U.S. is augmenting its strategic interests by bolstering support for Guyana. According to a statement from the U.S. Embassy in Georgetown, the United States Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) executed flight operations in conjunction with the Guyana Defence Force (GDF) on December 7, 2023.

This initiative is a component of ongoing collaborative efforts designed to bolster the security alliance between the U.S. and Guyana while also reinforcing regional collaboration (U.S. Embassy Georgetown, 2023). On January 8-9, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Daniel Erikson visited Guyana, engaging with national security leaders, including President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali and other senior officials. During the discussion, Erikson reiterated the U.S. dedication to enhancing defense collaboration with Guyana, upholding its sovereignty, and pursuing a peaceful resolution to the border conflict with Venezuela that honors Guyana's territorial integrity. Erikson emphasized Guyana's global significance, particularly its position on the UN Security Council and its leadership within CARICOM (U.S. Department of Defense, 2024).

On December 26, 2024, the Export-Import (EXIM) Bank of the U.S. approved \$527 million in financing for a gas-to-energy project in Guyana aimed at doubling the country's installed electricity capacity and enhancing energy security. The funds will be used for the construction of a natural gas separation plant and a 300-megawatt gas turbine power plant near Georgetown. This project will facilitate Guyana's transition to cleaner and more reliable energy, reduce the import of polluting fuel oil, and decrease carbon dioxide emissions by more than 460,000 tons per year (EXIM, 2024). The interest of the U.S. in the energy sector is reflected through the production increase carried out by ExxonMobil, an American energy company, through its subsidiary, ExxonMobil Guyana. Based on the 2023 annual report, ExxonMobil Guyana revealed that they have implemented several production enhancement projects using Floating Production, Storage, and Offloading (FPSO). In the report, there are three operational FPSO units, namely Liza Phase 1: FPSO Liza Destiny; Liza Phase 2: FPSO Liza Unity; and the Payara project: FPSO Prosperity. ExxonMobil will then add three more FPSO units in 2025 - 2027 (ExxonMobil, 2023). Destiny;

On March 1, 2025, the Bureau of Western Hemisphere, through the social media account X, @WHAAsstSecty, issued an official statement condemning the actions of Venezuelan naval vessels. The statement explicitly mentioned that the threats directed at ExxonMobil's FPSO are unacceptable actions and constitute a violation of Guyana's internationally recognized maritime territory.



Figure 3. Statement from the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Regarding the Maritime Territorial Violation by the Venezuelan Navy
Source: X @WHAAsstSecty

In figure 3, the Bureau further warns that additional provocations will result in consequences for the Maduro regime. This statement also reaffirms the U.S. support for the territorial integrity of Guyana and the 1899 arbitration award relevant to the border dispute between Guyana and Venezuela. The statement in figure 2 was reiterated by U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who, during his visit to Guyana on March 27, 2025, said, "It will be a very bad day for the Venezuelan regime if they were to attack Guyana or attack ExxonMobil or anything like that—it would be a very bad day, a very bad week for them" (Department of State,

2025). This statement shows that the U.S. is reaffirming its commitment to protecting its strategic interests, including energy security in Guyana.

Based on the previous explanation, the research aims to analyze the U.S. energy interest within the context of the Guyana-Venezuela dispute from 2023 to 2025. Employing a framework of Copenhagen School securitization, the research will integrate the concepts of energy interest and security with securitization theory. The core objective is to analyze how U.S. energy securitization is narrated throughout this specific dispute, particularly focusing on how certain energy-related issues are framed as existential threats, thereby legitimizing extraordinary responses.

LITERATURE REVIEW, ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK & RESEARCH METHOD

Literature Review

Previous studies (Padula et al., 2023; Mahabir and Ganpat, 2024; Rodriguez, 2024; Cummings, 2018) examining the actors involved in the Guyana-Venezuela territorial dispeo-economic framework to examine the influence of Guyana's oil discoveries on regional dynamics. Their research, utilizing energy sector data, academic literature, and media accounts, demonstrates that oil not only aggravates domestic ethnic political problems in Guyana but also amplifies Venezuela's longstanding claims to the Essequibo region. The research highlights ExxonMobil's pivotal role in reinforcing U.S. geopolitical goals to sustain regional supremacy in the face of China's and Russia's growing influence and Brazil's declining power. However, it doesn't offer a detailed explanation of the United States' specific energy interests in this context. Mahabir and Ganpat (2024) present a detailed examination of the border dispute, highlighting its colonial heritage and subsequent intensifications. Their analysis elucidates Venezuela's repudiation of the 1899 arbitral ruling and the December 2023 referendum, examining how local political dynamics under Nicolás Maduro, alongside ExxonMobil's Stabroek Block finds, intensified the confrontation. This research focuses exclusively on the Guyana-Venezuela dispute and does not provide any discussion of the U.S. involvement.

Rodriguez (2024) elucidates that Venezuela's assertions on the resource-abundant Essequibo region constitute a substantial threat to the stability of South America. This study underscores the interaction of colonial heritage, contemporary geopolitical factors, and international law in addressing the conflict, accentuating the essential role of global engagement, particularly the International Court of Justice (ICJ), in thwarting annexation efforts and maintaining regional stability. This research exclusively examines the conflict and its resolution between the two nations, focusing on the ICJ's involvement, yet it does not address the U.S. as a significant actor in the dispute. Cummings (2018) presents empirical evidence demonstrating that the 2015 oil discovery altered the bilateral relationship from a state of relative diplomatic engagement to one of considerable strain. Cummings (2018) illustrates a significant rise in reporting on border disputes in the Guyana Chronicle following the discovery, asserting that Venezuela's decree asserting ownership of Essequibo was probably a tactical ploy by the Maduro administration to redirect public focus from internal issues. This research examines the conflict between the two nations, focusing on the discovery of oil. However, it fails to analyze the interests of the U.S., specifically through ExxonMobil, in relation to these oil discoveries.

Previous literature provides a gap by only focusing on the dispute between Guyana and Venezuela, while other actors are also dimensions involved in and impacted by this complex territorial claim. The U.S. interests in this conflict, driven primarily by the region's energy resources, remain unexamined in the academic discourse. A comprehensive analysis is therefore needed to explore the multifaceted ways in which the U.S. influences and is affected

by the dispute, shedding light on its strategic dimensions, particularly in energy. The threat from Venezuela to Guyana's territory, in which the U.S. had an interest in energy.

Analytical Framework

Energy interest is used in this research to understand the position of the U.S. in the ongoing dispute. The focus of this research on energy pertains to the various types of states within the global energy system. Luft and Korin (2009) classify nations within the global energy system as energy producers, energy consumers, or transit states. Consumers pursue varied suppliers and channels to alleviate supply interruptions. Producers, on the other hand, diversify their clientele and supply chains to mitigate dependence on a singular customer or potential disruptions such as blockades or terrorism. The diversification initiatives undertaken by producers and consumers result in the formation of transit states, which gain from transit fees, foreign investment, and improved energy security via possible access to redirected energy supplies (Luft & Korin, 2009: 336-337). Energy-producing nations strive to satisfy the rising demand from both developed and developing consuming countries (Al-Yasiri, 2022). For these producers, oil and gas serve as main revenue streams and are essential for economic development (Goldthau & Witte, 2010). Shaffer (2009) observes that economic and political trends in producer nations, often relevant to exporters, indicate that energy export profits may impede the development of non-energy sectors, impacting economic sustainability. These economies typically reallocate labor and capital from agriculture and manufacturing, with energy revenues supporting less developed sectors (Shaffer, 2009).

Energy consumer states regard oil and gas as significantly politicized commodities. Thus, guaranteeing access to affordable oil and gas is a fundamental strategic priority for consumers, necessitating considerable government intervention (Goldthau & Witte, 2010). Consumer nations enhance energy security by diversifying energy sources and suppliers, maintaining strategic oil reserves, constructing redundant energy infrastructure, and ensuring fuel-switching flexibility (Shaffer, 2009). These tactics are employed to protect their energy supply interests. Umbach (2004) categorizes threats to energy supply as economic, physical, and environmental, which might present as global or local energy security concerns. In addition to market dynamics, price volatility or supply interruptions may arise from exporter policies, geopolitical conflicts, and swings in exchange rates (Umbach, 2004). In the dispute between Guyana and Venezuela, the U.S. is categorized as a consumer nation, while Guyana is classified as a production nation. The U.S. perceives that the prospective energy resources in the Guyana region may enhance its energy interests, rendering it a strategic priority for the U.S. Consequently, the conflict between Guyana and Venezuela from 2023 to 2025 jeopardizes U.S. energy interests.

This research also utilizes the idea of energy security to examine U.S. energy interests in the Guyana-Venezuela dispute from 2023 to 2025. The analysis of energy interests is conducted from the viewpoint of energy-consuming nations, with a strong correlation to energy security. The definition of energy security has developed in conjunction with transformations in the global energy framework. The changes are characterized by the predominance of fossil fuels, the deregulation of energy markets, the advancement of nuclear energy, the rising energy demand from developing nations, and the effects of political instability and significant natural disasters (Chester, 2010). Winzer (2012) categorizes authors into three groups regarding the definition of energy security. The initial group perceives energy security as the uninterrupted provision of energy commodities. The second group uses subjective criteria to differentiate between secure and unsafe continuity, positing that security is compromised solely when energy shortage drives costs beyond a specific threshold, while price fluctuations beneath that barrier are deemed inconsequential. The third category broadens the assessment of impact, encompassing not only the stability of prices and quantities in commodities markets but also

the continuation of services, together with their effects on the economy and the environment (Winzer, 2012). This study pertains to the initial group's concept, which concerns the continuation of the United States' energy supply derived from the contested areas of Guyana and Venezuela.

Gitelman et al. (2023) categorize risks affecting energy security into three groups: infringements of national sovereignty due to foreign actions; natural and anthropogenic disasters linked to fuel and energy resource deficiencies, deteriorating infrastructure, and climatic catastrophes; and uncertainties in socio-economic variables stemming from shifts in investor and consumer preferences, structural transformations in markets for diverse goods and services, and the reconfiguration of trade flows (Gitelman et al., 2023). The authors address the threat posed by the first risk group, specifically the infringement of national integrity resulting from the acts of foreign nations. This threat pertains to Venezuela's assertion of territorial rights over Guyana. The unilaterally asserted region possesses energy reserves overseen by a US corporation; hence, the US has a vested interest in preserving its energy security.

Finally, this study employs the Copenhagen School's securitization theory as developed by Buzan, De Wilde, and Waever in 1998. This theory is derived from the presence of threats within the domain of security studies: military, political, economic, social, and environmental. In this context, security pertains to the emphasis on how an issue is regarded as a danger by the state (Buzan et al., 1998: 21-23). Christou and Adamides (2013) assert that the energy sector can be incorporated into securitization within contemporary security studies. Christou and Adamides (2013) contend that energy securitization transcends a singular domain of security studies yet cannot be classified as a distinct field. Energy security is a significant factor in securitization and impacts securitization in various domains. Energy securitization subsequently integrates into the securitization within the political, economic, and military spheres (Christou & Adamides, 2013). The idea of securitization seeks to elucidate the progression of threats from political concerns to security matters. Buzan et al. (1998) contend that securitization occurs when an issue is framed as a threat, necessitating urgent measures and legitimizing activities that go beyond conventional political protocols.

The Copenhagen School asserts that securitization consists of securitizing agents, referent objects, and functional actors. The securitizing actor is the entity that asserts an issue is threatened by declaring that an object is at risk. A securitization actor is an individual or collective that engages in a security discourse act. Securitization participants may encompass political leaders, bureaucrats, governmental entities, lobbyists, and advocacy groups (Buzan et al., 1998: 25, 36, 40). The referent object is an entity perceived as existentially endangered and possessing a valid entitlement to survival. The referent object in securitization may be a state; however, securitization actors might theoretically designate any entity as a referent object (Buzan et al., 1998: 36). Functional actors are those who can affect security dynamics without identifying themselves as securitization agents or reference objects. Functional actors possess the capacity to impact security policy (Buzan et al., 1998: 36).

Buzan et al. (1998) state that securitization encompasses three elements: existential threat, emergency action, and breaking free from rules. Existential threats are related to the referent object, and securitization actors can construct a narrative that there is an existential threat to the referent object. When an existential threat is responded to, the relevant actors can gain legitimacy to take emergency actions. These actions often involve violations of existing rules, due to the nature of the threat that does not allow for handling through conventional means (Buzan et al., 1998: 25 - 26). Breaking free from rules in securitization represents a phase in which securitization participants can engage in actions that transcend conventional political conduct or violate established norms (Buzan et al. 1998: 24). This research employs

securitization theory from the Copenhagen School to explain U.S. energy interests in the Guyana-Venezuela dispute (2023-2025).

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach, specifically utilizing a constructivist methodology. Constructivism is used to analyze the influence of culture, norms, and identity on state behavior. The key aspect of constructivism is the formation and construction of processes in international politics, including major actors, institutions, regulations, language, norms, cultural meanings, identities, and roles (McCourt, 2022: 1-2, 4). Jepperson et al. (1996) assert that norms, culture, and identity substantially impact national security interests and a nation's security policy. Wendt (1992) argues that constructivism emerges from the existence of identity and interest systems. Identity forms the foundation of interests. Actors articulate interests in the process of defining the situation (Wendt, 1992: 396, 398).

This research primarily uses official documents (e.g., policy statements, reports, transcripts) and media reports as secondary data (Bakry, 2016). The data analysis is begun by identifying U.S. norms and identity in the Guyana-Venezuela dispute, connecting them to how norms, as argued by Jepperson et al. (1996), shape national security interests and policy. This research connects these norms to U.S. energy interests, focusing on energy securitization via process tracing and speech act analysis. This analysis focuses on the norm of self-reliance (Galtung, 1976) to examine the United States as an energy consumer dependent on Guyana as a supplier of energy resources.

Process tracing, as proposed by Balzacq (2011), is an appropriate tool for understanding securitization by investigating the social factors that facilitate the creation of social phenomena. Robinson (2017) underscores the interpretivist essence of process-mechanism explanations in securitization due to the intersubjective framing of threats. This corresponds with Balzacq's (2011) perspective on securitization as a connected sequence of actions—how threats are generated, communicated, and interpreted—ultimately generating or exhibiting a threat. Robinson (2017), referencing Tilly (2001), elucidates that process tracing in securitization entails identifying "mechanisms" as distinctly defined sets of events that modify relationships and "facilitating conditions" that include relational factors such as authority distribution and social capital, alongside historically specific ideational dispositions and institutional memory.

In this research, process tracing is employed to explain the process of energy securitization in the context of U.S. energy interests within the Guyana-Venezuela dispute between 2023 and 2025. The mechanism identified is Venezuela's self-claim over Guyanese territory, which poses a direct threat to U.S. energy interests. The facilitating conditions include the broader threat from Venezuela to U.S. energy interests. According to Robinson (2017), mechanisms connect facilitating conditions to the securitization output, thus requiring a thorough tracing of these conditions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Dynamics of the Guyana–Venezuela Conflict 2023 - 2025

The longstanding territorial conflict between the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela about the Essequibo area intensified markedly from 2023 to 2025. This era was marked by Venezuela's progressively forceful assertions, evident through domestic legislative measures and a contentious referendum, primarily propelled by the discovery of significant offshore oil deposits. In response, Guyana persistently pursued settlement via recognized international legal avenues, mainly the International Court of Justice (ICJ), while securing substantial diplomatic backing from the global community.

Guyana's primary interest in this region is driven by the economic implications of its energy resources. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (2024), Guyana

increased crude oil production by an annual average of 98,000 b/d from 2020 to 2023, making it the third-fastest-growing non-OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) producing country during this period. Crude oil production has been the largest contributor to Guyana's economic growth in recent years. From 2020 to 2023, Guyana's crude oil output increased by an average of 98,000 barrels per day each year, making Guyana the third-fastest-growing non-OPEC oil-producing country during this period (U.S. EIA, 2024).

Guyana's growing energy sector has drawn a variety of investors, with the U.S.-based ExxonMobil being the most prominent contributor. The surge in investment is primarily motivated by the substantial economic prospects offered by Guyana's energy resources. For ExxonMobil, Guyana constitutes a pivotal growth engine, providing high-quality, low-cost resources integral to their worldwide production plan. The company has repeatedly expedited its Guyanese projects, utilizing sophisticated technology and operational proficiency to swiftly initiate new production and reinforce its leading position in the nation's emerging energy sector.

This can be seen through ExxonMobil Guyana's statements through annual reports and its websites released. One of ExxonMobil's significant achievements in Guyana is the discovery of about 11 billion barrels of oil offshore in 2015, which swiftly elevated the nation to a prominent position in the global energy sector. This was succeeded by an extraordinary rate of development, transitioning from discovery to initial oil production in under five years, enhancing Guyana's economy, and resulting in growing gross domestic product (GDP) growth and considerable government revenue (ExxonMobil, 2025). Furthermore, ExxonMobil Guyana gained major operational advancements and financial results during 2023 to 2024. In 2023, the Payara project's Prosperity FPSO started its operations earlier than expected, greatly enhancing production capacity and reaching an average of over 600 kbd by the end of the year. In 2024, the corporation achieved an important milestone by reaching a total of 500 million cumulative barrels of oil produced. Additionally, the production surpassed the impressive mark of 645,000 barrels of oil per day from the Stabroek block. Notably, the Prosperity FPSO exceeded expectations by achieving target production of 220,000 barrels per day (ExxonMobil, 2023, 2024).

In contrast to Guyana's perspective, Venezuela's interest in the disputed territory is primarily motivated by energy and political considerations. Notably, during the 2023 Essequibo referendum, the Venezuelan government actively promoted the initiative for an extended period, characterizing participation as a patriotic act and frequently aligning it with expressions of support for the Maduro administration (The Guardian, 2023a). After the referendum, Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro instructed the country's state-owned enterprises to begin the exploration and extraction of oil, gas, and mineral resources in Guyana's Essequibo region "without delay." At the same time, he required the creation of local subsidiaries for Venezuelan public companies, including the oil corporation Petroleos de Venezuela (PDVSA) and the mining conglomerate Corporación Venezolana de Guayana (The Guardian, 2023b).

In addition to energy interests, Venezuela's quest for the Essequibo region is largely influenced by internal political interests. The 2023 referendum regarding the territory acted as a diversion from the upcoming 2024 presidential elections. In this context, President Nicolás Maduro is grappling with low approval ratings and appears to be at a disadvantage against the prominent opposition candidate, Maria Corina Machado. In light of previous promises made in a ceremony in Barbados 17 October 2023, attended by representatives from the US, UK, EU, Canadian and Colombian governments, to facilitate competitive elections—such as the possible reinstatement of opposition candidates and the assurance of freedom of expression in return for the lifting of U.S. sanctions—the Venezuelan government swiftly rejected the results of the opposition primary. Machado's decisive win in the primary was accompanied by threats of arrest directed at the organizers and a refusal from the Supreme Court to acknowledge the

results. This strongly biased reaction indicates that the 2023 referendum may have been a strategy employed by the Maduro government to strengthen its backing and divert attention from its vulnerable electoral standing (Sabatini, 2023).

A detailed chronology of the Guyana-Venezuela dispute from 2023 to 2025 (table 1) begins in 2023 with Venezuela's declaration of its intention to hold a referendum about the Essequibo region, eliciting reaction from Guyana through a submission to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). In 2024, notable advancements encompassed Venezuela's initiative to appoint an official governor in the disputed region. By 2025, the conflict has advanced to the ICJ mandating directives to Venezuela in response to a series of assaults by Venezuela on Guyana, illustrating the persistent diplomatic and legal endeavors regarding the disputed region.

Table 1. Guyana-Venezuela Dispute Chronology 2023-2025

Event	
<i>Feb. 17, 2023</i>	Guyana's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement commemorating the 57th anniversary of the 1966 Geneva Agreement, affirming its continued legal relevance to the territorial dispute.
<i>Apr. 3, 2023</i>	The International Court of Justice (ICJ) rejected Venezuela's preliminary objections on admissibility and jurisdiction in the case concerning the 1899 Arbitral Award, firmly establishing the Court's authority to adjudicate the dispute and strengthening Guyana's legal position.
<i>Sep. 21, 2023</i>	Venezuela's National Assembly adopted a resolution calling for a consultative referendum on the country's claim to the Essequibo region.
<i>Oct. 23, 2023</i>	Venezuela released the five referendum questions, which included proposals to reject the 1899 Arbitral Award, dismiss ICJ jurisdiction, and endorse the creation of a new "Guayana Essequiba State" within Venezuela. The referendum was scheduled for December 3, 2023.
<i>Oct. 30, 2023</i>	In response to the planned referendum, Guyana filed a formal request with the ICJ for provisional measures to prevent Venezuela from taking any actions that would alter the status quo in the disputed territory.
<i>Dec. 1, 2023</i>	The ICJ unanimously ordered Venezuela to refrain from any action that would modify the prevailing situation in the disputed territory, where Guyana administers and exercises control.
<i>Dec. 3, 2023</i>	Venezuela proceeded with the referendum. Voters overwhelmingly supported rejecting the ICJ's jurisdiction and endorsed the creation of a "Guayana Essequiba" state within Venezuela.
<i>Dec. 6, 2023</i>	Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro authorized the immediate exploration and exploitation of oil, gas, and minerals in Essequibo and issued a three-month ultimatum ordering Guyanese companies to leave the region. President Irfaan Ali of Guyana rejected these measures as a direct threat to his country.
<i>Dec. 14, 2023</i>	Presidents Maduro and Ali met in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and issued the Joint Declaration of Argyle for Dialogue and Peace, pledging not to threaten or use force against one another and committing to resolve the dispute through international law. Venezuela reiterated its non-recognition of ICJ jurisdiction.
<i>Jan. 9 & Feb. 7, 2024</i>	Guyana formally communicated with the ICJ, notifying the Court of Venezuela's ongoing actions related to the Essequibo dispute.
<i>Feb. 2024</i>	Guyana declared a moratorium on new oil exploration northwest of the 70-degree line, a strategic measure adopted at the height of bilateral tensions following the December 2023 referendum.
<i>Jan.–Apr. 2024</i>	Venezuela issued a series of decrees and laws seeking to annex and incorporate Guyana's Essequibo Region—representing approximately 70% of Guyana's national territory—into Venezuela.
<i>Apr. 3, 2024</i>	President Maduro signed the Organic Law for the Defense of Guayana Esequiba, formally establishing "state number 24, the state of Guayana Esequiba," within Venezuela's political and territorial structure as the legal implementation of the December 3 referendum result.
<i>May 1, 2025</i>	The ICJ issued a further order directing Venezuela to refrain from conducting elections for Essequibo while the territorial dispute remains before the Court. Guyana's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a press release emphasizing the legally binding nature of the order.

<i>May 2, 2025</i>	The Government of Guyana formally stated its expectation that Venezuela comply with both the December 1, 2023, and May 1, 2025, ICJ orders, affirming their binding character and reiterating Guyana's refusal to engage in bilateral negotiations regarding Venezuela's claim of nullity of the 1899 Arbitral Award.
<i>May 25, 2025</i>	Venezuela proceeded with parliamentary and regional elections, which included the election of a governorship purportedly established to administer the Essequibo territory.
<i>Late May 2025</i>	Guyanese soldiers reported three attacks within 24 hours by armed Venezuelan men dressed as civilians. The Guyana Defence Force confirmed the incidents; the Maduro government denied involvement.

Sources: Al Jazeera (2023a, 2023b, 2023c, 2024, 2025a, 2025b); Center for Strategic and International Studies (2025); Guyana Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2025a, 2025b); Library of Congress (2024); Organization of American States (2023); Security Council Report (2024). Compiled by authors.

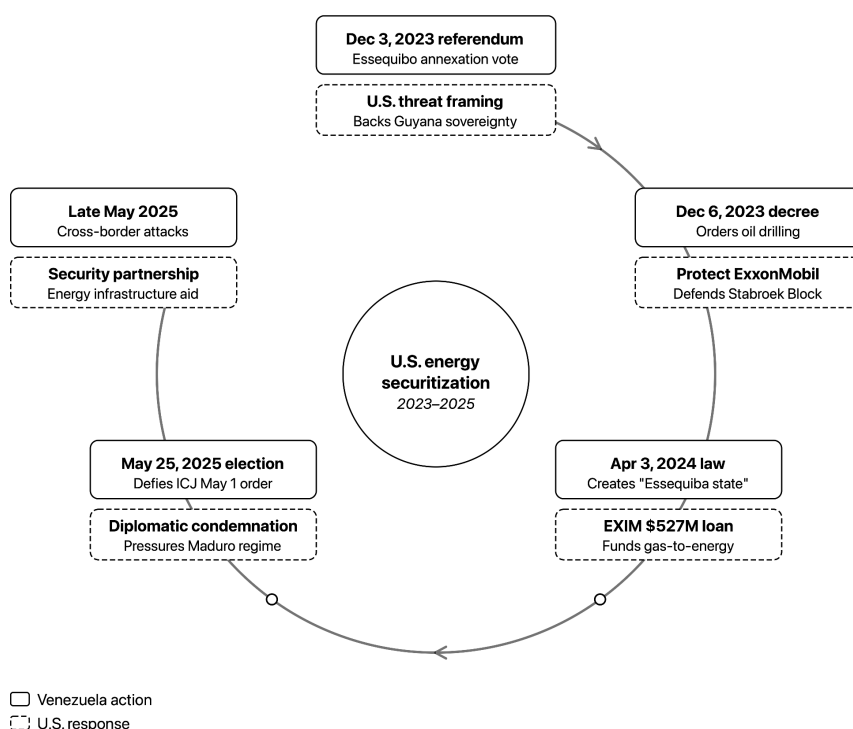
The U.S. Energy Interest During the Guyana–Venezuela Conflict 2023–2025

In this section, securitization is used to analyze: (1) the energy interest as the driver of securitization; (2) if the logic of energy securitization is fulfilled by the U.S. during the Guyana-Venezuela conflict within the years 2023-2025; and (3) what actions had been taken by the U.S. This research asserts that U.S. backing for Guyana in its conflict with Venezuela is mostly driven by energy interest. This connection highlights the strategic significance of the Venezuela conflict within the years 2023 - 2025. Energy discourse in this part is also regarded as part of U.S. energy interest. The energy discourse advanced by U.S. officials through statement, including Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Congressman Jason Smith, and U.S. Ambassador Nicole Theriot, throughout the 2023–2025 conflict can be read as a direct expression of U.S. energy interest, linking discursive practice to the underlying logic of securitization that drives the U.S. engagement in the dispute. Energy discourse in this manner clarifies why energy-related statements made by U.S. officials are not simply rhetorical: they articulate tangible material stakes in Guyana's oil sector and reflect the U.S.'s strategic positioning as a consumer-state actor with vested interests in a producer state's stability. The energy discourse advanced by U.S. officials throughout the 2023–2025 conflict can be read as a direct expression of U.S. energy interest, linking discursive practice to the underlying logic of securitization that drives American engagement in the dispute.

Direct statements from the U.S. officials highlight a clear connection between Guyana's energy output and tangible benefits for the U.S. interests. In March 2023, during a bipartisan congressional delegation visit to Guyana, Congressman Jason Smith, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, explicitly stated that (The Ways and Means Committee, 2023): "Guyana's abundant energy resources have the potential to lift its people out of poverty, help power the world, and ensure more affordable energy for American families and job creators". Energy security is also highlighted at Remarks by U.S. Ambassador to Guyana Nicole Theriot during Ambassador Welcome Reception: "I look forward to partnering with you and the Guyanese people to advance the goal of a prosperous and safe Guyana and to build a more sustainable and secure region, with a special emphasis on energy security, food security, and climate resilience (U.S. Embassy Georgetown, 2023a)." The U.S. is also supporting Guyana's energy infrastructure, demonstrated by the Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM) approving a \$527 million loan to Guyana's Ministry of Finance in 2024. This investment seeks to strengthen Guyana's energy infrastructure by facilitating a gas-to-energy initiative, anticipated to increase the country's installed electric capacity and improve its energy security (EXIM, 2024).

ExxonMobil's operations in Guyana further exemplify the involvement of U.S. energy interests in the conflict. ExxonMobil, a prominent American energy giant, significantly influences Guyana's emerging oil and gas industry. On May 20, 2015, ExxonMobil Corporation declared an oil discovery in the Stabroek Block, situated around 120 miles offshore Guyana, according to a press statement (ExxonMobil, 2015). Hunter Farris, Senior

Vice President for Deepwater at ExxonMobil Upstream, described the 11 billion barrels offshore discovery as a "world-class oil discovery, perhaps the most significant oil find anywhere on the planet in generations". He further stated that this find and subsequent production have "transformed daily life for many of the country's 800,000 citizens" and turned Guyana into "one of the most incredible economic and geopolitical success stories the world has seen" (ExxonMobil, 2025). The designation of Guyana as an "energy superpower" and a "geopolitical success story" by ExxonMobil indicates that major U.S. energy companies recognize and respond to its geopolitical implications. In addition to financial considerations, they saw Guyana's energy as pivotal to global energy security and stability, assisting significant users such as the U.S. and Europe. This narrative bolsters the U.S. government's strategic interests and may advocate for ongoing diplomatic and financial support for American energy companies in Guyana.



Source: Authors Compilations based on Table 1.

Figure 4. The U.S. Energy Securitization Cycle: Venezuelan Escalation Points and Triggered U.S. Responses (2023–2025)

Figure 4 illustrates the cyclical logic through which Venezuela's escalating actions during the Essequibo dispute have been translated into successive U.S. energy securitization responses between 2023 and 2025. The cycle begins with the December 3, 2023 referendum, which functions as the trigger event; Venezuela's first formal claim over Essequibo as state policy and the initial securitizing moment for Washington, in which Guyana's territorial integrity and, by extension, ExxonMobil's offshore concessions are framed as under existential threat. Maduro's December 6 decree authorizing oil exploration in the disputed waters then escalates the threat from territorial to directly economic, targeting the Stabroek Block in which U.S. capital is already invested. The April 2024 Organic Law institutionalizes the annexation and prompts the U.S. to shift from rhetoric to material backing through the EXIM \$527 million loan for Guyana's gas-to-energy infrastructure. Subsequently, the May 25, 2025 elections for an Essequibo governorship defy the ICJ's May 1 order and draw sharper U.S. diplomatic condemnation, while the late May 2025 cross-border attacks push the cycle into a hard-security register, justifying deeper U.S. partnership on energy infrastructure protection, which then

loops back to reinforce the original threat framing. This cyclical structure reflects the securitization logic described by Buzan et al. (1998): each Venezuelan action reactivates the existential-threat frame, and each corresponding U.S. response further entrenches energy interest as the referent object being defended.

The logic of securitization proposed by Buzan et al. (1998) is that securitization is firstly formed by existential threats which are related to referent objects. This research posits that the United States' energy security faces an existential threat rooted in its energy interests therefore the U.S. conducted energy securitization during Guyana - Venezuela conflict 2023 -2025. Specifically, the U.S. energy interest is jeopardized due to Venezuela's actions and policies. In 2023, Venezuela directly threatened Guyana by asserting a claim over a significant portion of Guyanese territory, as detailed in Table 2. In pursuit of this claim, Venezuela held a consultative referendum (Al Jazeera, 2023a; Al Jazeera, 2023b; Library of Congress, 2024). The Venezuelan referendum poses a threat to Guyana's territorial integrity and sovereignty, which could lead to instability in the region. This stance is also a threat to U.S. energy interests, given that the disputed Essequibo region is rich in offshore oil reserves, drawing investments from American companies like ExxonMobil.

Following the December 3, 2023, referendum, Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro announced on December 6, 2023, his authorization for the immediate exploration and exploitation of oil, gas, and minerals within the disputed Essequibo territory. He also issued a three-month deadline for Guyanese companies operating in the region to cease their activities and withdraw. In response, Guyana's President Irfaan Ali swiftly condemned these actions as a "direct threat" to his nation's sovereignty (Al Jazeera, 2023b). The Venezuelan President's decision poses a direct challenge to U.S. energy interests, especially considering the substantial investments made by American companies, notably ExxonMobil, in the offshore oil fields of Guyana's contested Essequibo region. Any actions taken by Venezuela to interfere with these operations or to assert control over the territory may have a direct effect on U.S. corporate assets and the stability of the energy supply.

Consequently, this research identifies U.S. energy security as the main referent object confronting an existential threat inside the framework of U.S. energy securitization. The security of energy is immediately threatened by Venezuela's recent activities, especially its territorial claims over Guyana and its unilateral permission for resource extraction. These activities jeopardize American corporate investments in the region, particularly ExxonMobil, and undermine the overall stability of energy supply chains. As an energy consumer, the U.S. pursues energy securitization through strategies argued by Shaffer (2009) like diversifying sources, maintaining strategic reserves, building robust infrastructure, and ensuring fuel-switching capabilities (Shaffer, 2009). These efforts aim to protect against economic, physical, and environmental threats to supply, which can stem from market volatility, exporter policies, or geopolitical conflicts (Umbach, 2004). U.S. energy securitization emerges when energy security is jeopardized by geopolitical disputes, such as the Guyana-Venezuela dispute, necessitating securitization to safeguard energy security and interests.

The next logic of securitization identified in this research is emergency action which argued by Buzan et al. (1998) when an existential threat is responded to, relevant actors can gain legitimacy to take emergency actions. The U.S. commences energy securitization in response to Venezuela's belligerent acts, especially its territorial claim over Guyana, which are regarded as an existential threat. Consequently, the existential threat is associated with the emergency action implemented by the U.S. Secretary Marco Rubio during joint press availability with Guyana's President Irfaan Ali in 2025 stated that (Department of State, 2025): "*And the other are regional threats – the regional threats based on illegitimate territorial claims by a narco-trafficking regime.*" The emergency action that was identified is related to the Guyana-Venezuela conflict from 2023 to 2025.

The emergency actions by the U.S. in reaction to Venezuela's referendum about the contested territory with Guyana, as outlined in Table 3, encompassed several key actors and initiatives. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken reiterated unwavering U.S. support for Guyana's sovereignty, underscoring a peaceful resolution grounded in the 1899 arbitral award and recognizing the International Court of Justice's appeal for restraint. Moreover, U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) collaborated with the Guyana Defence Force, conducting flying operations in Guyana's airspace on December 7, 2023, as part of a standard security exercise. Additionally, Principal Deputy National Security Advisor Jon Finan conferred with Guyana's President Irfaan Ali to reaffirm unwavering U.S. support for Guyana's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and defense capabilities.

Table 3. Existential Threat and Emergency Action in U.S. Energy Securitization

Existential Threat	Emergency Action
Venezuela proceeded with its consultative referendum (Al Jazeera, 2023b; Al Jazeera, 2023a; Library of Congress, 2024). Reports indicated that voters overwhelmingly supported the rejection of the ICJ's jurisdiction and the creation of a new "Guayana Essequiba" state (Al Jazeera, 2023a; Al Jazeera, 2023b; Library of Congress, 2024).	Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken reaffirmed unwavering U.S. support for Guyana's sovereignty in a call with President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, reiterating calls for a peaceful resolution to the Venezuela-Guyana land dispute based on the 1899 arbitral award, acknowledging the International Court of Justice's call for restraint, and looking forward to future cooperation on the UN Security Council, all while agreeing on the importance of a peaceful and democratic Western Hemisphere (U. S. Department of State, 2023).
Al Jazeera reported that Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro authorized the immediate exploration and exploitation of crude oil, gas, and minerals in the disputed Essequibo region. He also issued an ultimatum, demanding that Guyanese companies operating in the region leave within three months. Guyana's President Irfaan Ali swiftly rejected these measures as a "direct threat" against his country (Al Jazeera, 2023b).	Cooperation between USSOUTHCOM and the Guyana Defence Force (GDF) will involve the execution of flight operations in Guyana's airspace on December 7, 2023. This exercise is a continuation of routine engagements and operations aimed at strengthening the security partnership between the US and Guyana, while also enhancing regional cooperation (U. S. Embassy Georgetown, 2023b).
During the period in January to April 2024, Venezuela issued a series of decrees and laws aimed at purportedly annexing and incorporating Guyana's entire Essequibo Region, which constitutes nearly 70% of Guyana's national territory, into Venezuela (Guyana Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2025a).	Jon Finan met with Guyana's President Irfaan Ali to reaffirm the steadfast U.S. support for Guyana's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and defense capabilities (The White House, 2024).

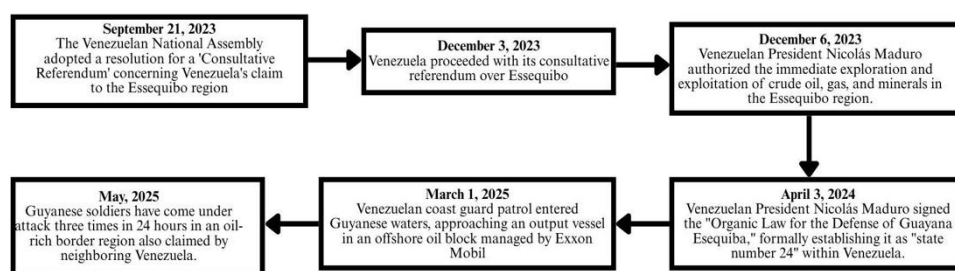
Source: Compiled by Authors

According to Buzan et al. (1998), the final stage of securitization logic, "Breaking free of rules," describes the point where a securitizing actor can take actions that deviate from normal political behavior or even violate established rules. In this case, the U.S., through Secretary of State Marco Rubio, issued a warning to Venezuela: "*It will be a very bad day for the Venezuelan regime if they were to attack Guyana or attack ExxonMobil or anything like – it would be a very bad day, a very bad week for them*" (Department of State, 2025). The warning was disseminated subsequent to the Guyana Defence Force's confirmation of three attacks on its personnel by armed individuals, reportedly Venezuelan and disguised as civilians, occurring within a single 24-hour period on May 2025. These incidents were reported by Guyanese soldiers, although the Maduro government later denied any state involvement (Al Jazeera, 2025a). Previously On March 1st, 2025, the U.S. Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs issued a statement (figure 2) condemning Venezuelan naval vessels for threatening ExxonMobil's offshore production unit, calling it a clear violation of Guyana's internationally recognized

maritime territory. The Bureau warned that further provocation would lead to consequences for the Maduro regime and reaffirmed U.S. support for Guyana's territorial integrity and the 1899 arbitral award.

This warning and statement indicate a deviation from established norms, implying the United States' readiness to go beyond limitations if its interests are threatened. The statement suggests that the US is prepared to surpass traditional foreign policy to protect its oil interests in Guyana. The Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs' declaration, characterizing Venezuelan actions as an "unacceptable and clear violation of Guyana's internationally recognized maritime territory" and warning of "consequences for the Maduro regime," represents the ultimate securitizing maneuver. This assertion presents the matter as an existential danger to Guyana's territorial integrity and primarily U.S. energy interests. This suggests that the U.S., in its role as a securitizing actor, is prepared to transcend established diplomatic norms and implement extraordinary measures.

The overall energy securitization by the U.S. during the Guyana - Venezuela conflict 2023 - 2025 is possible as an output from process tracing. Process tracing argued by Balazacq (2011) consists of social factors that facilitate the creation of social phenomena. Furthermore, it includes identification of mechanism and facilitating conditions (Robinson, 2017). This research explores the use of self-claim as a mechanism within the context of energy securitization in the U.S. The assertion originates from Venezuela's claim regarding the territory of Guyana, as illustrated in figure 5. The figure illustrates that Venezuela's self-assertion acts as a catalyst for the U.S. energy securitization process. Figure 5 presents a timeline of events that highlights the progression of Venezuela's territorial claim, beginning with the resolution adopted in September 2023 and culminating in President Maduro's signing of the "Organic Law for the Defense of Guayana Esequiba" in April 2024, which effectively annexes the territory. The assertive self-assertion, which reached a peak with military operations in May 2025 in a region of Guyana known for its oil wealth, poses a direct risk to the stability of energy supplies from an important South American producer. The significant oil and gas reserves in the contested Essequibo region, coupled with the participation of U.S. companies such as ExxonMobil, naturally lead to worries regarding the protection of these energy resources and the overall energy dynamics in the region. As a result, this ongoing and increasing assertion plays a crucial role in driving U.S. energy security initiatives, as it highlights the need to protect energy interests and reduce the risks of potential disruptions caused by geopolitical instability.



Source: Compiled by Authors
Figure 5. Self-Claim Mechanism

The next stage of process tracing is the facilitation of conditions. This research highlights the facilitating conditions that emerged from Venezuela's perceived threat to U.S. energy interests. The assertion of ownership over Guyana's territory, where ExxonMobil was active, led to direct confrontations, including an incident in March 2025 when the Venezuelan coast guard approached ExxonMobil's vessels. The assertive stance taken by Venezuela, which has evolved from legislative measures to direct maritime incursions in a region vital for U.S. energy

interests, has fostered a situation where U.S. intervention appears to be increasingly warranted. The ongoing challenges faced by ExxonMobil, a major American energy company, underscore the economic and strategic importance for the U.S., thereby serving as a crucial factor in its response to energy security concerns. The possible interruption of oil production from the Stabroek block, an increasingly important source of crude, calls for U.S. intervention to maintain the stability of the U.S. energy supply and safeguard its investments.

CONCLUSION

This research draws several conclusions about the U.S. energy securitization during Guyana - Venezuela conflict within 2023 - 2025. The research using primary data from government and secondary data from media concluded that the U.S. energy securitization move developed as a traceable process. The securitization move is fulfilled by identification of referent objects, emergency actions and breaking free rules. Together with process tracing as the data analyzing method, the U.S. energy securitization move is concluded to happen during the conflict. In this case the energy securitization is started at Venezuela referendum in 2023 in which the U.S. consider it as existential threat which need emergency action to respond it, the securitization move grows into breaking free of rules which occurs when Venezuela started to threatening ExxonMobil FPSO in the Guyana territory.

The oil interests of the United States are seen as a key reason for its support of Guyana amid the challenges posed by Venezuela. The actions and policies of Venezuela that threaten Guyana's territory are seen as a significant risk to U.S. energy interests, particularly given the considerable investments made by American oil companies like ExxonMobil in Guyana's developing offshore oil industry. As a result, there is a need for a securitization initiative to protect these essential energy assets and ensure a stable energy supply, considering that the U.S. is a energy consumer state.

The U.S. energy securitization move is posited as a process that is defined by analysing the mechanisms and facilitating conditions, specifically the process of Venezuela's self-claim over Guyana's territory. The self-claim mechanism evolves into a facilitating condition that, by heightening regional instability and the likelihood of conflict over energy resources, justifies the U.S. in asserting its security interests in the region. This dynamic enables the U.S., as an energy-consuming nation, to rationalize interventions intended to secure a stable energy supply and portraying these actions as essential for its energy security.

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