

**PROCEEDINGS
İSTANBUL AREL UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL
CONGRESS 2023
CHANGING GEOPOLITICS OF CENTRAL ASIA
AND THE CAUCASUS: CHALLENGES AND
PROSPECTS
(17-18 JUNE 2023)**

BOOK of PROGRAMME & ABSTRACTS

PROCEEDINGS
İSTANBUL AREL UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS 2023
CHANGING GEOPOLITICS OF CENTRAL ASIA AND THE CAUCASUS:
CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS (17-18 JUNE 2023)
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AIM AND SCOPE

From a global perspective, Central Asia and the Caucasus as a geopolitical complex is one of the most notable regions of the world. Changing geopolitics of the region which retains challenges and prospects in the same pot is of crucial importance not only for its periphery but also for the rest of the world. While the great and regional powers' contests; interstate, intrastate, and extra-state conflicts; terrorism; and organized crime challenge the stability of the region, prospects of security, economic, and organizational cooperation promote a new horizon of peace, stability, and prosperity.

It is highly likely that Central Asia's and the Caucasus' future will be more dynamic than ever. Changing dynamics of the region transforms its geopolitics. The 21st Century has brought a new atmosphere of cooperation together with uncertainties, new risks, and threats to the region. A new understanding of scholarship is one of the determinant factors to shape a safe and secure future for the region. This may also help positive developments for the entire world. For that reason, İstanbul Arel University / Türkiye has organized an online international congress titled "Changing Geopolitics of Central Asia and the Caucasus: Challenges and Prospects" (17-18 June 2023).

The aim of Congress is to discuss, analyse and assess the present and future areas of concern and opportunities in Central Asia and the Caucasus. The Congress will be held in two days with successive five sessions. The first three sessions will deal with challenges with an understanding of the enlarged security approach. The fourth session will concentrate on regional cooperation areas of the economy, energy, transportation and the fight against organized crime and terrorism. The final session is about the future of regional organizations, forums and conflict resolution initiatives.

DAY 1: 1st Session
17 June 2023
10.00 – 12.20 (İstanbul Time)

[In order to participate in the session, Ctrl+click here](#)

Opening Session – Introduction (10:00-10:30-İstanbul Time)

Opening Speech of the Rector İstanbul Arel University Prof. Dr A. Ercan Gegez

Key Note Speaker – Ex-Minister of Education of I.R. of Afghanistan Mirwais Balkhi

Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Dr Ali Bilgin Varlık

Session-I: Evolving Strategic Landscape (10:30-12:20-İstanbul Time)

- Impacts of US withdrawal from Afghanistan
- Implications of the Russia-Ukraine War
- Great powers' contests

Session	No.	Speaker	The topic of the Paper
I	1.	Guli Yuldasheva	Changing geopolitics of Central Asia: Challenges and prospects
I	2.	Bardia Torabkhanly	The trend of geopolitical changes in Central Asia and the perception of Central Asian Republics from changing challenges and opportunities
I	3.	Mariusz Rzeszutko	Geopolitical changes in the Caucasus caused by Russian military involvement in the so-called 'near abroad' - opportunities and threats.
I	4.	Fikret Birdişli	Hybrid War, and "Carrot Stick" strategy of Russia in the Ukraine War
I	5.	Shoaib Khan	Implications of Russia-Ukraine War on Eurasian geopolitics
I	6.	Gökhan Tekir	The security implications of Afghanistan for Central Asia
I	7.	Mirwais Balkhi	The Russia-Afghanistan relations under the US Presence: Challenges and opportunities 2001-2021

DAY 1: 2nd Session
17 June 2023
12.20 – 14.40 (İstanbul Time)

[In order to participate in the session, Ctrl+click here](#)

Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Dr Fatma Aslı Kelkitli

Session-II: Regional Security: Challenges-1

- Interstate conflicts
- Intrastate conflicts
- Terrorism and organised crime

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II	9.	Derya Azer & Yunus Karaağaç	Russia's hybrid warfare strategy as a product of its historical exceptionalism
II	10.	Shahindah Hesam	Geopolitical issues in the Black Sea-Southern Caucasus Region and Türkiye-Russia conflict and cooperation post-2002
II	11.	Jinguo Wang;Yudai	Separatism in Ingushetia: History, present, and challenges
II	12.	Sima Baidya	Kaleidoscopic strategic politicalscape in Taliban's Afghanistan 2.0: Deep impact on Central Asian Region
II	13.	Dinka Gojun	Drug trafficking as a threat to regional security in Central Asia and the Caucasus
II	14.	Smrutirekha Sahu	Women trafficking as a challenge to regional security in Central Asia and South Caucasus

DAY 1: 3rd Session
17 June 2022
14.40 – 17.00 (İstanbul Time)

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Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Dr Aşkın İnci Sökmen Alaca

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- Energy security
- Food security
- Migration

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III	16.	Muhammad Manzoor Elahi	(Re-)defining Central Asia's energy El-dorado amid global net-zero vis-à-vis green and low-carbon energy: Challenges and prospects
III	17.	Abdusamat Khaydarov & Amirbek Kenjayev	Water - energy aspects of Central Asian Security
III	18.	Gülşen Aydın	The impact of Covid-19 on the geopolitics of Central Asia: A comparative analysis
III	19.	Lehari Kuppili	Changing geopolitics in Central Asia: Role of Russian out-migration
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18 June 2023
10.00 – 12.20 (İstanbul Time)

[In order to participate in the session, Ctrl+click here](#)

Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Dr Bülent Durgun

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- Hydrocarbon Energy Resources
- Transportation Lines
- Fight Against Criminal Organizations
- Fight Against Terrorism

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IV	25.	Pallavi Beriha	Connecting histories and geographies: The dispersal of the Bukharan Jews of Central Asia
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DAY 2: 5th Session
18 June 2023
12.20 – 14.40 (İstanbul Time)

[In order to participate in the session, Ctrl+click here](#)

Moderator: Asst. Prof. Dr Selma Şekercioğlu Bozacıoğlu

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- Regional Forums
- Regional Conflict Resolutions

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DAY 2: 6th Session
18 June 2023
14.40 – 17.00 (İstanbul Time)

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Moderator: Prof. Dr E. Cüneyt Akalın

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- Regional Forums
- Regional Conflict Resolutions

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VI	36.	Museyib Shiraliyev (21)	The European Union as a mediator between Armenia and Azerbaijan
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VI	38.	Liu Chang Chinese (14)	Small country diplomacy under the great power game: Taking Central Asian Countries as an example
VI	39.	Priti Kamal (25)	Challenges and role of women towards shaping the future amidst contemporary geopolitical conflicts
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Closing Remarks: Prof. Dr Oktay Bingöl

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DAY 1: 1st Session
17 June 2023
10.00 – 12.20 (İstanbul Time)

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Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Dr Ali Bilgin Varlık

Session-I: Evolving Strategic Landscape

- Impacts of US withdrawal from Afghanistan
- Implications of the Russia-Ukraine War
- Great powers' contests

Changing Geopolitics of Central Asia: Challenges and Prospects

Guli Yuldasheva*

Abstract

The paper forwards the idea of the Central Asian (CA) deeper integration with the Organization of Turkic states (OTS) and close cooperation with Iran to prevent the loss of national sovereignties and regional identities in the present-day geopolitical tension around Central Asia. The region of Central Asia has historically been a zone of the joint Persian-Turkic civilization that facilitates today's mutual understanding between CA states, other OTS countries, and Iran due to the closeness of their political culture, mentality, and culture. To achieve a more favorable geopolitical and economic climate for their development, the CA states should also intensify cooperation in the Persian Gulf that corresponds to the emerging tendencies of cooperation between Iran and the Arab world.

The importance of the subject is stipulated by the aggravation of the long-term geopolitical and economic challenges and threats in the development of the CA region that may destabilize the entire region and radically change the existing regional order. Much of the present-day situation depends on the outcomes of the growing confrontation between the West headed by the US and Russia, the West and China, and the US-Iran. This is exacerbated by the continued instability of Afghanistan and the Russian-Ukrainian war. Altogether, this demands a thorough analysis of the current geopolitical situation, its reasons and possible outcomes for Central Asia, and recommendations on how to withstand the newly emerging political challenges and threats around the region.

Correspondingly, the author uses the system-analytical, problem-chronological, and geopolitical approaches as the main ones that allow describing the main actors' geopolitical interests and evolution of the investigated problems based on the analysis of the modern IR system peculiarities.

The paper will describe the clash of geopolitical interests between the leading actors, and their link with CA security and economic development. The unleashed information war, the opposing sides' nuclear rhetoric, and the ambivalent stand of China in the Ukrainian conflict together with the preserved instability in Afghanistan and the sanction politics make the future of the Central Asian states doubtful and their independence instable.

It is clear that the situation may get out of control and lead to destabilization of the entire region that necessitates speedy integration within the OTS, consolidation of relations with Iran

* Senior Fellow, Department for Expertise of the Research, methodological, and educational literature, Coordination-Methodological Center on Contemporary History of Uzbekistan under Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, guli_57@mail.ru.

and the Gulf as a whole to form a mutually beneficial social-economic space to stimulate future prosperity and independence of the involved states.

Progress will be dependent on the outcomes of the presidential elections in Türkiye, the effectiveness of the foreign policy strategies, political will, and determination of the CA countries to defend their political choice.

Keywords: Geopolitics, Central Asia, OTS, Iran

The Trend of Geopolitical Changes in Central Asia and Perception of Central Asian Republics From Changing Challenges and Opportunities

Bardia Torabkhanly*

Abstract

This research attempts to examine and identify geopolitical changes created after the withdraw of great powers from Centra Asia and the opportunities and challenges faced by the Central Asian Republics (CARs) as the result. Under the conception of Great Game Central Asia has always been considered as a region in need of patrons. The presence of great powers has promised to promote security, finance and trade in Central Asia, a strategic region important for its energy, communication, and infrastructure projects. Following the withdrawal of United States from Afghanistan and Russian invasion Ukraine, China did not indicate the willing to fill the power vacuum in Central Asia, where regional powers such as Iran and Türkiye were considered as incapable. Starting a new era for the CARs (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan) in which the role of Great Powers is significantly diminished. For the Central Asian Republics, the presence of great powers was the guarantor of security for the region, while a great power vacuum has created security and economic challenges for these Republics. The decline of the great powers' position has exacerbated the need and willingness for the Central Asian republics to pursue more proactive and autonomous foreign policies.

The Central Asian Republics with the knowledge of the geopolitical importance of the region are focusing on fostering ties and promoting regionalism in order to fill the power vacuum in the region and finish the Great Game in Central Asia once forever. By using trend analysis methodology, this article tries to analyze the opportunities and challenges faced by the Central Asian Republics by examining and identifying the geopolitical changes created after the withdrawal of great powers from Central Asian. Therefore, this research based on the trends of geopolitical changes in the Central Asia in past decades tries to answer the questions; what are the trends of geopolitical changes in Central Asia and what are the perception of Central Asian Republics from changing threats and opportunities in the region? The findings of the research indicate that, Central Asian Republic focused their policies on regional level and by expansion of regionalism to faces the threats created by geopolitical changes in the fields of security, finance and trade mainly after the withdrawal of United states and the invasion of Ukraine by Russia.

Keywords: Centra Asia, Changing Geopolitics, Great Powers, Russia, United States

* M.A student in regional studies, Regional Studies Central Asia and the Caucasus
Allameh Tabataba'i University/Eco college of Insurance. TorabkhanlyBardia@gmail.com

Geopolitical Changes in the Caucasus Caused by Russian Military Involvement in the So-called 'Near Abroad' – Opportunities and Threats

Mariusz Rzeszutko*

Abstract

The Russian Federation's recent activities and military involvement in the so-called 'near abroad' have had a profound impact on geopolitical changes in the Caucasus region. Increased involvement in the unrecognized breakaway republics of Georgia during the Covid-19 pandemic, the military support provided to suppress protests in Kazakhstan and Belarus, the introduction of so-called 'peacekeeping forces' along the line of demarcation of the Armenian-Azeri conflict or, finally, the next phase of armed aggression against Ukraine have significantly remodelled previous perceptions of relations with Russia and changed the regional status quo. This activity and its consequences (e.g. sociological changes in the perception of Russia as an ally nation, shifting views of Russia's military potential in light of defeats on the Ukrainian front, ethnic segregation of the compulsory military conscription within Russia) bring both a series of risks and benefits for the Caucasian states and nations.

The subject of the study was Russian military activity in the Near Abroad area and its benefits and threats to the countries of the North and South Caucasus. The paper focuses on mapping both the process itself and its outcomes.

The research methods used in the process include comparison, historical methods, analysis and synthesis as well as reasoning per analogiam.

Keywords: Near Abroad, Russo-Ukrainian War, Caucasus states, geopolitics

* PhD, emrzet@gmail.com.

Hybrid War, and "Carrot Stick" Strategy of Russia in the Ukraine

Fikret Birdiřli*

Abstract

According to the power-centric approach in international politics strength of each nation was relatively constant unless it won a war or made new alliances. Therefore, throughout history, wars have had an important place as a constructive institution and a dynamic factor in international society.

But Wars are now considered unlawful in international law. However, in this study, it is argued that wars with a transformed character continue to have a decisive influence on the distribution of power. An example of this hypothesis is Russia's use of hybrid warfare methods for its post-imperial and revisionist policies. In this way, Russia uses its acquired network-centric warfare ability for potential friends and foes within the scope of the Carrot and Stick War strategy.

Russia's support for leaders of Syria, Belarus, and Libya is the best example for Carrots while offensive politics toward Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine for Stick policy. Karabakh War between Azerbaijan and Armenia has been an example for both Carrot and Stick because of the pre-war and post-war positions of belligerents, and relative gain for all sides.

In this context, Russia's carrot, and stick wars gain importance for not only regional security but international also because of contain some message for both the EU and the USA.

This paper includes also an evaluation of the strategic cultural elements of Russia to understand and assessment of its strategy and perception of the region and international areas.

In this way, it has been tried to understand un kinetic Hybrid Warfare Techniques used by Russia Against Ukraine. Besides, Russia's hybrid scenario "network-centric warfare" is evaluated as a threat not only to Ukraine and the region but also to international security. Descriptive and historical analysis methods were used in the study.

Keywords: Hybrid Warfare, Strategic Culture, Russia, Ukraine War.

* Professor Dr İnönü University. International Relations, fikret.birdisli@inonu.edu.tr

Implications of Russia-Ukraine War on Eurasian Geopolitics

Shoaib Khan*

Abstract

The Russia Ukraine wars which send the shock waves continue to reverberate geopolitically across Eurasia. The uncertain Western support and the vulnerability to retaliate, regional powers like Türkiye besides the states of the South Caucasus and Central Asia are with complicated choices. There was a big reduction in the Ukrainian forecasted harvest, along with Russia's decision on banning grain exports to the Eurasian Economic Union members, raised concerns about food security. The world witnessed the unfolding geopolitical drama in the ongoing war. The geopolitical ambitions of NATO and Russia are the root cause of this crisis. This is the reason for which geopolitical rivalries between the West and Russia have been experienced at its highest level.

It has been witnessed in the world where China and Iran border each other, allied against the Turks and Russians. Given their actions, this NATO involvement in this area may be encouraged. This war altogether is likely to have significant geopolitical consequences beyond Europe that will reshape political alignments and the security environment even in the faraway region. A mix of aspirations for projecting Russian power status; extending influence to Russian ethnic and other dissatisfied minorities in the former Soviet Republics was the motive of Russia in launching this war on Ukraine. To counterbalance the Western one in Eurasia and opposition to NATO expansion, particularly the inclusion of Ukraine; recreating a Russian sphere of influence.

There are multiple factors interacted which caused the conflict. The goals of the actors were incompatible, even if that was covered by the excitement that accompanied the fall of communism. In a classic security dilemma as the situation is being viewed as one of the conflicting goals not only revises our understanding of the happenings but changes our thinking on the possible future scenario. In between Russia and Central Europe is where Ukraine is situated, in maintaining regional stability the country has an important role. If not contributing to maintaining it in the long-term security is only temporary.

Keywords: Russia, Ukraine, NATO, European Union, Energy, Geopolitics, Eurasia

* Dr, University of Mumba, Faculty of Centre for Central Eurasian Studies. shoaibk_92in@yahoo.com.

The Security Implications of Afghanistan for Central Asia

Gökhan Tekir*

Abstract

Although much attention in the international relations literature focuses on the security challenges between Afghanistan-Pakistan, Afghanistan's effect on the Central Asian states has been neglected. Being created as an artificial state, Afghanistan's existence as a country has always had a dividing factor in the Central Asia. Throughout history Afghanistan never became a centralized state. Strong religious and ethnic identities always challenged the central authority. Thus, Afghanistan's neighbours have to manage state-to-state relations with Kabul and their relations with ethnic and religious groups.

The collapse of the last remnants of the state authority in Afghanistan after the Soviet-Afghan war had spill over effects in the newly independent Central Asian republics. This effect was especially visible in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Afghanistan has considerable Tajik and Uzbek population. In the civil war in Tajikistan, the United Tajik Opposition received active support of groups in Afghanistan against its war against the government forces. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), designated as a terrorist organization by Uzbekistan, operated out of Taliban controlled areas in Afghanistan. The IMU also organized attacks to Kyrgyzstan. Post 9/11 U.S. military campaign in Afghanistan in 2001 removed Taliban from the power and provided a relatively stable environment for Central Asian republics.

Despite short term improvements in security, healthcare, and education, the insurgency movement led by the Taliban forces gained momentum and eventually seized the power again in Afghanistan. The worries concerning the Taliban's takeover are very much real in the eyes of the policymakers in the Central Asian states. Although Trump Administration's agreement with the Taliban stated that the Taliban would not allow any terrorist group to use the Afghan territory to threaten the security of the USA and other countries, the Taliban's takeover has enabled terrorist groups. Daesh has taken advantage of the chaos created by the Taliban administration. Al Qaeda also benefited the Taliban rule.

The IMU, which has close ties with the Al-Qaeda, fought in the Taliban ranks during overthrowing Ghani government. The Taliban handed over the governance of the Afghan-Tajik border to Jamaat Ansarullah whose stated goal is to overthrow Tajik government. A new group, the Tajikistan Taliban Movement is also operating in Afghanistan.

All these developments indicate that there is a real possibility of terror spilling into Central Asia. Yet, total disengagement is not an option for the Central Asian republics due to territorial proximity. Therefore, they have to manage complex and fluid relations with the

* Asst. Prof. Dr, Department of International Relations, Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University, gokhan.tekir@hbv.edu.tr.

Taliban. This paper tries to unfold the effects of the Taliban takeover on the Central Asian republics with a particular emphasis on Tajikistan and Uzbekistan since they are the most affected republics in Central Asia by using process-tracing method. As Afghanistan increasingly becomes a place of instability and chaos, their political and security environment of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan will also be disturbed.

Keywords: Afghanistan, the Taliban, terrorism, the Central Asia.

The Russia-Afghanistan Relations Under the US Presence: Challenges and Opportunities 2001-2021

Mirwais Balkhi*

Abstract

Afghanistan and Russia faced many opportunities and challenges in their bilateral relations between 2001 and 2021. The elimination of hostility from the historical memory of the people of Afghanistan, and the acceptance of Russia's position and capacity as one of the world's great powers to create a secure and stable Afghanistan were among the basic pillars of Afghanistan's foreign policy. Russia also considered Afghanistan an important country, neighboring its southern security belt. Between 2001–2021, despite the presence of international forces — especially those of the USA, Russia's traditional rival — the government of Afghanistan and Russia made significant efforts to improve and develop relations with each other in the political, economic, and security fields. But they have faced many challenges in the relationship. It is essential to understand the relations between Afghanistan and Russia during the period of the presence of the United States in Kabul from the point of view of how Kabul and Moscow saw each other in this period. How has this two-way view finally caused Moscow to support the Taliban today? The re-emergence of the Taliban raises many questions in Afghanistan-Russia relations. Is Moscow's relationship with the Taliban strategic and friendly or a tactical and temporary? What effect do these relations have on the continuation of the Taliban?

Keywords: security complex, positive balancing, NATO, historical memory, the USA, Heart of Asia Process.

*PhD., Ex-Minister of Education of IR Afghanistan, Fellow, The Wilson Center Washington D.C.,
balkhi.mmirwais@gmail.com

DAY 1: 2nd Session
17 June 2023
12.20 – 14.40 (İstanbul Time)

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Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Dr Fatma Aslı Kelkitli

Session-II: Regional Security: Challenges-1

- Interstate conflicts
- Intrastate conflicts
- Terrorism and organised crime

The Caucasus Policy of the US Against the Background of Geopolitical Reality After the Second Karabakh War

Asgar Zeynalabdinov*

Abstract

As a result of the Second Karabakh War, Azerbaijan achieved the establishment of a new geopolitical environment in the South Caucasus region by resolving the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and recovering its territorial integrity. The global energy crisis caused by Russia's aggression against Ukraine has intensified Azerbaijan's role in guaranteeing global energy security.

These realities have influenced the United States' foreign policy toward not only Azerbaijan but also the Caucasus area. Security in the Caucasus region, as well as keeping the region's countries safe from threats and pressure from Russia and Iran, are critical components of US foreign policy strategy. Following the end of the Second Karabakh War, the US administration emphasized the importance of taking substantial steps to foster peace and improve bilateral relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. At the same time, official Washington affirmed support for Azerbaijan's attempts to preserve its economy and pursue its Caspian Sea energy potential. Azerbaijan's active participation in the NATO campaign in Afghanistan, as well as the terrorist attack, raised our country's relevance in official Washington.

Simultaneously, Azerbaijan plays an essential role in helping to stabilize Europe's energy security through the Southern Gas Corridor and by supplying fuel to Ukraine. These facts highlight the Caucasus' relevance to the United States.

Official Washington works closely with Georgia and Armenia, in addition to Azerbaijan. The US administration is stepping up efforts to have Azerbaijan and Armenia sign a peace treaty and normalize bilateral relations. Meetings between Azerbaijani and Armenian officials were planned in this regard through the intervention of official Washington. Georgia, whose territorial integrity was compromised as a result of Russian occupation, is also interested in strong cooperation with the US in resolving challenges that are critical to the country today. Georgia's role as a transit country in the transportation of the Caspian's rich energy resources is one of the primary factors increasing its importance for official Washington. And the invading Armenia has denied itself all of these prospects as a result of its isolationist stance.

Today, Armenia, relying on "patrons" such as Iran, Russia, and France, is delaying the signing of a peace treaty. In the absence of an autonomous foreign policy plan, Armenia is currently engaging in provocative behaviour rather than attempting to normalize relations with Azerbaijan and Türkiye. As a result, the situation in the region worsens.

* Researcher, lecturer, Baku State University, Azerbaijan, asgarzeynalabdinov@bsu.edu.az.

The United States pays special attention to the Caucasus region in light of Azerbaijan's altered geopolitics as a result of the Second Karabakh War. As a result, the US government is interested in establishing peace in the region on the basis of the fundamental principles advanced by Azerbaijan in the context of the world's political situation, which includes Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The restoration of peace in the region will provide numerous chances for official Washington by diminishing the positions of powers such as Iran, France, and Russia, all of whom are interested in the region's current tense condition.

Keywords: Second Karabakh war, US, geopolitical environment, policy

Russia's Hybrid Warfare Strategy as a Product of Its Historical Exceptionalism

Derya Azer* & Yunus Karaağaç*

Abstract

Russia has long been among the most decisive players in the great power chess game. Throughout its history, the vast and far-reaching Russian geography has hosted different political regimes and developed geopolitical strategies in accordance with the political agendas of these regimes. Yet, one thing remained indispensable to Russian foreign policy: Its distinct sense of self. Russia's self-perception in the face of its changing rivals has historically been a key determinant of its power politics. Yet, such exceptionalism brought along a rather exclusionist and expansionist tradition in Russian foreign policy.

Again, this Russian self-perception enabled the Russian identity to persist, as the law of dialectic requires every exclusionary attempt to serve an inclusionary purpose and Russian foreign policy to divert from the Western political culture. From the time when Catherine the Great made a bid for the expansion of Russian territories until the latest invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Russian exceptionalism, emphasizing unique Russian needs and responsibilities for Russia's unique geographical conditions, has served as a driving force for expansionism. Such an exceptionalist narrative can be clearly seen in today's revisionist Russian geopolitical strategy, which was fleshed out by the writings of influential strategist Alexander Dugin. The term "sphere of influence," located at the core of Russian exceptionalism, was articulated as a justifier for the future expansionist desires of the Putin regime. Yet, the discursive elements correspond to only one part of the overall Russian geostrategy today. At this point, hybrid warfare comes out as the main mean for such ultimate end.

The concept of hybrid warfare was popularized by Frank G. Hoffman, who analyzed the Hezbollah-Israel conflict. Yet, its institutionalization gained momentum with the study *The Value of Science is in Foresight* by Valery Gerasimov (2013), Chief of the General Staff of Russia. Hybrid warfare includes both regular and irregular actors, symmetric and asymmetric structures, conventional and unconventional tactics. Hybrid warfare, also referred to as the "Gerasimov Doctrine", refers to the coexistence of regular and irregular forces altogether. Such coordination is multi-dimensional and multi-layered. Military, political, social, economic, cultural, and cyber methods/spaces are integrated with traditional physical domains such as land, air, sea and space.

Russia is one of the main practitioners of the hybrid war concept. We witnessed this during the intervention in Georgia in 2008 and the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Russia's cross-border hybrid activities in 2008 and 2014 were characterized by Russian support for separatist groups, encouragement of protests, covert operations with clandestine units such as

* MA, International Relations, Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna, derya.azer@gmail.com.

* PhD, Independent Researcher, yunuskarags@gmail.com.

the "Little Green Men", and the articulation of low-intensity conflicts through cyber methods. The Russia-Ukraine War, which started in the Donbass region in southeastern Ukraine in 2014 and escalated on February 24, 2022, has emerged as the most recent version of the hybrid war strategy, and all of the hybrid war components have been put into practice.

The main thesis of this paper is the latest Russian aggressiveness towards Ukraine has been a product of its historical exceptionalism. In this study, Russian exceptionalism is presented in a historical perspective, and the hybrid war strategy in Ukraine, which constituted a concrete example of the transition from narrative to practice, is analyzed with descriptive methodology.

Keywords: Russia, Russian Exceptionalism, Russian Expansionism, Hybrid Warfare

Geopolitical Issues in the Black Sea-Southern Caucasus Region and Türkiye-Russia Conflict and Cooperation Post-2002

Shahindah Hesam*

Abstract

The Black Sea-Southern Caucasus region is strategically located between Europe and Asia, and has been the subject of geopolitical interest and conflicts for centuries. The region has important energy pipelines, trade routes, and military assets. In addition, it is a region where various ethnic and religious groups have continued to coexist for centuries, contributing to its complex political landscape.

Significant geopolitical developments have occurred in the region since 2002. The nations in the region have battled to articulate their national identities and claim their places in the global community. Russia and Türkiye have played significant roles in the geopolitics of the area. The two nations have a long history of collaboration and conflict, and a number of variables, such as energy, security, and cultural ties, have influenced their relationship. Russia and Türkiye have a complicated relationship that has seen conflict and collaboration since 2002.

The region has witnessed explicit military conflicts (Georgia, 2008), "hybrid" conflicts (Ukraine, 2014), the biggest land war in post-World War II Europe (Ukraine, 2022), territorial conflicts (Georgia, Ukraine), and "frozen conflicts" (Nagorno-Karabakh).

This paper analyses regional conflicts and how the two Black Sea powers have navigated their interests. Further, it discussed their complementary interests and shared concerns that draw them towards collaboration in the region in spite of historical conflicts. The paper draws from long history of the two former imperial nations to relate to their present struggle of conflict and cooperation to further their strategic interests.

The Black Sea-Southern Caucasus region has been the epicentre of geopolitical tensions, which a number of factors including energy, security, and tensions between different ethnic and religious groups has fuelled. The battles in the area have shown how crucial external powers, like Türkiye and Russia, are to the geopolitics of the area. The two nations, aided by their leadership, have been realistically able to pursue their interests in competing scenarios without escalating into large-scale conflict - a feature relatively uncommon given the capabilities of both powers. Several factors, including history, their perception of the West, cultural identities and domestic politics have aided them in their policies towards cooperation. Still, those factors can easily become reasons for conflict.

The Black Sea and southern Caucasus thus represent a fundamental key in understanding their relationship as the sea's strategic value has a deep effect on the geopolitical mindset of both countries.

Keywords: Black Sea, Southern Caucasus, conflict, cooperation

* Ms, International Relations. Jamia Millia University, New Delhi, India, sha.hesam123@gmail.com.

Separatism in Ingushetia: History, Present, and Challenges

Jinguo Wang * & Yudai Ouyang*

Abstract

Research background: The COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict have partly fuelled separatist tendencies in the Caucasus.

Purpose of the article: There are many ethnic groups in the North Caucasus region. Under almost similar geographical, political, and cultural environments, some ethnic groups have strong separatist tendencies, while some ethnic groups have no strong separatist tendencies, or even no separatist problems. For example, the Republic of Ingushetia, which is very similar to Chechnya in terms of historical memory, living environment, religion, language, culture, and economic development level, did not show obvious separatist tendencies after the end of the Cold War. Ingushetia, despite not having a strong separatist tendency, faced a land dispute with the neighboring administrative region of North Ossetia. The dispute should have been resolved peacefully, but unfortunately, it was resolved by force, which further fuelled separatist tendencies in Ingushetia. The unresolved land dispute and the use of force to resolve it may have contributed to the sense of injustice and marginalization felt by the Ingush people, leading to increased support for separatism. In 2018, a land-swap agreement between Chechnya and Ingushetia exacerbated Ingushetia's separatist tendencies. In 2020, affected by the new crown epidemic, Ingushetia became the first autonomous republic in Russia to declare bankruptcy. This undoubtedly inspired the separatist tendencies in the Ingushetia region. In that year alone, there were many terrorist incidents in Chechnya and Ingushetia. The Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2022 will exacerbate this trend. What was the motivation for Ingushetia's separatism? What is the current state of Ingush separatism? In the future, what will be the development trend of Ingushetia separatism? These become topics worthy of further study.

Methods : Geopolitical approach and simulation analyses

Findings & Value added: This article attempts to analyze the historical context of the development of Ingushetia separatism, analyze the factors of the emergence and development of separatism in the North Caucasus region, and combine the latest trends in Ingushetia separatism to simulate the possible future direction of the issue. According to different political goals and targets, the problem (or tendency) of Ingushetia separatism can be roughly divided into two parts. 2018), the second was opposition to the separatist forces that handed over the territory of the Republic of Ingushetia to the Republic of Chechnya (2018). With the conflict between Russia and Ukraine and the process of globalization, the Ingushetia issue has

* Prof. Dr, School of Politics and International Relations, Lanzhou University. wangjinguo@lzu.edu.cn

* Ms, School of Politics and International Relations, Lanzhou University, ouyangyudai123@163.com.

become increasingly prominent and has gradually become one of the factors of instability in the region. In the future, the Ingushetia issue may go in three directions, namely, to be resolved, to freeze the conflict, and to become the next "Chechnya". Judging from the current situation, the issue of Ingushetia separatism cannot be completely resolved in a short period of time, and its development trend is likely to fall into a frozen conflict. The problem of Ingushetia separatism is a typical case of separatism in the North Caucasus. However, the current academic research on it is limited. An in-depth analysis of this issue is not only conducive to understanding Russia's strategic layout in the region and then making predictions about its foreign policy, but also helps to understand hotspot issues in the Caucasus region. At the same time, this study complements the theory of separatism to a certain extent.

Keywords: North Caucasus, Ingushetia, separatism, ethnic relationship

Kaleidoscopic Strategic Politicalscape in Taliban's Afghanistan 2.0: Deep Impact on Central Asian Region

Sima Baid*

Abstract

The paper problematizes the contestation for inner power struggle in present Taliban's Afghanistan in the post-US withdrawal political scenario. US withdrawal had a seismic effect in Afghanistan. In August 2021, Taliban came to power for the second time like a Blitzkrieg in Afghanistan. It is a déjà vu moment for the world. The paper contends that change of regime has been interpreted differently by different regional/major powers. The paper makes a differentiation from its earlier Taliban regime in terms of its impact, interface, encounter and mode of containment [if so] by regional/ major powers. In absence of America, other powers' approaches are different. It is obvious from the process(s) of alliance formation and numerous meetings with new evolving formations. It has been observed that Afghanistan's neighboring countries' concerns have been consolidated by the efforts of coming together to have an impact on current Afghanistan regime. As Taliban's regime is desperate for the recognition from the world community, its neighbors are taking a nuanced view to understand and interpret the events and act accordingly. The paper would highlight the role of Russia, China, Pakistan and Iran in the Taliban regime 2.0 in Afghanistan. The paper examines, whether failure of war on terror led to the present diplomatic push by various actors from all directions. The paper also examines China's edge on the new Taliban regime to the surprise of the world! There is no doubt that it is a complicated situation, where in spite of the existence of angularities among regional powers, each power has been vying to present its model of peaceful Afghanistan. The paper has observed that slowly and steadily Taliban has tightened its grip and started changing everything in Afghanistan. Even if these changes are taking place with its own geography, but its impact is not going to be infinite beyond its own geography. In this connection, the paper would look into its impact on other geographies with territorial proximity to Afghanistan i.e. Central Asian region. The paper argues that Central Asian region cannot be insulated from these changes. As Central Asia is diverse and follows different pathways to have a different political identity. It is not only Islam or energy or post-Soviet economy or post-socialism. The paper argues that kaleidoscopic, i.e. ever-changing strategic environment in Afghanistan has been impacted Central Asian region deeply. Last but not the least the paper makes an attempt to fathom its changes.

* Asst. Prof. Dr, Centre for West Asian Studies/School of International Studies/ JNU, New Delhi, India.
sima.baidya@gmail.com.

Drug Trafficking as a Threat to Regional Security in Central Asia and the Caucasus

Dinka Gojun*

Abstract

The continuous drug traffic destabilizes transit routes by exacerbating corruption, increasing the social impact of drug abuse as well as strengthening terrorist organizations (Schmidt, 2003). Through drug trade linkages to terrorism, it is a threat to security even in the military sense of the term (Behera, 2013). The main thesis of the paper is that drug trafficking that mainly originates in Afghanistan poses a security threat to Central Asia and Caucasus countries because of the routes used. The thesis is that drug trafficking if widespread can cause instability in countries affected and nearby regions through corruption, terrorism, and societal effects. Since the US departure from Afghanistan, the already enormous drug trafficking enterprise in the country proliferated further meaning that in the upcoming years, if the threat is not controlled, the countries in the region especially on the trafficking routes could see national instability due to drug trafficking penetrating different layers of the society.

Although there has been previous research on the topic, there has been no recent review of the literature and due to the current volatile nature of the region, it is of utmost importance. The stability of Central Asia and Caucasus is not only important to their neighbours but also globally. Drug trafficking does not affect only the origin countries, but its effect is global. Drugs produced in Afghanistan are used in Europe, China, and the US. Therefore, the great powers have an obligation to aid its prevention and instability in the region could have global repercussions. Thus, this paper is of crucial importance because it will shed light on an important issue that has been ignored recently.

The main discussion points will be forming or further establishing a theory that drug trafficking is a security threat through the review of previous literature. The second point will analyse drug trafficking from Afghanistan and whether there has been an increase since the departure of US forces. This will be done using data from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. Finally, previous research will be employed to link drug trafficking originating from Afghanistan to instability in Central Asian and Caucasus countries.

The methods used will be a review of previous literature, UNODC data comparative analysis, and analysis of new developments through news reports. If deemed suitable, other methods can be pursued.

The hypothesis is that the US departure from Afghanistan increased drug trafficking in the region which increases security threats in the Central Asia and Caucasus region. However, this is a hypothesis and not a guaranteed outcome, thus objectivity is crucial.

Keywords: Drug trafficking, regional security, Central Asia, Caucasus

* Ms., Department of Political Science, University of Gothenburg. dinkagojun@gmail.com.

Women trafficking as a Challenge to Regional Security in Central Asia and South Caucasus

Smrutirekha Sahu*

Abstract

Women trafficking is a global concern for the national and international security and known as a Human Rights issue. The most well-known cases of trafficking in women were those of trafficking for sexual exploitation. Women in Central Asia and South Caucasus are exposed to trafficking due to various reasons: poverty, gender discrimination, due to warlike situation, internal conflict in the country and impoverished parents selling off their daughters to get economic benefit. Most of the women fall into the traps of traffickers who lure the victims by promising them a good income abroad. After they reach to destinations, they fall into sexual exploitation. Central Asia is a source, and to a lesser extent, a transit and destination point of victims trafficked for the purpose of sexual and labour exploitation. Women from Central Asia forced into prostitution in the Middle East, Eurasia and Asia. They are also into domestic trafficking. The countries of South Caucasus are both the origin and destination for the women trafficking. Victims are trafficked to Greece, Russia and Middle East countries. Armenia is mainly a country of origin, while women are forced into prostitution domestically in Georgia as well as Russia, Germany, Austria and others. Similarly Azerbaijan is a source, transit route and destination for human trafficking especially women from Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan are trafficked there for prostitution.

The legislation of the Central Asia and South Caucasus countries have all the necessary background to combat trafficking successfully. Armenia and Azerbaijan ratified the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children in 2003, while Georgia ratified in 2006. All the five Central Asian countries has also ratified this protocol supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. Further, all Central Asian countries recognize trafficking as a criminal offense and define this crime accordingly. The countries are parties to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime by ratifying the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

While all Central Asian and South Asian Countries have taken important steps to introduce new laws and policies against trafficking of women, there are still significant shortcomings. These include the identification of victims, investigation techniques, prosecution of traffickers and assistance to victims. The paper critically explore the implications of women trafficking in Central Asia and South Caucasus as a challenge to regional security, which is the main thesis of the study. The study has it relevance in the gender

* Ph.D Scholar, Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies (International Studies), smrutirekhasahu145@gmail.com

perspective that Women trafficking as an organized crime, has become a threat to the changing geopolitics of both the regions and to the countries where victims are trafficked. The research is based on analytical and descriptive methods and it is a qualitative study. It follows the deductive methodology. The research is based on both primary and secondary sources. Further, the study recommends to combat trafficking of women for regional security in both the regions.

Keywords: women trafficking, organised crime, Central Asia, South Caucasus.

DAY 1: 3rd Session
17 June 2022
14.40 – 17.00 (İstanbul Time)

[In order to participate in the session, Ctrl+click here](#)

Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Dr Aşkın İnci Sökmen Alaca

Session-III: Regional Security: Challenges-2

- Climate change
- Energy security
- Food security
- Migration

Renewable Energy in Central Asia and Cooperation with the EU

Zhuldyz Kanapiyanova*

Abstract

Central Asian countries, which are rich in underground non-renewable resources such as natural gas, oil and coal, also have renewable resources such as wind, solar and water. While the infrastructure of non-renewable energy resources in energy production has been developed and come to the fore since the Soviet period, the infrastructure of renewable energy has started to be addressed later accordingly and is less popular due to the lack of infrastructure. In this context, Central Asian countries are in close cooperation with the European Union, which is the leader in renewable energy. The energy cooperation between the two actors is carried forward with projects such as WECOOP and SECCA.

The aim of the study is to analyze the contribution of energy cooperation with the EU by considering the renewable energy policies of Central Asian countries. The main subject of the study is the capacity of developing the renewable energy potential of the Central Asian countries, which have non-renewable natural resources, with the EU, which is the leader in renewable energy.

Around the world, renewable energy has the dual goal of meeting growing energy demand and decarbonizing the energy supply. Europe, which is at the forefront of renewable energy development, research is focused on the state of energy resources and progress towards renewable energy targets, as well as the effectiveness of policy instruments. The importance of renewable energy has started to gain importance in the Central Asian region as well, with the transition to green energy and the development of clean energy as an alternative to non-renewable energy all over the world. The prospects for renewable energy sources development are viewed positively, as the Central Asian countries are beginning to recognize the need to use renewable energy to meet growing energy demand while striving for sustainable development (eg, reducing CO₂ emissions).

In this context, it is valuable to learn about the renewable energy potential of Central Asian countries and the difficulties and obstacles in developing it. The study consists of introduction, conceptual and theoretical background, renewable energy potential of Central Asian countries and energy cooperation with the EU. The background of the study is analyzed with the neoliberal theory, which argues that international political institutions can allow states to cooperate successfully in international relations, and the assumptions of the most prominent representatives of neoliberalism, Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye. According to the results of the study, the Central Asian region, which is rich in natural energy resources, cannot develop its renewable energy capacity due to its insufficient infrastructure. In this

* Dr, International Relations, Eurasian Research Institute, Akhmet Yassawi Turkish-Kazakh, juldyz777@hotmail.com.

context, Central Asia will be able to develop renewable energy programs and policies within the framework of neoliberal theory with the EU, which is the leader in renewable energy.

Keywords: renewable energy, Central Asia, EU, cooperation.

(Re-)defining Central Asia's Energy El-dorado Amid Global Net-Zero vis-à-vis Green and Low-Carbon Energy: Challenges and Prospects

Muhammad Manzoor Elahi*

Abstract

Main Thesis: Central Asia has long been considered an energy "El-dorado" due to its vast reserves of fossil fuels, particularly natural gas and oil. However, the global urgency to achieve net-zero emissions has led to a rethinking of the region's energy landscape. This paper argues that (re-)defining Central Asia's energy El-dorado in the context of the net-zero goal requires a fundamental shift towards renewable and low-carbon energy sources.

Importance of the subject: The significance of study cannot be overstated, as Central Asia's energy resources have played a significant role in the region's economic development and global energy security. However, the continued reliance on fossil fuels not only contributes to climate change but also exposes the region to energy price fluctuations and geopolitical risks. The transition towards renewable and low-carbon energy is therefore critical for both environmental and economic sustainability.

Content of the Paper: The paper is structured into three main discussion points. Firstly, it analyzes the challenges and prospects of renewable energy development in Central Asia, taking into account the region's unique political, economic, and social context. This includes a comparative analysis of the renewable energy potential of different Central Asian countries, such as solar and wind power in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and hydropower in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Secondly, the paper explores the role of regional cooperation in energy transition, particularly in the context of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Central Asia's strategic location makes it a potential renewable energy hub for peripheral states and the paper examines the opportunities and challenges of developing renewable energy infrastructure to meet growing energy demand in neighboring countries.

Finally, the paper discusses the policy and regulatory frameworks needed to facilitate the transition towards renewable and low-carbon energy in Central Asia. This includes an assessment of the legal and institutional barriers to renewable energy development and the potential for policy innovation to incentivize private sector investment in the sector.

Methodological Considerations: The methodology used in this paper involves a review of relevant literature, data analysis, and case studies of renewable energy projects in Central Asia. The outcome of this research is a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and prospects of (re-)defining Central Asia's energy El-dorado in the context of the net-zero goal.

* Mr., GCU Main Campus, Department of Political Science Government College University Lahore, Pakistan. mmelahi@gcu.edu.pk.

Conclusion: The paper concludes that a successful transition towards renewable and low-carbon energy in Central Asia requires a coordinated effort from governments, the private sector, and international organizations, as well as the adoption of innovative policies and regulatory frameworks that can incentivize the deployment of renewable energy technologies.

Keywords: Central Asia, Net-Zero, Low-Carbon Energy Transition, Green Energy, Climate Change

Water - Energy Aspects of Central Asian Security

Abdusamat Khaydarov* & Amirbek Kenjayev*

Abstract

Modern Central Asia, which is a link between the countries of Europe, the Middle East, South and East Asia, is one of the most significant regions in the modern geopolitics. Today, the countries of the region are in the process of integration into the system of international relations and the world economy, which until recently occurred at the background of a number of unresolved problems, including border, territorial, and water - energy issues. The unresolved nature of these problems, especially the water - energy problem, hindered development of full-blooded cooperation and potentially posed a serious threat to the security of Central Asia itself and neighboring regions. The water - energy problems of the region, which does not have direct access to the world's oceans, have played and continue to play a critical role in maintaining security in Central Asia. Throughout the centuries-old history of the region, water has been and remains a key factor in the development of the socio-economic life of the states of the region. Active involvement of Kabul in the last two years in the issue of water consumption of transboundary rivers separating Afghanistan from the countries of Central Asia raised many questions affecting the interests of this group of countries, and determined the choice of this topic. The article focuses on the evolution of the efforts and approaches of the Central Asian states to the problem of consumption of the water resources of transboundary rivers from the moment of independence to the present time. Special attention is paid to the initiatives of the Republic of Uzbekistan aimed at resolving water - energy and other problems in the region, which have long hampered the development of cooperation between the countries of Central Asia. The result of these efforts was the creation of a new atmosphere of cooperation in the region and significant increase in mutual trade between neighboring countries. The work is based on study of factual historical material, the chronicle of the most important events on the selected topic in the last three decades; analytical materials published on the pages of foreign mass media were used. The methodological basis of this research involves the comparative historical method; the work is based on the principles of historicism, reliability and scientific objectivity. The authors come to the conclusion that fresh water reserves depletion caused by such factors as global warming, population growth and the development of national economies may create new threats and challenges to the security of Central Asia in the future. With the implementation of the current interim Government's plans to use Amu Darya water resources, a new important aspect appeared in the relations between Kabul and the countries of Central Asia, which requires joint coordination on the basis of existing international legal documents on this issue. All this causes

* Dr, The Diplomatic Academy at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy, the Republic of Uzbekistan. akhat54@gmail.com.

* Dr, Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies. amirkenjayev1818@mail.ru.

the vital necessity of the fundamental improvement of institutional framework for joint transboundary water use in Central Asia, in particular, improving activities of the Interstate Coordinating Water Commission and turning it into a full-fledged regional organization for joint management of transboundary water sources in Central Asia.

Keywords: Central Asia, Afghanistan, water - energy problems, transboundary water sources, cooperation, new atmosphere of cooperation.

The Impact of Covid-19 on the Geopolitics of Central Asia: A Comparative Analysis

Gülşen Aydın*

Abstract

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in late 2019 had an unprecedented impact on global politics and the functioning of international relations. It is important to address the impact of Covid-19 in the context of Central Asia, a region that is characterized by its geopolitical complexity and economic interdependence, because the pandemic has triggered a range of political, economic, and social challenges that have tested the resilience of regional institutions and governments. This conference paper aims to explore this important issue with a focus on Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. To this end, following the introduction, the paper first evaluates the impact of Covid-19 on the economic development of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. While the paper secondly focuses on the impact of the pandemic on the regional cooperation in Central Asia, it thirdly explores changes in the geopolitical alliances in face of pandemic. The main argument of the paper is that the Covid-19 pandemic has had a mixed impact on the economic development, regional cooperation, and geopolitical alliances in Central Asia.

The research method employed in this paper is a comparative analysis of the political and economic responses of the three Central Asian countries to the Covid-19 pandemic. The paper draws on a range of primary and secondary sources, including official government statements, academic literature, and media reports. The paper explores the impact of Covid-19 on three key areas: economic development, regional cooperation, and geopolitical alliances.

The findings of this paper suggest that the Covid-19 pandemic has had a mixed impact on the geopolitical dynamics of Central Asia. On the one hand, the pandemic has led to a sharp decline in economic activity in the region, particularly in the areas of trade, tourism, and remittances. This has had a dramatic effect on the region's overall economic performance, with GDP growth rates declining sharply in 2020. However, the pandemic has also led to greater regional cooperation and coordination, particularly in the areas of healthcare and border management. This has led to a renewed emphasis on regional integration, with governments in the region exploring new avenues for collaboration and partnership.

Furthermore, the pandemic has also affected the geopolitical alliances of Central Asian countries. Kazakhstan has sought to strengthen its relationship with China, particularly in the areas of healthcare and economic cooperation. Uzbekistan, on the other hand, has sought to build closer ties with Russia, while Kyrgyzstan has maintained its traditional ties with both Russia and China. Overall, the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the complex and evolving

* Assoc. Prof. Dr, International Relations, Ataturk University. gulsenaydin@atauni.edu.tr.

nature of the geopolitical landscape of Central Asia, and the challenges faced by regional governments and institutions in responding to these changes.

In conclusion, this study highlights the mixed impact of the pandemic on the region's economic development, regional cooperation, and geopolitical alliances, and provides insights into the challenges faced by regional governments and institutions in responding to these changes.

Keywords: Covid-19, economy, regional cooperation, geopolitics

Changing Geopolitics in Central Asia: Role of Russian Out-Migration

Lehari Kuppili*

Abstract

Geopolitics of central Asia is highly dynamic and a subject of constant scrutiny among academicians. A wide range of factors contribute to the dynamics like energy, resources, diaspora, political regimes and changes in the regimes, trade, cooperation over various areas, migration and so on. Russian out migration is one of the determinants of geopolitics in the region. Central Asia nations adopted ethnic or cultural nation building causing several minorities, especially Russians (largest minority in central Asia) to out migrate. The Russian out migration was initially seen by academia as threat to peaceful relations between central Asia and Russia. Especially considering the Russia Ukraine war, outmigration of Russians from central Asia was thought to a reason that could irk Russia. However, a pattern of return migration of Russians to central Asia has emerged surprising academia as Russians had to face othering and lack of opportunities in their homeland. The paper attempts to find why outmigration despite patterns of inward migration would act as a strong determinant in geopolitics of the region. An in-depth study is much needed and gains significance as Russian minorities in Central Asia are both geographically and politically significant to the region and is one of the vital determinants of the foreign policies of Russia and central Asian nations towards each other. The paper asserts that the Russian out migration plays a vital role in geopolitics of central Asia. The paper enquires into why Russian out migration plays a significant role in the changing Geopolitics of the region. The analysis further focuses on reasons for Russian out migration and elaborates the kind of change in geopolitics. The paper follows policy and event analysis methods to the study. The study is qualitative based on quantitative data. The study has incorporated lee method of migration (Push and pull) to explain Russian in and out migration. The study assumes Russian out migration as independent variable (VI) and changing geopolitics as dependent variable (VD). The paper hypothesizes that Russian out migration inflicts insecurity of loss of influence over central Asia, both geographically and politically, especially in the border countries. The paper also assumes that the actions of Russia in Central Asia, for an instance coming to rescue of Kazakhstan during 2021 turmoil, are assurance in disguise to Russian minorities in central Asia to stay in central Asia as Russia would always protect them. The paper also argues that the inward migration trends of Russians to central Asia are also a part of changing geopolitics and response of Russia to changing Geopolitics.

* Ms., Russia and Central Asia, International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India
Leharipatnaik@gmail.com.

Managing Migration in Kazakhstan through “Migration Policy Concept 2023-27”

Muhammet Musa Budak*

Abstract

The geography of Kazakhstan has gained a multinational structure due to the migrations it has experienced throughout history. It has a social structure with different ethnic structures. The People's Assembly institution was established in the young Kazakh Republic, which gained its independence with the collapse of the Soviet Union. This institution has developed policies for more than 130 different social groups to live in harmony in the country. The high number of Kazakh population living abroad also indicates a different dimension in the development of migration policies. The Kazakhstan administration, which encouraged the return of Kazakhs living abroad after its foundation years, had to develop the depth and dimensions of its migration policies in the following years. The fact that Kazakhstan's emigration over the years is more than the immigration it receives necessitates more effective policies in this field. “Migration Policy Concept 2023-2027” approved by Kazakh government opens the door to different initiatives in this context. This article uses a descriptive-analytical method to advance itself and by examining the challenges on ground and Kazakh governments policies to overcome these questions based on mentioned concept paper. It is obvious that emigration from Kazakhstan has a distinctive trend. Negative migration balance only contributes to the problem of under-population especially northern territories (such as North Kazakhstan, Kostanai, Pavlodar and Karaganda regions) and shortage in the labor market. Another important challenge for the country is decreasing human capital quality. In the last five years, the proportion of emigrants with higher or vocational education reached 70% of the total number of people leaving the country while only 11% of incoming migrants had higher education. On the other hand, one of the largest groups which prefer to emigrate to other countries is students. More than 89.000 Kazakhstanis are studying at universities of different countries. Most of them have ambition to stay where they are which risks countries future potential. Another large group of Kazakhstanis living abroad is labor migrants. As Eurasian Economic Union has a general labor market and Kazakhstanis do not have to obtain any special work permits to work in Russia, many prefers to settle abroad to gain their livelihood. With the new concept, the Kazakh government aims at promoting the flow of skilled workers, protecting the rights of Kazakhs working abroad and in general a "reloading" migration policy.

Keywords: Kazakhstan, Migration Policies, Kazakh Diaspora, Negative Migration

* Dr, International Relations, Gaziantep University. mmbudak@gmail.com.

DAY 2: 4th Session
18 June 2023
10.00 – 12.20 (İstanbul Time)

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Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Bülent Durgun

Session-IV: Cooperation Prospects

- Economy and trade
- Hydrocarbon Energy Resources
- Transportation Lines
- Fight Against Criminal Organizations
- Fight Against Terrorism

The Impact Analysis of Chinese Aid to Central Asia

Rahman Nurdun*

Abstract

Many new countries emerged after the collapse of the former Soviet Union in early 1990s, among which Central Asia countries such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan started their struggle of nation building, working hard to build up friendly relations with neighboring countries in general, and with China in particular.

Fully aware of Central Asia's strategic importance and natural resources, Chinese leadership wasted no time to mobilize whatever means available to gradually fill up the gap left by the Russians. The instruments applied by China, apart from other diplomatic offensive, are large-scale aid badly needed by the ruling elite of the Central Asian countries to stay in power, such as construction of water dams, hospitals, roads, schools, which are the immediate needs of the local people as well as trainings of military and police officers, restoration of historic relics, etc.

Although at the beginning, China's contribution was not very significant, but with the rapid development of Chinese economy in last twenty years, Chinese aid in the region has surpassed those of Japan, the United States and EU both in quantity and scope. Looking back, it seems that Chinese efforts has paid off in the past thirty years as it became quite clear that China is now considered as an indispensable partner by the leaders of Central Asian countries. Despite regime changes in some Central Asian countries, one thing is clear that China has succeeded in doing business on favourable terms with whoever in charge after a political upheaval.

This paper starts by giving readers a general idea on the history of China's ODA, then proceeds to elaborate on Chinese perception on aid giving, finally analyzes the impact of Chinese aid to Central Asian countries based on some case studies.

Keywords: China, Central Asia, Aid, Elite

* Dr, Department of International Relations, Hacettepe University, Türkiye, rnurdun@gmail.com.

The Main Directions of Türkiye's Policy in the South Caucasus at the Present Stage

Gunel Aliyeva-Mammadova*

Abstract

Türkiye's policy has an ever-increasing influence on the vast Eurasian space at the present stage. Thanks to the new directions in Türkiye's foreign policy, the foundations of the country's multi-vector policy are being developed, which is very important for all Muslim countries. It can be said with confidence that in the current political conditions, Türkiye is increasingly strengthening its position not only in the region, but also beyond its borders, which makes it possible to create a multipolar world in the "New Great Game" in the post-pandemic era.

Türkiye's role and significance in the heart-land zone is increasing day by day. The Caspian, Black, Mediterranean, Red and Persian Gulfs is the key to exercising territorial and economic control over Eurasia (70% of the world's proven oil reserves, 40% of the world's natural gas reserves are located here), and this, in turn, determines control over the planet.

One of the main trends in Türkiye's foreign policy is relations with Azerbaijan. The 44-day Patriotic war showed the far-sighted policy of Türkiye, the main goal of which is to establish stability not only on its territory, but also on the territory of all Muslim states.

The 44-day Patriotic war became a golden page in the history of Azerbaijan, which opened a new era for the entire region.

Keywords: Türkiye, Azerbaijan, foreign policy, Caucasus

* Senior Lecturer, Asian and African countries history Baku State University, Azerbaijan, gunkaa.m@gmail.com.

Türkiye's Humanitarian Diplomacy

Faisal Banna*

Abstract

Türkiye as a key player in international politics have done tremendous work in enabling the opportunities of peace in the middle east, with the coherence of mutual agreements and bilateral talks. The country which hosts worlds largest refugee population around 3.9 million have important sake in global politics. In this global capacity building process of Türkiye this paper will try to understand how Türkiye's humanitarian diplomacy working to boost as a soft power in its foreign policy and how it is helping Türkiye to post earthquake reconstruction and rehabilitation. This paper will make a detailed study about how Türkiye contributed to the world distress and relief funds to different nations and gained domestic and national supports from across the nation states which extended its aid diplomacy.

Turkish humanitarian diplomacy is the use of diplomatic channels by Türkiye to address international humanitarian challenges and advance peace, stability, and development. This strategy is founded on the idea that diplomacy and humanitarianism ought to complement one another in order to make the world a better place for everyone.

In recent years, Türkiye has taken a more active involvement in humanitarian diplomacy, particularly in response to the Syrian refugee crisis. Since the start of the Syrian conflict in 2011, Türkiye has been hosting millions of Syrian refugees and collaborating with the international community to help those in need.

Additionally, Türkiye has participated in numerous international humanitarian and peacekeeping missions, including those in Somalia, Sudan, and Afghanistan etc. Türkiye has this welcoming image from global political stakeholders and different nation states, this in a comprehensive way helped Türkiye in their distress. Türkiye timely helped Qatar when this tiny island nation had to go through from its neighbouring power Saudi Arabia and its allies. So these little helps to different nations without checking its merits back now helped Türkiye to get wide spread global aid and assistance. This paper in detail will analyse how Türkiye used humanitarian diplomacy as soft power to strengthen its international ties and make strongest supporters from global politics. This paper will also make comprehensive analysis of Türkiyes developmental works in Asia and Africa in different arenas. In final this paper will try to encompass the aid and rescue Türkiye got during the devastating earthquake it happened in 2023. The study about this aid diplomacy will also investigate and contribute the idea of spreading humanitarian diplomacy as the basic diplomacy pack in different nation state as a key model to protect and help human race.

Keywords: Humanitarian diplomacy, Türkiye, global aid, disaster management, aid diplomacy.

* Research scholar, Pondicherry University, India, faisalbannam@gmail.com

The Interests of the States of the Region in the Opening of the Zangezur Corridor

Igbal Aghayev*

Abstract

Transport corridors have historically played an important role in the establishment of commercial ties, and control over them has been a source of wealth for ethnic groups living in these crucial territories. And the question of the security of such corridors steadily gained strategic importance, eventually becoming one of the top priorities of superpower foreign policies interested in controlling trade routes.

Due to the formation of new independent states in the South Caucasus, as well as Armenia's closure of the railway passing through Zangezur (a geographical part of Azerbaijan's historical west, transferred to Armenia in 1921) and connecting Nakhchivan with the main part of Azerbaijan, the country lost land connection with its exclave for 30 years.

In addition to its local importance for transportation connectivity, the Zangezur corridor may be viewed on two additional levels: 1. regional; and 2. inter-continental. The corridor's importance on a local level stem from the fact that it functions as a catalyst for local development in any country through which a new transportation route passes. It should be highlighted that the new corridor crosses through the least developed regions of three countries: Azerbaijan, Türkiye, and Armenia. Thus, the corridor should connect the southwestern regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which have been occupied and devastated for almost 30 years, Western Zangezur, the least developed region of the Republic of Armenia, and the eastern provinces of Türkiye, which have been underdeveloped for decades due to incessant terrorist attacks.

The Zangezur corridor and the procedures that occurred as a result of the "44-day war" between Azerbaijan and Armenia in 2020 exacerbated the region's political and diplomatic strife. As a result of this conflict, Azerbaijan was granted the right to use Zangezur, the ancient land of Azerbaijan, solely for communication purposes. At the same time, the revival of the region's republics, which were still in an active "neutral" condition, was aided by its exclave Nakhchivan and the creation of a land link from there to the Republic of Türkiye.

The article seeks to assess the regional states' national interests in the context of new geoeconomic realities that may emerge in the region with the opening of the Zangezur corridor. With a tripartite statement on November 9, 2020, the "44-day war" provided some clarity to the Azerbaijani-Armenian conflict, which had been under a ceasefire since 1994. However, it generally exacerbated the situation in the region.

* Assoc. Prof. Dr, Asian and African countries history, Baku State University, Azerbaijan.
igbal64@rambler.ru.

The states who have reaped the most benefits from the 30-year "status quo" have shown strong opposition to changing borders in accordance with international law principles.

States that attempted to identify relations based on their interests by using terms like "strategic partner" and "friendly-neighborly relations" were forced to take an open stance in the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. The Russian-Ukrainian war, which started in February 2022, exacerbated an already terrible position.

The article aims to ascertain the economic and political motivations of the region's states, both interested and uninterested in the opening of the Zangezur corridor, in the context of their national interests.

Keywords: One belt one road (OBOR), Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB), cooperation, logistics, Zangezur corridor, Middle corridor

Connecting Histories and Geographies: The Dispersal of the Bukharan Jews of Central Asia

Pallavi Beriha*

Abstract

This chapter is an effort in historical and cultural anthropology. The chapter places special emphasis on the Bukharan Jews, a group whose numbers have decreased due to immigration from 35,000 in 1989 to 1,000 in 2009. Since the late 19th century, a great deal has been written on the Central Asian Jews, known as the Bukharan Jews, who fell under Russian and subsequently Soviet rule. Yet the study of Bukharan Jews has just begun, at a time when there are essentially no Jews remaining in Central Asia. One of the oldest ethnic and religious communities in Central Asia, the Bukharan Jews have cultivated a unique culture over time. After the Russian Empire conquered Central Asia, different legal designations for various Jewish subjects of the empire were required, leading to the creation of the term "Bukharan Jew" as a collective designation for "native Jews of Central Asia" (and not for Jews of the city or emirate of Bukhara). Bukharan Jews made contacts with Eastern European Jewish groups and re-established ties to the larger Jewish culture after the Russian takeover. The Soviet nationalities policies of the 1920s, the great purges of the late 1930s, Russification during the era of Great Friendship of the Peoples in the Soviet Union, and the post-Soviet glasnost all had an impact on the documentation and studies of Bukharan Jewry as Ashkenazi Jews in Central Asia, as they did with other minority groups. All of these had a significant influence on the study and recording of the region's numerous ethnicities and national minority groups. The Bukharan Jews were one of the world's most secluded Jewish groups by the time of the Russian Revolution. Bukharan Jews who had worked to establish a Bukharan Jewish Soviet culture and national identity were charged during Stalin's Great Purge or were forced to assimilate into the larger Soviet Tajik or Soviet Uzbek national identities as part of the Soviet Union's nationalities policies and nation-building campaigns.

Some anticipated that the nation's nationalistic policies would become more extreme when the Soviet Union fell apart and the Republic of Uzbekistan was established as an independent entity in 1991. Jewish emigration both Ashkenazi and Bukharan has increased as a result of the rise of Islamic radicalism in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In Central Asia, there were 45,000 Bukharan Jews prior to the fall of the USSR.

Currently, there are 60,000 Bukharan Jews in the US and roughly 150,000 in Israel. 500 people reside in Canada. Almost no Bukharan Jews are still present in Tajikistan, which had 15,000 Jews living there in 1989. Israel and the United States were where most of the immigrants settled. When the Russians left and Uzbekistan became an independent nation-

*Russian and Central Asian Studies (School of International Studies/SIS), Jawaharlal Nehru University, India, pberiha7cr7@gmail.com.

state in 1991, both Muslims and Jews faced numerous challenges, but the Jews faced more challenges.

The Bukharan Jews experienced a similar sense of marginalisation that Jews in Arab countries had in the 1950s and 1960s because they were "outside of the nationalist project" and because they felt like they were "on the weaker side of tense Muslim-Jewish relations." Jewish exodus from independent Uzbekistan was motivated by similar fears to those shared by Jews in other Arab countries, who believed that the termination of European monitoring would result in a return to Arab dominance and the loss of all gains made during colonialism.

As can be observed there is immense literature available dealing with Jews, Jewish identity, status of Jews, Diaspora etc. Independently. Literature is also available pointing towards improvement of Central Asia's relations with Israel, US, France and Canada where Bukharan Jews have been migrated. However, there is lack of literature dealing specifically with the formation and evolution of Bukharan Jews. None of the mentioned literature touches upon the emergence of Bukharan Jews in Central Asia as uniquely different from the rest of Jewish identities despite major similarities. The proposed research will be an attempt to revisit how Bukharan Jews has evolved in the light of different stages of historical developments in Central Asia's society.

- 1.How the Bukharan Jews has evolved and is different from rest of the Jewish identities?
- 2.What are the traits of Bukharan Jews?
- 3.How has the Jewish emigration to Israel affected Central Asia?
- 4.What are the issues and challenges of the Jews community in Central Asia?

In the research, theoretical, historical, descriptive, analytical and qualitative methods will be used to address the research questions and objectives. Multiple methods will allow different research objectives and questions to be fully explored. In the first stage of the work, conceptual understanding of Jews in general and Bukharan Jews in particular from different websites and secondary data from researchers will be used to study the formation of Bukharan Jews during Soviet period and the State Policies and status of Jews in Central Asia. The second stage will rely upon the primary data acquired and application of quantitative analysis in order to examine the Bukharan Jewish Diaspora in Central Asia.

Keywords: Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Bukharan Jews, Ethno-religious, Soviet colonialism, immigration, National Identity, Soviet Union Nationalities Policy, Russification, Islamic Fundamentalism or Radicalism

Impact of Global Tax Policy Programs on the Geopolitics of Central Asia and the Caucasus

Bettina, Gattyán*

Abstract

During my research, I focus on the economic, political, and social effects of Indian tax policy decisions, but at the same time, the processes started due to global taxation trends also affect other countries of the worlds. I am currently looking for answers to how global tax laws and cooperation initiatives of international organizations affect the geopolitics of Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Chinese President Xi Jinping announced the "One Belt One Road" initiative in 2013. This program is based on the economic relationship between the countries of the best-known and oldest trade network, the Silk Road. This economic cooperation has influenced the economic history of the region and through it its geopolitics for the longest time. As part of this initiative, a non-profit organization was created that promotes the tax cooperation of the participating countries. The Belt and Road Initiative Tax Administration Cooperation Mechanism includes many Central Asian countries such as Kazakhstan or Afghanistan. The aim of the organization is to ensure economic growth through tax policy, speed up the settlement of controversial issues and provide countries with the opportunity to share good practices that have already been proven.

In addition, by 16 December 2022, 138 countries had joined the October 2021 declaration on Statement on a Two-Pillar Solution to Address the Tax Challenges Arising from the Digitalisation of the Economy, more precisely to the OECD/G20 inclusive framework on BEPS. The goal of the OECD's international tax reform is to reduce the activities of multinational companies by changing the place of tax payment, so that they pay as little tax as possible. The first pillar includes the dispute resolution processes, while the second pillar contains the rules for the taxation of large multinational companies. The countries that have signed the convention have undertaken to introduce the 15 percent minimum global corporate tax assessment rules into their own national law in 2023. At the same time, many countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus are not members of the inclusive framework like Afghanistan or Kuwait, so they have not joined the OECD Global Tax Deal.

In my thesis, I examine the economic effects of the above-known global tax policy agreements. To this end, I will first present what elements they contain. After that, I analyse the correlations between the tax revenues of the countries concerned and their economic performance indicators using statistical indicators. All this to demonstrate how global taxation

*Eötvös Loránd University Department of Modern and Contemporary World History, Hungary, guttyan.bettina@gmail.com

has become a soft power in international politics and what impact it has on the geopolitics of Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Keywords: Global Minimum Tax; soft power; BRITACOM; OECD

DAY 2: 5th Session
18 June 2023
12.20 – 14.40 (İstanbul Time)

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Session – V: Prospects for Regional Cooperations-I

- Future of Regional organisations
- Regional Forums
- Regional Conflict Resolutions

Organization of Turkic States: A New Game Changer in Central Asia and the Caucasus

Murodjon Mustofaev*

Abstract

International organizations and structures are studied within the system of international relations (IR) through theories of regionalism, institutionalism and functionalism and via a historical approach. It is expedient to study the Organization of Turkic States, which is developing its modes of cooperation under the umbrella of the common civilization of its member nations, through the civilizational approach put forward by American political scientist Samuel P. Huntington.

The OTS as a regional mechanism has institutionalized cooperative relations between the Turkic States within a multilateral framework.

Istanbul Summit and Three Historical Decisions

The 8th Summit of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (Turkic Council) was hosted by Türkiye under the theme of “Green Technologies and Smart Cities in the Digital Age” on Democracy and Freedom Island not far from Istanbul on November 12, 2021. This Summit was marked by the adoption of important decisions in the history of the organization, three of which are appropriate to highlight:

First, the Turkic Council was renamed the Organization of Turkic States (OTS). The decision was hotly debated in political and scientific circles and was ultimately warmly welcomed.

Second, the Istanbul Summit has, in a sense, officially completed the process of unification of all the Turkic states around a single organization. Turkmenistan, which had so far been an honorary guest at the organization’s Summits, was officially granted observer status.

A third important outcome of the Istanbul Summit was that the organization officially adopted its long-term development strategy: “Turkic World Vision–2040.”

Samarkand and Ankara Summits of the OTS

On November 11, 2022, the 9th summit of the Organization was held in Samarkand.

The summit, which was held under the slogan "A New Era of Turkic Civilization: On the Path to Common Development and Prosperity", is of great importance in terms of the decisions and the initiatives of the leaders.

Emerging Global Challenges and Security Issues in the Turkic World

* Independent Researcher, International Relations and Geopolitics, University of World Economy and Diplomacy, murodlawyer@gmail.com.

In today's complex geopolitical process, the level of cooperation within the framework of the Organization of Turkic States in ensuring security in the Central Asian region cannot be overestimated. The reason for this is that, firstly, the OTS is not a military structure, and secondly, we are witnessing many other factors that determine security and stability in the region. To these, we can include the regional interests of the actor states, situation in Afghanistan, and the specific security policies of the turkic states located in the Central Asian region.

Keywords: Organization of Turkic States, Istanbul Summit, Samarkand Summit, Extraordinary Summit, security, globalization.

Organization of Turkic States and Motivations of Member States

Merve Erkan Aydın*

Abstract

The Organization of Turkic States (OTS) is an international organization with cultural, political, and economic aspects involving the Turkic states in Central Asia and Caucasus region and Türkiye. In this organization, which includes Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan as full members; and Hungary, Turkmenistan, and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as observer members, each member state has its own expectations and goals. In this study, the main sources of motivations, expectations, and perceptions of the OTS members towards the organization will be discussed. Therefore, it will be claimed that the organization was established in order to provide mutual benefit and develop cooperation in economic, political, and cultural fields depending on the national interests of the member states.

This study is planned to consist of four main parts. For the introduction part, general information will be given about the OTS and the content of the study. In the second part, OTS will be examined as an organization in a detailed manner. Accordingly, the history and transformation of the organization, its organizational structure, and objectives and cooperation areas will be presented in subtitles. In the third part, which includes the main arguments of the study, the motivations of the member states will be examined separately. In this context, only the member states will be included and the evaluations of the observer states will be left to the last part of the study. Therefore, in the subtitles of the third part, Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan's perceptions, expectations, and aims regarding OTS will be discussed. For the conclusion part, however, the motivations and expectations of the organization will be covered and finally a general evaluation will be made.

The main output of the study and its contribution to the literature was determined as the evaluation of the motivations of the member states towards the organization, not the organization itself. This is because it is thought that the approach of the member states towards the organization is important for the continuity and transformation of the OTS in the future. Methodologically, a quantitative research method will be adopted in the study, and it is foreseen to benefit from various academic sources as well as the official documents of the organization such as summit statements and agreements, and to examine all collected data in a cause-and-effect relation. In this respect, OTS will be evaluated from the perspective of the state level of analysis.

Keywords: Organization of Turkic States

* PhDC, Global Studies, Shanghai University. merve.erkanydin@gmail.com.

Caucasus Cooperation Organisation: Designing a Model for Regional Multilateral Collaboration

Mandana Tishehyar*

Abstract

The exceptional cultural and civilisational features of the Caucasus region have turned it into a treasure trove of cultural, linguistic, racial, and religious diversity throughout history. The peoples of this civilisational sphere have been heirs to the ancient traditions of peaceful coexistence and unity against common enemies. However, in contemporary times, the media and the public tend to emphasise the differences between Caucasian peoples, both at regional and international levels.

Ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union, despite the numerous international and regional organisations that emerged among the newly independent republics and the South Caucasian countries that joined them, we have not witnessed the establishment of an independent regional institution and the formation of a mechanism for dialogue in this part of the globe.

In fact, the scientific, cultural, and media elites can play a vital role in constructing a new model of communication, understanding, and dialogue among the thinkers and media leaders of the region through leveraging the potentials of the new patterns of mass communication.

Dialogues between academic and media representatives throughout the region might contribute to forming a new discourse that emphasises regional convergence. This convergence is embedded in the history and cultural traditions of the region and might be the basis for the formulation of new theories and models of cooperation. Therefore, it seems to be the right time for the establishment of an institution consisting of representatives from the cultural, academic, and media sectors in the three Caucasian republics and their neighbours and discuss the existing challenges and possible solutions to increase the understanding and relations between civil societies in the six countries.

Keywords: Caucasus, regional integration, dialogue, new regional order

* PhD, Regional Studies (Central Asia and Caucasus), ECO College of Insurance, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Iran, mandana.tishehyar@gmail.com.

Changing Geopolitics and Security of Central Asia: Dynamic Approach for India

Gitesh Kumar*

Abstract

This article represents the changing geopolitics and security situation in the context of Central Asia in the 21st century. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the 1990s and the end of the cold war, three aspects are responsible for transforming geopolitical structure and global order, particularly in the Central Asian region. First aspect prompting the institutional structure of terrorism through IMU, Taliban, etc. Second aspect is the changing face of New Great Game in Central Asia through involving many new players such as Russia, China, South Korea, USA, India, Türkiye, Japan etc. because of natural resources and energy in Central Asia. Third point is Russia and Ukraine confrontation in the context of Central Asian geopolitics. From this perspective, this article covers many types of geopolitical dimensions and emerging trends which are the most critical components in the dynamic approach, policy, action, ways, and direction of India in the transformation period. In this regard, two major contextual factors need to be examined while analysing India-Central Asia. The first factor is the common geocultural space. The second is synergy in strategic culture and thinking. these two arguments appear to be interrelated but need to be studied in a broader geopolitical setting in terms of Central Asia and the Caucasus. As has been argued over the years by academics and policy makers, a consensus over strategic culture can facilitate the fruition of greater strategic cooperation among points different angel from different angles. It is in this the common geo-cultural vectors or shared cultures that bind both India-Central Asian countries. A new paradox has appeared where multilateral organisations are involved in geopolitical and geo-economic outlook. Recent regional advances demonstrate that a new 'great game' is evolving with the new actors. However, the future of the CARs is still dependent on the vested interests of the great powers.

Hence, this article will focus on qualitative approach, descriptive, and analytical methods from the perspective of geopolitics and security architecture in Central Asia, what actions and reactions of India's foreign policy within changing geopolitical of Central Asia? How these types of events reflect and diversify on the foreign policy of India? Which type of factors that motivation for India in the changing geopolitical environment of Central Asia? Thus, this article will attempt the changing geopolitical and security architecture in India's foreign policy context.

Keywords: Geopolitics, Security, India, New Great Game, Energy

* Dr, Cooperation Prospects, BMS Degree College Lucknow, India, giteshkumar12345@gmail.com.

Future Study of Neo-Eurasianism in Türkiye

Milad Hasanalizadeh*

Abstract

Türkiye leaned to the West during the cold war to protect itself from the threats of the USSR thereat, and after the Soviet Union dissolution, it tried to look at newly independent countries of Central Asia and caucuses as an opportunity in foreign policy. Moreover, existing barriers did not let Türkiye's concession to the EU after numerous attempts; Therefore, after failure to merge with the West, Türkiye shifted its orientation from the West to the Middle East and Eurasia in search of its identity. It has been a new era for Türkiye termed Eurasianism (ulusalcılık). This Eurasianism of Türkiye has not been one specific orientation in Türkiye's foreign policy and has evolved over time: in a way that included or excluded US or Russia. The last approach has been in cooperation with Russia, namely in the Astana process, 3+3 initiative and mediating for Ukraine conflict. This type of Eurasianism (ulusalcılık) has had dire implications in the region, to the extent that some talk about Türkiye's accession to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and new nexus of Türkiye- Russia- Iran-China.

On the other hand, Türkiye projected its initiatives in the Caucasus and Central Asia. It is already a major trade partner of countries in this region. It has cultural ties with Turkish-speaking countries in the region. Türkiye is the hub of energy pipelines of resourceful countries of the region and has a strong step in the Karabakh crisis. Where does it go this leadership of Türkiye in the region? Will we see a future Türkiye Eurasianism together with the anti-western countries? or will Türkiye be provisioned to play a role of unquestionable power in Eurasia? After analyzing the drivers of Eurasianism in Türkiye, I will attempt to analyze what is exactly this Eurasianism in Türkiye and what has been the orientation of it and then with future studies methods envisage what direction is going this Eurasianism and write different scenarios by applying quantitative methods.

One example scenario is Türkiye's leadership in Eurasia: specifically with Türkiye's strategic role as an energy hub in the region and the "Organization of Turkic States" with cultural infiltration of Türkiye in the region. It is confirmed by Türkiye's full-fledged support to Azerbaijan in the Karabakh war. (Scenario: Türkiye will have the upper hand in the region independent from US and Russia). Another scenario is Türkiye-Russia rapprochement. Moreover, more scenarios with future studies methods may envisage after exploring drivers of Neo-Eurasianism in Türkiye.

* MA, Regional Studies, ECO College of Insurance, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Iran, m.hasanalizadeh90@gmail.com.

Türkiye, with great potential and history, is the neighbour of Iran and Russia and this Neo-Eurasianism in Türkiye's foreign policy can change the equations in the region. A Türkiye-Russia rapprochement directly will influence Iran- Russia relations or Türkiye's upper hand in the region, weakening Russia and Iran's position. Specifically, after the Ukraine crisis Türkiye has gained momentum, Russia's sidelined, and distracted from the region's developments and it can even get stronger. In this regard, this future study attempts to interpret these different meanings and orientations of Neo - Eurasianism in Türkiye with scenario planning to help policymakers have a better understanding and foresight about the complexity of Neo-Eurasianism in Türkiye.

Keywords: neo Eurasianism, Russia, Türkiye, scenario

Fundamentals of Türkiye's Policies Towards the Central Asian Turkic States

Yaşar Sarı*

Abstract

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, historical developments shook international and regional systems. These are the end of the Cold War and the disappearance of the Soviet Union. As a result of these developments, the bipolar world system ended, and new states emerged. Five of the Soviet Union republics that gained their independence with the dissolution of the Soviet Union are in Central Asia or the geography of Turkestan with its historical name. The newly independent states are Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. These republics, which gained their independence, are known as republics of Turkic origin, except for Tajikistan. These states embarked on a quest to preserve the independence they had achieved in the early 1990s and to be part of the international society.

With the end of the Cold War, Turkish political elites thought that Türkiye's place in the international system diminished. However, the geopolitical value of the regional system in Central Asia saw a power vacuum around it with the disappearance of the Soviet Union. This gap allowed Türkiye to act more comfortably and create and implement its foreign policy related to the Turkic world. In this unstable and uncertain period in the international and surrounding regional systems, Türkiye directed its attention to the former Soviet Union republics of Turkish origin, which had just gained their independence, to seize the opportunities. Leading Turkish policymakers of the period, such as Turgut Özal and Süleyman Demirel, played an essential role in this orientation. Both politicians made efforts for the multidimensional development of relations between Türkiye and the Turkic Republics.

At the same time, the leaders of the Central Asian states, which gained independence, worked to develop bilateral relations and become members of regional and international organizations to ensure their states' recognition in world politics and to find a place for themselves in the international system. The Republic of Türkiye gave great support to these efforts. Thus, the states that became independent after the collapse of the Soviet Union, especially the newly independent states of Turkish origin in Central Asia, brought a new vision to Turkish foreign policy.

With Turgut Özal's death in 1993 and Süleyman Demirel's assuming a symbolic role as President, Türkiye's foreign policy towards Central Asian states was also affected. Especially when the short-term unstable coalition governments, the 1994 and 2001 economic crises, and the efforts to become a member of the European Union were added, the romantic approach felt in the early 1990s gave way to disappointments. Of course, the international and regional atmosphere of the period was also influential in this. The United States's efforts to expand

* Prof. Dr, Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University & Ibn Haldun University. yasarsari@gmail.com.

NATO in Europe with the effort of creating a unipolar world and to take Central Asia into its sphere of influence with the claim of spreading democracy, The "Near Abroad" policy, which the Russian Federation declared in order to protect the legacy of the Soviet Union as the dominant power in Eurasia, and its efforts to re-establish its dominance in the former Soviet territories adversely affected Türkiye's foreign policy in the region.

In Turkish foreign policy, the policy change regarding the Central Asian region started after 2009, reaching its peak with the establishment of the Organization of Turkic States in November 2021. This study will examine the Relations of Türkiye and the Turkic Republics based on the multilateral and bilateral diplomatic, economic and security framework. Finally, establishing the Organization of Turkic States and its vision for 2040 will be discussed. The primary purpose of this study is to reveal the continuity and changes in Türkiye's relations with the Central Asian Turkic Republics and to determine the level of the relations today. However, as in every relationship, it will also focus on the existing problems and their origins. While doing all this analysis, rationalist foreign policy analysis methods will also be used.

Keywords: Decision-Making, Identity, Rationality, Interests

Türkiye's Role in Afghanistan's Political and Security Developments, Emphasizing the Afghan Peace

Shirin Tajik & E. Cüneyt Akalın*

Abstract

Türkiye, as a regional power and NATO member, has played an active role in Afghanistan's developments in recent years. After the US-led coalition attacked Afghanistan in 2001, Türkiye has been active as a NATO member in the civilian sphere in Afghanistan, and after the withdrawal of the US and NATO, it has tried to maintain its influence in this country.

Türkiye's role in Afghanistan has been multifaceted. Türkiye's involvement in Afghanistan has been both significant and complex, with its role fluctuating over time based on the internal and external conditions of the country. It has evolved.

In recent years, Türkiye has played a critical role in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan, particularly through its involvement in the peace process. Türkiye has participated in numerous peace talks providing a platform for dialogue and negotiation. Additionally, Türkiye has provided security support to the Afghan government, including training and equipping Afghan security forces, as well as providing humanitarian aid and support for reconstruction and development efforts.

In this regard, the main question of the thesis is, what has been the role of Türkiye in the developments of Afghanistan, especially the peace process of this country? The main Hypothesis of the research is that Türkiye's role in Afghanistan based on the role theory has oscillated between the developer (as a NATO member) and mediator (as an independent player in the peace process) based on Afghanistan's domestic situation.

The data-gathering method used in this research is a library documentary; the most important sources are available articles, Books, Documents, valid Internet texts, and Reports. This research has been done using the qualitative method and the application of role theory.

Investigating the precise situation of Türkiye in Afghanistan is significant both for Afghanistan and researchers as the Turks pursue specific objectives in Afghanistan.

Thus, conducting research is essential to better understand the reasons behind Türkiye's presence and goals. This is what makes research on this topic highly important.

Moreover, the research findings indicate that despite changes in methods and means of cooperation, Türkiye's role in Afghanistan is aimed at maintaining its influence in the country as a symbol of Türkiye's regional power components and as a tool for political leverage with other powers. (You can enlarge this section)

* Independent researcher, tajikshirin9191@gmail.com,
Prof. Dr, ecuneytakalin@gmail.com

DAY 2: 6th Session
18 June 2023
14.40 – 17.00 (İstanbul Time)

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Moderator: Prof. Dr E. Cüneyt Akalın

Session – VI: Prospects for Regional Cooperations-II

- Future of Regional organisations
- Regional Forums
- Regional Conflict Resolutions

Prospects for Regional Cooperations-Regional Conflict Resolutions

Ayşegül Ün*

Abstract

This study apprehends the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) which was formed after the dissolution of Soviet Union in 1991. The main focus is to understand the regional security dynamics of CIS and its functional structure as a regional complex. Also, this study tends to understand the power dynamics imposed by Russia, studied as the leading country of the complex towards the region. The time period emphasized for this study implicates from the year 1991, the fall of Soviet Union, to present.

The CIS has been observed within its historical background. The study discusses the post-Soviet entity as a security complex and aims to understand the roots of the foundation through entity's missions and impacts on the regional and global level. The analyse-made considers Russia as the complex's dominant power, therefore criticises extensive power implications around the region and within the CIS security complex on the basis of its structural components in the chapters.

The aim of the study also tends to understand the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) military alliance and its importance. It glances throughout the unrests among the members or now ex-members of CIS and combs the correlated reasons underlying the outbreaks by illustrating the examples of the past conflicts occurred in Georgia and Ukraine in comparison to the recent unrest placed in Kazakhstan. In addition, it explains the role of CSTO as a peace keeping force under the roof of CIS complex's sub-division.

The methodology used follows through in the scope of the Regional Security Complex Theory's application area as it has been often associated within CIS studies. However, this study provides a theoretically comparative and a hybrid point of view involving the regionalism ideology in conclusion. The research comprises event-based analysis within the outbreaks in CIS complex.

Keywords: International Relations; Commonwealth of Independent States; Conflict Resolution; Russo-Ukrainian Conflict

* PhD student, International Relations, Altınbaş University, Türkiye, aysegulun@hotmail.fr.

Central Asia's Role in the Peace Process of Afghanistan

Bakhtyar Gul Ahmadzai*

Abstract

Central Asia plays an important role in Afghanistan's peace process. Afghanistan, a country with a long history of conflict, urgently needs local support to find lasting solutions to its internal security problems. Given their geographical proximity and historical links with Afghanistan, the Central Asian countries play an important role in promoting peace and stability in the region. This abstract aims to examine the role of Central Asia in the Afghan peace process.

Central Asian countries have been actively involved in supporting Afghanistan's peace process. In 2018, Tashkent hosted a conference attended by representatives of Afghanistan, Pakistan and the United States, marking the first direct talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government in several years.

Similarly, Kazakhstan has played a key role in the peace process, hosting several rounds of negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan government. In 2018, the Astana Process was launched with the aim of bringing together various stakeholders in the Afghan conflict, including the Taliban, the Afghan government and regional actors, to facilitate dialogue and reconciliation. Kazakhstan has also provided humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, especially in the areas of education and health care.

Another area in which Central Asian countries have contributed to the Afghan peace process is security cooperation. Sharing borders and sharing security concerns, the Central Asian nations have worked closely with Afghanistan to address issues such as terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime. For example, the SCO, which includes four Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan), has been actively involved in promoting regional security cooperation through information sharing, joint military exercises, and counter-terrorism.

Central Asia's role in the Afghan peace process is important for several reasons. Central Asian countries have border with Afghanistan. The ramifications of the Afghan conflict, including terrorism, drug trafficking and refugee flows, all have a direct impact on the region. Afghanistan and Central Asia share common histories and cultural ties that can be used to foster trust and understanding in the peace process. Central Asian countries can use their cultural and linguistic ties to facilitate communication and build bridges between Afghan actors.

In this study, based on the academic articles, books, reports, and other relevant sources.

* PhD Candidate, International Relations, KAZNU, Kazakhstan, bakhtyarsalihzai123@gmail.com.

(This study is based on secondary sources such as books, academic articles, and reports.)

If the author makes use of any government reports, formal speeches and web sites of governments and foreign ministries of the Central Asian states and Afghanistan, he also should specify them as primary resources.

The literature review can provide insights into the historical, political, economic, and cultural ties between Central Asia and Afghanistan, as well as the role played by Central Asian countries in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan. Central Asian countries have a vested interest in the peace and stability of Afghanistan. The country has the potential to act as a hub for regional trade and connectivity projects that could benefit the entire region.

Central Asia has played an important role in Afghanistan's peace process. By facilitating peace negotiations, supporting regional economic integration, and cooperating on security issues, the Central Asian countries have demonstrated their commitment to promoting peace and stability in the region. However, much remains to be done and it is critical that regional actors continue to work together to find lasting solutions to Afghanistan's security challenges.

Keywords: Central Asia, peace process, Afghanistan

The European Union as a Mediator Between Armenia and Azerbaijan

Museyib Shiraliyev*

Abstract

The European Union (EU) engages in conflict resolution efforts through both its military and civil missions deployed in various parts of the world. The EU's conflict resolution approach is underpinned by its political legitimacy and economic power, which enhance its ability to assert its presence in conflict or crisis areas. Furthermore, the EU's operational and structural capabilities have positioned it as a significant security actor.

For millennia, the South Caucasus region has acted as a boundary between Western and Eastern civilizations. The region is rife with conflict due to the international borders established after the collapse of the Soviet Union, which were drawn without regard for historical consolidation and international legal reconciliation. Consequently, the lingering predicament of the principles of territorial integrity and self-determination has impeded the resolution of conflicts in the South Caucasus.

From the perspective of liberal intergovernmentalism, the EU's prolonged low profile in the conflict resolution process in the South Caucasus is largely due to the reluctance of EU member states to undertake further commitments over a wide geographical area that extends beyond their own backyards. In addition, the difficulty of achieving political solidarity and unity of interests in matters related to foreign policy has always been the most obvious weakness of the EU. The prevailing uncertainty among the countries in the South Caucasus is also reflected in the EU's shifting priorities and strategic paradigms in regional integration issues. Therefore, any new game-changing initiatives introduced by global and regional actors must be contextualized to determine the future trajectory of the European security complex and regional security construction.

The large-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, and as a result, the increasing international isolation of Russia, the traditional security hegemon in the South Caucasus, in the political scene, has both political and political implications for Türkiye, Iran and China as well as the EU throughout the Caucasus. created new economic opportunities. In the face of disappointment with Moscow's actions, the EU sees opportunities to increase its role as a conflict resolution partner, especially in the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. Both Armenia and Azerbaijan tend to have a positive impression of the EU's involvement in conflict resolution in the region. However, although the desire for more engagement with the EU exists among the countries in the region, there is an asynchrony between the Union's security policy and the expectations of the South Caucasian states, resulting in an inefficient security situation. The capacity of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia to shift from neorealist behavior to positive peace, as preached by the Union, remains a fiction

* PhD Candidate, International Relations, Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University. msirliyev@mail.ru.

unless all actors make a change in their foreign policy thinking. Otherwise, the security cacophony in and around the South Caucasus will persist.

Keywords: European Union, South Caucasus, Karabakh, Conflict Resolution

How the 2022 Constitutional Amendment Can Make a Change in the Political Structure of Kazakhstan

Maryam Shayegan* & Mandana Tisheyar*

Abstract

A national referendum on constitutional amendment was held in Kazakhstan on June 5, 2022, following the request of President Tokayev to rebalance the division of state powers by reducing the influence of the presidency and strengthening other branches and institutions. Tokayev carried out reforms after January 2022 protests, which began due to the fuel price increase. In fact, the main aim of the amendment was to reduce the concentration of power and the authority of the president and at the same time to increase the power and the role of the parliament, local representative bodies and people in Kazakhstan.

The Constitution of Kazakhstan has been revised several times since its independence. The last reforms were done through referendum on June 5, 2022, made 56 amendments in 33 Articles of the Constitution and this means changing one-third of the Constitution. Following these reforms, the Constitutional Court was reconstituted, the death penalty abolished, the form of government in Kazakhstan changed from a super-presidential model to a presidential form with a strong parliament, and the provisions related to the role and special privileges of the first president were removed. Actually, relatives of the president are forbidden to take high governmental positions. Also, the Mazhilis election will be held under a mixed electoral system.

In this article, the authors try to examine the impact of the 2022 Constitutional Referendum on making change in the political structure of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Therefore, the main question of this research is: How the 2022 constitutional amendment can make a change in the political structure of Kazakhstan?

For answering the question of the article, inductive reasoning and exploratory method have been used. In addition, the data has been collected, summarized and analyzed through library, official statements, reports, as well as examining of the Constitution of Kazakhstan and the amendment made on June 5, 2022.

According to the investigation, the results of Constitutional amendment in Kazakhstan could be divided in three terms: short-term, mid-term and long term. It seems that the short-term impacts of some reforms on the political structure of Kazakhstan can be seen at the very first moment. However, understanding the success, progress and effectiveness of some of the reforms that pursue higher goals such as achieving democracy and reducing the concentration of power will be shown in mid-term and long-term. However, examining and evaluating the

* MA, ECO College of Insurance, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Iran, shayeganmaryamir@gmail.com.

* Ph.D ECO College of Insurance, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Iran, mandana.tishehyar@gmail.com.

events, the election procedures in Kazakhstan and the reports of international organizations and news agencies, would help us to understand the direction of reforms in Kazakhstan.

Keywords: Kazakhstan, Constitutional law, Referendum, Political Structure

Small Country Diplomacy Under the Great Power Game: Taking Central Asian Countries as an Example

Liu Chang*

Abstract

In today's world, the game of great powers has become an important theme of international relations. Especially as Sino-U.S. relations continue to decline, U.S.-Russian relations have broken down in an all-round way, and the game between major powers has become more and more intense, showing a trend of complexity and long-termization. Especially after the escalation of the Ukrainian crisis in February 2022, the security situation in Eurasia has undergone drastic changes, and the geopolitical confrontation between Russia and the United States and the West has become sharper and protracted, which has had a great impact on the domestic and foreign affairs of Eurasian countries located in the post-Soviet space. In this context, Central Asia's strategic position continues to rise, and it may become the next key region in the game of great powers after Ukraine and the Indo-Pacific region. Major countries such as China, the United States and Russia, and regional powers such as Türkiye, India and Iran have increased their investment in the region, exerting influence through various means such as politics, economy, religion, and culture, in order to gain a favourable position in the new round of great power games.

While promoting the diversification of the regional order, this move has also increased the risk of the regional situation getting out of control, and may interact with the region's intensified political turmoil, increased regional conflicts, and rising threats of terrorism. But this does not mean that Central Asian countries can only passively bear the above risks. Thirty years after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the countries in this region have become increasingly prominent as independent countries. They are no longer completely pawns in the game of great powers, but have partially possessed the ability to play chess players. Regional integration ushered in a new impetus for development. Against the background of intensified competition between big and middle powers, the bargaining power of small countries has increased. Based on the unique power, strategic preferences and strategic needs of small countries, Central Asia, under the image of a firm defender of its own independence and sovereignty, continues to promote pluralistic diplomacy to develop friendly relationship with all countries, and focuses on enhancing regional self-determination capabilities, and maintains regional stability and security by strengthening regional cooperation, in order to achieve self-development with the help of great powers instead of being the victim of the game of great powers, but it also faces a lot of difficulties.

Keywords: Small Country Diplomacy; Great Power Game; Central Asian; Pluralistic Diplomacy

* Assistant Researcher, Institute of Russian, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, China, liuch07@163.com.

Challenges and Role of Women Towards Shaping the Future Amidst Contemporary Geopolitical Conflict

Priti Kamal *

Abstract

Women in Central Asia and the Caucasus face a wide range of challenges, including economic, social, and political barriers that limit their opportunities and access to resources. Women in the region face significant gender inequality in all areas of life, including access to education, employment, and political participation. Traditional gender roles and expectations continue to be a significant barrier to women's empowerment in the region. Violence against women, including domestic violence, remains a pervasive issue.

The ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine has led to displacement, loss of livelihoods, and the breakdown of social structures, which has had a disproportionate impact on women and children. Women who have been displaced from their homes are often forced to live in crowded and unsanitary conditions, which can lead to health hazards and increased vulnerability to violence. This conflict has led to increased militarization and tension in the region, and has raised concerns about the potential for further conflict and instability.

The US withdrawal from Afghanistan has led to increased regional tensions, particularly among neighboring countries in Central Asia and Caucasus. This could exacerbate existing conflicts or create new ones, with potential implications for women's rights and well-being, including an increase in the number of refugees and internally displaced persons in the region.

Drastic changes have been observed in Afghanistan post US withdrawal, notably for the women residing there. Women in Afghanistan have had made significant progress in recent years, including gaining access to education and employment opportunities, and participating in politics. However, Taliban's return to power has raised concerns about the future of women's rights in the country, including potential fear for a rollback of the gains they have made in recent years.

Despite these challenges, there are also reasons to be hopeful. Women in the region have shown remarkable resilience and determination in the face of adversity, and there are many organizations including international community who are committed to protect the gains made by women in Afghanistan. Also, women's organizations and civil society groups have played vital roles in promoting democracy and human rights, advocating for gender equality, and addressing domestic violence and human trafficking. Although remaining under-represented, women have been active participants in the region's politics. Women's leadership, entrepreneurship, and innovative thinking could assist Central Asia, the Caucasus

* Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies (School of International Studies), Jawaharlal Nehru University, India, pritikamal31@gmail.com.

and neighboring region, building a more inclusive and prosperous future for all by forward-moving gender equality and women's rights. Another area where women can play a critical role is in promoting peace and stability in the region. Women's participation in peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts has been shown to be effective in reducing violence and promoting long-lasting peace.

Women's role in shaping the future of the world, amidst the changing geopolitical dynamics needs to be explored extensively for achieving new horizon of peace, stability and prosperity. This paper will analyze the challenges and role of women in advancing democracy and human rights, tackling new security challenges, fostering peace and stability, along with facilitating economic progress in Central Asia, the Caucasus and neighboring regions in the pretext of contemporary geopolitical conflicts. The research methodology used will be analytical, descriptive and qualitative with usage of primary and secondary data. The paper will bring out the ways ahead to utilize the potential and roles of women towards shaping the future of the world.

Keywords: Women, Central Asia, Afghanistan, Geopolitics

Depicting a Prosperity Horizon in Central Asia and the Caucasus with a Focus on Geo-cultural and Geo-economic Aspects

Ana Yousefian*

Abstract

Considering the shift in the global order which is believed to be more regional than global or as some experts of International Relations put it, the concurrence of the regional and global phenomenon bears great opportunities for the countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus in terms of potentials of economic prosperity. Having a broader picture in mind, Asia is more Asian than ever due to the huge flow of capital, human and goods inside Asia more than it has with the outside world. It is worth noting that the shift in the global economy with China as a key player has pushed the regional trend forward, expanding the scope of cooperation in this very region. There is a growing sense of regionalism not only in experts' analyses but also on the ground by taking geographical connections into consideration. In other words the geo economic aspect standing on two pillars, trade and connectivity is one lens through which we can see the future of the region. On the other hand the shared culture among these countries has the capacity to intensify the people to people relationship, shaping a network of connections and adding a geo cultural dimension to the context. Given that the region of study is a non-Western one the theory applied for analysis and foresight is a complex of the Chinese relational theory and the non- Western regional theory of International Relations. The research question is whether the new global context provides the countries of the region with opportunities that can survive the geopolitical tensions on behalf of economic prosperity and development. To answer this question it is needed to have a deeper look at the soft and hard capacities in Central Asia and the Caucasus. The hard capacities deal with the geographical connections and highly populated countries with a growing middle class as consumers that facilitate and boost the movement of the people, goods, demand and capital leading to more trade and investment. The soft capacities deal with shared culture, laying the ground for the progress of the hard capacities by replacing fundamentalist views with shared cultural elements that can foment a regional interdependence resisting the outside turbulences. This research is qualitative and it involves non- numerical data such as texts, podcasts, web casts therefore a secondary research.

Keywords: Central Asia and Caucasus, geo economical aspect, geo cultural aspect, new global order

* PhD Candidate, International Relations, Azad University, Azerbaijan, anayousefian@gmail.com.

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