

CENTRAL ASIAN REGIONALISM - GEOPOLITICAL DYNAMICS AND GLOBAL STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a comprehensive analysis of Central Asian regionalism, focusing on the intricate geopolitical dynamics, regional cooperation, and the involvement of global stakeholders in the region. The study delves into the multifaceted dimensions of Central Asian regionalism, addressing key research questions related to the geopolitical implications of international powers, strategies for fostering regional stability and prosperity, and the role of regional organisations in promoting economic collaboration and dialogue. The analysis encompasses the perspectives of influential global players such as China, Russia and to a lesser extent the United States in exploring their roles and potential contributions to the region. Through a meticulous review of scholarly works and empirical data, the research offers nuanced insights into the challenges and opportunities for building a cohesive regional order in Central Asia. Employing a multidisciplinary approach and rigorous methodologies, including extensive literature review and geopolitical analysis, this study seeks to provide a holistic understanding of the strategic roles of countries like Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, India and Turkmenistan in promoting regional stability and economic development. Furthermore, the research outlines the European Union's strategic engagement in Central Asia and its partnership with India to enhance regional stability and expand economic opportunities. The anticipated outcomes of this study hold significant implications for policymakers, regional organisations, and global stakeholders involved in Central Asia. By addressing complex global challenges and fostering cooperation to combat trafficking in drugs, arms, and human beings, the findings of this research endeavor to contribute to the advancement of regional stability and prosperity in Central Asia. If Europe gets India right, the chances of a pluralistic, open and inclusive world order increases. Kazakhstan, as a linchpin in the Central Asian regional order, must lead the charge towards deeper integration and collaboration, ensuring that Central Asia's potential is fully realised.

ॐ त्र्यंबकं यजामहे सुगन्धिं पुष्टिवर्धनम्।

उर्वारुकमिव बन्धनान्मृत्योर्मुक्षीय मामृतात्॥

We worship the three-eyed one (Lord Shiva) who permeates and nourishes all like a sweet fragrance. May He liberate us from the bondage of worldly attachments and death, granting us the nectar of immortality.

-Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra

Keywords: Regional Orders, EU-India Strategic Partnership, Great Powers, Diplomatic Stabilisation Strategies

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Central Asia has long held significant geopolitical importance due to its strategic location and rich resources. Here are some key points highlighting its historical significance:

The age of Tamerlane, also known as Timur, was a significant period in the history of Central Asia and beyond. Here are some key points about his era:

1. Rise to Power:

- Tamerlane (1336-1405) was a Turco-Mongol conqueror who founded the Timurid Empire in 1370. He emerged from the region of Transoxiana, in present-day Uzbekistan.

2. Military Conquests:

- Tamerlane is renowned for his military campaigns, which extended from Russia to India and from the Mediterranean Sea to Mongolia. His conquests included the sacking of Delhi in 1398 and the defeat of the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid I at the Battle of Ankara in 1402.

3. Cultural Impact:

- Despite his reputation for brutality, Tamerlane was also a patron of the arts and architecture. His capital, Samarkand, became a center of culture and learning, attracting scholars, artists, and architects from across the Islamic world.

4. Legacy:

- The Timurid Empire, established by Tamerlane, laid the groundwork for the later Mughal Empire in India. His descendants, including Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire, continued to influence the region's history.

5. Geopolitical Influence:

- Tamerlane's campaigns significantly altered the political landscape of Central Asia and the surrounding regions. His empire served as a bridge between different cultures and facilitated the exchange of ideas and goods¹.

Tamerlane's era was marked by both destruction and cultural flourishing, leaving a complex legacy that historians continue to study and debate.

According to Ayse Zarakol, the Genghisid nomadic states incarnated world orders since they were world conquerors and creators of world orders with centralised states, political authority, and a diplomatic network.

¹ https://www.dailyhistory.org/How_did_Timur_change_the_history_of_the_world

The historical geopolitical landscape of Central Asia was significantly shaped by various Eastern international relations and world orders before Western influence became predominant. Here are some key aspects:

1. Mongol Empire:

- The Mongol Empire, established by Genghis Khan in the early 13th century, created a vast interconnected region that facilitated trade, cultural exchange, and political centralization. The Pax Mongolica, or Mongol Peace, allowed for relatively safe and stable trade routes across Central Asia, integrating it into a larger Eurasian network

2. Timurid Empire:

- Following the Mongol Empire, the Timurid Empire under Tamerlane (Timur) continued the tradition of strong centralized authority. Tamerlane's conquests and subsequent rule brought a degree of political stability and cultural flourishing to Central Asia, particularly in cities like Samarkand.

3. Silk Road:

- The Silk Road was a critical factor in shaping Central Asian geopolitics. It was a trade route and a conduit for diplomatic and cultural exchanges. Various Central Asian states and empires, such as the Sogdians and later the Khwarezmian Empire, played pivotal roles in maintaining and benefiting from this network.

4. Islamic Caliphates:

- The spread of Islam through the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates brought Central Asia into the broader Islamic world. This integration influenced the region's political structures, legal systems, and cultural practices, fostering a shared religious and cultural identity.

5. Regional Alliances and Rivalries:

- Central Asia was characterized by a complex web of alliances and rivalries among various khanates, emirates, and tribal confederations. These relationships often dictated the balance of power in the region, with entities like the Khanate of Bukhara and the Emirate of Khiva playing significant roles.

6. Cultural and Intellectual Exchange:

- Central Asia was a melting pot of cultures, languages, and ideas. The region's cities, such as Bukhara and Samarkand, were renowned centers of learning and culture, attracting scholars, artists, and traders from across Eurasia. This intellectual and cultural exchange helped shape the region's identity and influence.

These factors collectively contributed to the unique geopolitical and cultural landscape of Central Asia before the advent of Western influence. The region's history of political centralization, authority relationships, and international interactions laid the groundwork for its later developments.

The Russian conquest of Central Asia was a gradual process that took place over several decades in the 19th century. Here's an overview of when, how, and why this conquest occurred:

When:

- **Early 19th Century:** Initial Russian incursions into Central Asia began in the early 1800s.
- **1839:** Russia's first major attempt to conquer the Khanate of Khiva failed.
- **1847-1853:** Russia built a series of forts along the Syr Darya River
- **1860s-1880s:** The most significant period of conquest, during which Russia systematically subdued the major Central Asian khanates, including Khiva, Bukhara, and Kokand.

How:

- **Military Campaigns:** Russia employed a combination of military force and strategic fort-building. Key battles and sieges, such as the capture of Tashkent in 1865 and the fall of Samarkand in 1868, were pivotal.
- **Diplomacy and Treaties:** Russia also used diplomatic means, signing treaties that often favored Russian interests and gradually eroded the sovereignty of Central Asian states.
- **Infrastructure Development:** The construction of railways and telegraph lines facilitated Russian military and administrative control over the vast region, adding cohesion to the region.

Why:

- **Strategic Interests:** Central Asia was seen as a buffer zone against British expansion from India, part of the broader "Great Game" between the British and Russian Empires.
- **Economic Motives:** The region's rich resources, including cotton, silk, and minerals, were highly attractive to the Russian Empire.
- **Imperial Ambitions:** Expanding into Central Asia was part of Russia's broader imperial strategy to increase its influence and control over Eurasia.

The Russian conquest of Central Asia significantly altered the region's political, economic, and social landscape, integrating it into the Russian Empire and later the Soviet Union. Central Asia was integrated into the Soviet Union, serving as a critical area for resource extraction, particularly oil, gas, and minerals. The region also played a strategic military role, with numerous bases and testing sites.

Post-Soviet Independence:

- After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the newly independent Central Asian states became significant players in regional geopolitics. Their vast energy resources attracted global interest, leading to new alliances and rivalries. Today, Russia still consider itself the regional hegemon in Central Asia.

Modern Geopolitics:

Today, Central Asia continues to be a geopolitical hotspot. It serves as a bridge between Europe and Asia and is a key area for initiatives like China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the rejuvenation project of the Silk Road. It matters due to the following considerations:

- **Peace and War:** The region's stability and development are crucial for global energy security and trade. Russia cannot conduct global war, without control over the energy fields of Caucasus and Central Asia. The geopolitical significance of the Caucasus and Central Asia extends beyond energy, impacting Russia's influence over neighboring countries. Without preeminence in these areas, Russia's strategic military and economic leverage on the global stage would be significantly weakened. Central Asia also has significant deposits of minerals, including uranium, gold, and rare earth elements.
- **Regional Stability:** Central Asia's stability is crucial for Eurasia's broader security. Issues such as terrorism, extremism, and drug trafficking are significant concerns that impact regional and global security.
- **Military Presence:** Major Powers maintain a military presence or influence in the region. For example, Russia has military bases in several Central Asian countries, and the U.S. has historically had a presence in the region for counterterrorism efforts.
- **Trade Corridors:** Central Asia serves as a vital corridor for pipelines transporting oil and gas to global markets. Projects like the Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline and the Central Asia-China Gas Pipeline are examples.
- **Economic Partnerships:** The region is involved in various economic partnerships and organizations, such as the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which enhance its economic integration.

- Cultural Ties: The region shares deep cultural and historical ties with neighboring countries, influencing its geopolitical interactions. Most of the region is made up of Persianate or Turkish-speaking people mixed-up by Turkic-European-Mongol tribes to form nations (Uzbeks are real Turkish-Iranians, Kazakhs Turkish-Mongols and crowning it all the Tajiks, a Mongol-Iranian people).

Central Asia's geopolitical significance is thus multifaceted, involving strategic location, resource wealth, political dynamics, economic integration, and cultural influence. These factors collectively shape the region's role in international politics and its interactions with major global powers.

This piece examines Central Asia's economic integration and cooperation, highlighting the significant benefits of successful cooperation. It discusses the region's context and importance, the exciting potential of Eurasian economic integration, the challenges to regional cooperation, and the substantial benefits that can be reaped from successful economic integration and regional cooperation, paving the way for Central Asia's growth and stability.

1. Context and importance:

- Central Asia, comprising five former Soviet republics (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan), has gained attention because of its energy resources and strategic location.
- Neighbors such as Europe, China, and Russia have economic interests in the region.
- Central Asia's Islamic tradition connects it with the Middle East and other Islamic countries.

2. Eurasian Economic Integration:

- The disintegration of the Soviet Union allowed Eurasia to catch up with global economic integration.
- Today, a significant share of world trade occurs between Eurasian economies².
- Land routes could play a more substantial role in continental trade.

3. Challenges to Regional Cooperation:

- Lack of ownership and political commitment by leaders.
- Insufficient funding mechanisms.
- Transboundary issues related to energy and water resources.

² https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/tdstat47_FS02_en.pdf

4. Benefits of Cooperation:

- Improved use of regional energy and water resources.
- Enhanced preparedness for natural disasters.
- Prevention of conflicts.

5. Intra-regional trade

- Kazakhstan: Intra-regional trade has fluctuated, with significant increases in recent years due to enhanced economic cooperation with neighboring countries.
- Uzbekistan: Trade within the region has grown, particularly with Kazakhstan, which is its largest trading partner in Central Asia.
- Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan: These countries have also seen varying levels of intra-regional trade, influenced by economic policies and regional agreements³

The paper aims to comprehensively analyse Central Asian regionalism, focusing on geopolitical dynamics, regional cooperation, and the involvement of various global stakeholders in the region. It seeks to explore the complexities and opportunities within Central Asia, highlighting the potential for collaboration and mutual respect among multiple stakeholders. It aims to address key research questions related to the geopolitical implications of global powers, strategies for fostering regional stability and prosperity, and the role of regional organisations in promoting economic collaboration and dialogue.

The scope of the paper revolves around Central Asian regionalism, focusing on geopolitical dynamics, regional cooperation, and the involvement of various global stakeholders in the region. The research questions addressed in the paper may include inquiries such as

1. What are the geopolitical implications of China's rise and Eurasia's transformation to the World Islands, particularly about Central Asia?
2. How can the EU, China, and India contribute to addressing the root causes of protests and promoting stability and prosperity in Kazakhstan?
3. What are the potential strategies for leveraging EU support for Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) and fostering collaboration among countries and organisations in the region?
4. How could regional organisations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) contribute to fostering stability, economic collaboration, and dialogue in Central Asia?

³ Fjæsted & Overland

5. What are the critical focus areas for promoting sustainable development, economic growth, and cultural exchange in Central Asia, particularly in cooperation with the European Union and other global partners?

These research questions aim to explore the multifaceted dimensions of Central Asian regionalism, including geopolitical, economic, and strategic considerations, and the potential for collaboration and mutual respect among various stakeholders.

The structure of the paper is designed to provide a thorough understanding of Central Asian regionalism. It includes sections that delve into the geopolitical implications of global powers such as China, the EU, and India in Central Asia. Additionally, the paper addresses strategies for leveraging support from these global stakeholders to promote regional stability and prosperity. It also explores the role of regional organisations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in fostering economic collaboration and dialogue in Central Asia. The paper is organised to provide a comprehensive overview of the multifaceted dimensions of Central Asian regionalism, emphasising the potential for cooperation and mutual benefit among different countries and organisations in the region.

Definition of terms:

Regional Cooperation is the collaboration between neighbouring countries to address common challenges and achieve shared goals. It often involves joint trade, infrastructure, environmental protection, and security efforts. The aim is to enhance mutual benefits and foster regional stability and development.⁴

Geopolitical Stability describes a state of consistent and predictable political relations and conditions within a specific geographic area. It is characterised by the absence of conflict, effective governance, and cooperative international relations, which together create a secure and stable environment for economic and social activities.⁵

Economic Integration: Economic integration involves unifying economic policies and practices between countries to facilitate trade and investment. This can range from free trade agreements to full economic unions, where member countries adopt standard policies on trade, tariffs, and regulations. The European Union is a prime example of economic integration.⁶

Cultural Exchange: Cultural exchange refers to sharing ideas, traditions, and customs between different cultures. This can occur through various means, such as travel, education, art, and media. Cultural exchange promotes mutual understanding and appreciation, helping to bridge cultural divides and foster global harmony.

⁴ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/regional-integration/overview>

⁵ Schellenkens (2021)

⁶ <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/e/economic-integration.asp>

Defining Equilibrium and a balance of interest in Central Asia

Defining an equilibrium and balance of interests in Central Asia prima facie involves the US, Russia, and China and an understanding the unique roles and strategies each country employs in the region:

1. United States: The US aims to promote stability and independence among Central Asian states, counterbalancing Russian and Chinese influence. Its strategy Advancing sovereignty and Prosperity aims at advancing a more stable, prosperous, and interconnected Central Asia, free to pursue its political, economic, and security interests with a variety of partners⁷. This involves diplomatic engagement, economic aid, and security cooperation.
2. Russia: Russia focuses on maintaining its historical influence through security and political means. It leverages organizations like the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) to assert its presence.
3. China: China's strategy is primarily economic, driven by the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It invests heavily in infrastructure and energy projects, aiming to integrate Central Asia into its economic sphere³.

Balancing these interests requires a nuanced approach where each power's influence is acknowledged and managed to prevent dominance by any single actor.

EU and India Contributions

European Union:

- The EU is a significant donor and development partner in Central Asia, focusing on regional cooperation in trade, energy, climate, water, and socio-economic development.
- The EU's strategy includes promoting connectivity through initiatives like the Middle Corridor, which aims to enhance trade routes between Europe and Central Asia.

India:

- India's role is strategic, aiming to strengthen its presence through trade and connectivity projects. It collaborates with the EU on initiatives like the Middle Corridor to enhance its influence in the region⁸.

These contributions from the EU and India help diversify the region's partnerships, providing alternatives to the dominant influences of the US, Russia, and China. This conclusion has then been refined under our analytical framework.

⁷ <https://2017-2021.state.gov/united-states-strategy-for-central-asia-2019-2025-advancing-sovereignty-and-economic-prosperity/>

⁸ Wani (2024)

The literature review will build upon the historical context established in the introduction and delve into the existing scholarly works on Central Asian regionalism and look beyond this Archimedean point. An Archimedean point is a hypothetical standpoint from which one can objectively perceive and reason about certain truths. The term originates from the ancient Greek mathematician Archimedes, who famously said, "Give me a place to stand, and I shall move the Earth." In philosophy, it represents a perspective that is detached and reliable, allowing for objective analysis:

To challenge an Archimedean point, we can:

1. **Question the Objectivity:** Argue that no viewpoint can be entirely objective, as all perspectives are influenced by subjective experiences and biases.
2. **Highlight Contextual Dependence:** Emphasize that understanding and reasoning are context-dependent, and a detached viewpoint might overlook important contextual nuances.
3. **Introduce Alternative Perspectives:** Present different viewpoints that might offer equally valid insights, thereby challenging the notion of a single, definitive standpoint.
4. **Critique the Assumptions:** Analyze and critique the underlying assumptions that support the Archimedean point, showing that they might not be as firm or immovable as presumed

Scholarly Contribution

Central Asian regionalism has been a topic of significant academic interest, especially in recent years. Here are some key points from the literature:

Historical Context and Evolution: Central Asian regionalism has evolved significantly since the independence of the Central Asian republics in the early 1990s. The region, comprising Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, has seen various attempts at regional cooperation, often influenced by external powers like Russia and China¹.

Challenges and Criticisms: Many scholars argue that regionalism in Central Asia needs to be expanded and more productive. Political instability, economic disparities, and external influences have hindered practical regional cooperation⁹. As the competition increases over molding the region, its constraints and political conditions have resulted in a certain cacophony. The EU needs to become better to listen to their needs, what matters to them, and the conflicts in Central Asia instead of pushing its own agenda¹⁰.

Recent Developments: Since Shavkat Mirziyoyev was elected President of Uzbekistan in 2016, there has been a renewed interest in regional cooperation. This period has provided new impetus to regionalism in Central Asia, with increased diplomatic engagements and regional initiatives.

⁹ Park & Adibayeva (2023).

¹⁰ Lempp & Mayer (2024).

Conceptual Debates: There is an ongoing debate about whether the term “regionalism” is appropriate for Central Asia. Some scholars, such as Buranelli, suggest that “regional order” might be a more accurate term, reflecting the relatively stable and predictable set of relations between states in the region.

Future Prospects: The future of Central Asian regionalism is uncertain, especially given the geopolitical dynamics involving significant powers like Russia, China, and the United States. However, there is potential for increased cooperation, particularly in trade, security, and environmental management.

My scholarly contribution looks beyond positioning towards diplomatic stabilisation strategies proper, encompassing:

Implications of Eurasia Turning into a World Island

1. Geopolitical Shifts: The transformation of Eurasia into a “world island” has significant implications for global power structures. This shift can alter the strategic interests of the EU, necessitating a comprehensive understanding of the region’s evolving dynamics. The transformation of Eurasia into a “world island” could be seen as a tectonic shift in global geopolitics, reshaping the landscape of international relations.

2. Clearing the Path for the EU-India Strategic Partnership

Evolving the Partnership: To make the EU-India Strategic Partnership truly strategic, both parties need to address existing challenges and take actionable steps. This includes joint initiatives in technology, trade, and security. Just as a tree’s roots stabilize the soil, India’s involvement can stabilize the shifting sands of Central Asian geopolitics. Partnerships pave the path to progress, emphasizing the need for collaborative efforts to achieve mutual goals.

3. Engaging Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan’s Strategic Importance: The EU can leverage Kazakhstan’s strategic position and abundant resources to enhance trade, energy security, and political cooperation. By fostering deeper ties, the EU can secure a reliable energy partner and a gateway to Central Asia. Kazakhstan can be seen as the “keystone” in the arch of Central Asian stability, holding together the region’s economic and political structures.

4. Engaging India

India’s Role in Central Asian Regionalism: Engaging India is crucial for balancing regional power dynamics. India’s growing influence and economic prowess make it a vital partner for the EU in fostering regional stability and security. Just as a tree’s roots stabilize the soil, India’s involvement can stabilize the shifting sands of Central Asian geopolitics.

I look beyond this present reasonable departure point.

By engaging strategically with Kazakhstan and India in the context of the evolving EU-India Strategic Partnership, the EU can foster regional stability and navigate the broader geopolitical

shifts in Eurasia. These strategies not only enhance mutual benefits but also align with the EU's long-term strategic interests.

My work contributes to the academic discourse by providing a nuanced understanding of Central Asian regionalism and offering practical recommendations for EU engagement in the region at the cutting edge of research. This holistic approach addresses immediate policy concerns and considers long-term strategic implications. Additional pieces on India Vision2050 and Governance and Performance in India are in the pipe-line¹¹.

Methodological considerations

This piece examines the intricate dynamics of great powers as they navigate the complex landscape of global security. It explores the interplay between power and vulnerability, shedding light on how these nations balance their quest for influence with the inherent insecurities they face. Through a nuanced analysis, our work reveals the multifaceted strategies employed by great powers to secure their interests in an ever-evolving international arena. This study is explorative, a method that serves to explain and shed light on complex and less understood phenomena. These studies priori-tize open-ended inquiry, allowing researchers to uncover new insights rather than testing predefined ones. By embracing flexibility and adaptability, explorative studies can reveal underlying patterns and relationships that might be overlooked in more structured approaches. This method is especially valuable in fields like international relations, where the dynamics are constantly evolving and multifaceted.

My Approach to Central Asian Regionalism

My approach is **descriptive, and practice-oriented**, and I use AI to analyse and describe the current state of regionalism in Central Asia. This method focuses on the following:

- **Descriptive Analysis:** Providing a detailed account of regional dynamics without heavily relying on theoretical frameworks.
- **Practical Insights:** Emphasising real-world applications and immediate observations can be particularly useful for policymakers and practitioners.
- **AI Utilisation:** AI can be leveraged to gather, process, and analyse data, offering a more comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of regional trends and issues.

Practice Theory Approaches to EU Foreign Policy

Practice theory in the context of EU foreign policy offers a different perspective:

- **Conceptual Framework:** Practice theory provides a structured way to understand the actions and behaviours of EU foreign policy actors. It emphasises the importance of practices—repeated actions recognised as competent by a community.

¹¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1ZL5AxmK_A

- **Localised Practices:** This approach focuses on the localised, bottom-up, and top-down practices of EU representatives and actors in various environments. The broader policy context shapes these practices.
- **Historical Context:** Practice theory often involves historicising the struggles around practices to understand the development processes of institutions like the European External Action Service (EEAS).
- **Evidence-Based:** It promotes a more active, localised, and evidence-based understanding of agency, moving beyond abstract notions of national interest or normative aspirations.

Key Differences

1. **Theoretical vs Descriptive:** While practice theory relies on a conceptual framework to analyse foreign policy actions at the nexus of transnational identity, community and action in the field, my approach is more descriptive and practical, focusing on immediate observations and real-world applications from my desk.
2. **AI Integration:** My use of AI for data analysis contrasts with the more traditional qualitative methods often employed in practice theory studies. AI generates a personalised context based on a human prompt, whereby digital information is recycled and given new life through analysis.
3. **Focus areas:** Practice theory emphasises the importance of localised practices and historical context, whereas my approach is more oriented towards current, practical insights without delving deeply into theoretical or historical analysis.

By contrasting these approaches, I can highlight our method's unique strengths in providing actionable insights and real-time analysis while acknowledging the depth and conceptual rigour that practice theory brings to studying EU foreign policy.

Comparing the bliss of nonconceptual wisdom found in the Himalayas with the frantic, dopamine-enhancing nature of AI-supported research and policy advisory is fascinating. Some key points to consider are as follows:

Non-Conceptual Wisdom in the Himalayas

1. **Inner Peace and Clarity:** Nonconceptual wisdom, often achieved through deep meditation and mindfulness, leads to inner peace and clarity. This wisdom transcends ordinary thought processes and is deeply rooted in the present moment.
2. **Spiritual Fulfillment:** Practitioners often describe this state as blissful and fulfilling, connecting them to a sense of universal consciousness and compassion.
3. **Simplicity and Nature:** The serene environment of the Himalayas, away from modern distractions, enhances this experience. The natural surroundings contribute to a sense of harmony and balance.

AI-supported research and policy advisory

1. **High-Stimulation Environment:** AI-supported research involves constant interaction with cutting-edge technology, data analysis, and problem-solving. This environment can be highly stimulating and rewarding, often leading to bursts of dopamine as new insights and solutions are discovered.
2. **Impact and Innovation:** The fast-paced nature of AI research can lead to significant breakthroughs and impactful policy decisions. This sense of achievement and contribution to society can be exhilarating.
3. **Complexity and Challenge:** The complexity of AI systems and the challenges they present can be intellectually stimulating, keeping researchers engaged and motivated.

Comparison

- **Nature of Bliss:** The bliss from nonconceptual wisdom is more about inner tranquillity and spiritual connection, whereas the dopamine rush from AI research is tied to external achievements and intellectual stimulation.
- **Environment:** The peaceful, natural setting of the Himalayas contrasts sharply with the dynamic, tech-driven environment of AI labs and policy centres.
- **Sustainability:** Nonconceptual wisdom offers a sustainable, long-term state of contentment, whereas the high-energy nature of AI research may lead to burnout if not appropriately managed.

Both experiences offer unique forms of fulfilment and can complement each other. Balancing inner peace from nonconceptual wisdom with the excitement of AI research could lead to a more holistic and enriched life. Once you have finished reading my piece, let me know what aspects of these experiences resonate most with you.

AI models like Bing's typically generate arguments based on patterns and data from vast information. Here are some critical differences between AI-generated arguments and traditional scientific arguments:

AI-Generated Arguments:

1. **Data-driven:** AI arguments rely heavily on large datasets and statistical correlations. They analyse patterns and trends from extensive data sources to form conclusions.
2. **Speed and Scale:** AI can process and analyse data much faster and on a much larger scale than humans, allowing for rapid argument generation.
3. **Contextual Understanding:** Advanced AI models use semantic search and natural language processing to understand the context and nuances of queries, providing more relevant and precise answers.

4. **Adaptability:** AI can continuously learn and adapt from new data, improving its arguments over time based on user interactions and feedback.

Traditional Scientific Arguments:

1. **Hypothesis-Driven:** Scientific arguments often start with a hypothesis tested through experiments and observations.
2. **Evidence-Based:** These arguments rely on empirical evidence from controlled experiments, peer-reviewed studies, and reproducible results.
3. **Logical Structure:** Scientific arguments follow a logical structure, including a clear statement of the problem, methodology, results, and conclusions.
4. **Peer Review:** Scientific arguments are subject to peer review, ensuring that the findings are scrutinised and validated by other experts in the field.

In summary, while AI-generated arguments are powerful and efficient, they differ from traditional scientific arguments in their reliance on data patterns, speed, and adaptability versus the hypothesis-driven, evidence-based, and peer-reviewed nature of scientific arguments.

AI analysis is a non-linear and non-sequential method that generates personalised context on a human prompt, leveraging machines' power in an analytic and accumulative manner. It is progressive by retrieving prior research stored digitally and transforming information into knowledge comparable to Kuhnian scientific practice. My method should not be confused disparagingly with the production of a report. Instead, it is a knowledge map, enabling quick identification of information, making it easier to understand and navigate complex information. Internauts cannot use knowledge maps so much for brainstorming as to focus on decision points. Knowledge maps are applied in various sectors to organise information and problem-solving and to communicate effectively.

We used AI Bing for data analysis to enhance our methodology's credibility and clarity. AI Bing integrates advanced AI models and proprietary technology to provide accurate and comprehensive search results.

Here are some specifics about how AI Bing works and was implemented:

1. AI Models and Technology:

- **Next Generation GPT:** AI Bing leverages the latest generation of GPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) models, designed to understand and generate human-like text based on vast amounts of data
- **Prometheus Model:** This proprietary technology combines Bing's search index with GPT capabilities to deliver more relevant and complete answers.

2. Data Analysis Process:

- **Data Collection:** AI Bing was used to gather data from various sources, including academic articles, news reports, and online databases. This ensured a comprehensive collection of relevant information.
- **Data Cleaning:** The collected data was processed to remove any inconsistencies, duplicates, and irrelevant information, ensuring the accuracy of the analysis.
- **Data Analysis:** Using AI Bing, we analysed both structured and unstructured data. For example:

I also used DataLab. The AI-driven DataLab is designed for data analysis, experimentation, and innovation.

Key Features of Data Lab

1. **Data Integration:** Combines data from various sources, making it accessible for analysis.
2. **Advanced Analytics Tools:** Provides tools for statistical analysis, machine learning, and data visualisation.
3. **Collaboration:** Facilitates teamwork among data scientists, analysts, and other stakeholders.
4. **Scalability:** Supports large-scale data processing and storage.
5. **Security:** Ensures data privacy and protection through robust security measures.

Common Uses

- **Research and Development:** Innovating new products or services.
- **Business Intelligence:** Gaining insights to drive business decisions.
- **Predictive Analytics:** Forecasting trends and behaviours.
- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Supporting strategic planning and operations.

Benefits

- **Enhanced Decision Making:** Provides actionable insights.
- **Innovation:** Encourages experimentation and discovery.
- **Efficiency:** Streamlines data processing and analysis.

Data Collection

- **Sources:** Gathering data from various sources such as databases, APIs, web scraping, and sensors.
- **Quality Assurance:** Ensuring the data collected is accurate, complete, and relevant.

Tools and Technologies

- **Programming Languages:** Python, R, SQL
- **Data Processing:** Apache Spark, Hadoop
- **Visualization:** Tableau, Power BI, Matplotlib
- **Machine Learning:** TensorFlow, Scikit-learn, PyTorch

In the following , we lay out the land. First, we make a presentation on Central Asia. Second, we set out a thematic structure for the analysis concerning great powers' quest for security in an inter-connected world. Third, we anchor the analysis in the changing Eurasian geopolitical context. Fourth, we examine into the challenges for Central Asian regionalism from a comparative perspective. Fifth, we examine how the EU , China and India could mutualise in Central Asia. Sixth, we examine the contribution of the Central Asian Economic Cooperation (CAREC). Seventh, we consider the role of the EEAU and Kazakhstan. Eight, we can now turn to India and the EU. Nineth, we delve into an initiative on the Ferghana-valley. Tenth, we explore further common ground between the EU and India. In the conclusion, we sum up our findings and take perspective in terms of seven themes ranging from a shared idea about man over a EU-Central Asia Center in Samarkand to a series of round table talks on Afghanistan in New Delhi.

2.0 CENTRAL ASIA: A PRESENTATION

In this section, we consider presenting the Central Asian region using data science, a discipline that explores how data analytics can be harnessed to make meaning out of the many data swarming around and describe the region and possibly generate predictions about its future.

2.1 Economic Trends

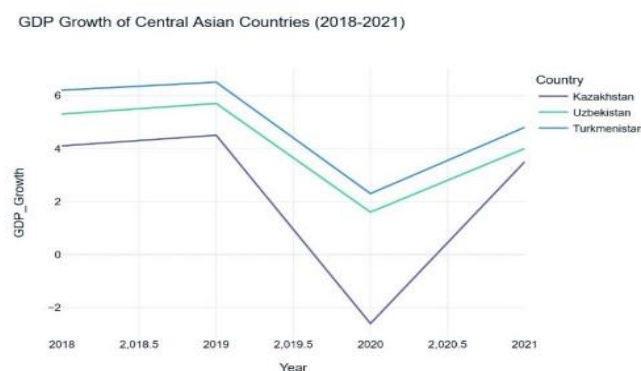
In general terms, the three leading Central Asian states saw healthy GDP growth from 2018 to 2021. Kazakhstan experienced steady GDP growth, except for a decline in 2020, likely due to the pandemic, while Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan showed consistent growth. According to the World Bank,

“Kazakhstan has seen impressive economic growth driven by the first generation of market-oriented reforms, abundant mineral resources extraction, and strong foreign direct investment (FDI). Sustained economic growth has transformed the country into an upper middle-income economy, commensurately raising living standards and reducing poverty. Over the last 10 years, however, Kazakhstan's growth has slowed from 10% over 2000-2007 to below 4%,”

highlighting the vulnerabilities of an economy still dependent on hydrocarbons and with stagnant productivity growth.

Looking ahead, adjusting to the global green transition presents significant challenges for Kazakhstan. Revitalizing economic growth and productivity will require bolder steps to enable the private sector to thrive and drive economic diversification by reducing the state's footprint and boosting competition across the economy, complemented with strengthening human capital and policies to support decarbonization¹².

Figure 1



Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) and Gross National Product (GNP) per capita are measures used to compare economic performance and living standards between countries, but they focus on different aspects. PPP is an economic theory that compares countries' currencies through a "basket of goods" approach. It adjusts for price level differences across countries. PPP is useful for comparing the economic productivity and living standards between countries. It provides a more accurate reflection of what people can buy with their income in their country. GNP per capita is the total economic output of a country, including income from abroad, divided by its population. It measures the average income of a country's citizens. GNP per capita is useful for understanding the average income level of a country's residents. However, it doesn't account for differences in the cost of living between countries. It adjusts for cost of living and price level differences, providing a more accurate measure of what people can afford in their country.

- **GNP per capita** gives a straightforward average income figure but doesn't consider how far that income goes in terms of purchasing power.

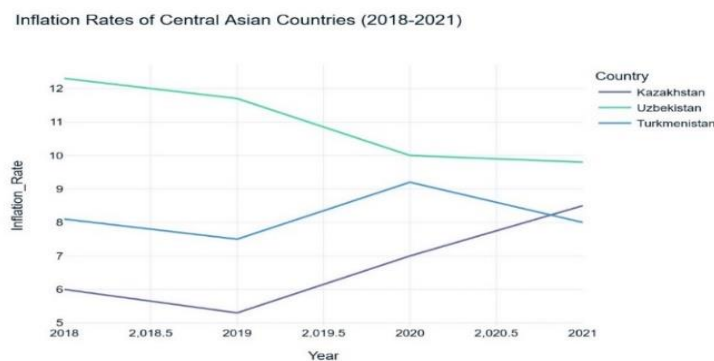
In summary, while GNP per capita tells you how much people earn on average, PPP tells you how much that income can buy in terms of goods and services. Both metrics are essential for understanding different aspects of economic well-being.

¹² <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kazakhstan/overview>

Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) per capita

- **Kazakhstan:** \$32,688
- **Uzbekistan:** \$10,308
- **Turkmenistan:** \$19,974
- **Kyrgyzstan:** \$6,250
- **Tajikistan:** Not explicitly listed, but generally lower than Kyrgyzstan.

Figure 2



Gross National Product (GNP) per capita

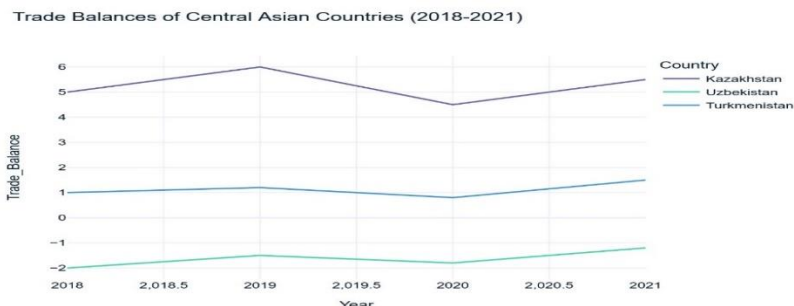
- **Kazakhstan:** Approximately \$11,000
- **Uzbekistan:** Approximately \$2,000
- **Turkmenistan:** Approximately \$7,000
- **Kyrgyzstan:** Approximately \$1,300
- **Tajikistan:** Approximately \$1,100

These figures provide a snapshot of the economic conditions in these countries. PPP offers a more accurate reflection of living standards by adjusting for cost-of-living differences, while GNP per capita gives an average income level.

Inflation rates varied, with Uzbekistan having the highest rates, peaking at 12.3% in 2018.

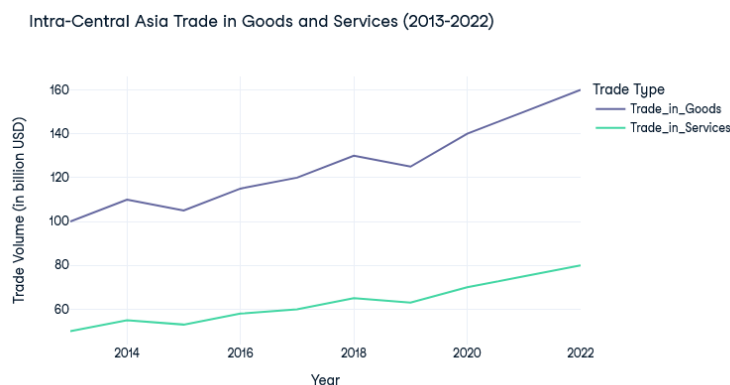
Kazakhstan's trade balances were positive, indicating a trade surplus, whereas Uzbekistan consistently had a trade deficit. Turkmenistan's trade balance remained relatively stable with slight fluctuations.

Figure 3



Over the decade, trade in goods has steadily increased from 100 billion USD in 2013 to 160 billion USD in 2022. Similarly, service trade has also grown, rising from 50 billion USD in 2013 to 80 billion USD in 2022. According to the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, both sectors exhibit a consistent upward trend, indicating strengthening economic ties within Central Asia.

Figure 4



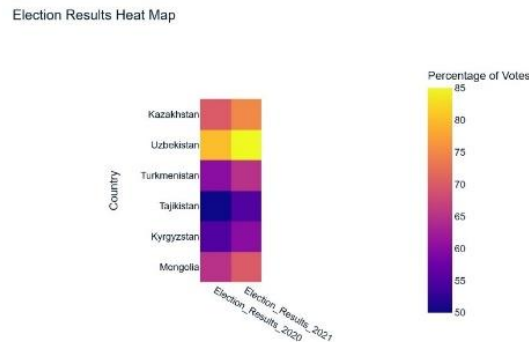
2.2 Political Developments

To track political changes such as election results, policy reforms, and governance indicators, I will create a sample dataset and generate heat maps and timelines to illustrate these trends effectively.

The analysis of political changes in six Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Mongolia) reveals the following:

1. **Election Results:** There is a general increase in the percentage of votes for the winning party from 2020 to 2021 across all countries, indicating potential political stability or consolidation of power.

Figure 5



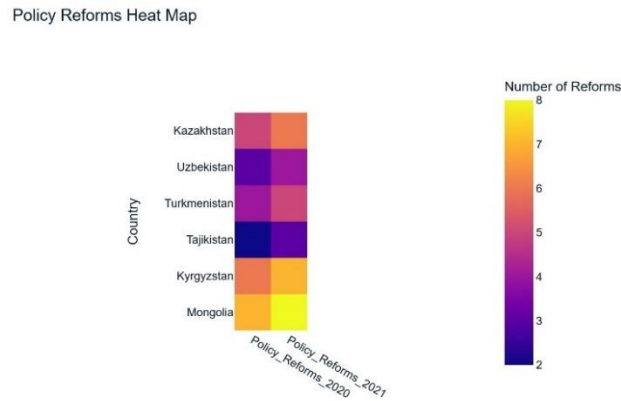
2. **Policy Reforms:** The number of major policy reforms has increased in most countries, with Mongolia showing the highest number of reforms in both years, suggesting active policy-making.
3. **Governance Indicators:** Governance scores have improved slightly from 2020 to 2021, with Mongolia consistently having the highest scores, indicating better governance practices.

Overall, the trends suggest a region experiencing political stability, active policy reforms, and gradual improvements in governance.

A governance indicators heat map is a powerful tool that can be used for various purposes, including:

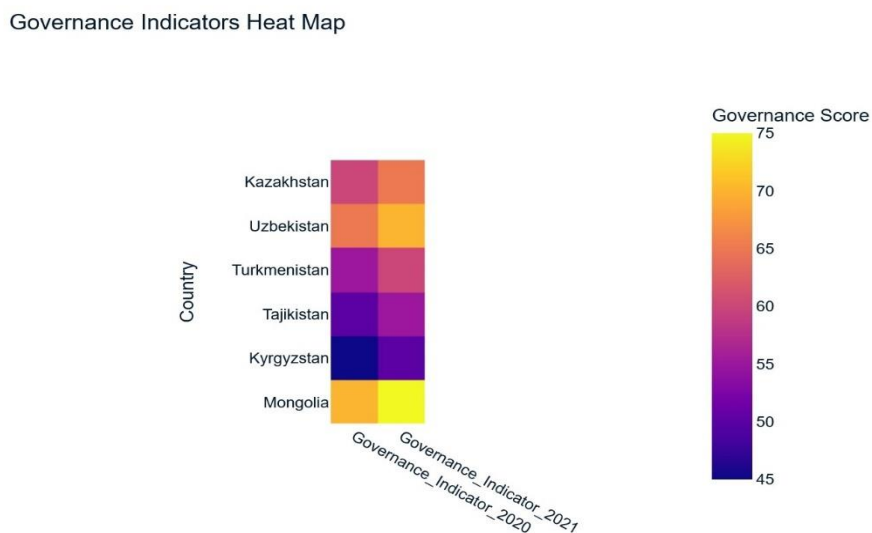
1. **Identifying Strengths and Weaknesses:** By visualizing governance indicators, you can quickly identify areas where a country or region is performing well and areas that need improvement. This can help policymakers prioritize reforms and allocate resources more effectively.
2. **Comparative Analysis:** Heat maps allow for easy comparison between different countries or regions. This can be useful for benchmarking performance and understanding how different governance practices impact outcomes.
3. **Monitoring Progress:** Over time, a heat map can track changes in governance indicators, helping to monitor the impact of policies and reforms. This can be crucial for assessing the effectiveness of governance initiatives.
4. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Heat maps can be a compelling way to present data to stakeholders, including government officials, NGOs, and the public. The visual format makes complex data more accessible and easier to understand.

Figure 6



5. **Policy Development:** By highlighting key governance issues, heat maps can inform the development of targeted policies and interventions. They can help identify which areas require immediate attention and which strategies might be most effective.
6. **Risk Assessment:** In the context of investment or development projects, governance indicators heat maps can help assess risks related to political stability, regulatory quality, and other governance factors. This can guide decision-making and risk management strategies.

Figure 7



To provide a detailed explanation of the visualizations and their implications for market reform and EU intervention in Central Asia, let's break down each component:

Data Sources and Visualizations

1. Election Results Heat Map:

- **Data:** The heat map draws its information from the percentage of votes for the winning party in the years 2020 and 2021.
- **Visualization:** It shows the intensity of election results, with higher percentages indicating stronger political support for the winning party.
- **Implications:** Countries with higher percentages may have more political stability, while those with lower percentages might experience political volatility.

Figure 8

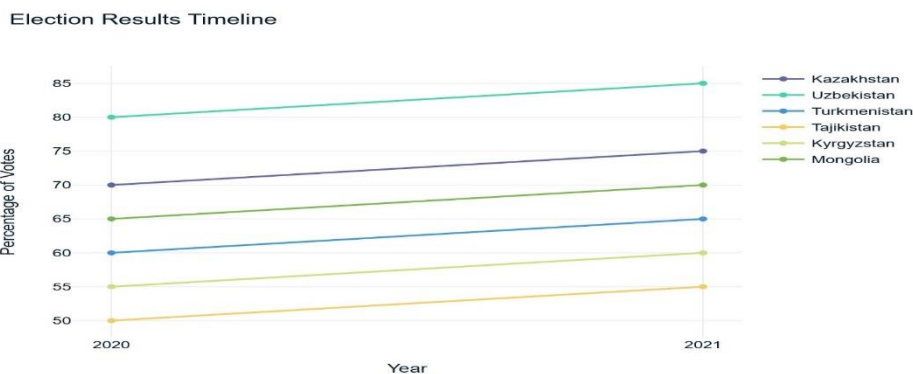


Figure 9

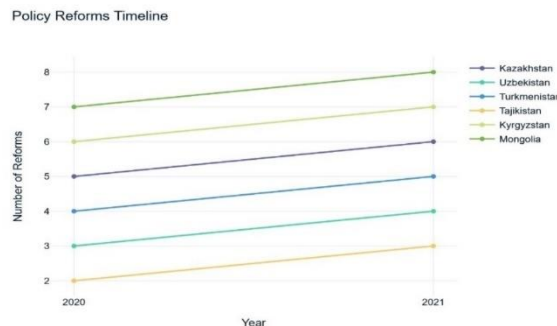
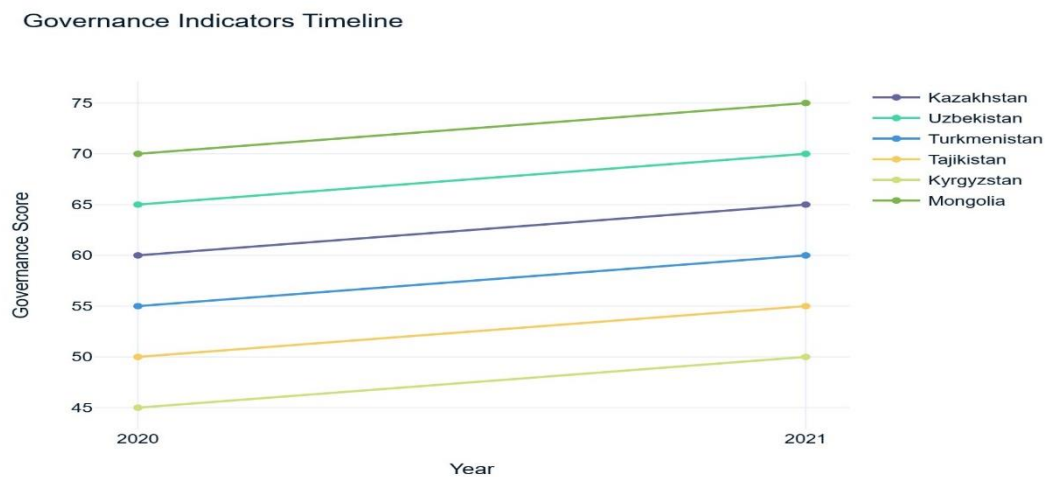


Figure 10



2. Policy Reforms Heat Map:

- Data: This heat map uses the number of major policy reforms enacted in 2020 and 2021.
- Visualization: It highlights the intensity of policy-making activities, with higher numbers indicating more active reform agendas.
- Implications: Countries with more reforms are likely more dynamic in their policy-making, which could be a sign of efforts to modernize and improve governance.

3. Governance Indicators Heat Map:

- Data: The governance indicator scores for 2020 and 2021 are used here.
- Visualization: It shows the quality of governance, with higher scores indicating better governance practices.
- Implications: Higher governance scores suggest more effective and transparent governance, which is crucial for sustainable development.

4. Timelines:

- Data: The timelines track changes in election results, policy reforms, and governance indicators over the two years.
- Visualization: They provide a temporal view of the trends, showing how each country has progressed or regressed.

- Implications: Timelines help identify patterns and trends, such as consistent improvements or declines, which are essential for long-term planning.

Predictions and Recommendations for Market Reform

1. Market Reform Predictions:

- Active Policy Reforms: Countries like Mongolia, which show a high number of policy reforms, are likely to continue their trajectory towards market liberalization and modernization.
- Governance Improvements: Countries with improving governance scores are better positioned to implement effective market reforms, as good governance is a prerequisite for successful economic policies.

2. EU Intervention and Capacity Building:

- Target Countries: The EU should focus on countries with lower governance scores and fewer policy reforms, such as Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, to help them catch up with their more dynamic neighbors.
- Capacity Building: The EU can provide technical assistance, training, and resources to improve governance practices, enhance transparency, and build institutional capacity.
- Supportive Measures: Financial aid, investment in infrastructure, and support for civil society organizations can help create a more conducive environment for market reforms.

Specific Actions for the EU

1. Governance and Institutional Strengthening:

- Training Programs: Implement training programs for government officials to improve their skills in policy-making, administration, and governance.
- Anti-Corruption Measures: Support anti-corruption initiatives to enhance transparency and accountability in governance.

2. Economic and Market Reforms:

- Technical Assistance: Provide technical assistance for drafting and implementing market-friendly policies and regulations.
- Investment in Infrastructure: Invest in critical infrastructure projects that can boost economic activities and facilitate market integration.

3. Social and Civil Society Support:

- Civil Society Organizations: Support civil society organizations that advocate for good governance, human rights, and social justice.
- Public Awareness Campaigns: Fund public awareness campaigns to educate citizens about their rights and the importance of good governance.

Summary

The visualizations provide a comprehensive overview of political changes in Central Asia, highlighting areas of stability and volatility. The EU can play a crucial role in supporting market reforms and capacity building by targeting countries with lower governance scores and fewer policy reforms. By focusing on governance, economic reforms, and social support, the EU can help create a more stable and prosperous Central Asia.

2.3 Social Indicators

I will create a sample dataset for demographic data, including population growth, age distribution,

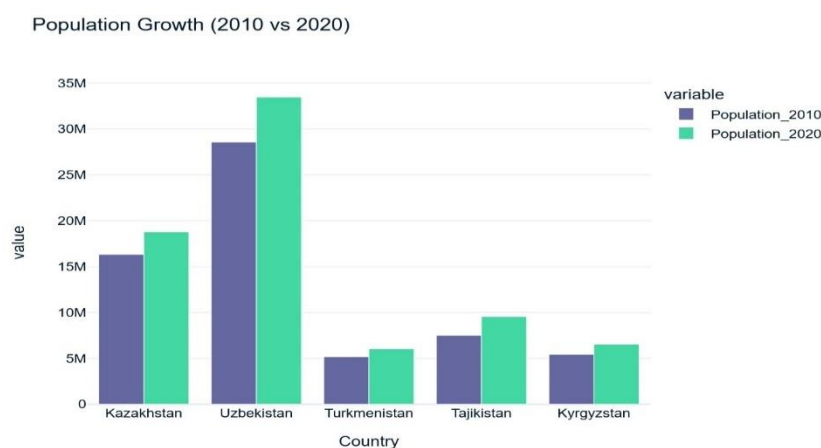
I will generate bar charts and population pyramids to present this data.

The demographic analysis of Central Asia reveals the following insights:

1. Population Growth:

- All five countries (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan) have experienced significant population growth from 2010 to 2020.
- Uzbekistan has the largest population, followed by Kazakhstan.

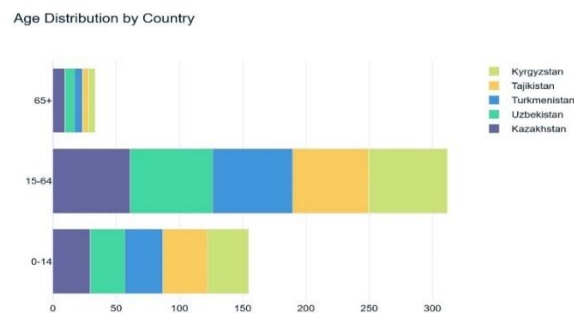
Figure 11



Age Distribution:

- The age distribution shows a youthful population, with a significant proportion of individuals aged 0-14, especially in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.
- The working-age population (15-64) is the largest age group across all countries, while the elderly population (65+) is relatively small.

Figure 12



Education Levels:

Primary education levels are nearly universal across all countries.

Secondary education levels are also high, though slightly lower than primary education.

Tertiary education levels vary more significantly, with Kazakhstan having the highest percentage of tertiary-educated individuals and Kyrgyzstan the lowest.

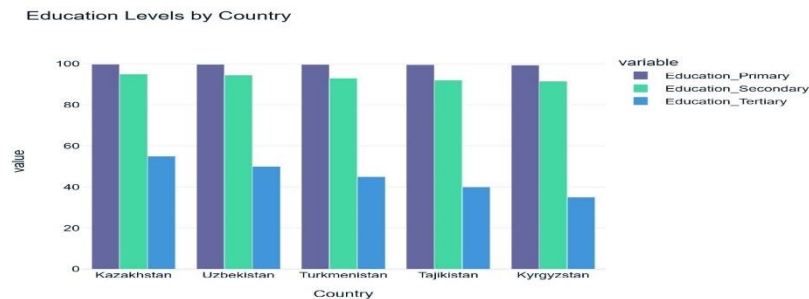
These findings highlight the region's youthful and growing population, with strong primary and secondary education systems but varying levels of tertiary education attainment.

Based on the demographic data, we can derive and predict several key insights and trends for Central Asia:

1. Population Growth:

- **Economic Implications:** The significant population growth suggests a growing labor force, which can drive economic growth if adequately harnessed. However, it also implies a need for job creation and economic diversification to prevent unemployment and underemployment.
- **Urbanization:** Rapid population growth may lead to increased urbanization as people move to cities in search of better opportunities. This can strain urban infrastructure and services if not managed properly.

Figure 13



2. Age Distribution:

- **Youthful Population:** The large proportion of young people (0-14) indicates a high dependency ratio, meaning a significant portion of the population is not yet in the workforce. This can put pressure on education systems and require substantial investment in schooling and child healthcare.
- **Future Workforce:** The substantial working-age population (15-64) suggests a potential demographic dividend if this group is well-educated and employed. Policies focusing on skill development, vocational training, and higher education will be crucial.
- **Aging Population:** Although the elderly population (65+) is currently small, it will grow over time, necessitating future planning for healthcare, pensions, and elderly care services.

3. Education Levels:

- **Primary and Secondary Education:** High levels of primary and secondary education indicate a strong foundation for basic literacy and numeracy. This is positive for overall human capital development.
- **Tertiary Education:** The varying levels of tertiary education suggest differences in higher education access and quality. Countries with lower tertiary education levels may need to invest more in higher education infrastructure and policies to improve access and quality.

Predictions and Recommendations:

- **Economic Policies:** Implement policies that promote job creation, especially in sectors that can absorb a large workforce, such as manufacturing, services, and technology.
- **Education Investment:** Increase investment in education at all levels, with a focus on improving tertiary education to ensure a highly skilled workforce.

- **Healthcare and Social Services:** Plan for future healthcare and social services needs, particularly for the aging population, to ensure sustainable development.
- **Urban Planning:** Develop comprehensive urban planning strategies to manage the expected increase in urbanization, ensuring adequate infrastructure and services.

Overall, the demographic trends in Central Asia present both opportunities and challenges. Proactive and strategic planning in education, economic policies, and social services will be essential to harness the potential of the growing and youthful population while preparing for future demographic shifts.

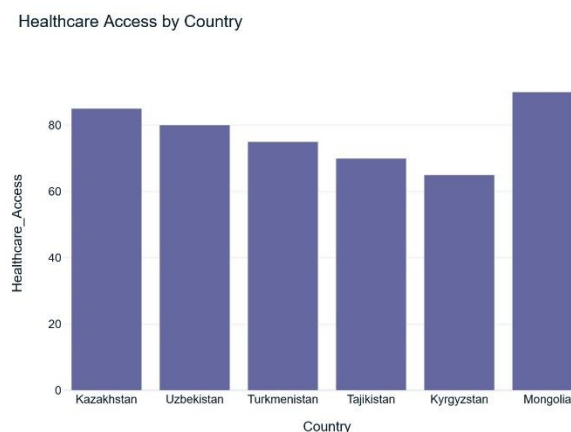
2.4 Health and Education

The social metrics dashboard for six Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Mongolia) reveals the following insights:

1. **Healthcare Access:** Mongolia and Kazakhstan have the highest healthcare access rates, while Kyrgyzstan has the lowest.
2. **Disease Prevalence:** Disease prevalence is highest in Kyrgyzstan and lowest in Mongolia.
3. **Literacy Rates:** Literacy rates are exceptionally high across all countries, with Kazakhstan leading slightly.
4. **School Enrollment:** School enrollment rates are also high, with Mongolia having the highest rate and Kyrgyzstan the lowest.

Overall, the data indicates strong literacy and school enrollment rates across the region, with varying levels of healthcare access and disease prevalence.

Figure 14

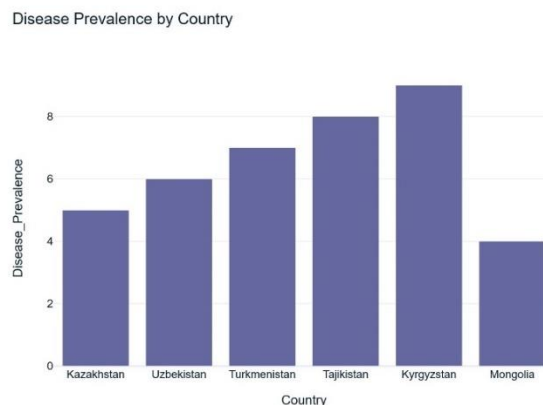


The figures provide several insights into the Central Asian region, highlighting variability and market potential:

1. Healthcare Access:

- **Variability:** There is significant variability in healthcare access, with Mongolia and Kazakhstan having higher access rates compared to Kyrgyzstan.
- **Market Potential:** Countries with lower healthcare access, such as Kyrgyzstan, present opportunities for investment in healthcare infrastructure, services, and technology.

Figure 15



2. Disease Prevalence:

- **Variability:** Disease prevalence varies, with Kyrgyzstan having the highest rates and Mongolia the lowest.
- **Market Potential:** High disease prevalence in certain countries indicates a need for improved healthcare services, pharmaceuticals, and preventive care programs.

3. Literacy Rates:

- **Variability:** Literacy rates are uniformly high across the region, indicating a well-educated population.
- **Market Potential:** High literacy rates suggest a strong foundation for workforce development and potential for industries requiring skilled labor, such as technology and services.

4. School Enrollment:

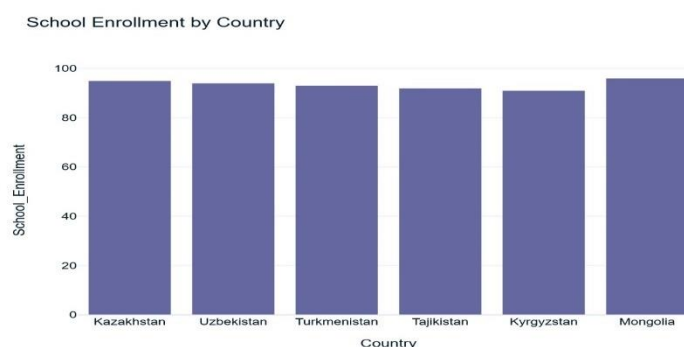
- **Variability:** School enrollment rates are also high, with slight variations.

- **Market Potential:** High enrollment rates indicate a future workforce that is well-educated, presenting opportunities for higher education institutions, vocational training programs, and industries that rely on educated employees.

Predictions and Market Potential:

- **Healthcare Sector:** There is significant potential for growth in the healthcare sector, particularly in countries with lower access and higher disease prevalence. Investments in healthcare infrastructure, medical technology, and pharmaceuticals can address these gaps.
- **Education and Workforce Development:** The high literacy and school enrollment rates suggest a strong potential for industries that require skilled labor. Investments in higher education, vocational training, and technology sectors can capitalize on this educated workforce.
- **Economic Diversification:** The variability in social metrics indicates opportunities for economic diversification. Countries can leverage their strengths, such as high literacy rates, to develop new industries and reduce reliance on traditional sectors.
- **Urbanization and Infrastructure:** As the population grows and urbanizes, there will be increased demand for urban infrastructure, housing, and services. This presents opportunities for investment in construction, real estate, and urban planning.

Figure 16



Overall, the Central Asian region shows promising market potential, particularly in healthcare, education, and technology sectors. Addressing the variability in social metrics through targeted investments can drive economic growth and development.

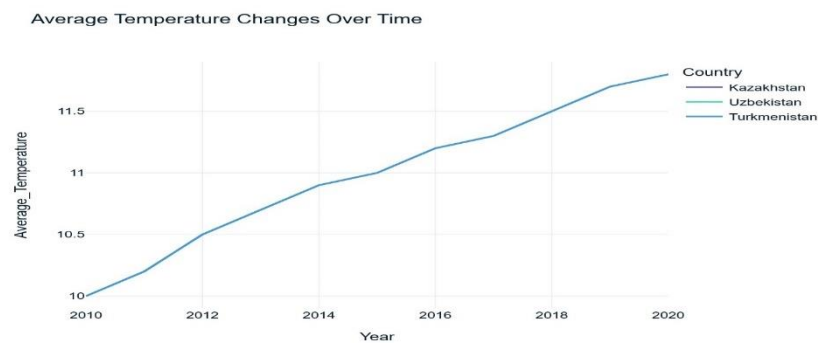
2.5 Environmental Changes

Monitor climate data, such as temperature changes, precipitation patterns, and natural disaster occurrences. Line graphs and geographic maps can highlight these environmental trends.

The line graph shows a gradual increase in average temperatures for Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan from 2010 to 2020.

This trend suggests a warming climate in these countries, which could lead to more frequent heatwaves and other temperature-related impacts.

Figure 17



The line graph indicates a steady increase in precipitation levels for all three countries over the same period.

Increasing precipitation could lead to more frequent flooding events, changes in agricultural productivity, and impacts on water resources.

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan show higher occurrences of natural disasters compared to Turkmenistan. This information can be used to predict and prepare for future natural disasters, focusing on areas with higher historical occurrences. Overall, the data suggests a warming climate with increasing precipitation and a notable number of natural disasters, which could have significant environmental and socio-economic impacts.

2.6 Energy and Resources

To examine energy production, consumption, and export data of Central Asian countries, I will create a sample dataset with the following structure:

The first diagram is a Sankey diagram used to compare volumes between many and many. Here, it visualises the share each energy producer consumes from its energy production. This suggests that Kazakhstan produces the most of its energy and Turkmenistan the least.

Figure 18

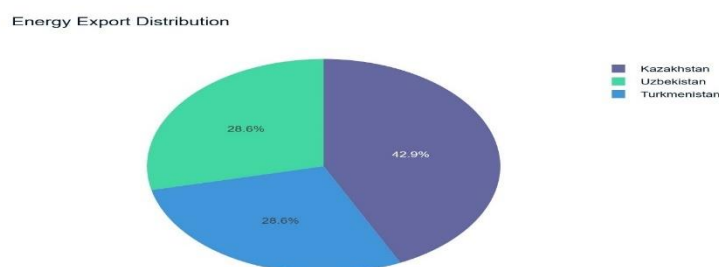
Energy Production, Consumption, and Export in Central Asia



The pie charts illustrate the energy dynamics in Central Asia. Kazakhstan is the largest energy producer, followed by Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. In terms of consumption, Kazakhstan also leads, consuming a significant portion of its production, while Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan consume less. For exports, Kazakhstan exports the most energy, followed by Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The visualisations highlight Kazakhstan's dominant role in energy production and export within the region.

Monitor climate data, such as temperature changes, precipitation patterns, and natural disaster occurrences. Line graphs and geographic maps can highlight these environmental trends.

Figure 19



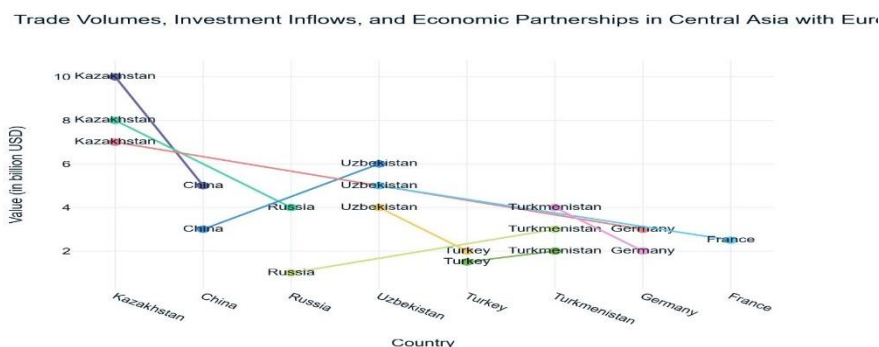
2.7 Trade and Investment

Visualise trade volumes, investment inflows, and economic partnerships. Network diagrams can show the connections between different countries and sectors.

The network diagram reveals significant trade and investment relationships between Central Asian countries and their key partners, including European nations. Kazakhstan has strong economic ties with China, Russia, and Germany, particularly in the energy, mining, and automotive sectors. Uzbekistan engages with China, Turkey, and France, focusing on agriculture, manufacturing, and technology. Turkmenistan's primary partners are Russia, Turkey, and Germany, with activities in energy, construction, and chemicals. This visualization

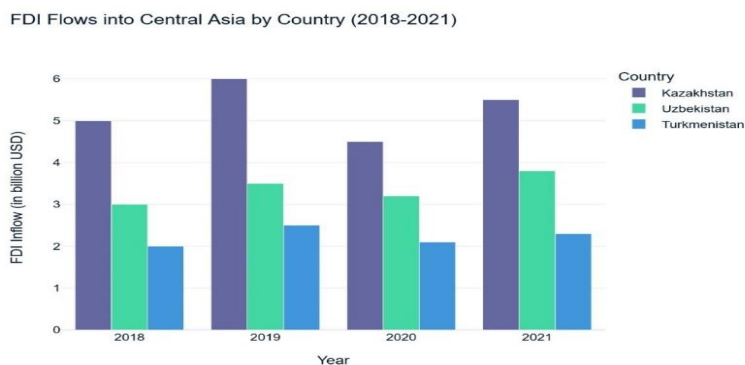
highlights the diverse and interconnected economic partnerships between Central Asia and Europe.

Figure 20



The chart illustrates the FDI flows into Central Asia from 2018 to 2021, focusing on Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. Kazakhstan consistently received the highest FDI inflows, peaking at 6 billion USD in 2019. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan also saw steady FDI inflows, with Uzbekistan gradually increasing over the years. The primary countries that originated from these investments were China, Russia, and Turkey, which indicated strong economic ties with these nations.

Figure 21



Summary

Market Potential, Political Will to Reform, and Governance Strengthening in Central Asia:

- Market Potential: Central Asia has significant market potential due to its strategic location, natural resources, and growing economies. Countries like Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are leading in terms of economic reforms and market liberalization.

- **Political Will to Reform:** There is a varying degree of political will to reform across the region. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan show strong political will with active policy reforms, while countries like Turkmenistan and Tajikistan lag behind.
- **Governance Strengthening:** Governance can be strengthened in countries with lower governance scores, such as Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. The EU can play a crucial role in providing technical assistance, training, and resources to improve governance practices.

To create a comprehensive summary and the requested charts, we need to follow these steps:

1. **Summarize Market Potential, Political Will to Reform, and Governance Strengthening in Central Asia:**
 - **Market Potential:** Central Asia has significant market potential due to its strategic location, natural resources, and growing economies. Countries like Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are leading in terms of economic reforms and market liberalization.
 - **Political Will to Reform:** There is a varying degree of political will to reform across the region. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan show strong political will with active policy reforms, while countries like Turkmenistan and Tajikistan lag behind.
 - **Governance Strengthening:** Governance can be strengthened in countries with lower governance scores, such as Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. The EU can play a crucial role in providing technical assistance, training, and resources to improve governance practices.

Applying a policy reform line to Central Asian states can help guide and implement effective governance reforms in the region. Here's how it can be tailored to their specific context:

1. **Guidance for Implementation:** Central Asian states can use a policy reform line to outline clear steps for implementing reforms in areas such as economic diversification, anti-corruption measures, and public service improvements. This ensures that all stakeholders understand the process and objectives.
2. **Prioritization:** Given the diverse challenges in the region, such as economic dependency on natural resources and political stability issues, a policy reform line can help prioritize reforms. For instance, focusing first on economic reforms to reduce dependency on a single sector can be crucial.
3. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establishing robust mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating reforms is essential. Central Asian states can set up independent bodies to track progress and assess the impact of reforms, ensuring transparency and accountability.

4. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engaging with various stakeholders, including government agencies, the private sector, civil society, and international organizations, is vital. A policy reform line can facilitate this engagement, ensuring that reforms are inclusive and have broad support.
5. **Resource Allocation:** Efficient allocation of resources is critical for successful reforms. Central Asian states can use the policy reform line to identify key areas that require investment, such as infrastructure development, education, and healthcare.
6. **Risk Management:** Identifying potential risks, such as political resistance or economic instability, and outlining strategies to mitigate them is crucial. This can include measures like building consensus among political leaders and ensuring economic policies are resilient to external shocks.

By applying a policy reform line, Central Asian states can systematically address their governance challenges, promote sustainable development, and enhance regional stability.

The increase in intra-regional trade in Central Asia highlights several key trends and implications for the region:

1. **Economic Integration:** The growth in trade among Central Asian countries indicates a move towards greater economic integration. This can lead to more robust economic ties and interdependence, which can help stabilize the region economically and politically.
2. **Economic Growth:** The rise in intra-regional trade has been accompanied by significant economic growth. For instance, the region's GDP has expanded at an average annual rate of 6.2% over the past two decades.
3. **Trade Turnover:** Intra-regional trade turnover has grown by more than 80% in the last five years, reaching \$10.6 billion. This suggests that Central Asian countries are increasingly trading with each other, which can reduce dependency on external markets and enhance regional resilience.
4. **Connectivity and Infrastructure:** Improved connectivity and infrastructure are likely contributing to this increase in trade. Initiatives aimed at removing trade barriers and enhancing cross-border procedures are playing a crucial role.
5. **Potential for Further Growth:** There is still significant potential for further growth in intra-regional trade. Leaders in the region are aiming to increase mutual trade turnover to \$15 billion.

Overall, the rising intra-regional trade in Central Asia is a positive sign of economic cooperation and development, which can lead to a more prosperous and stable region.

3.0 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

At a philosophical level, this is an inquiry into how the shifting of the reader's perception from seeing the world as a collection of separate entities to recognizing the interconnectedness of all things. At a conceptual level, it is concerned about how actors' quest for security could be framed in analytical terms. There are four conceptual handles to my analytical approach (1) A non-polar international system (2) The geopolitical implications of great powers (3) Impact of regional organisations in shaping conflicts at the nexus of geoeconomics-geopolitics (4) diplomatic stabilisation strategies under non-polarity.

1. Non-Polar International System

The concept of a **non-polar international system** refers to a global structure where power is distributed among many different actors rather than being concentrated in a few dominant states. Here are some key points about this concept and its implications at both global and regional levels:

1. **Decentralized Power:** Unlike unipolar or bipolar systems, a non-polar system has numerous centers of power, including states, multinational corporations, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations.
2. **Complex Interdependence:** In a non-polar world, no single entity can dominate global affairs. Instead, power is more diffused, leading to a complex web of interdependence among various actors
3. **Dynamic and Fluid Alliances:** Alliances and partnerships are more fluid and issue-specific, rather than being based on long-term strategic interests.

Global Level

1. **Multiplex World Order:** The global governance structure is characterized by multiple layers of interaction, including economic, political, and social dimensions. This multiplexity allows for a more pluralistic approach to global cooperation
2. **Increased Role of Middle Powers:** Middle powers and smaller states gain more influence as they can form coalitions and partnerships to address specific global issues.
3. **Challenges to Global Governance:** The diffusion of power can make global governance more challenging, as there is no single authority to enforce rules or norms.

Regional Level

1. **Regional Hegemons:** In the absence of a dominant global power, regional powers may emerge to exert influence within their respective regions.
2. **Regional Organizations:** Regional organizations and agreements become more important as mechanisms for managing regional issues and conflicts.

3. **Variable Geometry:** The concept of variable geometry suggests that regional and global governance structures are not uniform but vary depending on the issue and the actors involved.

2. Great Powers

A **great power** is a sovereign actor that has significant influence and strength on a global scale. Here are some key characteristics:

1. **Global Influence:** Great powers have the ability to shape international events and policies through their diplomatic, economic, and military capabilities.
2. **Economic Strength:** They possess substantial economic resources, which allow them to exert influence over global markets and trade.
3. **Military Capability:** Great powers maintain strong military forces that can project power beyond their borders.
4. **Diplomatic Reach:** These states often play a central role in international organizations and alliances, influencing global governance and security.
5. **Recognition:** They are recognized by other states and international bodies as having the capacity to influence global affairs.

This may be contrasted with the notion of a regional power, characterized by :

1. **Economic and Military Strength:** A regional power typically has significant economic resources and military capabilities that allow it to influence its region¹³.
2. **Geopolitical Influence:** These states often have the ability to shape political and economic dynamics within their region. This influence can be exerted through diplomacy, economic policies, or military presence.
3. **Recognition and Identity:** A regional power is often recognized as such by other states within the region and beyond. This recognition can be based on historical, cultural, or political factors.
4. **Foreign Policy Strategies:** Regional powers may adopt various strategies, such as cooperation, leadership, or even hegemony, to maintain their status and influence¹⁴

In a non-polar world, where power is distributed among multiple states rather than dominated by one or two superpowers, great powers have an inherent interest in developing cooperative approaches. This is due to the complex interdependencies and the need for stability in the international system. The European Union (EU), as a significant actor in this landscape, has a

¹³ <https://peacediplomacy.org/2022/03/26/middle-powers-in-the-multipolar-world/>

¹⁴ <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780199743292/obo-9780199743292-0222.xml>

vested interest in strengthening the authority of international organizations to ensure a balanced and harmonious global order.

Inherent Interest in Cooperation

1. **Interdependence and Stability:** In a non-polar world, great powers are interdependent economically, politically, and environmentally. Cooperation is essential to manage global challenges such as climate change, pandemics, and economic crises. Without cooperation, these issues can escalate, leading to instability that affects all states.
2. **Avoiding Conflict:** Non-polarity increases the risk of conflicts due to the lack of a clear power hierarchy. Cooperative approaches help mitigate these risks by fostering dialogue and understanding among great powers. This reduces the likelihood of misunderstandings and conflicts.
3. **Shared Benefits:** Cooperative approaches allow great powers to share the benefits of global public goods, such as security, trade, and technological advancements. By working together, they can achieve outcomes that are beneficial for all, rather than engaging in zero-sum competition.

The EU's Interest in Strengthening International Organizations

1. **Normative Power:** The EU has historically positioned itself as a normative power, promoting values such as democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Strengthening international organizations aligns with these values and enhances the EU's influence on the global stage.
2. **Multilateralism:** The EU's foreign policy is deeply rooted in multilateralism. By bolstering international organizations, the EU can ensure that global governance structures are robust and capable of addressing transnational issues effectively.
3. **Economic Interests:** A stable and predictable international system is crucial for the EU's economic interests. International organizations play a key role in regulating trade, investment, and economic cooperation, which are vital for the EU's prosperity.

Dimensions of Strengthening International Organizations

1. **Institutional Reforms:** Enhancing the decision-making processes and representation within international organizations to ensure they are more inclusive and democratic. This includes reforms in the United Nations, World Trade Organization, and other key institutions.
2. **Resource Allocation:** Increasing financial and human resources to international organizations to enhance their capacity to address global challenges. This involves contributions to peacekeeping missions, development programs, and health initiatives.
3. **Legal Frameworks:** Strengthen international legal frameworks to ensure compliance with international norms and standards. This includes supporting international courts

and tribunals that uphold the rule of law. For China to comply with the international order, it must have a say in the design of institutions and influence over rule-making to ensure the new Concert between Great Powers is harmonious and represents a balance between legitimacy and power. The purpose is to keep the peace or to prevent the outbreak of great power war preventing an orderly power transition from within the Western-led international order.

Theoretical Perspectives

1. **Lisbeth Hooghe:** Hooghe's work on multilevel governance highlights the importance of authority being dispersed across multiple levels of governance, from local to global. This approach is crucial in a non-polar world where no single actor can dominate¹⁵. She asks to what extent the international domain is anarchic? When and how do states delegate authority to regional and international organisations ?
2. **Other Theorists:** Scholars like Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye emphasize the role of complex interdependence and the need for international institutions to manage these interdependencies effectively.

Foreign Policy Leadership and Influence Strategies

1. **Diplomatic Engagement:** Active diplomatic engagement and coalition-building are essential for the EU to influence international organizations and promote cooperative approaches among great powers.
2. **Soft Power:** Leveraging soft power through cultural diplomacy, development aid, and educational exchanges to build goodwill and foster cooperation.
3. **Strategic Partnerships:** Forming strategic partnerships with other great powers and regional organizations to address common challenges and promote stability.

Differences from Regional Powers

1. **Scope of Influence:** Great powers have a global reach and their actions impact the entire international system, whereas regional powers primarily influence their immediate neighborhoods.
2. **Interests and Priorities:** Regional powers may prioritize local issues and conflicts, while great powers must consider a broader range of global issues.
3. **Cognitive Dissonance:** Reducing cognitive dissonance involves aligning perceptions and actions among great powers to ensure coherent and consistent policies. This is crucial for maintaining stability and avoiding conflicts.

Summary

¹⁵ <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/measuring-international-authority-9780198724490?q=hooghe&lang=en&cc=us#>

In terms of capabilities, great powers are isomorphic: military, economic, cultural, educational, soft power, political systems and culture all have a bearing and can be used to wield influence to promote self-interest.

In a non-polar world, great powers have a fundamental interest in developing cooperative approaches to manage interdependencies and ensure stability. The EU, with its commitment to multilateralism and normative power, plays a crucial role in strengthening international organizations. The EU can enhance global governance and promote a balanced international order by focusing on institutional reforms, resource allocation, and legal frameworks. Understanding the differences between great and regional powers, and addressing cognitive dissonance, is essential for achieving harmony and reducing conflicts in the international system.

Authority, as defined by sociologist Max Weber, is legitimate power recognized and accepted by society. It differs from mere power, which can be exercised without legitimacy. Authority can take various forms, such as traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational. It could also have an emotional component in digital society and be exercised as part of complex processes in the networked organization of the EU-led international society.

Authority strengthens the position of great powers by providing a stable and recognized framework within which they can operate. This legitimacy allows them to lead and influence other states more effectively, fostering cooperation and reducing conflicts. By establishing and maintaining authority, great powers can ensure a more predictable and orderly international system, which is crucial for managing global challenges and maintaining stability.

The following assumes not only that the US, China, and Russia are great powers but also that the EU and India are, albeit incomplete and aspiring ones. The assumption is we can only shed light on and explain what is going on or should be going on in Central Asia by understanding the interaction between those great powers and how they seek influence.

The geopolitical implications of great powers, both in theory and practice, significantly influence regional organisations.

Theoretical Implications

1. **Balance of Power:** The theory suggests that great powers strive to maintain a balance of power to prevent any one state from becoming too dominant. This balance influences regional organisations, often aligning with or against great powers to maintain regional stability.
2. **Hegemonic Stability Theory** posits that a single dominant power (hegemon) can enforce rules and norms that lead to global stability. Regional organisations may benefit from a hegemon's stability but can also suffer from over-dependence on it.
3. **Geopolitical Theories:** Theories like Mackinder's Heartland Theory and Spykman's Rimland Theory emphasise the strategic importance of some geographic regions. Great powers often focus on these areas, influencing regional organisations within them.

Practical Implications

1. **Economic Influence:** Great powers often exert influence through economic tools such as trade agreements, sanctions, and investments. Regional organisations may align their policies with those of great powers to gain financial benefits or avoid monetary penalties.
2. **Military Alliances:** Great powers form alliances to project power and protect their interests. Regional organisations like NATO are examples of great powers' influence shaping the region's security dynamics.
3. **Diplomatic Pressure:** Great powers use diplomatic channels to influence regional organisations. This can include lobbying for certain policies, mediating conflicts, or supporting specific political factions¹⁶.

Impact on Regional Organizations

1. **Policy Alignment:** Regional organisations often align their policies with the interests of great powers to gain support or avoid conflict. This can lead to a loss of autonomy and bring stability and resources.
2. **Conflict and Cooperation:** The presence of great powers can lead to both conflict and cooperation within regional organisations. While competition between great powers can lead to regional tensions, their collaboration can enhance regional stability and development.
3. **Institutional Strengthening or Weakening:** Great powers can either strengthen regional organisations by providing resources and legitimacy or weaken them by creating divisions and fostering dependency.

In summary, the influence of great powers on regional organisations is multifaceted, involving economic, military, and diplomatic dimensions. The impact can stabilise and destabilise, depending on the nature of the great powers' involvement and the regional context. In the following analysis I examine in greater detail how these dynamics play out in Central Asia, a geopolitical hotspot, as I put forward strategies for practical problem-solving and nodal points for coordination and common ground between EU and India, as an equilibrating strategic partnership to US, Russian and Chinese influence in Central Asia. Undoubtedly, regional order in the Indian Ocean and Central Asia are high on the bucket list of the EU-India Strategic Partnership. To add complexity, the EU has named Kazakhstan a pivotal power. Its role is worthy of analysis as well.

3.0 REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Regional organizations plays an important role in shaping conflicts at the nexus of geoeconomic and geopolitical conflict dimensions.

¹⁶ <https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/2404308/>

Regional organisations play a crucial role in shaping the geopolitical landscape by fostering cooperation and addressing collective challenges among member states. Here are some key ways they influence geopolitics:

1. **Economic Integration:** Organizations like the European Union (EU) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) promote economic integration, which can lead to increased trade, investment, and economic stability in their regions
2. **Political Stability and Security:** Regional organizations often work to maintain peace and security. For example, the African Union (AU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) engage in conflict resolution and peacekeeping missions.
3. **Cultural and Social Cooperation:** These organizations also foster cultural exchange and social cooperation, helping to build stronger regional identities and mutual understanding among member states.
4. **Environmental and Health Initiatives:** Regional bodies can address transboundary issues like environmental protection and public health. The EU, for instance, has been active in setting environmental standards and coordinating responses to health crises.
5. **Geopolitical Influence:** By acting collectively, regional organizations can amplify their geopolitical influence on the global stage. This can be seen in the EU's role in global trade negotiations and ASEAN's efforts to balance relations with major powers like China and the United States.

Overall, regional organisations help shape the geopolitical landscape by promoting cooperation, stability, and collective action among their member states. I will apply this to a Central Asian context.

Regional organizations like the Central Asia Economic Cooperation (CAERC), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) have proposed several strategies and initiatives to foster regional stability in Central Asia. Here are some key examples:

1. **CAREC:**
 - **Economic Integration:** CAERC focuses on enhancing economic cooperation among Central Asian countries. This includes initiatives to improve trade, investment, and infrastructure development, which can contribute to economic stability and growth in the region.
2. **SCO:**
 - **Security Cooperation:** The SCO emphasizes regional security through joint military exercises, intelligence sharing, and counter-terrorism efforts. The organization also works on combating drug trafficking and other transnational crimes.

- **Economic Development:** The SCO has an Economic Development Strategy that aims to promote economic cooperation and development among member states. This includes initiatives like the SCO New Economic Dialogue Programme, which seeks to enhance economic ties and development projects.

3.CSTO:

- **Collective Security:** The CSTO focuses on collective defense and security among its member states. This includes joint military exercises, coordinated responses to security threats, and efforts to maintain regional stability through military and strategic cooperation. The Central Asians have become concerned about Russia's drift towards the reassertion of its former empire and the example set by the invasion of Ukraine.

These initiatives help strengthen economic ties, promote sustainable development, and enhance regional stability in Central Asia. These organisations play a crucial role in addressing the multifaceted challenges in Central Asia, from economic development to security threats, thereby contributing to the region's overall stability and prosperity.

The third leg of my argument concerns political stabilisation strategies.

These governments and political leaders use approaches to maintain or restore stability in world affairs. A “force d'équilibre” or balancing power like the EU in geopolitics aims to maintain stability by preventing any one state or coalition from becoming too dominant. Here are some key strategies used by such powers:

1. **Diplomatic Engagement:** Actively engaging in diplomacy to mediate conflicts and foster dialogue between rival states. This can help de-escalate tensions and build trust.
2. **Alliances and Partnerships:** Forming strategic alliances and partnerships to counterbalance the influence of more powerful states. This can involve both military alliances and economic partnerships.
3. **Economic Leverage:** Using economic tools such as trade agreements, sanctions, and foreign aid to influence the behavior of other states. Economic interdependence can be a powerful stabilizing force.
4. **Military Presence:** Maintaining a credible military presence in key regions to deter aggression and reassure allies. This can include deploying troops, conducting joint exercises, and establishing military bases.
5. **Multilateral Institutions:** Supporting and strengthening international institutions like the United Nations, NATO, and the World Trade Organization to promote collective security and economic stability.
6. **Conflict Prevention and Resolution:** Investing in conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms, such as peacekeeping missions and diplomatic initiatives, to address potential sources of instability before they escalate.

These strategies aim to create a balance of power that discourages unilateral actions and promotes a stable international order. Arguably, our age has never been more in need of diplomatic stabilisation strategies combining integrated politico-economic policies, the upholding of a rules-based multilateral order, and practical and creative diplomatic approaches and initiatives. Central Asia is important as it is nestled between China, India, Russia, and the Middle East.

The best thing we can do is honor Central Asia's contribution to an international order characterised by tolerance, international outlook, centralisation of political authority, and diplomatic network by analysing how this region's cohesion and integrity might be vouched for from the vantage point of the EU and India, two incomplete great powers with a clear and obvious interest in partnering up and strengthening governance in this region.

Ensuring that the EU-led international society remains pluralistic and respectful of each great power's interests, integrity, and autonomy involves several key strategies:

1. **Promoting Multilateralism:** The EU can continue to support and strengthen multilateral institutions like the United Nations and the World Trade Organization. This helps ensure that international rules and norms are upheld, providing a platform for all powers to voice their interests.
2. **Strategic Autonomy:** The EU's concept of strategic autonomy aims to enhance its ability to act independently on the global stage while still cooperating with other powers. This involves reducing dependencies, particularly in critical areas like defense and technology, and building internal capacities.
3. **Inclusive Dialogue:** Engaging in continuous and inclusive dialogue with other great powers ensures that their interests and concerns are considered. This can help prevent conflicts and promote mutual respect and understanding.
4. **Balancing Interests:** The EU must balance its own strategic interests with those of other powers. This involves careful diplomacy and negotiation to find common ground and mutually beneficial solutions.

Regarding the ideal of the EU being a coherent and integrated foreign policy actor, it is indeed a challenging and ongoing process. The EU's foreign policy is often seen as fragmented due to the diverse interests of its member states. However, efforts like the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the European External Action Service (EEAS) aim to create a more unified and effective foreign policy.

While the ideal of a fully coherent and integrated EU foreign policy may be stylized, significant progress has been made, and the EU continues to work towards greater unity and effectiveness in its external actions.

Summary

The conceptual framework employed in this study represents a dynamic fusion of established geopolitical theories with the intricate realities of Central Asia. By adopting a flexible and

adaptive approach, the study bridges the gap between theoretical underpinnings and real-world complexities, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of the evolving regional orders in Central Asia. Embracing the ex post conceptual framework, the research effectively integrates theoretical constructs with empirical geopolitical landscapes, offering nuanced insights into the strategic roles of global actors and the potential for the European Union, in collaboration with India, to project power and act as a force d'équilibre in the region. This approach not only facilitates a holistic understanding of the EU's strategic engagement in Central Asia but also provides valuable implications for regional stability and global power dynamics. By coupling theory with practical geopolitical considerations, the study contributes to the advancement of knowledge on the complexities of regionalism and the multifaceted geopolitical landscape of Central Asia

1. Great Powers' Quest for Security:

- We examine how major powers, such as China, and Russia, EU and India pursue their security objectives and how their quest for security influences regional stability and global power dynamics in Central Asia.
- **Example:** China wants stability and development in Xinjiang. Therefore, it seeks to secure its interests through strategic military and economic initiatives, impacting regional stability and global power balances. It considers Central Asia a testing ground for the soundness and reliability of its relationship with its partners.

2. Regional Organizations Shaping the Geopolitical Environment:

- We investigate the role of regional organisations like the European Union in shaping geopolitical landscapes. We assess its real and imagined efforts in promoting economic integration, regional cooperation, and conflict resolution in Central Asia and how to proceed.
- **Example:** "ASEAN's efforts in fostering economic integration and regional cooperation have significantly contributed to geopolitical stability in Southeast Asia, mitigating tensions and promoting cultural exchange among member states."

3. Diplomatic Stabilization Strategies:

- We explore the diplomatic strategies states and regional and international organisations employ or could use to stabilise regions.
- **Example:** "The European Parliament's call for recalibration of the EU's Central Asia strategy, emphasizing strengthening of regional cooperation, sustainable development and human rights in Central Asia".

We operationalize the conceptual framework by examining the policies and initiatives through which the EU could become an influential global actor in Central Asia. I examined the various aspects such as economic opportunities, regional security dynamics, troop alignment and responsibilities, confidence-building measures, and geopolitical deconfliction. Additionally, we explore the potential for the EU, in collaboration with India, to project power and act as a force d'équilibre in Central Asia. This operationalization involved a comprehensive analysis of the strategic objectives, regional security dynamics, and the potential for the EU to foster cooperation and promote shared values between Europe and Central Asia. Furthermore, we addressed the role of regional organizations and initiatives in fostering regional stability and development, providing valuable insights into the interplay between national interests and regional cooperation. Overall, the operationalization of the conceptual framework involved a detailed exploration of the practical applications of theoretical constructs within the complex geopolitical landscape of Central Asia.

4.0 EURASIA FOREVER

Alexandros Petersen's "The World Island: Eurasian Geopolitics and the Fate of the West" explores the geopolitical dynamics of Eurasia and its significance to Western interests. Petersen builds on the ideas of historical figures like Sir Halford Mackinder, George Kennan, and Jozef Pilsudski to propose a 21st-century strategy for Eurasia. He emphasises the importance of Western engagement in the region to promote stability, good governance, and policy independence.

Strategy for Promoting Good Governance, Policy Independence, Integration, and Western-Orientation in Eurasian Nations:

1. Strengthening Democratic Institutions:
 - Support Civil Society: Provide funding and training for local NGOs and civil society organisations to promote transparency, accountability, and citizen participation.
 - Judicial Reforms: Assist in developing independent judicial systems to ensure the rule of law and protect human rights.
2. Economic Integration:
 - Trade Agreements: Facilitate trade agreements encouraging economic cooperation and reducing barriers between Eurasian nations and Western countries.
 - Infrastructure Development: Invest in infrastructure projects that enhance connectivity and economic integration within the region and with the West.
3. Energy Cooperation:

- Diversification of Energy Sources: Promote the development of diverse energy sources to reduce dependency on any single country, particularly in the context of Russian energy influence.
 - Sustainable Energy Projects: Support renewable energy projects to foster long-term energy security and environmental sustainability.
4. Educational and Cultural Exchange:
- Scholarship Programs: Establish scholarships for students from Eurasian countries to study in Western institutions, fostering mutual understanding and collaboration.
 - Cultural Initiatives: Promote cultural exchange programs to build stronger people-to-people ties and enhance Western influence.
5. Policy Independence:
- Capacity Building: Provide technical assistance and training to government officials to enhance their capacity for independent policy-making.
 - Regional Cooperation: Encourage regional cooperation initiatives, allowing Eurasian countries to address common challenges and reducing external dependencies collectively.
6. Security Partnerships:
- Defense Cooperation: Develop defence cooperation agreements to enhance the security capabilities of Eurasian nations and deter external threats.
 - Counterterrorism Efforts: Collaborate on initiatives to address shared security concerns and promote regional stability.

Implementing these strategies can help foster a more stable, independent, Western-oriented Eur-asian region, aligning with the goals outlined in Petersen's work.

5.0 CENTRAL ASIAN REGIONAL INTEGRATION: CHALLENGES AND STAKES

1. Background:

Central Asia comprises five former Soviet republics: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Despite cultural, historical, and political similarities, attempts at durable regional cooperation have been unsuccessful. Let us analyse the situation:

2. Challenges to Regional Cooperation:

- **Neo-Patrimonial Nature:** Central Asian governments' neo-patrimonial structure hinders integrated economic, political, and security systems at the regional level. Cooperation.

- **External Powers:** External powers such as China and Russia play a significant role. Russia aims to preserve its influence over former Soviet republics through the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). Kazakhstan, a regional power, benefits economically from EAEU membership, prioritising cooperation with Russia over its Central Asian neighbors.
- **Institutional Weakness:** The dissolution of the Central Asian Cooperation Organisation (CACO) in 2005 highlights the lack of a unified regional block. Institutional weaknesses hinder deeper cooperation.

3. Keywords for Key Players:

a. Kazakhstan:

- **Economic Benefits:** Kazakhstan gains economic advantages by participating in the EAEU. These benefits outweigh the potential gains from Central Asian cooperation within the CACO.
- **Strengthening Ties with Russia:** Kazakhstan aligns with Russia to safeguard its interests, even at the cost of regional cooperation with neighbours.

b. Uzbekistan:

- **Strategic Position:** Uzbekistan seeks stability and economic growth. Regional integration can enhance trade, investment, and security.
- **Balancing Act:** Uzbekistan balances relations with Russia, China, and other Central Asian states.

c. China:

- **Economic Interests:** China views Central Asia as a crucial region for its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Energy resources, trade routes, and infrastructure projects are at stake.
- **Security Concerns:** Stability in Central Asia affects China's security interests.

d. Russia:

- **Preserving influence:** Russia uses the EAEU to maintain hegemonic influence over former Soviet republics. Cooperation with Kazakhstan serves its interests.
- **Geopolitical Rivalries:** Russia competes with China for influence in Central Asia.

e. India:

- **Energy and Trade:** India seeks access to Central Asia's energy resources and markets.
- **Strategic partnerships:** India aims to counterbalance China's regional influence.

4. Proposed plan for strengthening regional integration:

- **Learn from ASEAN:** Central Asia can adopt an ASEAN-like approach. Effective coordination structures shared norms, and a more unified stance can enhance internal cooperation and autonomy from external influences.
- **Invest in Infrastructure:** Develop cross-border infrastructure (transport, energy, and digital connectivity) to facilitate trade and people-to-people exchanges.
- **Address Water and Energy Disputes:** To prevent conflicts, collaborate on transboundary water management and energy resources.
- **Promote People-Centric Cooperation:** Encourage cultural exchanges, educational programs, and civil society engagement.

Central Asia faces challenges, but strategic cooperation can lead to a more integrated and prosperous region.

Lessons from Asian populations

Central Asia can draw valuable lessons from the success of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in fostering regional cooperation and integration. Here are some key takeaways:

1. **Gradual approach:** ASEAN's success lies in its incremental approach. Central Asian countries should prioritise achievable goals and build trust over time. Gradual steps allow for adaptation and consensus-building.
2. **Inclusive Dialogue:** ASEAN promotes open dialogue among member states. Central Asian countries should regularly consult, address concerns, and seek common ground—inclusivity fosters cooperation.
3. **Shared Norms and Values:** ASEAN countries adhere to shared norms, including noninterference and consensus-based decision-making. Central Asia can benefit from defining common principles to guide cooperation.
4. **Economic Integration:** The economic community of ASEAN countries facilitates trade, investment, and labour mobility. Central Asia should focus on removing barriers, harmonising regulations, and promoting intraregional trade.
5. **People-Centric Approach:** ASEAN emphasises people-to-people connections. Central Asia can strengthen ties by investing in cultural exchanges, educational programs, and tourism.
6. **Conflict Prevention:** ASEAN's conflict resolution mechanisms prevent escalation. Central Asia should proactively address transboundary issues (such as water management) to avoid disputes.

From ASEAN's pragmatic, consensus-driven approach to achieving regional integration and cooperation, Central Asia can learn.

6.0 MUTUALISATION BETWEEN EU, CHINA AND INDIA

A collaborative and strategic approach is essential to pave the ground or further mutualise the strengths and weaknesses of India, China, and Europe for the development of Central Asia. Here are some key areas where these regions can work together:

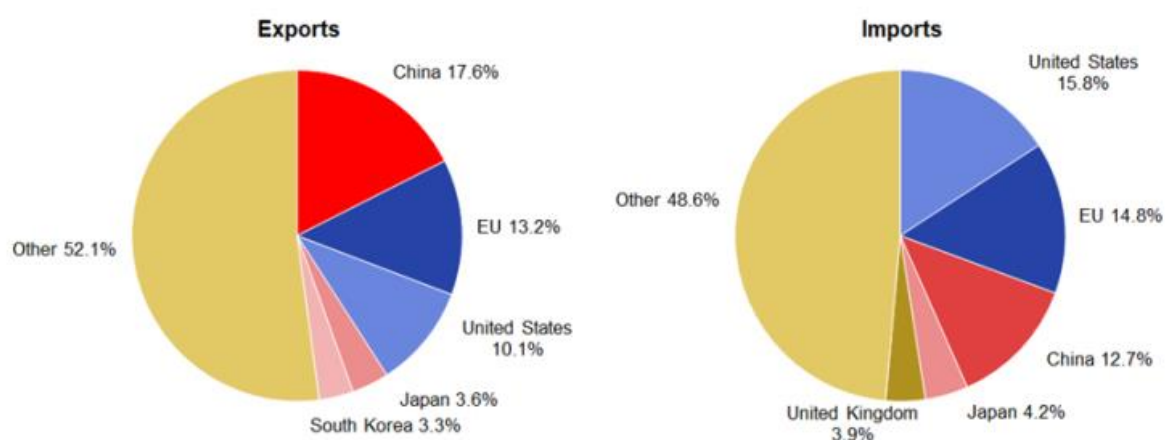
Strengths and Weaknesses

India

- **Strengths:**
 - **Technological Expertise:** India is rapidly advancing in IT and digital services.
 - **Democratic Values:** Promotes democratic governance and human rights.
 - **Cultural Ties:** Historical and cultural connections with Central Asia.
- **Weaknesses:**
 - **Infrastructure:** Needs improvement in infrastructure development.
 - **Economic Constraints:** Limited financial resources compared to China and the EU.

Figure 22 - Composition of China's foreign trade partners

China among the world's largest traders of goods, 2022 (% share of world exports/imports)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: ext_it_introeu27_2020) and UNCTAD

Source: Eurostat

China

- **Strengths:**
 - **Financial Power:** Significant investment capabilities, primarily through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
 - **Infrastructure Development:** Expertise in large-scale infrastructure projects.
 - **Proximity:** Geographical closeness to Central Asia.
- **Weaknesses:**
 - **Political Concerns:** Issues related to transparency and political influence.
 - **Cultural Differences:** There is less cultural affinity with Central Asia than India.

Europe

- **Strengths:**
 - **Technological and Educational Resources:** Advanced technology and educational systems.
 - **Human Rights and Governance:** Strong emphasis on human rights, democracy, and good governance.
 - **Economic Stability:** Stable economic environment and significant market potential.
- **Weaknesses:**
 - **Geographical Distance:** Farther from Central Asia compared to China and India.
 - **Bureaucratic Processes:** Slower decision-making processes due to complex governance structures.

Collaborative Strategies

1. Infrastructure Development:

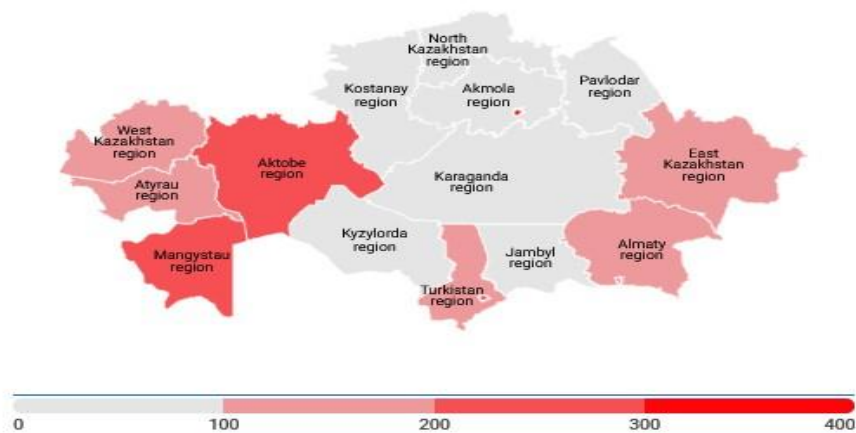
- **China's Role:** Leverage China's expertise and financial power to build infrastructure projects like roads, railways, and energy pipelines.

- **India's Contribution:** Provide technological support and workforce training to ensure the sustainability of these projects.
 - **Europe's Input:** Ensure projects meet international standards for transparency, environmental sustainability, and human rights.
2. **Economic Cooperation:**
- **Trade Agreements:** Establish trilateral trade agreements to facilitate smoother trade between Central Asia, India, China, and Europe.
 - **Investment in SMEs:** Encourage investment in Central Asia's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to boost local economies.
3. **Educational and Technological Exchange:**
- **Joint Research Initiatives:** Promote joint research and development projects in technology, agriculture, and healthcare.
 - **Scholarship Programs:** Create scholarship programs for Central Asian students to study in India, China, and Europe, fostering a skilled workforce.
4. **Governance and Human Rights:**
- **EU's Role:** Lead initiatives to promote good governance, rule of law, and human rights in Central Asia.
 - **India's Support:** Share experiences in democratic governance and civil society engagement.
 - **China's Contribution:** Focus on economic development while aligning with international standards for governance.
5. **Cultural Exchange:**
- **Cultural Programs:** Organize cultural exchange programs to enhance mutual understanding and cooperation.
 - **Tourism Development:** Develop tourism infrastructure to attract visitors from India, China, and Europe, boosting local economies.

By combining their strengths and addressing their weaknesses, India, China, and Europe can significantly contribute to the sustainable development of Central Asia. This collaborative approach can lead to a more prosperous and stable region, benefiting all parties involved.

This has to be compared to the provinces in Kazakhstan where protests erupted during 2022:

Figure 23- Chart over Protests in Kazakhstan



Source: <https://cabar.asia/en/analysis-of-protests-in-kazakhstan-2019-2022>

To address the areas in Kazakhstan where most protests occurred, a collaborative plan by China, the EU, and India could focus on several key strategies:

1. Economic Development and Job Creation

- **Investment in Local Industries:** Encourage investments in local industries, particularly in regions like Zhanaozen, Aktau, Aktobe, and Atyrau, which are rich in oil and minerals. This can create jobs and reduce economic disparities.
- **Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs):** Support the growth of SMEs through grants, low-interest loans, and business training programs. This can help diversify the economy and reduce reliance on large corporations.

2. Infrastructure Development

- **Transport and Connectivity:** Improve transportation infrastructure to better connect remote areas with major cities like Almaty and Nur-Sultan. This can facilitate trade and mobility, boosting local economies.
- **Digital Infrastructure:** Invest in digital infrastructure to enhance internet connectivity, especially in rural areas. This can support education, healthcare, and business activities.

3. Social Programs and Education

- **Vocational Training:** Implement vocational training programs tailored to the needs of local industries. This can equip the workforce with relevant skills and improve employability.
- **Education Initiatives:** Support educational initiatives that focus on reducing inequality and providing opportunities for youth. Scholarships and exchange programs with institutions in China, the EU, and India can be beneficial.

4. Governance and Transparency

- **Anti-Corruption Measures:** Work with the Kazakh government to implement anti-corruption measures and promote transparency. This can help build trust between the government and the people.
- **Community Engagement:** Establish community engagement programs to involve local populations in decision-making processes. This can ensure that development projects meet the actual needs of the communities.

5. Healthcare and Social Services

- **Healthcare Access:** Improve access to healthcare services in protest-prone areas. Mobile clinics and telemedicine can be effective in reaching remote populations.
- **Social Safety Nets:** Strengthen social safety nets to support vulnerable populations. This can include unemployment benefits, food assistance, and housing support.

6. Environmental Sustainability

- **Sustainable Practices:** Promote sustainable practices in industries to protect the environment and ensure long-term economic viability. This can include renewable energy projects and pollution control measures.
- **Community-Based Conservation:** Engage local communities in conservation efforts to protect natural resources and biodiversity.

Implementation Framework

- **Joint Task Force:** Establish a joint task force comprising representatives from China, the EU, India, and Kazakhstan to oversee the implementation of the plan.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Set up a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to track progress and make necessary adjustments.
- **Funding Mechanisms:** Create a multi-donor trust fund to pool resources and ensure sustained funding for the initiatives.

By focusing on these areas, China, the EU, and India can help address the root causes of the protests and contribute to the stability and prosperity of Kazakhstan.

7.0 CENTRAL ASIAN REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

The Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) cooperation is an intergovernmental organisation between 11 countries and development partners working together to promote development through cooperation, leading to accelerated economic growth and poverty cooperation. Its members are Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The

overarching vision of God's Neighbours, Good Partners, and Good Prospects guides it. Since its inception in 2001, it has mobilised € 51 billion in investments.

There are several operational clusters: economic and financial stability, Trade Tourism and economic corridors, Infrastructure and economic connectivity, Agriculture and Water, Human Development, and Cross-Cutting themes.¹⁷ It is supported by the Carec Institute, headquartered in Urumqi, Xinjiang, China, which underpins capacity-building, think tanks, economic monitoring, knowledge management, and research activities.¹⁸

The main financing partners are Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, ADB IFI & and China.¹⁹ Carec bypasses India and includes Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The flagship projects are the six rail & road corridors:

India's engagement with Central Asia is rooted in a deep historical connection and a commitment to mutual growth and stability. By fostering cooperative relationships and respecting the sovereignty of Central Asian nations, India aims to contribute to regional stability and prosperity.

Infrastructure Development

- **High-Speed Rail Projects:** Collaborate with EU firms experienced in high-speed rail to design and implement projects within CAREC.
- **Sustainable Development:** Ensure that infrastructure projects align with EU sustainability standards, promoting green and inclusive growth²⁰.

5. Policy and Regulatory Alignment

- **Regulatory Frameworks:** Align CAREC's regulatory frameworks with EU standards to attract European investments and ensure compatibility in trade and transport.
- **Policy Dialogue:** Establish regular policy dialogues between CAREC and EU policymakers to address challenges and explore new opportunities for cooperation²¹.

Figure 24 CAREC Corridor Network

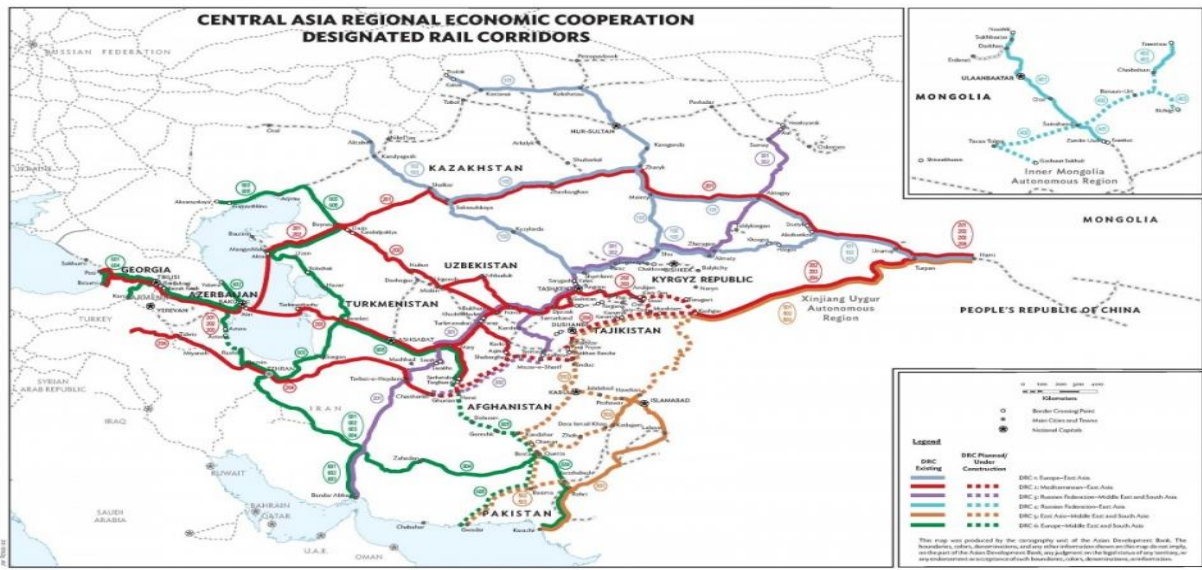
¹⁷ <https://www.carecprogram.org/>

¹⁸ Carec program <https://carecprogram.org/uploads/2024-Capacity-Building.pdf>

¹⁹ https://www.carecprogram.org/?page_id=13630

²⁰ https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/global-gateway-eu-funded-study-opens-way-major-investment-sustainable-transport-connections-between-2023-06-30_en

²¹ https://www.carecprogram.org/?page_id=32



Source: https://www.carecprogram.org/?page_id=20Action

Plan to Leverage EU for CAREC 2030 Vision

1. Strategic Partnership and Funding

- **Engage EU Institutions:** Establish formal partnerships with EU institutions such as the European Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB) to secure funding and technical assistance for CAREC projects.
- **Joint Ventures:** Promote joint ventures between EU companies and CAREC member states to develop high-speed rail infrastructure and other regional integration projects.

2. Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building

- **Workshops and Training:** Organize workshops and training programs with EU experts to share best practices in high-speed rail technology and regional integration.
- **Technical Assistance:** Utilize the EU's experience in regional integration (e.g., the Schengen Area) to develop frameworks for seamless cross-border movement within CAREC.

3. Trade Facilitation and Market Access

- **Trade Agreements:** Negotiate trade agreements between CAREC member states and the EU to facilitate market access for goods and services.
- **Customs Harmonization:** Implement EU-style customs harmonisation to reduce trade barriers and improve border efficiency.

India's Perception of CAREC and Institutionalizing Cooperation

India's Perception

India views CAREC as a strategic platform for enhancing regional connectivity and economic cooperation. India is particularly interested in CAREC's potential to improve trade routes and energy security, aligning with its regional integration goals.²² The EU has consistently supported a stable border regime between China and India. With China now confident in its status as a powerful nation and India a member of BRICS, China may pragmatically cooperate rather than merely planting in the sown of the British's rule-and-divide tactics. The partition of the Indian sub-continent, however, is something Islamabad perceives Delhi has never accepted in their heart of hearts. Meanwhile, the EU is restoring and consolidating its role, conducting a comprehensive review of its Asia policies. By consolidating their external identities, it might become possible for the EU and India to engage in domestic reform and growth at both ends of Eurasia, and in the process, remain both optimistic about the future and unify a large part of humanity.

Institutionalizing Cooperation

- **Bilateral Agreements:** Develop bilateral agreements between India and CAREC member states focusing on trade, transport, and energy cooperation.
- **Joint Committees:** Establish joint committees to oversee the implementation of cooperative projects and address any emerging issues.
- **Investment in Infrastructure:** Encourage Indian investments in CAREC infrastructure projects, particularly transport and energy sectors.

Current Barriers

- **Geopolitical Tensions:** Regional geopolitical tensions can hinder cooperation and project implementation.
- **Regulatory Differences:** Variations in regulatory frameworks between India and CAREC member states can create obstacles.
- **Funding Constraints:** Limited financial resources can delay or prevent the execution of large-scale projects.

Comparison with CACO

The Central Asia Cooperation Organization (CACO) focuses on similar regional cooperation and integration goals. However, CAREC's broader membership and comprehensive strategic framework provide a more robust platform for achieving long-term development goals.

CAREC can significantly advance its 2030 vision by leveraging EU expertise and resources, promoting sustainable development and regional integration. Institutionalizing cooperation with India will further enhance these efforts, despite the existing barriers.

²² <https://thediplomat.com/2024/06/india-in-the-caucasus-and-central-asia-the-giant-next-door/>

EBRD-Funded Projects under CAREC

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has been a significant contributor to the CAREC program, focusing on various sectors including transport, energy, and trade facilitation. Some notable projects funded by the EBRD under CAREC include:

1. Transport Sector:

- **Road and Railway Projects:** EBRD has financed several road and railway projects to enhance connectivity within the CAREC region. This includes the modernization of key transport corridors that facilitate trade and movement across borders.

2. Energy Sector:

- **Renewable Energy Projects:** Investments in renewable energy projects to promote sustainable energy solutions in CAREC member countries.

3. Trade Facilitation:

- **Customs Modernization:** Projects aimed at modernizing customs procedures to streamline trade and reduce bottlenecks at borders.

Strengthening and Delineating Cooperation with EIB

To strengthen and delineate cooperation with the European Investment Bank (EIB) for CAREC projects, the following steps can be taken:

1. Strategic Alignment:

- **Joint Strategy Development:** Develop a joint strategy between CAREC and EIB that aligns with both entities' goals and priorities. This strategy should focus on critical areas such as infrastructure development, sustainable energy, and trade facilitation.

2. Collaborative Projects:

- **Co-Financing Initiatives:** Identify and develop projects that can be co-financed by both EIB and EBRD. This will not only pool resources but also leverage the expertise of both institutions.

3. Technical Assistance and Capacity Building:

- **Knowledge Sharing:** Facilitate knowledge-sharing and capacity-building initiatives where EIB can provide technical assistance based on its extensive experience in project implementation and management.

4. Policy and Regulatory Support:

- **Regulatory Harmonization:** Work towards harmonising regulatory frameworks to ensure smooth implementation of projects. EIB's experience in working with diverse regulatory environments can be invaluable here.

5. Sustainability Focus:

- **Green Projects:** Prioritize projects that focus on sustainability and environmental protection. EIB's strong emphasis on climate action and environmental sustainability can help CAREC achieve its green development goals.

By leveraging the strengths and expertise of both EBRD and EIB, CAREC can significantly advance its 2030 vision, promoting regional integration and sustainable development. Since China perceives cooperation in Central Asia as key to the quality of the conversation with its partners, and India has apparent interests in Central Asia and may even have been lured to soften its stance on BRIC membership, the EU could be construed to have an interest in acting as mediator, provided equivocation and a piece of both the cake and a slice of the action are forthcoming.

8.0 EURASIAN UNION AND KAZAKHSTAN

The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) was established on January 1, 2015, following a treaty signed by Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia in 2014. The union aims to promote economic integration among its member states, including Armenia and Kyrgyzstan. The EAEU facilitates the free movement of goods, services, labour, and capital and coordinates policies in various sectors such as macroeconomics, transport, industry, and agriculture. Trade creation is steadily growing within EAEU. It was set up as a rival to the European Union following the failure of the negotiations on a comprehensive framework between the EU and Russia launched in 2008 and disrupted in 2012, as its fatal attraction of a Eurasian destiny, the restlessness of the Steppe once more tempted Russia combined with fear that made it believe there was a threat to its form of governance necessitating a preemptive move on Ukraine, its traditional sphere of influence.

The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)

EAEU is significant regional organization that plays a crucial role in fostering regional stability and economic integration in Central Asia. Here are some of the key strategies and initiatives proposed by the EAEU:

- **Economic Integration:** The EAEU aims to create a single market for goods, services, capital, and labor among its member states. This includes harmonizing regulations, reducing trade barriers, and facilitating the free movement of people and goods.
- **Infrastructure Development:** The EAEU focuses on developing regional infrastructure, including transportation networks, energy projects, and digital connectivity. These initiatives are designed to enhance economic connectivity and support sustainable development in the region.

- **Trade and Investment:** The EAEU works to expand trade and investment opportunities both within the union and with external partners. This includes negotiating trade agreements, promoting foreign direct investment, and supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
- **Economic Policy Coordination:** The EAEU coordinates economic policies among its member states to ensure macroeconomic stability and sustainable growth. This includes cooperation on fiscal policies, monetary policies, and industrial development strategies.
- **Social and Labor Policies:** The EAEU also addresses social and labor issues, including the protection of workers' rights, social security coordination, and the promotion of employment opportunities.

Advantages for Russia

Russia benefits significantly from the EAEU in terms of import and export relationships. The union allows Russia to maintain and expand its economic influence over its neighbouring countries, ensuring a stable export market, particularly energy resources². Additionally, Russia receives a substantial share of customs duties collected within the EAEU, further boosting its economic position.²³

Addressing Trade Imbalance

To address the trade imbalance within the EAEU, member states could consider revising the distribution of customs duties and enhancing economic cooperation to ensure more equitable benefits. This might involve developing joint industrial projects and increasing investments in member states' economies to foster balanced growth.

EU's Relationship with the EAEU

The European Union views Russia as a counterweight to China's growing regional influence. This geopolitical consideration impacts the EU's relationship with the EAEU. Engaging with the EAEU could give the EU strategic leverage in Eurasia, potentially balancing China's economic and political clout.

Engaging with the Eurasian Economic Union (EEAU) presents several challenges and potential drawbacks for the European Union (EU):

1. Geopolitical Tensions

Russia's Influence: The EEAU is heavily influenced by Russia, which can complicate EU-EEAU relations due to existing geopolitical tensions between the EU and Russia.

Conflicting Interests: The strategic interests of EEAU member states may sometimes align with those of the EU, leading to potential conflicts and diplomatic challenges.

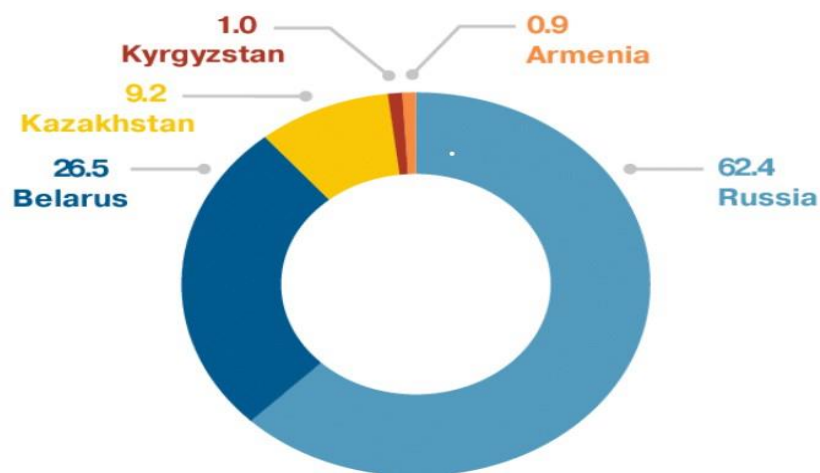
²³ <https://thediplomat.com/2023/06/who-benefits-from-the-urasian-economic-union/>

2. Economic Disparities

Market Integration Issues: The economic structures and regulatory environments of EEAU member states differ significantly from those of the EU, making market integration complex.

Trade Barriers: Non-tariff barriers and differing standards can hinder trade and investment between the EU and EEAU.

Figure 25 – EEAU Trading Structure



3. Regulatory and Legal Challenges

Divergent Regulations: The EEAU has its own set of regulations and standards, which may be different from EU regulations, creating legal and administrative hurdles.

Intellectual Property Rights: Differences in the enforcement of intellectual property rights can pose challenges for businesses operating across both regions.

4. Political and Governance Issues

Authoritarian Regimes: Some EEAU member states have authoritarian governments, which can lead to human rights concerns and complicate political cooperation with the EU.

Governance Standards: The governance standards in EEAU countries may not meet the EU's expectations for transparency and accountability, affecting joint initiatives.

5. Security Concerns

Regional Instability: The EEAU region includes areas with ongoing conflicts and security issues, which can pose risks to EU investments and cooperation projects.

Cybersecurity Threats: Differences in cybersecurity standards and practices can create vulnerabilities in joint digital initiatives.

Despite these challenges, cooperation opportunities exist in areas such as trade, energy, and infrastructure development. However, careful navigation of these issues is essential to ensure mutually beneficial outcomes.

Engaging with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) offers several potential benefits for the European Union (EU):

1. Enhanced Trade Opportunities

- **Market Access:** The EAEU provides access to a large market with over 180 million consumers, which can boost trade and economic growth for EU businesses.
- **Reduced Trade Barriers:** Engagement can lead to the reduction of tariffs and non-tariff barriers, facilitating smoother trade flows between the regions.

2. Energy Security

- **Diversification of Energy Sources:** The EAEU includes major energy producers like Russia and Kazakhstan, which can help the EU diversify its energy sources and enhance energy security.
- **Joint Energy Projects:** Collaboration on energy infrastructure projects, such as pipelines and renewable energy initiatives, can benefit both regions.

3. Economic Cooperation

- **Investment Opportunities:** The EAEU offers investment opportunities in various sectors, including infrastructure, manufacturing, and agriculture.
- **Economic Integration:** Closer economic ties can lead to greater economic integration, benefiting both regions through increased economic stability and growth.

4. Geopolitical Stability

- **Regional Stability:** Engaging with the EAEU can contribute to regional stability by fostering economic interdependence and reducing geopolitical tensions.
- **Diplomatic Relations:** Improved relations with EAEU member states can enhance diplomatic ties and cooperation on global issues.

5. Cultural and Educational Exchanges

- **People-to-People Connections:** Engagement can promote cultural and educational exchanges, strengthening people-to-people ties and mutual understanding.

- Collaborative Research: Joint research initiatives and academic partnerships can foster innovation and knowledge sharing.

6. Infrastructure Development

- Connectivity Projects: Collaboration on infrastructure projects, such as transportation corridors and digital connectivity, can improve regional integration and economic development.
- Modernization Efforts: Joint efforts can support the modernization of infrastructure in EEAU member states, benefiting both regions.

By leveraging these potential benefits, the EU can enhance its strategic presence in the EEAU region, fostering mutual economic growth and stability no later than the end of the war in Ukraine as far as Russian territory is concerned.

Astana : Staying or Exiting the EAEU

For the EU, deciding to engage with or distance itself from the EAEU involves weighing the strategic benefits against the potential political and economic risks. Maintaining a balanced approach that fosters economic cooperation while upholding the EU's core values might be the most prudent strategy²⁴.

Suffice to say that the EU must balance its desire for Russia as a geopolitical counterweight to China, while simultaneously strengthening its Central Asia strategy for more than mere energy security. On one hand, the EU faces the need to counterbalance China; on the other hand, it must navigate China's interest in cooperation within Central Asia. This cooperation implies the stabilisation of Afghanistan, which is crucial for the ratification of the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) and should lead to a much more effective EU response to the needs of our Central Asian brethren

Recommended EU Stance

The EU should aim for a pragmatic engagement with the EAEU, focusing on areas of mutual economic interest while advocating for reforms that align with international governance and human rights standards. This balanced approach can help the EU leverage its relationship with the EAEU to counterbalance China's influence without compromising its values. The European Union is by far Kazakhstan's biggest export market, but Astana could import more from the EU.²⁵ To make the bilateral relationship more balanced and somewhat off-set, the Kazakh's import dependence on Russia should be in areas where China cannot.

Supporting Kazakhstan's Multi-Vector Role

Kazakhstan's multi-vector foreign policy aims to balance relations with major powers, including Russia, China, and the EU. The EU can support Kazakhstan by:

²⁴ <https://cabar.asia/en/what-are-the-consequences-of-exit-from-eaeu-for-kazakhstan>

²⁵ <https://cabar.asia/en/what-are-the-consequences-of-exit-from-eaeu-for-kazakhstan>

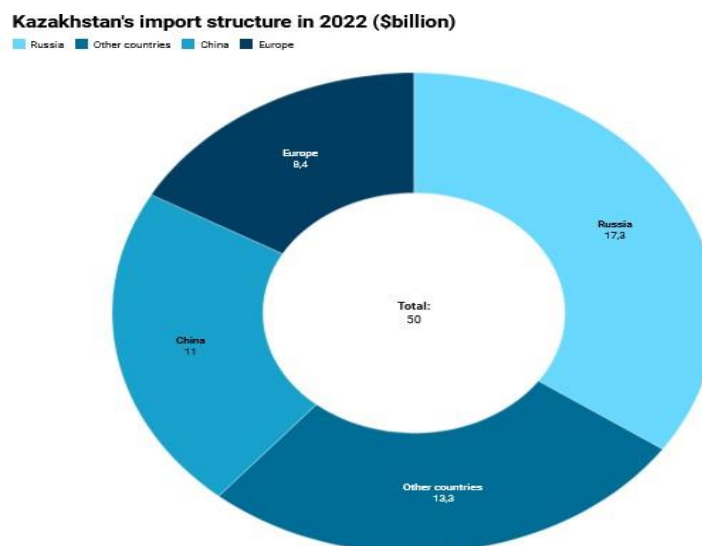
1. Economic Cooperation: Enhancing trade and investment ties with Kazakhstan to diversify its financial partners and reduce over-reliance on any single country.
2. Technical Assistance: Providing expertise and support for Kazakhstan's legal and institutional reforms, which can strengthen its governance and economic resilience.
3. Regional Initiatives: Promoting regional cooperation projects that include Kazakhstan, thereby reinforcing its central role in Central Asia.²⁶

Balancing Russia and China

The EU faces a delicate balancing act in maintaining strong trade relations with Russia while managing China's growing influence. Here are some strategies:

1. Diversified Engagement: The EU should engage with Russia and China on different fronts, ensuring that economic ties with Russia are independent of energy imports post-settlement in Ukraine.
2. Technological Collaboration: While China aims to develop Russia technologically, the EU can offer alternative partnerships in technology and innovation, reducing Russia's dependency on China.

Figure 26



3. Diversified Engagement: The EU should engage with Russia and China on different fronts, ensuring that economic ties with Russia are independent of energy imports post-settlement in Ukraine.

²⁶ <https://www.cipe.org/resources/kazakhstan-in-the-eaeu-economic-cooperation-and-financial-and-economic-effects/>

4. **Technological Collaboration:** While China aims to develop Russia technologically, the EU can offer alternative partnerships in technology and innovation, reducing Russia's dependency on China.
5. **Strategic Dialogue:** Maintaining open communication channels with Russia and China to address mutual concerns and prevent escalation of tensions.

Views on the absence of a Free Trade Agreement

The EU and Russia do not have a free trade agreement primarily due to geopolitical tensions and conflicts. Here are some key reasons:

1. **Geopolitical Tensions:** Various geopolitical events have strained the relationship between the EU and Russia, particularly Russia's actions in Ukraine. The annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 led to significant sanctions from the EU.
2. **Sanctions and Restrictions:** In response to these actions, the EU imposed sanctions on Russia, targeting sectors such as finance, energy, and technology. These sanctions have severely impacted trade relations and made a free trade agreement unlikely.
3. **Existing Agreements:** The EU and Russia have had a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) since 1997. This agreement covers various aspects of their economic relationship but needs to include the comprehensive trade liberalisation that a free trade agreement would entail.
4. **Economic and Political Differences:** The EU and Russia have significant economic and political differences, including differing approaches to market regulation, governance, and human rights. These differences make negotiating a comprehensive free trade agreement challenging.

Various countries view the lack of a free trade agreement between the EU and Russia differently depending on their geopolitical and economic interests. Here are some perspectives:

1. **Western Allies:** Countries like the United States, Canada, and the UK generally support the EU's stance on Russia. They view the lack of a free trade agreement as a necessary measure to uphold international law and respond to Russia's actions in Ukraine.
2. **Central European Countries:** Nations such as Poland and the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) mainly support the EU's sanctions and lack of a free trade agreement with Russia. They have historical and security concerns regarding Russia and see these measures as essential for regional stability.
3. **China and Other BRICS Nations:** Countries like China, India, and Brazil may view the situation more pragmatically. While they may not openly support Russia's actions, they often advocate for dialogue and may continue to engage economically with Russia, seeing opportunities in the reduced EU-Russia trade.

4. **Developing Countries:** Many developing nations might be more neutral, focusing on their economic interests. They may see the lack of a free trade agreement as an internal matter between the EU and Russia while continuing to navigate their own trade relationships with both regions.
5. **Global Economic Impact:** On a broader scale, the lack of a free trade agreement and the resulting sanctions have contributed to global economic uncertainties, particularly in energy markets. Countries dependent on energy imports have had to adjust to the changing dynamics.

Broadening Russia's Foreign Policy

To shift Russia's foreign policy away from a neo-Leninist dream of an Asian empire, the EU could:

1. **Promote Orderly Multipolarisation:** Encourage Russia to see itself as part of a multipolar world where cooperation with multiple global powers is beneficial.
2. **Economic Incentives:** Offer financial incentives for Russia to engage in peaceful and cooperative international relations rather than aggressive expansion²⁷.
3. **Cultural and Educational Exchanges:** Cultural and educational exchanges foster people-to-people connections, which can gradually influence public opinion and policy directions.

Kazakhstan's military budget

Kazakhstan must significantly bolster its military budget to harness its potential as a regional powerhouse. Consider this: while Kazakhstan allocates a mere 0.5% of its GDP to defense, neighboring Uzbekistan dedicates a substantial 3.7%. This stark contrast underscores the urgent need for Kazakhstan to elevate its military spending to ensure its influence and security in the region.

The disparity in military spending between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan has several significant geopolitical implications:

1. **Regional Influence:** Uzbekistan's higher military budget allows it to project greater power and influence within Central Asia. This could lead to a shift in the regional balance of power, with Uzbekistan potentially taking a more dominant role, useful *vis-a-vis* Iran and China, and complementary to the capabilities of Astana, how ?
2. **Security Concerns:** Kazakhstan's relatively low military spending might raise concerns about its ability to defend its borders and maintain internal stability. This could make it more vulnerable to external threats or internal unrest.

²⁷ https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/russia_en

3. **Alliances and Partnerships:** Countries with stronger military capabilities often attract more strategic partnerships and alliances. Uzbekistan's higher spending might make it a more attractive partner for other regional and global powers, potentially isolating Kazakhstan.
4. **Economic Priorities:** The disparity also reflects differing economic priorities. Kazakhstan may be focusing more on economic development and social programs, while Uzbekistan prioritizes military strength. This could lead to different paths of development and influence in the region.
5. **Perception and Prestige:** Military spending is often seen as a measure of a country's commitment to its defense and sovereignty. Kazakhstan's lower spending might be perceived as a lack of commitment to these areas, affecting its prestige and standing among its neighbors.

In summary, this disparity could lead to a shift in regional dynamics, with Uzbekistan potentially gaining more influence and Kazakhstan needing to reassess its defense priorities to maintain its position. If a romantic motive in addition to political priorities enters into the causes for such low a military budget, it should not lead the Kazakh government to become complacent about the need for a balance between wealth, freedom and justice let alone ignore Central Asia's role in world history in past, present and future. Happiness is the departure point for eternal reincarnations. Adopting the leadership style as gardener tendering his flowers and greenery to allow healthy growth by cutting down does not absolve the Kazakh executive from knowing and communicating about when the time for the next phase of transformation is ripe. Over the horizon are the implications of Turkey acceding to the European Union and the rise of India.

Summary of EU's Stance

The EU should adopt a balanced and pragmatic approach, supporting Kazakhstan's multi-vector policy, maintaining strategic economic ties with Russia, and offering technological partnerships to counterbalance China's influence. By promoting diplomatic stabilisation, equivocating and peaceful cooperation, the EU can help steer Russia away from aggressive foreign policies. As a potential regional power Kazakhstan has an inherent interest not only in a well-functioning polity but also in preventing Central Asia from becoming a throwing ball between great powers, and by implication, to make Kazakhstan into a battleground for war. I submit, the Kazakhs foreign policy decision-makers need to saddle up mixing rough and soft, wide and near, and engage in a conversation about long-term strategic planning and about objectives and a calculation of means. Positioning is about status, strategy presupposes leadership.

9.0 INDIA

According to Kanti Bajai & Saira Basit India's grand strategy has been shaped by several historical constants and evolving concepts over time:

Historical Constants

1. **Geopolitical Position:** India's strategic location in South Asia, with access to the Indian Ocean, has always been a significant factor. This positioning influences India's maritime strategy and its relationships with neighboring countries.
2. **Civilizational Heritage:** India's rich cultural and historical legacy has played a role in shaping its strategic outlook. The emphasis on non-alignment and moral leadership can be traced back to ancient Indian philosophies
3. **Colonial Experience:** The impact of British colonial rule has left a lasting imprint on India's strategic thinking, particularly in terms of defense and foreign policy structures.

Evolution of Concepts

1. **Non-Alignment to Multi-Alignment:** Initially, India's grand strategy was heavily influenced by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) during the Cold War, emphasizing sovereignty and independence from major power blocs. In recent years, this has evolved into a more pragmatic approach of multi-alignment, engaging with multiple global powers to maximize strategic benefits².
2. **Economic Liberalization:** Post-1991 economic reforms have significantly influenced India's grand strategy, integrating economic growth with strategic objectives. This shift has led to greater emphasis on trade, investment, and technological advancements.
3. **Security and Defense Modernization:** India's focus on modernizing its military capabilities and enhancing its defense infrastructure has been a constant, but the approach has evolved with advancements in technology and changing threat perceptions.

Calculus of Means

1. **Diplomacy:** India has consistently used diplomacy as a key tool in its grand strategy, balancing relationships with major powers like the US, Russia, and China, while also engaging with regional neighbors and multilateral organizations.
2. **Military Power:** The development and modernization of India's armed forces have been crucial. This includes nuclear capabilities, conventional forces, and strategic partnerships for defense technology.
3. **Economic Instruments:** Leveraging economic growth, trade agreements, and investments to enhance strategic influence has become increasingly important in India's grand strategy.

These elements collectively illustrate how India's grand strategy has been shaped by historical constants while evolving to address contemporary challenges and opportunities.

Figure 27 – There are Sultans and Sultans



India and Central Asia share a long history of engagement. Politically, this range spans from the Kushan Empire, which spans modern Central Asia and Indian territories, to the Mughal conquest of India during the early 16th century. Economically, not only did Central Asian cities—such as Ferghana, Samarkand, and Bukhara—play an essential role in the Silk Road connecting India with China and Europe, but also Indian merchants based in the region formed an integral part of the local economy. In addition to solid economic bonds, cultural exchanges between the two areas flourished. This included the spread of Buddhism from India to Central Asia and beyond and Sufism from Central Asia to India.

India's strategic interests in the region highlight its efforts to enhance connectivity, trade, and security cooperation. Given its proximity to China and Russia, Central Asia is seen as a critical area for India's energy security and geopolitical influence. In the grand tapestry of India's progress, the call for coherent and integrated approaches is as vital as the historical Aryan influences, subtly echoing the timeless wisdom of diverse cultures. India was admitted as a member of the SCO in 2017 to explore and broaden its options in cooperation with China.

Prasenjit Basu and Brahma Chellaney offer insightful perspectives on India's potential as a global leader.

Prasenjit Basu

Prasenjit Basu emphasizes India's role as a **“bridging power”**. He believes that India has the unique capability to connect the developing and developed worlds. This position allows India to leverage its influence creatively and constructively on the global stage. Basu highlights India's democratic values, economic potential, and strategic location as key assets in its leadership role.

Brahma Chellaney

Brahma Chellaney, on the other hand, focuses on India's **geopolitical and economic rise**. He notes that India's emergence as a significant force is partly due to the economic slowdown in China, which has shifted global attention towards India. Chellaney underscores India's strategic importance in Asia, its growing economic clout, and its potential to shape regional and global security dynamics.

Both scholars agree that India's leadership potential is substantial, driven by its democratic ethos, economic growth, and strategic positioning. However, they also acknowledge the challenges India faces, such as regional security issues and the need for continued economic reforms.

In the words of Bhraman Chelleney the thinking goes like this in New Delhi:

India's interests are largely driven by the impact of the Sino-Russian partnership on the India-Russia defence relationship, a critical fulcrum of relations between New Delhi and Moscow. The argument goes that the deepening of Sino-Russian strategic and economic relations, and India's own strategic and security partnership with the US, could induce Russia to become indifferent to future defence supplies, and even stall essential transfers of equipment and spares during crisis situations.

An important lesson of the Ukraine conflict for India is to rebalance its defence imports to minimise the risk inherent in single source dependency.

On the geopolitical front, Central Asian nations, deprived of a regional anchor like Russia, are being thrust closer to China, which is attempting to shape the Eurasian landscape by promoting its Belt and Road Initiative to its advantage. This exposes a critical hiatus in the Sino-Russian partnership, showcasing Beijing's unwillingness to compromise on its economic and political interests to sustain its relationship with Moscow.

Considering these developments, Indian foreign policy in Eurasia is guided by a need to constrain the expanding footprint of China in the region. Seen in this context, India's Central Asia outreach and Russia's Eurasian Economic Union agenda have many common economic and security convergences, including on the issue of counterterrorism.

Collaboration between India and Russia can provide a credible balance in the Eurasia-Afghanistan-Pakistan-Iran box, by maintaining pressure on radical Islamist groups operating in the region and by acting as a counter poise to China.

There is a perception that a pragmatic Moscow is unlikely to choose sides in any India-China conflict or support Pakistan. It can possibly be an honest broker in preventing escalation of Sino-Indian conflict. However, India must remain cognisant of the fact that while the two countries share convergent interests in continental Asia, balancing China in South Asia is not one of them.

As China becomes more important for Russia, it is important to maintain the vitality of the latter's partnership with India as an alternative to economic dependence on Beijing. India has considerable potential to fill gaps in, and broadly support, the Russian economy. It also has its own interests in maintaining access Russian defence equipment and energy supplies. However,

it remains to be seen how far this trade potential can be realised in view of unprecedented Western sanctions, and significant economic downturn in Russia.²⁸

This influential line of thinking reflects a certain interaction and represents a geopolitical line of reasoning devoid of theoretical concepts, diplomatic practice, relational structures, female-inspired creativity, and human empathy.

According to Marlène Laruelle and Sébastien Peyrouse in their work “Mapping Central Asia: Indian Perceptions and Strategies,” India views Central Asia through a multifaceted lens that includes historical, geopolitical, and strategic dimensions:

1. **Historical Links:** India recognizes the deep historical and cultural connections with Central Asia, which date back to the Silk Road era.
2. **Geopolitical Context:** Post-Soviet Union, India sees Central Asia as a region of strategic importance, especially in the context of countering China’s influence and managing relations with Pakistan.
3. **Energy Security:** Central Asia’s rich energy resources are crucial for India’s growing energy needs.
4. **Regional Stability:** India is concerned with the stability of Afghanistan and the potential for regional destabilization²⁹, a concern it shares with China.

India’s approach emphasizes its long-term, cooperative nature and respect for the sovereignty and stability of Central Asian nations.

Phunchok Stobdan, a noted expert on Central Asian affairs, has highlighted several key issues that impact India’s relations with Central Asia. Here are some of the critical points:

1. **Geopolitical Constraints:** India’s lack of direct land access to Central Asia is a significant barrier. The instability in Afghanistan and the complex India-Pakistan relationship further complicate connectivity.
2. **Economic Engagement:** While there is potential for economic cooperation, especially in energy and trade, the current level of economic engagement remains limited. Enhancing trade routes and economic ties is crucial.
3. **Security Concerns:** The region’s security dynamics, including the influence of external powers like China and Russia, and the threat of terrorism, impact India’s strategic interests.

²⁸ <https://asialink.unimelb.edu.au/insights/china,-russia-and-india-the-great-power-game-in-asia>

²⁹ <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2023/02/19/the-strategic-importance-of-central-asia-and-indias-influence-in-the-region/>

4. **Cultural and Historical Ties:** Leveraging historical and cultural connections can help strengthen diplomatic relations. However, this aspect needs more focused efforts to translate into tangible outcomes.
5. **Strategic Presence:** Enhancing India's strategic presence in Central Asia is vital. This includes diplomatic initiatives, defense cooperation, and participation in regional organizations.

Stobdan emphasizes that addressing these issues is essential for evolving a sound Central Asia policy for India.

India's soft power is derived from its rich cultural heritage, diverse traditions, and contributions to various fields. Here are some key sources of Indian soft power:

1. **Cultural Heritage:** India's ancient history, art, literature, and architecture are globally recognized. Monuments like the Taj Mahal and festivals like Diwali attract international attention.
2. **Cinema and Entertainment:** Bollywood films are popular worldwide, including in Central Asia. They help promote Indian culture and values.
3. **Yoga and Spirituality:** Yoga, Ayurveda, and other spiritual practices have a significant following globally. International Yoga Day, celebrated on June 21, has further boosted India's image.
4. **Cuisine:** Indian cuisine, with its diverse flavors and regional specialties, is loved by many around the world.
5. **Education and Scholarships:** Offering scholarships and educational exchanges can help build long-term relationships with other countries.
6. **Democratic Values:** As the world's largest democracy, India's political system and democratic values are admired globally.

To strengthen its soft power in Central Asia, India can focus on the following strategies:

1. **Cultural Diplomacy:** Organize cultural events, film festivals, and exhibitions showcasing Indian art, music, dance, and cinema in Central Asian countries.
2. **Educational Exchanges:** Increase the number of scholarships and exchange programs for Central Asian students to study in India. This can help build a network of alumni who have a positive view of India.
3. **Language and Literature:** Promote the study of Hindi and other Indian languages in Central Asia. Translation of Indian literary works into local languages can also help.
4. **Tourism:** Encourage tourism by simplifying visa processes and promoting India as a travel destination in Central Asian countries.

5. **Collaborative Projects:** Engage in joint cultural and academic projects with Central Asian countries to foster mutual understanding and cooperation.
6. **Media and Broadcasting:** Increase the presence of Indian media in Central Asia through partnerships with local broadcasters and digital platforms.

By leveraging these strategies, India can enhance its influence and strengthen its ties with Central Asian countries.

India faces several challenges in projecting its power and stabilizing its influence both globally and specifically in Central Asia. Here are some of the key challenges:

General Challenges

1. **Geopolitical Rivalries:** India's strategic environment is complicated by its relationships with neighboring countries like China and Pakistan. These rivalries often limit India's ability to project power effectively.
2. **Economic Constraints:** Despite being one of the world's largest economies, India faces significant economic challenges, including poverty, unemployment, and infrastructure deficits, which can limit its ability to invest in foreign policy initiatives.
3. **Security Concerns:** Issues such as terrorism, insurgency, and internal security challenges can divert attention and resources away from international engagements.
4. **Bureaucratic Hurdles:** Red tape and bureaucratic inefficiencies can slow down decision-making processes and implementation of foreign policy strategies.

Challenges in Central Asia

1. **Geographical Barriers:** Central Asia is landlocked and distant from India, making physical connectivity a significant challenge. The lack of direct land routes due to strained relations with Pakistan further complicates access.
2. **Competing Influences:** Central Asia is a region of strategic interest for many powers, including Russia, China, and the United States. Competing influences make it difficult for India to establish a dominant presence.
3. **Economic and Infrastructure Development:** Central Asian countries face developmental challenges such as underdeveloped financial sectors, lack of water and energy coordination, and climate change impacts.
4. **Security and Stability:** The region is affected by issues like drug trafficking, religious extremism, and political instability, which can undermine efforts to build stable and cooperative relationships.
5. **Limited Economic Engagement:** India's trade and investment in Central Asia are relatively low compared to other major players like China. This limits India's economic influence in the region.

Strategies to Overcome Challenges

1. **Enhanced Connectivity:** Investing in infrastructure projects like the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) can improve connectivity with Central Asia.
2. **Multilateral Engagements:** Strengthening ties through regional organizations like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) can provide a platform for deeper engagement.
3. **Economic Cooperation:** Increasing trade, investment, and economic cooperation with Central Asian countries can help build stronger ties. Initiatives like the India-Central Asia Business Council can be instrumental.
4. **Cultural Diplomacy:** Leveraging cultural ties, educational exchanges, and people-to-people connections can enhance India's soft power in the region.
5. **Security Cooperation:** Collaborating on counter-terrorism, anti-narcotics, and other security issues can help address common threats and build trust.

By addressing these challenges and implementing strategic initiatives, India can strengthen its influence and contribute to the stability and development of Central Asia.

Thus, Central Asia is significant in India's broader strategic priorities, including economic modernisation, managing relationships with China and Pakistan, and maintaining regional order in the Indian Ocean. Here is how:

Economic Modernisation

1. **Energy Security:** Central Asia is rich in natural resources, particularly oil and natural gas. India's engagement with countries such as Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan helps secure energy supplies, which is crucial for economic growth.
2. **Trade and Investment:** India aims to boost trade and investment with Central Asian countries. The International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)³⁰ and the Chabahar Port in Iran are vital projects that will enhance connectivity and trade routes³¹.

Relationships with China and Pakistan

1. **Strategic Balance:** India aims to counterbalance China's regional influence by strengthening ties with Central Asia. This is part of a broader strategy to prevent Chinese hegemony in Asia.
2. **Security Cooperation:** India collaborates with Central Asian countries on counter-terrorism and security issues, which also helps manage threats from Pakistan and maintain regional stability.

³⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_North%E2%80%93South_Transport_Corridor

³¹ <https://universalinstitutions.com/stay-invested-on-chabahar-and-india-iran-ties/>

India's "Connect Central Asia" policy, launched in 2012, aims to strengthen and expand India's engagement with the Central Asian region. Some critical aspects of the policy are as follows:

Objectives

1. **Economic Cooperation:** Enhance trade and investment opportunities between India and Central Asian countries.
2. **Energy Security:** Secure energy resources from Central Asia, particularly oil and natural gas, to meet India's growing energy needs.
3. **Connectivity:** Improving physical connectivity through infrastructure projects such as the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and the Chabahar Port in Iran³².
4. **Security Cooperation:** Collaborates on counterterrorism, combating drug trafficking, and addressing other security challenges.
5. **Cultural and People-to-People Ties:** Promotion of cultural exchanges, educational partnerships, and tourism

Key Initiatives

1. **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC):** This multimodal transportation network aims to reduce the time and cost of transporting goods between India and Central Asia.
2. **Chabahar Port:** India's investment in Iran's Chabahar Port provides a strategic gateway to Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan.
3. **TAPI Pipeline:** The Turkmenistan—Afghanistan—Pakistan—India (TAPI) pipeline project aims to transport natural gas from Turkmenistan to India, enhancing energy security.

Diplomatic Engagements

India has actively engaged with Central Asian countries through high-level visits, bilateral agreements, and participation in regional forums such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

Challenges

1. **Geopolitical Tensions:** Regional instability poses connectivity and security cooperation challenges, particularly in Afghanistan.
2. **Infrastructure Gaps:** The lack of developed infrastructure in some Central Asian countries can hinder trade and connectivity efforts.

³² Khan (2024)

Overall, the “Connect Central Asia” policy reflects India’s strategic interest in fostering a closer relationship with Central Asia, leveraging historical ties and addressing contemporary challenges.

Thus, India plays a significant role in Central Asia, both strategically and economically. The essential aspects of India’s engagement:

1. Energy and Trade:

- India seeks access to Central Asia’s energy resources, including oil and gas. Diversifying energy supplies is crucial for India’s growing economy.
- Trade ties with Central Asian countries can enhance economic cooperation and benefit both regions.

2. Connectivity and Infrastructure:

- India supports infrastructure projects that improve connectivity between Central and South Asia. The International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) is an example.
- Chabahar Port in Iran, partly developed by India, provides an alternative trade route for Central Asian goods.

3. Security and Stability:

- India shares concerns about regional stability, terrorism, and extremism. Cooperation in security matters is essential.
- India participates in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) alongside Central Asian states to address security challenges.

4. Geopolitical Balancing

- India aims to counterbalance China’s influence in the region. Central Asia provides a platform for India to engage diplomatically and economically.
- India’s “Connect Central Asia” policy emphasises cultural exchanges, education, and people-to-people ties.

In summary, India’s engagement in Central Asia focuses on energy, trade, connectivity, and regional stability. It is vested in increasing security, reducing conflict in the Ferghana Valley, and expanding trade and investment opportunities in Central Asia. It shares concerns about Afghanistan with China and Russia but also varies regarding their influence in Central Asia. It has a limited diplomatic footprint in Central Asia and a burgeoning trading relationship with Africa³³. As a member of the SCO, Delhi has an intrinsic interest in moving forward with the

³³ <https://www.orfonline.org/research/india-s-balancing-act-in-the-sco>

development of Central Asia as a stabiliser and security provider in return for the development of energy trade and its political economy—Priyanka.

10.0 THE EUROPEAN UNION

The EU's strategic objectives in Central Asia are centred around three main pillars:

1. **Partnering with Central Asian states and societies for resilience:** This includes promoting human rights, democracy, and security and addressing environmental challenges.
2. **Partnering for prosperity:** The EU supports economic diversification, private sector development, intraregional trade, and sustainable connectivity.
3. **Supporting regional cooperation:** The EU fosters dialogue and collaboration among Central Asian countries to address common challenges and opportunities.

Characterising the Delivery

Several critical approaches can characterise the delivery of these objectives:

- **Address the specific needs** and contexts of each Central Asian country, recognising the region's diversity.
- **High-Level Engagement:** Regular high-level meetings and summits, such as the upcoming EU-Central Asia leaders' summit, help to align strategic priorities and enhance cooperation.
- **Focus on Sustainability:** Emphasis is placed on sustainable development, including environmental protection and climate resilience.
- **Investment in Youth and Education:** The EU invests in education and youth programs to build human capital and foster long-term development
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Continuous assessment of program outcomes ensures that funds are used effectively and objectives are met.

These strategies reflect the EU's commitment to fostering a stable, prosperous, cooperative Central Asia.

Most Central Asian five still have the Eu as their main trading partners³⁴. Neither the EU Commission, Eurostat, nor the ECB is capable of providing the astonished public and policy-makers with data on the developments in services trades, FDI flows, and the composition of central bank reserves in Euro and how it is used as an invoice currency in multi-bilateral trade.

³⁴ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/isdb_results/factsheets/region/details_central-asia-5_en.pdf

The European Union (EU) has identified Kazakhstan as a pivotal country due to its strategic importance in several key areas. Kazakhstan is rich in critical raw materials for the EU's green and digital transitions. The Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Kazakhstan, which came into force in 2020, has elevated their bilateral relations, focusing on energy, transport, and environmental sustainability. This partnership aims to secure a sustainable supply of raw materials, support economic diversification, and foster regional stability.

The European Union (EU) has outlined several key objectives for its engagement in Central Asia. These include promoting sustainable development, enhancing regional cooperation, and supporting good governance and human rights. The EU also aims to foster economic diversification and integration, improve education and research opportunities, and strengthen the rule of law in the region. The Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA) aims to provide a more solid foundation for EU-Kazakhstan relations in areas of mutual interest³⁵.

Central Asia is the gateway for the EU to Beijing, which also has apparent interests in the stability and development of Afghanistan, which has or is providing a haven to Xinjiang terrorists. Xinjiang is a stumbling block to the ratification of the comprehensive investment agreement in the European Parliament. Beijing recognises the need for strengthened economic development in Tajikistan, while the SCO has been upping its game out of the Bishkek CT Center, impressed by the latest turbulence – the plight of Tajik migrants in Russia - and the need for a response to the fragility and lack of effectiveness, not to mention the tone deafness of the Tajik government to the needs of its people.

However, the allocation of funding in Central Asia presents several challenges. One major issue is tailoring development programs to the specific needs of each country, given the diverse political and economic landscapes. Additionally, the region's vulnerability to natural disasters and the effects of climate change requires significant investment in disaster preparedness and response. Ensuring effective use of funds and achieving tangible outcomes remains a complex task due to these varied and evolving challenges:

1. EU's Central Asia Strategy:

- The European Union (EU) updated its strategy for Central Asia in 2019 to account for new developments and opportunities for partnership and cooperation with the region. This strategy aims to support sustainable development based on democracy, good governance, and human rights while boosting trade and investment between the EU and Central Asia³⁶.
- The Central Asian Heads of State and the President of the European Council held their first-ever high-level meetings in 2022 and 2023, resulting in a joint roadmap for deepening ties between the EU and Central Asia in furtherance of

³⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A22016A0204%2801%29>

³⁶ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/central-asia_en

their multilateral partnership³⁷. The first-ever EU–Central Asia leaders’ summit is scheduled for 2024, formalising cooperation at the highest political level.

- Given the changing geopolitical situation (such as Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and security threats from Afghanistan), Central Asia’s geostrategic importance has increased partnership opportunities.

2. Strengthening Cooperation with Kazakhstan:

- The EU has an Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA) with Kazakhstan, which governs trade and economic relations. Kazakhstan is the EU’s largest overall trading partner in Central Asia, accounting for 37% of Kazakh exports and representing 27.9% of its total trade in 2023. The EU is also the largest foreign investor in Kazakhstan³⁸.
- The EPCA creates a better regulatory environment for businesses, covering areas such as trade in services, the establishment of companies, capital movements, raw materials, energy, government procurement, and intellectual property rights³⁹

The EU’s Central Asia strategy is designed to foster stability, prosperity, and cooperation in the region. Here are the key tenets and the rationale behind them:

Key Tenets

1. Partnering for Resilience:

- **Human Rights and Democracy:** Promoting democratic governance, rule of law, and human rights.
- **Security:** Addressing security challenges, including counter-terrorism and border management.
- **Environmental Challenges:** Tackling environmental issues such as climate change and water resource management.

2. Partnering for Prosperity:

- **Economic Diversification:** Supporting economic diversification and private sector development.
- **Intra-Regional Trade:** Promoting trade within Central Asia to enhance economic integration.

³⁷ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14587-2023-INIT/en/pdf>

³⁸ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kazakhstan/cop27-european-union-concludes-strategic-partnership-kazakhstan-raw-materials-batteries-and-0_en?s=222

³⁹ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2023/EEAS-CA_FACTSHEETS-Kazakhstan_May23.pdf

- **Sustainable Connectivity:** Developing sustainable transport and energy links.
3. **Supporting Regional Cooperation:**
- **Regional Platforms:** Encouraging dialogue and cooperation through regional platforms.
 - **Conflict Prevention:** Facilitating cooperation to prevent conflicts over resources like water.

Rationale

1. **Geostrategic Importance:** Central Asia's location makes it a crucial link between Europe and Asia, enhancing its strategic significance for trade and energy routes.
2. **Economic Potential:** The region's rich natural resources and growing economies present significant opportunities for trade and investment.
3. **Stability and Security:** Ensuring stability in Central Asia is vital for the broader security of Europe, especially given the region's proximity to conflict zones like Afghanistan.
4. **Sustainable Development:** Promoting sustainable development aligns with the EU's broader goals of environmental protection and economic resilience.
5. **Human Rights and Governance:** Strengthening democratic institutions and human rights in Central Asia supports the EU's values and contributes to long-term stability.

These tenets and their underlying rationale reflect the EU's commitment to fostering a stable, prosperous, and cooperative Central Asia, which is beneficial for both the region and Europe.

Kazakhstan has been named a **pivotal power** by the European Union (EU) due to several strategic reasons:

1. **Strategic Location:** Kazakhstan's geographic position makes it a crucial link between Europe and Asia. This location is vital for trade routes and energy corridors, enhancing its importance in regional and global geopolitics.
2. **Rich Natural Resources:** Kazakhstan has significant oil, gas, and minerals reserves. The EU sees Kazakhstan as a key partner in securing a stable and sustainable supply of raw materials, which is essential for Europe's energy security and industrial needs.
3. **Economic Potential:** Kazakhstan's growing economy and efforts to diversify beyond hydrocarbons make it an attractive partner for the EU. The country is investing in renewable energy, infrastructure, and technology, aligning with the EU's goals for sustainable development.

4. **Political Stability:** Compared to some of its neighbors, Kazakhstan has maintained relative political stability. This stability makes it a reliable partner for long-term strategic initiatives².
5. **Strategic Partnerships:** The EU and Kazakhstan have signed several strategic agreements, including partnerships in raw materials, batteries, and renewable hydrogen. These agreements aim to boost economic and industrial integration, enhance supply chain resilience, and promote sustainable practices.

These factors collectively make Kazakhstan a pivotal power in the eyes of the EU, as it plays a significant role in the region's stability and development.

Key Issues

1. **Economic Inequality:** Despite Kazakhstan's vast natural resources, including oil, wealth has not been evenly distributed. Many citizens face economic hardships, leading to frustration and anger.
2. **Political Discontent:** The long-standing influence of former President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who ruled from 1986 to 2019, and the perceived lack of genuine political reform have fueled public dissatisfaction.
3. **Corruption:** Corruption within the government and business sectors has exacerbated economic and social inequalities⁴⁰

Government response

The government's response to the protests in 2022 was severe, with security forces using force to quell unrest. This resulted in numerous casualties and mass arrests. President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev requested assistance from the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), deploying Russian and other allied troops to stabilise the situation.

Regional conflicts

In addition to the nationwide unrest, there have been localised conflicts, particularly in the western regions, where economic grievances are more pronounced due to the concentration of oil and gas industries.

To deepen its understanding of Kazakhstan's needs and partner-up, the EU can take several strategic steps:

1. **Enhanced Dialogue and Cooperation:** Establishing regular high-level dialogues between the EU and Kazakh officials can help both sides understand each other's priorities and challenges. This includes political, economic, and cultural exchanges¹.

⁴⁰ <https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/helpdesk/kazakhstan-overview-of-corruption-and-anti-corruption>

2. **Joint Research and Innovation Projects:** Collaborating on research projects, particularly in areas like renewable energy, mining, and technology, can provide insights into Kazakhstan's industrial needs and capabilities.
3. **Cultural and Educational Exchanges:** Promoting student and academic exchanges can foster mutual understanding and build long-term relationships. Programs like Erasmus+ can be instrumental in this regard.
4. **Economic Partnerships:** Strengthening economic ties through joint ventures and investments in critical sectors such as raw materials, batteries, and renewable hydrogen can help the EU understand Kazakhstan's financial landscape and regulatory environment.
5. **Addressing Regional Conflicts:** Engaging in dialogue about regional conflicts and security issues, particularly in the western regions of Kazakhstan, can help the EU understand the socio-political dynamics and the needs of local populations.
6. **Local Community Engagement:** Working with local NGOs and community organisations can provide grassroots insights into what matters most to the Kazakh people, including social, environmental, and economic issues.

By taking these steps, the EU can build a more comprehensive understanding of Kazakhstan's needs and priorities, fostering a more robust and effective partnership.

Finally, Kazakhstan has been actively working to diversify its economy beyond its traditional reliance on oil and gas. Some key initiatives and strategies the Kazakh government is implementing are as follows:

1. **Development of Non-Extractive Industries:** Kazakhstan is focusing on sectors like agriculture, petrochemicals, metallurgy, tourism, and pharmaceuticals. These sectors are seen as having high potential for growth and job creation⁴¹.
2. **Investment in Infrastructure:** Significant investments are being made in infrastructure projects, such as the construction of roads and improvement of irrigation systems. These projects aim to enhance connectivity and support agricultural productivity⁴².
3. **Promotion of Innovation and Technology:** The government is encouraging the adoption of innovative technologies across various sectors. This includes support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to deploy new technologies.
4. **Green Projects and Renewable Energy:** Kazakhstan is also focusing on environmental sustainability by promoting renewable energy projects and ecotourism.

⁴¹ <https://foreignpolicy.com/sponsored/kazakhstan-aims-to-become-a-destination-for-global-investment/>

⁴² <https://astanatimes.com/2023/02/kazakhstan-diversification-agenda-faces-time-crunch/>

5. **Improving the Investment Climate:** Efforts are being made to create a favorable investment climate to attract global investors.

How the EU, China, the US, and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) Can Support Kazakhstan:

1. **Financial and Technical Assistance:** IFIs like the World Bank can continue to provide financial support and technical expertise for infrastructure and development projects.
2. **Trade partnerships:** The EU, China, and the US can establish and strengthen trade partnerships with Kazakhstan, helping to open new markets for Kazakh products and services.
3. **Investment in Green Technologies:** These countries can invest in Kazakhstan's renewable energy projects and support the development of green technologies⁴³.
4. **Capacity Building:** Providing training and capacity-building programs to enhance the skills of the Kazakh workforce in non-extractive industries.
5. **Research and Development Collaboration:** Collaborating on research and development initiatives to foster innovation and technological advancement in Kazakhstan.

These international partners can help Kazakhstan achieve a more diversified and resilient economy by working together.

11.0 KAZAKH-LED INITIATIVE ON THE FERGHANA VALLEY

Let us explore the idea of a Kazakh-led initiative in the Fergana Valley, which collaborates with India, Iran, and Russia. Some key points to consider are as follows:

1. Background:

- The Fergana Valley is a Central Asian region shared by Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.
- It holds geopolitical significance because of its strategic location and abundant natural resources.
- However, unresolved border disputes, ethnic tensions, and radicalisation pose security challenges.

2. Existing Initiatives

- Russia, Iran, and India have already established a coal export initiative, leveraging the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) to facilitate coal exports. India, Iran, and Russia also have a strategic agreement

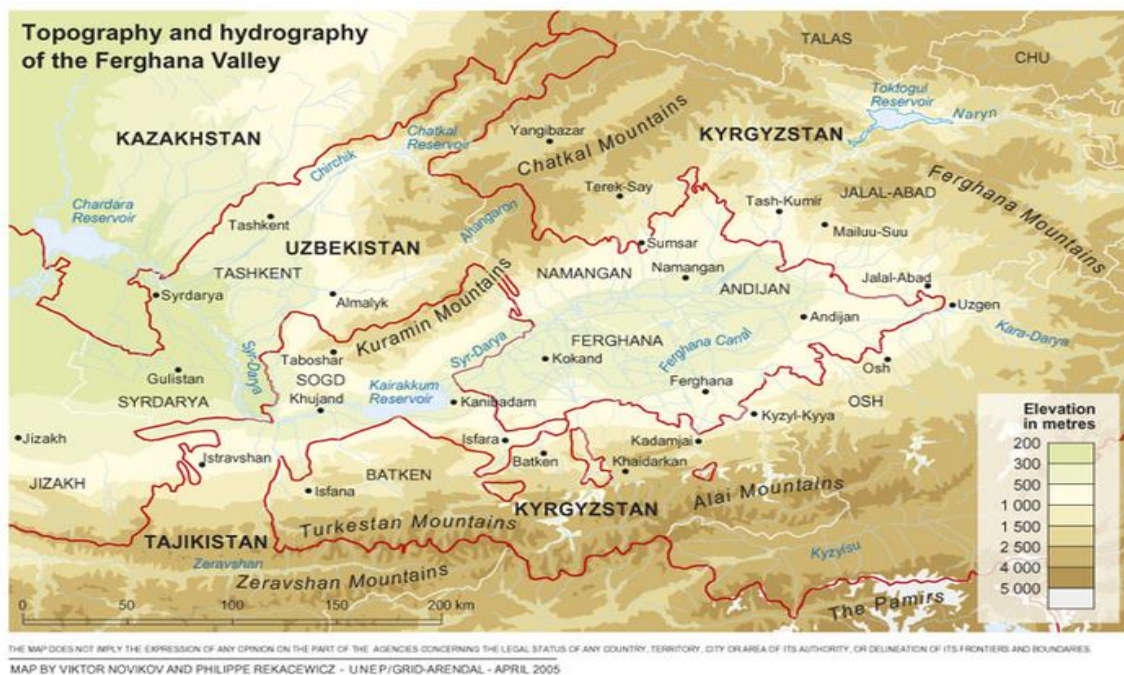
⁴³ <https://thediplomat.com/2021/05/eu-kazakhstan-aim-to-cooperate-on-green-projects/>

centred around the Chabahar port, bypassing Pakistan and reducing reliance on Western-controlled routes.

3. Potential Kazakh-Led Initiative:

- Kazakhstan, as a regional player, could take the lead in promoting stability and cooperation in the Fergana Valley.
- Areas of focus could include the following:
 - **Border Demarcation:** Accelerate border delimitation and demarcation processes among the three countries.

Figure 29 – Fergana A Fulcrum of Central Asian conflicts



Source: <https://reliefweb.int/map/kazakhstan/topography-and-hydrography-ferghana-valley-april-2005>

- **Security Cooperation:** Enhance collaboration to address transborder threats such as terrorism, extremism, and drug trafficking.
- **Resource Management:** Jointly manage water resources and address resource-related tensions.
- **Community Engagement:** Involve local communities in building safer environments

4. Geopolitical Implications:

- Such an initiative could foster closer ties, mitigate tensions, and promote economic integration.
- This would signal a shift in energy and security diplomacy in the region.
- Kazakhstan's role as a mediator and facilitator is crucial.

Remember that this is a high-level overview; further detailed planning and diplomatic efforts are needed to operationalise the initiative.

The implementation of the Kazakh-led initiative in the Fergana Valley faced several challenges:

1. **Historical Tensions:** The region has a history of ethnic tensions and territorial disputes among Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Resolving these longstanding issues would be complex.
2. **Border Delimitation:** It is crucial to define clear borders and resolve overlapping claims. Disagreements over border demarcation could hinder progress.
3. **Security Concerns:** The valley is vulnerable to transnational threats such as terrorism, extremism, and drug trafficking. Cooperation on security measures is essential.
4. **Water Resources:** The Fergana Valley relies on shared water resources. Managing water distribution fairly and sustainably is a challenge.
5. **National Interests:** Each country has its priorities and alliances. Balancing national interests while promoting regional cooperation is delicate.
6. **Geopolitical Dynamics:** Existing alliances (such as Russia's influence) and external actors (such as China) could impact the initiative.
7. **Local Engagement:** Involving local communities and addressing their needs is critical for long-term success. Demographic pressures and limited land coincide with a lack of jobs and economic opportunities.

Navigating these challenges would require diplomatic finesse, trust-building, and sustained stakeholder commitment.

Engaging the Uzbek, Kyrgyz, and Tajik communities in the Ferghana Valley initiative is crucial for its success. Some strategies are as follows:

1. **Local Dialogues:** Facilitate community dialogues involving representatives from each country. Shared concerns, aspirations, and potential benefits of cooperation are discussed.
2. **Cultural Exchange:** Promotion of cultural exchanges, festivals, and joint celebrations. Common historical and cultural ties are highlighted to foster understanding.

3. **Educational Programs:** Create educational programs that emphasise regional cooperation. Scholarships, student exchanges, and joint research projects can build bridges.
4. **Business Networks:** Encourage cross-border business partnerships. Joint ventures, trade fairs, and economic forums can enhance economic ties.
5. **Civil Society Engagement:** Involve NGOs, community leaders, and grassroots organisations. They can advocate for peace, tolerance, and collaboration.
6. **Media outreach:** Local media platforms share success stories, highlight cooperation, and address misconceptions.

Sustained efforts and genuine commitment are essential for community engagement.

12.0 THE FERGHANA VALLEY

Central Asia faces several ongoing security challenges, and the Ferghana-valley is home to a large chunk of Uzbeks, Tajik and Kyrgyz people. The Ferghana Valley is a fulcrum for most of the conflicts by which Central Asia is characterised:

1. **Terrorism and Extremism:** The region has been a target for terrorist groups, including ISIS and the Taliban. The instability in neighboring Afghanistan continues to pose a threat, with concerns about the spread of extremism and cross-border terrorism.
2. **Border Disputes:** Several Central Asian countries have unresolved border issues, which can lead to skirmishes and tensions. For example, the Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan border has seen periodic clashes.
3. **Drug Trafficking:** Central Asia is a major transit route for narcotics, particularly opiates from Afghanistan. This not only fuels organized crime but also contributes to corruption and instability⁴⁴.
4. **Water Resources:** Disputes over water resources, especially involving the Syr Darya and Amu Darya rivers, create tensions among countries that rely on these rivers for agriculture and drinking water.
5. **Ethnic Conflicts:** The region is home to diverse ethnic groups, and tensions can arise, sometimes leading to violence. For instance, ethnic clashes in southern Kyrgyzstan in 2010 resulted in significant casualties and displacement.
6. **Economic Instability:** Economic challenges, including unemployment and poverty, can lead to social unrest and make countries more vulnerable to external influences and internal strife.

⁴⁴ https://www.unodc.org/documents/regional/central-asia/Illicit%20Drug%20Trends_Central%20Asia-final.pdf

These challenges require coordinated efforts and regional cooperation to ensure stability and security in Central Asia.

12.1 Astana leads

A Kazakh-led stabilization project in the Ferghana Valley could be a significant step towards fostering peace and development in this conflict-prone region. Here are some key elements to consider:

1. Economic Development Initiatives

- **Joint Infrastructure Projects:** Develop shared infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and energy projects to improve connectivity and economic integration.
- **Agricultural Development:** Promote sustainable agricultural practices and provide support to local farmers to enhance food security and livelihoods.

2. Cultural and Educational Exchange Programs

- **Cultural Festivals:** Organize cultural festivals that celebrate the shared heritage and traditions of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.
- **Student Exchange Programs:** Facilitate educational exchanges to foster mutual understanding and cooperation among the youth of these nations.

3. Environmental and Climate Resilience Projects

- **Water Resource Management:** Implement joint water management projects to ensure equitable distribution and sustainable use of water resources⁴⁵
- **Climate Resilience Initiatives:** Develop programs to address climate change impacts, such as reforestation and sustainable land management⁴⁶.

4. Security and Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

- **Joint Security Patrols:** Establish joint security patrols along borders to prevent conflicts and enhance security cooperation.
- **Conflict Resolution Workshops:** Conduct workshops and training sessions on conflict resolution and peacebuilding for local leaders and communities.

5. Health and Social Welfare Programs

- **Healthcare Initiatives:** Improve access to healthcare services through mobile clinics and joint health campaigns.

⁴⁵ Wegereich (2017).

⁴⁶ <https://www.undp.org/kyrgyzstan/press-releases/undp-and-eu-support-joint-climate-action-stability-and-climate-resilient-development-ferghana-valley>

- **Social Welfare Programs:** Develop programs to support vulnerable populations, including women, children, and the elderly.

6. Governance and Institutional Strengthening

- **Capacity Building:** Provide training and support to local governments to enhance their capacity for effective governance.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Promote transparency and accountability in governance through joint monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Emphasizing Brotherhood and Partnership

- **Cultural Diplomacy:** In all project communications and activities, highlight the historical and cultural ties between Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- **Joint Celebrations:** Celebrate national holidays and significant events together to foster a sense of brotherhood and unity.

By focusing on these elements, Kazakhstan can lead a comprehensive stabilization project that not only addresses the root causes of conflict in the Fergana Valley but also strengthens its bonds with Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. This approach will help prepare the ground for long-term peace, stability, and prosperity in the region.

12.2 Unesco

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) could play a significant role in preserving and promoting Fergana Valley's heritage. Here are several ways:

1. Heritage Recognition:

- UNESCO can designate Fergana Valley sites as World Heritage Sites. This recognition raises awareness and encourages preservation efforts.

2. Capacity Building:

- UNESCO can provide technical assistance, training, and capacity-building programs to local communities and authorities.
- Workshops on conservation, restoration, and sustainable tourism can enhance expertise.

3. Documentation and Research:

- UNESCO can support research on cultural heritage and document traditions, languages, and historical narratives.
- This knowledge can inform preservation strategies and educational materials.

4. **Promotion and Tourism:**

- Collaborating with UNESCO can increase tourism. Heritage trails, festivals, and cultural events can attract visitors.

5. **Intercultural Dialogue**

- UNESCO fosters dialogue among diverse communities. Cultural exchange programs promote understanding and tolerance.

6. **Emergency response:**

- In times of crisis (natural disasters, conflict), UNESCO can mobilise emergency measures to protect heritage sites.

Overall, UNESCO's involvement strengthened preservation efforts and promoted Fergana Valley's unique heritage.

12.3 Involving youth in peacebuilding

Involving youth peacebuilding and cross-cultural understanding is crucial for sustainable peace. Some strategies are as follows:

1. **Create Spaces for Youth Voices:** Establish platforms where young people can express their opinions, share ideas, and actively participate in decision-making processes
2. **Enhance Peacebuilding Skills:** Provide training and workshops to equip young people with knowledge and skills related to conflict resolution, dialogue, and community engagement³.
3. **Build Trust:** Foster trust between youth and governments by involving them in policy discussions and implementation. Encourage collaboration and joint initiatives
4. **Promote Intergenerational Exchange:** Facilitate dialogue between different age groups to bridge gaps and promote understanding. Encourage mentorship and knowledge-sharing.
5. **Strengthen Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regularly assess the impact of youth-led peacebuilding initiatives and adjust strategies accordingly.
6. **Support Positive Contributions:** Recognise and support young people who actively contribute to their communities. Encourage their involvement in peacebuilding efforts.

Youth want to be taken seriously, to participate, and are open to the world. They are valuable agents of change, and their active participation is essential for building peaceful societies.

13.0 INDIA AND EU STRATEGIES COMPARED

Coordinating between India and the EU in Central Asia presents several challenges:

1. Divergent Strategic Priorities

- India focuses on security, energy, and cultural ties, while the EU emphasizes sustainable development, democracy, and human rights. Aligning these priorities can be complex.

2. Geopolitical Dynamics

- Major powers like Russia and China influence Central Asia. Navigating these geopolitical dynamics while coordinating policies can be challenging for both India and the EU.

3. Bureaucratic Hurdles

- Differences in bureaucratic processes and decision-making frameworks can slow down the implementation of joint initiatives.

4. Resource Allocation

- Both India and the EU have limited resources and must prioritize their engagements. Balancing resource allocation for Central Asia with other global commitments can be difficult.

5. Cultural and Linguistic Barriers

- Differences in language and cultural practices can hinder effective communication and collaboration between Indian and European stakeholders.

6. Economic Disparities

- The economic disparity between Central Asian countries and the varying levels of development can complicate the design and implementation of joint projects.

7. Security Concerns

- The volatile security situation in parts of Central Asia, particularly near Afghanistan, poses risks to joint initiatives and requires careful coordination.

8. Regulatory Differences

- Variations in regulatory environments and legal frameworks can create obstacles for trade, investment, and other forms of cooperation.

Despite these challenges, India and the EU can leverage their complementary strengths to enhance their strategic presence in Central Asia. They can overcome these hurdles and achieve mutually beneficial outcomes by focusing on common interests and fostering open communication.

EU-India Action Plan on Central Asia

1. Strategic Objectives

- **Promote Regional Stability:** Enhance security cooperation to address common threats such as terrorism, drug trafficking, and human trafficking.
- **Foster Economic Growth:** Boost trade and investment through joint economic initiatives and infrastructure projects.
- **Support Sustainable Development:** Collaborate on renewable energy projects and environmental protection.
- **Enhance Cultural and Educational Ties:** Promote people-to-people connections through educational exchanges and cultural programs.

2. Key Areas of Cooperation

- **Energy and Infrastructure:** Develop joint projects in renewable energy (solar, wind) and infrastructure (transportation corridors, digital connectivity).
- **Security and Counter-Terrorism:** Coordinate efforts to combat terrorism and enhance regional security.
- **Education and Research:** Establish joint educational programs, scholarships, and research initiatives.
- **Environmental Protection:** Collaborate on projects addressing climate change, water management, and biodiversity conservation.

Role of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan

Kazakhstan

- **Energy Hub:** Kazakhstan's vast energy resources, particularly in oil and natural gas, make it a crucial partner for energy security and diversification.
- **Strategic Location:** Its central location in Eurasia makes it a key player in regional connectivity projects, such as transportation and digital infrastructure.
- **Economic Potential:** Kazakhstan's growing economy and investment-friendly policies provide opportunities for joint economic initiatives.

Uzbekistan

- **Regional Integration Leader:** Uzbekistan plays a pivotal role in promoting regional cooperation and integration in Central Asia.
- **Security Partner:** Its efforts in combating terrorism and enhancing regional security are vital for stability in the region.

- **Economic Reforms:** Uzbekistan's ongoing economic reforms and openness to foreign investment make it an attractive partner for trade and investment.

Suggested Common Projects and Partnerships

1. **Renewable Energy Projects:** Joint investments in solar and wind energy projects in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to promote sustainable development.
2. **Educational Exchanges:** Establishing joint educational programs and scholarships to enhance cultural ties and build human capital.
3. **Infrastructure Development:** Collaborative infrastructure projects, such as transportation corridors and digital connectivity, to improve regional integration and economic growth.
4. **Security Initiatives:** Coordinated efforts in counter-terrorism and regional security to address common threats and enhance stability.

By focusing on these strategic objectives and leveraging Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan's strengths, the EU and India can enhance their cooperation in Central Asia, fostering mutual benefits and regional stability.

14.0 ADDRESSING GEOPOLITICAL TENSIONS IN CENTRAL ASIA

Addressing geopolitical tensions in Central Asia requires a multifaceted approach that involves diplomacy, economic cooperation, and cultural exchange. Here are some strategies that India, China, and Europe can employ:

1. Diplomatic Engagement

- **Multilateral Dialogues:** Establish regular multilateral dialogues involving Central Asian countries, India, China, and Europe to discuss regional security, economic cooperation, and political stability.
- **Conflict Resolution Mechanisms:** Develop conflict resolution mechanisms to address disputes peacefully. This could include mediation efforts and confidence-building measures.

2. Economic Cooperation

- **Joint Infrastructure Projects:** Collaborate on infrastructure projects that benefit the entire region, such as transportation corridors and energy pipelines. This can create interdependencies that reduce the likelihood of conflict.
- **Trade and Investment:** Promote trade and investment agreements that include all Central Asian countries, ensuring that economic benefits are widely shared and reducing economic disparities that can lead to tensions.

3. Security Cooperation

- **Counter-Terrorism Initiatives:** Work together on counter-terrorism initiatives to address shared security threats. This can include intelligence sharing, joint training exercises, and coordinated efforts to combat extremism.
- **Regional Security Frameworks:** Support the development of regional security frameworks that include all Central Asian countries, fostering a sense of collective security.

4. Cultural and Educational Exchange

- **People-to-People Ties:** Enhance ties through cultural exchange programs, educational scholarships, and tourism initiatives. This can build mutual understanding and reduce cultural misunderstandings.
- **Academic Collaborations:** Promote academic collaborations and research partnerships that address regional challenges, such as water management, environmental sustainability, and public health.

5. Good Governance and Human Rights

- **Promote Good Governance:** Support initiatives that promote good governance, the rule of law, and human rights in Central Asia. This can help create stable and accountable governments less prone to internal and external conflicts.
- **Civil Society Engagement:** Encourage the development of civil society organisations that can contribute to conflict prevention and resolution.

6. Balancing Interests

- **Respect Sovereignty:** Ensure that all initiatives respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Central Asian countries. Avoid actions that could be perceived as interference in domestic affairs.
- **Inclusive Policies:** Develop inclusive policies and consider the interests of all regional stakeholders, including smaller and less powerful countries.

7. Leveraging International Organizations

- **United Nations:** Utilize the United Nations and other international organisations to mediate disputes and provide a platform for dialogue.
- **Regional Organizations:** Engage with regional organisations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) to address regional issues collectively.

By adopting these strategies, India, China, and Europe can work together to address geopolitical tensions in Central Asia, fostering a more stable and prosperous region. Collaboration and mutual respect are vital to achieving these goals.

Here are some examples of good and bad actions that could be undertaken to address geopolitical tensions in Central Asia across various fields:

Diplomatic Engagement

Good Actions

- **Multilateral Dialogues:** Establishing regular multilateral dialogues involving all Central Asian countries to discuss regional issues and foster cooperation.
- **Neutral Mediation:** Acting as neutral mediators in conflicts between Central Asian countries to help resolve disputes peacefully.

Bad Actions

- **Exclusive Alliances:** Forming exclusive alliances that isolate certain countries, leading to increased regional tensions.
- **Coercive Diplomacy:** Using threats or coercion to force countries into aligning with specific geopolitical interests.

Economic Cooperation

Good Actions

- **Regional Trade Agreements:** Promoting regional trade agreements that benefit all Central Asian countries and enhance economic integration.
- **Infrastructure Projects:** Investing in infrastructure projects that improve connectivity and economic opportunities across the region.

Bad Actions

- **Economic Sanctions:** Imposing economic sanctions that disproportionately affect the civilian population and exacerbate poverty.
- **Resource Exploitation:** Engaging in exploitative practices that deplete natural resources without fair compensation to the local communities.

Security Cooperation

Good Actions

- **Joint Security Initiatives:** Developing joint security initiatives to combat terrorism, drug trafficking, and other transnational threats.
- **Confidence-Building Measures:** Implementing confidence-building measures to reduce the risk of military conflicts.

Bad Actions

- **Arms Race:** Engaging in an arms race that increases military tensions and diverts resources from development.
- **Unilateral Military Actions:** Conducting unilateral military actions that violate the sovereignty of other countries.

Cultural and Education Exchange

Good Actions

- **Student Exchange Programs:** Establishing student exchange programs to foster mutual understanding and cultural ties.
- **Cultural Festivals:** Organizing cultural festivals that celebrate the diverse heritage of Central Asia.

Bad Actions

- **Cultural Imposition:** Imposing one culture over others, leading to cultural homogenization and loss of local traditions.
- **Educational Bias:** Promoting educational programs that are biased and do not respect the local context and history.

Good Governance and Human Rights

Good Actions

- **Anti-Corruption Measures:** Implementing anti-corruption measures to improve governance and public trust⁴⁷.
- **Human Rights Institutes:** Supporting initiatives that promote human rights and the rule of law.

Bad Actions

- **Authoritarian Practices:** Supporting authoritarian regimes that suppress dissent and violate human rights.
- **Selective Justice:** Applying justice selectively to target political opponents while ignoring abuses by allies.

Balancing Interests and Inclusive Policies

Good Actions

⁴⁷ <https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/helpdesk/kazakhstan-overview-of-corruption-and-anti-corruption>

- **Inclusive Policy-Making:** Ensuring that all ethnic and social groups are represented in policy-making processes.
- **Balanced Foreign Policy:** Adopting a balanced foreign policy that considers the interests of all regional and global powers.

Bad Actions

- **Favoritism:** Favoring certain groups or countries over others, leading to resentment and conflict.
- **Exclusionary Policies:** Implementing exclusionary policies that marginalize certain communities.

Leveraging International Organizations

Good Actions

- **Engagement with UN:** Actively engaging with the United Nations and other international organizations to address regional issues.
- **Participation in Global Forums:** Participating in global forums to share experiences and learn from best practices.

Bad Actions

- **Ignoring International Norms:** Ignoring international norms and agreements, leading to isolation and sanctions.
- **Undermining Multilateral Institutions:** Undermining the credibility and effectiveness of multilateral institutions.

These examples illustrate how different actions can either contribute to or hinder the resolution of geopolitical tensions in Central Asia. It's crucial to adopt strategies that promote cooperation, respect, and mutual benefit to ensure long-term stability and prosperity in the region.

Against a Unit for Geopolitical deconfliction in EEAS speaks it would provide a false sense of security and underestimating the potential for conflict escalation, limited effectiveness, it requires complex coordination and communication, Deconfliction efforts might inadvertently legitimise the presence of adversarial forces in contested areas, complicating long-term strategic goal, maintaining deconfliction mechanisms can be resource-intensive, diverting attention and resources from other critical are, adversaries might use deconfliction agreements as a tool for political manipulation, gaining strategic advantages under the guise of cooperation. Deconfliction could lead to temporary solution that does not address the underlying causes of conflict, leading to recurrent tensions. There is a risk of miscommunication or misinterpretation, potentially leading to unintended consequences.

While deconfliction can reduce immediate risks, the opportunity costs of not engaging with Europe and other strategic regions must be considered. Central Asia's growing importance makes it essential for a truly strategic partnership between the EU and India, ensuring a balanced and comprehensive approach to global geopolitics.

In light of the comprehensive analysis presented, the conclusion synthesizes the key findings and underscores the unique contribution of this study to the existing body of literature on Central Asian regionalism.

15.0 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this study has comprehensively analysed Central Asian regionalism, drawing on an extensive review of existing literature and scholarly works. By engaging with the existing literature, this study has underscored the significance of previous contributions while also identifying critical gaps and limitations in the current body of knowledge. The critique of existing literature has revealed certain biases and oversights, particularly in the context of geopolitical dynamics and the involvement of global stakeholders in Central Asia. This study has sought to address these limitations by offering a nuanced and multifaceted analysis of the complexities within Central Asian regionalism, emphasising the potential for cooperation and mutual respect among various stakeholders.

The conclusions drawn from this paper underscore the successful coupling of the conceptual framework with empirical material, resulting in a comprehensive understanding of Central Asian regionalism. By effectively operationalizing the conceptual framework, the study navigated the intricate geopolitical landscape of Central Asia, shedding light on the strategic roles of global actors and the potential for the European Union, in collaboration with India, to project power and act as a *force d'équilibre* in the region. The integration of theoretical constructs with empirical geopolitical realities facilitated a nuanced analysis, revealing the EU's potential to foster cooperation and promote shared values between Europe and Central Asia.

The main findings of the study not only validated the conceptual framework but also provided valuable insights into the evolving regional orders in Central Asia. The study's ability to bridge theoretical underpinnings with real-world complexities allowed for a holistic exploration of the EU's strategic engagement in Central Asia, emphasizing the implications for regional stability and global power dynamics. The comprehensive analysis highlighted the potential for the EU to play a pivotal role in fostering resilience, prosperity, and regional cooperation, tailoring programs to meet the unique needs of each country and prioritizing high-level dialogue.

Furthermore, the unique contribution of this study lies in its comprehensive exploration of the geopolitical implications of global powers such as China, the European Union (EU), and India in Central Asia. By highlighting the strategies for fostering regional stability and prosperity, as well as the role of regional organisations in promoting economic collaboration and dialogue, this study has provided valuable insights into the evolving landscape of Central Asian regionalism. The findings of this study have significant implications for future research and policy considerations, particularly in the context of sustainable development, economic growth, and cultural exchange in Central Asia. As such, this study serves as a foundation for

further exploration and analysis, offering a robust framework for understanding and engaging with the complexities of Central Asian regionalism.

To sum up, the EU's interests, objectives, and values informing its strategies in Central Asia are:

1. Energy Import

- **Interests:** Ensuring a stable and diversified energy supply is crucial for the EU's economic stability and energy security.
- **Objectives:** Achieve sustainable development and reduce dependency on external energy sources.
- **Values:** Promotes environmental sustainability and economic resilience.

2. Promoting Kazakhstan as a Pivotal Power

- **Interests:** Strengthening ties with a key regional player to enhance stability and influence in Central Asia.
- **Objectives:** Promote European interests and values like democracy and human rights.
- **Values:** Supports good governance, human rights, and regional stability.

3. Russia as a Counterweight to China

- **Interests:** Balancing the influence of major powers to maintain strategic autonomy.
- **Objectives:** Ensure coherent and influential external action.
- **Values:** Promotes geopolitical stability and strategic balance.

4. Consolidating India's Engagement in Central Asia

- **Interests:** Enhancing cooperation with a significant democratic partner.
- **Objectives:** Strengthen global partnerships and foster regional stability.
- **Values:** Supports democracy, economic development, and regional cooperation.

5. Weighing in on Middle Eastern Dynamics

- **Interests:** Ensuring stability in a critical global security and energy supply region.

- **Objectives:** Promote global peace, stability, and security.
- **Values:** Advocates for human rights, conflict resolution, and stable energy markets.

6. Promoting Ties with China and Central Asia

- **Interests:** Building robust economic and political ties to enhance strategic position.
- **Objectives:** Develop a strong and secure Europe.
- **Values:** Supports economic growth, connectivity, and strategic influence.

7. Promoting Regional Order in Central Asia as an Example of Islamic Countries

- **Interests:** Setting a positive example for governance and stability in the Islamic world.
- **Objectives:** Uphold and promote EU values globally.
- **Values:** Promotes democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

8. Eurasia: A World Island

- **Interests:** Engaging with Eurasia as a central hub for global trade and politics.
- **Objectives:** Foster a prosperous and competitive Europe.
- **Values:** Supports economic integration, global trade, strategic connectivity and why not policy independence.

Thematically, this could then be translated into the following themes actions:

EURASIAN FUTURES

Decision-makers and researchers are still considering the geopolitical implications of China's rise and Eurasia's transformation to the World Islands. As it applies to Central Asia, political foresight, pragmatism, and courage are required.

Political foresight dictates that the European Union take the spoon in its right arm and recognise that Central Asia is a zone of contact of growing global significance and that it has no alternative to engaging more forcefully.

Pragmatically, the question arises of the demands to be made of China in Xinjiang to have the Cai ratified in return for stabilizing Afghanistan, Pakistan's Islamic hinterland instrumentalised to divert attention from domestic problems, a downtrodden transnational people and problematic home-grown relationship with democratic institutions in Pakistan.

Political courage concerns the Promoting Good Governance, Policy Independence, Integration, and Western-Oriented in Eurasian Nations.

In mathematics and physics, a vector is a quantity with both magnitude and direction. It is typically represented by an arrow whose length represents the magnitude and whose orientation in space represents the direction. Vectors describe physical quantities such as displacement, velocity, and force.

Research Project on Regional Orders in Central Asia: A Vital Exploration

A research project on regional orders in Central Asia would likely explore the dynamics of regionalism and the evolving geopolitical landscape. Central Asia, comprising Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan, is influenced by various external powers, including Russia, China, and the United States. The project examines how these influences shape regional cooperation, security arrangements, economic policies and domestic orders. It would also delve into the role of regional organisations and initiatives, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), in fostering regional stability and development.

Such a project would provide valuable insights into the interplay between national interests and regional cooperation, highlighting the challenges and opportunities for building a cohesive regional order in Central Asia. Regional order is the prerequisite for forming a viable regional organisation in Central Asia.

Kazakh-led Initiative in the Ferghana Valley

The Kazakh-led initiative in the Ferghana Valley, India's historical gateway to Central Asia, is of paramount importance, primarily aiming to foster regional stability and economic development. The Ferghana Valley, shared by Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, is marked by ethnic diversity and historical tension. Kazakhstan's involvement promotes cooperation and addresses shared challenges such as water management, border security, and economic integration. By leading initiatives in this region, Kazakhstan seeks to enhance regional security, boost economic ties, and position itself as a key player in Central Asian geopolitics.

CAREC

The EU's road to Central Asia goes via Afghanistan and Pakistan. That is why it should engage with CAERC, which China funds moderately while providing much of the conceptual framework undergirding its thinking. Central Asia is the key to Beijing, so the European Union has a clear and obvious interest in partnering up.

On the EU's engagement with CAREC, I have outlined a suitable course of action involving level-raising towards institutionalisation of links with India in terms of strategic alignment, cooperative projects, technical assistance and capacity building, policy and regulatory support, and sustainable growth in return for business opportunities.

On this basis, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank could become more active in Central Asia, making up for the weaknesses of SCO's economic arm.

This would signal the EU's commitment to ratification of CAI.

Central Asia as a Vector Between China and Russia

Central Asia, particularly Kazakhstan, plays a strategic role in balancing the influences of China and Russia. This region's **multi-vector foreign policy** aims to maintain and develop relationships with multiple major powers without becoming overly dependent on any single one. Here's how Central Asia could act as a vector for promoting the EU's values:

1. **Economic Cooperation:** The EU is Kazakhstan's largest trade partner and foreign investor. By leveraging this economic relationship, the EU can promote values such as sustainable development, environmental protection, and good governance.
2. **Political Engagement:** The Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA) between the EU and Kazakhstan facilitates cooperation in areas like justice, human rights, and civil society. This agreement can serve as a platform for promoting EU values in the region.
3. **Cultural and Educational Exchanges:** Programs like Erasmus+ and other capacity-building projects funded by the EU help foster a pluralistic political system and strengthen civil society in Kazakhstan.

India's Role in Reinforcing Kazakhstan's Multi-Vector Policy

India can play a significant role in reinforcing Kazakhstan's multi-vector foreign policy by:

1. **Economic Partnerships:** India has shown a keen interest in Central Asia since the economic liberalization in 1991. Strengthening trade and investment ties can help Kazakhstan diversify its economic partnerships.
2. **Soft Power and Cultural Ties:** India and Kazakhstan share long-standing historical and cultural connections. By enhancing cultural exchanges and educational collaborations, India can support Kazakhstan's multi-vector approach.
3. **Strategic Cooperation:** India's involvement in regional security and economic initiatives can provide Kazakhstan with additional options, reducing its reliance on any single power and supporting its multi-vector strategy.

Central Asia can act as a bridge between China and Russia and, with the support of the EU and India, be a vector for cooperation with the EU. The purpose must be to align with the new Eurasian realities.

Afghanistan is integral to the EU's Central Asia Strategy. India has the experience and expertise in Afghanistan that could benefit many people, while the United States recognizes that it has all but exhausted its means of influence in Afghanistan. A high-level conversation

is long overdue in support of the work of the UN and the contact group to arrive at a shared agenda and strengthen cooperation in response to changes. Pakistan and China agrees this must encompass (1) cooperation to prevent Afghanistan from descending into civil war, (2) to take substantive steps towards political reconciliation, (3) and counter-terrorism, (4) promotion of coordination and collaboration among Afghanistan's neighbouring countries and (5) efforts to pool the strengths of the Afghani-stan-related regional and multilateral mechanisms⁴⁸. This shared agenda provides a basis for dialogue between all of us.

Turkmenistan remains interested in broadening its options for export of its energy products, and the US has in the past engaged Taliban. Russia agrees the TAPI pipe-line from Turkmenistan-Pakistan-India should be leveraged. Engaging the Taliban pragmatically could prove challenging and require skill and patience given the diehard stances of the Pashtun underdogs on the broadening of the go-vernance framework towards the inclusion of the Tajiks and Hazarras, both Farsi-speaking peoples. Iran, a clear and present danger to international order, in turn, associates the establishment of links with India as an opening to the West but has also learned from India how to externalise its domestic conflicts, as evidenced by Hamas's reckless attack on Israel on October 7 2024.

HOMEWORK FOR PAKISTAN

In his book "Reimagining Pakistan: Transforming a Dysfunctional Nuclear State," Husain Haqqani outlines several key steps for Pakistan to undergo a meaningful transformation:

1. **Reconceptualizing National Identity:** Haqqani argues that Pakistan needs to move beyond its historical rivalry with India and redefine its national identity in a way that promotes unity and progress
2. **Civil-Military Relations:** He emphasizes the importance of reducing the military's dominance in politics and fostering a more balanced civil-military relationship.
3. **Economic Reforms:** Implementing comprehensive economic reforms to address issues like corruption, inefficiency, and lack of investment is crucial for sustainable development.
4. **Education and Social Development:** Investing in education and social development to empower the population and reduce extremism.
5. **International Relations:** Building constructive international relationships based on mutual respect and cooperation, rather than hostility and confrontation.

Haqqani believes that these steps are essential for Pakistan to overcome its current challenges and achieve a more stable and prosperous future.

THE TURKISH FACTOR

Turkey's interests in Central Asia are driven by several key factors:

⁴⁸ Krishnan & Johny (2022)

1. **Economic Opportunities:** Turkey aims to expand trade and economic cooperation with Central Asian countries.
2. **Cultural and Historical Ties:** Turkey shares linguistic, cultural, and historical ties with many Central Asian countries, which it leverages to strengthen its influence in the region.
3. **Strategic Autonomy:** Turkey seeks to diversify its international partnerships to reduce dependence on Western countries. Engaging with Central Asia is part of this broader strategy.
4. **Energy Security:** Central Asia is rich in natural resources, particularly oil and gas, which Turkey aims to access to secure its energy needs.

Turkey's foreign policy between China and Russia is characterized by a balancing act:

1. **Diversification:** Turkey seeks to diversify its international relations by engaging with both Eastern and Western powers. This includes strengthening ties with China and Russia while maintaining its NATO membership.
2. **Economic Interests:** Turkey has significant economic interests with both China and Russia, including trade, investment, and energy cooperation.
3. **Geopolitical Strategy:** Turkey's engagement with China and Russia is also a geopolitical strategy to enhance its influence and leverage in international affairs.

The impact of Turkey's potential accession to the EU on the EU's Central Asia strategy is complex:

1.Enhanced Cooperation: Turkey's EU membership could lead to enhanced cooperation between the EU and Central Asia, given Turkey's strategic location and historical ties with the region

2.Geopolitical Dynamics: Turkey's EU membership could alter the geopolitical dynamics in the region, potentially creating new opportunities for EU engagement with Central Asia⁴⁹.

3.Challenges: Turkey's accession to the EU is fraught with challenges, including political and economic reforms required for membership. These challenges could impact the EU's ability to effectively implement its Central Asia strategy.

Overall, Turkey's interests in Central Asia, its balancing act between China and Russia, and its potential EU accession all play significant roles in shaping the EU's strategy towards the region.

⁴⁹https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2024/762300/EPRS_BRI%282024%29762300_EN.pdf

GEOPOLITICAL DECONFLICTION

I have also addressed areas where the EU could act as power broker to reduce geopolitical tensions through diplomatic engagement, economic cooperation, security cooperation, cultural and educational exchange, good governance and human rights, balancing of interests and leveraging IFI's and regional organisations on the assumption that wrong and right actions are wise track marks facilitating enlightenment and liberation.

Here are some counter-arguments to the proposed strategies for Central Asia:

1. **Energy Security: Over-reliance on Central Asian energy resources** could lead to vulnerabilities if regional instability disrupts supply chains.
2. **Kazakhstan as Pivotal Power:** Kazakhstan's internal political dynamics and economic challenges may limit its ability to act as a stable and reliable partner.
3. **Russia as Counterweight to China:** Aligning too closely with Russia might alienate other potential allies and complicate relations with Western countries.
4. **Consolidating India's Engagement:** India's engagement in Central Asia faces logistical challenges due to geographical barriers and competing interests from other regional powers.
5. **Weighing in on Middle Eastern Dynamics:** Central Asia's influence on Middle Eastern dynamics is limited, and overemphasis here might divert attention from more impactful areas.
6. **Promoting Ties with China and Central Asia:** Strengthening ties with China could lead to dependency and reduce leverage in negotiations.
7. **Stimulating Discussions on Regional Order:** Local powers that prefer to maintain their autonomy might resist efforts to shape regional order.
8. **Adopting New Eurasian Reality:** The concept of a "new world island" might be overly ambitious and not reflective of the complex geopolitical realities.

Perspective

Central Asian countries, having gained independence from the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, embraced their sovereignty with a renewed sense of national pride and identity. This independence has allowed them to pursue their political, economic, and cultural paths, fostering a unique blend of traditional heritage and modern aspirations that enriches the region's cultural landscape.

The vast steppes of Central Asia, with their sweeping landscapes and rich history, hold a timeless allure. These open plains have been home to nomadic cultures for centuries, offering a sense of freedom and connection to nature deeply ingrained in the region's identity. The

steppe's beauty and vastness symbolise the boundless potential and resilience of the Central Asian people.

Central Asia's unique blend of cultures, languages, and traditions sets it apart. The region's strategic location at the crossroads of civilisations has made it a melting pot of influence from East China and West China. Its history of trade along the Silk Road, rich Islamic heritage, and diverse ethnic tapestry contribute to its distinct character.

Despite these unique features, Central Asia shares common challenges and aspirations with other regions. Pursuing economic development, political stability, and regional cooperation are universal goals. The region's efforts to balance tradition with modernity and its quest for a cohesive regional identity resonate with the experiences of many other parts of the world.

Central Asia's journey is a testament to the universal human spirit. It strives for progress while honouring its rich heritage.

After the push-ups, let us see how to carve out a strengthened role for the CACO.

Action Plan for Strengthening the Central Asian Cooperation Organisation (CACO)

1. Drawing on Comparative Regionalism and Experiences from Other Regions

Comparative Regionalism:

- **European Union (EU):** Emphasise economic integration and the free movement of goods, services, and people. Establish a Central Asian single market to boost intraregional trade.
- **ASEAN:** Focus on political and security cooperation. Develop a Central Asian security framework to address common threats.
- **African Union (AU):** Promotion of socioeconomic development and integration. Regional development projects should be implemented to reduce disparities.

Experiences from other regions:

- **EU:** Establish robust institutions to oversee integration processes.
- **ASEAN:** Foster a sense of regional identity and solidarity.
- **AU:** To address socioeconomic challenges through collaborative initiatives.

2. Power Political Rationale and Economic Interests

Power Political Rationale:

- It seeks to assert its leadership role in Central Asia, balancing relations with Russia, China, and the West. Nevertheless, its leaders want to preserve their freedom of action and consider the CACO a constraining factor.

- **Uzbekistan:** Aims to enhance its regional influence and ensure security and stability.

Economic interests:

- It focuses on energy exports, infrastructure development, and attracting foreign investment. It recognises regional organisations that promote trade.
- **Uzbekistan:** Prioritize economic reforms, diversification, and creating a favourable business environment.

3. Mapping the Positions and Interests of the Main Actors: Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan:

- **Position:** Leading regional power with significant economic resources.
- **Interests:** Maintaining regional stability, enhancing economic ties, and leveraging its strategic location for trade.

Uzbekistan:

- **Position:** An emerging regional player with a focus on economic reforms.
- **Interests:** Strengthen regional cooperation, improve infrastructure, and attract investment.

4. Link between Regional Order and Region-Owned Regional Organisations

Regional Order:

- A stable regional order in Central Asia requires cooperation on security, economic development, and political stability.

Region-Owned Regional Organisations:

- **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO):** Focuses on security cooperation and combating terrorism.
- **Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU):** Promotes economic integration and trade.

Articulation

- Regional organisations such as the SCO and EAEU are crucial in fostering cooperation and stability. They provide platforms for dialogue, conflict resolution, and economic collaboration.

5. Role of Central Asia in Islam and World History

Islam:

- Centre of Islamic scholarship and culture since the 8th century.

World History:

- Central Asia was a crucial part of the Silk Road, facilitating trade and cultural exchange between East and West. It has been a melting pot of various civilisations and played a pivotal role in spreading ideas, goods, and technologies⁵⁰.

Central Asia's rich history and strategic location make it a vital region in global geopolitics and cultural heritage and a vector for promoting an international order *characterised by religious tolerance, scientific progress, innovation, and good governmental order*.

In conclusion, the European Union's strategic engagement in Central Asia underscores its commitment to fostering resilience, prosperity, and regional cooperation. By tailoring programs to meet the unique needs of each country, investing in sustainable development, and prioritising high-level dialogue, the EU aims to build a stable and prosperous future for the region. The restoration of the EU leadership in world affairs is a corollary to making the Strategic Partnership with India truly strategic. Truly strategic by moving beyond road mapping⁵¹. Additionally, integrating Central Asia into this policy jigsaw is crucial for enhancing regional stability and expanding economic opportunities on both sides of the Himalayas.

As these initiatives continue to evolve, the EU's Central Asian strategy is a testament to the power of collaborative efforts in addressing global challenges and seizing shared opportunities⁵².

Imagine a group of ancient Hindu sages sitting under a banyan tree, sipping on some chai, and discussing modernising and unifying the Indian market. One sage, with a twinkle in his eye, says:

“Brothers, we need to modernise our market. It's like trying to herd cats with a flute! We have the technology of the 21st century but the market practices of the Mahabharata era. It's time to bring some unity and order, like aligning all the chakras in our economy!”

Another sage, stroking his long beard, chimes in:

“Indeed, we must unify our market. Right now, it's like trying to perform a synchronized dance with one leg in Mumbai and the other in Chennai. We need to bring everything together, like a perfectly cooked biryani where every grain of rice is in harmony.”

And the youngest sage, always the cheeky one, adds:

⁵⁰ Golden (2011)

⁵¹ <https://www.officetimeline.com/roadmaps>

⁵² <https://www.economist.com/special-report/2024-04-27>

“Think of it this way: modernising our market is like upgrading from a bullock cart to a bullet train. We need speed, efficiency, and a little bit of that Bollywood flair to make it all work smoothly!”

Having examined the policies and initiatives through which the EU could become an influential global actor in Central Asia, I conclude that it must stop barking at its shadow like a stray dog lost in the suburbs of D.C

Appendix 1 – Is India a Balancer or Multi-aligned?

EU's Stakes in India

1. **Economic Opportunities:** With its large and growing market, India offers significant opportunities for European businesses. The EU is India's largest trading partner, and enhancing this relationship can lead to mutual economic benefits.
2. **Strategic partnership:** India is a critical player in the Indo-Pacific region, crucial for global trade routes and geopolitical stability. Strengthening ties with India helps the EU maintain a balance of power in this region.
3. **Shared Values:** The EU and India share democratic values and a commitment to a rules-based international order. This common ground provides a strong foundation for cooperation on global issues such as climate change, security, and human rights⁵³.

Why India as a Pivot and Balancer

1. **Geopolitical Stability:** India's strategic location and influence in South Asia make it a pivotal player in maintaining regional stability. China.
2. **Economic Growth:** India's rapidly growing economy can counter China's economic dominance in Asia. This diversification is beneficial for global financial stability.
3. **Technological and Innovation Hub:** India is emerging as a global hub for technology and innovation. Collaborating with India can help the EU stay competitive in these critical sectors.

The European Union (EU), India, and China each have distinct ambitions and values regarding human development and societal progress. Here's a brief overview:

European Union

The EU's ambitions focus on promoting peace, security, and the well-being of its citizens. Key aims include:

- **Human Dignity:** Respecting and protecting human dignity as the basis of fundamental rights.
- **Freedom:** Ensuring freedom of movement and freedom of thought, religion, and expression.
- **Democracy:** Upholding representative democracy and political rights for all EU citizens.
- **Equality:** Promoting equal rights for all citizens, including gender and non-discrimination.

⁵³ https://ecfr.eu/special/what_does_india_think/analysis/conclusion_a_fresh_start_for_europe_and_india

- **Rule of Law:** Ensuring that all actions are based on treaties and upheld by an independent judiciary.
- **Human Rights:** Protecting rights such as freedom from discrimination and access to justice.

India

India's ambitions are multifaceted, focusing on economic growth, technological advancement, and social development. Some key areas include:

- **Economic Growth:** Striving to grow the electronics sector to \$500 billion and create millions of jobs by the decade's end.
- **Education and Skills:** Developing a skilled workforce to support technological and industrial growth.

China

A mix of historical, cultural, and strategic goals drives China's ambitions. Key areas include:

- **Global Power:** Asserting its place worldwide through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative and military modernisation.
- **Technological Leadership:** Investing heavily in technology and innovation to become a leader in various high-tech industries.
- **Cultural Values:** Emphasizing traditional values such as Confucianism to shape its domestic and international policies.

Comparison

- **Human Rights and Democracy:** The EU strongly emphasises human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. India also values democracy and human rights but focuses heavily on economic and technological growth. While investing in technological and military power, China often prioritises state control and traditional values over individual freedoms.
- **Economic and Technological Goals:** India and China have ambitious technological and economic goals, but China's scale and state-driven approach often give it a competitive edge.
- **Global Influence:** The EU aims to promote peace and security globally, while China seeks to expand its influence through strategic initiatives and military power. India is increasingly positioning itself as a critical player in the global tech industry.

Each region has unique ambitions that reflect its historical contexts, cultural values, and strategic goals.

Appendix 2 - What about man?

The spiritual roots of the notion of man in European tradition are deeply intertwined with philosophical, religious, and cultural developments over centuries:

1. **Ancient Greek Philosophy:** Philosophers like Plato and Aristotle laid the groundwork for understanding human nature. Plato emphasised the soul's immortality and quest for truth, while Aristotle focused on the rational aspect of humans, defining man as a "rational animal".
2. **Christianity:** The Christian tradition profoundly shaped European views on humanity. The concept of humans being created in the image of God (Imago Dei) emphasises every individual's inherent dignity and worth. This belief underscores the spiritual and moral dimensions of human existence.
3. **Renaissance Humanism:** During the Renaissance, there was a revival of interest in classical antiquity and a focus on human potential and achievements. Thinkers like Erasmus and Pico della Mirandola celebrated human dignity and the capacity for self-improvement through reason and education.
4. **Enlightenment:** The Enlightenment further developed the notion of man through the lens of reason and individual rights. Philosophers like Kant and Rousseau emphasised autonomy, moral agency, and the inherent worth of individuals.

Indian Tradition

The Indian spiritual tradition offers a rich and diverse perspective on the notion of man:

1. **Vedic and Upanishadic Thought:** The earliest spiritual texts, the Vedas and Upanishads, explore the nature of the self (Atman) and its relationship with the ultimate reality (Brahman). The concept of Atman emphasises the divine essence within every individual.
2. **Dharma and Karma:** Dharma (righteousness and duty) and Karma (the law of cause and effect) are central to Indian philosophy. These principles guide individuals in their moral and spiritual development, emphasising the interconnectedness of all life.
3. **Yoga and Meditation:** Practices like Yoga and meditation are integral to Indian spirituality. They focus on self-realisation and the union of the individual soul with the divine, highlighting the importance of inner transformation and spiritual growth.
4. **Bhakti and Devotion:** The Bhakti movement emphasises personal devotion to a deity and the transformative power of love and surrender. This tradition underscores the emotional and relational aspects of spirituality.

Chinese Tradition

Chinese spiritual traditions offer a unique perspective on the notion of man:

1. **Confucianism:** Confucianism emphasises the moral development of individuals and their roles within society. Ren (benevolence) and Li (ritual propriety) guide individuals in cultivating virtue and maintaining harmonious relationships.
2. **Daoism:** Daoism focuses on living in harmony with the Dao (the Way), the fundamental principle that underlies the universe. It emphasises simplicity, spontaneity, and the interconnectedness of all things. The notion of Wu Wei (non-action) encourages individuals to align with the natural flow of life.
3. **Buddhism:** Chinese Buddhism, particularly Chan (Zen) Buddhism, emphasises direct experience and meditation as paths to enlightenment. The concept of Sunyata (emptiness) challenges conventional notions of self and reality, promoting a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of all existence.

These traditions collectively offer a rich tapestry of spiritual insights into man's nature, each contributing uniquely to our understanding of human existence and potential.

Implications of Asia Generating More Wealth than the West

1. **Shift in Economic Power:** As Asia generates more wealth, the global economic centre of gravity shifts from the West to the East. This shift can change global trade patterns, investment flows, and monetary policies.
2. **Geopolitical Rebalancing:** Increased wealth in Asia can lead to more significant geopolitical influence for Asian countries. This rebalancing can affect global governance structures and international relations.
3. **Green industries:** Green industries must be promoted through deep reform of the Indian economy to ensure sustainable and equitable take-off for this pivotal power.
4. **Cultural Influence:** As economic power shifts, so does cultural influence. Asian countries may be more prominent in global cultural trends, media, and entertainment.

By recognising these dynamics, the EU can strategically benefit from Asia's rise while maintaining strong ties with key partners such as India.

All overripe civilisations experience *an abundance of degrowth*. The European Union and India must join hands on the typical journey of modernising their economies.⁵⁴ India and the EU should sign a Strategic and Economic Partnership Agreement.⁵⁵ Or the universe is not severe.

The drama of Hannibal was to be born too early. Some centuries later, he would have found the gates of Rome open. The empire was *sede vacante*, like the European Union today.

⁵⁴ <https://www.euractiv.com/section/eu-india/interview/strengthening-indias-european-ties-indian-ambassador-to-eu-calls-for-more-engagement/>

⁵⁵ Ilcus (2024)

Appendix 3 – Center of Europe-Central Asia

1. Introduction and Objectives

The European Central Asia Center in Samarkand aims to enhance cooperation between the European Union (EU) and Central Asian countries. The centre will promote sustainable development, economic growth, cultural exchange, and regional stability.

2. Key Areas of Focus

1. Economic Development and Trade

- Trade Facilitation: Organize trade fairs and business forums to connect European and Central Asian businesses.
- Investment Promotion: Provide information and support for European investors interested in Central Asia.
- SME Support: Offer training and resources for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to enhance their competitiveness.

2. Cultural and Educational Exchange

- Scholarship Programs: Establish scholarships for Central Asian students to study in Europe and vice versa.
- Cultural Festivals: Host annual cultural festivals showcasing the diverse heritage of Europe and Central Asia.
- Language Courses: Offer language courses in European and Central Asian languages to promote mutual understanding.

3. Sustainable Development

- Environmental Projects: Collaborate on renewable energy, water management, and biodiversity conservation projects.
- Sustainable Agriculture: Promote sustainable farming practices and support rural development initiatives.
- Urban Development: Share best practices in urban planning and sustainable city development.

4. Digital and Technological Innovation

- Digital Connectivity: Enhance digital infrastructure and promote digital literacy in Central Asia.

- Tech Hubs: Establish technology hubs to foster innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Cybersecurity: Collaborate on cybersecurity initiatives to protect digital infrastructure.

5. Governance and Rule of Law

- Legal Reforms: Support legal reforms and capacity-building initiatives to strengthen the rule of law.
- Anti-Corruption: Implement anti-corruption programs and promote transparency in governance.
- Human Rights: Advocate for human rights and support civil society organisations.

3. Implementation Strategy

1. Partnerships and Collaboration

- Government Partnerships: Work closely with Central Asian governments to align the centre's activities with national priorities.
- International Organizations: Collaborate with international organisations such as the United Nations and the World Bank.
- Private Sector: Engage the private sector in joint initiatives and public-private partnerships.

2. Funding and Resources

- EU Funding: Secure funding from EU programs such as Horizon Europe and the European Development Fund.
- Grants and Donations: Apply for grants and seek donations from philanthropic organisations and private donors.
- Membership Fees: Introduce membership fees for businesses and organisations that benefit from the centre's services.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Performance Indicators: Establish clear performance indicators to measure the success of the centre's programs.
- Regular Reporting: Provide regular reports to stakeholders on the progress and impact of the centre's activities.

- Feedback Mechanisms: Implement feedback mechanisms to continuously improve the centre's programs and services.

Conclusion

The European Central Asia Center in Samarkand will be a hub for fostering cooperation and promoting shared values between Europe and Central Asia. By focusing on key areas such as economic development, cultural exchange, sustainable development, digital innovation, and governance, the center will contribute to the region's prosperity and stability.

Appendix 4 – Anti-Trafficking Road Map

Creating a comprehensive road map for aligning troops and defining objectives in Central Asia to combat trafficking in drugs, arms, and people involves several key steps. Here's a structured outline:

1. Situation Analysis

- **Current Threat Assessment:** Evaluate the current state of drug, arms, and human trafficking in Central Asia.
- **Identify key trafficking routes, major players, and the scale of the problem.**
- **Regional Security Dynamics:** Understand the political and security landscape of Central Asian countries, including their capabilities and limitations.

2. Strategic Objectives

- **Disrupt Trafficking Networks:** Target and dismantle major trafficking networks.
- **Strengthen Border Security:** Enhance the capabilities of border forces to detect and intercept illicit trafficking.
- **Enhance Regional Cooperation:** Foster collaboration among Central Asian countries and international partners.

3. Troop Alignment and Responsibilities

- **Intelligence Units:** Collect and analyze data on trafficking activities. Provide actionable intelligence to operational units.
- **Operational Units:** Conduct raids, arrests, and interdictions based on intelligence reports.
- **Border Security Forces:** Monitor and secure borders to prevent trafficking.
- **Specialized Task Forces:** Focus on specific types of trafficking (e.g., drugs, arms, human trafficking).

4. Milestones and Timeline

- **Short-term (0-6 months):**
 - Establish a joint task force with representatives from all Central Asian countries.
 - Conduct initial training workshops on data collection and analysis.
 - Launch pilot operations targeting known trafficking routes.

- Medium-term (6-18 months):
 - Expand intelligence-sharing mechanisms among regional law enforcement agencies.
 - Increase the number of coordinated operations and joint patrols.
 - Implement advanced surveillance and monitoring technologies at key border points.
- Long-term (18+ months):
 - Develop a comprehensive regional database on trafficking activities.
 - Regularly update and refine strategies based on evolving threats.
 - Strengthen legal frameworks and international cooperation to sustain anti-trafficking efforts.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Regular Assessments: Conduct periodic reviews of the strategy's effectiveness.
- Feedback Mechanisms: Implement systems for continuous feedback from ground units and stakeholders.
- Adjustments: Make necessary adjustments based on the outcomes of evaluations and emerging trends.

This road map provides a structured approach to tackling the complex issue of trafficking in Central Asia. Collaboration, intelligence, and adaptability are key to its success.

Appendix 5 – Regional CT Strategy

Creating an effective counter-terrorism strategy against groups like Hizb-ut-Tahrir, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), and other terrorist organizations in Central Asia requires a multi-faceted approach. This strategy should involve cooperation among Central Asian countries, China, the US, Russia, Europol, and local police forces. Here's a proposed strategy:

1. Intelligence Sharing and Coordination

- **Joint Intelligence Task Force:** Establish a task force comprising intelligence agencies from Central Asian countries, China, the US, Russia, and Europol and CT SCO Office. This task force will facilitate real-time intelligence sharing and analysis.
- **Centralized Database:** Develop a centralized database to track terrorist activities, movements, and networks. This database should be accessible to all member countries.

2. Strengthening Border Security

- **Advanced Surveillance:** Implement advanced surveillance technologies, such as drones and biometric systems, at key border points to monitor and intercept terrorist movements.
- **Joint Border Patrols:** Conduct joint border patrols involving Central Asian countries and neighboring states to enhance border security.

3. Disrupting Terrorist Financing

- **Financial Monitoring:** Collaborate with international financial institutions to monitor and disrupt the flow of funds to terrorist organizations.
- **Sanctions and Asset Freezes:** Impose sanctions and freeze assets of individuals and entities linked to terrorist activities.

4. Counter-Radicalization Programs

- **Community Engagement:** Engage with local communities to counter radical ideologies through education and awareness programs.
- **Rehabilitation Programs:** Develop rehabilitation programs for individuals who have been radicalized, offering them alternative pathways and support.

5. Military and Law Enforcement Operations

- **Targeted Operations:** Conduct targeted military and law enforcement operations to dismantle terrorist cells and apprehend key leaders.
- **Training and Capacity Building:** Provide training and capacity-building programs for local police and military forces to enhance their counter-terrorism capabilities.

6. Legal and Policy Frameworks

- **Harmonized Legislation:** Work towards harmonizing counter-terrorism laws and policies across Central Asian countries to ensure a unified approach.
- **International Cooperation Agreements:** Strengthen international cooperation agreements to facilitate extradition and prosecution of terrorists.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

- **Regular Assessments:** Conduct regular assessments of the strategy's effectiveness and make necessary adjustments based on evolving threats.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Implement feedback mechanisms to gather input from all stakeholders and continuously improve the strategy.

8. Public Awareness and Media Strategy

- **Media Campaigns:** Launch media campaigns to raise public awareness about the dangers of terrorism and the importance of cooperation in counter-terrorism efforts.
- **Counter-Propaganda:** Develop counter-propaganda initiatives to combat terrorist narratives and prevent radicalization.

This comprehensive strategy aims to address the multifaceted nature of terrorism in Central Asia through collaboration, intelligence sharing, and targeted actions. Continuous evaluation and adaptation are crucial to its success.

Appendix 6 – Afghan Round-table talks– New Delhi

Agenda for Great Power Talks on Afghanistan

1. Opening Remarks

- Welcome and introduction by the host nation.
- Statements from key representatives of participating countries.

2. Review of Current Situation

- Security updates and recent developments in Afghanistan.
- Humanitarian situation and ongoing relief efforts.

3. Political Stability and Governance

- Discussion on the formation of an inclusive government.
- Strategies to ensure political stability and prevent power vacuums.

4. Counterterrorism Efforts

- Coordination of international efforts to combat terrorism.
- Sharing intelligence and resources to address terrorist threats.

5. Human Rights and Social Issues

- Ensuring the protection of human rights, with a focus on women's and children's rights.
- Addressing issues related to education, healthcare, and social services.

6. Economic Development and Reconstruction

- Plans for economic aid and investment in Afghanistan.
- Infrastructure development and job creation initiatives.

7. Regional Cooperation

- Enhancing cooperation with neighboring countries.
- Promoting regional stability and economic integration.

8. Humanitarian Aid and Refugee Support

- Strategies for providing humanitarian aid to displaced populations.

- Support for Afghan refugees in neighboring countries and beyond.

9. Future Engagement and Monitoring

- Establishing mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and support.
- Setting timelines for follow-up meetings and progress reviews.

10. Closing Remarks

- Summary of key points and agreements.
- Closing statements from participating countries.

This agenda aims to address Afghanistan's multifaceted challenges by fostering cooperation among great powers and ensuring a comprehensive approach to stability and development.

Appendix 7 – Addressing Pakistan’s fear of the Pincher

Here are some measures and strategies that India, the US, the EU, and China could undertake to reassure Pakistan and improve relations. This is not so much about the international community as about empowering India and Pakistan to act, to be courageous, to lead at various levels. The premise is that war between Pakistan and India must be avoided pending discussions on the future status of Kashmir within India:

India

1. **Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs):** Engage in regular dialogues and meetings to address mutual concerns and reduce misunderstandings.
2. **Trade and Economic Cooperation:** Resume and enhance trade relations to build economic interdependence and trust.
3. **Military Transparency:** Share information about military exercises and movements near the border to avoid misinterpretations.
4. **Cultural Exchanges:** Promote people-to-people contacts through cultural, educational, and sports exchanges. For instance, a travelling exhibition on the Harappa civilization and cross-border cooperation programs for those living beyond the Indus river.
5. **Joint Initiatives:** Collaborate on joint projects in areas like healthcare, education, and infrastructure to foster goodwill. For instance a Joint South Asian University⁵⁶ and Autostrada Amritsar-Lahore.

United States

1. **Diplomatic Engagement:** Facilitate high-level diplomatic talks between India and Pakistan to mediate and resolve conflicts⁵⁷.
2. **Economic Aid and Development:** Provide economic assistance and development projects in Pakistan to improve its economic stability.
3. **Counterterrorism Cooperation:** Work with Pakistan to address terrorism concerns while ensuring that Pakistan’s security concerns are also addressed.
4. **Educational and Technological Partnerships:** Enhance cooperation in education and technology to build long-term partnerships.
5. **Public Health Initiatives:** Collaborate on public health projects, especially in areas like vaccination and disease control.

⁵⁶ <https://www.bmj.com/content/375/BMJ-2021-067384>

⁵⁷ <https://www.usip.org/publications/2024/02/2021-india-pakistan-ceasefire-origins-prospects-and-lessons-learned>

European Union

1. **Humanitarian Aid:** Continue providing humanitarian aid and support for disaster relief efforts in Pakistan.
2. **Trade Agreements:** Strengthen trade relations through favorable trade agreements and support for Pakistan's exports and for Saarc.
3. **Migration and Mobility:** Facilitate legal migration pathways and address irregular migration issues through comprehensive dialogues.
4. **Counterterrorism Support:** Enhance cooperation in counterterrorism efforts and security measures.
5. **Development Programs:** Invest in long-term development programs focusing on education, governance, and human rights.

China

1. **Economic Investments:** Increase investments in Pakistan's infrastructure and development projects under the Belt and Road Initiative.
2. **Military Cooperation:** Engage in joint military exercises and training programs to build trust and cooperation.
3. **Diplomatic Support:** Support Pakistan in international forums and advocate for its interests.
4. **Cultural and Educational Exchanges:** Promote cultural and educational exchanges to strengthen people-to-people ties.
5. **Technology Transfer:** Share technology and expertise in areas like agriculture, healthcare, and industry to boost Pakistan's development.

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Statement on AI

Artificial Neuron Networks replicates the human biological brain through large collections of “neurons”, or nodes, connected by “synapses”, or weighted couplings, which are trained to perform certain tasks rather than asked to execute a predetermined set of instructions. ANNs are derived from alloy theory, which demonstrates that alloy systems can be formed by several elements combined in all possible proportions. It works like magnetism by attracting and repelling. Artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionising how we work and interact with the world. As a transformative technology, AI has the potential to drive innovation, enhance productivity, and solve complex global challenges. AI analysis is a digital method that retrieves the information stored digitally and turns it into knowledge on human prompts, generating personalised context. Language learning models, like GPT-4, part of AI Bing deployed in this study, sort and analyse data through use of deep learning techniques to understand patterns and generate human-like text. They rely on vast datasets and complex algorithms to predict the next word in a sequence, enabling them to create coherent and contextually relevant responses. Recent advancements, such as integrating formal logic, aim to enhance their reasoning capabilities and reduce biases. By harnessing the power of AI, we can unlock time-bound knowledge maps and new opportunities for economic growth and make rapid progress in analytical work, thus providing the conditions for problem-solving and concentration on human

relationships and strategic activities. Virtual collaborative structures should not be construed as an opportunity for the exploitation of monads in slave-like conditions to cut slack in the camp of the opponent, for mowing the lawn in the ranks or for organisational capture of the environment but involve a mutually beneficial and reciprocal transaction between the decision-maker and analyst to optimise decision-making, speed-up problem-solving and to close gaps in understanding as well to tighten the meshes in the network-centric knowledge society. I also used Grammarly and Sharly AI.

I take full responsibility for the content of the piece and its mistakes.