

**India's Strategy of Energy Security in Central
Asia: A Case Study of Kazakhstan (1991-2020)**

**Thesis Submitted to Jadavpur University for the Degree of Doctor
of Philosophy (Arts)**

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Certified that the thesis entitled “**India’s Strategy of Energy Security in Central Asia: A Case Study of Kazakhstan (1991-2020).**” submitted by me for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arts to Jadavpur University is based upon my work carried out under the Supervision of Dr. Bijaya Kumar Das, Associate Professor, Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University, Kolkata and that neither this thesis nor any part of it has been submitted before any degree or diploma anywhere/elsewhere.

Signature of Supervisor:

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Date:

Date:

*I dedicate this work to
my dearest Mother-in-Law
and beloved wife Tanima Kayal*

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List of Abbreviations

AF-PAK- Afghanistan and Pakistan

CARs- Central Asian Republics

CASAREM- Central Asia South Asia Regional Electricity Market

CCAP- Connect Central Asia Policy

CIA - Central Intelligence Agency

CICA-Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia

CII- Confederation of Indian Industry

CIS- Commonwealth of Independent States

CNPCI- China National Petroleum Corporation International

CSTO-Collective Security Treaty Organisation

DRDO-Defence Research and Development Organization

EACU- Eurasian Customs Union

EEU- Eurasian Economic Union

EIA- Energy Information Administration

EU- European Union

EXIM- Export Import

FDI- Foreign Direct Investment

FTA- Free Trade Agreement

GAIL- Gas Authority of India Limited

GDP- Gross Domestic Product

IDSAs- Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses

IEA- International Energy Agency

IFS- Indian Foreign Service
IGC- Inter-Governmental Commission
IM- Indian Mujahedeen
IMF- International Monetary Fund
IMU- Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
INSTC- International North South Transport Corridor
IPI- Iran Pakistan India Pipeline
ISRO- Indian Space Research Organization
IT-Information Technology
ITEC- Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation
J&K- Jammu and Kashmir
JV- Joint Venture
JWG- Joint Working Group
LNG- Liquefied Natural Gas
LOC- Line of Credit
LOC- Line of Control
MBD- Million Barrels per Day
MEA- Ministry of External Affairs
MOC- Ministry of Commerce
MOD- Ministry of Defence
MOU- Memorandum of Understanding
MTOE- Million Tonnes of Oil Equivalent
MW- Megawatts
NAM-Non-Aligned Movement
NATO- North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGG- New Great Game
NPCIL- Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited
NSG- Nuclear Suppliers Group

OECD- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

ONGC- Oil and Natural Gas Corporation

ORF- Observer Research Foundation

PPP- Purchasing Power Parity

RATS- Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure

RSC- Regional Security Complex

SCO- Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

TAPI- Turkmenistan Afghanistan Pakistan India (Pipeline)

TCF- Trillion Cubic Feet

UN- United Nations

Eurasia Political Map



Source: www.mapsland.com.

Central Asia Political Map



Source: www.nationsonline.org.

Introduction

In the matter of a nation's growth in terms of its economy military might and human development index, India presents a paradox that has attracted much scholarly and popular discourse in recent year. On the one hand, India has been noted as a poor, third-world country with unsatisfactory human development and social inclusion. On the other hand, India is seen as dynamic centre of innovation and entrepreneurship that is energised by a pool of brilliant graduates and a fast-growing entrepreneurial middle class. These stark contradictions have drawn much scholarship and commentary with regard to the country's global comportment and international relations. In this context, this dissertation seeks to contribute to the growing body of literature in this field, and offer relevant insights into India's strategy to achieve energy security with reference to Central Asia in general and Kazakhstan in particular.

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 and its aftermath in respect of the newly independent, mineral rich states of Central Asia have been the subject of keen interest to scholars and international observers. It soon became apparent that these Central Asian Republics, given their abundant energy resources and strategic location in the heart of Asia, has emerged as a playground for multinational rivalries and the start of a New Great Game. A host of geopolitical complexities in the region have been exposed through the process of observation and analysis. While there is so gainsaying the importance of the region's location and enormous wealth of resources, there is at once a tricky mix of authoritarian political regimes, religious orthodoxy, tenor activism and narcotics trafficking. The major external powers engaged in the region must-willy-nilly contend with such a complicated matrix of

realities in order to gain control over the largely untapped energy resources, such as oil, natural gas and uranium. After the September 11, 2001 terror strikes in the U.S, the world has witnessed rapidly shifting geopolitics, particularly with regard to region having strategic importance. The sovereign Republics of Central Asia became increasingly sensitive to the attention being bestowed on them by energy-hungry big powers. They were conscious of their rapidly swelling wealth from the stock of resources and accordingly, tightened their control over those resources. They also made it clear that they were no longer finger-puppets in the hands of outside powers. This dissertation takes these geopolitical perspectives into account and accordingly presents its findings, arguments and reasoning.

Most of the scholars and policy makers in India and the west are agreed on the importance of Central Asia to India's strategic and energy security agenda. They identify the region as vital to the expansion of India's economic sphere of influence. The region is not only a destination in itself but also acts as a bridge to greater Eurasia. India and the Central Asian region have the advantage of regular historical linkages and strong civilizational and cultural affinities. This study explains how the Central Asian Republics (CARs) can benefit from India's experience of successful political transformation in the post-colonial period, as also from a mutually productive relationship with a fast emerging regional and global power.

The Asian security scenario presents a troubled geopolitical environment. India as a rising power has to contend with two hostile neighbors, namely, Pakistan and China. All three nations possess nuclear arsenals, and India has fought wars with both the other two. This reality contributes to instability in South Asia. To compound the complexities, Afghanistan has come to pose a very new threat of the re-emergence of radical Islam and rampant terrorism in the wake of the withdrawal of western forces from that violence ridden country. In the ongoing scenario,

India's security concerns emanate from its north and west. In their turns, the Central Asian Republics are likewise affected by Afghanistan's volatility given its location in South and Central Asia. Further, they too have previous experiences with religious extremism and radicalism.

In the spheres of energy and economic growth, India's policy influencers and policy makers commonly identify Central Asia's hydrocarbon and mineral resources as important for meeting the nation's energy security needs, particularly in the context of the desirability of diversifying its energy sources. Again, on economic considerations India views Central Asia as a lucrative market for its goods and services. Moreover, the region has the potential to serve as a conduit for trade and communication with the larger Eurasian landmass. This is significant since India ends to establish overland connectivity with other parts of Asia and Europe. The Central Asian Republics in turn, stand to gain from India's capacity to counterbalance the pressures extended by Russia and China, who currently dominate the region. Policy makers and scholars in Central Asia have expressed their awareness of India's growing presence in the region being less intrusive than that of other major external powers.

The influential elite in the Central Asian Republics are particularly conscious of India's status as a democratic multi-ethnic, multi-religious, pluralist, inclusive and secular federal republic. On the other hand, key Indian personages often refer to the country's cultural heritage being significantly link to the larger Eurasian region. They continue to emphasise the cultural commonalities and civilizational affinities between the two regions, that date back to the ancient Silk Road and spread of Buddhism. They also mention the popularity of Bollywood cinema among the people of Central Asia and Russia. Central Asian leaders are agreed on these realities. The elite of both regions jointly support this narrative that helps them to look beyond

India's currently limited engagement with Central Asia and perceive a great future partnership that would echo the historical successes.

Objectives of the Study

This work attempt to explore the principal argument in the discourse and their applicability to the dynamics of India's contemporary energy security strategy in relation to the Central Asian Republics in general and Kazakhstan in particular inasmuch as it constitutes a part of the main research objectives. Basing on this premise, this study analyses India's energy and economic engagements with Kazakhstan and the larger Central Asian Region. Given the background and other considerations enunciated above, this study proposes to spell out the problems relating to India's trade and energy relations with that region and offer reasoned solutions. This study aims to critically examine the circumstances that have created major kindness and challenges in the way of advancing the relations between India and the Central Asian region. A Significant challenge is posed by China's growing influence in Central Asia and the competition for control of the energy resources in Kazakhstan and the contiguous Republics. This study acknowledges the institutions of relevant forums for promoting trade, cultural and other ties between India and Kazakhstan. This study proposes to discuss the direction of India's foreign policy strategy with regard to Central Asia in general and Kazakhstan in particular. In the process it will highlight the areas in which the energy policies of India and Kazakhstan converge and create the potential for further cooperation between the two nations. This study will necessarily trace the evaluation of India's energy Security needs. It will also spell out the recent developments and the impact of political, economic, and military factors that improve or impede in international energy transactions in Kazakhstan. This work will attempt to assess India's geopolitical perspectives and the impact of Kazakhstan om energy security and the formulation of a strategy for the future. The study will examine the factors that have encouraged

India to launch many initiatives in the Central Asian region, as also the factors that have limited India's success in achieving its objectives. A concurrent and ancillary objective of this study is to examine India's existing and potential engagements in the international energy scenario and its relations with the Central Asian Republics and the other competing powers in the region. Finally, the study will examine the possibilities emanating from India's energy security strategy in Central Asia, particularly Kazakhstan, as well as India's interactions with the two dominant players in the region, namely, Russia and China.

Research Method

This work uses a qualitative paradigm to investigate the determinants of India's energy security strategy in Central Asia, particularly Kazakhstan. Such a qualitative methodology enables a holistic understanding of the doctrines and mind-sets influencing India's strategy in Central Asia. It allows the study to explain the 'why' and the 'how' instead of simply delineating the 'what'. Qualitative research warrants an appropriate choice of method; a diversity of participants; a plethora of perspectives, the elasticity of the researcher and the subjects; and the application of different methods and approaches. In the same vein, qualitative methods permit the approach to be premised on interpretation, subjectivity, and flexibility in research design. The method itself emphasizes the process rather than the outcome in which situations and actions are inseparably linked. This approach allows for an experience that involves an explicit acknowledgement of the impact of the research process on the research situation.

A growing awareness of the limits of quantitative research, particularly its rigidity, gave rise to qualitative methods. While qualitative research lays stress on the measurement of variable

and the testing of hypotheses, qualitative research method adopts a relatively philosophical approach with the objective of understanding the social sciences through experience, comprehension and perception. This significantly effects the approach applied in this study. In as much as it attempts to understand Indian motivations regarding the formulation of a strategy of energy security in relation to Central Asia. Accordingly, this work rises above the analysis of mere trade and economic data and bilateral security cooperation. The work text into account the different perceptions and attitudes of Indian scholars who express divergent opinions and differ from one another in conceptualizing India and Central Asia. The method used in this work includes such different variables and behavior. In the event this work has selected a qualitative paradigm that acknowledges these divergences and at the same time usages a national approach to perform on objective analysis. The qualitative tools applied in this study on exposition of the design, and the formulations of research questions are given in the following sections.

This methodology appears to be particularly relevant in the present context, where the study forces on the determinants of India's strategy of energy security with regard to Central Asia. Further, it text into account that the Indian policy makers are the research objects and, for lack of an institutionalized setup for making formalized foreign policy, the distinction between the context and the phenomenon is unclear.

For conducting a case study effectively, it is vital to establish the case, or unit of analysis and the boundaries of the study. The case or unit is treated as the phenomenon to be studied, and the boundaries are meant to clarify what is not that phenomenon, and accordingly indicate what remains outside the objective of the study. The case in respect of this study can largely be identify as India's strategy of energy security in Central Asia. To be specific, the salient

features of the case understudy are firstly, the process that gives shape to India's strategy of energy security in Central Asia, secondly, the elites who are formulating the strategy among with the determinants, and thirdly, the factors involved in influencing this strategy. This works includes a time frame for considering India's strategy of energy security in Central Asia. In particular, it highlights the period offer the dissolution of Soviet Union and the emergence of the Central Asian Republics from late 1991 to end 2020. Importantly, by definition and context, this work is about India's relation with the Central Asian Republics in general and Kazakhstan in particular, with particular reference to International Relations and geopolitical perspectives. Further, it forces on a political perspective, while identifying cultural and social factors.

While reviewing a variety of case studies, the research for this study is primarily posited on an intrinsic case study. The reasoning behind this approach is that an intrinsic method provides an enhanced understanding of a particular case. While acknowledging that India's strategy of energy security in Central Asia is the outcome of a unique set of circumstances that preclude other cases, and while accepting that some of the conceptual and analytical frameworks develop allow for limited theoretical contribution to the field, this intrinsic case study has a more objective, result oriented purpose. Moreover, on intrinsic method in case study research almost always relies on a single case for study, where a single case has embedded units. Accordingly, an analysis of the embedded factors within a case makes it possible to consider the sub-units that exist within a longer case. This is so because data can be separately interpreted within the sub units as a part of the case analysis. Distinctions can be made between the subunits, on between case analyses, on across all the subunits, namely, cross case analysis. As first observed in the initial survey of related literature, this method makes it possible for the determinant of India's strategy of energy security in Central Asia to be treated as embedded units within the longer case. In turn, this allows for a study of their impact on strategy and vice-

versa. In brief, though there are significant advantages in a qualitative single case study method, there is serious criticism from scholars who considers it to be short of methodological accuracy and too vulnerable to the subjectivity of the scholar.

Sources of Data

This work has sourced data from numerous agencies comprising, inter alia, official Indian documents, press releases, inter-governmental legislation and agreements, speeches annual reports, and trade data key government bodies in India, such as the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Ministry of Defence (MoD), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Ministry of Defence, the Prime Minister Office (PMO) contribute significantly to formulating the country's global Affairs. This study has given due importance to analysing the official discourses emanating from these sources. This work has given weightage to the statements made by Indian policy makers as published in print media, such as The Hindu, The Indian Express, The Hindustan Times, The Mint, The Times of India, The Statesman, The Economic and Political Weekly, The Political Business Daily, The Telegraph etc., besides statement of foreign Affairs and foreign policy as appearing on websites like The Diplomat and Asia Times, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Foreign Policy Research Institute, Vivekananda International Foundation, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, Observer Research Foundation. In terms of secondary data this study has relied upon books journal articles, conference papers, research papers, various websites and newspaper reports. The secondary data have proven to be useful in the collation of background information on India and Central Asia relations. Further such data have helps to create a conceptual framework for understanding India's strategy and have provided a background against which India's opportunities and challenges in the region can be Appreciated and measured.

Research Questions

The work addresses the following research questions in its endeavour to address the research objectives identified previously.

1. Why the state of Kazakhstan occupies a Central position in India's 'Connect Central Asia policy'?
2. What are the perceptions of intelligentsia and commons people from both sides regarding bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and India?
3. Which aspects constitute major challenges of India's involvement in Kazakhstan?
4. How far India is successful in maintaining a balance between its own interests and interests of other powers in this region?
5. Would India ignore the stability issue in Pakistan and Afghanistan in realizing a healthy relationship with Kazakhstan?

Review of Literature

The aim of reviewing literature within an academic study is to achieve a recognition for the work as a part of the contemporary literature and result of other research in the given area of study. It is necessary to sift through the existing relevant literature in order to critically evaluate, analyse and synthesize the contemporary knowledge in respect of the specific research

problem.¹ This work attempts to offer a deeper discussion of the literature pertinent to the various chapters within the detailed discourse in that chapter.

The proposed research on ‘India’s Strategy of Energy Security in Central Asia: A Case Study of Kazakhstan (1991-2020)’ entails numerous reviews of literature relevant to the subject of study. It is worthwhile to mention the book, “China and India in Central Asia: A New Grate Game?” by Marlene Laruelle, Jean-Francois Huchet, Sebastien Peyrouse, and Bayram Balchi (Eds.), Palgrave, 2010, is a knowledgeable study comprising different aspects of the approaches of both China and India to the emerging Grate Game in Central Asia. Significant chapters of the book relate to matters of India-China cooperation and conflicts in Central Asia. An explanation of the different approaches of major powers to get a fort-hold in Central Asia is provided in the chapter relating to the nature and extent of the ongoing Grate Game being played out in Central Asia. Further, chapters have been assigned to elaborate on the roles played by India and China in the reconstructive process of Afghanistan which is India’s gateway to the Central Asian region.

The research objective of this study identifies a broad scope for discussing the wider dimensions of the relevant literature that share similar overall objectives. In the context of the Central Asian Republics having come into existence a little over three decade ago, this work has identified a few instances of contemporary scholarship that offer a holistic discussion of India’s energy policy in the region, that are at once rigorous in their analysis.

¹ Hart, Chris. *Doing Your Masters Dissertation: Realising your potential as a social scientist*. Sage Publication, 2005.

This work appreciates the significance of the book, 'Mapping Central Asia: Indian Perceptions and Strategies' by scholars Marlene Laruelle and Sebastien Peyrouse, published in 2011, Routledge. This book presents an edited compilation of essays by Indian scholars with expertise on Central Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and Russia. The compilation is divided into three segments, the first recounts the history of India's role in the region, the second dwells on India's current engagements, and the third highlights the contentious region such as Tibet, Kashmir and Xinjiang and how they affect regional geopolitics. These essays by Indian scholars are mostly descriptive and offer an important source of data. As such, they are referenced extensively within the body of this study.

In the introductory part they discuss how they were spurred to do their study best on the two paradoxes that exist within the relations between India and Central Asia. The first was about the contradiction between the optimistic expectations of scholars and experts regarding India's great potential in the region and the unhappy reality of India's actual engagement so far. The second was observed to be the absence of consideration of the Indian elite thinking on the issue by the western scholarship on the subject. Laruelle first expounds on the geopolitical ramifications of the involvement of external powers in Central Asia during the post-Cold War period. She painstakingly builds a critique of the widely accepted academic structure for explaining contemporary Central Asia, that is, the Great Game.

Later, she elaborates on the idea of the New Silk Road and its impact on China, the United States and other major powers, while upholding the Silk Road as an opportunity for concerned countries to develop cultural, civilizational and trade linkages, with each such nation adding their own national flavor to the international discourse. Turning her focus on India, she presents a critique of the cognitive framework formulated by Indian elites to justify their country's role

in the region, to wit, historical analogy. She contends that Indian scholars on the subject plays emphasis on history, that is, a collective memory of a glorious shared past, in order to project on ambitious future for relations between India and the Central Asian Republics. She further explains that the conceptual structures of the Great Game, the Eurasian Heartland and the New Silk Road may explain the involvement of India and other importance players in Central Asia, but the use of historical analogy to project a great potential is a uniquely Indian approach. In her opinion, such justification of India's present involvement based on historical and civilizational linkages may not be a pragmatic approach.

Laruelle's references to the conceptual structures that govern India's strategy in Central Asia are not quite reflective of the Indian point of view. In other words, she does not consider Central Asia within the longer perspective of India's International relations. She does not take into account the linkages between India and Central Asia as a subset of India's grand foreign policy strategy. In the event, she does not consider some of the greater objectives of Indian foreign policy, and how they may have spurred its ambitions in Central Asia. Her deconstruction of the perspectives guiding India's international relations does not go beyond references to the use of historical analogies. Rather, she reduces the relations between India and Central Asia to a tendency in Indian foreign policy to rely on ancient myths.

Among other important commentaries Peyrouse's articulation of India's engagement in Central Asia stands out. He has attributed India's late foray in the region in the 90s to an understandable focus on internal matters and a constrained economy. Nevertheless, he contends, India's later failure to forge ahead in Central Asia is seriously symptomatic of a larger systemic drawback. He points out India's incapacity to present itself as a model for the Central Asian Republics. In his opinion, Indian democratic structure is a cause of uncertainties regarding its intentions in

the minds of the Central Asian elites. Doubts are created when the policy makers are not in sync with the opposition and civil society. In consequence, India is losing out to China and Russia, with whom the authoritarian elites of Central Asia can easily relate. Western nations are also making headway by extending open support to Central Asia's civil society. This observation made by Peyrouse gives the essence of his evaluations of Indian strategy. However, in the conclusion, both Laruelle and Peyrouse acknowledge the huge potential for furtherance of ties between India and Central Asia. In their view, India should gear itself to make use of the several economic opportunities, as well as deepen security and energy cooperation ties in order to improve its presence in the region. However, in a note of caution, they point to the geopolitical volatility in the broader region in areas such as Kashmir, Afghanistan, Tibet, Baluchistan, and Xinjiang, that are outside the Control of India and Central Asia Republics. India will need to take these geopolitical uncertainties into account while attempting to bolster its presence in Central Asia to match that of China and Russia. In summary, this compilation of essays is an important contribution to the existing literature on India and Central Asia relations, inasmuch as it encompasses the salient features of geopolitics, history, economics, foreign policy and society. Students who seek to fathom India's motivation in Central Asia find this seminal work to be extremely helpful.

Another important study relating to India's engagements in Central Asia is the Nirmala Joshi edited work, 'Reconnecting India and Central Asia: Emerging Security and Economic Dimensions', published in 2010, Central Asia Caucasus Institute. The study covers the security and economic features of the relations between India and Central Asia, while referencing the opinion expressed by Indian scholars with regard to Central Asia. After her introduction, Joshi has devoted a chapter to the 'Strategic Environment in Central Asia and India', authored by scholars Arun Sahgal and Vinod Anand, Sahgal and Anand deftly acknowledge the

contemporary security environment in the region that motivate India and Central Asia to cooperate in this sphere. They analyse the complex internal parameters of Central Asia and compare the approaches adopted by external powers such as China Russia and the west against one another. The importance of Central Asia to these plays revolves around the region's hydrocarbon deposits, as also the region location at the junction of vital trans-continental pipelines, communications links and multimodal transportation network. The authors have posited Afghanistan as an important geopolitical link between Central Asia and South Asia. This explains India's efforts to seek an overland route to Central Asia through Afghanistan largely for energy and security considerations. They make a mention of how India's strategy in Central Asia and Afghanistan may connect to a longer emerging strategic vision for its relations with particularly China and Asia. However, they do not proceed to an elaborate discussion of this vision.

In the third chapter, 'Responses to Non-Traditional threats and challenges', Joshi presents an important analysis of the linkages between cross-border terror, Islamic radicalism, narcotics and weapons trafficking and India's internal security concerns. She lays emphasis on the intricate interplay and the commonality of such threats to India and the Central Asian Republics, that largely emanate from extremist groups, like the Taliban and the Jihadi Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). As far as India is concerned the Taliban's predominance in Afghanistan echoes the brazen operation of Pakistan-sponsored terror group in Kashmir. The central Asian Republics are concerned with the support extended by the Taliban to the IMU and other Central Asian Jihadi outfits that only aggravates the extant volatility in restive part of the region such as the Fergana valley. Joshi thereby presents an important introduction for such analysis that is the subject of the second chapter of this study.

The final chapter of the book has been written by scholar Gulshan Sachdeva. He draws attention to Regional Economic linkages and presents a neo-liberal trade argument in favour of increased cooperation between India and the Central Asian Republics. He contends that such arrangement will enhance peace and prosperity in Central Asia and South Asia. He recommends that India should play a significant role in the evolving dynamics of Asian economics. In his view, deepened ties with Central Asia will act as a stepping stone to economic linkages with the longer Eurasian zone. He suggests that India should follow this agenda in few ways: firstly, India may turn its focus to Central Asia as an important potential source for hydrocarbons, since India is in dire need to diversify its sources for satisfying a grooming energy hungry economy. Secondly, it may seek to participate in developing a number of trans-Eurasian linkages via pipelines, roads and railways, Sundry communication networks, and the important regional security and economic structures. Scholar Gulshan Sachdeva furnishes important points for consideration in this study which is elaborated in chapters three and four of this dissertation.

This study refers to another book, 'India and Central Asia: The Mythmaking and International Relation of a Rising Power', authored by Emilian Kavalski, I.B. Tauris publishers, London, 2008. This book begins by considering the evolving dynamics of India's foreign policy in the past-Cold War scenario, when India adopted particularly assertive and pragmatic approach. After the end of the Cold-War, India's foreign policy with regard to Central Asia has veered towards pragmatism, an away from a dependence on historical and cultural ties and past relationship. The book focusses on the new pragmatism in India's foreign policy with regard to the Central Asian Republics and others players present in that region with their own perception. Moreover, the authors elaborate India's objectives and perceptions of its interests, and realization of the same by means of a constructive frame work.

Another book, 'Geopolitics and Energy Resources in Central Asia and Caspian Sea Region' authored by Shams-Ud-Din (Ed), published by Lancers books, 2000, attempt to consolidate the developmental landmark in the rise and growth of the Central Asian Republics. In presenting on independent analysis, the author has divided the book into chapters dealing with different aspects of development with regard to the economic, political, socio-cultural and security aspects that define Central Asia's policies and conceptions in the backdrop of the perspectives and interest perceptions of other concerned countries. The book depicts both the internal and external developments with regard to Central Asia. This includes the activities of different players in the region, including India. Further, it explains India's focused strategy for achieving economic and energy security.

The book 'India and Central Asia: A Reader', by Xinru Liu (Ed.), published by permanent Black in 2012, dwells on the Socio-cultural and economic linkages between India and Central Asia based on ancient trade routes, and traces India's historical relations with Central Asia. It delineates the gradual evaluation and development of Central Asia as also India's changing approach towards that region. It further elaborates on India's participation in the nation building processes that are ongoing in Central Asia. It objectively considers the perceptions of the Central Asian Republics towards India, based on which a mutual relationship can be taken forward.

The book, 'India and Central Asia: Redefining Energy and Trade Links', authored by Angira Sen Sharma, pentagon press, 2010, incorporates detailed information on the energy resources of the respective Central Asian Republics, as also India's energy requirements. The author goes on to clarify the nature and extent of the bilateral relationship that India maintains with each of

these countries. In another section of the book Sen Sharma offers information relating to present and potential transport connectivity and network linkages between Central Asia and the international market.

The book, 'Culture, Society and Politics in Central Asia and India', by Karan Singh and N.N. Vohra (Eds.), Shipra Publications 1999 dwells on cultural and historical ties as the basis for the contemporary relationship between India and the Central Asian region. The authors propose that there must necessarily be regional corporation between the republics of Central Asia and other important powers, both regional and extra regional, including India. The book provides clarity to the approach adopted by India to the constraints relating to the Caspian Sea region.

The book, 'Modern Central Asia', by Ram Rahul, Vikas Publishing, New Delhi, 1979, traces the evolutionary history of Central Asia from ancient times to the modern era, as also India's historical and Cultural engagements with the Central Asian countries. The book presents an account of the long struggle among important international powers to gain influence and control in the Central Asian region.

The book, 'South Asia and Central Asia: Geographical Dynamics', by Ambrish Dhaka, Mangal Deep publications, Jaipur 2005, proposes a gamut of potential engagements between the Central Asian region, and India, while suggesting a revised structure for cooperation in the backdrop of the contemporary tendency towards globalization and the sway of the world Trade Organisation (WTO). The richness of the Central Asian region in terms of its energy reserves acts like a magnet that draws different powers including India, each with their own approach and dialogue, towards this region.

In another important article, 'India's Energy Security and Central Asia's Energy Resources' (Central Asia and the Caucasus, vol. 37, no.1, 2006) Ambrish Dhaka expounds an India's strategy of energy security in Central Asia. The author presents a general overview of India's own energy environment for domestic consumption and imperative to explore other alternatives in order to meet its needs. This article contains a useful analysis of the diverse existing possibilities. In the author's view India should constructively engage with the Central Asian Republics, with particular reference to the Caspian Sea region, for exploration and utilization of the energy resources that have yet to be tapped. The article furnishes information with regard to the different routes, transit facilities and markets in relation to Central Asia's energy reserves, along with a review of the challenges that need to be faced and overcome.

The book, 'India and Central Asia the Road Ahead', by Raghav Sharma (January 2009) is in the form of a special report on Institute of Peace and Conflicts Studies (IPCS). It gives a detailed analysis of India's engagements in Central Asia that span issues relating to security, diversification of India's energy security sources, and the advent of Sundry radical Islamic groups in Central Asia that impact India's Security environment. It also explains the different challenges that stand in the way of India achieving its objectives and the fulfillment of its interests.

In the article, 'India and Kazakhstan should share Complementary Objectives' (Strategic Analysis vol. 33, no.1, 9 January 2009), Scholar P. Stobdan traces the evolution of Kazakhstan's Strategic Significance for India as also for the three major power, namely, USA, Russia and China. All these players have been attempting to establish and expand their presence in Central Asia in general and Kazakhstan in particular. This article explains the different factors that drive India and the other powers to compete for control and influence in the region.

There is an astute exposition of the mutuality of interests and objectives that inspire the relationship between India and Kazakhstan and form the basis for a common approach and institutional structure to further the relationship.

The article, “India’s Soft Power in Central Asia: Why it must work in the Look North Policy” (mainstream, vol. 53, no.29, July 2015), Ramakrushna Pradhan, expounds on the tremendous economic and energy potential of Central Asia that inspires and drives India’s Look North Policy and strategy for diversifying energy sources. The article lauds and encourages a proactive and deepening relationship between India and Central Asia, with a special focus on Kazakhstan. In particular, it lays out India’s strategy of using Soft Power diplomacy in order to add different dimensions to bilateral relationships that are of mutual significance in economic, political and security fields.

The article, ‘India-Kazakhstan Relations: Challenges and prospects’, (Mainstream, vol. 47, no. 38, September 2008), by Vijay Kumar Bhatia, gives importance to India’s long historical and cultural engagements with the countries of Central Asia since they are the basis of India’s contemporary strategy and economic ties with the region. This article presents an analysis of the old foundations of the India-Kazakhstan relationship and relates the same to India’s present perceptions and objectives as well as the official and formal approach of Kazakhstan towards India’s on-going outreach in the region. It also delineates the different constraints and challenges that stand in the way of furthering the relationship, and indicates the future prospects of the relationship that now obtains.

The article, ‘India-Kazakhstan: Emerging Ties’, by Meena Singh Roy (Strategic Analysis, January-March 2002) attempts to span the various aspects of India’s engagements with

Kazakhstan. It explains the basis of India-Kazakhstan relations, the current motivations taking the relationship forward, the new areas of partnership opening up the challenges, the best options for further strengthening the relationship and the future possibilities of cooperation between the two countries.

The article, 'Nuclear Fuel and the Emerging Dynamics of Indo-Kazakhstan Relations', by Deepti Srivastava (Mainstream, vol. 47, no.33, 2010), gives an overall view of the significance of Kazakhstan in India's foreign policy, given Kazakhstan's stature as Central Asia's fastest growing economy and the world's biggest producer of crude oil and uranium. The article deftly enunciates India's need and ongoing quest for energy security and diversification of energy sources. It also spells out the imperatives driving the India-Kazakhstan relationship.

The article, 'India-Kazakhstan Relations: Challenges and Opportunities', by Ashok Sajjanhar, Published in Gateway House (November 20, 2013), depicts the strategic importance of Central Asia in general and Kazakhstan in particular. It also explains Kazakhstan's initiatives in respect of regional interests and the dialogue process in order to promote peace and stability in the region. This article provides an analysis of the different areas of cooperation between Kazakhstan and India. It suggests the different avenues of potential cooperation between the two countries within the joint mechanisms already existing.

A special report of the Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis, 'India and Kazakhstan: New Ways Ahead' by Zakir Hussain, (February 18, 2009) offers a perspective on Kazakhstan's potential with regard to energy resources and related issues. This article analyses both the nature and scope of India's relations with Kazakhstan in terms of nuclear security. It spells out the inter government mechanisms that are designed to promote the relationship at national and

international levels. Moreover, it depicts the economic dimensions of this relationship and the different approaches adopted by the two countries.

The special report, 'India's Role and Interests in Central Asia', by Ivan Campbell, Saferworld, October 2013, analyses the evaluation and development of India's relations with Central Asia since the turn of the century. It adopts a two-pronged approach to the study of India's objectives in Central Asia, namely, security and the diversification of India's energy sources. It addresses India's need for energy to sustain rapid economic growth, as also the need to ensure security in the context of the threats posed by different radical islamist groups. Finally, the article deftly argues in favour of India's need to exploit the commercial possibilities existing in Central Asia. The above books and articles are useful as secondary sources for the purpose of this research.

Organisation of Chapters

This dissertation comprises five substantive chapters that expound India's strategy of energy security in Central Asia, with Kazakhstan as a case study, apart from the introduction and conclusion. The first chapter offers a historical perspective and a conjectural frame work to understand India's motivation in the region. The second and third chapters spell out the determinant of India's foreign policy and the consequent actions initiated by India. The fourth chapter outlines pipeline politics and India's strategy for cooperation and competition in the extended neighborhood. The fifth and final chapter clarifies both the opportunities and challenges with regard to India's quest for energy sources in Central Asia.

Chapter 1, India and Central Asia from A Historical Perspective delivers and analysis and understanding of the historical evolution of India's engagements in Central Asia. The chapter

also provides the premise for understanding India's historical imperatives that also drive its modern-day engagements with the region. It covers the ancient and medieval periods, dating from the Indus-Oxus civilizations to the Mughal conquests of the sixteenth Century. It depicts how the familiarity enjoyed between India and the Central Asian region has evolved from their historical linkages. In that period Buddhism had originated in India and then spread north to Central Asia before radiating towards the coast and onwards towards South East Asia. The further spread of Buddhism was intercepted by the Arab invasions. Central Asia was conquered by the Mongols and Muslims subsequently, the Muslims invaded India. During the reign of Babar in Delhi, there was a restoration of cultural and collaborative engagements between India and Central Asia. At the same time the Mughal Empire was established in India. As a consequence, Central Asia largely influenced the Indo-Islamic artistic culture that came into being. In the subsequent phase of history, the interactions between Central Asia and India were governed by the respective Tsarist and British empires. The chapter also notes the period when India's engagements with Central Asia were moderated via Moscow, under the Soviet Union. The chapter then proceeds to cover the fateful events in the 1990s, when the newly formed Central Asian Republics and a more assertive India were able to engage as sovereign nations without outside interference.

In some, this chapter attempts to furnish a historical perspective of India's engagements with Central Asia, in addition to providing a critical analysis of India's capacities, strategies and initiatives with regard to Central Asia, especially in respect of energy security in the post-Cold War Scenario. Accordingly, it provides a historical and factual foundation for a theoretical structure to enable and understanding of India's engagements in the region. This aspect has been addressed thoroughly in the chapter to follow. The historical background and the evolution of cultural exchanges delineated in this chapter caters to an expressive

comprehension of the determinants of India's energy security strategy. This becomes the focus of an exhaustive study later in the thesis.

Chapter 2, India's Foreign Policy Objectives in Central Asia with Special Reference to Kazakhstan, contends that a proper understanding of a nation's foreign policy is essential in order to make sense of the nature of its relations with other nations and to appraise its role in international politics. Further, the methodology adopted in order to comprehend a nation's foreign and security strategy needs to include the way in which different actors and agencies influence a nation's conduct of foreign policy. Accordingly, this chapter attempts to establish a deeper understanding of India's foreign policy objectives with reference to the Central Asian region. The significant factors that drive India's political processes include energy, economy and security. Accordingly, this chapter furnishes a comprehensive review of largely unexplored parameters that give shape to a nation's identity, in this case the historical evolution of a nation's self-perception, its journey through experiences and the consequent perspectives of its leadership. In this manner, this chapter traces India's foreign policy culture with regard to Central Asia in general and Kazakhstan in particular.

An important foreign policy objective of India in the Central Asian region is to enhance mutual economic, energy and trade relations. This chapter delineates India's traditional role in the region's trading and other economic activities. In the past when over the security environment became volatile, the economic links between India's north western territories with Central Asia progressed haltingly. The restive north-western frontiers of undivided India had often inhibited the furtherance of economic relations with the Central Asian region. In the last few decades India's rapidly growing economy and enhanced need for energy have prompted India to look towards the Central Asian states that are rich in energy reserves. The Central Asian Republics,

have sought to strengthen economic relations with an emerging Asian Power like India in order to consolidate its position in the globalized world. India's emergence as a rapidly expanding economy to reckon with has introduced a shifting trend in Asian geopolitics. However, India's economic stability and sustained development depends on the availability of adequate sources of energy. In respect of the Central Asian region in general, and Kazakhstan in particular, India has launched strong initiatives through its Connect Central Asia Policy of 2012. India's political elites are concerned with the insecurities plaguing Afghanistan and Pakistan, that preclude an overland pipeline from Central Asia to South Asia, and jeopardize overland linkages with Central Asia through Afghanistan.

This chapter analyses India's Look North and Connect Central Asia Policies that have emerged in the last three decades. India's burgeoning relations with the Central Asian Republics span issues relating to overall security, as also economic and energy engagements. General security issues and energy security are significant factors that drive India's foreign policy with respect to Kazakhstan and the wider Central Asian region. India's current foreign policy gives emphatic attention to improving the depth and extent of mutual engagements with the Central Asian Republics. The platform offered by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is utilized by India and the five Central Asian Sovereign Republics towards coordinating their policies with regard to the threat perceptions posed largely by radical Islamist terror groups. India's policy makers as well as the elites of Central Asia are acutely aware of the need for multilateralism in the current global scenario.

This chapter addresses the overall geopolitical security issues that are manifested in the overlapping regions of South and Central Asia (Afghanistan and North Pakistan), and deals with the complex interplay of security concerns relating to Central Asia and India's immediate

neighborhood. There is also a discussion on India's national security interests, both domestic and external and an explanation of how these issues overlap with the insecure environment in Afghanistan and Pakistan located as the doorway to Central Asia. In doing so, it highlights the ongoing security cooperation between India and the Central Asian Republics.

This chapter deals with the pragmatism of India's foreign policy as also the political overtures and outreach with regard to the Central Asian region. India's foreign policy construct in respect of the Central Asian region is based on general security concerns and energy Security in particular. The chapter explains India's need to collaborate with the Central Asian Republics in the backdrop of ongoing security threats emanating from radicalism. Moreover, concurrent to a depiction of the enhancement of relations with the Central Asian Republics, the chapter traces the historical and strategic relationship that India and Russia nurture between themselves and there by formulate respective foreign policy objectives. Clearly, as incorporated in the Chapter, the national Security strategy adopted by India and the Central Asian states is necessarily dynamic in nature overall, the chapter defines the salient features that combine in the formulation of India's foreign policy with regard to Central Asia. India's economy has been on a growth trajectory over the last few decades. The rising demand for energy resources has been consistent with the burgeoning industrial sector. This phenomenon explains India's declared objective of improving bilateral and multilateral engagements with the republics in Central Asia, especially in the economic realm. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is a platform that enables India to secure bilateral and multilateral arrangements for pursuit of energy sources and access to markets in the extended neighborhood. Even so, inspite of the different agreements designed to enhance relations with the Central Asian Republics, the overland route from India to the region could not open up owing to Pakistan's hostility and Afghanistan's insecurities. In the event, India had to revert to a Sea route through Iran Chabahar

Port. Plainly, India's foreign policy strategy in Central Asia has to contend with complexities arising from intermediate countries.

The circumstances that work in favour of India's expanding presence in Central Asia include its overall fair image, historical cultural linkages with the region diplomatic and political detachment from the internal politics of other countries, and its own immergence as an economic power house. India's policy is to stay away from the great power competition in Central Asia, particularly between Russia and China. However, India consciously takes the initiatives to protect and further its strategic interests in the region. It adopts a multi-pronged approach, so that its initiatives are mutually beneficial for the Central Asian Republics in general and Kazakhstan in particular.

Chapter 3, 'Bilateral Relations between India and Kazakhstan on Energy and Economic Security', deals with India's rapidly growing energy requirements and the need to secure diverse sources, as against Kazakhstan's potential for addressing India's concerns. This chapter explores the paradigm of India not only seeking energy cooperation with Kazakhstan as its primary objective, but also relating to that country in terms of general trade and multi-faceted connectivity. The chapter examines the geopolitics associated with the search for energy security, analyses India's energy compulsions and its strategy to diversify its sources, in the backdrop of its rapid economic growth and evident expansion of its middle-class. It lends a perspective on India's energy imports vis-à-vis consumption levels, and furnishes an empirical study of how the energy-export oriented economic of the Central Asian region can serve India's diversification strategy. It gives an overview of Kazakhstan's energy reserves comprising oil, gas and nuclear sectors. The chapter proceeds to outline India's present energy cooperation and production with Kazakhstan, and then relates the success of such cooperation to a plethora of

opportunities for expanding trade and connectivity linkages, that will all combine to assist India to achieve its great power aspirations.

Chapter 4, 'Energy Resources of Kazakhstan and Pipeline Politics: India's Regional Strategy for Cooperation and Competition', tests the contention that India's strategy in Central Asia is finally determinant by the issue of connectivity. India's bid to achieve the status of a great power and the concomitant spread of its soft power in terms of cultural and civilizational aspects in the control Asian region revolves around the achievement of pragmatic means of access. This chapter further examines India's relation with China and Russia with respect to the rivalries in the region and, in that context, appraises the progress of India's aspirations in Central Asia since the beginning of this century.

Since the Central Asian Republics were once an integral part of the Soviet Union, Russia continues to enjoy a legacy of significant political and economic influence in the region. In the post independent era, the newly sovereign republics of Central Asia have viewed India, as an emergent big power with a strongly resurgent economy to be a valued potential customer for their energy exports, principally oil and gas. As India began to explore the possibility of tapping new sources of energy in that region it found China to be already established as a strong competitor for the available energy resources. Owing to its common border with the Central Asian, China had a head start in the Great Game being played out in that oil-rich region. It has established its presents by way of constructing new pipelines for acquiring additional energy assets. India's bid to source its energy supply from Central Asia become subject to the agreeability of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to begin exporting their oil and gas to South Asia. Another important factor to be taken into account is the intention of the United State to tap into Central Asian energy reserves by way of routes that go either westward through Europe or

Southward through India. US foreign policy strategy in Central Asia is accordingly limited to the acquisition of energy resources. Such strategic US involvement will have the effect of reducing the influence of Russia and China in the region. With these objectives in mind, the US has extended its support to the proposed Trans Caspian and Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) natural gas pipelines. The US has taken note of the number of new Chinese pipelines and consider China to be a progressively influential player in Central Asia.

This chapter proceeds to appraise the rivalries among US, Russia, China and India in the pursuit of strategic influence in Kazakhstan. All these important nations have their own respective approach for turning local decisions in their favour, especially in Kazakhstan. The chapter also analyses India's foreign policy objectives in the competitive scenario in Central Asia. In the context of its dealings with the major players in the region as well as with the Central Asian Republics (CARs) within the forum of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and other such platforms. It attempts to measure the progress made by India by way of its strategic objectives in the region, and then examines the challenges that have restricted India's success.

Chapter 5, 'Challenges and Opportunities in India's Quest for Energy in Kazakhstan', the final chapter, focuses on the extend of India's role within the international dynamics evinced in Kazakhstan, and examines the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats with regard to the application of India's energy strategy in Kazakhstan. A major, apparently insuperable, challenge to India's proposal for a pipeline from Central Asia is the volatility and insecurity obtaining in Afghanistan as also the hostility posed by Pakistan. This chapter discusses India's approach towards maintaining the security in its frontier regions in the backdrop of the 'three evils' by way of terrorism, separatism and Religious Fundamentalism in addition to the study conducted in chapter two. It also addresses the manner in which India's political elites deal

with the threats to national security. It acknowledges the challenges faced by India's policy makers in charting a frontier security policy. The chapter deals with the extend of India's involvement in Kazakhstan energy sector and delineates the factors responsible for impeding progress, that are largely beyond India's control. The most important constraint in the way of India acquiring control of energy sources in Central Asia, particularly Kazakhstan, is the absence of a direct and convenient overland access route. The unfavorable relations obtaining between India and China, that come to the surface with respect to various global and bilateral issues, also add to the complexities prevailing in Central Asia. The second half of this chapter explains India's approach to the SCO as its full member, and the opportunities that the SCO open up. The chapter then proceeds with a study of the various aspects of India's soft power that are implemented in Kazakhstan by means of generous development assistance.

Chapter- One

India and Central Asia from Historical Perspective

Introduction

Since ancient times, India and the countries of Central Asia have shared many common historical experiences. In its extended neighbourhood, India has remained familiar with Central Asia till as recent as 1947. This ancient friendships among these countries have been forged on the basis of geographical, cultural, historical and religious ties. They have often been referred to as these Transoxania². Their cultural trade and commercial relations have flowed unbroken up to the middle of the 20th century. Numerous Science bearing testimony to these ancient ties are to be found across Central Asia and India. This Science are evident in their philosophy, architecture, music, art, culture literature and philosophy. This selective acceptance and absorption of mutual traditional have taken place through the merchants and traders of both India and Central Asia. The socio-cultural mosaic of these nations has been definitively influenced by their continual exchanges.

This chapter, through its four sections discusses the significant exchanges between India and the Central Asian nations on geographical, Social and Cultural parameters. The first

² Askarov, A. "The Beginning of The Iron Age in Transoxania". *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, edited by A. H. Dani, and, V.M. Masson, UNESCO Publishing, 1992, P. 442.

section outlines the historical and geopolitical, communalities between India and Central Asia. The second section traces the mutuality dating back to the Indo-Aryan contacts. The third section dwells on the medieval ties binding India and central Asia that flowed from the older civilisations existing around the Indus-Oxus deltas, then coming forward to the more recent social cultural and political influences during the rule of the Mughals and others of Turkic descent. The section also deals with the interactions between India and Central Asia where both were parts of different empires, Further, it reaches back to the annexation of the Khanates by the Tsarist Empire and concludes with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, there by spanning India's periods of both British and Independent rule. There is also a focus on both the historical and modern context of India-Central Asia linkages. The forties section begins at the turn of the millennium in the post-Soviet era and deals with the interactions between India and the newly independent Central Asian Republics in the contemporary period.

Pre-historic Period of Central Asia

Central Asia has nurtured ancient civilisations since prehistoric times. It has largely been nomadic region, with various tribes moving from place to place in search of food. Before the Muslim invasion the region was populated by the Achaemenids, Kushans, Greeks, Sassanians, Aryans, Huns, Turks and Scythians. The Aryans, including some of these tribes were profoundly suffused with Asian and European cultures. Between the 7th and 6th centuries BCE the Scythians built a big empire in the region.³ The Sakas, established their

³ Abetekov, A and Yusupov, H. "Ancient Iranian Nomads in Western Central Asia". *History Of Civilizations of Central Asia: The development of sedentary and nomadic civilizations: 700 B.C. to A.D. 250*, edited by János Harmatta, Volume II, UNESCO Publishing, 1994, pp, 26-30.
www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000105703. Accessed on 27 December 2020.

own dynasty and ruled the area of Western Turkey, Central Asia and modern-day Iran around the Arab and Caspian Sea.⁴ Later, the Persians confirmed them to the Pamirs and Tieshan Mountains, the region which is now known as Kyrgyzstan. The Sakas retained autonomy there till the Persians conquered them in 200 BCE. The Scythians, also known as Scyth, Saka, Sakae, Iskuzai or Askuzai were settled to the north of the Syr Darya River. They ruled parts of Central Asia and Eastern Europe, East of the Vistula, and a part of South Asia that dates back to the 7th century BCE and 3rd century CE, till they were defeated by the Persian sassanids.⁵

Central Asia links with India were forged when Buddhism arrived in the region.⁶ The Parthians and the Scythians dominated much of Central Asia.⁷ Some changes took place in the first century CE when the nomadic tribes were organised under the dominant Kushans tribe. The Kushan held power in eastern Turkistan, Bactria, Sogdian, Mughalistan and northern parts of India.⁸

This Central Asian empire defeated Cyrus, Alexander the Great,⁹ and Timur, as well as their descendants during the ancient and medieval periods. The Persian Empire dates back

⁴ Ibid. p. 21, 26, 31, 35.

⁵ Ibid. p. 24.

⁶ Ibid. p.22.

⁷ Koshelenko, G, A and Pilipko, V, N. "Parthia". *History Of Civilizations of Central Asia: The development of sedentary and nomadic civilizations: 700 B.C. to A.D. 250*, edited by János Harmatta, Volume II, UNESCO Publishing, 1994, pp, 127-142. www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000105703. Accessed on 27 December 2020.

⁸ Puri, B. N. "The Kushans". *History Of Civilizations of Central Asia: The development of sedentary and nomadic civilizations: 700 B.C. to A.D. 250*, edited by János Harmatta, Volume II, UNESCO Publishing, 1994, pp, 239-254. www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000105703. Accessed on 27 December 2020.

⁹ Sanujit, "Cultural links between India and the Greco-Roman world." *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, 12 Feb 2011.

to around 600 and 559 BCE.¹⁰ It was founded by king Cyrus before the Greeks arrived in Central Asia.¹¹ At the turn of the millennium, Central Asian was the hub of the Turkish government. With the expansion of Turkey political authority remained with the Turks but Iran remained the centre of culture. Over the centuries, the religions of Central Asia not only co-existed, but also interacted, and the several religions infiltrated into Central Asia.¹² As a matter of fact, the mixture of ancient religious led to the advent of Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Islam. Also, influential merchants from time to time set up commercial empires around the famous Silk Road.¹³

However, Alexander's successor, Seleucus, founder of the Seleucid dynasty dominated most of Bactria and the Sogdians.¹⁴ In fact, Al-Biruni supposed that 310 BCE. was the beginning of the Seleucid age.¹⁵ In 200 BCE the Mongols arrived from the Gobi Desert and took over Kashgar in Xinjiang. Then when across Central Asia to finally reach the Volga River in Russia in 400 CE.¹⁶ Meanwhile, the white Huns conquered parts of eastern

¹⁰ Dandamayev, M. A. "Media and Achaemenid Iran". *History Of Civilizations of Central Asia: The development of sedentary and nomadic civilizations: 700 B.C. to A.D. 250*, edited by János Harmatta, Volume II, UNESCO Publishing, 1994, pp, 239-254. www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000105703. Accessed on 27 December 2020.

¹¹ Sanujit, Op. cit.

¹² Litvinsky, B A. "Christianity, Indian and Local Religions". *History Of Civilizations of Central Asia: The Crossroads of Civilizations: A.D 250 to 750*. Edited by B. A. Litvinsky, Volume III, UNESCO Publishing, 1996, pp, 414-424, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000104612>. Accessed on 2 January 2021.

¹³ Litvinsky, B A. and Guang-Da, Zhang. "Historical Introduction". *History Of Civilizations of Central Asia: The Crossroads of Civilizations: A.D 250 to 750*. Edited by B. A. Litvinsky, Volume III, UNESCO Publishing, 1996, pp, 23-38, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000104612>. Accessed on 2 January 2021.

¹⁴ Sanujit, Op. cit.

¹⁵ Bulgakov, P G. "Al-Biruni on Khwarizm". *History Of Civilizations of Central Asia: The Crossroads of Civilizations: A.D 250 to 750*. Edited by B. A. Litvinsky, Volume III, UNESCO Publishing, 1996, pp, 311-320, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000104612>. Accessed on 2 January 2021.

¹⁶ Ishjamt, N. "Nomads in Eastern Central Asia". *History Of Civilizations of Central Asia: The development of sedentary and nomadic civilizations: 700 B.C. to A.D. 250*, edited by János Harmatta, Volume II, UNESCO Publishing, 1994, pp, 239-254. www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000105703. Accessed on 27 December 2020.

Europe and India. On the other hand, they had occupied the regions of Tokharistan and Bactria.¹⁷ In the middle and the second half of the 2nd century CE, the Huns moved West and European horizon¹⁸ and the abandoned areas were taken over by the Turkish tribes. Chinese princes launched his first invasion of central Asia and conquered the valley of Fergana. The Chinese use the word Turki to refer to all the nomadic tribes, they occupied the territory between Mongolia and the Black Sea.¹⁹ Around 200 CE, the Turkish tribes settled in the valley of Fergana.

In the 7th century, the Arabs defeated the forces from Byzantium and Sasanian Persia.²⁰ Around 740 CE and 750 CE they conquered Merv and occupied Khurasan.²¹ In the end, in the last quarters of the 7th century they settled in the heart of Central Asia.²² Having invaded Central Asia, they crossed the Amudarya and Conquered Bukhara in 676 CE.²³ Later, in the 10th century, Islam became the dominant religion in Central Asia, which

¹⁷ Naveed, Muhammad Bin. "White Huns (Hephthalites)". *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, 22 Jun 2015. [www.worldhistory.org/White_Huns_\(Hephthalites\)/](http://www.worldhistory.org/White_Huns_(Hephthalites)/). Accessed on 21 April 2020.

¹⁸ Kyzlasov, L R. "Northern Nomads". *History Of Civilizations of Central Asia: The Crossroads of Civilizations: A.D 250 to 750*. Edited by B. A. Litvinsky, Volume III, UNESCO Publishing, 1996, pp, 311-320, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000104612>. Accessed on 2 January 2021.

¹⁹ Guang-Da, Zhang. "Kocho (Kao-Ch'ang)". *History Of Civilizations of Central Asia: The Crossroads of Civilizations: A.D 250 to 750*. Edited by B. A. Litvinsky, Volume III, UNESCO Publishing, 1996, pp, 298-309, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000104612>. Accessed on 2 January 2021.

²⁰ Litvinsky, B A. "The Arab Conquest of Iran". *History Of Civilizations of Central Asia: The Crossroads of Civilizations: A.D 250 to 750*. Edited by B. A. Litvinsky, Volume III, UNESCO Publishing, 1996, pp, 444-451, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000104612>. Accessed on 2 January 2021; Jalilov, A. H. "The Arab Conquest of Transoxania". *History Of Civilizations of Central Asia: The Crossroads of Civilizations: A.D 250 to 750*. Edited by B. A. Litvinsky, Volume III, UNESCO Publishing, 1996, pp, 452-460, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000104612>. Accessed on 2 January 2021.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

gradually became a prominent cultural centre.²⁴ In ten years, the Arabs successfully dominated Turkey, Transoxania, Fargana, Tashkent, Khwarzam and Kashgar.

Geopolitical and Historical Context: Central Asia and India

Relations with Central Asia and Iran (Persia) comprise an important part of India's foreign policy as these countries are located in the extended neighbourhood north of the Sind region. Also, the region has ancient geographical, economic and political links with the cities of northern India. Before the European nations reached India over the sea routes, there was the constant threat of invaders entering the country across the north western frontier. After crossing the gate way of Indus into the plains of Punjab the invaders were geographically and economically handicapped as they ran short of food and supplies. Beyond this region they proceeded to the fertile Indo-Gangetic Plains of Hindustan. Mahmud Ghazni captured Lahore and set up an economic base for future campaigns in North India and Gujrat.²⁵

The rivers, namely, Sind, Syr Darya, Amu Darya, Kabul and Helmand covered large tracts of Central Asia and Persia²⁶. However, unlike the Punjab, the Central Asian plains consisted of vast deserts and mountains, which made it hard for the people to sustain life. The geopolitical context of North West India distinguishes India from Central Asia and Persia. The Pamir plateau in Asia is geographically significant. It is here meeting point of

²⁴ Tor, D. G. "The Islamization of Central Asia in the Samanid Era and the Reshaping of the Muslim World." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, vol. 72, no. 2, 2009, pp. 279-99, www.jstor.org/stable/40379005. Accessed on 22 January 2020.

²⁵ Stein, Burton. *A History of India*. 2nd ed., Blackwell Publishers, 2010, p. 130.

²⁶ McKinney, Daene C. "Cooperative Management of Transboundary Water Resources in Central Asia". *In the Tracks of Tamerlane: Central Asia's Path to the 21st Century*, edited by Dan Burghart and Theresa Sabonis-Helf, National Defense University, Center for Technology and National Security Policy, 2004, pp. 187-219.

four empires and kingdoms, namely India with its Indus and tributaries, China with its Tarim, Central Asia with its Syr Darya and Amu Darya rivers, and Persia with its upper oxus and the Hindukush Valley. The area is known as the roof of the earth, where six important places stand out, namely the Himalayas and Karakorum, Sulaiman and Hindukush, Tien Shar and Kunlun. These mountains include Tibet, Sinkiang Central Asia, East Persia, North West Frontier and the Indian mainland.²⁷

The geographical features of India, Central and Persia enables the construction of roads. The climate and social support the growth of agricultural products. And the earth is reach with natural resources. These factors and the condition of travel influences the activities that the people engage in. The discovery and construction of new roads followed upon the needs of travellers, trekkers, merchants and explorers. The movement of people from place to place was encouraged by the opening of commercial routes. In the Middle Ages explanation of the world was largely spurred by missionary zeal and commercial needs.

Before the middle of 20th century, the geographical conditions allowed for a convenient trading route between India and Central Asia and Persia, through the long travel presented risks and dangers for the caravans. The Turks and Mongols helped to continue the caravan trade because of the many benefits and profits. They encouraged the traders with all necessary services. In India, even before the advent of Turkish rulers, the merchants were provided with resources and assistance by the ruling elite. As discovered through recent

²⁷ "Karakorum-Pamir." www.whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5535/. Accessed on 22 October 2020; and also see Isaacson, Andy. "Pamir Mountains, the Crossroads of History". *The New York Times*, 17 December 2009. www.nytimes.com/2009/12/20/travel/20Pamir.html. Accessed on 22 October 2020.

research, the traders needed the backing of well-established authority so that they could continue with their business.

The Turks establish their rule in India in the early 13th century.²⁸ At this time the trade between India and central Asia received a boost. Historical evidence suggests that the Turkish Sultans monitored the North Indian trading routes competently.²⁹ Accordingly, the consequent safety and security of the borders resulted in an increase in the trade with Persia, Central Asia and China.

By the time the Mongols became powerful, the Seljuq Turks had built an elaborate system of roads that allowed for the movements of armies as also for the use of merchants from Baghdad.³⁰ Several facilities were made available on route by the Abbasids who built the Khurasan road network and other major highways of the country and through different parts of Persia and Central Asia. As indicated, the growth in trade owed to the enhancement of road safety all along the trading routes.

The merchants of India had always been keenly interested in Central Asia, the homeland of the Aryans. In the past the people of Central Asia established commercial and cultural relations with India because of geographical advantages and ethnological commonalities. The boundaries of Central Asia could not be drawn to define distinct political and

²⁸ Ahmad, Mohammad Aziz. "The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India (1206-1290 A.D.)." *Indian History Congress*, vol. 3, 1939, pp. 832–841, www.jstor.org/stable/44252438. Accessed on 25 October 2020.

²⁹ Auer, Blain. "The "Advent of the Turks" and the Question of Turkish Identity in the Court of Delhi in the Early Thirteenth Century." *Turkish History and Culture in India: Identity, Art and Transregional Connections*, edited by A. C.S. Peacock and Richard Piran McClary, Brill, 2020, pp. 88-103, doi.org/10.1163/9789004437364_005. Accessed on 26 December 2020.

³⁰ Peacock, A. C. S. *The Great Seljuk Empire*. Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2015, pp. 301-303. and also see Başan, Aziz. *The Great Seljuqs A history*. Routledge, 2010, p. 16.

geographical entity. Nevertheless, it was roughly the region bounded by the Caspian Sea to the west, the Pamirs and Tien-Shan mountains to the East, Jaxartes (Syr) to the North and Oxus (Amu) the South. In the past the region to the East of the Caspian Sea was largely desert country, with Merve and Ashqabad as important cities. Bukhara was the principal town in the upper basin of the Oxus. Turkistan comprised the fertile lands of Farghana and Samarkand. Central Asia was home to different tribes, including the Turks, the Tartars, the Chinese, the Huns, the Uzbeks and the Mongols. The geographical positioning of the region opened it various influences from the major cultural regions like India, Persia and China. The nomadic tribes found convenient postures around the Khivan. On the other hand, the Kipchak Steppe is located the north of these Oases, while the great mountains ranges of the Pamirs, Tien-Shan, and Hindukush lie to the East and South East. Such physical features consisting primarily of steppes and pastures made Central Asia famous for breeding horses.³¹ The Silk Route passed through this region, justifiably termed at the ‘Heart of Asia’ and made it commercially significant.³²

The entire region of Central Asia was differently described by different people. The Greeks and Romans described it as a non-bitter zone. The Arabs referred to it as the region between Amudarya and Syrdarya. Ibn Battuta was known as Turkistan, a country ruled by the Turks. This country boasted of a long and glorious history. It has given birth to and nurtured great poets, Sufis, Muhaddisines, Mufassirins, Mathematicians, doctors and warriors who contributed greatly to its permanent fame. Central Asia has had a

³¹ McGovern William M. *The Early Empires of Central Asia: A Study of the Scythians and the Huns and the Part They Played in World History*. The University of North Carolina Press, 1939, p. 2. www.asi.nic.in/wp-content/uploads/asi_book/18843.pdf. Accessed on 27 December 2020.

³² Mishra, Ravi K. “The ‘Silk Road’: Historical Perspectives and Modern Constructions.” *Indian Historical Review*, vol. 47, no. 1, 26 June 2020, pp. 21–39, doi.org/10.1177/0376983620922431. Accessed on 27 December 2020.

conspicuous part in human history. The region has allowed for over 100,000 archaeological discoveries. As it happens the area is once again the focus of the world's current concerns. In order to grasp the significance of the region's present politics, economics and traditions, we must understand its long past.

Timur and the Period of the Mongols

The invasion of Central Asia by the Mongols was accompanied by plenty of violence and bloodshed.³³ In 1220 CE, Genghis Khan attacked Bukhara which he looted and destroyed by fire.³⁴ He then went on to conquer the cities of Merv, Samarqand Termez, Bulkh and Kabul. He set up a militant regime in that region.³⁵ To give an estimate of the scale of violence, thirty thousand people were killed in Bukhara including women and children even slaughtered all the cats and dogs.³⁶ As a result, Central Asia fell to Mongolia. The Mongols dominated Central Asia for centuries, and reaches their peak power in the time of Amir Timur.³⁷ In the 14th century CE destroyed large areas and exterminated much of

³³ Abazov, Rafis. "The Mongol Invasion of Central Asia". *The Palgrave Concise Historical Atlas of Central Asia*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, pp. 50-51; Shagdar, Bira. "The Mongol Empire in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: East- West Relations." *The Silk Roads: Highways of Culture and Commerce*, edited by Vadime Elisseeff, Berghahn Books and UNESCO Publishing, 2000, pp. 127-144.

www.en.unesco.org/silkroad/knowledge-bank/mongol-empire-thirteenth-and-fourteenth-centuries. Accessed on 22 February 2021.

³⁴ Islam. Arshad. "The Mongol Invasions of Central Asia". *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, vol. 6, no. 4 April, 2016, pp. 315-319. DOI: 10.7763/IJSSH. 2016.V6.664. Accessed on 23 February 2021.

³⁵ Abazov, Rafis. Op. cit.

³⁶ Strathern, Paul. "The Silk Route of the Mongols the Coming of Ghengis Khan". *Silk and Spice Routes, Exploration by the land*, New Discovery Books: UNESCO, 1994, pp. 34-39.

www.en.unesco.org/silkroad/knowledge-bank/silk-route-mongols. Accessed on 23 February, 2021.

³⁷ Ashrafyan, K Z. "Central Asia Under Timur From 1370 To the Early Fifteenth Century." *History Of Civilizations of Central Asia: The Age of achievement, A.D. 750 to the end of the fifteenth century; the historical, social and economic setting*, Edited by: M. S. Asimov and C. E. Bosworth, Volume IV, UNESCO Publishing, 1998, pp, 323-346.

www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000111664.xml=http://www.unesco.org/ulis/cgi-bin/ulis.pl. Accessed on 23 February, 2021.

the population.³⁸ Having conquered large portions of Central Asia, he decided to settle in Persia and India. He founded the Timurid empire. The areas under his contract were known for their remarkable buildings and gardens. He actively encouraged science and art. History remembers him as a great intellectual and a reckless conqueror. The Timurid dynasty ended in the early 16th century CE.³⁹

Societal Growth in Central Asia

During the Samanid Empire, Bukhara was an important centre of Islamic education through the institution of the madrasa.⁴⁰ In the 14th and 15th centuries Samarkand was known to be the hub of such education.⁴¹ This academic tradition began to fade after the end of the Timurid dynasty. In the 15th century, Central Asia was a cultural literary centre. The most famous poets were Ali-Shir Nava'i and Abdul Rahman Jami. In ancient times literature was influenced by Persian literature.⁴² Al-biruni and Minhaj-i-Siraj were the famed historians of this period in Central Asia, when the art of storytelling was also developed. In Central Asia, art and cultural thrived in the form of art and crafts, architecture, and Miniatures of Samarkand and Bukhara.⁴³

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Habib, Irfan., at al. "Literature in Persian and Other Indo-Iranian Languages." *History of Civilizations of Central Asia: Development in contrast: from the sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century*, edited by Chahryar Adle and Irfan Habib, Volume-V, UNESCO Publishing, 2003, pp. 689-713.

www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000130205. Accessed on 23 February, 2021.

⁴³ Adle, Chahryar and Habib, Irfan. *History of Civilizations of Central Asia: Development in contrast: from the sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century*, Volume-V, UNESCO Publishing, 2003, pp. 810-815.

www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000130205. Accessed on 23 February, 2021.

India's Relationship with Central Asia: A Historical Overview

Since ancient times, till recently, India has shared a common border with Central Asia. That a part, the two regions have had similar geographical features that have nurtured geo-cultural affinities. There have always been two-way flows that were economic cultural, Social and political. Accordingly, their relationships have remained multi-faceted, deep and persistent. Even now, despite geographical re-alignments the two regions have continued to exchange ideas materials and people. This fact has been confirmed by both Indian and international observers. Abu Qasim Farishta has made informative observations on the lineage of the relations between India and Central Asia.⁴⁴

At the present time the circuitous distance and the Himalayas mountains hinder the traffic between India and Central Asia. This includes the flow of peoples, goods and services. However, since ancient times intrepid travellers have under taken here journey over the rocky, barren mountains to forge the ties that now exists between here ancient civilizations of these two religious. These travellers have comprised permanent immigrants, merchants and traders who established cross-cultural links and influenced these historical developments of India and Central Asia. These exchanges have had a profound and lasting effect.

As it happened, many Indians moved to Samarkand Bukhara and other cities in Central Asian. They introduced cotton, aromatic and other spices, and the Buddhist religion and

⁴⁴ Haider, Mansura. "India and Central Asia: Linkages and Interactions." *Central Asia, The Great Game Replayed, An Indian Perspective*, edited by Nirmala Joshi, New Century Publications, 2003, pp. 256-257.

traditions to their hosts. In the event, in the early evolution of community life Buddhism and its systems flourished in Central Asia, especially in the business communities. Subsequently, with the advent of the Islamic era, this ancient relationship became blurred as the rulers changed their focus to military conquest. The cultural gains of the classic era were soon erased by cultural conflict.

Different excavations in the Amudarya Valley, Uzbekistan, Samarkand, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have revealed evidence of contacts between India and Central Asia since prehistoric times. Saka, Hanas, Turks, Kushanas and Mughals have come to India from Central Asia. India's historical and cultural ties can be traced to the eastern region of Central Asia, Xinjiang and Tibet. These links have been discovered in the excavations of records and in the Tibetan literature relating to the Xingiang region. As a matter of history India has had rulers of Central Asian origin. Dynasties of Indian origin have ruled Khotan and elsewhere in Central Asia.

In ancient times the Silk Route consisted of high mountain roads and trade routes that traversed the Himalayan and Pamir regions. Similarities have been found between the Neolithic culture in the Kangra Valley of India and Gissan of Central Asia in ancient times. A common clay civilization existed around 3500 BCE throughout Asia, from Mesopotamia to China, and from Egypt to the Indus Valley.⁴⁵ Subsequently, between 2000 and 1500 BCE, Aryan traders from Central Asia arrived in India and Iran and established

⁴⁵ Tosi, M., et al. "The Bronze Age in Iran and Afghanistan." *History of Civilizations of Central Asia: The dawn of civilization: earliest times to 700 B.C.*, edited by A. H. Dani and V. M. Masson, Volume-I, UNESCO Publishing, pp. 184-216. www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000094466. Accessed on 23 January, 2021.

cultural relations between the two regions.⁴⁶ In ancient Indian poetry, the great Indian epics of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata (1700-1500 BCE), the Upanishads, and later Sanskrit literature, there are many references to places, countries, peoples, races and practices of the Central Asian Region. In turn, the geographic names, populations, codes of conduct and daily life in Central Asia reflect the influence of Indian culture. In the ancient Indian epics and the Puranas, Asia is referred to as Jambudvipa, and the Pamirs are known as mount Meru.⁴⁷ Both the Mahabharata and the Ramayana focused on the regions of central Asia.⁴⁸

Many Central Asian communities participated in the Mahabharata war. The Sakas and Yavanas (Greeks) are portrayed in the Mahabharata and Manu Smriti (Hindu Code) as degraded Kshatriyas. The Mahabharata (5.4.15) makes references to the Sakas, the Pahlavas (Persians), the Kambojas (speakers of portico of Tajikistan), and the Rishik (Kushanas).⁴⁹ The China, Huna and Saka are also mentioned elsewhere in the Mahabharata (2.47.19). The Kanka (Sogd's Kangyu) is mentioned by Sankara and Tushara (Tokharian). Medieval Sanskrit Buddhist and Jain literature contain much information about central Asia. In this perspective, there are clear indications of links between the Indus Valley and Central Asia even before the arrival of the Aryans in India. The archaeological excavations at Harappa in the here north-western part of India-Pakistan give proof of the exchange of goods between India and Central Asia. It appears that the Harappa and imported jewelleryes from Central Asia. At the same time Harappa pottery, ivory, metallic goods

⁴⁶ Joseph, Tony. "New Reports Clearly Confirm Arya Migration into India." *The Hindu*, 13 September 2019, p. 7.

⁴⁷ Kumar, B.B. "India and Central Asia links and interactions." *India and Central Asia: Classical to Contemporary Periods*, edited by B. B. Kumar and J.N. Roy, Concept Publishing Co, 2007, pp. 1-25.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 4-16.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

and handicrafts were focus in archaeological sites in Central Asia. Over there, even the home-made items give evidence of an Indian influence.

Ancient Indo-Central Asia Links

The ancient India-Central Asia links have been well documented and evidenced. The noted pre-historians of Russia have discovered important relics of Sohan culture in the range mountainous terrains of the Hindukush and the Pamirs in the valley of Oxus and its tributaries in Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and other places.⁵⁰ The earliest stage of the ancient Stone Age, also known as the paleolithic culture of Central Asia, or the Borykazghan culture. Such diffusion of cultures continued through the Neolithic stage and the Bronze Age. During the Achaemenian, Seleucid and Kushan periods, parts of India and Central Asia were ruled together as a cohesive region. The links were further deepened by the Indian languages, scripts, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. While the dynasties of Indian origin ruled many kingdoms of Central Asia, the dynasties of Central Asian origin ruled India. The interactions between the two regions persisted and developed.

There is another reasoned believe that Khotan was established by the exiled Gandharan subjects of Emperor Ashoka. The language of the documents discovered in Sundry archaeological expeditious in Khotan is Chinese Turkistan was found to be in ancient Prakrit. It is the Gandharan dialect of the Middle-Indo-Aryan Kharosthi documents, they are return in the Kharosthi script of India. In addition to the Dhammapada manuscript, these documents that were found at Lou-Ian Kroraina were written on wood, leather and

⁵⁰ Ibid.

silk. They support the belief in the expansion of the Gandhara to Turkistan.⁵¹ It is important to note in this regard that several dynasties of the Central Asian states claimed an Indian origin. These claims are given credence by names such as Anand, Punya deva, Vasudeva, Dharmapala and Buddha Mitra; mixed names such as Vasu Mogiya, Vasu Kekeya, and titles such as Maharaja (great king) in the records.

Indo-Aryan and Central Asian Contacts in the Bronze Age

Urbanisation was introduced in the Bronze Age as evidenced in the size and complexity of the settlements, specialization of crafts, irrigation, and agriculture in South-eastern Turkmenia.⁵² Scholars, such as V.M. Masson of Russia believe that the evidence suggests a cultural contact between India and Central Asia. Studies have shown Harappa features in the finds reported from Altyndepe. This confirms that there were economic interactions towards the end of the 3rd millennium BCE among South Turkmenia, Southern Afghanistan and the Indus Valley.⁵³ The archeologically excavated articles in metal and ivory, pottery and beads at Altyndepe closely resemble the findings at Harappan Sites. Likewise, many Turkmen terracottas are similar to the terracottas discovered in the Indus Valley. While scholars are still engaged in determining the specific features of the culture in South Turkmenistan, it is already clear that there were reciprocal influences obtaining between India and Central Asia. It can be reasonably assumed that northern India, Afghanistan and the Southern parts of Central Asia comprised a region where painted

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Masson, V M. "The Bronze Age in Khorasan and Transoxania." *History of Civilizations of Central Asia: The dawn of civilization: earliest times to 700 B.C.*, edited by A. H. Dani and V. M. Masson, Volume-I, UNESCO Publishing, pp. 217-236. www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000094466. Accessed on 23 January, 2021.

⁵³ Ibid.

ceramic pottery of similar rural cultures was fairly common. It is also safe to conclude that pro-urban civilizations evolved through similar processes. In the post-Harappan epoch too, strong cultural and historical ties existed between the two civilizations.

The latter part of the Bronze Age and the early part of the Iron Age are connected with the early Indo-Europeans, including the Aryans.⁵⁴ Some scholars maintain that the findings indicate the starting point of the Indo-Aryan migration to be in Central Asia. Others Scholars, however, believe that the Indo-Aryans arrived in India from the west through the Caucasus.⁵⁵ Through there is a controversy regarding the route taken by the Indo-Aryan settlers, scholars are of the unanimous with regard to the continuation of close contacts between India and Central Asia in the Post-Harappan period.⁵⁶ As mentioned earlier the Indian traditions expressed in Vedic, Buddhist, Brahmanical and Puranic literature have always described this region as a cohesive zone. The evidences clearly paint to a definite system for the flow of cultures and ideas between Central Asia and India through the Indians borders lands. However, these evidences do not lend themselves to a narration of a chronological sequence in the history of the third millennium BCE.

The closest connection to the Indi-Aryans of the Rigveda⁵⁷ have been discovered at the sites of the painted grey ware culture in urban Iran and Afghanistan, in addition to the Gandhara and Swat Valley culture that too are linked to Iran and Central Asia.⁵⁸ However, the much touted relationships between the earliest Indo-Aryans in the north-west-India,

⁵⁴ Library of Congress, Op. cit.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Toshkhani, S. S. "Religious Cultural and Artistic Links Between Ancient Kashmir, Afghanistan and Central Asia." *India and Central Asia: Classical to Contemporary Periods*, edited by in B. B. Kumar and J.N. Roy, Concept Publishing Co, 2007, p. 64.

⁵⁸ Gaur, R. C, "The Painted Grey Were and the Aryan Problem". *Ethnic Problem of the History of Central Asia in the Early Period*, edited by M. S. Asimov, Nouka, 1981, pp. 327-34.

Iran and Central Asia are mired in dispute, in the absence of solid evidence directly linking these cultures with those of the north of the Central Asian urban centres. Accordingly, to the reputed Hungarian scholar J. Harmata, in his study of Indo-European cultures, common usage of words is to be found not only in the Indo-Iranian texts but also in the Anatolian documents.⁵⁹ Harmata has confirmed the presence of Indo-Aryans in Mesopotamia in the third millennium BCE.⁶⁰ It may be concluded that India was the original home of the Indo-Aryans who later migrated to western Asia via Iran and Central Asia.

There are many Indo-Aryan personal names in the Tell-el-Amarna archives.⁶¹ A number of linguistic scholars have studied at least twenty Indo-Aryan words in the classical languages of Central Asia. These studies lead one to consider the possibility of a migration out of India in the Vedic period. Likewise, it may be assumed that in the Indo-Iranian state, the original home of the Aryans was in India.

The archaeological discoveries discussed point to India and Central Asia being the two major cradles of world civilisation that rose at an early period and acquired a durable character. The contacts between the two regions played an important role in the development of culture in India and Central Asia. However, despite the significant mutual interactions and social impacts, the cultures of the two peoples preserved their distinctive character.⁶²

Indo-Central Asia Relations During Saka Epoch

⁵⁹ Tripathi, D.N. "Central Asia and Indo-Aryans". *India, Central Asia and Russia: Three Millennia of Contacts*, edited by D. N. Tripathi, India Council of Historical Research, 2013, pp. 14-25.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Childe, V. G. "The Aryans: A Study of Indo-European Origin". Routledge, 1996, pp. 18-20.

⁶² Kaushik, D. "India Central Asia in Modern Times". Satvahan Prakashan, 1985, p. 12.

The independent states of Bactria were founded before the middle of the 3rd century BCE and the Sakas were limited to their Soma region. Thus, the Graeco-Bactrians and the Parthians became the buffer states for the empires in the south. But this convenient Geo-Political arrangement lasted only for a little over a century. Newly evolving pressures and movements triggered events to the farther east gave the Sakas the first opportunity in their history to set up their own kingdoms in the south. This expansion presented them with favourable circumstances to play a more constructive role in world history and civilization.

From the latter half of the 2nd century BCE the eastern Sakas became centred in South Asia. Their Western groups, including the Sarmatians, remained involved in the west. The eastern Sakas established power centres in Punjab and Sind, Mathura and Ujjain, Gujarat and Maharashtra.⁶³ Up to the end of the 4th century CE, the Sakas played an important role in the history of India and Southern Asia. They became an integral part of the life and culture in this region. Even today India is home to the Sakaldwipi Brahmans. Importantly, India has formally accepted the Saka era as the national system of reckoning dates in a calendar.

Through Indian's history, the Yavanas (Greeks), the Sakas (Scythians, slavs), the Hunas (Huns), the Kushans (descended from Mongols), the Mongols and the Turks arrived from or through Central Asia. In turn, India's ethnic communities migrated from India to the Central Asian regions. Apart from the Sakaldwipi Brahmans, the Chouhans, Rajputs and

⁶³ Chakrabarti, K. "The Gupta Kingdom." *History Of Civilizations of Central Asia: The Crossroads of Civilizations: A.D 250 to 750*. Edited by B. A. Litvinsky, Volume III, UNESCO Publishing, 1996, pp, 414-424, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000104612>. Accessed on 2 January 2021.

Jats of India are also descended from the Sakas. According to another opinion, the Sakas were probably of Indian origin who later migrated to Central Asia.

In the natural course of events, these dynamic historical movements deeply impacted the mind and culture of the peoples of India and Central Asia. In India the Saka calendar is still in official usage. The similarities in languages and the use of Indian dialects in Central Asia have been subjects of study and are well documented. During the Achaemenid empire, the Geopolitical influences of India and Central Asia began to mesh and contact between the two regions were closer and more frequent. This era witnessed the first durable political entities that covered the Central Asian region such as Bactria, Parthia and Sughd into a geopolitical unit that structured to ponds of northern India.⁶⁴ This Geopolitical bonding was further strengthened with the arrival of the Greek and the setting up of a migrant Saka empire that spread across the Pamir mountains.⁶⁵

Indo-Central Asia Relations During Kushan Era

During the Kushan Era, the interactions between India and Central Asia were most cordial and at their peak.⁶⁶ Also during the Kushan rule Northern India and Central Asia were incorporated as a cohesive state. The region of Kushan Empire covered a vast amount of area from Bactria to Benares and from Kashmir to Sind.⁶⁷ This resulted as a freer exchange of people, ideas and institution between the two regions. The palace at Varakhsha displays

⁶⁴ Kumar, B.B. Op. cit.

⁶⁵ Sanujit, Op. cit.

⁶⁶ Gopal, Surendra. "India and Central Asia 1947-1991". *India and Central Asia: Classical to Contemporary Periods*, edited by B. B. Kumar and J.N. Roy, Concept Publishing Co, 2007, p. 87.

⁶⁷ Puri, B. N. "The Kushans." *History Of Civilizations of Central Asia: The development of sedentary and nomadic civilizations: 700 B.C. to A.D. 250*, edited by János Harmatta, Volume II, UNESCO Publishing, 1994, P. 239-254. www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000105703. Accessed on 27 December 2020.

a painting depicting a king riding an elephant during a tiger hunt, along with his royal retinue. Again, at Adina-Tepe, there is a figure of the sleeping Buddha (About 12-meter size) in the Nirvana posture.⁶⁸ These items are part of the evidence of the influence of Indian traditions. There is even a painted figure, purporting to be of Indra on Devotee, appear to be distinctly Indian in its structure, colours, costumes and style, and is similar to some of the figures at Ajanta.⁶⁹ The two-way flow between the region continued even after the Kushan era. Excavation in central Asia have revealed a number of Buddhist temples and caves containing icons and paintings with Indian influences. Needless to add, central Asia has been impacted by different influences from other areas also.⁷⁰

India and Central Asia were mutually enriched by the close cultural relations during the Kushan era. The cultural exchanges were mutual. Claude Arpi, a noted Central Asian historian and analyst of the culture and contemporary policies of Central Asia states that the flow of cultural influences in the early part of the Kushan rule was largely from central Asia to India. On the other hand, in the later period of Kushan era, Indian influences began to flow Central Asia through the spread of Buddhism which had already impacted the cultured traditions of India.⁷¹

Kushan inscriptions have been found in Taxila and the Somnath pillar along with Kushan coins. This indicates a historic synthesis of cultures and religions. They stand testimony to the co-existence of Zoroastrianism with the Indian religion of Buddhism and Saivism.⁷² In

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Arpi, Claude. "Cultural relations between India and Tibet an overview of the light from India". *India and Central Asia: Classical to Contemporary Periods*, edited by B. B. Kumar and J.N. Roy, Concept Publishing Co, 2007, pp. 80-88.

⁷² Litvinsky, B. A. and M. I. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya, eds. "Religions and Religious Movements-II". *History of Civilizations of Central Asia: The crossroads of civilizations: A.D. 250 to 750*, edited by Ahmad Hasan Dani, B. A. Litvinsky, Volume III, UNESCO Publishing, France, 1996, pp. 420-431.
www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000104612. Accessed on 2 April 2020.

the Kushan era, Central Asia propounded economically as well. The interaction between India Central Asia continued long after the Kushan era. The excavation at penjikent (Tajikistan), Varaksha (Uzbekistan) and Ajina-Tepe (Tajikistan) have revealed frescos that been resemblance to those found in the Indian caves of Bharhut and Ajanta.

It is to be noted that the most important economic and strategic historical tie between India and Central Asia were forged in the period of Mauryan empire and its successor Kushan empire, in the form of trade routes and new military garrisons across the two regions. Taxila is situated in the north east of the subcontinent that is at the doorstep to Central Asia. It was there Kautilya, the noted Mauryan intellectual and advisor Chandragupta Maurya wrote is political-security treatise, the Arthashastra, in the 4th century BCE. This provided the ideological basis for the expansion of the Mauryan empire into Central Asia.

Buddhism: The Catalyst of Indo-Central Asian Cultural and Spiritual Relations

The first spiritual bonding between the people of India and Central Asia uses created through Buddhism. Through Buddhism originated in India, it survived and flourished outside and elsewhere. The centuries that embraced Buddhism adapted the philosophy to their own search for spiritual upliftment and material wellbeing. Buddhism developed on the historical canvas of each place and took on a form that offered and uplifting religious experience.

Buddhism transcended the barriers of region diversity and become a rare unifying force founded on the religious principles of humanity fraternity and equality. The inroads made

by Buddhism in the territories beyond the Hindukush and its survival in alien lands is the stuff of a unique history. Buddhism touched the common people in their own language on matters dealing with their daily life. It propounded gender equality and the equal right of all human beings. It laid emphasis on the protection of all creatures including wildlife. Membership of the Sangh was open to monks from all quarters. Buddhism propagated the idea of universal brotherhood in all its manifestations, such as peace upon all and Vasudeva-kutumbakam (the world is one family). These principles had sustained humanity from antiquity. Buddhism straightway touched the sentiments of the people and enabled a direct common bond between the devotee and the teaching of the Buddha. Buddhism played a key role in introducing and popularising Indian language, scripts, philosophy, religions and ideas throughout Asia, while exposing India to foreigners.

Any history of how Buddhism cemented the relations between India and Central Asia needs to start with the period of Ashoka whose political and spiritual learning are evidenced in his etched-on rocks.⁷³ At the time, the ruling families in the region exchanged different ideas among themselves.⁷⁴ The connections became intense when the Bactrian Greek forces arrived in the Indus region. They introduced their own religion, philosophies, literature, mythologies, economic system and coin currency. They also began the flow of trade between India and Bactria.⁷⁵ However, the influences were not one-sided. The Bactrian kings were curious about the local religions of Shiva, Krishna and Buddha.

⁷³ Litvinsky, B. A. and Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya, M. I. "Religions And Religious Movements – II." *History Of Civilizations of Central Asia: The Crossroads of Civilizations: A.D 250 to 750*. Edited by B. A. Litvinsky, Volume III, UNESCO Publishing, 1996, pp, 414-440, www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000104612. Accessed on 2 January 2021.

⁷⁴ Foltz, Richard. *Buddhism and the Silk Road*. In: *Religions of the Silk Road*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 37.

⁷⁵ Sanujit, Op. cit.

Similarly, Buddhism was well built in Bactria.⁷⁶ The numerous Buddhist inscriptions in Kharoshthi, and the Buddhist Stupas and Monasteries in Gandhara and Kapisa, and as for north as Termez, the city at the crossing of the Oxus, date back to the advent of the Bactrian kings and onwards.⁷⁷ Both Bulk and Tirmiz were home to strong Buddhist influences that lasted till the forced expansion of Islam.⁷⁸

The spread of Buddhism caused a continual flow of information, scientific knowledge, languages and literature between India and Central Asia. Given the proximity to the great Silk Route, that originated in China, these influences reached far into Eurasia. During the Kushan period the Buddhist religion made deep inroads into East Asia, Japan, China and the Koreas, thus becoming a Pan-Asian phenomenon. Apart from religion the arts also flourished since the Bactria and Gandhara schools of Kushan Buddhism spread across the Empire in northern India and reaching deep inside Central Asia. This manifested is the subsequent styles that emerged from the regions.

While the great Kushan empire was between across South Asia and Central Asia. the Silk Road was facilitating the trade connections from China and India through Central Asia to the Western World. Because of this progression, Buddhism was exposed to western ideas and religious and a new form of Buddhism developed that had its greatest impact on Gandhara. These Buddhist impressions found strong expression in the Gandhara art that was patronize in the Kushan empire. Accordingly, along with the figure of the Buddha,

⁷⁶ Bosworth, C. E. and Bolshakov, O. G. "Central Asia Under the Umayyads and the Early Abbasids". *History Of Civilizations of Central Asia: The Age of achievement, A.D. 750 to the end of the fifteenth century; the historical, social and economic setting*, Edited by: M. S. Asimov and C. E. Bosworth, Volume IV, UNESCO Publishing, 1998, pp, 28-45.

www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000111664.xml=<http://www.unesco.org/ulis/cgi-bin/ulis.pl>. Accessed on 25 February, 2021.

⁷⁷ Litvinsky, B. A. and Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya. Op. cit.

⁷⁸Ibid.

the Bodhisattva began to gain in importance.⁷⁹ The story of Buddha's life left an indelible imprint in people's minds. However as in the case of Gandhara art, the Mahayana form of Buddhism emerged from Gandhara and followed the Silk Route through Afghanistan to all the republics in Central Asia.⁸⁰ The Buddhist culture and the wonderful art of Gandhara have lasted throughout Asia to the present day. While the concentration happens to be located in Pakistan the Gandhara culture spreads throughout central Asia up to the Tarim Valley. Much of Gandhara's ideas and sculptures reached China, then proceeded to Korea and Japan. Therefore, it can be assumed that Buddhism reached the Tarim Basin in the middle of the 2nd century AD.⁸¹ These developments are studied with great interest by Indian and Western Scholars.⁸² Historical research has led to the discovery of Buddhist stupas and monasteries in Merv (contemporary Turkmenistan) Tirmiz and near Bokhara in Uzbekistan, Buddhist paintings at Samarkand, a large monastic establishment at Tajikistan, and many sites around Issyk-Kul Lake in Kyrgyzstan. At the same time, a temple dedicated to Shiva and Uma has been found at Panjkent in Tajikistan.

As indicated, Buddhism's expansion in Central Asia was facilitated by the Silk trade routes, the important centres that came up on these communication channels, as well as the settlements and tranquil retreats nearby that met the need for seclusion of the Buddhist

⁷⁹ Bopearachchi, Osmund. "A Pectoral Depicting Buddhas and bodhisattvas From Greater Gandhara". pp. 231-249; Myer, Prudence R. "Bodhisattvas and Buddhas: Early Buddhist Images from Mathura." *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 47, no. 2, 1986, pp. 107-142. Jstor, www.jstor.org/stable/3249969. Accessed on 1 March 2020.

⁸⁰ Zhu, Tianshu. *Emanated Buddhas in the Aureole of Buddhist Images from India, Central Asia, and China*. Cambria Press, 2018, pp. 315-20.

⁸¹ Yong, Ma and Yutang, Sun. "The Western Regions Under the Hsiung-Nu and The Han". *History Of Civilizations of Central Asia: The development of sedentary and nomadic civilizations: 700 B.C. to A.D. 250*, edited by János Harmatta, Volume II, UNESCO Publishing, 1994, P. 219-235 www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000105703. Accessed on 27 December 2020.

⁸² "Asia Society". *The Buddhist Heritage in Pakistan: Art of Gandhara*, www.sites.asiasociety.org/gandhara/. Accessed on 1 March 2020.

monks. An in-depth study of Buddhism in Central Asia would demand details such as the land and its peoples, the physical and the geopolitical dynamics of the time, the trajectory of migratory movements of the people and their impact within the margins and peripheries of Central Asia.

The spread of Buddhism was given a fillip when the Pala rulers of Bengal built on the Mahayana form of Buddhism to create the Vajrayana and Tantrayana systems.⁸³ Evidence of the evolution is found in the different compartments for meditation at the Buddhist monastery at Takht-I-Bhai. They indicate the new role of the monks who became popular beacons for the Buddhist disciples. These specialised Buddhist monks left behind legacies of different stories and traditions as far north as Khaplu in Baltistan. Buddhist monks migrated along the Silk Road and influenced the people of the areas they crossed.⁸⁴ The many Buddhist monasteries along that route bear testimony to the path followed by the Buddhist and have become centres of education. Buddhism and the Zoroastrian religion became part of the Sogdian culture.⁸⁵ The influence was so strong that many of the Turks who arrived in central Asia adopted Buddhism as their religion. There are many translations of Buddhist texts into the Uyghur language of Xinjiang. The contents of Buddha's teachings have strongly impacted central Asia and the surrounding regions.

The spiritual upliftment afforded by Buddhism, as also its general flavour, deeply influenced the people of Central Asia, while its influence would in the land of its birth,

⁸³ Sen, Sailendra N. *Textbook of Indian History and Culture*. Macmillan, 2007, p. 81.

⁸⁴ Wong, Shantel and Wendy Yu, "Buddhist Iconography Along the Silk Road with Prof. Osmund Bopearachchi, Part Two-The Land Route." *Buddhist door Global*, September 2019. www.buddhistdoor.net/features/buddhisticonography-along-the-silk-road-with-professor-osmundbopearachchi-part-two-the-land-route. Accessed on 4 March 2020.

⁸⁵ Bosworth, C. E. and Bolshakov, O. G. Op. cit.

(India). Buddhism existed strongly in the four major states in northern Chinese Turkestan, namely, Bharuka, Agnidesa, Kaochang and Kucha. Since then, till date Kucha has remained a strong hold of Buddhism.⁸⁶ Buddhism is estimated to have arrived in this region in the 1st century CE.⁸⁷ The region played an important part in propagating Buddhism and facilitating its rise and evolution in the northern regions and in China. In the time of Hsuan Tsang, in the 7th century CE, the famous centre of Buddhist learning was established at Balkh. It was known as the Nava-Samgharama where an unbroken chain of commentators taught Buddhist principles. Around the 3rd century CE Kucha boasted of one thousand stupas and temples.⁸⁸ Kucha in Central Asia was also the centre of music that originated in India. From there it spread to China, along with the musical instruments. There is significant evidence that Buddhism in the flourishing state of Kucha was the dominant religion. However, Mahayana Buddhism thrived in Yarkand and Khotan. Khotan played a significant role in the spread of Buddhism.⁸⁹ In the view of Chinese Buddhist monk Hiuen Tsang, a large amount of Sanskrit documents of the Buddhist principles reached Khotan from Kashmir.⁹⁰ At the same time Kashgar, Kucha and Turfan were noted for being Hinayanist centres.⁹¹ The states in Tarim valley were in close contact with India and the Oxus Valley. The two most important centres of Buddhism that is Hinayana and Mahayana, coexisted in the Tarim province.⁹²

⁸⁶ Litvinsky, B. A. and Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya. Op. cit.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Zhu, Tianshu. "The Influence from Khotan: The Standing Buddha Images in Kucha." *Interaction in the Himalayas and Central Asia: Process of Transfer, Translation and Transformation in Art, Archaeology, Religion and Polity*, edited by Eva Allinger et al., 1st ed., Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, Vienna, 2017, p. 127.

⁸⁹ Guang-Da, Zhang. "The City-States of the Tarim Basin". *History Of Civilizations of Central Asia: The Crossroads of Civilizations: A.D 250 to 750*. Edited by B. A. Litvinsky, Volume III, UNESCO Publishing, 1996, pp, 282-292, www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000104612. Accessed on 2 January 2021.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Zhu, Tianshu. Op. cit. pp. 167-80.

⁹² Guang-Da, Zhang. Op. cit.

Most of the Buddhist literature that were written in Sanskrit got translated into the major language of Central Asia. Kucha's most famous scholar were Kumarajiva.⁹³ Born of an Indian father and a Kuchean mother, He conducted deep research into Buddhist literature and philosophy, initially in Kashmir and subsequently in Kucha, and then lived in China for long time. Having become an expert in India Buddhist philosophy, he translated many Sanskrit text into the Chinese language.⁹⁴ However, it is important to note that the scholarship in Central Asia was not limited to the Buddhist teaching. Kumarajiva has extended his research into the four Vedas, five treatises (Panchatantra). The Brahmanical shastras and astronomy at Kashgar, as he was on his way back from Kashmir after studying the Buddhist scripture. It is evident that Central Asia, like India, had important centres of learning. What stands out is that people of different ethnique origins, who spoke different languages lived in harmony in Central Asia.

Kashgar gain important both by way of essential activity and spread of Buddhism.⁹⁵ Its location gave it the opportunity to provide relief and hospitality to numerous travellers who had arrived after a difficult track over the mountain. Likewise, countries that were situated along the neither route from Kashgan to China were important commercial hubs and cultural centres. These centres spread Indian culture and Buddhism in Central Asia and China. Many manuscripts in Sanskrit, as also bilingual document in Kuchean and Sanskrit provide evidence that the Buddhist monk at these centres were well versed in Sanskrit. As recorded by a Chinese pilgrim, Kashgar and other centre on the route to China were noted for their Buddhist studies and for the expansion of Buddhism into China

⁹³ Shi, Longdu. "Buddhism and the state in medieval China: case studies of three persecutions of Buddhism, 444-846." Department of Religions and Philosophies SOAS, University of London, 2016, p. 47.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Litvinsky, B. A. and Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya. Op. cot.

through famous schools and intelligent who not only translated in Buddhist text but also were active as teachers.

According to the account of Fa-Hien, all monks of Central Asia studied Sanskrit. Hsuang-Tsang also testified that the Buddhist monks of Kucha were schools of Sanskrit. A few palm leaves have been discovered at mingoi that have parts of two Buddhist religious drama. One of them is the Sariputrprakarana of Asvaghosh that is written in the script that prevail in the time of Kaniska.⁹⁶ This Sanskrit manuscript is the oldest of its kinds. It also happens to be the oldest specimen of Indian dramatic art.

The expansion of Buddhism into Central Asia owned to the patronage and enthusiasm of different rulers, such as Ashoka, however, the exact date when Buddhism was introduced to various part of Central Asia is a matter of controversy. There is no doubt that emperor Ashoka of the Maurya dynasty encourage Buddhist activities.⁹⁷ In popular legend Ashoka was attracted to Buddhism owing to his grief at the great suffering and numerous deaths cause by his military victories.⁹⁸ It is estimated that at the start of the Christian era, the Sakas and Kushanas as also Indian traders, spread parts of India culture and Buddhism to the states of eastern Turkestan and the northern Oasis of Tufan and Kucha.⁹⁹ According to others scholars, Buddhism was introduce and spread to Central Asia during the regime of Ashoka who sent a group of monks to Gandhara for the purpose. The first missionary to introduce Buddhism to central Asia is said to be Vairochara a Kashmiri Scholar who

⁹⁶ Puri, B. N. *Buddhism in Central Asia*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1993, pp. 24-30.

⁹⁷ Paul, Groner. editor *A History of Indian Buddhism: From Sakyamuni to Early Mahayana*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1993, pp. 95-96

⁹⁸ Richard Foltz, Op. cit. p. 38.

⁹⁹ B. A. Litvinsky and M. I. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya, Op. cit. p. 433.

founded the first monastery at Khotan.¹⁰⁰ When Buddhism began to spread into central Asia it drew the attention of Xiongnu, an ancient Mongolian tribe that directly interested with Central Asia.

Generally, Buddhism was a major protagonist in developing and deepening the relationship between Indian and Central Asia. A new phase in the correction between these two regions with the spread of this religion in Central Asia. Its influence was so deep and diverse that it gave rise a new culture in Central Asia. It was synthesis of the best tradition that had prevail among the population of India and Central Asia in the earlier centuries. The mutual contact between the true regions and the spread of Buddhist tradition and teaching in central Asia under the Kushan are evidenced by the numerous Buddhist temple and cultural centres in the region. The people of Central Asia did not accept Buddhism and the ideas ancient Indian culture and allow their expansion in a blind manner. They did so after understanding the new influences and teachings and combining them with the local culture traditions. Among the Archaeological discoveries, the manuscripts of Buddhist Sanskrit written in Brahmi and Kharosthi scripts were the most interesting finds. Also, interesting to note, Buddhism in Central Asia was not mere translation from Sanskrit and Prakrit, but was given a distinct interpretation by the follows. As a result, the Indian types of Buddhism came to have local variants. The spread of written tradition directly from India and indicated by the similarity of Karatepe inscriptions with some ancient Indian epigrams. The Buddhism inscription provide the scientists with evidence that there were followers of the Buddhist schools of Sarvastivad and Mahasanghik under the Kushan in Central Asia. In general, there is a death of irrefutable indicators of the deep penetration

¹⁰⁰ B.B. Kumar, Op. cit. p. 7.

of Buddhism and part of Indian culture is Central Asia. During the dominance of the Kushan.

India-Central Asia Cultural Links and the Role of Kashmir in the Ancient Period

Emperor Ashoka was a great patron of Buddhism. He took active measures to spread faith in Central Asia. Accordingly, in his time, Buddhist and Hindu Centres were established in Central Asia. The region stretched from Afghanistan up to East Sinkiang (Xinjiang). The Roman Empire has unleashed unspeakable atrocities upon Jesus of Nazareth and his followers. Infact, his disciples were thrown to hungry lions in the colosseum in Rome. In contrast, the Indian missionaries, largely from Kashmir Successfully propagated Buddha's message of peace, love and fraternity to the violent tribes of Central Asia. In ancient times, Kashmir monks, traders and travellers frequented the route to the north and south of the Takla Makan desert. They mingled with the people, spread Buddha's teachings and passed an Indian cultural influence where ever they went. Kashmir acted as the gateway for Indian culture and commerce for extending to central Asia from the start of the propagation of Buddhism and Buddhist culture in that area. Leading Kashmir, monks and scholars of India carried Buddhist teachings to the Far East.¹⁰¹ They translated the religions texts and taught important theories in Central Asia. According to the travel accounts of Hsuan

¹⁰¹ Chatterji, Suniti K. *Hindus and Turks from prehistoric times: India-Central Asia Contacts and Links*. Asiatic Society, pp. 130-132.

Tsang, Kashmir was the most historically notable centre for the development and expansion of Buddhism.

Archaeological expeditions in India, Egypt, Mesopotamia and China have unearthed plenty of evidence above the ancient culture that prevailed in these regions and their propagation and growth in the past 5000 years. Kashmir, being strategically located in the middle of West Asia and the Far East, became a principal link in the cultural commercial and political interactions among these significant ancient civilizations. Apart from the maritime routes the Silk Road connected India with Central Asia, China and Turkey. Accordingly, the Silk Road happened to function as the great trans-Asian highway. The overland route between Central Asia and India passed through the valley of Kashmir. During the reign of Kaniska, Kashmir hosted the Buddhist Council. This council left a legacy of progressive Buddhism known as the Mahayana to the world. Its pronouncements were engraved on copper plaques and plates. The Kashmiri Buddhist scholars and monks based out of Kashmir were pioneers in spreading Buddha's teachings in the areas further to the west of Kashmir, in and around Badakshan, and in Tibet to the east. The mountain name Hindu Kush indicates that it was part of ancient India.¹⁰²

In The footsteps of Emperor Ashoka Kanishka became the chief patron of Buddhism and helped to propagate its teachings in all his dominions.¹⁰³ Kashmir hosted the fourth Buddhist council during his rule.¹⁰⁴ Kanishka also sponsored some of the most significance

¹⁰² Pandit, K. N. "Indo-Tajik Relations: A Curtain Raiser". *India, Central; Asia and Russia: Three Millennia of Contacts*, edited by D. N. Tripathi, India Council of Historical Research, 2013, p. 141.

¹⁰³ Pugachenkova, G. A. et al., "Kushan Art." *History of Civilizations of Central Asia: The development of sedentary and nomadic civilizations: 700 B.C. to A.D. 250*, edited by János Harmatta, Volume II, UNESCO Publishing, 1994, pp. 323-361. www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000105703. Accessed on 27 December 2020.

¹⁰⁴ Litvinsky, B. A. and Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya. Op. cot.

Buddhist stupas in Punjab, Afghanistan, eastern Turkestan and the Ganges Valley. He covered the fourth Buddhist council at Kuvana in Kashmir on the advice of Parsva. One of the purposes was to consolidate the collection of secret texts and prepare commentaries on the sutra, the Vinaya and the Abhidharma with the help of all the monks in attendance. This Council was an important step in the progress of Buddhism and signalled a new era in the hub of the Sarvastivada school of Buddhism. The related doctrines spread across Kabul, Bactria, Tibet and Central Asia. Kanishka promoted such advancement and diffusion.¹⁰⁵

Kashmir played a pivotal role in the spread of India, culture and commerce to Central Asia. Mahayana Buddhism as a cultural movement spread to Central Asia and influenced local dress, crafts, art and writing, in course of history.¹⁰⁶ Central Asia is turn influenced Kashmir by way of Sufi Islam, that was brought to the Valley by Shah Hamadan and others. The Indus civilization reached as far as Iran, Iraq, and Syria. The interactions led to the mutual enrichment of different civilizations and resulted in a cultural affinity between regions.

There is plenty of evidence that some of the migrant tribe of Central Asia had at first arrived in Kashmir for setting. At a subsequent phase in history, many Indians, largely from Kashmir, travelled to Central Asia and built their colonies in the basin of the Tarim. That Oasis town on the Silk Road became the centre of their commercial activities. Of great significance is the historical fact of the king of Khotan being an Indian named Vijaya. Again, there is historical proof that three Kushan kings ruled Kashmir for approximately

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

100 years. The three kings, Hushka, Jushka and Kanishka, founded three towns and named them after the unselves, that is, Hushkapura, Jushkapura and Ksnishkapura. These powerful kings ensured the dominance of Buddhism in the valley of Kashmir.

Kashmir witnessed the advent of Islam with the arrival of teachers, scholars and traders from Iran and Central Asia. As a result, the kingship of Kashmir became a Muslim Sultanate. The progressive school of Buddhism, the Mahayana along with its culture, had flowed to Central Asia from Kashmir in the first century. This type of Buddhism had developed in Kashmir subsequent to the fourth Buddhist council. On the other hand, in 1372 B.C.E Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani, also known as Shah Hamadan locally, arrived in Kashmir.¹⁰⁷ He brought over 700 master craftsmen from Iran and relocated them in Srinagar.¹⁰⁸ Accordingly, several handicrafts of Iran, Samarkand, and Bukhara became popular in the Kashmir valley.

In the flow of history, Kashmir has retained a long tradition of arts and crafts. These comprise papier-mache, shawl, weaving, silk embroidery and needlework, rug making, wool crafts, wood-work and stone work. With the arrival of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani and his followers in Kashmir, these handicrafts received a significant boost.¹⁰⁹ Hamadani also encouraged calligraphy, as he himself was an expert in this art. Further, he pioneered the art of book-binding. Along with calligraphy, such Hamadani introduced the art Hashiakiari,

¹⁰⁷ Dhar, Nazir Ahmad. "Shah-E-Hamdan: Kashmir's Benefactor." *Greater Kashmir*, 9 Sept. 2016, www.greaterkashmir.com/todays-paper/shah-e-hamdan-kashmirs-benefactor. Accessed on 22 January 2020

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

that is, the outline decorative art work on leaves and documents.¹¹⁰ Finally, at Srinagar in Kashmir, he founded the first manuscript library of Islamic books.

Because Buddhist teachings, art and culture went to Central Asia from Kashmir, traces of Kashmiri art have been discovered in Kazil, Khotan, Kashgar and Tun-Huang. The craftsmen were Kashmir artists, Painters and calligraphers. Their style of art has been differently called Gandhara art and Graeco-Iranian Buddhist art, or Kushanas Gandhara art. While Kashmiri art has maintained its distinct style. It has evolved and absorbed the styles of other countries. It was richly influenced by Tibetan, Indian, Chinese, Persian and Greek art. Research has revealed that in ancient times the people of Kashmir and the people of Turkestan shared a common civilisation and culture. The art of Kashmir reached its glorious peak in the time of Lalitaditya Muktapada when Kashmir dominated over large swathes of central Asia, Afghanistan and Northern India. The evidence discovered indicates that almost all the wall paintings in Central Asian temples and Viharas were created by Kashmiri artists. The paintings on the covers of Buddhist manuscripts that were discovered in Gilgit are representative of the Kashmiri School of art that prevailed in Kashgar and Ladakh.

Ancient Land Routes between India and Central Asia

There were a number of land routes between India and Central Asia. Towards the end of the 1880s, Indian traders transported commodities to Central Asia across Persia.¹¹¹ This

¹¹⁰ Dar, Mehraj Din and Basu, Nighat. "Influence Of Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani on Vocational Education in Kashmir." *Journal Of Humanities and Social Science*, vol. 21, no. 3, March 2016, pp. 38-46. DOI: 10.9790/0837-2103023846. Accessed on 22 January 2020.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

new trade route had the advantage of being less perilous and less costly. On either side of the Sindhu River Takshashila and Purushpura respectively connected the trade routes in India with the trade routes in Central Asia. Takshashila, the capital city of Gandhara, had a locational advantage. It was the terminus of several important land routes. It was also the starting point of the notable trade routes between India and Central Asia. One such route is the north west across Kashmir valley to Gilgit, Yarkand and Kashgar.¹¹² Thereby connected with eastern and western Turkistan. The route to western Turkistan passed Purushpura (Peshawar) and Kapisha (modern Begram) Bactria.¹¹³ Bactria became an important junction as several routes met at that point. Babylon, Susa-Herat, Samarkand-Tashkent is the Oxus Valley in the north and several routes from Kashgar in the west converged in Bactria.¹¹⁴ The Takshashila-Kapisha-Bactria route became even more important during the Achaemenian period when Punjab was the headquarters.¹¹⁵ Again, in the Seleucid period, it became a royal highway to the west. Bactria was connected to the Oxus Valley by two routes.¹¹⁶ The renowned geographers Strabo and Pliny had referred to the Caspian highway that went towards the Caspian Sea.¹¹⁷ This was the route that was preferred by Indian traders who took their trade to the Black Sea ports owing to the facility of navigation on the Oxus River.¹¹⁸ The route to Tashkent via Samarkand went further to the north-east to Turfan.¹¹⁹

Hiuen Tsung arrived at Purushpura in India via Hami-Turfan Tashkent Samarkand roads, Oxus Valley, Bactria and the Bamiyan-Kapisha Purushpura route.¹²⁰ However, in 644 CE,

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Sanujit, Op. cit.

¹²⁰ B.B. Kumar, Op. cit.

Hiuen Tsang return do China via an alternative route, that is the one reaching Kashgar via Bactria that passes the south of Pamir.¹²¹ In 1273 C.E. Marko Polo used this route travel to Cathy.¹²² The route proceeds from Bactria to Badakhshan, the valley of Wakhan then to Sariqol south of the Muz Tagh Ata Ala.¹²³ Then to Tashkurghan and finally to Kashgar and Yarkand. Another route from Kashmir passes through Gilgit, Darkot and Baroghil passes and meets the Badakhshan-Wakhan-Sariqol route and Sarhad.¹²⁴

Linguistic, Literary and Classical Links Between India and Central Asia

Sanskrit literature contains may references of the continual links between India and central Asia. The Indian scholar Rahul Sanskrityan has listed over a thousand words of Russian and Central Asia language that one similar to Sanskrit words with largely some Sanskrit root.¹²⁵ In his writings Rahul Sanskrityan has accounted for another few hundred words in Indian and Central Asian languages that are similar, mostly sharing common root.¹²⁶ Other studies have highlighted linguistic links between both Indo-European languages and Non-Indo-European languages. As Buddhism spread along the Silk Road, Sanskrit become the religious language in the surrounding areas. Later, the Buddhist texts became available in the local languages. These are great similarities in the folklore of central Asia and India that have similar characters events and plots. The Panchatantra is the collection of fairy tales in Sanskrit that were composed around 3-4 CE. Later these stories were translated

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

into central Asian language. Accordingly, the folktale of Central Asia is found to have the same plots as in the Panchatantra.

Indian literature contains many references to the people of Central Asia. These mentions are largely found in the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and the puranas. The immigration of Central Asian people to India is an accepted historical fact.¹²⁷ This immigrant assimilated with Indian society. The Yavanas and Maga Brahmanas are known to have come from the north-west.¹²⁸ These are many references in Patanjali's Mahabhashya and Gargi Samhita to Greek chiefs arriving India with their forces from Bactria.¹²⁹ Varahamihira, the renowned astronomer happened to be a Maga Brahmin.¹³⁰ At his point, it must be noted that Indian traditions indicate an outward migration of Shakas, Yavanas, etc. from India.

The Puranas and Indian epics contain much information about India and neighbourhood in Central Asia. Medieval Indian life nature also contains such descriptions. Rajshekhar's Kavyamimamsa, Kalhan's Rajatarangini some dictionaries, Sanskrit and Buddhist texts and fables etc,¹³¹ also provide similar information. In Kalidasa's epics and dramas one finds accurate information about the northern mountain areas in India. This is most evident in the Meghdoota and Vikramorvasiam.¹³²

It may be mentioned that Indian trader, monks and scholars very often travelled to Central Asia. Significantly, some ruling families, in Central Asia like the Khotan, maintained that they were of Indian origin. On the other hand, the shakers Kushanas and Hunas arrived

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

from Central Asia and rule part of India. Some ruling kings in India were of Turk and Mongol origin. They continued to have contain Central Asian connections. Accordingly, knowledge about Central Asia is incorporated in Indians classical and medieval literature. Since then, many names' items of trades and geographical features have not undergone much change. For instance, Kubha has become Kabul and Gandhar has become Kandahar. In Indian literature, scholars have found names that correspond to names in Central Asia.

Consequent upon the continued connection and interaction between Central Asia and India. Their languages were mutually arrived. The phonetic simultaneities confirm this fact. Some Indian language accepted a number of Central Asian words like Ratna, Guru and Mani.¹³³ These names are also common in Mongolia and Tibet. Bokhara has evolved from vihara on Vihara. The pre-Aryans of Central Asia contributed words like Ganga, Anga, Vanga and Kalinga.¹³⁴

The interaction between the peoples of Central Asia and the people of India in the medieval period gave rise to the Urdu language. Hindi has absorbed a number of Turkic, Persian and Arabic words. Such words are also found in other Indian language. In during the Mughal rule in Indian Persian become the official language. On the other hand, Russian scholars have found some Indic languages in Central Asia. Different languages were spoken in Tarim and Oxus Valleys. The linguistic structure was not constant through time. The languages changed when the ethnic composition of society changed, with the passage of time.

¹³³ Singh Amit K. "India and Central Asia: An Interpretation of Mutually Indelible Historical Relationship and its Multi-Faceted Impact." *International Journal of Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Studies*, vol 2, no.7, 2015, pp. 61- 72. www.ijims.com/uploads/8e397c65041fc95a937210.pdf. Accessed on 3 March 2020.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

Sanskrit was systematically taught in Central Asia. In the Tokharian language Sanskrit was known as Arshi (Arya).¹³⁵ A number of Sanskrit manuscripts such as Asvaghosh's Buddha Charit and Saundaranand kavys were discovered in Shorchuq in central Asia during different excavations. The Bower manuscripts found at Kucha are medical texts.¹³⁶ New discoveries in central Asia and India during colonial times include a lot of material on the cultures and languages of different regions. The research during the colonial era, however, has many uncertainties. For instance, the cultural and linguistic chronology in the matter of the geographical spread has not been touched upon and there was a stress on differences rather than similarities.

The Expression of Mughal Connections with Central Asia

When the Mongols invaded India in the 13th century the trade and cultural ties of the region with central Asia were stopped for a while. Subsequently, however, in the same century, Timur sent a number of craftsmen from Delhi to Samarkand to build his new capital.¹³⁷ The connection between north India and Central Asia was thereby re-established. In course of time a descendant of Timur, Babur, became the founder of the Indo-Islamic Mughal Empire. Born in Andijan in the Fergana Valley Babur was mostly a monarch on the move, as he fought to expand his dominance over various parts of Central Asia, Persia, Afghanistan and India.¹³⁸ He succeeded in founding the Mughal dynasty in India. His court was a rich mix of the elite from Central Asia, where he himself was the king of Farghana.

¹³⁵ B.B. Kumar, Op. cit.

¹³⁶ B.B. Kumar, Op. cit. p. 26.

¹³⁷ B.B. Kumar, Op. cit. p. 19.

¹³⁸ Ibid. p. 14.

Some of his sultans in India represented the Tughlak, Khilji and Turkmen tribes. The Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Courts were rife with Manasabdars (high ranking nobles). He thus introduced hundreds of Turanis of Central Asian noble families into the Mughal courts in Delhi.

As the Mughal Courts flourished under the patronage of Babur and his successors, large number of scholars, writers, poets, artists, architects, and Sufi saints from Samarkand and Bukhara began to migrate to Delhi. Having arrived from Farghana valley and setup his own empire in India, he wrote the Babarnama, a biographical account about his native place and the wars he fought there. The narrative contains a lot of descriptions about the land, the people their lifestyle, housing, village structure, vegetation, fruits climate and so on. He expresses his dislike of India's heat and dust and fondly recalls the melons of Central Asia. While Abul Fazal has written about India's melons the Mughals pined for their roots and fruits in Central Asia. That a part their even nostalgic about the birds and other features of Central Asia. Akbar tried to grow Turanis grapes and melons in India. Jahangir was more obsessed with original central Asian fruits. In his time, special runners were deployed to bring apples from Samarkand. Information about Central Asia the Sufis and others arriving from there are not only to be found in the Babarnama and Ain-e-Akbari but also in the memories of other Mughal Kings and Delhi Sultans.¹³⁹

Though the Mughals preferred the regional fruits from their places of origin, Central Asia depended heavily on trade for their golden age of prosperity. India, on the other hand, largely produced its own wealth. Its coins in the Mughal era had more than double the weight of central Asian coins in the 16th century. After the death of Abdullah Khan, central

¹³⁹ Mansura Haider, Op. cit. pp. 256-258.

Asian coins had ever use metal value.¹⁴⁰ The Mughals maintained the trade route to central Asia, not only as a nostalgic connection to their homeland, but also to import Turcoman horses. This high endurance breed was the mainstay of the fear some Turko-Mongol cavalry. These mounts comprised Central Asia's top export item to Mughal India. In this manner India, in the Mughal period, maintained a positive balance of trade with central Asia. Many Indian Commodities went to Russia via central Asia however, with the passage of time, Uzbekistan increasingly became the terminus for Indian goods instead of a transit point for trade and commerce.¹⁴¹

After succeeding his father Humayun in 1556, Akbar became the Mughal emperor and during his reign his empire reached its peak.¹⁴² Unlike his father and grandfather who had been raised in central Asia and Afghanistan. Akbar was not so emotionally connected with that region. Akbar was however, conscious of the security threats to India consequent upon the political unrest in Central Asia. He directed his efforts to immunise India to the 16th century power struggles in Transoxania and to safeguard his empire that now extended to Kabul, Kandahar and most of Afghanistan.¹⁴³

Central Asians were driven by different reasons to migrate to India. At times the economic and political volatility in central Asia propelled an exodus to India. At other times they were drawn by the patronage extended by the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal court to Muslim's scholars, artists, soldiers and Sufi saints from Central Asia, Iran and the Arab countries. As noted by scholars the mutual influences between the two regions are expressed in the similarities is the paintings in India and central Asia. At the turn of the

¹⁴⁰ Foltz, Richard C. Op. cit. p. 21.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

16th century, a distinct blending appeared in the Indo-Turani style in miniature paintings. These paintings, during the Mughal era, evolved largely due to the efforts of central Asian masters. Again, the 17th century central Asian miniaturists adopted the Indian style particularly those of the Delhi masters.¹⁴⁴ There were many central Asian miniature painters and calligraphers serving in the Mughal courts. There was also a reverse flow of Indian mechanics, artisans, stone masons, builders and handicrafts from India into Central Asia. Timur took many of them to Samarkand.

The interactions between the Delhi Sultanate and Central Asia had begun with intellectual and artistic exchanges. Subsequently, a distinct Indo-Islamic culture begun to take shape when the Mughals introduced their own artistic and cultural heritage to the native Indian population. In this manner, with two-way interactions, Indian values meshed with values of Central Asian Turkic and Persian origin. In the 17th century, during the rule of Shah Jahan the Central Asian language, namely, Persian, that was popular in the Mughal courts became Indianised. The result, Urdu, retained the native Indian grammar along with a largely Persian vocabulary.¹⁴⁵

In retrospect, it was in the medieval times that India felt the biggest impact of Central Asian culture. In the last quarter of the 16th Century, there were a number of diplomatic exchanges between India and the Central Asian countries. In the finding of Scholar Foltz, a number of Uzbeks had family and other links with India from before.¹⁴⁶ With this background they assimilated relatively easily in the Indian ambience. While there appears to have been a continual flow from Central Asia to India. The rivers movement from India

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

was much less. However, around the border areas, there were Mughal rebels kept threatening to defect to the Uzbeks. The Mughals in India and the Uzbeks in Central Asia selected their ambassadors carefully. Among the Islamic nations the customs were to send leading clerics as ambassadors, so that the kings who received bad news would hesitate to kill the messenger.

The Mughals in India selected envoys of Central Asian origin, who were of high rank and duly incentivised with a promotion before under taking the mission. Mir Baraka was deputed many times to his native city, Bukhara, as the envoy of both Jahangir and Shah Jahan. Important Mughals in India commissioned these ambassadors with the task of delivering messages and gifts to family members, friends, and religious leaders, as also for collecting valued objects from that region. Accordingly, these diplomatic exchanges facilitated personal linkages between the independent political entities in Mughal and Uzbek territories. The Mughals thus maintained ties of friendship with the Uzbeks of Central Asia.

The mutual influences between Central Asia and India in the Mughal era depended largely on personal connections. The travellers between the two regions were mainly religious figures, merchants, adventures and explorers, though their missions often overlapped. The Mughal rulers were not inclined to distance themselves from their Central Asian origins and took care to keep up their connections with Central Asian personages, mainly the Sufi heads of the Naqshbandi Order. They also went out of their way to showering visitors to the court from Central Asia with expensive gifts. They even gave royal patronage to those who decided to stay back in India. Accordingly, in the Mughal times, Sufi leaders in India and Central Asia had followers in each other's countries.

Medieval Contacts Between India and Central Asia: Role of the Turkomans

While the contacts between India and Central Asia in the post Gupta period existed between different ethnic groups covering a wide area, the Turkomans conducted the most important exchanges between the two regions. This significant relationship is prominently high-lighted from the 8th century CE. Kalhana, the Sanskrit historian of Kashmir who wrote the *Rajatarangini*, the first genuine chronical in 1149-50 CE, has recorded authentic evidence about the Turkoman presence in India from earlier times.¹⁴⁷ It is interesting to note that, from ancient times, the nobles of Central Asia, particularly the Turkomans, considered armed soldiering as the most honourable and elevated profession. The Ghaznavid kings who invaded India from time to time through their armies awed their origins to the Turkomans.¹⁴⁸ Some invaders like Mahmud of Ghazni threatened to disrupt the cordiality of relations between India and Central Asia with their depredations. However, such conflicts did not end the contacts between the two cultures.¹⁴⁹ The scope of Indo-Central Asian contacts increased along with the magnitude of Indian response, as the multitude of linkages has existed over a long period of time.

¹⁴⁷ Zutshi, Chitralkha. "Past as Tradition, Past as History: The Rajatarangini Narratives in Kashmir's Persian Historical Tradition." *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol. 50, no. 2, May 2013, pp. 201–219, doi:10.1177/0019464613487119. Accessed on 2 March 2020.

¹⁴⁸ Bosworth, C. E. "Introduction." *History Of Civilizations of Central Asia: The Age of achievement, A.D. 750 to the end of the fifteenth century; the historical, social and economic setting*. Edited by: M. S. Asimov and C. E. Bosworth, Volume IV, UNESCO Publishing, 1998, pp. 22-26.
www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000111664.xml=<http://www.unesco.org/ulis/cgi-bin/ulis.pl>. Accessed on 25 February, 2021.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

In medieval times, the political process of forming states was influenced by Central Asian politics and were often a result of the political dynamics in Central Asia. The adoption of Persian as the official language in the Sultanate of Delhi,¹⁵⁰ the Bahmani Sultanate of the Deccans in Kashmir perpetuated the influence of Central Asia Culture in India and emphasised India's enduring relationship with Central Asia.¹⁵¹ In order to gain people's trust and support in the various regions of India, the Turkomans brought over Central Asian technologies in the fields of art and decor, crafts, masonry, calligraphy, paper making, cloth printing, building construction, etc.

The two civilizations of India and Central Asia had ancient routes and durable traditions. India too projected itself to the outside world as the cradle of ancient civilization and the epitome of refinement and culture. The Turkoman influence in all activities on the ground served to enhance a mutually enriching relationship between Indians and Central Asians.

Influence of India-Central Asian Exchanges on Medical Knowledge

In the area of medical knowledge and practices, exchanges among the different Asian Civilizations have continued since antiquity. According to historians, the spread of medical ideas and skill across political boundaries happened a few centuries before the common Era. The spread of medical knowledge, both scientific and folk, was facilitated by invasions, trade and different kinds of social, economic and cultural interactions. Three

¹⁵⁰ Islam, Riazul and Bosworth, C. E. "The Delhi Sultanate." *History Of Civilizations of Central Asia: The Age of achievement, A.D. 750 to the end of the fifteenth century; the historical, social and economic setting*, Edited by: M. S. Asimov and C. E. Bosworth, Volume IV, UNESCO Publishing, 1998, pp, 274-294. www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000111664.xml=http://www.unesco.org/ulis/cgi-bin/ulis.pl. Accessed on 25 February, 2021.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

principal medical traditions came into contact with one another. The Mediterranean tradition was formulated by Galen and practiced as Yunani Tibbia. It was the Arabic name for Greek medicine and it was written as Yunani in English. It was popular in Islamic societies in medieval times. In South Asia, the Indian system of medicine was known as Ayurveda. And there was the Chinese system of medicine. Medical historians attribute the development of the modern medical science in Europe to theoretical and practical ideas in the India, Greco-Arab, and Chinese schools of medicine known as the great traditional medicine.¹⁵²

Information relating to the basic medical traditions were freely exchanged by Buddhist monks between the medical practitioners of India and Central Asia.¹⁵³ This led to an enhancement of knowledge with regard to healing, translation of medical texts, documents and the manuscripts written by famous physicians. Information was exchanged about medicinal plants,¹⁵⁴ with the two regions contributing herbal seeds and seedlings with curative and healing properties. In addition to interactions regarding the fundamentals of medicine as incorporated in the *Materia medica*, there were regular migrations of physicians and surgeons from one country to another and between the regions of Central Asia and India. Some of the reputed healers were forced to relocate as their services were requisitioned and they were tasked to apply their expertise in specific cases. Others migrated for better career prospects and for being in proximity to renowned healers at centres that encouraged medical and philosophical research. The healers from Central Asia

¹⁵² Shankardass, Mala K. "India's interactions in Medical Knowledge and Practice". *India's Interaction with China, Central and West Asia*, edited by in A. Rahman, vol. 3, Part-2, Project of History of Indian Science, Philosophy and Culture, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 274-287.

¹⁵³ *History of Indian Healing Traditions*. Science and Society, www.ncbs.res.in/HistoryScienceSociety/content/overview-indian-healing-traditions. Accessed on 22 March 2020.

¹⁵⁴ Singh Amit K. Op cit.

included those from Iran. The migration of Central Asian hakims to India during the Mughal period is recorded in the documents of the times.¹⁵⁵ Those of great repute for their skills were appointed by the Mughal emperors as their personal physicians. They also earned special titles for their successes in the practical of their professions.¹⁵⁶

There are specific records of exchanges between India and the different countries of Central Asia with regards to medical compositions and the efficacy of drugs. These bilateral exchanges in respect of the theories of the *Materia Medica* were facilitated by the land routes that were frequented by traders, Buddhist monks, and cultural emissaries.¹⁵⁷ While researching the medical exchanges between India and Central Asia, the part played by the healers of the minority nationalities in Sinkiang and Tiber is often by passed.¹⁵⁸ However, there were many occasions for medical exchanges with those areas. It is a matter of record that many medical products and ideas in China owe to the exchanges is knowledge with those areas. In Sinkiang, in particular, many original Indian medical texts have been found, along with the translated excerpts in ancient Khotanese.¹⁵⁹ There is enough evidence to prove the practice of Indian medicine in these areas.¹⁶⁰

Medieval Connection of Indian Astronomy with Central Asia

India and Central Asia shared close connections in different fields of human endeavour since antiquity. For example, basic trigonometry in Central Asia originated from ancient

¹⁵⁵ Shankardass, Mala K. Op cit.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

India astronomy and astronomical knowledge. Central Asian scholars built on that knowledge with such assiduity that it was recognised as a part of world heritage.¹⁶¹ Al-Beruni and Al-Khwarizmi were reputed scholars also came to India from Transoxiana, Central Asia.¹⁶² They built upon the Sanskrit and other Indian Sciences. Al-Beruni composed the Tarikh-ul-Hind that incorporates comprehensive information about India.¹⁶³ On the other hand, Al-Khwarizmi focused on Indian mathematics.¹⁶⁴ He composed a brilliant astronomical ‘Zij’ that was founded on Hindu parameters and systems of calculation.¹⁶⁵ In 1126 CE his writings on Indian astronomy and mathematics were translated from Arabic to Latin.¹⁶⁶ He composed a gist of the Sindhind and the astronomical tables of Arkand, which dwelt on the mid night astronomy of Brahmagupta. It is widely accepted by scholars that Indian astronomy was influenced by the Alexandrian school which explains the largely Greek technical nomenclatures.¹⁶⁷ It is therefore evident that the scholars from Central Asia have not only preserved and simplified the Greek and Indian astronomical traditions but have also enriched them by way of the Cot and Tan functions and tables, thereby adding significantly to the world's scientific heritage.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶¹ Bag, A. K. “Status of Sine Tables in India and Central Asia during Medieval Times”. *India, Central; Asia and Russia: Three Millennia of Contacts*, edited by D. N. Tripathi, India Council of Historical Research, 2013, pp. 102-108.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Duran, Serbay and Samanci, Hüseyin. “Al-Khwârizmî’s Place and Importance in the History of Mathematics.” *ITM Web of Conferences*, vol. 22, 17 October, 2018, pp. 1-4. www.doi.org/10.1051/itmconf/20182201037. Accessed on 22 March 2020.

¹⁶⁵ Habib, Irfan. “Science and Technology.” *History of Civilizations of Central Asia: Development in contrast: from the sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century*, edited by Chahryar Adle and Irfan Habib, Volume-V, UNESCO Publishing, 2003, pp. 464-477. www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000130205. Accessed on 23 February, 2021.

¹⁶⁶ Bag, A. K. Op cit.

¹⁶⁷ Sanujit, Op. cit.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

Central Asian Scholars helped to disseminate the Indian concept of zero and the decimal system to Europe.¹⁶⁹

In the field of astronomy, Aryabhatta's *Ardha Ratrika* had a great impact on Abu Mashar al-Balkhi.¹⁷⁰ In Turfan some Uighur texts have been discovered that deal with lunar calculations founded on Indian's astronomy.¹⁷¹ The Indian system of medicine dominated the famous Bower manuscripts discovered in Central Asia. Indeed, the Indians systems of an adopted by Abu Mansur Muwafaq.¹⁷² Medieval Central Asia witnessed the rise of the Abbasid Caliphs. The three Indian astrological treatises, namely, *Aryabhatya*, *Brahmasphutasiddhanta* and *Khandakhadyaka*, were introduced at the court of the Abbasid caliphs.¹⁷³ While Aryabhatta composed his treatise in 499CE, the other two were written by Brahmagupta in 628CE and 665CE, respectively, Under the patronage of the Abbasid caliphs, starting from Abu Jafar al- Mansur (754-75CE), Indian scholars helped to study and translate these works into Arabic.¹⁷⁴ In this respect, the Mughals in India encouraged the Samarkand school of astronomy.¹⁷⁵ The astronomical tradition followed the work of Ulugh Beg, Timur's grandson also is reputed for having constructed the Samarkand observatory, and for his astronomical tables, the *Zij-i-Ulugh Beg*. Many copies of his work have been discovered in India. In the 17th century also, a number of Islamic treatises on astronomy were translated in to Sanskrit.¹⁷⁶

¹⁶⁹ Kumar, B B. Op cit.,

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Habib, Irfan. Op. cit.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

Naqshbandiya Sufism and Other Medieval Links Between India and Central Asia

In the Islamic world, the Naqshbandi Order is one of the principal Sufi Orders (Tariqa).¹⁷⁷ This order harks back to the 14th century Bukhara in Khurasan. Naqshbandiya is more notable for its Socio-Political theme than its anthropological roots.¹⁷⁸ The founder is set to be Mahammed Bahauddin Naqshbandi. This order grew into a global movement in the 15th and 16th centuries CE. It's spread to large swathes of the Sunni Muslim territories, such as West and Central Asia, the Ottoman Society and the Indian subcontinent, including China.¹⁷⁹ In its incipient stages, it was structured by Bahauddin Naqshbandi, who formulated the rules for the order. He took on the responsibility of establishing its centres throughout Central Asia, Herat, Balkh, Badakshan and India.

By the 15th century CE, the Naqshbandis had become so influential across Central Asia that they became closely involved in Central Asian politics, particularly in Bukhara.¹⁸⁰ The first Naqshbandis in India came along with Babur.¹⁸¹ Babur's successors in India and the Naqshbandi Sufi order gradually grew in importance and both expanded their influence in the country. The growth of the Naqshbandi order in India owed largely to Babur's

¹⁷⁷ Tabyshalieva, A. "Social Structures in Central Asia." *History of Civilizations of Central Asia: Towards the contemporary period: from the mid-nineteenth to the end of the twentieth century*, edited by Chahryar Adle, et al., Volume-VI, UNESCO Publishing, 2005, pp. 81-98, www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000141275. Accessed on 2 March, 2021.

¹⁷⁸ Ahmed, Sheikh S. "Naqshbandiyya Sufi Order: A Link between India and Central Asia". *India, Central; Asia and Russia: Three Millennia of Contacts*, edited by D. N. Tripathi, India Council of Historical Research, 2013, pp. 131-137.

¹⁷⁹ Qzdalga, Elisabeth. *The Naqshbandis in Western and Central Asia*. Isim Newsletter 6/00, Book Presentation, Leiden University, October, 2000, p.35. www.core.ac.uk/download/pdf/15605108.pdf. Accessed on 22 July, 2020.

¹⁸⁰ Tabyshalieva, A. Op cit.

¹⁸¹ Ahmed, Sheikh S. Op. cit.

conquest of India in 1526.¹⁸² The retinue of the new king comprised many Sufis, Chieftains, Nobles, etc. A number of important personages, such as Aziz Koka, ladies of the harem, namely Gurukul Begum and Salima Sultan, and Babur himself sought proximity to Mohammad Naqshband or Khwaja Ahrar, as they belonged to the same ancestral home land. In the 17th century CE, the Naqshbandis were the most powerful force in the areas now known as western Xinjiang, even though Islam had already become well established there. The area was host to notable Sufi shrines. The Naqshbandis even ruled in Kashgar for a period of time. The Tomb of The Fragrant concubine in Kashgar is the tomb of the Naqshbandi Khojas.¹⁸³

In this perspective, following the example set by Khwaja Ahrar, the Naqshbandi-Timurid alliance in India served two purposes.¹⁸⁴ It helped the Timurid regime to establish its Islamic identity and also helped to spread the Naqshband, teachings among the Indian Muslim community. Even after the end of the Mughal empire, between the 14th and 28th centuries, the Naqshbandi-Timurid partnership showed up in the social and religious bonding between the Naqshbandi and Afghans.¹⁸⁵ In the Mughal era, the Naqshbandi pir had a political role to play. The Naqshbandi shaykhs were closed to the ruler. These shaykhs advised the ruler and settled his administrative affairs. In addition, the ruler expected the shaykhs to involve divine support for his reign. Overall Indian Islam was greatly influenced by this central Asian phenomenon.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸² Kocumkulkizi, Elmira and Daniel Waugh, editor(s). "Religion". Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities, University of Washington, www.depts.washington.edu/silkroad/culture/religion/religion.html. Accessed on 22 July.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ahmed, Sheikh S. Op. cit.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Buehler, Arthur. "The Naqshbandiyya in Timurid India: The Central Asian Legacy". *Journal of Islamic Studies, Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol-7, no. 2, 1996, Colgate University, pp. 208-228.

Close Affinities Between India-Central Asia in Art and Architecture

Though Mughal art and architectures expressed a distinct Indo-Islamic style, they also serve to emphasise the empire's Central Asia origins.¹⁸⁷ Many of the most notable Mughal moments, including the Taj Mahal, were constructed by Central Asians.¹⁸⁸ Other than the name of Central Asian architects, there is much other evidence of Islamic architecture being introduced into India. For Instance, both the Taj Mahal in India and the Gour-i-Amir in Samarkand happen to have the same arrangement of the underground sepulchral vault.¹⁸⁹ Also, both the Taj Mahal and the Gour-i-Amir have the distinctive architectural feature of the bulbous domes.¹⁹⁰

These domes typify Muslim architecture. The Mughal style of architecture is a blend of Central Asian and Indian art forms.¹⁹¹ This style climaxed in the time of Shajahan with the construction of the Taj Mahal. Other than being a symbolic expression of love, it was the finest fusion of Central Asian and Indian art. Shajahan employed architects, master-craftsmen, and masons from Central Asia and India to bring up these wondrous moments that is one of the wonders of the world.¹⁹² Again, the Indian style of miniature paintings was influenced by the Central Asian miniature art forms. Subsequently, the miniature

¹⁸⁷ Pugachenkova, G. A., et al. "Architecture." *History of Civilizations of Central Asia: Development in contrast: from the sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century*, edited by Chahryar Adle and Irfan Habib, Volume-V, UNESCO Publishing, 2003, pp. 482-553. www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000130205. Accessed on 23 February, 2021.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Abdullah Chaghtai, "Indian links with Central Asia in Architecture." *The India Society*, 1937. pp. 85-87.

¹⁹¹ Pugachenkova, G. A. Op cit.

¹⁹² Ibid.

paintings of the Mughal era gave new life to the Bukhara school. As evident, the two cultures of Central Asia and India continued to renew and enrich each other.¹⁹³

On the other hand, the Mughal buildings that have with stood the test of time are the most prominent markers of the Central Asian origins of those rulers.¹⁹⁴ The marble and sand stone building materials used by the Mughals and the towards that were typically found in temples gave the Mughal constructions a distinctive style and an Indian flavour. However, the building plans for the mausoleums and gardens bear Central Asian traditions.¹⁹⁵ The cultural evolution in India in the 16th and 17th centuries, during the Mughal era, represented as amalgam of cultural elements from where ever in Asia the Persian Islamic cultural was dominant.¹⁹⁶ The contributions and compositions of migrant artists, musicians and poets, the communications between intellectuals, the spread Naqshbandism, and the effusions of Mughal architecture combine to present a dramatic flow of people, traditions, and ideas across a large geographical expanse.¹⁹⁷ The boundaries of this world were remarkable as they were defined by cultural affinity and not political demarcation. Consequently, it comprised a much larger territory then any empire could possibly administer.

Medieval Linkages Between India and The Emirates of Bukhara

The ancient settlement of Bukhara is presently the capital of Uzbekistan's Bukhara region being located on the Silk Road, the city of Bukhara has a long tradition as a centre of trade,

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

culture Scholarship, and religion.¹⁹⁸ It was a principal hub of the Islamic world during the golden age of the Samanid. The famous city has many mosques and madrassas. The Bukharans contributed generously in the fields of architecture, designs of gardens and music, especially Sufiana music.¹⁹⁹ The design of the Bukhara dome became a signature of the Mughal architecture.²⁰⁰ The dome of the Samanid King, Nasr bin Ahmad, in Bukhara finds a replica in the dome of the Taj Mahal. Again, the Juy-e-Muliyān gardens in Bukhara had inspired the Shalimar Bagh in Kashmir, that was constructed in the times of empire Jahangir.²⁰¹

Many Indian book binders, bakers, weavers, jewellers, and farmers participated in traditional exports and trade. They even captured the tea trade in Bukhara, and set up tea-packing units in Samarkand.²⁰² Indian merchants sold muslin cotton fabric, indigo, rugs, dyes iron, copper, sugar, and steel pots, etc. From Central Asia, they exported raw silk, Russian porcelain dishes and manufactures to Kashgar, Afghanistan and India. From ancient times the Indians maintained cordial relations with the people of the cities in Central Asia. Indian and Central Asian merchants had built up friendly mutual relations. The locals in Central Asia found the Indians to be a source of information and culture. After the region was annexed by Russia, the Indian traders extended their good will with Russian firms.²⁰³

¹⁹⁸ Akimushkin, O., et al. "Arts of the Book, Painting and Calligraphy." *History of Civilizations of Central Asia: Development in contrast: from the sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century*, edited by Chahryar Adle and Irfan Habib, Volume-V, UNESCO Publishing, 2003, pp. 556-610.

www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000130205. Accessed on 23 February, 2021.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Pandit, K. N. Op.cit. p. 142.

²⁰² Mukminova, R. G. and Mukhtarov, A. "The Khanate (Emirate) Of Bukhara." *History of Civilizations of Central Asia: Development in contrast: from the sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century*, edited by Chahryar Adle and Irfan Habib, Volume-V, UNESCO Publishing, 2003, pp. 35-62.

www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000130205. Accessed on 23 February, 2021.

²⁰³ Ibid.

19th Century Indo-Central Asian Commerce with Kashmir as a Transit Centre

Since ancient times India's linkages with Central Asia was facilitated by the ease of access and cultural commonality between Kashmir and that region.²⁰⁴ Kashmir and the other frontier territories of Ladakh, Baltistan, Gilgit and Hunza were connected with the Silk Route.²⁰⁵ Consequently, they participated with Central Asia in a two-way flow of people, goods and ideas. However, subsequently, these exchanges were impeded by the Anglo-Russian colonial rivalry during the 19 Century CE.²⁰⁶ This rivalry introduced severe constraints to movements between British India and the Russian parts of Central Asia.²⁰⁷ Russia kept extending its central southwards in Central Asia and finally established the office of the Governor General of Turkestan in 1867, based out of Tashkent.²⁰⁸ On the other hand, the British kept a tab on Russia's advances in Central Asia through its listening posts in the frontier territories of Kashmir, Ladakh, Baltistan, Gilgit, Hunza, Yasin and Chilas.²⁰⁹ Though Britain and Russia set up road blocks in the continuance of exchanges between Central Asia and British India, the people of the frontier territories around Kashmir kept up their contacts with Russian Turkestan in both general and commercial terms, but on a reduced scale.²¹⁰ At the same time, significant interactions between Russian

²⁰⁴ Warikoo, K. *Central Asia and Kashmir: A Study in the Context of Anglo-Russian rivalry*. Gian Publishing House, 1989, pp- 50-61.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Warikoo, K. "Kashmir and Russian Turkestan during the Nineteenth Century". *India, Central; Asia and Russia: Three Millennia of Contacts*, edited by D. N. Tripathi, India Council of Historical Research, 2013, pp. 201-215.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

Central Asia and Kashmir took place in the form of intelligence agents, political emissaries and official missions.²¹¹

The caravans that represented the mutual exchanges between Central Asia and India passed through the Hindu Kush. Khotan was renowned for its carpets, jade, and Silk fabrics.²¹² In the same way, Samarkand gained fame for its hemp cords, cottons fabrics and paper. Bukhara was the best market for carpets, Badakhshan for rubies and lapis-lazuli, Tibet for pashm wool and musk, Turfan for Pashm wool and Kashmir for calligraphed books, fine shaw's and saffron. As a result, these territories became significant trading centres on the reputed Silk Route. On the southern part of this route, different tracks branched off at Khotan and Yarkand towards India through the Karakoram and Pamir passes in the Kashmir area.²¹³

Kashmir evolved into a transit centre in the mutual trade between India and Central Asia because of its geographical access to Central Asia and the old Silk Route. The most popular trade route through Kashmir passed through Srinagar, Leh, Yarkand, Kashgar and Kokand.²¹⁴ Even so, the volume and value of the trade using this route was less than what passed through Punjab-Afghanistan-Central Asia and the Sea route through Bombay, Batum and Caspian Sea. In this context, before the sea routes were discovered and opened, the overland trade routes between India and Central Asia were the most important channels of communication.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid

Traditionally, the Central of the caravan trade between Central Asia and India through Kashmir was in the hands of Peddlers and trading agents who acted individually or through a collective. Subsequently, around the end of the 18th century there is enough evidence to indicate that the ruling elite of Russia began to take interest in this trade.²¹⁵ As a consequence of the constraints faced by Russian merchants in doing commerce with Europe in the wake of the Napoleonic wars and continual blockade, Russia began to explore the potential for trading with Asia. It was decided to set up a Russian commercial company that would focus on Asian countries and operate on the routes reaching as far as Kashmir, Tibet and India.²¹⁶ This proposed trading activities were energised in the first quarter of the 19th century when Russia took active steps to establish commercial linkages with central Asia, Afghanistan, Punjab and Kashmir.²¹⁷ As a result, Russia sent official diplomatic and trade missions to Kokand, Bukhara, Ladakh, Kashmir and Punjab to forge agreements with the different territorial rulers as secure the unhindered transit of goods.

In this perspective, the subsequent rivalry between Russia and Britain over Central Asia adversely affected the trade between India and Central Asia. On the one hand, Britain took positive steps in Kashmir to encourage Indian trade with Chinese Central Asia (Warikoo 50-61). On the other hand, the Tsarist administration in Russia initiated counter measures to block British goods from accessing Central Asian markets.²¹⁸ As a result, any substantial trade between Kashmir and Russian central Asia cause to an abrupt end. Nevertheless, India's indigenous products, such as spices, tea, indigo, books, brocades and shawls continued to trickle through to meet the constant demand for there in Central Asia and, from time to time, Russian gold and paper currency found their way to India. Many

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Warikoo, K, 1989, OP cit.

Indians, including Kashmir's, used this narrow trade channel to visit Central Asian markets and a number of Central Asian traders visited the markets in Leh and Srinagar.²¹⁹ While the trade between Russian Central Asia and Kashmir had been already reduced to an insignificant and irregular trickle, these movements were further inhibited by the unrest in central Asia in the period following the Russian Bolshevik revolution.²²⁰ In Soviet Russia, the state had nationalised private trade. This development left little opportunity for trade between India and Soviet Central Asia since it was operated solely through private traders.²²¹

Exchanges Between India and Central Asia through the Historic Silk Road

The Great Silk Roads never fail to capture the fascination of historians and other scholars, since they carried economic and cultural exchanges across the vast expanses of Eurasia.²²² The Silk Roads represent various movements, interactions, and resettlement across borders that were not strictly demarcated. These movements were not always over long distances. Since the 1st century BCE, the ancient Silk Road was used for semi-diplomatic and commercial missions from the east of the Mediterranean Sea, across the middle East, Bactria, Samarkand, India and the Central Asian region all the way to China.²²³ This Great Silk Road facilitated the diverse flows in many directions of people, ideas and

²¹⁹ Gopal, Surendra. 2013, Op. cit. pp. 231-239.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Khan, Nasir Raza. "India's Connection with the Silk Route." *India Quarterly*, vol. 61, no. 1, Jan. 2005, pp. 79-117.

²²³ Banerjee, Ranjana. "The Living Remnants of the Silk Route: Cross-Cultural Fusion Between India and Central Asia". *Central Asia and South Asia: Economic, Developmental and Socio-Cultural Linkages*, edited by Rashmi Doraiswamy, Manak Publication, 2017. pp. 331-333.

commodities.²²⁴ Through the 2nd century CE, the local rulers along the Silk Route actively encouraged the spread of Buddhism to Central Asia and China.²²⁵

India's relations with Central Asia date back to the 3rd century BCE since both the regions happened to be located on the ancient Silk Route.²²⁶ This channel of communication between, India and Central Asia facilitated the continual mutual exchange of goods, people and ideas.²²⁷ Though the Silk Road became suspension in time and the exchanges between the two-regional petered out there is an ongoing effort between India and the governments in Central Asia to revive the old ties.²²⁸ The Silk Route was not used merely for the exchange of goods, like Silk textiles and spices etc., but was also explored fortune dissemination of idea thoughts, philosophy and religion. This route enabled the spread of Buddhism from India to Central Asia and onwards to West China in the contemporary Xinjiang region.²²⁹

The teachings of Buddhism spread early and fast along the Silk Route.²³⁰ The Buddhist monks moved in the company of the travelling merchant. They spread Buddha's doctrine with missionary zeal. The religious teachings encouraged the popularity of music along

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Khan, Nasir Raza. Op cit.

²²⁷ Mishra, Mukesh Kumar, "The Silk Road Growing Role of India." *ZBW-Leibniz Information Centre for Economics*, 2020, www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/216099/1/THE%20SILK%20ROUTE.pdf. Accessed on 3 January 2021.

²²⁸ Menon, Rhea and Sharanya Rajiv. "Realizing India's Strategic Interests in Central Asia." Seminar, Carnegie India. 2019, www.carnegieindia.org/2019/12/01/realizing-india-s-strategic-interests-in-central-asia-pub-80576. Accessed on 22 July 2020.

²²⁹ Sajjanhar, Ashok. "India-Central Asia relations: Expanding vistas of partnership". Observer Research Foundation, Jun 22 2016, www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/india-central-asia-relations-expanding-vistas-of-partnership/. Accessed on 23 July 2020.

²³⁰ Ibid.

the Silk Road.²³¹ India is already in the process of renewing its past Silk Route connections with Central Asia, with a view to tapping into the region's energy potential.

The Silk Route provided the most important link between India and Central Asia. Since it carried the bulk of the merchandise. This route not only enabled trade to flow but also facilitated cultural exchanges.²³² These linkages resulted in durable geo-economic and geo-cultural relations between India and Central Asia.²³³ In course of history, this over land route lost its primacy with the discovery and activation of a new Sea Route. In course of time, the Old Silk Route lost its position as the chief connector between the two regions.²³⁴

The spread of Buddhism from India to Central Asia ran concurrently with the spread of cultural political and economic influences along the great Silk Road.²³⁵ The territory that is contemporary Central Asia was noted for the caravan routes used by merchants, diplomats, travellers, warriors, monks and missionaries at different times in history.²³⁶ The proposal to revive the Silk Road in the present time can be implemented in keeping with modern needs and technologies. For instance, India and Kyrgyzstan can re-active the ancient Silk Road with the help of the historical and cultural centres situated in the same larger geographical region.²³⁷ These two countries can make use of the new Cultural, Socio-economic globalisation and the latest advances in information technology. It may be noted that both countries have a common world view in the matter of many global

²³¹ Banerjee, Ranjana. Op cit.

²³² Liu, X. The Silk Road in World History. Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 42-60.

²³³ Ibid. pp. 61-86.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

growth prospects, as in the extension of different fields of communication, economic integration and advancements in all forms of cooperation and security systems.²³⁸

Relations Between India and Central Asia During the Rivalry Between Britain and Tsarist Russia

In the period after 1857, the historical connections between, India and Central Asia continued apace. However, during the 19th and 20th centuries there were other pressures that tended to force India and Central Asia to pull away from each other.²³⁹ At the start, the two imperial powers, Tsarist Russia and Britain, did not envisaged such snapping of ties between the two regions. However, during the 19th century, the two powers resented each other's involvement in their respective possessions.²⁴⁰ In the end, they demarcated their own areas of influence with Afghanistan identified as a buffer zone between British India and Tsarist Central Asia. At the start of the 20th century such demarcations appeared to be the only practicable expedient to avoid war, come to an agreement over Persia and maintained the balance of power in Europe.

In the remaining part of the 19th century, Britain and Russia influenced world politics by indulging in the Great Game for Asia.²⁴¹ From the last part of the 18th century, India's Mughal Empire had begun to collapse and the British were well on the way to colonising

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Kaushik, Devendra. "Central Asia in Indo-Russia Relations". *India, Central; Asia and Russia: Three Millennia of Contacts*, edited by D. N. Tripathi, India Council of Historical Research, 2013, pp. 180-193.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Fourniau, V and Poujol, C. "The States of Central Asia: Second Half of Nineteenth Century to Early Twentieth Century". *History of Civilizations of Central Asia: Towards the contemporary period: from the mid-nineteenth to the end of the twentieth century*, edited by Chahryar Adle, et al., Volume-VI, UNESCO Publishing, 2005, pp. 30-48, www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000141275. Accessed on 23 February, 2021.

the subcontinent. At the same time, the Tsarist Russian empire was consolidation its suzerainty over Central Asia.²⁴² The history of the late 19th century was largely of the Great Game played by the two imperialist powers, in which both tried to gain strategic control of over the two regions.²⁴³ Accordingly, the Great Game consisted mainly of the imperialist political contest between Britain and Russia to gain control of resources and dominate in Central Asia and Afghanistan.²⁴⁴ In time, Russia established control over Central Asia and connected the economy of the area with that of Russia in the north because Central Asian cotton was necessary to feed the textile factories in Moscow and St. Peterburg.²⁴⁵ Tashkent turned into a transit centre for the transport routes going north. At the same time, the British developed the port cities of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, so that Indian trade could be conducted by the Sea routes. The disconnect between India and Central Asia was further enhanced with the changing language education in the two regions. While the British promoted English, the Tsarist Russian encouraged education in the Russian language.²⁴⁶ Consequently, the erstwhile common language, Persian, the basis of centuries-old cultural communication was set aside. Eventually, the Silk Route was abandoned and the ancient relations between Central Asia and India were severed.²⁴⁷

Britain's attention on Afghanistan and the northern territories lost its focus when India's native rulers began to resent the colonial rule and there was a major domestic turmoil triggered by the First Indian Mutiny in 1857.²⁴⁸ Even so, after a few years, anticipating a

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Akbar, Z. "Central Asia: The New Great Game", *The Washington Review of Turkish & Eurasian Affairs*, October, 2012. www.thewashingtonreview.org/articles/central-asia-the-new-great-game.html. Accessed on 3 March 2020.

²⁴⁴ Rumer, Boris Z. *Central Asia: A Gathering Storm?* Routledge, 2002, pp. 66-108.

²⁴⁵ Fourniau, V and Poujol, C. Op cit.

²⁴⁶ Kaushik, Devendra. Op cit.

²⁴⁷ Chandra, Amiya. *India-Central Asia Relations: The Economic Dimension*. Pentagon Press, 2015, pp. 19-20.

²⁴⁸ Kaushik, Devendra. Op cit.

Russian advance against the khanates of Kokand and Bukhara in 1866, the British intelligence network revived its contacts with Bukhara and Samarkand.²⁴⁹ After the Russian annexed the Khanates, Britain maintained an effective and widespread network of spies across Central Asia over the subsequent few decades.²⁵⁰ Britain needed the intelligence for two purposes. Firstly, it wanted to be alert to any Russian agenda for expanding to the south. Secondly, and more vitally, it wanted to pre-empt any collaboration between Russian agents and the Indians based in Central Asia. Significantly, the ruling princes in India has begun to explore the potential for collaborating with the Russians. Between 1866 and 1880, the Rajas of Kashmir, Indore, Gwalior and Jaipur tried to forge an early alliance with Tsarist Russia that was in a situation of confrontation with Britain.²⁵¹

While Central Asia's position as a strategic links between India and Russia was weakened by Russia's annexations of the region and the establishment of British colonial rule in India, the connections between India and Central Asia were not totally erased. India's efforts to liberate itself from British rule was given a fill up by the Russian conquest of Central Asia.²⁵² These developments that were a setback to Britain spurred the people of India to shake off the border the British colonial oppression. On the other hand, Maharaja Ranbir Singh of Kashmir sent a delegation of four persons to Tashkent soon after Russia had occupied the area.²⁵³ Two members of the delegations were killed while on their way. The other two emissaries, Abdur Rahman Khan and Sarfaraz Khan managed to reach Tashkent in November 1865.²⁵⁴ The mission failed as the Tsarist government refused to

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Kaushik, Devendra. Op cit.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

support the movement for India's national liberation.²⁵⁵ However, despite the Russian government backing off from co-operating with Indians in their struggle for freedom, Britain's rivalry with Russia over Central Asia encouraged India's freedom fighters to persist in their struggle and continue with their centuries-old affinity with Russia.²⁵⁶

The continuity conflict between Russia and Britain finally came to a halt with the signing of the Anglo-Russian convention at St. Petersburg in August, 1907.²⁵⁷ Both parties agreed to abide by the boundaries that existed at the time in Tibet, Afghanistan and Persia.²⁵⁸ Even though both the empires retained the desire to intrude into each other's territories and areas of influence, other Eurasian forces had risen and greatly changed the balance of power in the region. The Anglo-Russian treaty of 1907 reduced conflicts in South and Central Asia and allowed the two great powers to focus on another constructive issue. Afghanistan remained within the British area of influence and became a buffer zone between the two empires.²⁵⁹ In addition, Britain would control the Persian seas. Russia would rule over the northern lands. The issue of Tibet would be decided separately after consulting the Chinese.²⁶⁰

After the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 the Soviet Union became ideologically supportive of the Indian Marxists.²⁶¹ The ties between India and Central Asia received another boost when Tashkent became the venue for Indian revolutionaries to liaise with the Soviet. Afghanistan became the base for the Khilafat movement that transited Central Asia and

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Singh, Mahavir and Krassilchikov, Victor (Eds). *Eurasian Vision*. Anamika Publishers, 2003, p. 133.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

reached Turkey to join common cause with Mustafa Kamal Ataturk. This Bolsheviks withdrawn their initial support of the Indian revolutionaries in 1925 owing to increasing British pressure and the antipathy of native.²⁶² Central Asians to the presence of Indian revolutionaries in Tashkent. The Soviet support of India's communist resumed after the centre of communication shifted from Tashkent to Moscow.

The unhindered trade and communication between the Indian subcontinent and Central Asia received a set back with the advent of Soviet rule and the demarcation of Central Asia into separate Soviet republics. However, Tashkent remained a centre for Indian studies and Russian Indologists moved there after the institute for oriental studies was relocated there from Moscow. The Soviets expected these establishments in Tashkent to aid their war effort during the Second World War. Tashkent University also set up a chair on Indian studies. A gradually strengthening of an Indian cultural presence boosted India's popularity among the common folk in Central Asia.

It led the way for heightened and durable co-operation between the two regions. Subsequently, when the Soviet Union found its presence in Afghanistan to be a drain on its resources. Without matching benefits, it was constrained to revise policies in the region as also domestically. The Soviets began to withdraw from Afghanistan in early 1988 after the advent of Mikhail Gorbachev as the general secretary and president and the promulgation of his policies of Glasnost and Perestroika to revive the flagging Soviet economy.²⁶³ While the Soviet communist party had failed to rejuvenate the stagnant economy, it lost its position of power when Gorbachev's reforms and the democratisation

²⁶² Kaushik, Devendra. Op cit.

²⁶³ Cronin, Richard P. "Afghanistan in 1988: Year of Decision." *Asian Survey*, vol. 29, no. 2, Feb. 1989, pp. 207-215,

of the country got under way.²⁶⁴ The core unity of the Soviet Union began to be diluted by 1990 with rising food shortages and state financial deficits.²⁶⁵ This situation was aggravated when Eastern Europe broke away from the Soviet Block amid the emergence of nationalist identities. The Central Asian Soviet Socialist Republic were also consumed by the need to design their own future and, by Dec 1991, they were on their own independent paths. as distinctive nations.²⁶⁶

India's Policy Towards Post-Independence Central Asian Republics

Given their new-found independence in 1991, the five Central Asian Republics²⁶⁷ became independently able to relate to the world at large. After surviving an initial economic crisis these republics aimed to achieve economic stability, domestic democratisation and preservation of their independence. To that end they embarked upon foreign policies that would align them to select foreign partners. They also decided to open different sectors of their economy to different degrees. In the light of this domestic and diplomatic structure, the Central Asian Republic have renewed diplomatic relations with India so as to revive the historical business and cultural relations and recalibrate the same to the contemporary imperatives.

Since ancient times, the Central Asian region has functioned as India's extended neighbourhood. India, in turn has positioned the modern transformation of these traditional relationships as its primary policy objective in the contemporary context. In the process, it

²⁶⁴ York, Harry M. "The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan: Strategic Context." *School of Advanced Military Studies, Defence Technical Information Centre*, January 2013, www.apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA606280.pdf. Accessed on 2 April, 2020.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Devendra Kaushik, Op. cit. p. 192.

²⁶⁷ York, Harry M. Op cit.

is importance to note take into account the existing realities. On the positive side there are the residues of Indian culture that can be built upon. At the same time India must adopt to the evolved political ambience in the newly independent republics. Even as India has the advantage of a cultural legacy, it must also contend with geo-political disadvantages.

Relative to the easy multi-dimensional exchanges between India and Central Asia during the Soviet era, the post-brake up structure of independent Central Asia presents a very different geopolitical arena. The breakup of the Soviet Union in a short span of time forced India to re-design its policies towards Russia and the newly independent states, as well as the other socialist block countries. A new geo-political configuration had come into being in the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The ancient cultural and social linkages vested upon India the responsibility to renew its relationship with the region. India's own traditional policy of non-alignment was also turned to re-establishing its ties with Central Asian States.

In the backdrop of critical developments in the neighbourhood and around the world, India's relationship with Central Asia during the 1990s veered towards security issues.²⁶⁸ In the aftermath of the terrorist attack in the USA on September 11 2001, Afghanistan became centre for counter terror operations.²⁶⁹ In this context, the Republic of Central Asia assumed importance because of their geo-strategic location. Further, in the wake of their independence, the Central Asian countries witnessed a phase of religious revivalism. This

²⁶⁸ Roy, Meena Singh. "India's interests in Central Asia." *Strategic Analysis*, vol. 24, no. 12, 1 Mar. 2001, pp. 2273-2289.

²⁶⁹ Cottey, Andrew. "Afghanistan and the new dynamics of intervention: counter-terrorism and nation building." *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute 2003, Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, pp. 167-194. www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/167-194Chapter4.pdf. Accessed on 2 March 2020.

movement gained intensity following the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan were the most affected.

In the last phase of the 20th century, India emerged as a nuclear power and witnessed a surge in economic growth. India's policy towards Central Asia went beyond security issues and concentrated on economic diplomacy. India's successful economic liberalisation led to an enlargement of its economic profile. The Central Asian market came under focus because of its geographical proximity, the known routes of trade and the strategic importance of its connectivity with a wider Eurasia. India's envisaged economic growth required an expansion and diversification of the sources of supply of energy in order to adequately meet the potential requirements. Global political dynamics indicated that the existing sources of energy were no longer dependable. In the context of the shifting geopolitics, the Central Asian region, that was rich in oil and gas resources, became critical for India's energy security.

The newly resurgent Central Asian nations designed their foreign policies so their foreign policies so as to bolster the different sectors of their economy. This focus opened up the possibilities of engaging in bilateral trade and co-operation with liberalised, growing economies that had streamlined banking facilities. The Central Asian countries needed to gear themselves to attract foreign investments. International organisations began to extend funds under diverse schemes with a view to revitalising the economy of this region.

Subsequent to their independence, the Central Asian nations came under the scrutiny of regional and global powers that desired to expand their spheres of interest into this vulnerable territory. In the Great Game, the power-seekers zeroed in on areas having a

power vacuum. These contenders for power and influence were both regional and extra-regional. It did not take long for them to stake their claims on the regions of Central Asian and Transcaucasia countries that were rich in oil and natural gas reserves.

Concluding Observation

India and the nations of Central Asia are familiar with one another owing to their Centuries old connections. The exchanges between the two regions date back to pre-historic times (4000 BCE). Some scholars have held forth on the overlapping of the geo-political orbits of northern India and Southern Central Asia over many Centuries, until the fall of the Kushan Empire. In that period, Buddhism travelled north from its origins in India to Central Asia and then spread coastwards. These interactions were interrupted when the Arabs invaded. Sindh, and the Muslims and Mongols conquered Central Asia, and subsequently India. However, the collaborative and cultural ties between India and Central Asia were restored when Babur began to reign in Delhi, and established the Mughal Empire. Consequently, an Indo-Islamic artistic culture came into being that was largely influenced by Central Asia. Subsequently, during the 19th and much of the 20th century the earlier paradigm shifted radically.

The British arrived in India and began the process of establishing their rule. In time, the Mughal Empire collapsed. At around the same time the forces of the Tsar of Russia reached the borders of Central Asian emirates. These two developments resulted in India and the Central Asian region veering away from each other, while the two expansionist, impartial and colonising powers, Britain and Russia, engaged in their own Great Game. Following the policies of the two colonial empires, India and Central Asia took to different

paths. However, the respective spheres of influence sometimes overlapped in Afghanistan, where the two imperial powers found themselves on the brink of war.

After the Soviet Union broke up, the newly independent Central Asian Republics (CARs) began the process of nation building. India, however despite of the historical partnership, was unable to assist in the efforts in the early 1990, owing to an economic crisis, domestic problems, and uncertainties in the making of foreign policy, India found itself focussed on Pakistan and South Asia. Approaching the new millennium, India became more assertive and started to engage with the Central Asian Republic on issues of shared security and strategy. Even so, it failed to match the initiatives already taken in the region by the Chinese and other players. It failed to recover its past economic influence and has remained a secondary partner ever since. In this scenario, pursuant to its Connect Central Asia Policy (CCAP), India tried to make up for its earlier neglect of the Central Asian region by presenting the old cultural and civilisation affinities, as well as its own technological and innovative capacities, thereby closing the gap between its economic prowess and that of China's. While the Central Asian Republics Officially acknowledge their historical and cultural ties with India, the relationship is yet to manifest by way of substantive benefits in the current context.

Overall, this chapter has attempted to provide a historical overview of India's ties to Central Asia, as also a critical study of India's capabilities, policies and actions in respect of Central Asia, particularly in the matter of energy security after the termination of the cold war. In the process, it offers a historical and factual basis for a theoretical understanding of India's engagement in the region, that the following chapter will attempt to engage in. The historical backdrop and the cultural exchanges as outlined in this chapter,

allows for, a meaningful understanding of the determinants of India's energy. Security Strategy. This becomes the topic for a comprehensive analysis later in the thesis.

Chapter-Two

India's Foreign Policy Objectives in Central Asia with Special Reference to Kazakhstan

Introduction

Foreign policy is a country's overall strategy that designs the conduct of its relations with other countries and populations on the global stage.²⁷⁰ It is the final structure of the principles, the interests and the objectives within which a Nation conducts its relations with other nations.²⁷¹ The "principles" of foreign policy deals with the accepted codes of conduct, that are by definition desirable, such as honouring treaties and not interfering in the internal affairs of other countries. A Nation's "interests" are the factors that a Nation considers to be important for its existence and growth such as territorial integrity, advancement of living standards, and the continuance of a free way of life. A state's

²⁷⁰ As, Bojang. "The Study of Foreign Policy in International Relations." *Journal of Political Sciences & Public Affairs*, vol. 06, no. 04, 2018, doi:10.4172/2332-0761.1000337.

²⁷¹ Boundless Political Science, "Foreign Policy". *Lumenlearning.Com*, <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-politicalscience/chapter/foreign-policy>. Accessed 6 May 2020.

“objectives” are the precise goals to be achieved in the light of the circumstances in which the interactions with another states are conducted.

The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the termination of the Cold War resulted in prominent changes in the global political environment. Accordingly, India has had to reconsider the basic parameters of its foreign policy. It became increasingly clear that India had to improve its relations with the west, particularly the United States. Such a realignment of diplomatic focus assumed and undeniable urgency and demanded priority in New Delhi. Gradually over time, India has risen in prominence in the regional and international group of nations. The dramatic economic growth since 1990 has helped India to begin commercial relationship with the important countries of the world. Importantly, it has succeeded in achieving cooperation with the United States in the field of politics and security. However, India’s efforts at engaging with all powers have encountered certain blocks. These impediments have appeared following the emergence of China as a dominant economic and military power, the aggressive and threatening stance of Beijing in its bilateral relations with New Delhi, the deterioration in US-China relations, the abrogation of post-Cold War understanding between US and Russia, attempts by the US to sanctions and isolate Iran.

As India began to liberalised its economy, it reached out to the Association of South- East Asian Nations (ASEAN) with a view to engaging with that important regional grouping. In 1992, Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao declared India’s look East Policy. In the immediate period after the end of the Cold War this was a very successful Indian diplomatic initiative. Following the dissolutions of the Soviet Union Rao promptly established diplomatic relations with the new republics in Central Asia. In the early 1990’s,

Rao took the initiative to revise India's foreign policy towards the Middle East to adapt to the increased significance of the countries in that region. It was Rao's tenure that India began to seriously consider different areas of co-operation with the African region. This led to the founding of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC).²⁷² By the end of the 20th century India's foreign policy had made new provisions for dealing with important regions, including the immediate neighbourhood.

In 1991, fifteen newly independent states were formed from the dissolved Soviet Union.²⁷³ This resulted in significant geopolitical changes and had a considerable impact on global affairs. In Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan were no longer under Soviet control. As independent Sovereign nations, they were now free to formulate their own foreign policy in international affairs. They could play their own path of growth and forge ties with other countries as they deemed necessary. All features in the existence of the former Soviet Republics, particularly with respect to the military and security spheres, were impacted by the fall of the Soviet Union. According to Martha Brill Olcott, "Few people of the world have ever been forced to become independent nations. Yet that is precisely what happened to the five Central Asian Republic."²⁷⁴ As Sovereign entities, they faced significant challenges in establishing their position on the world stage. The difficulties were three-fold in the context of their foreign policy. Firstly, owing to their Subservient-position under the Soviet regime, they had no experience in international dealings and had no power to engage with the global

²⁷² Waidyatilake, Barana. "The Indian Ocean Rim Association: Scaling Up?". *Institute of South Asian Studies*, no, 262, 12 July 2017, pp. 1-14. www.isas.nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/media/isas_papers/ISAS%20Working%20Papers%20No.%20262-%20The%20Indian%20Ocean%20Rim%20Association.pdf. Accessed on 22 July 2020.

²⁷³ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopedia. "Collapse of the Soviet Union". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11 Aug. 2020, www.britannica.com/event/the-collapse-of-the-Soviet-Union. Accessed 12 October 2020.

²⁷⁴ Olcott, Martha B. "Central Asia's Catapult to Independence". *Foreign Affairs*, vol, 71, no. 3, Summer 1992, pp. 108-130. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20045233>. Accessed on October 10 2020.

community. Secondly, when the Soviet Union was in decline, the snapping of economic linkages with USSR caused major difficulties in the Central Asian Republics and adversely affected their economic, political and ethnic circumstances. Thirdly, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the new geopolitics in Central Asia witnessed a Scramble among regional and global powers to establish their own influence.²⁷⁵

In this dynamic period, successive prime ministers of India, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh succeeded in expanding the scope of India's engagement with its extended neighbourhood, Central Asia.²⁷⁶ Along with the rapid growth of India's economy there were enhanced commercial dealings with the neighbouring regions. Both Vajpayee and Singh made significant efforts towards initiating trade linkages with East Asia. India's foreign policy recognized the growing importance of the Gulf States in West Asia, but failed to negotiate free trade agreements with the Gulf of Co-operation Council (GCC). However, India's rapid growing needs for energy imports, and the expansion of exports to the Gulf overtimes resulted in the GCC states becoming India's foremost trading partners. With its look east policy India signalled a new focus on its extended neighbourhood that was made possible by its internal economic reforms. In this perspective, India's foreign policy assumed new dimensions with the additional features of a Look West Asia Policy, a Connect Central Asia Policy (CCAP), and a more intense engagement with Central Asia and the Indian Ocean littoral.

²⁷⁵ Rakhimov, Mirzokhid. "Regional Cooperation in Central Asia and Perspective of Central Asia-India Relations". *India, Central Asia and World Powers*, edited by Nasir Raza Khan, 1st ed., 2013, India: Primus Books, pp. 18-20.

²⁷⁶ Scott, David. "India's Extended Neighborhood Concept: Power Projection for a Rising Power". *India Review*, vol. 8, no. 2, 29 May. 2009, pp. 107-143, DOI: 10.1080/14736480902901038. Accessed on October 10 2020.

There were major strategic implications in India's emphasis on Central Asia, Africa, and the Middle East for directing India's exports and sourcing important raw materials. As the mutual dependencies between India and its extended neighbourhoods continued to grow apace, New Delhi bestowed high priority to the renewal of historical geographical connectivity, and the construction of new corridors for transport of goods and energy to and from the Persian Gulf, Central Asia and South-East Asia. Then, following focused diplomatic efforts, India began to participate in the regional institutions that were newly established in the extended neighbourhood. Though India had, in the past, shied away from regionalism, in the early 1990s, India laid stress to its participation in the regional institutions sponsored by ASEAN. In Central Asia, India gained the positions of observer in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Finally, recognising China's growing economic influence in the Indian Ocean littoral, India began to expand and deepen its own engagements in the region.

While India's foreign policy towards the world's major power, extended neighbourhood and within the subcontinent in the last 30 years, its intrinsic values and principles have remained steadfast. India's foreign policy, once geared to non-alignment, is now supportive of "Strategic autonomy" which upholds the same spirit. The concept of non-alignment, over time been given new meanings, all of which may not confirm to what the founders of India's foreign policy had envisioned. Originally, Non-alignment as a strategy had a reason during the Cold War rivalry that prevailed towards the middle of the 20th Century when India became independent.

It is inevitable that India's foreign policy would undergo structural changes in the years ahead in accordance with India's perception of its position in the world. At present, in spite

of the reduced rate of growth of the Indian economy in the recent past, India is on track to becoming a major global power. Its financial and commercial policies had addressed its weaknesses in the global system. In the rapidly shifting circumstances that are evident in the international scenario, India is conscious of its emerging strength. India's economy has witnessed notable changes on account of an accelerated rate of growth over 25 years. About half of the economy is currently connected with international trade through imports and exports. The Indian economy is now quite different from what it was before the reforms that took place in the 1990s. The present economic interdependence with different countries requires a policy of "strategic autonomy" based on prevailing realities. India's foreign policy is no more focused on defending its economy against foreign exploitation, but is now geared towards influencing the regional environment, and participating in international affairs in order to bring about the conditions favourable to India's growth and wellbeing. In essence, India is on a mission to achieve strategic influence.

Central Asia's Geostrategic and Geopolitical Significance

In order to understand the influences exerted by external powers in the region, it is necessary to study the field of active geopolitics. For a century, scholars have done extensive research on the geostrategic significance of Central Asia. The pioneers of research on modern geopolitics, Halford Mackinder and Karl Haushofer, have considered how different international centres of power have competed with one another to establish their claims on the landmass known as Eurasia. In the wake of the dissolutions of the Soviet Union these eminent scholars and others have tried to project the geostrategic future of the region on the basis of the new policies and networks that emerged. It is an ongoing

exercise, since geography must be the critical parameter in comprehending the complex interplay of politics, commerce, and security in shaping the environment of Central Asia.

The concept of geopolitics originated in the works of the Swedish human geographer Rudolf Kjelle, in whose view the state is a geographic organism, or phenomenon in space, that found political manifestation as a country or nation.²⁷⁷ Different scholars have defined and explained the term Geopolitics from separate perspectives. Fundamentally, as prevails in the ongoing discourse, the term embraces a multiplicity of interactions between global politics and the spatial contexts of the geographies of the world's nations. In the first half of the 20th Century the concept of geopolitics assured realistic dimensions. Mackinder provided the British with an ideology that supported imperialistic ambitions. Subsequently, the works of Haushofer motivated Nazi Germany with an ideological platform for its geographic expansionism, largely in Eastern Europe. Later on, the ideas of Dutch-American Nicholas Spykman, particularly with regard to containment, influenced George Kennan America's diplomat and historian who advocated a containment policy towards the Soviet Union all through the Cold War. It was, once again, a realist interpretation of geopolitics. Another group of thinkers, including Zbigniew Brzezinski and Samuel Huntington, emerged in the early 1990s who used geopolitics to justify American hegemony.²⁷⁸ With this backdrop, they analysed the international relations succeeding the Soviet Union and the colonial era.²⁷⁹ In his renowned paper, the

²⁷⁷ Roger, Kaspersen, E, and Julian V Minghi. *The Structure of Political Geography*. Routledge, 2011. pp. 7-10.

²⁷⁸ Aysha, Emad El-Din. "Samuel Huntington and the Geopolitics of American Identity: The Function of Foreign Policy in America's Domestic Clash of Civilizations." *International Studies Perspectives*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2003, pp. 113-132. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/44218255. Accessed 24 July. 2020.

²⁷⁹ Brzezinski, Zbigniew. *The Grand Chessboard*. Basic Books, 1997, p. 62.

geographical pivot of History, Mackinder was the first scholar to state that Central Asia was vital to the control of the Eurasian landmass, and thereby the rest of the world.²⁸⁰

Since then, Central Asia has repeatedly figured in the contemporary geopolitical discourse. Mackinder's proposition was echoed in the later works of Haushofer and Spykman who offered a logical reasoning for their countries to gain control and supremacy over Eurasia, or at least its containment. Their proposition fuelled the scholarly discourses that followed the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the competition among different powers to access the resources of the region, even as new borders were drawn for the sovereign states that emerged. There was a scramble to form geo-strategic and geo-economic configurations that resulted in co-operation and competition of the region. New discourses that promoted such an ideal situation surfaced in the United States, Russia, China, Iran and Turkey.²⁸¹

The importance of Central Asia owes to its position at the heart of the Eurasian land mass. Historically, it straddled the paths of both invaders and traders. In some cases, it had encouraged foreign powers to extend their influence in the region, and in other cases, it had spurred such external advances. In geostrategic terms, the region is known as Greater Central Asia. It includes the five Central Asian republics, Afghanistan and the Turkic Xinjiang province of China.²⁸²

²⁸⁰ Mackinder, H. J. "The Geographical Pivot of History". *The Geographical Journal* vol. 23, no. 4, 1904 pp. 421-444.

²⁸¹ Fettweis, Christopher J. "Sir Halford Mackinder, Geopolitics, and Policymaking in the 21st Century." *The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters*, vol. 30, no. 2, 2000, pp. 61-62. www.press.armywarcollege.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1974&context=parameters. Accessed on 22 October 2020.

²⁸² Sahgal, Arun and Vinod Anand. "Strategic Environment in Central Asia and India". *Reconnecting India and Central Asia: Emerging Security and Economic Dimensions*, edited by Joshi, Nirmala, The Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and The Silk Road Studies Program, 2010, pp. 33-79. www.silkroadstudies.org/resources. Accessed on 22 October 2020.

Sir Halford Mackinder in his “Heartland Theory”, postulated in the early 20th Century had highlighted the geopolitical and strategic significance of the Eurasian heartland, namely the Central Asian region. In turn, in 1997, Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote in “The Grand Chessboard” that the region in the post-Soviet era was a “Black Hole”. The post-Soviet Central Asia consisted of the Caucasus, former Soviet Socialist Republics, and Afghanistan, also known as the Eurasian Balkans.²⁸³ In his view, Uzbekistan was the crux of Central Asia. It was least subject to Russian dominance and its autonomy was essential to the continuance of the other Central Asian States.²⁸⁴ In the last two decades Kazakhstan has emerged as the richest in resources and has become one of the most important states in Central Asia.

There is the interplay of many forces in Central Asia and the Caspian region that attract international attention. Firstly, its strategic importance lies in its geographical closeness to countries such as China, India, Russia, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Secondly, it is richly endowed with hydrocarbon reserves. Thirdly, it has come to serve as a transit hub for gas and oil pipelines. Moreover, different communication corridors emanate from there to connect with China, Russia, Europe, and India. Fourthly, Central Asia in general, principally Afghanistan, is a home to illegal drug production and trafficking, and some major terrorist groups.²⁸⁵

²⁸³ Brzezinski, Zbigniew. *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*, Basic Books, 1997. pp. 86-122.

²⁸⁴ Ibid. pp. 112-113, 143-144.

²⁸⁵ “Illicit Drug Trends in Central Asia”. *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Regional Office for Central Asia*, 2008, www.unodc.org/documents/regional/central-asia/Illicit%20Drug%20Trends_Central%20Asia-final.pdf. Accessed 13 Oct 2020.

On the other hand, the geopolitical significance of Afghanistan owes to its position as strategic bridge between Central Asia and South Asia, as also to it becoming a source of potential terror threats to other countries. Accordingly, Central Asia is a major factor in the dynamics of international politics. In consideration of the factors outline above, the regional and global powers began to compete for influence in Central Asia in the post-Cold War period. The decline and dissolution of the Soviet Union caused a power vacuum in the vast Eurasian arena. It was almost inevitable that there would be geopolitical jockeying for influence in the region involving great power such as Russia, USA, China, Iran and India, besides other countries and also large international organizations. In Central Asia, the attention of the world was drawn mainly to security and economic issues. These are the main areas where the nations of Central Asia engage with external powers.

On the energy map of the world, Central Asia enjoys a strategic position with strong connections to neighbouring regions. In some its significance owes to its economic structure, political characteristics, and geographic location that give access to other parts of the world. It is important to note that the Central Asian Republics survive and prosper because they maintain different external connections and corridors. The energy potential of the region becomes important because the corridors branch out in all directions, effectively, connecting China, Russia, Europe, the Caucasus region, South Asia and the countries around the Indian Ocean.

Politically, the region of Central Asia is relatively more stable than Afghanistan, Iran, and the middle east in general. From the start of the 21st century accelerated developmental activities have propelled the great powers to compete more vigorously for energy resources. In turn this has led to energy prices spiralling upwards, and a new outlook on

energy security. Central Asia, owing to its energy reserves, has become the arena where great powers, in the region and outside have entered into competition. These rivalries affect their relationships and impact the balance of power, thus shaping the international structure that emerged in the post-Cold War era. According to scholars, Central Asia plays an important role in the new world order. It is the focus of stiff competition in a world where the demand for energy resources is increasingly intense. In the world energy market, Central Asia and the Caspian region assume critical strategic importance particularly when nations are trying to diversify their energy sources.

Fundamental Factors Underlying India's Foreign Policy Strategy in Central Asia

India's geopolitical interest in Central Asia, falling within its extended neighbourhood, has continued in the post-Cold War era. India's foreign policy was designed by its democratic nature, spurred by its economic growth, and driven by its own great power ambitions beyond South Asia and into the extended neighbourhood even as it sought to engage with the existing great powers of the world. India's ambition to achieve the status of a great power is challenged by security threats in its immediate neighbourhood, as emanating from Pakistan and China. It is also affected by the volatility existing in Afghanistan. Importantly, China is its principal rival in garnering influence in the region.

India's economic stake in central Asia is a key component of its policy to achieve energy security and trade ascendancy. With a view to pursuing its opportunities in the region, India is interested in featuring in the cooperation architectures such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the European Economic Union (EEU). India joined

the SCO as a substantive member at the summit in Astana, on June 9, 2017.²⁸⁶ The SCO's security activities in the region is bolstered by India's participation in security cooperation, which is in line with India's own foreign policy security objectives.²⁸⁷ India's membership in the SCO is also expected to bring to the fore regional security issues, particularly the security situation in Afghanistan.²⁸⁸ The ethos of terrorism, as existing in central Asia, is based on the three pernicious ideas, namely, separatism, extremism and terrorism. As a member of SCO, India has an important role to play in curbing terrorism.²⁸⁹ The stability of the entire region is under the threat of terrorists groupings that are extremely active in Afghanistan.²⁹⁰ India is deeply concern about the inroads made by the Islamic States particularly in Afghanistan.²⁹¹ On a bilateral basis, India is closely connected with the government of Afghanistan, and has expended much money in developing infrastructure in that country.²⁹² All the neighbours of Afghanistan are members of the SCO which can be a useful platform for initiating combined efforts at establishing political stability ensuring security and promoting economic prosperity for that country.²⁹³ SCO's own standing is enhanced thereby along with a widening of its political and security responsibilities making it an important alliance.

²⁸⁶ Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. "Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Division: Brief on SCO". 2020. www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/SCO_MULTI_Brief_feb_2020.pdf. Accessed on April 4, 2020.

²⁸⁷ Rab, Abdul and He Zhilong. "SCO, India and Pakistan: New Perspectives and New Hopes." *International Journal of African and Asian Studies*, vol. 50, no. 0, 2018, pp. 10-13, www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JAAS/article/view/45028/46470. Accessed on 20 October 2020.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Vivekananda International Foundation. "Round Table Discussion on Taking India and Central Asia to the Next Level". March 20 2018, www.vifindia.org/event/report/2018/march/20/discussion-on-taking-india-and-central-asia-to-the-next-level. Accessed on 21 April 2020.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Ibid.

India's concept of extended neighbourhood in respect of central Asia includes cooperation with the Central Asian Republics in matters relating to military and political issues, particularly transnational terror, radicalism, narcotics, and arms trafficking. That apart, India is keen on building cultural ties with the region. India's national security objectives take into account the terrorist groups operating in and from Pakistan, as well as the security concerns prevailing in Afghanistan which lies between south and Central Asia. Since the start of the 21st Century India has made deals and engaged in economic activities in the region in the fields of energy security and trade. This is in line with India's geo-economic and geopolitical policies with respect to Central Asia. In India's view, central Asia clearly is a part of its extended neighbourhood. Strategy flows from traditional and historical concepts concerning the region.

India has engaged with central Asia over the centuries both across land and the western seas. The old relations have lately entered a new phase. India's current dealings with central Asia are based on five factors. These factors guide Indian diplomats to pursue India's interests abroad. Central Asia is an essential part of India's external development strategy, posture, and ambitions. Of the five factors indicated above, the first has to do with external oil, coal, and other natural resources that form India's energy mix and drive economic growth. India's need for energy and natural resources continues to rise rapidly owing to its fast-growing economy, and the increased demand of the expanding middle class. Central Asia has proved to be rich in natural hydro carbon and ore reserved. Policy makes and think tanks in India are convinced of the need to connect central Asia to India's energy security policies. Indeed, the region offers India the opportunity to diversify its traditional dependence on the Gulf Region. On the other hand, for Central Asia India represents a most attractive destination for its energy resources, being the only market of

its size close to the source. India, intern, can ensure its energy security requirements from multiple sources.

The Second factor has to do with the increasing volumes of trade and investment between India and Central Asia. India exports a growing number of mid and high-value manufacture goods to central Asia. Intern, it imports mostly natural resources and manufacture goods from that region. The rise in trade volumes between India and Central Asia signify a deepening intensity of mutual relations. India's burgeoning manufacturing sector is constantly searching for new consumer markets. The economies in Central Asia present attractive new opportunities owing to their unprecedented economic growth over the last two decades. The policy makers in India are increasingly aware that Central Asia's growing economies and expending middle classes are of strategic importance to its export intensive sectors. To illustrate, India's export profile to Central Asia is dominated by pharmaceutical products, industrial fuels, machinery and vehicles. This has also led to as increase in Indian investments in Central Asia.

The third factor driving India's current interest in Central Asia is its geographic proximity. India is aware that it needs to link its economic growth and developmental strategy to a favourable and stable security environment beyond its restless immediate neighbourhood. In order for India to achieves its national security objectives, and for Central Asia to manage its complex internal and external security environment, there is a focus on curbing the spread of radical. Islam and terror, stabilizing the environment in Afghanistan, and reducing the Security risks from non-state actors.

The fourth factor is a recognition of the heightened diplomatic pressure that Central Asian countries bring to bear in important international institutions, particularly the SCO, with respect to negotiations in areas involving India's core interests. These include negotiations in trade and investment regulations, energy, intellectual property, on environmental policies.

The fifth and last factor deals with the geopolitical structure and the growing dynamics of rivalry between India and China within and outside of Asia. The previous four factors cater to the enhancement of national power that requires new areas to be securitized, to enable peaceful access to energy resources and new consumer markets. Such security is also needed for the conduct of extra regional diplomacy, and the development of military capabilities for the protection and evacuation of expatriates abroad.

India's Re-engagement with Central Asia in the Context of the New Great Game

To understand and explain the New Great Game, it is necessary to hark back to the circumstances that revived Mackinderan geopolitics in American ideological thinking during the Cold War. Which affected the geopolitical thinking in post-Soviet Eurasia in the 90s. Spykman had reinterpreted Mackinder's theories. It practically affected the American strategy of containment in the Cold War. In this context, the U.S extended its policy of containment to South Asia in the post-colonial period. The U.S viewed India as a potential ally and a pivotal state in the region. From an India-Central Asia perspective, the U.S policy of containment in the Cold War period likely led India to forge closer ties with the Soviet Union. India's closeness to Moscow facilitated contacts with Central Asia.

The Success of the Regan Doctrine showed in the collapse of the Soviet Union. The concept of the Great Game and many Mackinderan terms were used with reference to the situation playing out in the Eurasian land mass, where numerous concurrent nation-building exercises were taking place. As the five new Central Asian Republics began to assert their respective geopolitical orientations, Boris Rumer, in 1993, talked about the new Great Game in the heart of Asia. He pointed out that the process of the Great Game and its outcome would potentially alter the political and military equations that existed from China to the Persian Gulf.²⁹⁴ Mackinder's concepts were used to explain the competition for Central Asia. US's ambitious as the world's only super power were connected to its primacy in the region in economic, energy, and politico-security issues.²⁹⁵

In the 1990s, scholarly studies of the circumstances in post-Soviet Central Asia revolved around the idea of the New Great Game. The analysts considered the Mackinderan concepts of antagonistic rivalry for grabbing strategic influence in Central Asia that targeted the region's energy and economic resources. This was the thought process that engaged many of the scholars. According to scholar Edward's, the New Great Game was one of competing for influence, power, hegemony, and profit in Central Asia.²⁹⁶ He propounds the idea that Central Asia is critical to the security of Eurasia, the New Great Game is large a geostrategic and geo-economic competition.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁴ Rumer, Boris Z. "The Gathering Storm in Central Asia." *Orbis*, vol. 37, no. 1, 1993, pp. 89-105.

²⁹⁵ Brzezinski, Zbigniew. *The Grand Chessboard*. Basic Books, 1997, pp. 24-25.

²⁹⁶ Edwards, Matthew. "The New Great Game and the New Great Gamers: Disciples of Kipling and Mackinder." *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 22, no. 1, Mar. 2003, pp. 83-102. doi:10.1080/0263493032000108644.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

Edmonds goes on to distinguished between the Great Game and New Great Game. The distinctive characteristics of the two are under four parameters: location, players, objective and scope.²⁹⁸ This order structure is used to explain the present dynamic of the New Great Game. It also helps to understand the ideological roofs of the conduct of foreign players in the region, including that of India. However, before delving into the connections with India, one must consider how the idea of the New Great Game is relevant to contemporary Central Asia.

The post-Soviet Central Asia has become a part of globalised dynamics that one intricately related to similar geopolitical dynamics being played out in South Asia, East Asia, West Asia Europe, and Africa. In the present scenario, the complexities of Central Asian affairs and heavily influenced by other networks of overlapping inter regional relations.²⁹⁹ According scholar Nishtha Kaushiki, the diplomatic missions of different international players in Central Asia reflect their own respective political, socio-economic, and geo-historical background and frame work.³⁰⁰

India also identities the currents geopolitical events in central Asia with the New Great Game. However, it views the Central Asian Republics themselves as key players in the game. India finds the parameters of the current involvement of the Great power in the region to have remain the same as they were in the 1990s, and have accordingly determents its own strategy in the region. As already highlighted, South Asia and Central Asia share

²⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 89.

²⁹⁹ Kavalski, Emilian. "Coming to Terms with The Complexity of External Agency in Central Asia". *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2011, pp. 21-29.

³⁰⁰ Kaushiki, Nishtha. "The New Great Game and India's Connect Central Asia Policy: Strategic Perspectives and Challenges." *Journal of International and Area Studies*, vol. 20, no. 2, 2013, pp. 83–100. www.space.snu.ac.kr/bitstream/10371/96559/1/6.The-New-Great-Game-and-India%E2%80%99s-Connect-Central-Asia-PolicyStrategic-Perspectives-and-Challenges_Nishtha-Kaushiki.pdf. Accessed on 12 July 2020.

historical geopolitical linkages, with central Asia lying in India's Extended neighbourhoods. India is particularly aware of the need to inhibit its hostile rivals, namely China and Pakistan from gaining control in South Asia. In the backdrop of its long engagement with cross-border terrorism, India is deeply concern with the flow of terror, narcotics and weapons across the porous borders of Kashmir, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asian Republics. Geographically India is located at the eastern age of an are Islamic States. It is also home to second longest Muslim population in the world. Accordingly, India is wary of any radical Islamism that may seek to entire the country from the region to disturb its domestic equilibrium. Given its economic growth and enhanced need for energy security, India finds its necessary to diversity its energy sources. In this context, Central Asia, with its abundant resources, assumes great important. From the economic point of view Central Asia represent a significant market for its goods and services. It is also a transport hub that provides access to the markets of greater Eurasia. To India's advantage, its historical, civilization and cultural ties with the region coupled with its technological process, enabled it to become a contemporary partner for the region. These factors also allow India to face off China's power strategies in Central Asia.

Indian foreign policy architects admit to India already being a player, or heading to becoming one, in the New Great Game currently under way in Central Asia. However, they stress India's reluctance to engage in competition on conflicts with any other players. On the other hand, India is keen to cooperate with the Central Asian Republics and other players in the region. Scholars in India argue that India enjoys greater historical, geographical commercial and cultural linkages with the region compare to other actors. They add that India's democratic structure enables its ties with Central Asia to stand the test of durability.

Prospects for India's Foreign Policy vis-a-vis Post-Soviet States of Central Asia

As the Soviet Union progressively decline, its member states in Central Asia began to encounter grave Security issue in the form of Islamic military, drug trafficking and illegal arms trade. USA-China-Russia, The Great power rivals, in order to gain influence in the region, have informed the trebled Central Asian states of their willingness to extend massive military and economic assistance in order to deal with religious extremism. In course of time in addition to the security dilemma, these states have been coping with increasing conflicts relating to claims and counter claims along the regional borders. In spite of the dissolution of the Soviet Union having eroded Russia's dominants in the region, Russia continued to provide security to the newly Independent Central Asian States that were devoid of their own necessary defences.³⁰¹

The fall of the Soviet Union opened up new prospects for India's foreign policy. Through the 1990s, India and the Central Asian states experienced many changes and uncertainties. They were in the process of adopting revised domestic policies and adopting to the fast-evolving global scenario in terms of politics, trade commerce, diplomacy, cultural values, security and defence dynamics. On account of these shifts, India and the central Asian states, in recognition of their own national and regional interest, devised plans that would promote peace, stability and security in South West, and South-east Asia. India joined the first countries to forge diplomatic ties with the five Central Asian Republics that gained

³⁰¹ Freire, Maria Raquel. "Russian Policy in Central Asia: Supporting, Balancing, Coercing, or Imposing?" *Asian Perspective*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2009, pp. 125–149. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/42704675. Accessed on 8 Jun. 2020.

independence in the 1990s. India's efforts at establishing felicitous relationship in the region were best on factors exceeding the ancient historical ties. Importantly, India needed to pre-empt Pakistan from forming an anti-India coalition in the Central Asian States with respect to the dispute over Kashmir. Further, India desired to maintain its connections with the traditional military and commercial suppliers, as also to open up fresh opportunities for its business.

India's Prime Minister Rao perceived the strategic importance of Central Asia and accordingly gave shape to India's focus in the region. While according high priority to the region, he spelt out India's desire to foster honest and open friendship and to promote stability and cooperation without targeting any third country.³⁰² He thus laid the foundation for India's Look North Policy. This policy took into account the historical linkages in terms of political, cultural and religious issues.³⁰³ India has emphasized its national interests in Central Asia by means of its Look North policy. The purpose of this policy was to frame a proactive and meaningful view of the Central Asian region.

However, the stated political intend did not result in a meaningful, strategic and economic engagement at the beginning. Pakistan refusal to accord transit passage across its territory effectively delinked India geographically from the region. Furthermore, India was yet to launch the economic reforms that would bring about a desirable strategic acuity in Central Asia.³⁰⁴ During the tenure of P.M. Rao, both India and Central Asian Republics were in

³⁰² Muni, S. D. "India and Central Asia: Towards a Co-operative Future". *Central Asia-The Great Game Replayed: An Indian Perspective*, edited by Nirmala Joshi, New Century Publications. 2003, pp. 97-151.

³⁰³ Kavalski, Emilian. "India's Bifurcated Look to Central Eurasia: The Central Asian Republics and Afghanistan". *The Oxford Handbook of Indian Foreign Policy*, edited by David M. Malone, C Raja Mohan and Srinath Raghavan, Oxford University Press, 2015, pp. 424-436.

³⁰⁴ Roy, Meena S and Roy, Rajorshi. "Placing India in the Emerging Regional Dynamics of Central Asia." *Revista UNISCI*, no. 45, 2017, pp.85-115. www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=76754084005 Accessed on 2 October 2020.

the process of revising their relationship with their immediate neighbour and the great powers. In the circumstances India and Central Asia were active in promoting mutual political connections.

Since there was important matter to consider India's foreign policy towards the five Newly-Independent Republics in Central Asia as has been suitably modified and reset in the last three decades. During the tenure of P.M. Nehru India's foreign policy was positioned idealistically according to socialistic and internationalist values. Subsequently, in the post-Cold War era India's foreign policy was reset on pragmatic concepts that prioritized national interest over other consideration. After the 1990s, India's foreign policy witness another important paradigm shift. In place of the unilateralism of the earlier decades, India adopted a multi-lateral approach that was marked by a new proactive attitude towards Central Asia. In the early stages of the 21st century the flexibility that guided India's foreign policy enabled it expand its presents in the different Central Asian Republics.

In 2003, Atal Bihari Vajpayee become the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Tajikistan.³⁰⁵ It was then that India formed a Joint working Group to deal with international terrorism.³⁰⁶ Vajpayee brought a clarity of perspective by separating the ancient soft power cultural linkages between India and Central Asia from the Newly emerging hard power potential. However, he did not underestimate the old connection. During his 2003 visit to central Asia, he stated, historically, this extended neighbourhood of ours has been very close to own hearts. It is linked to India through ties history, culture, and spiritually from older

³⁰⁵ Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. *India-Tajikistan Bilateral Relations*, 2017.

www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India-Tajikistan_bilateral_relations.pdf. Accessed on 20 October 2020.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

times.³⁰⁷ In time, India has enhanced its dealing with the region and often emphasized its non-competitive approach. In 2003, while visiting the central Asian state, Yashwant Sinha, India's External Affairs Minister, declared 'we see Central Asia as part of India's extended neighbourhood and own presence there is to promote a mutually inclusive relationship'.³⁰⁸ Officials in India's ministry of defence referred to the intensification of India's relations with the Central Asian Republican as an effort to establish strategic space for India in the region and to encircle Pakistan. India's military relation with Tajikistan effectively presents Pakistan with a Northern quandary. India's presence in Central Asia opens up another front against China.³⁰⁹

India's Re-engagement with Central Asia: Connect Central Asia Policy as a Foreign Policy Instrument

In June 2012, with a view to forgoing meaningful political, security, and economic cooperation with Central Asia, a new Connect Central Asia policy was introduced under the aegis of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government.³¹⁰ India's focus in the region is centered on energy, sovereignty, commerce and counter terrorism. Further, in its aim to become a power to reckon with in the global arena, India cannot effort to ignore Central Asia. Also, India's renewed interest in Central Asia was concomitant with China extending its influence in the immediate neighbourhood that is South Asia, consisting of Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Myanmar and Nepal, and having a military presence at the border of Bhutan. These inroads made by China in the political and economic spheres have the effect of strategically encircling India. In this backdrop, India is engaging more

³⁰⁷ Scott, David. 2009, Op. cit. p. 126

³⁰⁸ Ibid. p.127.

³⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 128.

³¹⁰ Kaushiki, Nishtha. Op cit. p. 84.

vigorously with the SCO and with the establishment of the new comprehensive Economic cooperation Agreement (CECA) in order to connect its market with the markets of Central Asia.³¹¹ There is now the potential for a Cross-regional energy infrastructure, new flight connection with the Central Asian States, and the development of Information Technology (IT), Banking, and pharmaceutical industries, that will effectively bolster economic linkages.

India's approach to Central Asia is in terms of the policy outlined above. Kazakhstan and Tajikistan are essential to the success of this policy owing to its strategic geographical location. It shares borders with Afghanistan, China, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan while being close to Gilgit Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Further, Kazakhstan is important for its huge potential uranium and hydropower reserves that are ethical to India's energy needs. Notwithstanding the absence of direct overland connectivity, India has decided to invest heavily in the IT and education sectors in Central Asia in general, and Kazakhstan in particular, that will set as bridges to bring the region closer. Over time, Kazakhstan has assumed great significance as a protagonist in linking Central Asia with India in support of India's Connect Central Asia Policy. The people-to-people contacts have enabled a deepening of India's relations with the region. In this context, a number of researchers from India visit Central Asia in pursuit of their research. India is keen to transform its education sector so that it becomes an attractive destination for Central Asian students. India also recognizes the importance of using soft power to advance its relations with the region, since soft power often has a greater reach than hard power.

³¹¹ Singh Roy, Meena. "India's "Connect Central Asia' Policy: Building Cooperative Partnership". *Indian Foreign Affairs Journal*, vol. 8, no. 3, July-September 2013, pp. 301-316.

India's connect Central Asia Policy is intrusive of factors that comprise comprehensive relationships. It also encourages implementations. Accordingly, it is not confined to energy, oil and natural resources, but seeks linkages in politics, culture and defence. This policy is not meant to be a mere statement of intent, but for realistic manifestation. In 2013, India's Vice-President Hamid Ansari visited Tajikistan. Under the umbrella policy towards Central Asia, he advised the development and pursuit of separate policies with each of the Central Asian nations; so that India's interest met on a converging platform.³¹² In general, India's relations with Central Asia were influenced by domestic circumstances and wider regional factors.

In 2015, Modi visited all the five Central Asian States, namely, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan,³¹³ India Connects Central Asia Policy received significant impetus. Such a tour, not undertaken here to fore, underlined the priority India bestowed on its historical, civilizational linkages with this resource- rich, strategically located region.³¹⁴ The connect Central Asia Policy was facilitated and made more meaningful by India's membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and participation in the SCO unit in Russia. As a result, the economic ties were expanded, new energy partnerships were forged, Security cooperation was scaled up, and cultural diplomacy was widened. These initiatives qualitatively transformed India's ties with Central Asia. The objectives of PM Modi's visit were largely two-fold. Firstly, the aim was to heighten the economic and trade relations with stress on energy and transport

³¹² Kumar, Vinay. "China's aid to Tajikistan does not clash with India's interests, says Ansari." *The Hindu*, 18 Apr. 2013, www.thehindu.com/news/national/chinas-aid-to-tajikistan-does-not-clash-with-indias-interests-says-ansari/article4627846.ece. Accessed on 20 October 2020.

³¹³ "A Year of Smart Diplomacy: Milestones 2015." Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, Press Information Bureau, 10 Jan. 2021, www.pib.gov.in/newsite/printrelease.aspx?relid=133723. Accessed on 20 October 2020.

³¹⁴ Pant, Himani. "PM Modi's well-timed visit to Central Asia." *Observer Research Foundation*, 14 Dec. 2015, www.orfonline.org/research/pm-modis-well-timed-visit-to-central-asia. Accessed on 20 October 2020.

correctively. Secondly, there was a focus on broadening the scope and depth of India's strategic partnership with the central Asian region by forging both bilateral and multilateral partnerships to assist Afghanistan in achieving stability and growth.³¹⁵ The benefits of this visit manifested is greater economic co-operative, enhanced energy ties, stronger security engagement and significant emphasis on cultural diplomacy aimed at the qualitatively transforming relations with Central Asia.³¹⁶

The initiatives to broaden India's economic engagement with the region were an important factor in the Connect Central Asian Policy. Significant efforts were made to strengthen India's multilateral relations with Central Asia (Roy India's 309). The objective of India's Connect Central Asia Policy was to establish a durable partnership in energy, natural resources and trade. The region around the Caspian Sea was increasingly significant as a source of oil and gas for world markets (Roy India 310). In spite of India's historical and current efforts to deeper ties with the Central Asian States, it has not succeeded in becoming their major economic or strategic partner (Roy India's 312). Certain constraints impede India's efforts towards expanding its role in the Central Asian Region. For India, a major challenge in the Central Asian Republic's is the concern for security. India's connect Central Asia Policy cannot succeed by ignoring the destabilising factors in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Given this context, India distinguishes its strategies in Central Asia in terms of national security, geostrategic positioning, energy security, and economic opportunities.

³¹⁵ Dave, Bhavna. "Resetting India's Engagement in Central Asia: From Symbols to Substance", *Policy Report*, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies; January, 2016, www.files.ethz.ch/isn/196264/PR160202_Resetting-Indias-Engagment.pdf. Accessed on 20 October 2020.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

National Security Objectives of India in Central Asia

In matters related to India's national security, Central Asia assumes critical significance. India notes the religious extremism prevalent in the region. Accordingly, it is interested in curbing the rise of radical Islamist groups that may pose terrorist threats. With the decline and dissolution of the Soviet Union, Central Asia became a fertile territory for starting and consolidating such groups. In the event, many groups of Jihadists operate in the region.³¹⁷ India considers Central Asia as lying in its extended, strategic neighbourhood. As such, India is majorly concerned with the emergence of non-traditional terror threats in Central Asia and its adjacent areas that may potentially destabilize the Central Asian States. It is in India's strategic interests to assist the Central Asian Republics to maintain their modern Secular ambiance and ward off the forces of radical Islam.

In pursuing its national security objectives in the extended neighbourhood of Central Asia, India takes into consideration its own domestic circumstances in the form of a large Muslim minority. Further, it takes into account the role of Pakistan in the immediate neighbourhood, as relating to deeper strategic concerns, particularly Pakistan's efforts to scuttle India's initiatives at wielding influence as a rising regional power.³¹⁸ India's relations with Pakistan have been marred by conflicts since the partition of 1947 and is centred on the issue of the union territory of the Kashmir. This study intends to examine how India's interactions with Pakistan and Afghanistan influence its strategies and relationships in respect of Central Asia, especially in the evolution of India's Security

³¹⁷ Matveeva, Anna and Antonio Giustozzi. "The Central Asian Militants: Cannon Fodder of Global Jihadism or Revolutionary Vanguard?" *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, vol. 29, no. 2, 4 Mar. 2018, pp. 189-206, doi:10.1080/09592318.2018.1433472. Accessed on 20 October 2020.

³¹⁸ Foshko, Katherine. "India and Russia: a new Central Asian engagement". *Gateway House*, 8 February 2012, www.gatewayhouse.in/india-and-russia-new-central-asian-engagement. Accessed on 20 October 2020.

Strategy towards Central Asia. In the opinion of some Scholars, Pakistan's search for strategic depth in Afghanistan³¹⁹ is for the purpose of defending itself against a potential Indian attack on its Western borders. This concept was introduced in Pakistan's military strategy in the 1980s. However, with the subcontinent turning into a nuclearised zone, the strategic visibility of the concept was dwindled. Even so, many incumbents in the Pakistan corridors of power continue to dangle the threat to justify the relations with Afghanistan. In 2010, the Chief of the Pakistani army, general Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, admitted Pakistan's intention to achieve strategic depth in Afghanistan, but decried any desire to control that nation.³²⁰ Analysts in Pakistan have subsequently modified the concept and proposed that a contemporary non-military understanding of strategic depth would have Pakistan seeking a friendly Afghans nation, to enable it to ramp up its military prowess on the front against India and also impede India's connect Central Asia policy to the north.³²¹ A non-military strategic depth in Afghanistan would free Pakistan to pursue its own economic, military and energy-seeking aims in Central Asia and Eurasia. It could also concentrate on curbing India's interactions in these regions by inhibiting over land access of transport routes and pipelines.³²² Moreover, it would enable Pakistan to extend further patronage to cross border terror in India in line with its strategic objectives.

In order to advanced towards India's stated aims in Afghanistan and Central Asia, the foreign policy makers in Delhi are aware of the need to monitor and contain Pakistan's

³¹⁹ Mustafi, Sambuddha Mitra. "Afghanistan: Strategic depth to strategic peace." *Gateway House*, 25 October, 2012. www.gatewayhouse.in/afghanistan-strategic-depth-strategic-peace. Accessed on 20 October 2020.

³²⁰ Arni, Anand and Abhimanyu Tondon. "The Genesis of Pakistan's 'Strategic Depth' in Afghanistan". *Fair Observer*, 2 Jun, 2014, www.fairobserver.com/region/central_south_asia/the-genesis-of-pakistans-strategic-depth-in-afghanistan-88910. and see Raghavan, V. R. "Strategic depth in Afghanistan." *Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India*, 7 November, 2001. www.mea.gov.in/articles-in-indian-media.htm?dtl/18510/Strategic+depth+in+Afghanistan. Accessed on 25 October 2020.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Ibid.

strategy in Afghanistan.³²³ In furtherance of its traditional good will in Afghanistan, India has been actively assisting the Afghan govt in infrastructural development, humanitarian nations and cultural advancement. In the process it expected to find wide support among Afghan officials and influencers, of whom many are already favourably disposed towards India.³²⁴ In the contemporary context, India's agreement to invest US \$ 85.21 million in the construction of the Chabahar Port in Iran was viewed as signalling a more proactive Afghan and Central Asia policy under P.M. Modi's administration.³²⁵ In its engagement with the Chabahar project, India proposes to facilitate an important Sea route that would enlarge the trade and resource access to landlocked Afghanistan and Central Asia via Iran. In the process it would bypass Pakistan, which limits Afghanistan's usage of its transport corridors and refuses to provide overland transit rights to India. In India's view the ideological and authoritarian legacy of the Soviet Union, that informs the Central Asian Republics, is quite different from the militant, political Islam in Pakistan's ethos. There is the apprehension that Pakistan may try to promote its own Islamic mindset in those republics. Indian experts are concerned with Pakistan's capacity to extend support to radical groups like the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) that spearhead militancy and extremist Islamism in Central Asia, in the same way as it propped up the Taliban in Afghanistan. In so doing, Pakistan may exploit the regional security networks that connect

³²³ Fair, C. C. and Gregory, Shaun, Editor (s). *Pakistan in National and Regional Change*. Taylor & Francis, 2013, p. 60.

³²⁴ D'Souza, Shanthie Mariet. India, Afghanistan and the 'End Game'? *India's Grand Strategy: History, Theory, Cases*, edited by Kanti Bajpai, Routledge India, (1st ed.). 2014. pp. 345-377. and also see Fair, C. Christine. Under the Shrinking U.S. Security Umbrella: India's End Game in Afghanistan? *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 179-192. DOI: 10.1080/0163660X.2011.562461. Accessed on 25 October 2020.

³²⁵ Behuria, Ashok and Rizvi, M Alam. "India's Renewed Interest in Chabahar: Need to Stay the Course". *Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses*. 13 May. 2015, p. 2. www.idsa.in/issuebrief/IndiasRenewedInterestinChabahar_BehuriaRizvi_130515. Accessed on 25 October 2020.

South and Central Asia. This will be in keeping with Pakistan's efforts to thwart India's emergence as a regional hegemon in South Asia.³²⁶

As is the case with China and Russia, India is embroiled in its own campaign against separatist groups, Islamic radicals, and others that sow unrest within India's Muslim population with the onset of the 'War on Terror', India found Central Asia to be a part of its 'extended security horizon'. This assumes importance as Russia because increasingly unable to oversee the security of the region. India has supported the US in establishing a military presence in Central Asia.³²⁷ India is aware of the competition posed by China for Central Asian resources and markets, particularly in energy-rich Kazakhstan. In order to promote mutual ties, India has offered military assistance and weapons deals to Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. There is the felt need to build a security structure that will counter Pakistan's sponsorship of Taliban and attempts to trigger Islamic militancy in Central Asia. These concerns are common to both India and the Central Asian Republics. As it turned out, the geopolitical tensions originating from China did not abate following India's support for U.S. military presence and political influence in Central Asia.

India is keenly aware of its existence as a Hindu majority nation having a large Muslim minority. Accordingly, its remains concerned with the possibility of conflicts in the wider Islamic world, particularly in its extended neighbourhood affecting its own Muslim population. Along with the troubles relating to the Islamist and separatist groups operating out of Kashmir, India is wary of the potential security threats enumerating from

³²⁶ Singh, Sinderpal. Debating Physical Connectivity between India and ASEAN: Economics versus Security. *India's Approach to Asia Strategy, Geopolitics and Responsibility*, Edited by Namrata Goswami, Pentagon Press, 2016. PP. 164-182.

³²⁷ Blank, Stephen. "India's Rising Profile in Central Asia." *Comparative Strategy*, vol. 22, no. 2, 1 Jan. 2003, pp. 139-57, doi:10.1080/01495930390202607.

Afghanistan and Central Asia and the overall harm that may be caused to the country's social fabric and unity. Domestic Security concerns influence India's decision and shape its relations with Afghanistan and Central Asia. The valley of Kashmir, that has Muslim majority has featured as the crux of India's conflicts with Pakistan since the partition of 1947.³²⁸ At present, only a portion of the zone of contention is in India's control the part known as Azad Kashmir, along with the Gilgit-Baltistan area, is occupied by Pakistan, while China controls Aksai chin while India and Pakistan are engaged in conflict over the future ownership of Kashmir, a Line of Control (LOC) exists as the de-facto border. In the 90s and there after the Kashmir valley witnessed long phases of unrest as militants protested New Delhi's control and took to the streets to promote their separatist cause.³²⁹ From across the border in Azad Kashmir Pakistan not only supported the militancy, but aggravated it by backing extremist groups in sending over trained militants to launch terror attacks against Indian forces. In 1989 the Soviet forces withdrew from Afghanistan after a prolonged period of violence. The large number Mujahedeen fighters who were earlier sponsored by Pakistan across the Durand Line, in Afghanistan, became inactive. Pakistan channelled them towards India and the LOC. This resulted in the Kashmiri Civil disobedience movement escalating to around insurgency. By the mid-90s, Pakistan had turned Kashmir into a killing field of a cross-border terror war.³³⁰ India was compelled to deploy the army to quell the violence. In 2019, Ladakh became a separate union territory. Jammu and Kashmir lost its status as a State and became a Union territory.³³¹ Relative to earlier times there is calm in the valley.

³²⁸ Minority Rights Group International, *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples-India: Kashmiris*, 2008, www.refworld.org/docid/49749d12c.html. Accessed on 11 October 2020.

³²⁹ Ganguly, Rajat. "India, Pakistan and the Kashmir Insurgency: Causes, Dynamics and Prospects for Resolution." *Asian Studies Review*, vol. 25, no. 3, September. 2001, pp. 309-34, doi:10.1111/1467-8403.00106.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Iwanek, Krzysztof. "Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir Are India's Newest Union Territories. What Does That Mean in Practice?" *The Diplomat*, 15 April 2020, www.thediplomat.com/2020/04/what-exactly-does-union-territory-status-in-the-republic-of-india-mean/. Accessed on 22 October 2020.

Going by the escalation in cross border terrorism in the 1990, India is concerned with the terror camps that may be easily positioned in the India-Pakistan-Afghanistan border region by Islamist extremist that support the Pakistani agenda. India's policy takes into account the flow of weapons, Jihadists and funds for operation in the region. For India, the active terror camps across the line of control remain a cause for concern with regard to establishing peace in Kashmir. In the present scenario while the western forces and in the process of gradually withdrawing from Afghanistan, India apprehends a possible relocation of Jihadists from Afghanistan and Central Asia to the region around Kashmir, and a repetition of the events of the 1990s.³³² India has to contend challenges to its unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity, even while attending to economic development and progress.

In the last two decades the security and regional stability of India and central Asia have been threaten by the militancy emerging from Afghanistan in the form of extremist activities and drug trafficking. The stability in central Asia is threaten by Islamist extremism, separatism and acts of terrorism. Since India and Central Asia have borders with Pakistan and Afghanistan, the threats from across the borders are similar. Accordingly, India and Central Asia are motivated to unite against their common enemy and strengthen future ties.³³³

³³² Balci, Bayram and Chaudet, Didier. "Jihadism in Central Asia: A Credible Threat After the Western Withdrawal from Afghanistan?" *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 13 August, 2014, www.carnegieendowment.org/2014/08/13/jihadism-in-central-asia-credible-threat-after-western-withdrawal-from-afghanistan-pub-56381. Accessed on 11 October 2020.

³³³ Mann, Poonam. "Fighting terrorism: India and central Asia." *Strategic Analysis*, vol. 24, no. 11, 1 Feb. 2001, pp. 2035-054, doi:10.1080/09700160108455337.

In the meantime, Russia, the United States, and China are deepening their influence and presence in central Asia in the form of multiple channels of cooperation. In the process they also initiate competition. The old and ongoing rivalry between Russia and United States is being increasingly felt in the region. The scarring violence and volatility in Afghanistan only aggravate the uncertainties in the region. The escalating violence and volatility in Afghanistan only aggravated the uncertainties in the region. The regional stability is sought to be upset by the militant Islamists who illegally cross the Afghan border and enter Tajikistan and other central Asian states. Accordingly, there does not appear to be any reduction in uncertainty in the short and medium terms. The radicalism emerging from Afghanistan and Pakistan is a matter to be dealt with by Russia, India, Iran and the Central Asian states as it hinders regional development and general stability.

The Swathe of territory comprising South and Central Asia poses security and strategic challenges for India, as it adversely affects the country's domestic and external security objectives. India's population demographics are such that the radicalism emanating from central Asia and Afghanistan can threaten India's domestic security and stability by way of promoting communal Hindu-Muslim conflicts. India's external threats include Pakistan's capacity to hinder India's efforts in the neighbourhood and interfere in India's relations with central Asia and Afghanistan. According to the Analyst Stephen Black, on the one hand, there is the potential for terror and violence in South and Central Asia. On the other hand, there is the continual possibility of a conventional or nuclear war between India and Pakistan, and even between India and China both these scenarios contribute to the vulnerability of India's relations in the immediate and extended neighbourhoods.

With collapse of Soviet Union, the Internal Security situation in central Asia became uncertain and unstable. Even after two decades since them, no significant improvement is discernible from India's point of view the insecurities in central Asia over flow into the greater South Asian region including the subcontinent's hinterland of Afghanistan, Kashmir and northern Pakistan. In the circumstances India's policy-maker are concern with the security threats from South Asia that intertwine with the uncertain security environments in Central Asia. The potential insecurities are essentially three-fold. Firstly, if the Taliban assumes power in Afghanistan, in the wake of a western withdrawal there may be a revival of ethnic conflicts and instability in that country, that could potentially sow unrest in the entire subcontinent and parts of Central Asia. Secondly, there is the unrelenting apprehension of Islamist extremism and terror flowing across the two regions, as instigated by groups such as the IMU, Al Qaeda and the Islamic State. Thirdly, the smuggling and spreading of weapons and narcotics are the proven stock-in-trade of the terror groups operating in the two regions.

In line with its national security objectives, India devises its security objectives, India devises its central Asia strategy after factoring in the diverse security threats. India is aware that its own stability and future may be adversely affected by the interplay between the threats emanating from outside and the radicalism existing within its borders. India's security interactions with Afghanistan and Central Asia take into account Pakistan efforts at using Afghanistan to tilt the strategic balance against India, particularly with the help of the Taliban in case they return to power. In the backdrop of these compulsions India has begun to construct a security and military cooperation structure with the central Asian Republics. India's policy makers regard security to be of paramount geopolitical significance and accordingly frame the countries strategy in the region. While dwelling on

and explaining these security parameters that inform India's overall strategy, these section attempts to clarify the formation and activation of India's national security objectives in the central Asian regions.

India's Military and Security Policy in Central Asia

Military agreements and instruments are gaining increasing importance in India's foreign policy as flowing from its overall rational security policy. India's security issues are not limited to the terrain up to the Afghanistan border but proceed beyond to the central Asian region. India has been engaging with central Asia since 2002 by way of its establish military process and exporting influence.³³⁴ A military presence in Central Asia gives India advantages in both economic and strategic teams. In case of any threat to India's Sovereignty or territorial integrity originating in South Asia, India's military response will be potentially more effective if there is an army presence in Central Asia. India's military holding in Central Asia may not match up to Russia's military but it enables India to maintain a strategic foothold in the region.³³⁵

India has continued to widen its bilateral relations with Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. While India established diplomatic relations with independent Kazakhstan after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the geo-strategic developments thereafter in the region have deeper the co-operation between the two countries. On the other hand, India's relations with Tajikistan are key to its strategic and security policies in

³³⁴ Blank, Stephen. "India and Central Asia: Part of the New Great Game". *Indian Foreign Policy in a Unipolar World*, edited by Harsh V. Pant, 1st ed., Routledge India, 2009, pp. 277-304.

³³⁵ Panda, Jagannath P. "India's New Look at Central Asia Policy: A strategic Review". *Mapping Central Asia: Indian Perceptions and Strategies*, edited by Marlene Laruelle and Sebastien Peyrouse, Ashgate, 2011, pp. 109-121.

the context of India's rivalry with China, hostilities with Pakistan, and assistance to Afghanistan in fighting the Taliban and Al Qaeda. In turn, Tajikistan plays an important role in the war against terrorism and drug trafficking.³³⁶

India's air force base at Ayni, Tajikistan, opposite Afghanistan, adds to regional security and helps to thwart Taliban and Pakistani advances into the region.³³⁷ It is important foreign military base for India as it will serve the country's long term strategic interests.³³⁸ Situated 10 kms north-east of Dushanbe, it was renovated with an investment of US \$ 25 million on the basis of a trilateral agreement between India, Russia and Tajikistan.³³⁹ India's Air Force base at Ayni, (Tajikistan), Signals a gradual expansion of India's role in central Asian defence.³⁴⁰ 2003, India's positive ties with Tajikistan enable the conduct of Tajik-Indian joint military exercises comprising the air and ground forces of both countries.³⁴¹

In this perspective India's security and military linkages in Central Asia have steady expanded. Other than with Tajikistan India maintains strong ties with Kazakhstan, a country that is strategically located, owns huge energy resources and has a social structure that is secular and pluralist. India's military connections with Kazakhstan date back to the Soviet Union. Torpedoes manufactures in Kazakhstan have been supplied to the Indian navy. The two countries have ongoing projects for the repair and modernization of the Torpedoes. Further, the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and Kazakhstan's

³³⁶ "Illicit Drug Trends in Central Asia". Op cit.

³³⁷ Panda, Jagannath P. 2011, Op. cit. p.116.

³³⁸ Chowdhury, Prasenjit. "India & the new great game". *The Statesman*, 4 July 2016, p. 7.

³³⁹ Panda, Jagannath P. 2011, Op. cit. p.117

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Blank, Stephen. "Military Rivalry in Central Asia." *World Politics Review*, 22 December, 2008, www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/3069/military-rivalry-in-central-asia, Accessed on 3 July 2020.

National Space Agency actively cooperate in the fields of manufacturing and launching satellites.³⁴² The government of Kazakhstan has included India in its defence policy papers as a potential country for the purchase of the arms.³⁴³ Both the countries have earlier jointly produced advanced military hardware and shared intelligence. Additionally, they actively cooperate in countering terrorism.

India views Central Asia as an important market for the sale of Indian weaponry. The sales have included air transports and helicopters to Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. In turn, in 2004, India purchased six mid-air refuelers from Uzbekistan.³⁴⁴ India is gearing up to become an independent security provider in Central Asia. This is facilitated by the steady growth of India's military linkages with the countries of Central Asia. Since 2002, India has stepped up its influence in Central Asia and its image as an important military power. In the context of India's overall National Security policy the growing importance of military issues and weaponry is discernibly reflected in India's foreign policies.³⁴⁵

Central Asia and India's Energy Security Objectives

India's growing status as an economic power since the beginning of the 21st century, India has been increasingly inclined to foray into overseas investments that are accompanied by inherent political and financial risks. India's overseas energy security strategies are an important part of its foreign policy. There is an acknowledgement that the advancement of India's energy security is related to the improvement of relations with resource rich

³⁴² Panda, Jagannath P. 2011, Op. cit. p.118.

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ Blank, Stephen. 2009. Op. cit. P. 298.

³⁴⁵ Ibid. pp. 294-295.

countries. With the backing of their government, India's oils and gas companies have engaged in overseas investments and the building of positive ties strategically important countries. To that end India has signed agreements with several Central Asian Countries in the field of energy cooperation. In 1999, India's minister of external affairs emphatically stated that energy is Security. A short fall in energy supply will adversely affect the nation's security.³⁴⁶ Energy security has become intricately associated with the idea of National Security. According to the European commission, energy security is explained as the capacity to ensure the satisfaction of the future essential energy needs. This is a two-fold process. Firstly, there must be sufficient domestic resources that can be economically tapped, or maintained as strategic reserves. Secondly, there must be an access to dependable external resources that may be supplemented, where necessary, by one's own strategic stocks.³⁴⁷

India has actively advance energy co-operation with the Republics of Central Asia that have vast reserves of oil and gas. India is one of the world's nations that are majorly dependent on External sources to meet its energy needs. This is the primary reason for the country to have energy Security Doctrine. In 2018, India was ranked as the third largest energy consumer in the world after the United States and China, according to the BP Statistical Review 2019. In the context of India's diverse economic expansion, growth of population and efforts of modernization over the past several years there is a rapid rising need for energy supply.³⁴⁸ India's oil reserves having proven to be insufficient relative to

³⁴⁶ Scott, David. "The Great Power 'Great Game' between India and China: 'The Logic of Geography.'" *Geopolitics*, vol. 13, no. 1, Feb. 2008, pp. 1–26. DOI:10.1080/14650040701783243.

³⁴⁷ Bahgat, Gawdat. "Europe's Energy Security: Challenges and Opportunities." *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, vol. 82, no. 5, 2006, pp. 961–975. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/3874209. Accessed on 11 April. 2020.

³⁴⁸ *Country Analysis Executive Summary: India*. U.S. Energy Information Administration, 30 September, 2020, www.eia.gov/international/content/analysis/countries_long/India/india.pdf. Accessed on 11 November. 2020

domestic needs, its dependency on imports is expected to significantly increase in the decades ahead.³⁴⁹ India's current energy import bill of around \$150 billion is projected to rise to \$300 billion by 2030. Accordingly, India's foreign policy must be geared to proactively and assertively pursued a long-term and stable strategy for the Secure Supply of energy.³⁵⁰

To that end, India is hopeful of building strong cooperation with the Central Asian Republics in the sphere of energy. Another burgeoning area of technological cooperation with the Central Asian Republics is related to India's own huge potential for improving its energy efficiency. Indians are now increasingly aware of the significance of energy efficiency, particularly given the growing concern for energy security and rising oil prices in recent years. There is now a conviction that improvement in energy efficiency must increasingly feature as a means to feature energy security and to meaningfully cooperate with the outside world in this field.

It is not enough for Indian oil and gas companies to explore and develop the energy deposits in the Central Asian republics, but they must also arrange for a suitable transit corridor subject to the regional cooperation structure for the delivery of hydrocarbon raw material to India. Keeping this in mind, the regional republics are evincing growing interest in diversifying the energy routes. In this context, India's energy strategy for Central Asia goes beyond business deals made by the oil companies on both sides; to the sharing of technical expertise in the exploration of oil and gas fields and introducing joint production mechanisms. Further, great emphasis is being laid on the establishment of an

³⁴⁹ *India 2020 Energy Policy Review*. International Energy Agency, 10 January 2020, www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2020-01/IEA-India%202020-In-depth-EnergyPolicy_0.pdf. Accessed on 11 April. 2020.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

energy corridor between Central Asia and South Asia. Provided the two regions of Central Asia and South Asia can be linked by suitable transit corridor (INTC) energy cooperation between the two regions can be a feasible outcome. The inter-regional cooperation framework comprises the Central Asian republics on the one hand and the countries of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and India on the other. The inter-regional transmission of energy is conditional on a dramatic improvement in the relations between old adversaries and a unanimous desire for collective prosperity.

India's economic interests in Central Asia are multifarious. India's growing export industries are looking to Central Asia as a potential market. Apart from arranging for dependable and sustainable access to the oil and gas reserves in Central Asia, India proposes to expand its trade and investments in the region. New Delhi's focus is on Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan as the major energy exporting countries of Central Asia; however, it is aware of the challenge posed by international competition in the region, that may hinder the achievement of its goals in totality. Accordingly, India's aim is to encourage cooperation among the major competing powers, with a view to bringing about stability in Afghanistan and the entire central Asia region.³⁵¹

Central Asia's proven natural gas reserves are estimated at 2266.8 trillion cubic feet (tcf). The oil reserves in the region are projected to be in the range of 145.7 thousand million barrels.³⁵² Kazakhstan's share is 93.7 tcf of gas and 3.9 thousand million barrels of oil. The country, in effect, owns 2% of global oil reserves and 1.3% of global gas reserves.³⁵³ In turn,

³⁵¹ RoufBhat, Abdul, et al. "Afghanistan Factor in India-Central Asia Relations." *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, vol. 8, no. 3, March 2018,

www.ijmra.us/project%20doc/2018/IJRSS_MARCH2018/IJMRA-13386.pdf. Accessed on 11 April, 2020.

³⁵² *BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2020*. June 2020, www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/energy-economics/statistical-review-of-world-energy.html. Accessed on 20 October, 2020.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*

Turkmenistan possesses 688.1 tcf of gas, or about 9.8 percent of world reserves.³⁵⁴ In India the primary energy consumption has almost tripled between 1990 and 2018, which is estimated to be the equivalent of 916 million tons of oil.³⁵⁵ India's use of natural gas among to 6 percent of its total energy consumption. By 2030, India proposes to increase the market share of natural gas to 15%.³⁵⁶ India is unable to satisfy even one-third of its needs from its domestic sources. The country has the option to resort to nuclear energy. However, that recourse is constrained by internal and external political issues. Owing to its proximity to Central Asia, India has the potential to be one of the biggest consumers of the regions oil and gas. India may prefer an over lands transit via Afghanistan, but such a pipeline may not be possible in the absence of peace in that country. In the event, the route through Iran emerges as the easiest and cheapest transit facility for Central Asia oil and gas. To that end, India has initiated the development of Iran's Chabahar port in order to established inter-regional connectivity.³⁵⁷ The port in question is essentially a cargo terminal that may extend connectivity to central Asia and Afghanistan. Accordingly, it is an ideal transit hub. It offers the opportunity for expanding cooperation among the countries of Central Asia. Japan has proposed to join India to together work towards developing the Chabahar Port in order to improve connectivity with Eurasia.³⁵⁸

Since 1995 India has been attempting to gain ground in the hydrocarbon sector of Kazakhstan.³⁵⁹ The efforts finally succeeded in 2009 when an agreement was signed by

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ *Country Analysis Executive Summary: India*. Op. cit.

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

³⁵⁷ Roy, Meena S, 2017, Op. cit.

³⁵⁸ Aoki, Kenta. "Chabahar: The Fault-line in India-Japan Infrastructure Cooperation." *Scaling India-Japan Cooperation in Indo-Pacific and Beyond 2025: Corridors, Connectivity and Contours*, edited by Jagannath P. Panda, KW Publisher, 2020. pp. 264-283. eBook Collection (MPIDSA).

³⁵⁹ Roy, Meena S. "Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's Visit to Kazakhstan." *Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses*. 27 April. 2011, www.idsa.in/idsacomments/PrimeMinisterManmohanSinghsVisittoKazakhstan. Accessed on 20 October, 2020.

India's Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) with Kazakhstan's KazMunayGas (KMG).³⁶⁰ In 2010 India's Ministry of Oil and Gas signed an Exploration Contract with KMG. Firm agreement between the ONGC and the KMG were signed during the Indian Prime Minister's visit to Kazakhstan April 2011. The latest agreement envisages a 25 percent participating interest for OVL in the Satpayev Block as a strategic foreign partner in the project.³⁶¹ Meanwhile, India has been in talks with Turkmenistan for enhancing energy linkages, in the face of competition from China, especially for participation in the initial prospecting and subsequent exploration and production in the offshore Caspian Blocks.³⁶² In October 2007, the joint venture of OVL-Mittal succeeded in acquiring a 30 percent share in the exploration of Block 11-12, off the shore from Turkmenistan in the Caspian Sea. This agreement is India's first initiation in Central Asia's energy sector. This project supports India's aim to diversity its sources of oil. At the present time 67 percent of India's oil imports on from West Asia and North Africa.³⁶³ Among India's proposed sources for acquiring oil in the pursuit of energy security Kazakhstan holds great importance. Taking into account the massive oil and gas reserves in Russia, Kazakhstan is the only other country with enough deposits to help meet India's energy security. This is inclusive of hydrocarbons and nuclear fuel. It is endowed with enormous reserves of uranium as also oil and gas.³⁶⁴

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ *Bilateral agreements concluded during PM's visit to Kazakhstan*. Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 16 April 2011, www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/4845/Bilateral+agreements+concluded+during+PMs+visit+to+Kazakhstan. Accessed on 20 October, 2020.

³⁶² Scott, David. 2009, Op. cit. p. 130

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ *Background Reference: Kazakhstan*. U.S. Energy Information Administration, 7 January, 2019, www.eia.gov/international/content/analysis/countries_long/Kazakhstan/pdf/kazakhstan_bkgd.pdf. Accessed on 15 November. 2019.

Kazakhstan possesses 12% of global uranium reserves. In 2019, it produced about 22,800 EU.³⁶⁵ In 2009 it led the world in the production of uranium, its share being 28% of global production.³⁶⁶ In 2019, Kazakhstan's production of uranium rose to 43% of the world's total.³⁶⁷ It is now in a position to become the biggest supplier of uranium in the world. In 2009, in the context of India's high dependence on the import of energy, Kazakhstan's Kazatomprom signed an agreement with India's Nuclear Power Corporation Limited (NPCIL) for the supply of 2100 tons of Uranium to India and also initiate a study of the feasibility for constructing Indian PHWR reactors in Kazakhstan.³⁶⁸ NPCIL declared that the agreement signalled "a mutual commitment to begin thorough discussions on large-term strategic relationship".³⁶⁹ In 2015, Kazatomprom signed an agreement with India's Department of Atomic Energy for the supply of 5000 tU to India between 2015 and 2019.³⁷⁰

In the realm of energy security, a proposal was mooted for constructing a gas pipe line project linking Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India (TAPI). The project was estimated to cost U.S \$ 7.6 billion. The pipe line would potentially be 1680 kms long.³⁷¹ The Asian Development Bank (ADB) had agreed to finance the project that India joined in November 2007.³⁷² Given the geopolitical constraints, the multilateral negotiations

³⁶⁵ "Uranium and Nuclear Power in Kazakhstan". World Nuclear Association, September, 2020, www.world-nuclear.org/information-library/country-profiles/countries-g-n/kazakhstan.aspx. Accessed on 15 November. 2020.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ Vishnoi, Himanshu and S. Narayan. "Nuclear Power in India." *Institute of South Asian Studies, NUS, Singapore and Center for Asia Studies*, April 2010, pp. 1-39. www.indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/files/Nuclear_Power_in_India_may2010.pdf. Accessed on 16 November. 2020.

³⁷⁰ "Uranium and Nuclear Power in Kazakhstan". 2020, Op. cit.

³⁷¹ Shekhawat, Singh P. "India China Relations: Implications for Global Peace and Regional Security." *National Defence College Bangladesh*, vol. 16, no. 2, December 2016, pp. 112-129, www.ndc.gov.bd/publications/62b76f3e-575a-498e-a465-b4b57ec594a8.pdf. Accessed on 17 November. 2020.

³⁷² Joshi, Nirmala. "India and Central Asia Energy Cooperation". *India and Central Asia: Two Decades of Transition*, edited by P. L. Dash, Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 50-61.

concerning the projects became complicated and protracted. For India, the security issues in Afghanistan and Pakistan appeared to be insurmountable in the near future. The countries involved in the project had to necessarily provide military protection for the pipe line. That apart, they had to agree to a method to fix the price of the gas, as well as the transit fees. All these issues had to be sorted out to the satisfaction of all concerned parties.³⁷³ The TAPI project can be of benefit to the concerned parties if it materializes.³⁷⁴ Not only would the transit revenues boost the general regional economy, the project would help Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan to overcome their land locked status.³⁷⁵ An alternative to the TAPI project, as viewed by India, is the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipe line project. This 2600 kms long project is appropriately named the peace pipe line.³⁷⁶ India has evinced interest in the IPI project that was started in 1994 for the purpose of transporting Iranian gas to Pakistan and India.³⁷⁷

Economic Policy of India Towards Central Asia

It has been increasingly evident to the foreign policy makers in India that the country's economic interests can be well served by the trade and investment opportunities that are potentially accessible in Central Asia. Ties between India and that region hold promise of great mutual commercial and economic benefits. India and the countries of Central Asia are agreed on the tremendous opportunities that may potentially ensue from their strategic political and economic linkages.

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

Despite their geographical proximity, there is currently no direct cross-border access between India and Central Asia. However, the deep historical, cultural and economic relationships, as noted heretofore, accord central Asia high priority in India's foreign policy. Further, India's strategic objectives favour the development of close relations with the Central Asian Republics. Both the region stands to gain economically through mutual trade. For India, the relationship would boost its energy security and help to satisfy its growing internal need for energy. Further, powers that are hostile to India will not be able to rope in the Central Asian Republics as part of a grouping that is inimical to India's interests. In this context, India needs to impede any efforts by hostile forces at upsetting the emerging balance of power in Central Asia. India and the Central Asian Republics are set to forge a unique relationship that takes all these factors into account.

India's policy in Central Asia is centered around economic cooperation. The main thrust is on exploring avenues for deepening economic ties by way of joint ventures in banking, agriculture, insurance, pharmaceuticals, and information technology. India has extended training facilities to the Central Asian Republics in the fields of management, consultancy, and construction. Given the current nature of industrial activities in these countries, technology from India has proven to be more suitable than from the west. India is keenly conscious of the significance of the vast available natural resources in these states. In turn, the Central Asian republics hold India in high esteem as an economic power. They are aware of India's remarkable progress in the fields of small and medium industries and human resources development. Accordingly, they are interested in India's Industrial and technical co-operation. There is a mutual recognition of this enormous potential for economic growth based on cooperation between India and the Central Asian region. There are vast opportunities presented by Central Asia's natural resources and India's technological and

scientific capacities for satisfaction of each other's needs. In spite of the problems associated with transitional economies in Central Asia, the rationale for collaboration with India is very clear.

The two regions have ample Potential for profitable mutual trade. They both offer promising prospects as destinations for investments. Though the current volumes of inter-regional trade is far short of the potential, there is great scope for India and the Central Asian republics to collaborate in multiple, meaningful ventures. Fortunately, India and these states have economies that are mutually complementary to each other, and not competitive, in matters relating to resources, man power and market. The pooling of their diverse strengths and capacities in the form of wider inter-regional co-operation will help to realize the existing potential.

Collaboration between India and Central Asia is already underway in the field of oil and gas this is in recognition of the importance of oil security in the contemporary world. The Central Asian republics are endowed with massive reserves of oil and gas constituting on estimated 4% (270- 360 trillion cubic feet) of global gas reserves.³⁷⁸ The newly established republic propose to exploit this natural wealth to secure their economic growth and prosperity. In the event, they are scouting for different markets for selling their name materials at the best prices. India happens to be the world's third largest consumers of energy.³⁷⁹ India requires massive energy resources in order to power its rapid economic growth. To that end the country is entering into multiple agreements with the central Asian region for the supply of sufficient amount of strategic minerals and energy. India's state-

³⁷⁸ Chowdhury, Prasenjit. Op cit.

³⁷⁹ International Energy Agency, *India 2020 Energy Policy Review*, iea.org. 8 March 2020. And also see "India Presently 3rd Largest Energy Consumer in World". *Business Standard*, 13 November 2018, p. 6.

owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) currently interests in oil and gas field across Central Asia and even as for as Sakhalin (Russia). In the circumstances, all deals between India and the Central Asian states are mutually beneficial. The interest of Asian oil consumer converges with the interest of the principal producer of oil.

Countries in both the region are actively considering different project for oil and gas production as also the means for the transportation of oil, including through proposed pipeline. The geographical proximity of India and the Central Asian republics allow for massive mutual gains as would be expected of constructive agreements between the biggest energy market and world's biggest energy producing region. It is in recognition of the oil producing potential of Central Asia and India's significant potential in the energy market, India had entered into a treaty with Uzbekistan on 'principles of interstate cooperation'. Further India had signed a 'Declaration on principles and direction of co-operation' with the newly independence states of Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. For the purpose of promoting trade India had also sign a Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPA) with each of these Republics. Acknowledging the ongoing processes for regional economic integration in Eurasia, India has sought to position itself so that it could enjoy and advantage in the Eurasian Integration process by means of a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with each of the Central Asian Republics.³⁸⁰ In addition to these agreements for establishing Economic cooperation, each of these Republics is a subscriber to the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme that allows these countries to depute a number of students to depute a number of students to avail of training programmes in different

³⁸⁰ Chandra, Amiya. *India-Central Asia Relations: The Economic Dimension*. New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2015. P. 30.

Indian Institutes. Consequent upon these factors, India recognises the need to design a distinctive approach to economic cooperation with the states of Central Asia.

Bilateral Economic Relation Between India and Central Asian States

In spite of its own strained resources, India has offered moderate financial aid to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan for the purpose of boosting bilateral economic relations.³⁸¹ In 1993 on the occasion of Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's visit³⁸², India offered \$ 10 million credit for capital goods and ventures in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.³⁸³ Further, India gave a \$ 5 million credit to Kyrgyzstan for the purpose of joint ventures and other cooperative economic activities.³⁸⁴ Also, at the request of Kyrgyzstan, India gifted medicine valued at dollar 500 thousand to that states.³⁸⁵ In 1993, on the occasion of the visit of Tajik Prime Minister of Abdullajanov visit, India offered \$ 5 million credit to Tajikistan.³⁸⁶ In 1995, India granted a further credit of \$ 5 million to Tajikistan to enable it to enter into a joint venture with a private Indian company 'Ajanta Pharm' for producing pharmaceuticals.³⁸⁷ In 1996-97, a pharmaceutical plant in Dushanbe built with Indian grant-in-aid became operative.³⁸⁸ In 2003, during Indian PM Vajpayee's visit, India granted assistance of \$ 40 million to rebuild the airport

³⁸¹ Attri, Ashok Kumar. *India and Central Asia Republics*. New Delhi: Regal Publications, 2010. P. 94.

³⁸² Rhea Menon, Sharanya Rajiv. "Realizing India's Strategic Interests in Central Asia". Carnegie India, 2020, www.carnegieindia.org/2019/12/01/realizing-india-s-strategic-interests-in-central-asia-pub-80576. Accessed 30 Dec 2020. Accessed on 2 January 2021.

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. *India -Tajikistan Relations*. December, 2014.

www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Tajikistan_December_2014.pdf. Accessed on 22 October 2020.

³⁸⁸ Attri, Ashok Kumar *op cit.*, p. 94.

at Ayni Tajikistan.³⁸⁹ This assistance package included a credit of \$ 25 million to be expended on mutually agreed industrial and infrastructure project.

India has been granting different form of economic aid for the purpose of strengthening bilateral relations with Central Asian states. The credit granted by India is not limited to a one-time fixed amount. Instead, the level of commitment is maintaining through the utilization and replenishment of funds. India's economic relations with the Central Asian Republics consist of partnership in the fields of trade and direct investments. At the star the flow of investment between India and Central Asia has been relatively modest. This is partly attributed to both India and Central Asia having started late in transiting to a market-based economy. Accordingly, India's presence in Central Asia was not impactful in the initial years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the formation of the Newly Independence Republics. Nevertheless, the regional outlook and projection suggest an enormous potential for engagement with these countries.

In recent years, viewing the promising growth dynamics in mutual economic relations, India and the Central Asian countries have been keen to boost their economic ties. In addition to these initiatives made by the respective governments, the private sector in all these countries has been significantly involved in taking advantage of the emerging opportunities and expanding their engagements. The Central Asian countries follow a policy of welcoming foreign investments. Though India's investible surplus is not considerable, a number of private companies have designated Central Asia as an important investment destination.

³⁸⁹ Ibid; and also see Bhatia, Jimmy V K. "Deepening strategic ties India-Tajikistan." India Strategic, 2013, www.indiastrategic.in/topstories2015_deepening_strategic_ties_India_Tajikistan.htm. Accessed on 20 September 2020.

India's investments are largely in the sectors of oil and gas, hotel industry, pharmaceuticals and tea market. Most of the large Indian pharmaceutical and entrepreneurs companies run project in the Central Asian states, achieving annual increases in market share. Indian Oil company ONGC Videsh Ltd. is present and active in Kazakhstan's Satpayev block³⁹⁰ where it has invested USD 400 million.³⁹¹ In the steel sector, Kazakhstan's Ispat Karmat records an important Non-Resident Indian (NRI) investment valued at over US \$ 800 million. This company runs an integrated steel plant with an annual production capacity of 6 million tonnes. This represents about 8% of Kazakhstan GDP. The country showcases the Ispat Karmat plant as a model investment venture.³⁹²

India and Central Asia have favourably viewed the potential for joint venture in the areas of Railways construction, science and technology, education, Tourism, ecology, health, environment, trade and commerce. The first joint venture M/s Kyrgyz Ajanta Pharma Ltd., was established in Bishkek in 1997.³⁹³ Currently some Indian joint ventures are achieving success in Uzbekistan. In 1996, in the construction sector M/s Tata Projects Ltd. finished building a modern hotel (Hotel Le-Meridien) in Tashkent.³⁹⁴ In 2004, Punj Lloyd Kazakhstan Ltd. entered a deal for building large-bore and small-bore pipelines.³⁹⁵

³⁹⁰ Attri, Ashok Kumar *op cit.*, p. 96.

³⁹¹ "PM Launches OVL Oil Block Project in Kazakhstan." outlook, 7 July 2015, Web. 8 January. 2019; also see Mehdudia, Sujay. "OVL considering being part of Kazakhstan's \$500 "Eurasia project"." Hindu, 16 Dec. 2013, Web. 12 January. 2019.

³⁹² Attri, Ashok Kumar *op cit.*, p. 97.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 98.

Bilateral Trade Between India and the Central Asian Republics

The volume of trade between India and the republics of Central Asia has fallen short of the acknowledged potential. The geographical constraints have impeded the flow of trade between India and these countries. However, there is a felt need to boost trade between the two regions. India is aware of its role as a significant regional power and member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. As such, it has evinced considerable keenness in improving economic ties with its extended neighbourhood in Central Asia particularly by means of trade.³⁹⁶ India and the countries in that region are agreed on the need to achieve the existing potential in trade. Policy makers in India and these countries have been consistently striving to strengthen their trade relations. The data since 2010 indicate a significant growth in India's bilateral trade with some of these countries, though India's trade with Central Asia in general has been lagging behind. However, there are signs of an improvement in the volume of trade between India and the Central Asian states. In order to reduce volatility in trade figures, India and these countries have set up joint commissions to oversee their coordination in the field of trade and joint ventures in economic, scientific and technological initiatives. As a part of the ongoing cooperation trade fairs and exhibitions are mutually organized in a regular manner.

In 2019-2020, India's total trade turn over in Central Asia is recorded at US \$ 2797 million, which is an improvement over the figure of US \$ 496 million recorded in 2010-11, these data have been compiled by the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India. The trade is majorly made up of India's imports of crude

³⁹⁶ Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS). "India-Central Asia Partnership: Moving for Regional Development and Connectivity". June 2019, www.ris.org.in/india-central-asia-partnership-moving-regional-development-and-connectivity. Accessed on 25 October 2020.

oil and chemical products from Kazakhstan. The relations can potentially expand with India's further imports of mineral resources from the countries of Central Asia. The absence of a shared border and direct over land access have dampened the prospects of intensive economic exchanges. The prolonged instability in Afghanistan and the relentless hostility of Pakistan prevents India from using the shortest route to Central Asia. In the circumstances, India's trade with central Asia is primarily conducted over the sea-route, and an alternate land route through Iran.³⁹⁷

India's Technical and Economic Cooperation programmes have helped to solidify India's engagement with Central Asia.³⁹⁸ However it has not led to any substantive improvement in trade and commerce between the two sides. As given in figure 1 and figure 2, trade between India and Central Asia was below US \$ 750 million in 2012-13, which is far below the existing potential.³⁹⁹ The increase in total trade between the two sides to US \$ 1241 million in 2013-14 is attributed to the sharp increase (US \$ 918 million) in bilateral trade with Kazakhstan, while the trade with the other republics remained generally at the same level.⁴⁰⁰ In spite of Pakistan's refusal to allow India to use its territory to Central Asia, India has maintained a positive trade trajectory with Central Asian states (figure 1 and 2). However, more than half of India's trade to the region is with Kazakhstan.⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁷ The Economist Intelligence Unit, "At the periphery: India in Central Asia." 4 Jan. 2019, www.eiu.com/n/. Accessed on 20 February 2019.

³⁹⁸ Wani, Ayjaz. "India And China in Central Asia: Understanding the New Rivalry in The Heart of Eurasia." ORF Occasional Paper, no. 235, Observer Research Foundation, February 2020, p. 20. www.orfonline.org/research/india-and-china-in-central-asia-understanding-the-new-rivalry-in-the-heart-of-eurasia-61473/. Accessed on 3 April 2019

³⁹⁹ Chandra, Amiya. Op. cit. p. 31

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

Figure-1: India's Imports from Central Asian Countries (Values in US\$ million)⁴⁰²

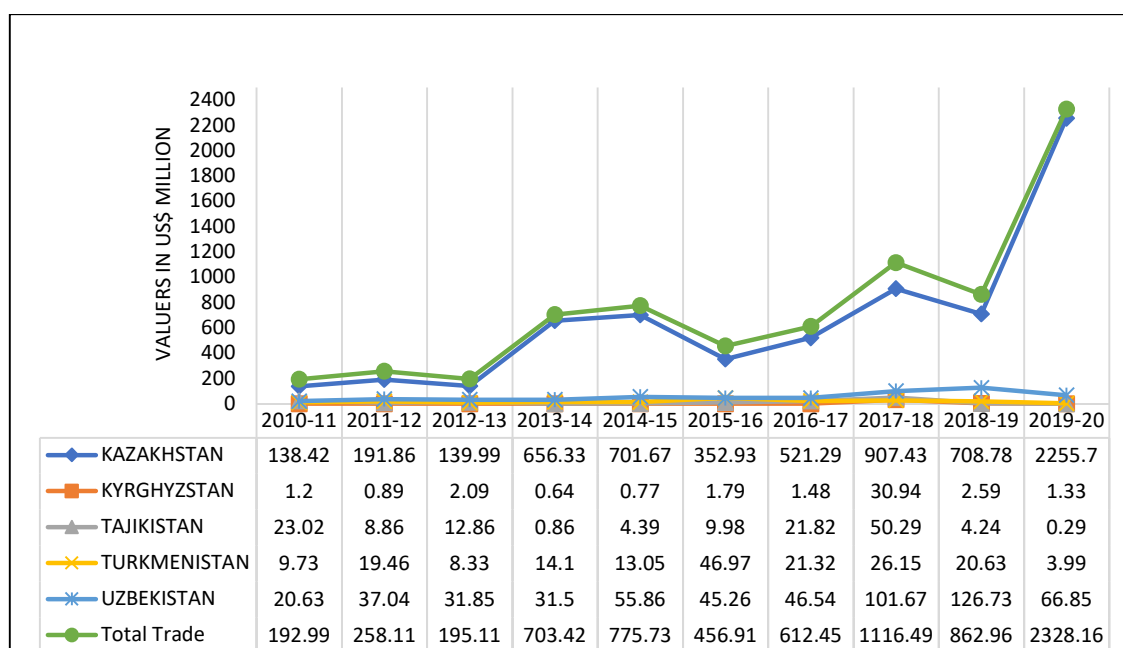
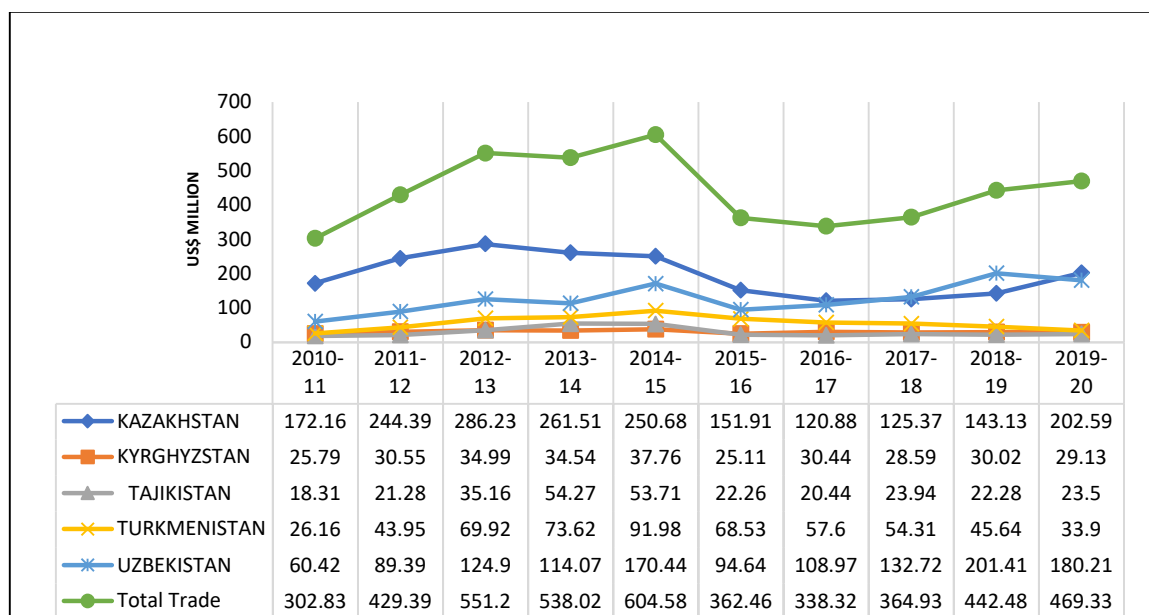


Figure 2: India's Exports to Central Asia (Values in US\$ Million)⁴⁰³



⁴⁰² Source: Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Govt. of India.

⁴⁰³ Source: Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Govt. of India.

While India's overall trade with Central Asia is low relative to potential, a significant increase in the export of Indian goods and services to the region between 2010 -2020 is observed.⁴⁰⁴ India's principal export to Central Asia comprises pharmaceutical products. The drugs are generally meant for over-the-counter retail sales. India thereby meets over 30% of Central Asia's pharmaceutical needs.⁴⁰⁵ Intern India's mineral imports from Central Asia largely consist of Zinc, Sulphur and limestone. In addition, under the agreement on cooperation in peaceful uses of Nuclear Energy signed in 2011, India has begun to import uranium from Kazakhstan for its civil nuclear reactors.⁴⁰⁶ As indicated in figure 1 and 2, there have been rising trends in India's imports from and exports to Central Asia.⁴⁰⁷ Viewed in a larger perspective, India's trade engagements with the Central Asian region have fallen short of the existing potential, though both sides are aware of the need to expand trade and economic relations.⁴⁰⁸

This is so because both India and Central Asia share economic complementarity by way of resources, man power and markets. India's tea, drugs, Pharmaceuticals and fine chemicals have an established presence in the markets of Central Asia. The region has emerged as a destination for energy seeking countries. Russia, China and USA are already operating in the region for the purpose of tapping the sources of energy. Accordingly, there is a need for India to promote trade and compete effectively. Currently, India is largely dependent on West Asia for satisfying its energy needs. To reduce this dependence and

⁴⁰⁴ Chandra, Amiya. Op. cit. p. 32

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ Roy, Meena S. "India's 'Connect Central Asia' Policy: Building Cooperative Partnership". *Indian Foreign Affairs Journal*, vol. 8, no. 3, July-September 2013, pp. 301-316.

diversify its sources India is keen on improving its economic and trade relations with the energy exporting Central Asian republics. In this context, as observed by Amiya Chandra, India needs to expand its economic cooperation with Kazakhstan, which is the leading Central Asian nation owing to its territorial size and huge natural resources.⁴⁰⁹ In the event, Kazakhstan is the best placed Central Asian country to satisfy India's energy needs. Ex-Ambassador Ashok Sajjan also highlights Kazakhstan's status as Central Asia's largest economy.⁴¹⁰ Accordingly, among the states of Central Asia India accords top priority to Kazakhstan.

After the end of the Cold War, Kazakhstan's status as an important energy exporter and India's largest trade partner in Central Asia has found deserving priority in India's foreign policy. India's need to diversify the sources of natural resources explains the country's rapidly growing relations with Kazakhstan. From India's point of view Kazakhstan possesses abundant natural resources that can be tapped inexpensively for India's purposes. Further, Kazakhstan is an attractive market for Indian goods.

India's Foreign Policy Towards Kazakhstan

From the start of its existence as an independent republic, Kazakhstan has accorded importance to India in its foreign policy. This is in recognition of India's identity as a tested and adaptive multi-ethnic, multi-cultural pluralist society with a successful track record of handling intra- ethnic relations. Moreover, India is structurally a secular and

⁴⁰⁹ Chandra, Amia. *India-Central Asia Relations: The Economic Dimension*. Pentagon Press, p. 13.

⁴¹⁰ Sajjanhar, "Ashok. Perspectives on India-Kazakhstan Relations: Challenges and Opportunities." *Perspectives on Bilateral and Regional Cooperation: South and Central Asia*, edited by Rashpal Malhotra, et al. Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (CRRID), 2013, pp. 39-46.

stable democratic polity. Intern, India has accorded great importance to Kazakhstan in recognition of its geostrategic location in the Central Asian region, as also its geographical proximity to and historical and cultural links with India. After the dissolution of Soviet Union and birth of Kazakhstan as an independent republic, India has recognized Kazakhstan's centrality in Central Asia's regional geopolitics. Kazakhstan's prominence in Central Asia is a keen to India's stature in south Asia. In the event India has given Kazakhstan a high position in its foreign policy priorities. To illustrate the point, India was one of the first country to recognise Kazakhstan's independence. In 1992, India established formal diplomatic relations with Kazakhstan when the Kazakh president Nazarbayev visited India. In the following year, in 1993, India's Prime Minister Narasimha Rao visited Kazakhstan.⁴¹¹

India and Kazakhstan have progressively come closer to each other, both being important countries in their respective regions while enjoying significant presence in the global comity of nations. Both the countries have the potential to transcend their regional prominence and play a larger role in global dynamics. Significantly, both the countries have been backing each other in different international forums. Kazakhstan has steadfastly rooted for increased participation by India in the regional organizations of Central Asia, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

It has supported an expanded role for India as a member state. Lately, the trajectory of relations between India and Kazakhstan has been significantly rising, with a potential for further acceleration in the years ahead. The principle motivating factors of the partnership

⁴¹¹ *India-Kazakhstan Relations*. Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, December 2018, https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/december_2018.pdf. Accessed on 20 October 2020.

have been a commonality of interests and a shared desire to deepen the strategic relations. Since the two nations complement each other in economic and strategic fields, the strengthening of their mutual ties is a natural outcome. This is evinced in their respective foreign policies where they accord prominence to each other. In the context of the dynamic international geopolitical scenario and widening economic interdependence, Kazakhstan recognises India as a strategic economic partner and also a potential 'bridging power' with a positive influence for the establishment of regional peace and stability.

Central Asia's considerable significance for India grows from its close proximity. Further, coordination and cooperation between India and Kazakhstan have great economic and strategic dimensions. The two nations are fully aware of the security challenges that concern the Central Asian Republics. The security challenges in the Central Asian region flow from terrorism, drug trafficking, organized crime, separatism, ethnic conflicts etc. India and Kazakhstan share a long-term perspective on co countering terrorism, banning Weapons of Mass Destructions (WMDs) and fighting organized crime like arms proliferation, etc. Joint efforts of both countries towards facing up to such challenges are in keeping with their mutual desire to establish peace, stability and security in South Asia and the Central Asian Republics, so that they may successfully achieve economic prosperity. The relationship between these two countries is designed to not only fulfil their mutual potential but to also further their regional and international interest.

Trade and Commerce are the mainstay of the fast expanding and varied linkages between India and Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan presents numerous avenues for trade and investments, and so does India. The existing political and strategic relations between the two countries are manifested in the deepening economic and trade ties since 2001. Given the current rate

of expansion in mutual exchanges, the trade relations between India and Kazakhstan are poised for significant growth. Investments represent another field with possibilities for significant growth. Both countries view foreign direct investments as having the capability of powering growth. Such investments can assist India and Kazakhstan to bridge the gap between domestic revenue and expenditures on programmes aimed at achieving employment and growth targets.

Foreign direct investments can also be directed towards improving the standard of living of population by means of improved labour productivity. Further, such investments can result in the transfer of technology and technical know-how for the beneficiary country. Among the republics of Central Asia, Kazakhstan is considered to possess a significant percentage of the global oil and gas reserves, much of which is yet to be identified and tapped. Kazakhstan's possession of unexploited energy resources can be of potential benefit for India with regard to the rapidly increasing short term and long-term energy needs.

New Partnership with Kazakhstan as Part of India's Connect Central Asia Policy

In 2012, India declared its Connect Central Asia Policy (CCAP) that presented the framework of a new vision of a robust strategic engagement with Central Asia. This policy stressed the need for proactive political economic and people to people engagements, with prominence given to the different realms of commerce, connectivity, consular access, community interactions and innovations. The areas of innovation were envisaged to be in the areas medicine, education and tourism. The policy highlighted the significance of soft

power over hard power. India's soft power was manifested in the areas of training and innovation even with regard to defence and nuclear energy cooperation with Kazakhstan. In order to analyse the research topic of why Kazakhstan is of prime importance in India's CCAP, one must consider national interest as the focal point for India's relations with Central Asia. Most of the studies dealing with India's foreign policy in respect of Kazakhstan lay stress on National interest. They identify India's growing need for energy resources as the principal force that drives India's CCAP in Kazakhstan. Scholars agree that India's growing economy is linked to growing energy needs.⁴¹²

India's engagement with Central Asia is multi-tiered as it encompasses political, economic and cultural engagements with the region.⁴¹³ This inclusive policy pattern reflects India's perception of its role in Central Asia. The Connect Central Asia Policy is structured on broad parameters of engagement in the political, economic, and people to people spheres, both bilaterally with individual countries and collectively with the region. The spirit of India's new policy is to build on the renewed relationship so as to cover the entire Eurasian region. The policy is essentially broad-based in as much as it spans cooperation in economic, political, educational, cultural, and other strategic areas of connectivity.⁴¹⁴ India's Connect Central Asia Policy is multi-faceted and, therefore, is not limited to energy, oil, and natural resources. It is about cooperation in every sphere including politics, culture and defence.⁴¹⁵ It is necessary to consider the opening of avenues beyond

⁴¹² Ramakrishna, G. & Rena, R. "An empirical analysis of energy consumption and economic growth in India: are they casually related?" *Studia Oeconomica*, vol. 58, no. 2, 2013, pp. 22-40. www.studiaoconomica.reviste.ubbcluj.ro/Abstract/volume582/abstract_02.pdf. Accessed on 22 October 2020. and also see Deb, Kaushik and Manoj Kumar. "India's Energy Demand and Supply". *Low Carbon Pathways for Growth in India*, edited by R. Kathuria et al. India Studies in Business and Economics, 2018, pp. 7-13.

⁴¹³ Singh Roy, Meena, Op. cit. 2013. P. 303.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid. p. 305.

⁴¹⁵ Jha, Martand. "India's Connect Central Asia Policy: A look back at India-Central Asia relations in the Post-Soviet era." *TheDiplomat.com*, 2 December. 2016, www.thediplomat.com/2016/12/indias-connect-central-asia-policy-2/#:~:text=China%20has%20made%20deep%20inroads,%2C%. Accessed on 22 October 2020.

Kazakhstan to access the other markets of Central Asia. In order to deal with the expansion of China's influence in contiguous areas, it is necessary for India to accelerate its outreach programme in the entire Central Asian region.

Kazakhstan's importance stems from inter-alia, its geo-strategic location. Kazakhstan is in centre of a region where great powers are scrambling for influence. It shares a border with China. Russia uses its military bases in the region to leverage its own political strategy. In the circumstances, under its Connect Central Asia Policy, India projects its democracy as a potentially effective political structure for Kazakhstan and other states in the region.

According to former Indian ambassador, Phunchok Stobdan, though Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan play critical roles in the regional dynamics of Central Asia, Kazakhstan needs to be given priority in India's foreign policy.⁴¹⁶ There are important factors that justify giving precedence to the oil-rich state of Kazakhstan.⁴¹⁷ A part from it being the region's largest country, it attracts the attention of all major powers. While being at the hub of Eurasia, Kazakhstan acts as a buffer state between the East and the West.⁴¹⁸

In the light of these factors, India has directed its economic thrust in Central Asia to the growth of trade relations with Kazakhstan. Firstly, Kazakhstan's pre-eminence in India's Connect Central Asia Policy owes to the significant opportunities it offers to Indian state holders. Secondly, Kazakhstan is a convenient destination for India's exports to the Central Asian region. Thirdly, within Central Asia, Kazakhstan has evolved as a financial hub. Fourthly, Kazakhstan has earned the reputation of having a conducive investment climate.

⁴¹⁶ Stobdan, Phunchok. *India and Central Asia: The Strategic Dimension*. K W Publisher, 2020, p. 288.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

Fifthly, Kazakhstan possesses a wide range of natural resources, including massive reserves of oil and gas, coal, uranium, and metal ones, that make it one of the most important producers and suppliers for industries across the world. Its Uranium enrichment plants are located at Ust-Kamenogorsk and it runs a rapid neutron reactor in Aktau. Sixthly, Kazakhstan continues to be an attractive destination for tourism and flow of wealth. Besides, being Central Asia's largest economy, Kazakhstan enjoys reputation of proven political stability and a favourable investment climate. It fosters felicitous relations with all countries of the world. Seventhly, despite its Muslim majority populace, Kazakhstan has evolved as a notably secular, prosperous, and a stable country that offers the freest economy in the post-Soviet geographical area. In a brief period of time, its economy has surged ahead and the country has earned international admiration as an iconic modern state and the most strategic hub among the former Soviet republics.⁴¹⁹ Finally, Kazakhstan's favourable geographical location as the cusp between Europe and Asia adds to its significance as India's holistic partner.⁴²⁰

India takes all these factors into consideration while formulating its foreign policy and accords justifiable priority to Kazakhstan. In central Asia, Kazakhstan is the only country to recognize India's huge potential and direct investments into India. Accordingly, under India's Connect Central Asia Policy, Kazakhstan and India have been working on the means to increase connectivity, particularly through air.⁴²¹ As a result of the factors outlined above, Kazakhstan has become an increasingly attractive destination for Indian

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

⁴²⁰ Shah, Saloni. "Kazakhstan has an abundance of investment opportunities for the discerning." India Inc Group, 14 Sept. 2020, www.indiaincgroup.com/kazakhstan-has-an-abundance-of-investment-opportunities-for-the-discerning-investor/ Accessed 15 November 2020.

⁴²¹ "India-Central Asia: Important to facilitate North-South trade". Observer Research Foundation, 3 May. 2019, www.orfonline.org/research/india-central-asia-important-facilitate-north-south-trade-50442. Accessed on 22 October 2020.

investment in Central Asia. The said factors accounts for Kazakhstan becoming the key country in India's Connect Central Asia Policy.

India's Foreign Policy Towards Kazakhstan: The Role of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and Other New Trends

In relation to Central Asia, India's foreign policy considers three important factors that comprise economic engagement, political alignment, and cooperation of emergent security matters, to be dealt with bilaterally and through the Shanghai cooperation organization. The members of this organization are exercised over the possibility of the volatile situation in Afghanistan seeping across borders into neighbouring countries. The threats posed by militant Islamism drug trafficking and organized crime are the chief concerns.

The SCO can be differentiated from other regional security groupings by its emphasis on a cooperative approach to non- traditional security threats. At China's behest, the member countries listed the terrorist and terror groups that would be targated jointly. The SCO also created a centralized hub for the storage of information and intelligence that would be accessible to all members. Viewing the need to block the sources of funds used by terrorists, an agreement was signed by the members of the SCO to cooperate on anti-drug operations and activated the SCO Secretariat for coordination among members on matters relating to Security.

In the immediate turn, India's foreign policy with regard to Afghanistan is aimed at countering Pakistan's influence and containing radical Islamism. However, in the longer-term India proposes to leverage its goodwill in Afghanistan for deepening its relations with

Central Asia in general and Kazakhstan in particular by way of strategic and economic linkages. In 2007, India was admitted to SCO as a member, along with Pakistan.⁴²² In this context, India and Kazakhstan have forged a meaningful military relationship. Such a tie-up also exists between India and Tajikistan. In addition, India participates in a number of trans-Afghan oil and gas pipeline projects.⁴²³ India's constructive involvement in SCO helps to pre-empt any potential inimical measures that may be taken by regional adversaries.

The evolution of the SCO as a Security alliance is sometimes viewed by other countries as a potential threat. However, the trajectory adopted by the SCO with regard to Security cooperation was gained clarity and highlights the need for advancing the desired coordination.⁴²⁴ India's proactive involvement in regional multilateralism lays stress on the spirit of shared growth. The present energy supply channels used by India for oil imports from Central Asia connect largely with the sources in Kazakhstan. The largest regional oil reserves and the highest productions of crude oil are in Kazakhstan. Such a wealth of resources presents the country with a huge potential for oil exports. India's economy is largely fuelled by the energy resources arriving from Kazakhstan. The SCO acts as an important forum where India and Kazakhstan can expand on their relations. India's growing economy is progressively opening out to the world at large and Central Asia occupies an important position in India's foreign policy. The fact of India being a fast emerging economic and strategic power in Central Asia and its connections with the

⁴²² Desai, Suyash. "India's SCO Challenge". *The Diplomat*, 5 December 2017, www.thediplomat.com/2017/12/indias-sco-challenge/. Accessed on 25 October 2020.

⁴²³ Clarke, Michael. "China's Strategy in 'Greater Central Asia.'" *India and Central Asia, Foreign Policy Research Centre*, vol. 2, 2012. pp. 77-103.

⁴²⁴ Roy, Meena S. "Role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Afghanistan: Scope and Limitations." *Strategic Analysis*, vol. 34, no. 4, 2010, p. 545.

countries in other regions is already well established. However, India's participation in the multilateral forum of SCO opens new diplomatic avenues for clarifying India's aims and assuring other members of its peaceful intentions and removing any possible doubt and distrust. This concept of India's benign aspirations is directed towards all members, particularly Pakistan and China. In order to expand its area of influence, India adopted a cautious foreign policy. India has displayed its intent to promote its national interests in the region without excluding China. Any effort to isolate China from India's strategy in Central Asia would have avoidably intensify hostility and suspicion between India and China.

It is necessary to consider the circumstances that encourage India to join the SCO. In this context, India considers in general terms four potential benefits that derive from its membership of the SCO. First, with regard to its concerns in the immediate neighbourhood in South Asia, India perceives SCO as an additional forum for engaging with China and Pakistan for the settlement of border problem. Second, in the potential aftermath of the western withdrawal from Afghanistan an effective SCO can initiate a security cooperation structure for establishing regional security and countering Islamic radicalism, cross border terror, and the trafficking of drugs and weapons, which are of concern to India. Third, the SCO offers a convenient forum for India to liaise with major Central Asian countries and fellow members for widening the scope of trade in energy and goods between India and its extended neighbourhood. Finally, the SCO is a strategic forum for confirming and expanding India's role as an important factor in the Eurasian region.

India's increasingly close relations with Kazakhstan help in affirming India's position of prominence in the regional affairs of Eurasia. To that end, the SCO offers an additional

opportunity for India and Kazakhstan to relate with each other in a conducive multilateral framework. Importantly, the SCO enables specific members to iron out their differences and arrive negotiated settlements.⁴²⁵ Significantly, the SCO affords India with an opportunity to intensify its trade relations with Kazakhstan and thereby expand India's economic initiative in Central Asia. Finally, in the context of security, India could avail of the SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist structure (RATS) and expand its military cooperation with the Central Asian Republics, so that it can catch up with China and Russia in this Sphere.⁴²⁶

In the Shanghai cooperation organization (SCO), India finds a convenient platform for advancing its foreign policy aims in Central Asia in general and Kazakhstan in particular. The generally observable interactions and dealings in Central Asia are increasingly reflected in the dynamics of the SCO. India is able to promote its multi-dimensional perception by means of the SCO. India has used its good will so that the Central Asian countries achieve growing importance in the structural of the SCO. The success of this regional grouping has been increasingly significant. The SCO has facilitated India's policy goal of expanding its relations with Kazakhstan. India finds the SCO useful for furthering regional cooperation in matters of security, and economic development. In the process India's constructive role and meaningful participation have contributed to its image as a large and important regional power.

⁴²⁵ Roy, Meena S. "India and the SCO: A Vision for Expanding New Delhi's Engagement." *Russian International Affairs Council*, 4 December. 2019, www.russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/india-and-the-sco-a-vision-for-expanding-new-delhi-s-engagement/. Accessed on 26 October 2020.

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

India's Affinity with and Stakes in Kazakhstan

It is acknowledged that interactions between India and Kazakhstan are both historical and ancient. The two countries have influenced each other's civilizational evolution. There is currently a proactive agenda for promoting cultural engagements for renewal of the old affinities. To that end they have cooperated in staging cultural events and popular exhibitions.⁴²⁷ Nevertheless, there is a felt need to shape the strategic structure of the relationship through increased investments in these soft ties, by means of more frequent cultural and educational exchanges, so that they can evolve into an all-round relationship.⁴²⁸

The meaningful and durable relations between India and Kazakhstan owe to a few significant factors. Both are made up of societies that are multi-ethnic, multi linguistic, and multi-cultural. Also, both are committed to secular values and to a policy of disallowing fundamentalism, religious extremism and terrorism. Importantly both the countries have a similar approach to important domestic and international issues. However, India is keeping not of the new geopolitics taking shape in the Eurasian region. Kazakhstan's potential role in the evolving geopolitical situation in Eurasia is of importance to India in framing its foreign policy. The relationship between India and Kazakhstan continues to be of high quality in being multi-dimensional. In 2019-2020 Kazakhstan was India's most significant trade partner in Central Asia, resulting in a total trade value of US \$ 2,458.29 million.⁴²⁹ Given the common factors of secularism and

⁴²⁷ Buckley, Caitlin A. "India and Kazakhstan: Bilateral Political, Economic, Strategic and Cultural Relations." India and Central Asia, *Foreign Policy Research Centre*, vol. 2, 2012. pp. 231-237.

⁴²⁸ Ibid. p. 237.

⁴²⁹ Stobdan, Phunchok. Op. cit. p. 292.

pluralism in their political structures, both countries are politically and economically committed to a relationship of strong affinity. Kazakhstan's growing importance in Central Asia gives a strategic edge to India's relationship with that country. In 2010, Kazakhstan completed a tenure of chairmanship of Europe's organization for security and cooperation.⁴³⁰ President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan accorded great importance to an Asia dialogue on security cooperation by way of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA). India is a member of this important inter-governmental forum for expanding cooperation in the sphere of peace, security and stability in Asia.⁴³¹ The seriousness of Kazakhstan's determination to fight terrorism became evident when it signed a Joint Working Group (JWG) agreement with India on terrorism. This agreement could also work towards furthering cooperation in the SCO.⁴³² That apart, the two countries have signed a strategic partnership agreement, as also an agreement to cooperate for bringing about stability in Kazakhstan.

There is no gainsaying that Kazakhstan possesses great potential as a country of interest to India, opportunities abound for modernizing its refineries, as also in the areas of services exports, pharmaceuticals, IT software, biotechnology, banking, health, educational services defence industries, agriculture farming, textiles, etc.⁴³³ In the field of commercial agricultural farming, India is in a position to lease agricultural land in Kazakhstan for the purpose.⁴³⁴

⁴³⁰ Buckley, Caitlin A. Op. cit. p. 236.

⁴³¹ Ibid.

⁴³² Ibid.

⁴³³ Ibid.

⁴³⁴ "Interactive Session with Kazakhstan Opportunities for Collaboration". *You Tube*, uploaded by ASSOCHAN India, 3 December. 2020, www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZoR1h2kI5Fg. Accessed on 17 December 2020.

There is great potential for India and Kazakhstan to cooperate in the area of high technology. Related ventures can be supported by India's rich collection of highly trained experts in the scientific arena. To achieve such a synergy, the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in 2001 at the third Session of the Indo-Kazakh Joint Scientific and Technological committee, in New Delhi.⁴³⁵ Moreover, India is powerfully positioned to assist the Republic of Kazakhstan in the development of human resources. Though on a small scale, India is already providing training to the citizens of Kazakhstan in select areas of expertise. To illustrate the point, the National Institute of Information Technology (NIIT) is extending training in its field. Under the auspices of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme, India has been helping Kazakhstan's efforts at enhancing capacity.

The large pharmaceutical companies of India are already operating in Kazakhstan and are observed to be increasing their annual market share. These companies may next explore the avenues for manufacturing their pharmaceutical drugs and products in Kazakhstan. Pursuant to the Agreement between the two countries in the field of health care a few medical institutions of India have visited Kazakhstan for exchanging experts and promoting joint research. This Agreement was signed between India's Ministry of Health and the corresponding Ministry of Kazakhstan for cooperation in the areas of health care, medical services, and pharmacy. The governments of the two respective countries are in the process of persuading India's pharmaceutical companies to set up joint ventures in Kazakhstan.

⁴³⁵ Roy, Meena S. "India-Kazakhstan: Emerging Ties". *Strategic Analysis*, vol. 26, no. 1, January-March 2002, pp. 48-64.

In the 21st century, Agri-Business assumes great importance and calls for cooperation between India and Kazakhstan. This is easily achievable since agriculture is already a growing field of cooperation between the two countries. In order to provide sustenance to its huge population and achieve food security, India needs to increase agricultural productivity, for which there is a requirement for massive quantities of fertilizers. In this context, Kazakhstan is among the world's top ten exporters of grain. Accordingly, its agricultural sector shows great promise of expansion. As a follow-up to these prevailing factors, India proposes to set up a gas-based fertilizer plant in Kazakhstan and also establish an Entrepreneurship Development Centre there. Both the countries have identified agriculture as a potential area of cooperation. Accordingly, the concerned Ministries in India and Kazakhstan signed an Agreement on cooperation in Agriculture.

With regard to bilateral cooperation between India and Kazakhstan, there is great promise of success in the field of travel and tourism.⁴³⁶ Both countries have identified this sector for joint development. In 2006, the first Kazakhstan-India Tourism Fair was organized in New Delhi.⁴³⁷ It gave tourist operators a platform for airing ideas about promoting tourism between the two countries.⁴³⁸ In 2007, the second Kazakhstan-India Tourism and Travel Fair was also held in New Delhi.⁴³⁹ It was observed that relaxations in the issuance of visas would encourage tourism. The consensus of views was that this sector held out considerable potential for developing a mutually beneficial partnership between the two countries.

⁴³⁶ Kundu, Nivedita D. *India's Emerging Partnerships in Eurasia: Strategies of New Regionalism*. Vij Book, 2016. P. 32.

⁴³⁷ Gupta, Sarthak. "Delhi hosts Kazakhstan-India Travel and Tourism Fair". Top News, 21 November 2009, www.topnews.in/delhi-hosts-kazakhstanindia-travel-and-tourism-fair-2238577. Accessed on 2 September 2020.

⁴³⁸ Mahanta, Gatikrushna. "India-Kazakhstan Economic Relations: Prospects and Challenges." *India and Central Asia, Foreign Policy Research Centre*, vol. 2, 2012. pp. 291-308.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*

India and Kazakhstan recognize the need for establishing and expanding mutual security linkages since there are a number of common security issues which are of both conventional and non-conventional nature. There are security threats that plague the region in general and India and Kazakhstan in particular.⁴⁴⁰ The security of both nations is adversely affected by terrorism, drug trafficking, arms smuggling, organized crime, separatism, ethnic strife, etc. India accords great priority to regional security since it impacts the security in Asia in general and India in particular.⁴⁴¹ There is plenty of scope for India and Kazakhstan to collaborate effectively in the field of counter-terrorism. Such collaboration will go a long way towards maintaining regional safety and overcoming the evil forces of terrorism, fundamentalism and extremism. The need for joint operations and continuing cooperation has escalated owing to the worsening security situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In recent decades, Pakistan has earned notoriety as the epicentre of terrorism.⁴⁴²

Challenges for India in Bilateral Relations with Kazakhstan

In order to reap the full benefits of its strategic partnership with Kazakhstan, it is incumbent on India to successfully overcome existing constraints. The greatest glitch in expanding bilateral commerce is the absence of direct accessibility between the two countries. Though Kazakhstan is in India's extended neighbourhood, such geographical proximity presents no benefit to either country since the overland route passes through a

⁴⁴⁰ Hussain, Mohammad S. "India-Kazakhstan Strategic Partnership in the 21st Century". *India and Central Asia, Foreign Policy Research Centre*, vol. 2, 2012. pp. 247-262.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴⁴² Sajjanhar, Ashok. *Op. cit.* 2013. Pp. 44-45

hostile Pakistan and on unstable Afghanistan in terms of security. Nevertheless, India has been in the process of initiating joint ventures in Kazakhstan in different fields, while at once by passing the logistical hurdles.

India remains cautious so that Pakistan, given its agenda in Kashmir, does not adversely influence Kazakhstan's positive mind set towards India. However, to its advantage, India already shares an understanding with the different Central Asian republics with regard to the security issues in Central Asia. As a result of the deepening economic, diplomatic and political ties between India and the states of Central Asia, it is expected that India's constructive role in ensuring regional stability and security is understood by all concern. In line with other major powers, it behaves India to expand its leading role by developing general and security infrastructure.

India's foreign policy strategy in Central Asia is design to cater to legitimate interests. The importance of Central Asia for satisfying India's present and future energy needs is obvious. In the past the absence of India's focus on Central Asia has given Pakistan and China the opportunity to make inroads in the region. Again, this backdrop, India's current strategy is to intensify its political and economic engagements with all the Central Asian Republics in the pursuit of its legitimate aims. Among the principal goals is the establishment of security and stability in Central Asia. With regard to the extant security threats being faced by the Central Asian Republics, India shares an understanding with the both Russia and the United States, with which it maintains positive relations.⁴⁴³ However, India has to contend with China and Pakistan, since both those relations are jointly intent

⁴⁴³ P. Stobdan, "Changing Strategic Landscape in Central Asia: Implications for India's Security", *Central Asia: Present Challenges and Future Prospects*, edited by V. Nagendra Rao and Mohammad Monir Alam, Knowledge World, 2005, pp. 233-244.

on blocking India's bid to expand its influence in Central Asia and improve its global standing.

Concluding Observation

This Chapter has referred to the existing studies with regard to India's foreign policy towards Central Asia in general and Kazakhstan in particular. Following the declaration of its Connect Central Asia Policy, India has been proactive on- the-ground-facilitation through investments on Chabahar port in Iran and road networks in Afghanistan. The present study attempts to analyse the empirical outcomes of India's foreign policy and political overturns in respect of the Central Asian region.

The thrust of the argument in this study is that India's foreign policy towards the Central Asian region is shaped by its perceptions of security in general and energy security in particular. The study highlights India's need to collaborate with the Central Asian Republics with regard to the ever-present security threats emanating from radicalisms. India nurtures a historical, strategic relationship with Russia which, combined with furtherance of relations with the Central Asian Republics, is clearly an integral part of India's overall foreign policy objectives. It is important to note, as indicated in this chapter, that the strategy from national security in respect of India and the Central Asian States is dynamic in nature. With regard to Afghanistan and Pakistan, the facts of national security have varied and widened according to the quality of bilateral relations and the activities of non-state actors. In the context of battling the multifarious evils that threaten national and regional security, India's foreign policy is to enhance bilateral cooperation and build a

strong security architecture. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is a forum that facilitates this policy.

In this respect, India and the Central Asian states have common threat perceptions and the policies for ensuring national security. The SCO, as a multilateral forum, assists the concerned member nations to agree on policies and practices for corrective action. By participating in the SCO, India has actively promoted the importance of the Central Asian powers in the regional dynamics. India's membership of the SCO has been increasingly important as it provides an opportunity for furtherance of relations with Kazakhstan and the other Republics of Central Asia. The SCO has proven to be an important instrument for the building of joint and collective institutions for regional cooperation that are aimed at strengthening the security and developing the economy of individual countries and the region in general. Moreover, by means of the SCO, India is able to project a fair image of itself as a regional power.

The chapter deals with the important factors that combine in the making of India's foreign policy in the Central Asian Region. India's economy has been consistently on a growth trajectory over the last few decades. The rising demand for energy resources has been in tandem with the burgeoning industrial sector. This phenomenon explains India's focus on improving bilateral and multilateral relations with the Republics in Central Asia, particularly in the economic realm. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) provided a forum where India could pursue its endeavours at securing its energy needs and accessing markets in the extended neighbourhood through Bilateral and Multilateral linkages. However, despite the agreements that were made to deepen ties with the Central Asian region, the direct overland route was blocked by a hostile Pakistan and an insecure

Afghanistan in the circumstances, India moved to open an alternative route over the sea and through Iran's Chabahar port. It is evident that India's foreign policy initiatives in Central Asia as to deal with intermediate complexities.

The factors that favour India's growing profile in Central Asia include its generally fair image, old cultural affinities in the region, diplomatic distancing from domestic politics of other nations, and its rise as an economic power. India consciously steers clear of the great power rivalry in Central Asia, especially between China and Russia. India is keen on securing its strategic interests in the region. It also espouses a multifaceted relationship that will prove mutually beneficial for the Central Asian Republics in general and Kazakhstan in particular.

Chapter-Three

Bilateral Relations Between India and Kazakhstan on Energy and Economic Security

Introduction

In the post-Cold War scenario, India attaches great importance to the development of multi-dimensional relations with Kazakhstan as part of its foreign policy. Since long, India's efforts directed at accessing Central Asia have been greatly hampered by hostility with Pakistan and the instability plaguing Afghanistan. The direction of India's foreign policy towards promoting a strategic relationship with Kazakhstan is borne out by proactive political initiatives and statements. The earlier chapters have outlined the traditional, historical factors, along with the contemporary compulsions, that drive India's foreign policy towards the Central Asian region as such, and especially Kazakhstan. The geopolitical linkages that date back to ancient times figure prominently in the playing out of the New Great Game. In matters relating to energy security and trade, contemporary India projects itself as a rising economic power that has the potential to be a constructive

economic partner. In a discussion on the parameters that are considered while framing India's foreign policy towards Kazakhstan, it will be prudent to recognize the complexities of the process.

While considering the principal motivation behind India's foreign policy in the extended neighbourhood of Central Asia and the particular focus on Kazakhstan, this study thus far has attempted to explain the political and security determinants of India's forays in to this region. This Chapter discusses the expanding economic, energy and trade relations with Kazakhstan as importantly featuring as a foreign policy objective. This chapter depicts Kazakhstan's expanding participation in the evolution of India's economy and energy security in the projected future. In this context, it is necessary to analyse two other driving factors in India's strategy in the extended neighbourhood of Central Asia. Firstly, there is the economic security that is necessary for trade to flourish. Secondly, there is the matter of establishing convenient connectivity with Central Asia and beyond, largely through Kazakhstan. This study discusses the demands of India's energy security and the economics of trade, as well as the initiatives taken to improve connectivity to Central Asia, as propelled by India's economic expansion. In the process this work takes stock of India's current energy needs and the extant level of economic engagement with Kazakhstan. It also lays stress on the criticality of connectivity that must spur India's economic and energy engagements in Kazakhstan. The role of security relations in furthering the overall relationships has been dealt with in chapter three, it is explained how the insecurities in the North western frontiers have impeded energy and economic relations with Central Asia.

Lately, India has over taken Australia in the magnitude of agricultural exports. In 2018, in the world rankings of the largest exporters of agricultural products, India has risen to the eighth position, while Australia has slid down to the ninth.⁴⁴⁴ Also, in 2018, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) was once again identified as India's utmost dynamic services Sector.² India is the top exporter of IT Services in the world, with China rank second and US placed third. In 2018, India was ranked as the eighth largest services exporter and the tenth largest services importer.⁴⁴⁵ In the last quarter of 2018, India once again recorded a significant year-on-year increase in the value of services exports. In terms of the latest available data the developing of Asia, including India have been expanding their share in the global value chains.⁴⁴⁶ In the process, India surpassed Italy as the tenth-largest importer. In the post decade, India's rank among the world's exporters and importers has improved substantially, indicating the vibrancy in the country's growing economy. While securing the 8th rank in the list of exporters, India entered the grouping of the world's top ten traders. India has succeeded in doubling its exports since 2008. With regard to imports, India rose six places in the world rankings.⁴⁴⁷ (Figure 3)

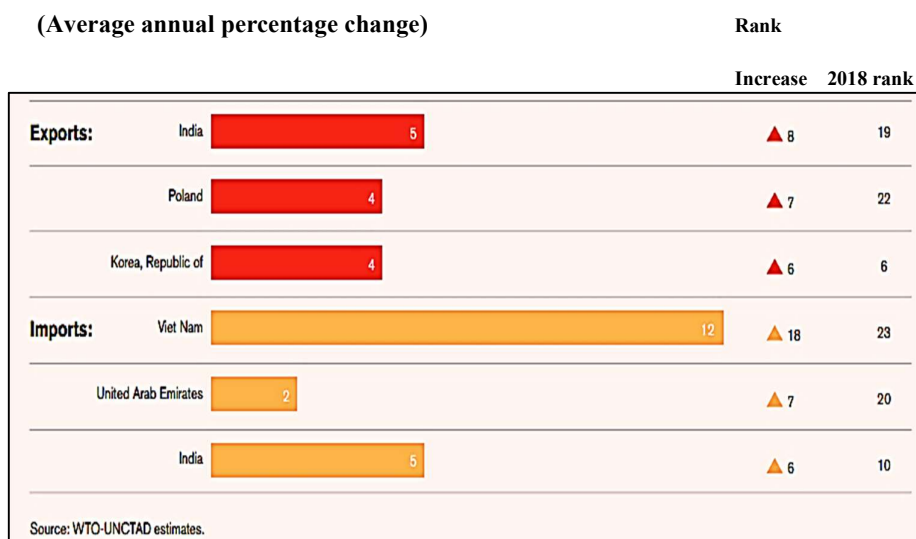
⁴⁴⁴ "World Trade Statistical Review 2019." *World Trade Organization*, 31 May 2019, p. 30, www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/wts2019_e/wts2019_e.pdf. Accessed on 27 July 2020.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 40.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 29.

Figure 3-Economies with the Most Significant Changes: India and the New Leading Traders in Export and Import Rankings 2008 vs 2018⁴⁴⁸



Along with the growth in India's economy, its commercial and trade relations with Central Asia have been expanding at a higher rate than before. India's increasing influence is considered to be connected to the rapid widening of its domestic market and national wealth. India's economic growth is concomitant with the rise in its stature in the Asian Continent. Since the globalization of its economy in 1991, India has laid emphasis on developing economic relations, and improving domestic growth and development. Some scholars and observers give credit to the policies initiated by Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao. Others mark India's entry to the World Trade Organization as the event that triggered India's economic growth and strong trade relations.⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁸ Source: World Trade Statistical Review 2019.

⁴⁴⁹ Mattoo, Aaditya and Arvind Subramanian. "India and the Multilateral Trading System Post-Doha: Defensive or Proactive?" *India and the WTO*, edited by Aaditya Mattoo and Robert M. Stern, A copublication of the World Bank and Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 327-366.

Mattoo and Subramanian observe that “India’s posture in international trade negotiations has been surprisingly defensive despite the significant autonomous reforms of recent years and the growing stake in more open markets abroad” (Jha 346).⁴⁵⁰ India’s economic engagements and trade relations with other states over the last two decades are not a new development. The country’s heightened economic activity and trade relations do not owe to trade practices based on the Western model. Some analysts mistakenly describe the economic interactions in Asia as stagnant and consider the continent to be deficient in technological upgradation and innovative advancement. The reverse is true as there is ample evidence of intra-Asian trade and particularly India-Kazakhstan trade and commercial engagements, as narrated in a number of treatises (Chandra 93-117, Gidadhubli 30).⁴⁵¹

There is global acknowledgement that after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Central Asian Republics have become the arena where major world powers are engaged in a New Great Game,⁴⁵² (as explained in detail in the previous chapter). In the context of this New Great Game, India is deemed to be presenting Central Asia largely in search of energy recourses. Most analysts attribute this motive to be behind India’s engagements in Central Asia particularly with Kazakhstan.⁴⁵³ However, in reality, India has built on its historical

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 346.

⁴⁵¹ Chandra, Amiya. *India-Central Asia Relations: The Economic Dimension*. Pentagon Press, 2015. pp. 93-117; and see Gidadhubli, R. G. “India-Kazakhstan Economic Relations”. *India-Kazakhstan Perspective: Regional and International Interactions*, edited by K Santhanam, Kuralay Baizakova and Ramakant Dwivedi, Anamaya Publishers, 2007, pp. 30-39.

⁴⁵² Chaudhuri, Basudeb and Manpreet Sethi. “India-China Interactions in Central Asia through the Prism of Paul Kennedy’s Analysis of Great Powers”. *China and India in Central Asia a New “Great Game”?* edited by Marlène Laruelle, et al. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, pp. 117-130.

⁴⁵³ Pant, Harsh V. “India is not the only country wanting more influence in the Central Asian region.” *Observer Research Foundation*, 9 June 2017, www.orfonline.org/research/india-growing-interest-central-asia-is-well-recognised-but-its-not-the-only-country-wanting-more-influence. Accessed on 20 July 2020.

relations with Kazakhstan for the purpose of spurring mutual economic development and cultural interactions, instead of limiting itself to a short-term objective of accessing energy resources to satisfy its growing need for the same. Without any unseemly rush, India has gradually expanded its presence in the Central Asian region as a natural follow-up to historical links that were snapped in the intermediate stage for over a century as a result of geopolitical developments and conflicts in the immediate neighbourhood. This becomes clear while observing the bigger picture of India's growing regional and global stature. Contemporary global politics is significantly affected by the issue of energy security. The worldwide industrial and economic growth over the last three decades has led to a doubling of energy consumption. The rapid shift of different economies from an agrarian base to an industrial base has pushed the demand for energy to spiral upwards. The quality of the change has been such as to increase the popular usage of fossil fuels and raise the demand. The transformation has so shifted the economic paradigm, the international geo-political and geo-economic environment has been massively impacted by the issue of energy. Going with the flow of its own domestic development, India prioritises its energy security and the need to tap both conventional and non-conventional sources of energy. To that end India buys considerable quantities of crude oil and natural gas from energy rich countries. Kazakhstan is widely reputed to possess the world's richest energy reservoirs and is shaping up to be among the world's largest energy exporters. India is conscious of the need to diversify its energy sources and Kazakhstan presents the opportunity to explore alternative energy markets in Central Asia. If there is a wide gap between the demand for energy as commensurate with economic growth, and the available supply of energy, the consequence is an energy crisis. India's policy makers are faced with the need to deal with this critical challenge and reduce the gap between the demand and supply of energy. There is the need to hone its oil diplomacy with oil-producing countries so as to ensure a steady

supply of crude oil and gas-from there. Further, there is at once the need to develop local resources through domestic and foreign investments. Finally, the country is required to expand and exploit renewable sources of energy.

India's Energy Security: A Foreign Policy Priority

India's foreign policy makers have traditionally been exercised over the issue of energy security as the country continues to be reliant on foreign sources of oil to satisfy its energy needs. In 1973-74, India had been importing half of its energy supplies from the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). At the time, there was a dramatic increase in the price of OPEC oil. To cope with this oil shock, India had to raise its exports to the oil-rich countries in order to avert a crisis in balance of payments.⁴⁵⁴ Subsequently 1991 when the Gulf War broke out, India's oil imports from Iraq and Kuwait dried-up. Those two countries were then supplying around fifths of India's total oil imports. In the event, India had to make good the shortfall by increasing its imports from Saudi Arabia and other nations in the Gulf.⁴⁵⁵ While the crisis continued in Iraq and Kuwait, in the early 1990s, P.M. Nagashima Rao initiative measures to liberalize the Indian economy and introduce important structural reforms that allowed for high market-driven growth note.⁴⁵⁶

Before the reforms kicked in, India was reactive to international crises as an when they occurred. At the time, though India's reliance on energy imports was high, it did not feature among the world's principal energy consuming countries, nor did it enjoy the status

⁴⁵⁴ Ganguly, Sumit and Manjeet S. Pardesi, "India and Energy Security: A foreign Policy Priority". *Indian Foreign Policy in a Unipolar World*, edited by Harsh V. Pant, Routledge India, 2013, pp. 99-127.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

of a major global economy. Since then, however, in the three decades following the implementation of structural economic reforms, India has come to be recognized as one of the fastest growing, major economies in the world. Such economic growth has necessarily been accompanied by a dramatic increase in the consumption of energy. In 2006, India ranked fifth among the longest energy consuming countries in the world.⁴⁵⁷ Presently India has risen to the position of the was third largest energy consuming country.⁴⁵⁸ The enhanced energy consumption that has accompanied economic growth has led to India becoming increasingly reliant of foreign sources of oil and gas. Based on its past experiences and deft handling of contemporary international developments, India has chosen to be proactive in global dynamics in order to secure its energy needs for sustaining high economic growth rates. India's foreign policy, accordingly, accords high priority to energy security. The following section proposes to depict the respective energy profiles of India and Kazakhstan, as also India's operative policies with regard to ensuring energy security. The strategic implication of these policy will also be discussing.

India's Energy Security: Dimensions and Concerns

In advance countries energy security is define by the adequate supply of energy at reasonable rates. This concept, however, varies in other countries. For instance, developing countries are critically concern with the impact of changing energy irises on their balance of payments and international relations. India is concern with securing its energy sources and has geared itself to quickly respond to the shifting dynamics in the global markets. In

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁸ "International Energy Agency". *India 2020 Energy Policy Review*. January 2020, p. 255.

www.iea.org/download/direct/2933?fileName=India_2020-Policy_Energy_Review.pdf. Accessed on 4 June 2020.

India, energy security has evolved to become a political priority, as the economy now ranks among the world's largest, and a high growth rate can only be sustained by larger inflows of energy. In 2005, speaking on the nation's Independence Day India's then President Late Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam highlighted energy security as the means to reach the goal of energy Independence.⁴⁵⁹ While the term Energy Security is widely used without spelling out its parameters, Kalam defines it as 'ensuring that our country can supply lifeline energy to all its citizens at affordable costs at all times'. Kalam lays down three parameters for dealing with energy Security. Firstly, conservation of energy is as important as its consumption. Secondly, there must be unhindered access to all global sources of energy. Thirdly, the energy accessed should be 'reliable, affordable, and environmentally sustainably'.⁴⁶⁰ There are important implications that attach to these principles. Issues relating to energy security are necessarily subject to prevailing geopolitics, friendly bilateral relations with other nations, diversification of energy sources, and widening of the types of energy by way of renewable and non-renewable.

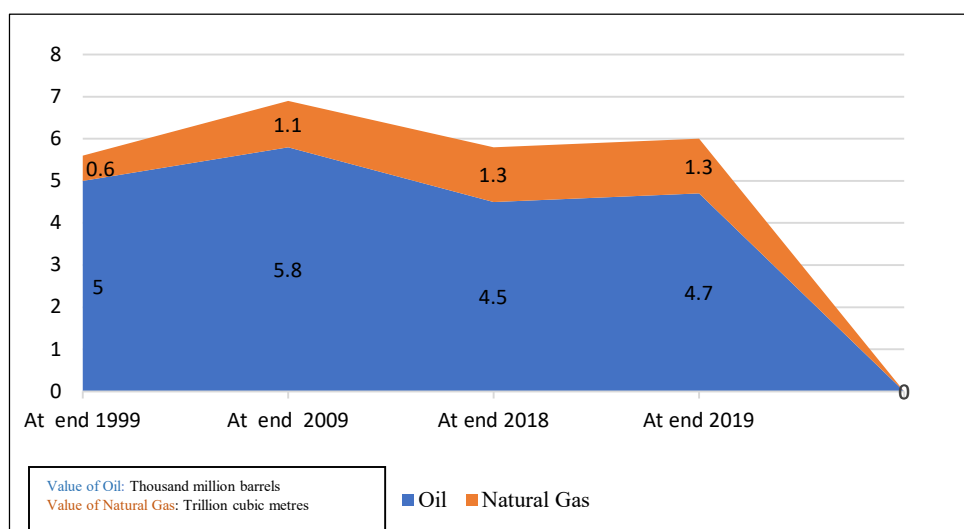
India's engagements with Kazakhstan are generally acknowledged to be centered around the search for energy resources. Most of the scholars have mentioned energy relations as the driving force behind India's dealings in the Central Asian region (Mohanty 252; Dash 7-8). The nature of India's interest in Kazakhstan, whether confined to energy resources, or directed at broader economic interest, is an arguable issue. This chapter discusses the energy relation in depth, as well as economic and trade engagements and other economic activities that enhance India's influence in the region. It then connects the overall activities to the ongoing restructuring of the broader environment.

⁴⁵⁹ Kalam, Abul A.P.J. "Energy Independence Our Highest Priority." *Outlook India*, 14 August 2005, 3 Mar. 2021, www.outlookindia.com/website/story/energy-independence-our-highest-priority/228272. Accessed on 2 October 2020.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid.

Over the past three decades India has experienced an expanding demand for energy spanning all sectors, including industry, agriculture, commerce, and housing. This trend is projected to remain on a growth trajectory. The extensive discussions on India's search for diverse energy sources in the last few years owe to different factors. Firstly, India's consumption of oil and gas far outstrips its natural reserves (figure 4). Accordingly, to Utkarsha A Singh, Scholar, most of India's natural gas reserves will have been exhausted by 2040.⁴⁶¹ Such projections have taken into account India's rapidly growing economy. However, policy makers need to balance economic growth with economic development and social progress. All the while, there is the awareness of India having limited energy resources for the sustenance of an accelerated economic growth rate. India's abundant coal reserves are unable to satisfy the daily consumption of energy in the country. Accordingly, India must purchase massive quantities of oil and gas from foreign sources.

Figure 4: India's Total Proved Oil and Natural Gas Reserves⁴⁶²

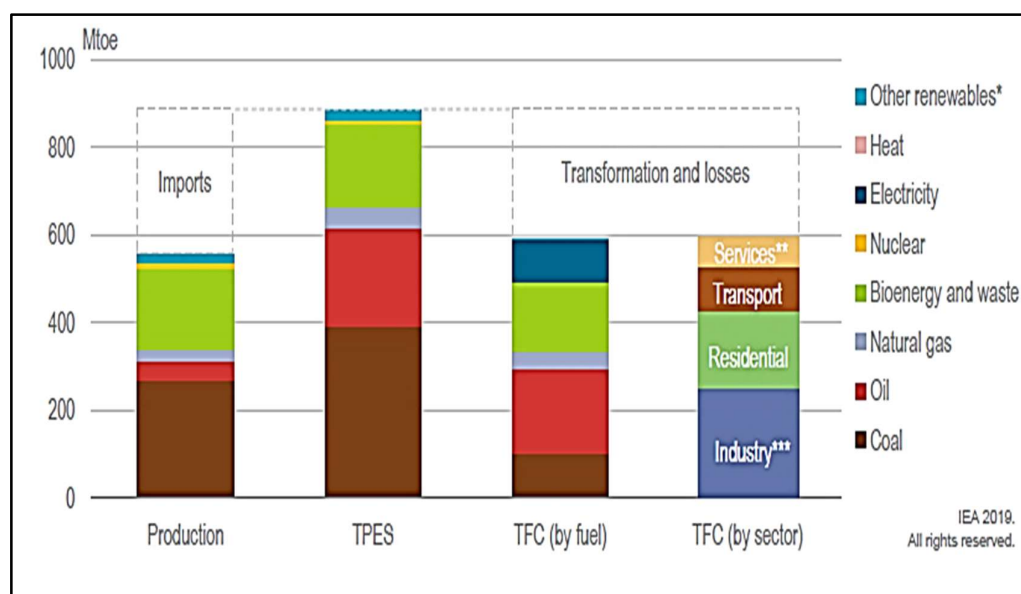


⁴⁶¹ Singh, Utkarsha A. "Examining the impact of natural gas use on Indian economy and environment". *Research Matters*, January 2021, www.researchmatters.in. Accessed on 15 January 2021.

⁴⁶² Source: "BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2020" 69 edition, www.bp.com, Accessed on September 2020.

India uses different energy sources for different purposes. It uses coal to generate power, oil to run transport and industry, and biomass for domestic heating and cooking (figure-5). Bioenergy and coal are largely obtained from indigenous sources. Oil and natural gas are mainly sourced from abroad. In 2017, India's Total primary Energy Supply (TPES) was 882 million Tons of Oil Equivalent (MTOE), almost two-thirds being made available by domestic production (554 MTOE). In India's Total Final Consumption (TFC), Industry has the largest share, followed by the domestic sector, service sector including transport, and agriculture sector (figure-5).⁴⁶³

Figure 5: Overview of India's Energy System by Fuel and Sector, 2017⁴⁶⁴



⁴⁶³ "International Energy Agency". *India 2020 Energy Policy Review*. January 2020, p. 255. www.iea.org/download/direct/2933?fileName=India_2020-Policy_Energy_Review.pdf. Accessed on 4 June 2020.

⁴⁶⁴ Source: "International Energy Agency". *India 2020 Energy Policy Review*.

Secondly, India's domestic reserves of oil and natural gas being low (Figure-2), India has to necessarily tap energy resources abroad in order to achieve energy security. Accordingly, India's energy security structure must take into account the prevailing geopolitical dynamics and shifting global markets. At the same time, there is a need to identify alternative source of energy in order to deal with potential changes in the world energy markets. At present, India imports crude oil largely from the Middle East.⁴⁶⁵ In 2019, around 59% of India's imported crude oil was transported from the Middle East through The Strait of Hormuz (figure-6)⁴⁶⁶. Since then, in consideration of changing geopolitics in the Middle East India has explored other sources for importing oil and natural gas. Kazakhstan has been identified as an important source for meeting India's energy needs and diversifying its energy imports. Such additional sources of energy supply help to strengthen India's energy security. In case, oil supply from any source dries up, India would still be able to import oil from other sources. So as to sustain the economy and maintain it's military.

Thirdly, India is globally recognised as a growing power to reckon with, given its nuclear arsenal, rapidly modernising military and a large economy of consequence.⁴⁶⁷ In the

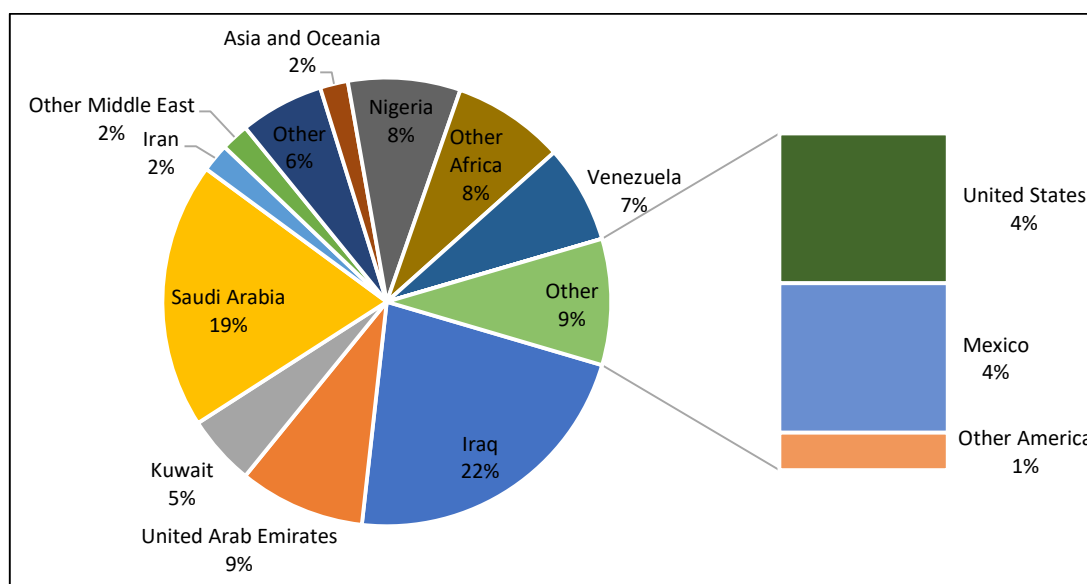
⁴⁶⁵ Joshi, Nirmala. "India-Central Asia Energy Cooperation", *India and Central Asia: Two Decades of Transition*, edited by P. L. Dash, Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 50-51.

⁴⁶⁶ "U.S. Energy Information Administration". *Country Analysis Executive Summary: India*, September 2020, www.eia.gov/international/content/analysis/countries_long/India/india.pdf. Accessed on 14 November 2020; and also see "International Energy Agency". *India 2020 Energy Policy Review*. January 2020, p. 255. www.iea.org/download/direct/2933?fileName=India_2020-Policy_Energy_Review.pdf. Accessed on 4 June 2020.

⁴⁶⁷ Rajagopalan, Rajesh and Atul Mishra, *Nuclear South Asia: Keywords and Concepts*. Routledge, 2014, pp. 12-15; also see Yang, Xiaoping. "China's Perceptions of India as a Nuclear Weapons Power." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 30 Jun. 2016, www.carnegieendowment.org/2016/06/30/china-s-perceptions-of-india-as-nuclear-weapons-power-pub-63970. Accessed on 4 June 2020.

absence of adequate energy security, a number of India's modernisation programmes may potentially be disrupted. It will also adversely affect India's efforts to continue with the high economic growth rate that it had achieved in the past decade.

Figure 6: India's Crude Oil Imports by Country⁴⁶⁸



In the decade between 2007 and 2017, India's energy consumption increased by 50% owing to significant growth across all sectors (figure-7). In the context of India's extant policies, the International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates India's demand for energy to more than double by 2040.⁴⁶⁹ In 2019, the US Energy Information Administration (EIA) projected India to have the fastest energy consumption growth rate in the world through 2050 (figure-8). According to EIA's estimates, by the mid 2040's India will outstrip the U.S in energy consumption. In the event, India will remain second only to China

⁴⁶⁸ Source: "U.S. Energy Information Administration". *Country Analysis Executive Summary: India*, September 2020. www.eia.gov/international/content/analysis/countries_long/India/india.pdf. Accessed on 4 June 2020.

⁴⁶⁹ International Energy Agency 2020. Op. cit. p. 78.

through 2050. In EIA study India’s growing energy consumption will be driven by India’s economic growth.⁴⁷⁰

Figure 7: India Total Final Energy Consumption by Sector, 1973-2017⁴⁷¹

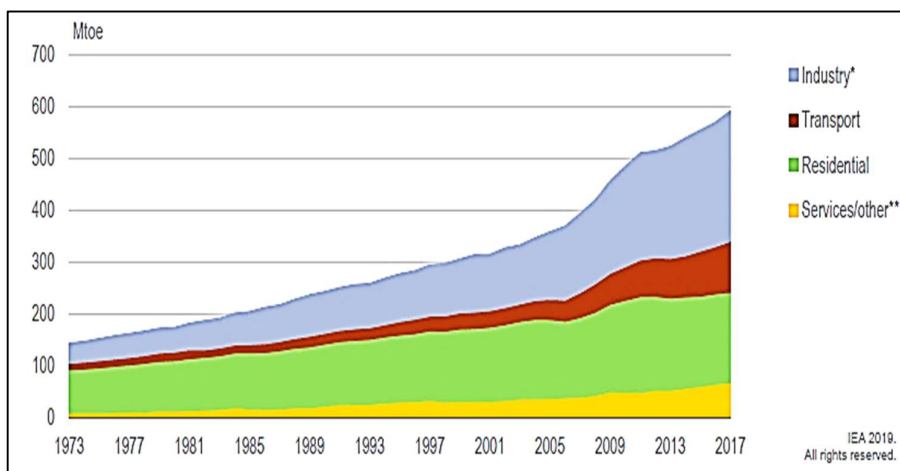
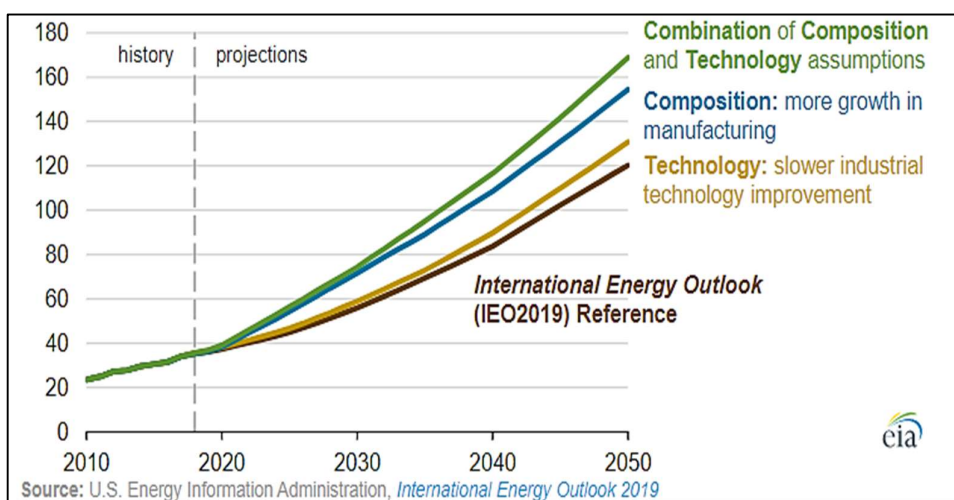


Figure 8: India Primary Energy Consumption in Four IEO2019 Cases (2010-2050)⁴⁷²



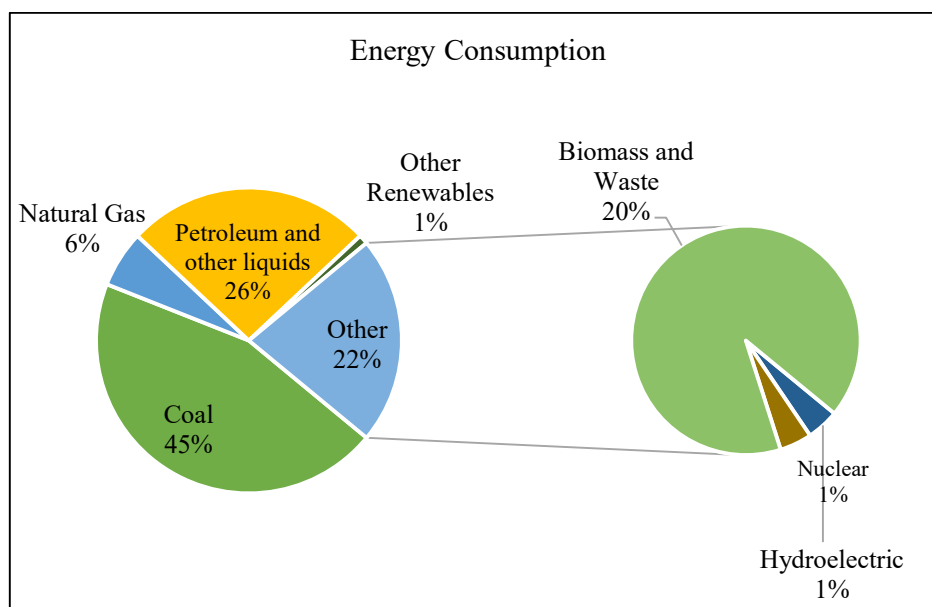
⁴⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁷¹ Source: “International Energy Agency”. *India 2020 Energy Policy Review*. January 2020.

⁴⁷² Source: Source: “U.S. Energy Information Administration”. 2019.

2018 In India's total energy Consumption, Coal remains the principal source at 45 %, followed by petroleum and other liquids at 26 %, and traditional biomass and waste at 20 %.⁴⁷³ Sources of renewable energy comprise a minor portion of the primary energy consumption. Natural Gas makes up 6 % of the country's energy consumption (figure 9). However, India proposes to increase the market share of the Natural Gas to 15 % by 2030, In order to gradually shift to the use of cleaner-burning fuels, so that there is a reduction in air pollution.⁴⁷⁴ In 2017, India's nuclear reactors contributed 3.22 % of total electricity generated.

Figure 9: Total Energy Consumption in India, 2018⁴⁷⁵

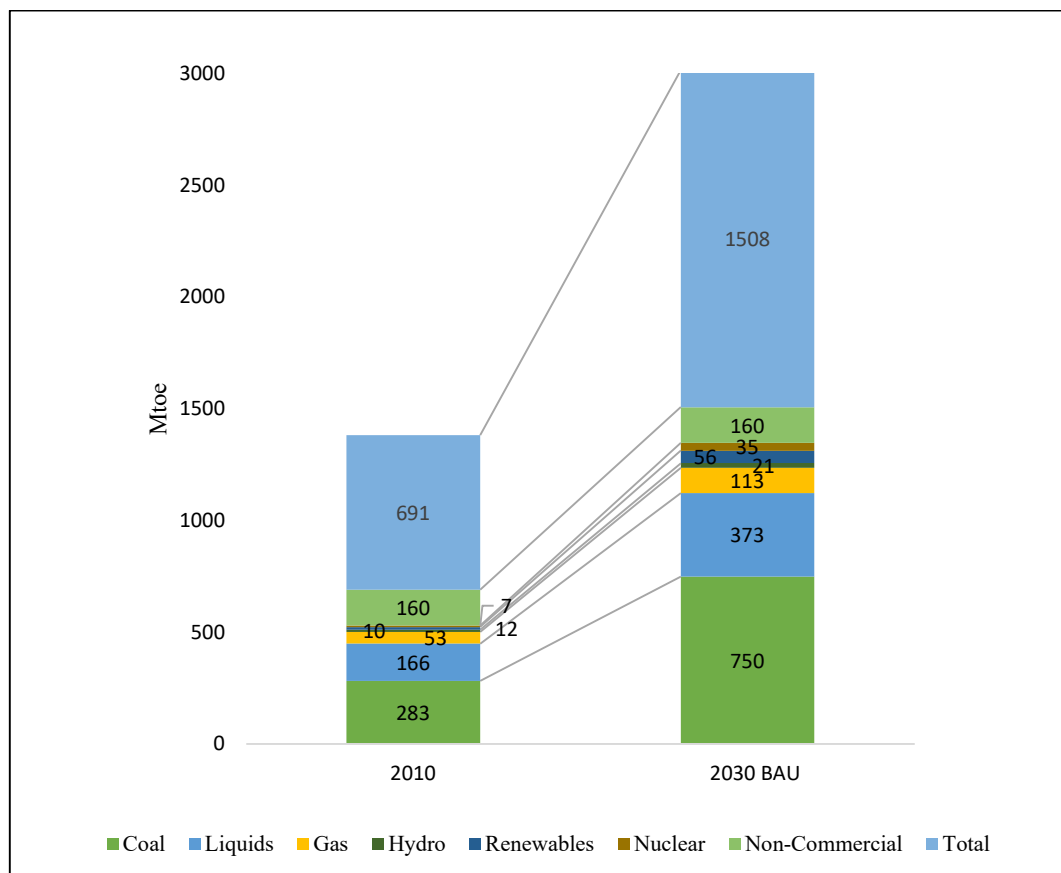


⁴⁷³ "U.S. Energy Information Administration". Op cit.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵ Source: "U.S. Energy Information Administration". *Country Analysis Executive Summary: India*, September 2020

Figure 10: India's Primary Energy Demand by Fuel Category in 2010 and Forecast for 2030⁴⁷⁶



McKinsey envisages a future rise in India's energy imports (figure-10). As indicated in the figures given above, India's energy demand in 2010 was recorded at 691 million Tonnes of oil equivalent (MTOE). Demand is projected to exceed 1508 MTOE by 2030. Accordingly, India's dependence of energy imports is estimated to rise from 30 % to over 50 %. Accordingly, India's primary energy demand is projected to increase at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.2% in the period between 2017 and 2040. Such a high

⁴⁷⁶ Source: McKinsey & Company, January 2014.

rate is not projected for any other economy in the world.⁴⁷⁷ India's high reliance on fossil fuel, coupled with inadequate domestic sources of fossil fuel, is expected to result in a substantial increase in energy imports by 2030.⁴⁷⁸ Figure 10 features India's projected energy demand and the accompanying risk to ensuring the country's energy security. At this point, this study deems it appropriate to explain the specific parameters of India's dependence on fossil fuels and determine Kazakhstan's relevance to the context.

The first increase in India's Total Primary Energy Supply (TPES) is a consequence of a rapid rise in energy consumption, and an increase in power generation to meet the rising demand for electricity. Between 2007 and 2017, fossil fuels were inducted to satisfy the TPES that rose by 55% (figure-11).⁴⁷⁹ In 2017, 44% of TPES was met by coal. In the past decades coal comprised more than half of the total growth in energy supply. In 2017, oil was recorded as India's second largest primary energy source comprising 25% of TPES.⁴⁸⁰ In the last decade 26% of total growth in TPES was made possible by enhance oil supply. In contrast, in the last five years, the share of natural gas in power generation and TPES has becomes smaller and unable to meet the growing demand. Bio-energy is India's third largest primary energy source. In 2017, it made up for 21% of TPES.⁴⁸¹

The growth in the supply of bio-energy has been less significant that the fast growth in the supply of fossil fuel. However, there has been a steady supply of hydropower with a growth of around 10% in the past decade. The supply of wind and solar energy has risen quickly,

⁴⁷⁷ *Energizing India's Progress*. Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Government of India, Annual Report 2019-2020, p. 6, www.mopng.gov.in/files/TableManagements/2020-12-08-115045-xyd7b-AR_2019-20E.pdf. Accessed on 27 October 2020.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid.

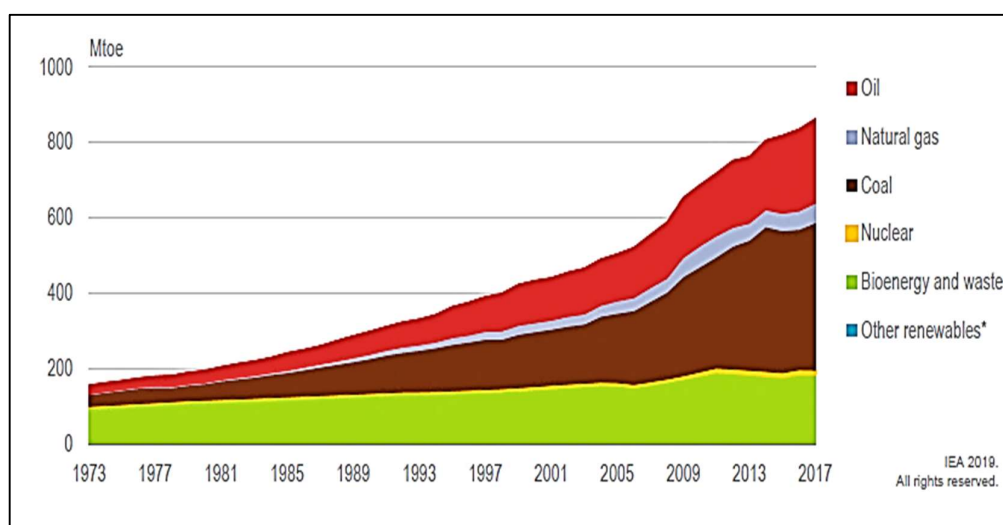
⁴⁷⁹ International Energy Agency. Op. cit.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid.

but from low base level. In 2017, they comprised only 1% of TPES. The energy generated by India's nuclear power plants amounts to around 1% of TPES.⁴⁸² It is clear that, despite small beginnings in the field of renewable green energy, India continues to largely depend on energy from oil and gas. This also explains the relevance of India's engagements with Kazakhstan, as further delineated in the following paragraph.

Figure 11: India's Total Primary Energy Supply by Source, 1973-2017⁴⁸³



In 2019, after the United States and China, India was the third largest consumer of crude oil and petroleum product.⁴⁸⁴ India is faced with a widening gap between its total demand for oil and the available local supply. In 2019, the total demand for crude oil was pegged at 5271 thousand barrels per day.⁴⁸⁵ The total domestic supply of oil was less than one thousand barrels per day (figure-12).⁴⁸⁶ In the circumstances in 2019, India's crude oil

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ Source: International Energy Agency. *India 2020 Energy Policy Review*. January 2020.

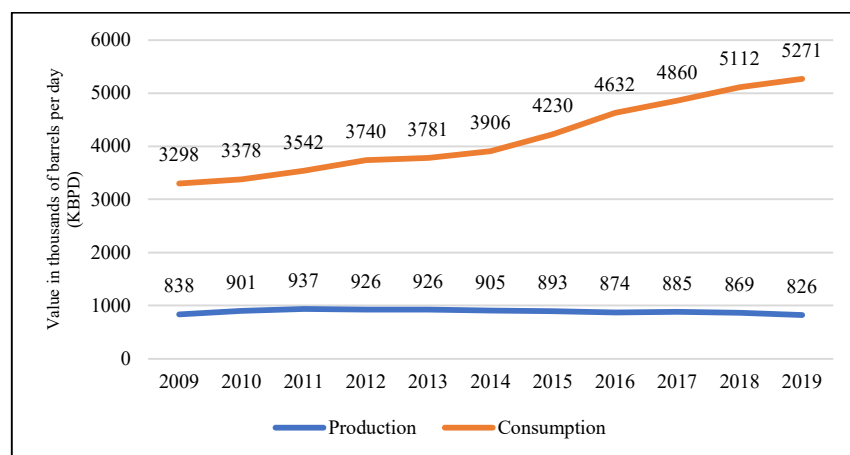
⁴⁸⁴ U.S. Energy Information Administration. Op. cit.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

import rose to 4.4 million barrels per day.⁴⁸⁷ According to estimates made by the International Energy Agency, India's oil imports are likely to more than double by 2040.⁴⁸⁸ Up to 90% of India's demand for oil will be met by imports within that period, given that its domestic productions of oil will stagnate below 1 thousand barrels per day.⁴⁸⁹

Figure 12: India Consumption and Production of Oil⁴⁹⁰



India's domestic energy of production is made up principally by coal and biomass. In 2017, almost half of the total production of energy on India owned coal. Bio energy and waste constituted a third of the total production (figure-11). Oil and gas production remains significantly low, obliging the country to depend majorly on oil imports. The supply of indigenously produce energy has grown at a much lesser rate than the rate of growth in the demand for energy. In consequence, India has been increasing reliant on impact. In the

⁴⁸⁷ "U.S. Energy Information Administration". *Country Analysis Executive Summary: India*, September 2020, www.eia.gov/international/content/analysis/countries_long/India/india.pdf. Accessed on 14 November 2020;

⁴⁸⁸ "International Energy Agency". *India 2020 Energy Policy Review*. January 2020, p. 255. www.iea.org/download/direct/2933?fileName=India_2020-Policy_Energy_Review.pdf. Accessed on 4 June 2020.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ Source: "BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2020" 69 edition, www.bp.com, Accessed on September 2020.

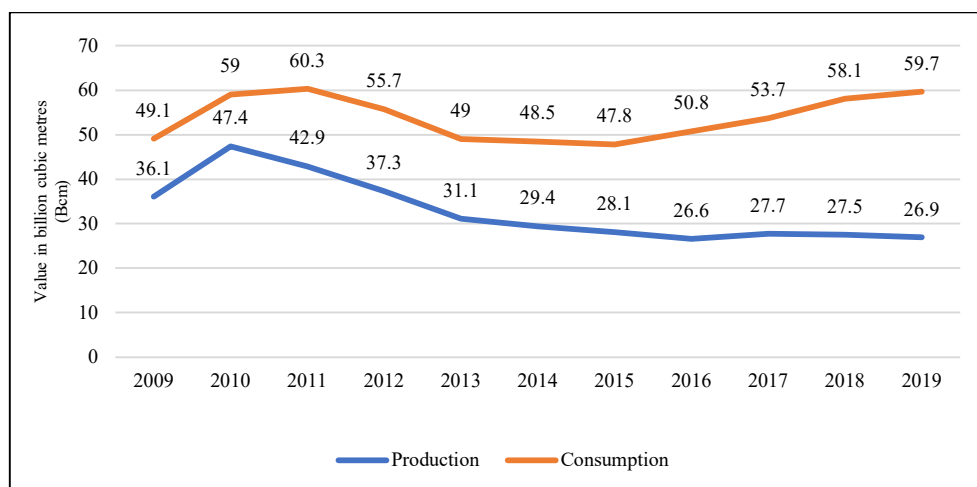
context of a significant fall in domestic production, India's imports of oil have risen at a steady rate, while there has also been a rapid rise in the imports of natural gas (figure-13).

In 2010, after reaching a peak, India's production of Natural Gas fell significantly. Between 2010-2019, the production, of natural gas flattened at around 325 billion Cubic Meter (BCM). Further, along with a growth in domestic consumption and a decline in domestic natural gas production, there was an increase in India's imports of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) over a number of years. (Figure-13).⁴⁹¹ Importantly, natural gas has the capacity to be a substitute of coal in the generation of electricity. According to the British petroleum statistical review of 2020, India was the world's fourth- largest importance of LNG in 2019, importing about 7.4% of global trade.⁴⁹² India's imports of LNG more than doubled between 2010 and 2019. In 2010, India's LNG imports totalled 11.5 BCM. The quantum of imports grew to over 32 BCM in 2019.⁴⁹³ Since India's demands for natural gas has been in excess of its domestic production. Over a number of years, the country is projected to become increasingly dependent on import of LNG. This will necessitate the building of an import infrastructure for Natural Gas. In consideration of the uncertainties accompanying import dependency, India needs to diversify the sources of supply and also increase domestic production. The threat perception in respect of LNG is the same as with regard to oil.

⁴⁹¹ U.S. Energy Information Administration". Op. cit.

⁴⁹² BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2020, 69 editions, www.bp.com, Accessed on September 2020.

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

Figure 13: India Consumption and Production of Natural Gas⁴⁹⁴

In the context of India’s rapidly rising demand for energy, and the country’s massive reliance on imports of oil, gas, and uranium, the magnitude of India’s energy dependence remains a matter of concern. Keeping this in perspective, in the 21st Century, the nuclear energy sector promises to play a key role in ensuring India’s energy independence and assuring the country’s energy security.⁴⁹⁵ Since 2004, the government has set a target for the nuclear sector to supply 20 Giga Watts (GW) of power by 2020. In 2007, the government indicated that this modest target could be doubled with international cooperation. However, it was also clear that the 20GW target would call for substantial uranium imports and speedier construction of nuclear power plants.⁴⁹⁶ In 2009, the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd. (NPCIL) declared that it had set a target of 60 GW nuclear

⁴⁹⁴ Source: “BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2020” 69 edition, www.bp.com, Accessed on September 2020.

⁴⁹⁵ Tagotra, Niharika. “India’s Ambitious Nuclear Power Plan-And What’s Getting in Its Way.” 9 Sep. 2020, www.thediplomat.com/2020/09/indias-ambitious-nuclear-power-plan-and-whats-getting-in-its-way/#:~:text=As%20of%20now%2C%20India%20produces,to%20the%20total%20energy%20mix. Accessed on 12 December 2020.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

power production by 2032.⁴⁹⁷ In 2010, the given target for 2032 was reiterated. In 2011, However, the target was revised to 63 GW.⁴⁹⁸ Later in the year 2011 the government declared the more achievable targets of 14,600 Mega Watt of electricity (MWe) by 2020-21 and 27,500 MW by 2032.⁴⁹⁹ According to date compiled by the World Nuclear Association, India imported 4522 tons of uranium between 2014 and 2017, with a considerable part sourced from Kazakhstan (table-1).⁵⁰⁰ Considering the domestic nuclear energy production envisaged by the government over the next few decades, It is clear that the imports of uranium will play a critical role in ensuring India's energy security.

Table 1: India's Uranium Imports from Kazakhstan (2014-2017)⁵⁰¹

Year	Source	Form	Tonnes
2014-15	TVEL	UO2 pellets	297
	Kazatomprom	UOC	283
2015-16	Cameco	UOC	251
	TVEL	UO2 pellets	346
2016-17	Kazatomprom	UOC	1924
	Cameco	UOC	1234
	TVEL	UO2 pellets	187

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁸ World Nuclear Association. "Nuclear Power in India". *world-nuclear.org*. 2020, www.world-nuclear.org/information-library/country-profiles/countries-g-n/india.aspx. Accessed on 3 Jan. 2021.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁰¹ Source: World Nuclear Association. "Nuclear Power in India". 2020.

In general India's energy imports are a consequence of the country's dependency with regard to energy security. In the absence of adequate domestic sources India has had to explore abroad for oil resources. In order to secure its long-term energy future, India needs to initiate a number of measures both within the country and outside. One of the fundamental factors in India's energy security policy is the diversification of energy sources. Accordingly, since 1990, with this in mind, India has begun to forge bilateral trade relationships with different oil supplying countries in the world.⁵⁰² Such efforts have resulted in an increase in India's oil imports ever since. The continued growth in India's domestic demand for energy is driven by economic and population growth, as well as urbanisation and industrialisation. For decades, India has witnessed a rising demand for oil in all sectors owing to rapid economic growth. There has been a dramatic spurt in the demand for oil since 2008, the average growth in demand approaching 160 thousand barrels per day in each year, to reach 4.4 million barrels per day in 2017. According to the International Energy Agency report of 2020, this amounts to 5% of global consumption.⁵⁰³ As a consequence, India has been scouting the world for sourcing oil and has accorded priority to engaging with different oil producing countries for securing oil supplies. In the process, India has found Central Asia to be an important region and focused on Kazakhstan.

⁵⁰² Kulkarni, Sanket S and Ameya Pimpalkhare. "India's import diversification strategy for natural gas: An analysis of geopolitical implications.", *Observer Research Foundation*, no. 330, December 2019, pp. 1-25, www.orfonline.org/research/indias-import-diversification-strategy-for-natural-gas-58395. Accessed on 12 June 2020.

⁵⁰³ "International Energy Agency". *India 2020 Energy Policy Review*. January 2020. www.iea.org/download/direct/2933?fileName=India_2020-Policy_Energy_Review.pdf. Accessed on 4 June 2020.

The focus of attention keeps oscillating between the oil producing countries and the oil consuming countries. In these ongoing dynamics, India has risen in importance in the sphere of oil and gas as the world's third largest energy consumer.⁵⁰⁴ In the context of the huge gap between India's domestic demand for and supply of energy, the acquisition of oil and gas sources abroad is critical for optimization of India's energy Security.⁵⁰⁵ To that end India has ramped up its energy diplomacy and has urged public sector enterprises to adopt an international perspective in securing foreign energy sources.⁵⁰⁶

India views Kazakhstan as important to its efforts towards diversifying energy sources. Accordingly, along with other countries in the world Kazakhstan has assumed increasing importance for India's energy diplomacy. According to Emilian Kavalski, Scholar, India's interest in Central Asia was expressly declared in 1995 with the launch of its Look North Policy. With this policy India has geared itself to access the massive hydro-carbon reserves in Central Asia. The dependability of Central Asia's energy exports is in line with India's policy to diversify imports.⁵⁰⁷ Again, Harmeet Singh, Scholar, refers to Kazakhstan's importance in India's foreign policy initiatives. The primary attraction of that country is its huge energy and mineral resources. Such natural wealth makes it the centre of attraction for the world's great powers and India. It is, therefore, essential for India, and energy hungry country, to expand its engagements there.⁵⁰⁸ In the field of nuclear energy, India's domestic Uranium reserves fall far short of need and the country is reliant on uranium

⁵⁰⁴ Energizing India's Progress. Op. cit. p. 68.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷ Kavalski, Emilian. "India's Bifurcated Look to Central Eurasia." *The Oxford Handbook of India Foreign Policy*, edited by David M. Malone, et al. Oxford University Press, 2015, pp. 424-436.

⁵⁰⁸ Harmeet, Singh. *India's Look North Policy: A Paradigm shift in India-Kazakhstan Relations*. Lap Lambert Academic Publishing GmbH KG, 2015. P. 61.

imports for operating its nuclear plants. The increasingly meaningful ties between India and Kazakhstan span nuclear cooperation and engagements in other areas that serve their common objectives and give fillip to their mutual desire to enhance their partnership.⁵⁰⁹ Moreover, Kazakhstan's geo-strategic location in the art of Eurasia adds significantly to the region's importance. This explains India's proactive measures by way of diversification, investment, technological upgradation, and the search for alternative routes of access. In India's view, Kazakhstan satisfies its foreign policy objectives.

Kazakhstan's Potential for Supply of Energy to India

Gaining access to Kazakhstan's oil fields is important for India's energy security in the 21st century. It effectively enables India to tap energy from an alternative source. To expand the engagements beyond oil, India negotiated with Kazakhstan to build a nuclear partnership.⁵¹⁰ Significantly, a considerable amount of Kazakhstan's oil and natural gas reserve can replace India's imports from the Middle East. According to the data given in the British Petroleum Statistical Review of world energy, 2020, Kazakhstan tops the Central Asian countries by way of proven oil reserves, and ranks 12th globally on the same parameters.⁵¹¹ India's energy security concerns have been spelled out in the previous sections along with the reasons for Kazakhstan assuming an important position in India's

⁵⁰⁹ Srivastava, Deepti. "Nuclear Fuel and Emerging Dynamics of Indo-Kazakh Relations," *Mainstream*, vol. 48, NO. 33, 7 August, 2010, pp. 8-9.

⁵¹⁰ Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. "*India-Kazakhstan Relations*" www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/december_2018.pdf. Accessed on July 2020; also see "Kazakhstan agrees to supply uranium to India". *World Nuclear News*, 8 July 2015, www.world-nuclear-news.org/UF-Kazakhstan-agrees-to-supply-uranium-to-India-0807156.html, Accessed on July 2020.

⁵¹¹ BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2020" 69 editions, www.bp.com, p. 14. Accessed on September 2020.

foreign policy strategy for securing India's energy future. This section now attempts to consider another dimension.

Given its considerable energy resources, Kazakhstan has achieved rapid growth in its economy. In the Caspian Sea basin, Kazakhstan possesses the largest proven oil reserves (table-2). The country has expressed his willingness to supply energy to India. By 2020, given its emergence as a leading oil producer, Kazakhstan is projected to become the second-largest non- OPEC supplier of oil to world markets.⁵¹² In addition to oil Kazakhstan has notable reserves of Gas, Coal and Uranium. In terms of the data published in the Oil and Gas Journal, Kazakhstan's proven crude oil reserves amount to 30 billion barrels as of January, 2018. Accordingly, after Russia, it has the Second-largest endowment in Eurasia.⁵¹³ The following paragraphs discuss the different types of available energy reserves in Kazakhstan, and their relevance to India's search for energy security. This section also attempts to portray Kazakhstan's partnership with India as extending beyond the pale of trading engagements in energy resources.

⁵¹² "International Energy Agency." *Energy Policies Beyond IEA Countries: Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia 2015*, IEA, Paris, 2016, <https://www.iea.org/reports/energy-policies-beyond-iea-countries-eastern-europe-caucasus-and-central-asia-2015>. Accessed on September 2020.

⁵¹³ *Energy Resource Guide-Oil and Gas-Kazakhstan*. International Trade Administration, 3 Mar. 2021, www.trade.gov/energy-resource-guide-oil-and-gas-kazakhstan. Accessed on September 2020.

Table 2: Kazakhstan Oil and Gas Condensate Reserves, 2019⁵¹⁴

Kazakhstan Proven and Probable Oil and Condensate Reserve in 2019 (Thousand tons)			
	A+B+C1	C2	A+B+C1+C2
Crude Oil	2899783.2	1630194.2	4529977.4
Gas Condensate	332650.2	87846.0	420496.2
Total	3232433.4	1718040.2	4950473.6

Note: A–Reasonable Assured, B–Identified, and C1–Estimated are roughly equivalent to proved developed producing, proved developed non-producing and proved undeveloped. C2 is generally equivalent to probable and possible combined.

The Oil and Gas Journal depicts Kazakhstan as basically and Oil-exporting economy. In 2018, its production of oil reached a record level. In that year, it produced 91.9 million tonnes (MT) of crude oil and gas condensate,⁵¹⁵ as a result of increased production at its Kashagan field (figure-14 and 15).⁵¹⁶ Between 2017 and 2019 there was a significant increase in oil production in the Kashagan field.⁵¹⁷ In 2019, the oil production in this field, that had begun in 2016 reached 380,000 barrels per day.⁵¹⁸ Kashagan possess the world's fifth-largest reserve of oil. It is expected to feature prominently in Kazakhstan's future oil production. By 2025, its production is expected to be 450 thousand barrels per day (kb/d),

⁵¹⁴ Source: *The National Energy Report Kazenergy 2019*. Kazakhstan Association of Oil, Gas and Energy Sector Organizations, «Kazenergy», The Republic of Kazakhstan, www.kazenergy.com/upload/document/energy-report/NationalReport19_en.pdf. Accessed on 24 January 2020.

⁵¹⁵ The National Energy Report Kazenergy 2019. Op. cit. p. 49.

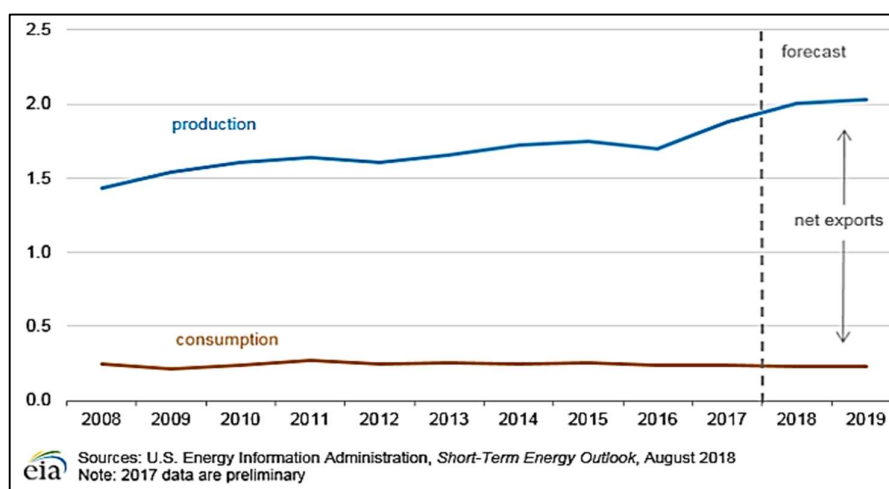
⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

⁵¹⁷ U.S. Energy Information Administration". Op. cit.

⁵¹⁸ Energy Resource Guide-Oil and Gas-Kazakhstan. Op. cit.

and by 2040 the figure is expected to rise to 955 kb/d.⁵¹⁹ Up to 2040, Kazakhstan’s oil production and exports are projected to continue growing consistently (figure-14 and 15). The future estimated growth is related to the current expansion being undertaken in the oil and natural gas field of Tengiz. The investments to be made for the future growth project at Tengiz were finalized by the concerned partners in 2016.⁵²⁰ The project is scheduled for completion by 2022. It is expected to add up to 260 thousand barrels per day of oil to the national total. (Figure-14 and 15).⁵²¹

Figure 14: Kazakhstan’s Oil Production and Consumption, 2008-2019⁵²²



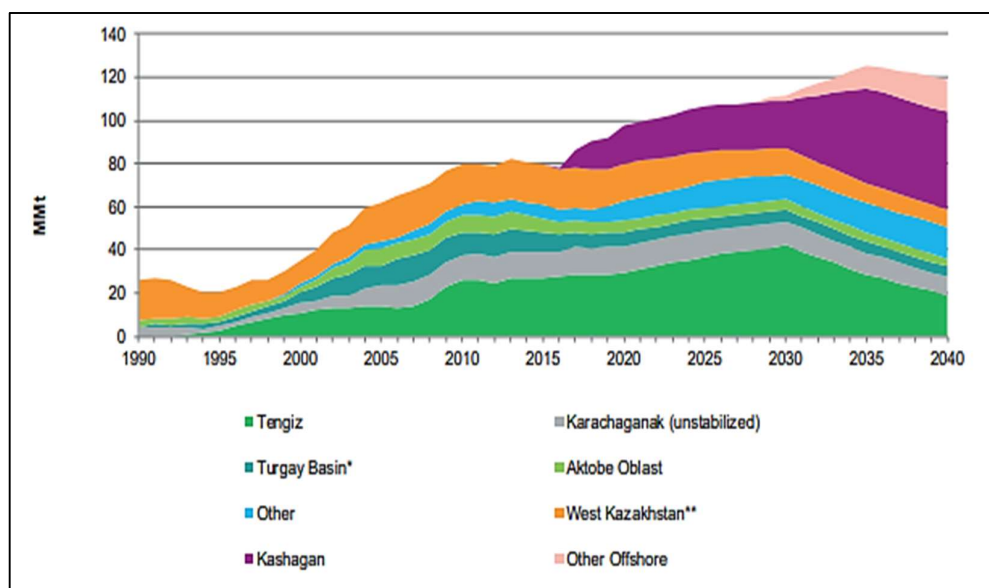
⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

⁵²⁰ Ibid.

⁵²¹ Ibid.

⁵²² Source: “U.S. Energy Information Administration”. *Background Reference: Kazakhstan*, 7 January 2019.

Figure 15: Kazakhstan’s Oil Production Outlook History and Projection (1990-2040)⁵²³



Kazakhstan’s economy is among the most energy-intensive in the world owing to its enormous resources of oil and natural gas, which can be supplied to different countries at affordable prices. The large volumes of natural gas available in Kazakhstan’s biggest oil field are mostly reinjected into the oil wells in order to increase the rates of oil production. Kazakhstan’s natural gas reserves are largely located in the fields that are which in crude oil or condensates. In all, Kazakhstan’s possess 42 gas condensate fields. Further, over 90% of the country’s oil reserves are to be found in 15 principal fields.⁵²⁴ The fields at Karachaganak and Tengiz possess the largest deposits in terms of both liquid petroleum and natural gas.⁵²⁵ The largest proven oil reserves in the region of the Caspian Sea are

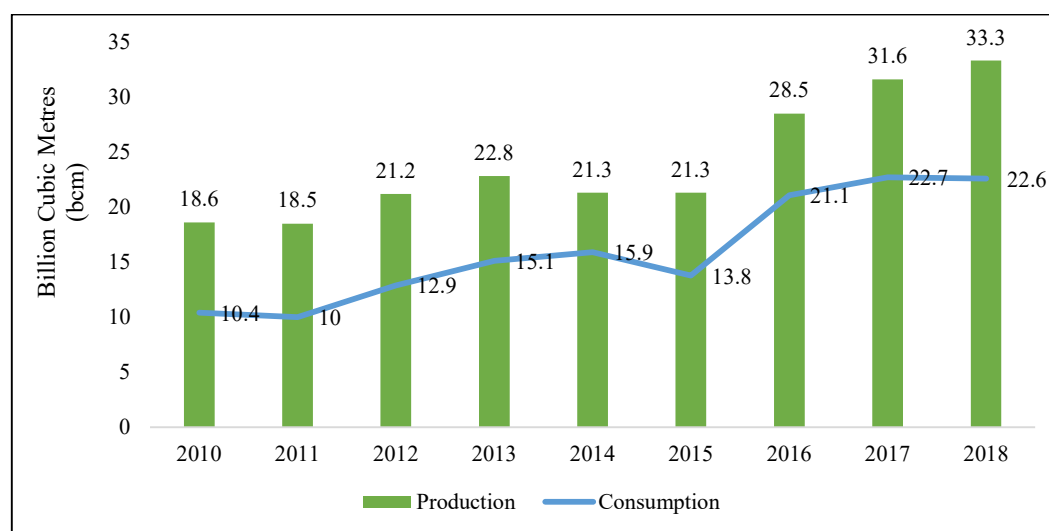
⁵²³ Source: The National Energy Report Kazenergy 2019. Op. cit.

⁵²⁴ “International Energy Agency.” *Energy Policies Beyond IEA Countries: Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia*. 2015, Op. cit.

⁵²⁵ Joshi, Nirmala. “India-Central Asia Energy Cooperation”, Op. cit. p. 52.

located in Kazakhstan. In 2019, the output of Crude and condensate in Kazakhstan was 1.965 million barrels per day.⁵²⁶ In 2018, Kazakhstan’s natural gas deposits were estimated to be as high as 85 trillion cubic feet (TCF) (figure 16).⁵²⁷ Between 2010 and 2018, Kazakhstan’s annual production of gas almost doubled from 18.6 billion cubic meters (BCM) to 33.3 BCM (figure 16).

Figure 16: Kazakhstan’s Natural Gas Production and Consumption: 2010-2018⁵²⁸



⁵²⁶ Energy Resource Guide-Oil and Gas-Kazakhstan. *Op. cit.*

⁵²⁷ U.S. Energy Information Administration”. Background Reference: Kazakhstan, 7 January 2019, *Op. cit.*

⁵²⁸ Source: Pirani, Simon, “Central Asian Gas: prospects for the 2020s”. *Oxford Institute for Energy Studies*, no. NG 155, December 2019, <https://www.oxfordenergy.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Central-Asian-Gas-NG-155.pdf>. Accessed on 20 March 2020.

Figure 17: Kazakhstan’s Natural Gas Output Projections: 2015-2040⁵²⁹

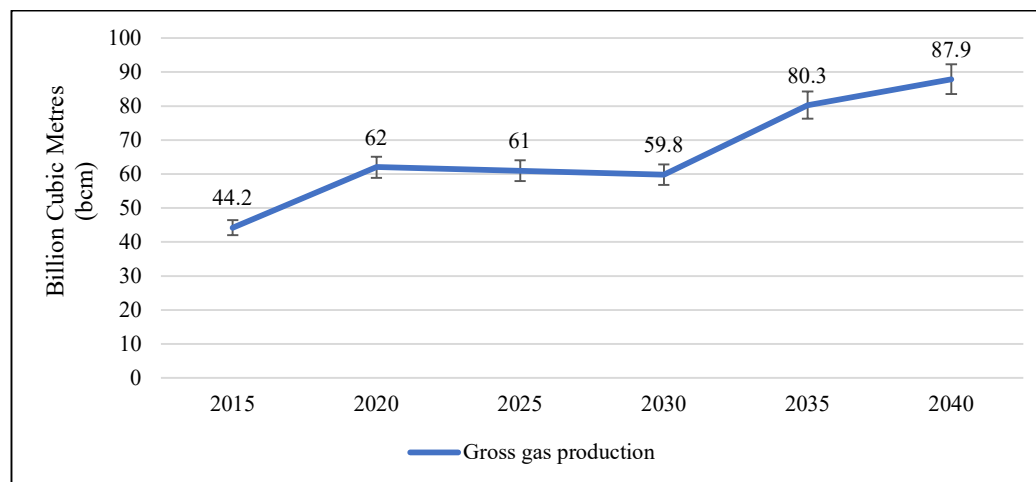


Figure 17 displays the projections till 2040 of Kazakhstan’s natural gas production.⁵³⁰ It is to be noted in particular, while natural gas output is estimated to rise to 62 billion cubic meters in 2020, the production is projected to fall to 61 BCM in 2025 and further to 59.8 BCM in 2030.⁵³¹ However, significantly higher levels of natural gas production is estimated to be achieved by 2035 and subsequently by 2040. The projection displayed in figure 17 are considered to be reasonable and practically achievable in Kazakhstan’s promising scenario.⁵³² The estimates of output are based on the assumption that the production will not lead to accelerated exhaustion of oil deposits. In terms of India’s policy for achieving energy security, Kazakhstan’s assumes importance owing to its potential for becoming a major exporter of Natural gas in the near term.

⁵²⁹ Source: Pirani, Simon, “Central Asian Gas: prospects for the 2020s”.

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

⁵³¹ Ibid.

⁵³² Ibid.

Being possessed of considerable Uranium deposits, Kazakhstan ranks among the world's top Uranium suppliers, providing 35% of the current global supply.⁵³³ On the other hand, after Australia and Canada, Kazakhstan has the world's third-largest uranium deposits. In 2012, its total reserves were 279 Kilotons (kt). The proven resources expected to rise to 1,455 kt.⁵³⁴ The potential is estimated to be as high as 1934 kt. Between 2001 and 2013, the annual production of uranium increased from 2022 tonnes to about 22,550 tonnes.⁵³⁵ Kazakhstan thereby became the world's leading uranium producer, with a production capacity of around 25,000 tonnes uranium per year.⁵³⁶ In 2012, Kazakhstan became the world's top most uranium producer with an output of 21.3 kt or 36.5% of total global uranium production.⁵³⁷ In 2018, it produced 21,705 tonnes of uranium. The output rose to 22,808 tonnes in 2019.⁵³⁸ In 2020, Kazatomprom projected its output in 2021 and 2022 to be 22,000-22,500 tonnes of uranium.⁵³⁹ This state-owned company is Kazakhstan's national operator for trading in uranium, rare metals, nuclear fuel for nuclear power plants, special equipments, technologies, and dual-purpose materials. It is among the world's largest uranium mining companies.⁵⁴⁰ In India's efforts towards diversifying its sources of uranium, Kazakhstan presents a critically viable option. Accordingly, India is proactively engaged with Kazakhstan in this regard.

⁵³³ "International Energy Agency." Energy Policies Beyond IEA Countries: Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia 2015, Op. cit. p. 177.

⁵³⁴ Ibid.

⁵³⁵ Ibid.

⁵³⁶ "Uranium and Nuclear Power in Kazakhstan". *World Nuclear Association*, 2021, www.world-nuclear.org/information-library/country-profiles/countries-g-n/kazakhstan.aspx. Accessed on January 2021.

⁵³⁷ "International Energy Agency." Energy Policies, Op. cit. p. 183.

⁵³⁸ "Uranium and Nuclear Power in Kazakhstan". Op. cit.

⁵³⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 171.

Cooperations with Kazakhstan as Part of India's Energy Policy

Thus far, this chapter has provided Kazakhstan's profile in terms of its energy reserves, and role as a supplier of energy presently and potentially. It has also outlined India's energy security concerns. It now attempts to explore the nitty gritty ties of India's energy related proposals to Kazakhstan. The study takes into account that India's foreign policy regarding security objectives in the general region of Central Asia, and Kazakhstan in particular, is designed to balance India's interests with the other perceived interests in that region. Kazakhstan clearly provides India with the critically necessary diversification for securing India's energy future. The chapter analysis India's studied approach and graded progress in terms of advancing its energy engagements with Kazakhstan. It also considers the proposals that have so far been made for greater energy cooperation.

India's energy policy is gear to ensuring energy security, as also to dealing with constraints that may come in the way of energy security. India's energy policy needs to deal with both domestic and foreign issues. On the one hand, the policy is oriented towards deployment of energy in order to satisfy the growing daily domestic needs. On the other hand, the government is required to ensure supply of energy from foreign sources. The government is exercise in the matter on an ongoing basis since energy is a key driven of economic growth. In the long run the energy sector will require to be reform as the demand for energy is expected to increase at an increasing rate. At present the level of per capita energy consumption in India is remarkably low in comparison with the relatively more advance countries of the world. The reforms will ensure that the supply of energy is consistent with future demand. Starting from 1991, India initiated important reform in the operation of the

economy that have given spurt to economic growth.⁵⁴¹ From then onwards, India experienced the prosperity that follows upon rapid economic growth. The legal and regulatory structure was strengthened, and especial emphasis was given to organizing the infrastructure and nationalizing the energy sector. In 2008, the government in India adopted an integrated energy policy. It was the first comprehensive policy that spanned all aspect relating to energy in India. It included import, export transport and pricing. The objective was to achieve sustainable energy security.

The dynamics of the global economy are such that the world has repeatedly witnessed the phenomenon of a resource deficient developing country turning to foreign sources for acquiring energy that is required for rapid industrialisation. When the western countries enter their phase of Industrialisation, their oil companies engaged with large foreign suppliers of energy. In order to compensate for the low domestic production of energy, most nations had to acquire energy assets abroad through intensified engagements with potential foreign suppliers. Such measures are accorded top priority by energy importing nations.⁵⁴² Policy makers in India framed four distinct processes so as to guard against any future disruptions in energy supply. The first process was to acquire foreign energy assets. The second process related to the initiation of gas pipeline projects. The third process was to enter into bilateral purchase deals. The fourth process was to ramp up energy diplomacy so that the supply of energy remained unhindered.⁵⁴³

⁵⁴¹ Ahluwalia, Montek S. "India's Economic Reforms: Achievements and Next Steps." *Asian Economic Policy Review*, vol. 14, no. 1, 14 Nov. 2018, pp. 46-62, doi: doi.org/10.1111/aepr.12239.

⁵⁴² Dasgupta, Arnab. "India's Strategy in the Indian Ocean Region: A Critical Aspect of India's Energy Security." *Jadavpur Journal of International Relations*, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 39-57.

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 44.

India's energy strategy was desired in the backdrop of a massive gap between demand and supply. In the circumstances, India had adopted a policy of acquiring energy assets abroad through the national oil companies. ONGC Videsh Ltd. has led the way in achieving this objective. India's extant geopolitical situation does not allow direct cross-border energy pipelines from Central Asia. Constraints exist in the form of a hostile Pakistan and a volatile Afghanistan in the matter of passing pipelines through these countries. Even so India has shown interest in the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project. In the absence of such a facility India has to fall back upon seaborne supply in order to run its economy. So far, India has relied on energy supply from the West Asian region where there are suitable hydrocarbon deposits. However, the supplies have been disrupted from time to time owing to regional unrest. As a result, India has sought to reduce its import dependence on West Asia and diversify its foreign energy supply sources. To that end, in 2014, India proposed the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) that would proceed from India to Russia and Azerbaijan through Iran. This route has the promise of reducing transport costs to a considerable extent.

In line with its policy to diversify the foreign energy sources, India established diplomatic relations with Kazakhstan soon after that nation became an independent Republic following the dissolution of the union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR). However, India was already late in entering the energy scenario in Kazakhstan.⁵⁴⁴ Meaningful energy negotiations between India and Kazakhstan began as late as 2009,⁵⁴⁵ when the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd (NPCIL) and the KazAtomProm of Kazakhstan signed civil nuclear cooperation agreements to facilitated future energy engagements.

⁵⁴⁴ Joshi, Nirmala. "India-Central Asia Energy Cooperation". Op. cit. p. 54.

⁵⁴⁵ Foshko, Katherine. "India-Kazakhstan: Beyond energy II-Gateway House." *Gateway House*, 28 April. 2011, www.gatewayhouse.in/india-kazakhstan-looking-beyond-energy-ii. Accessed on 12 Dec. 2019

Subsequently, in 2011 India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh embarked on the first official visit to Kazakhstan in order to meet President Nursultan Nazarbayev (Chandra 98-99). Seven bilateral agreements were signed during this visit. Both countries enter into a nuclear energy pact that allowed for joint exploration and research of uranium, besides collaboration in the construction and operation of nuclear power plants. In 2015 Kazakhstan signed a further agreement with India for supplying 5,000 tonnes of uranium over the following five years. Even before this agreement between 2010 and 2014, Kazakhstan had supply India with 2100 tonnes of uranium.⁵⁴⁶ India and Kazakhstan have signed a memorandum that would allow for cooperation in the joint extraction of natural uranium in Kazakhstan.⁵⁴⁷ Further, the two countries, after prolonged negotiations, have finalised a deal worth Rupees 1800 crores that would provide India's ONGC Videsh Ltd. with a 25% stake in the Satpayev oil field on the Caspian Sea.⁵⁴⁸ This deal has the objective of securing India's energy future and facilitating sustained economic growth.

In general, the existing vital strategic engagement vests KazAtomProm with the role of NPCIL's principal uranium and nuclear fuel supplier. India has adopted a strategy for expanding its involvement in Kazakhstan's energy resources, with the objective of securing India's energy future. In contrast with the other established global actors in the region of Central Asia, India enters the scene in Kazakhstan as an emerging global player. India views the energy agreements as a means to project a positive image for itself both bilaterally and globally.

⁵⁴⁶ "New Uranium Mining Projects -Kazakhstan." *World Information Service on Energy*, 14 Dec. 2018, www.wise-uranium.org/upkz.html#AKMOLA. Accessed on 20 September 2019.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸ Foshko, Katherine. Op. cit.

Kazakhstan possesses massive reserve of crude oil, natural gas, as well as other energy resources. Consequently, India view's Kazakhstan as a viable alternative option for securing on adequate supply of energy, including petroleum and gas product. Owing to its vast energy reserve Kazakhstan has grown in importance in India's strategy to diversify on expand energy import. In sum, the country presents much potential for intensifying energy cooperation in India. In the event a number of Indian companies are already engaged in Kazakhstan's energy sector for the purpose of extracting oil and gas. As indicated earlier, Indian Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Videsh Ltd. (OVL) has already entered Kazakhstan's hydrocarbon Sector.⁵⁴⁹ In the backdrop of India's varied engagements with Kazakhstan in the last decade, India's involvement in Kazakhstan's energy sector is relatively insignificant. India's ONGC Videsh Limited has a 15% stake in Kazakhstan's Alibekmola oil field and a 10% holding in the Kurmangazi oil field. In 2008, Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL) won the right to explore for gas in two fields in Uzbekistan.⁵⁵⁰ GAIL had also initiated negotiations with ExxonMobil for purchasing a stake in Kashagan, which is among Kazakhstan's biggest hydrocarbon fields.⁵⁵¹ India's possible involvement in the Kashagan project would have opened up the potential for aligning the Caspian Region to the world's economic structure, and also allowed Asian Pacific Stockholders to diversify access to the Caspian resources. While the current demand for energy is maximally met by Middle East Asia, Kazakhstan has emerged as the most viable alternative for diversification of sources. Nevertheless, while pursuing this

⁵⁴⁹ Mishra, Richa. "ONGC Videsh acquires 25% stake in Kazakh oil block." *Business Line*, 12 Oct. 2011, www.thehindubusinessline.com/companies/ONGC-Videsh-acquires-25-stake-in-Kazakh-oil-block/article20347674.ece. Accessed on 12 Dec. 2019

⁵⁵⁰ Lt Col Dhall, Vivek. *India' Energy Security*. Vij Books India Pvt Ltd, 2013, p. 40.

⁵⁵¹ Agt, Christof V. *Caspian Oil and Gas: New Perspectives beyond Projects and Pipelines*. Clingendael International Energy Programme (CIEP), 2014, pp. 47-49, www.clingendaelenergy.com/inc/upload/files/Ciep_paper_2014-01.pdf. Accessed on 12 Dec. 2019

rational objective, India has been constrained by incidental geostrategic, geopolitical and geo-economic hindrances.

Since the time when India's policy makers introduced the objective of diversifying the country's energy sources the first success in winning a stake in an oil field in Kazakhstan was considered. Significant to securing India's energy future. At the same time, India considered importing natural gas from Turkmenistan via Afghanistan and Pakistan through a pipeline (TAPI). Following its initial success in Kazakhstan, India began deliberations with Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to finalize oil deals. The initial talks with these countries did not make any headway. However, India's efforts to expand trade with Kazakhstan continued apace. The mutual relations between India and Kazakhstan in the matter of oil insources has been appreciably expanding. Consequently, India has successfully gained access to a number of Kazakhstan's oil fields. These favourable developments have motivated India to intensify its engagements with Kazakhstan.

In order to ensure a dependable, long-duration access to energy and other commodities, India has espoused a relationship with Kazakhstan that is mutually profitable. India's energy strategy is implemented by its important energy companies and national oil corporate that work in tandem to define the magnitude and potential of the country's oil engagements around the world. India proposes to utilise the capacities of these large companies in order to effectively enhance its participation in Kazakhstan's energy sector. In the Asian region, China is India's principal competitor for global oil reserves. China has already secured major stakes in Kazakhstan's oil fields and already has pipe lines in

place to transport oil and gas to its north-western border.⁵⁵² Following upon the rapid decline in global oil prices, Kazakh oil lost its attraction in the short run, but India includes Kazakhstan in its long-term strategy for ensuring its energy future and fuelling its ambitious economic aspirations. India presently has a steady presence in Kazakhstan's energy sector and now proposes to develop linkages with other producers in order to secure uninterrupted supplies of energy. In the process, India is expected to assume an increasingly important role in the region's security structure.

India and Kazakhstan: Nuclear Energy Cooperation

India's growing demand for energy includes the need for nuclear energy. In this context, the Nuclear Cooperation Agreement between India and Kazakhstan assumes great significance. India's 12th five-year plan spells out the role of nuclear energy as a viable alternative in meeting the country's growing energy needs. Accordingly, it envisages the construction of additional nuclear plants.⁵⁵³ During the 12th plan period, 2012-2017, India's Planning Commission projects an additional need for 100,000-megawatt of power.⁵⁵⁴ In 2009, during the visit of Kazakhstan's president Nazarbayev to India, the two countries entered a strategic partnership agreement.⁵⁵⁵ One of the clauses in the related Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) relates to the supply of Uranium to India. The issue was followed up in 2011 when India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited

⁵⁵² Pradhan, Ramakrushna. "The Energy Factor in India's Central Asia Policy." *World Affairs*, vol. 23, no. 2, Apr. 2019, pp. 126-39.

⁵⁵³ *Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017): Faster, More Inclusive and Sustainable Growth*. Planning Commission, Government of India, Sage Publication, vol 1, p. 22, www.niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/planrel/12thplan/pdf/12fyp_vol1.pdf. Accessed on 12 November 2019.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 119.

⁵⁵⁵ Sarma, Angira Sen. "India, Kazakhstan need to look beyond economic cooperation". *Observer Research Foundation*, 29 April, 2011, www.orfonline.org/research/india-kazakhstan-need-to-look-beyond-economic-cooperation. Accessed on 22 July 2020.

Kazakhstan. The India-Kazakhstan nuclear cooperation agreement was signed in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan.⁵⁵⁶ This Agreement finalised the arrangement for Kazakhstan to supply uranium to India, and also facilitated comprehensive cooperation in civil nuclear energy programmes. This nuclear energy pact allowed for joint exploration and research of uranium through jointly constructed and operated power plants. Kazakhstan committed to supply 2,100 tonnes of uranium to India by 2014.⁵⁵⁷ Kazakhstan thus became the fourth nation after USA, Russia, and Canada to enter into a pact with India for establishing civil nuclear cooperation. A separate agreement was proposed between the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) and Kazakhstan's Kazatomprom. Currently, Kazakhstan supplies uranium to India to meet the urgent nuclear fuel needs of India's nuclear power plants. In terms of an assure source of supply, the Agreement assumes importance since Kazakhstan possesses one of the world's largest deposits of uranium. Lately, Kazakhstan has led the world in the production of uranium.⁵⁵⁸

This agreement ensures the legality of the transactions that are limited to the peaceful usage of nuclear energy. The peaceful usage comprises nuclear energy for fuel, nuclear medicine, and nuclear radiations for health care. The Agreement provides for the exploration and collaborative mining of uranium, and the designing, construction and operation of joint nuclear power plants. Importantly, the deal covers the exchange of scientific and research knowledge. This nuclear agreement is of utmost significance as it provides India with major opportunities in Kazakhstan and gives a great fillip to Indo-Kazakhstan trade. Accordingly, Kazakhstan has become the fifth country to supply nuclear

⁵⁵⁶ Kaushiki, Nishtha. "The New Great Game and India's Connect Central Asia Policy: Strategic Perspectives and Challenges." *Journal of International and Area Studies*, vol. 20, no. 2, 2013, pp. 83–100.

⁵⁵⁷ "Kazakhstan to supply 2100 tonnes uranium by 2014." *Deccan Herald*, 16 Apr. 2011, p. 5.

⁵⁵⁸ "Uranium and Nuclear Power in Kazakhstan". World Nuclear Association. 2021, www.world-nuclear.org/information-library/country-profiles/countries-g-n/kazakhstan.aspx. Accessed on 5 February 2021.

fuel to India. The list of such countries includes USA, France, Mongolia, and Russia, from where India sources its uranium supplies for civilian energy purposes. According to the data recorded by the World Nuclear Association in 2010, in that year, out of its total imports of 868 tonnes of uranium, NPCIL imported 300 tonnes of uranium from Kazakhstan.⁵⁵⁹ This additional supply helps India to largely bridge its energy deficits. India's enormous need for energy resources has contributed significantly to the depreciation in the value of the Indian Rupee. However, India has the potential to achieve a stable economic growth if its need for energy is adequately met by the supply of nuclear energy.

With 20 functional nuclear power plants India has an install capacity of 4780 megawatt (MW). Six other nuclear units are in process of construction.⁵⁶⁰ By 2032, India proposes to increase its nuclear energy generating capacity 63,000 MW.⁵⁶¹ With 12% of the world's uranium reserve Kazakhstan is among the countries having the longest such deposits. It is also the world's top uranium producing country.⁵⁶² Kazakhstan is currently proposing to install a Japanese built 600 MWe boiling water reactor in the countries eastern part. India expects to participate in the project and thus further expand its nuclear energy development engagements with Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan is currently considering nuclear power projects that may potentially be best on India's Pressurised Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR) technology.⁵⁶³

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid, 2010, p. 3.

⁵⁶⁰ "Kaiga Generating Station". Power Technology, Energy News and Market Analysis, www.power-technology.com/projects/kaiga-station. Accessed on 22 October 2020.

⁵⁶¹ "Nuclear Power: India's Development Imperative". *Vivekananda International Foundation*, VIF Task Force Report, February 2019, p. 47, www.vifindia.org/sites/default/files/nuclear-power-india-s-development-imperative_1.pdf. Accessed on 22 October 2020.

⁵⁶² "Uranium and Nuclear Power in Kazakhstan". Op. cit.

⁵⁶³ Singh, Harmeet. Op. cit.

India-Kazakhstan Energy Partnership: Prospects

While Kazakhstan is imposing a progressively strict regulatory structure on investments, it continues to draw foreign investments, largely for upstream exploration and production, given its massive hydrocarbon reserve. The Indian Oil Videsh Limited (OVL) company failed to obtain a share in the Kurmangazy project. However, Kazakhstan has offered this company two other fields of medium size. Darkhan is another field that has been identified for exploration. Its estimated reserve among two 3 billion barrels of oil.⁵⁶⁴ India's OVL may potentially have the opportunity to play the role of operator in Yevgenia and such other fields in Kazakhstan, that have the capacity to annually produced around 1.5 million metric tonnes of oil. In this perspective, Kazakhstan represents a most important opportunity for India to diversify its sources of oil supply and, to that extend further bolster its energy security.⁵⁶⁵

Reliance petroleum leads the Indian companies that have proven success in installing state of the art refineries where a variety of crude oil from the heaviest to the lightest can be refine. They have the potential to partner with companies in Kazakhstan in refining projects. Likewise, companies in India can also collaborate in Kazakhstan's downstream petrochemical and fertiliser sectors in the process of adding value to the gas produced by the off shore fields. India's foreign policy in Kazakhstan is largely based on factors relating to energy security. Energy must remain the principal parameter in India's engagements with countries in Central Asia, that lie in it extend neighbourhood.

⁵⁶⁴ Mhalingam, Sudha. "India and Kazakhstan: Building Energy Bridges." *India-Kazakhstan Perspectives: Regional and International Interactions*, edited by K. Santhanam et al., Anamaya Publishers, 2007, pp. 48-63.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.

For Kazakhstan India has rapidly evolved into a meaningful and significant trading partner. Consequently, both countries have proceeded to formulate a new Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement in the energy sector. However, the agreement does not specifically identify the energy sector as a major area of celebration. Nevertheless, as Kazakhstan attempts to diversify its oil and gas exports, its partnership with India in the energy sector and modernisation programmes will become increasingly significant in the near and medium terms. Relative to a number of other countries in the world, in the last decade, Kazakhstan has advanced rapidly towards achieving a strong and dependable energy security and energy equity. In the context of Kazakhstan's north-west oriented tilt in energy policy in the recent past, India represents a viable alternative for consideration and activation. This option has grown in importance in the light of India's first expanding demand for energy and New Delhi's pressing overtures for expanding energy collaboration engagement with Astana. Kazakhstan's energy relations with Russia have intensified considerably over the last decades. However, Kazakhstan has also taken care to diversify its energy supplies to India and other energy partners through dynamic foreign policies. These favourable developments have enabled India to solidify its energy security structure through the diversification of oil and gas imports and achievements of the appropriate energy mix. In the process, India has expanded upon its diplomatic relations with Kazakhstan. Presently there is the scope for India and Kazakhstan to engage in mutually beneficial collaborations in the field of energy and beyond. In the event, the next section will expand upon the economic relations between India and Kazakhstan.

India and Kazakhstan: Bilateral Economic Relations

In Central Asia, Kazakhstan is the largest economy, and among the commonwealth of Independent States, it is the second largest after the Russian Federation. Through its

strategy 2030 Initiative, Kazakhstan proposes to transform its national economy so that it achieves the identify of an Innovation nation. It thereby plans to fulfil its ambition to be included in the top 50 competitive economics of the world.⁵⁶⁶ To that end, Kazakhstan is aware of the need to integrate its economy into the regional and global economic systems. To achieve such integration, it must improve upon its transit infrastructure in keeping with unique its geostrategic location. Further, it will help to bolster its information technology capabilities. This chapter examines the perception of the experts, analysts and influencers in India and Kazakhstan with regard to bilateral ties between the two Countries. The backdrop to the strong and abiding relationship is already embedded in history. There are also significant commonalities. Both the countries are multi- ethnic and multi-linguistic, with multi-cultural societies. Both the countries are adherents of secular principals. And both countries are committed to countering fundamentalism, religious extremism and terrorism. There is a convergence of opinions in both the countries in respect of important domestic and global issues. Soon after Kazakhstan became a sovereign republic in December 1991, its president Nazarbayev selected India as the first country outside of the commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to visit in February 1992. This gesture emphasised the warm felicity that exist between the two countries.

Central Asian nations like Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are renowned the world over for their wealth interns of energy resources. These countries were all too aware that their economic growth and prosperity hinged on the efficient explanation, development and export of crude oil and natural gas to other countries. India was considered to be a prime

⁵⁶⁶ Sajjanhar, Ashok. "India-Kazakhstan relations: Challenges and opportunities". Embassy of India, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, 2013, www.indembastana.gov.in/docs/Ashok%20Sajjanhar.pdf. Accessed on 14 February 2019.

example of a nation that had successfully transitioned from a planned economy to a marked economy.

As India went about securing its presents in Kazakhstan's energy sector, it became increasingly clear that building a meaningful and dependable partnership was subject to massive investments on the part of the government and private companies. Such investments would reflect India's commitment to deepen its energy relations with Kazakhstan, as also its commitment to secure its energy future for the purpose of its resurgent economy. In a short time, India's energy ties with Kazakhstan became a significant factor in the country's economic dynamics. It was clear from the beginning that trade with Kazakhstan and energy engagements would call for investments in the building of transportation factors and infrastructures. India's initiatives in boosting economic activities would also be analysed in terms of the responses on the part of Kazakhstan.

India's heightened economic engagements with neighbouring states and the deepening of ties with its neighbours highlighted India's support for developing nations. Since early 1990s when India's economy opened up as a result of fundamental reforms, India's foreign policy was infused with the long-term objective of initiating economic engagements that would foster a peaceful and beneficial international environment conducive to India's domestic advancement. To that end, India proactively pursued the establishment of a durable and dependable relationship with Kazakhstan that was founded on mutual goodwill, showed history and commonality of interest in the contemporary global environment. The focus was on essentially promoting a relationship of close understanding and cooperation between the two nations. As a newly independent state, Kazakhstan decided to develop its economy with the help of economic reform, market dynamics and

investments policies that would bring about speedy economic growth. It was in a position to foreign investments that would strengthen its economy. Accordingly, Kazakhstan's engagements with India were based on mutually beneficial economic cooperations.

As a matter of record, Kazakhstan experienced substantial economic development since 2000 that was manifested in the reduction of poverty and the emergence of a distinct middle class. From then on, its economy recorded an average annual growth rate of 6.8 percent between 2001 and 2016.⁵⁶⁷ This pattern of impressive development was made possible by Kazakhstan wealth of natural resources and economic activities related to the mining of oil and gas. Kazakhstan recognised Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) as a significant trigger to National Economic Growth and spelled out its economic goals and foreign policy objectives in that light. The importance of India's growing relationship with Kazakhstan was both economic and strategic. Kazakhstan massive deposit of energy resources presented India with the opportunity of diversifying its energy sources and sustaining the energy needs of its burgeoning economy. Kazakhstan, in turn, could avail of India's proven strength in Information Technology (IT) that would meet its economic needs in the service sector. The relationship between the two countries could evolve on the basis of mutual economic benefit.

India has evinced clarity in its foreign policy framework with regard to achieving economic integration with Kazakhstan. The two countries recognise the increasing convergence of interests by way of economic engagements and security issues. India views its relationship with Central Asia as not only a challenge but also a responsibility. The

⁵⁶⁷ World Bank Group. "A new growth model for building a secure middle class: Kazakhstan Systematic Country Diagnostic". April 2018, www.documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/664531525455037169/pdf/KAZ-SCD-April-2018-FINAL-eng-with-IDU-05012018.pdf. Accessed on 21 October 2020.

structure of the relationship is built around the two important parameters of economic engagements and security issues in the larger Asian arena.

The bilateral relations between India and Kazakhstan are differently significant for either country with regard to opportunity and potential. While their shared history is a useful backdrop for the contemporary relationship, there is a need for both the countries to engage in a gamut of activities and issues. These span the fields of politics, security, economy, commerce, culture, Human resource development. The bilateral relations between the two countries presuppose mutual sensitivity to their respective needs and concerns. Such a relationship can be faster through profound knowledge and understanding of each other, and shared empathy. The nature of the relationship is significantly influenced by diplomatic interactions and the mental affinity of shared ideas between the political leadership.

In the contemporary world bilateral relations are essentially founded on economic considerations. Since India and Kazakhstan are both developing economies, they both stand to benefit through cooperation in utilising the emerging opportunities. Kazakhstan has the advantage of accessing India's expertise and capital in the areas of petrochemicals pharmaceuticals, Information Technology, financial services, railways, Automobile manufacturing, etc. All these sectors provide opportunities for intensive collaboration.

When viewed against the potential, the actual investments made by the two countries in each other's economies appear to be relatively small. In the light of the studies made by the Export Import (EXIM) Bank of India and India's Ministry of Commerce (MoC) India requires both investments and state-of-the-art technology in infra-structural projects,

namely, airports, roads, ports, as also in natural resource-based fields such as paper, coal petroleum and petroleum products. On the other hand, Kazakhstan needs investments in Petrochemicals, sugar, transport vehicles, railways, textiles, Information technology, financial services health and education, both the countries are in a position to exploit their complementarities to mutual benefit. Kazakhstan has reached experience in successfully operating its tourism industry this can be positively useful to India.

Since India's adoption of the Connect Central Asia Policy in 2012, there has been considerable progress in the economic engagements between India and Kazakhstan while the relationship has made notable heading over the last decade, there is yet great potential for further expansion of the partnership. Both the countries are aware of the mutual benefit to be derived from enhancing the relationship. From India's point of view, stronger and deeper engagements with Kazakhstan will largely open up the possibility of accessing the wider Central Asian region.

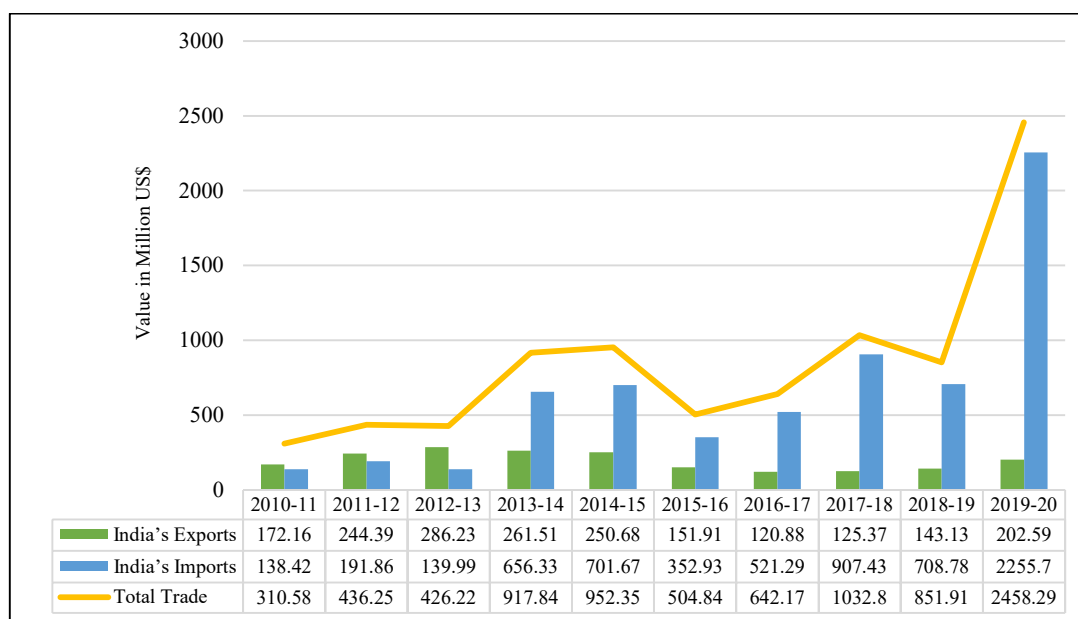
Figure 18 indicates the value of bilateral trade comprising exports and imports between India and Kazakhstan from 2010 to 2020. It evidences an increase in the value of bilateral trade from US \$ 310.58 million in 2010 to US \$ 2458.29 million in 2020. Kazakhstan is India's major trading partner in Central Asia as given in the said figure, midway in the decade under review, in 2015, the bilateral trade had reason in value to US \$ 952.35 million.⁵⁶⁸ Of this total value, the export component from India to Kazakhstan in 2015 was US \$ 250.68 million. In the same year India's imports from Kazakhstan were valued at US \$ 701.67 million (figure 18).⁵⁶⁹ India's exports to Kazakhstan, comprise tea, medical and

⁵⁶⁸ *India-Kazakhstan Relations*, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, July 2016, mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Kazakhstan1_July_2016.pdf. Accessed on 22 October 2020.

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

other pharmaceutical, machinery and equipment, and raw tobacco. India's imports from the region consists mainly of uranium, asbestos, titanium and oil.

Figure 18: India-Kazakhstan Trade Figures 2010-2020⁵⁷⁰



In Kazakhstan the sectors in which India has made notable investments are banking, tea packaging, steel, mining, oil and gas, engineering, medical and pharmaceutical trade, services, travel agencies, etc. The Indian companies that operate in Kazakhstan include Arcelor Mittal, KazStroyService, SUN Group, KEC Ltd, Punjab National Bank, ONGC Videsh Limited, ONGC Mittal Energy Limited (OMEL), and Gateway Ventures. These companies are largely Indian Public Sector Undertakings (PSU). In term Kazakhstan has invested in India mainly in the oil and gas sector and in Engineering Procurement and Construction (EPC) Companies. In 2015, during Indian Prime Minister visit to Kazakhstan

⁵⁷⁰ Source: Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Govt. of India.

the two countries signed a memorandum to establish a joint business council consisting of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Kazakhstan's chamber of International Commerce. To take forward their varied engagements, both the countries have undertaken joint initiatives in structuring the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) for the purpose of establishing surface connectivity.⁵⁷¹ Given Kazakhstan's huge wealth of mineral resources, particularly highly enriched uranium the two countries executed a fresh agreement for the supply of natural uranium to India. For India, a secure supply of uranium will enable a meaningful India-US civil nuclear cooperation and meet India's uranium requirements for its civil nuclear programme. In the long term, Kazakhstan will play a key role in India's efforts to diversify its energy base.⁵⁷²

The economic partnership between India and Kazakhstan has remained on an upward trajectory. It is also expanding into newer sectors. In this context, it must be noted that the current level of engagements is well short of the actual potential. Further, it does not adequately reflect the close mutual interactions and understanding that exist between the two countries. The trend of trade in the last few years evidences a rapid increase in the exports from Kazakhstan to India. In contrast, there have been a discernible reduction in the quantum and value of India's exports to Kazakhstan. Overall, the total bilateral trade between the two countries has been steadily increasing over a number of years. The growth in the volume of trade (exports and imports) is largely due to product diversification. The two countries are feet far from realising the full potential that exists in expanding trade to other commodities and thereby enhancing mutual gains from bilateral trade.

⁵⁷¹ Sachdeva, Gulshan. "India-Central Asian Economic Relations". *Mapping Central Asia: Indian Perceptions and Strategies*. Edited by, Marlene Laruelle and Sebastien Peyrouse, Ashgate, 2011. Pp. 123-141.

⁵⁷² Sajjanhar, Ashok. "India-Kazakhstan relations: Challenges and opportunities". Embassy of India, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, 2013, www.indembastana.gov.in/docs/Ashok%20Sajjanhar.pdf. Accessed on 14 February 2019.

Kazakhstan is fast developing into a major global source for metals and minerals. Over 50 percent of India's imports from Kazakhstan consists of petroleum. In 2018 the value of India's import of Radioactive chemical elements was recorded at US \$ 90.28 million.⁵⁷³ Over 90% of India's imports from Kazakhstan comprise of commodities such silver, hydrogen gas, asbestos, ferro alloy, construction materials, inorganic chemicals, gold, and dry fruits (Figure 19).⁵⁷⁴ In term India's export goods consist majorly of pharmaceuticals, coffee, tea, spices, textiles, heavy machinery, cars, trucks, surgical instruments, meat, and apparel. It is observed that, Kazakhstan's imports from India of the top 15 commodities, including pharmaceutical, amount to less than one percent of its total imports of those commodities.⁵⁷⁵ The value of India's export of services to Kazakhstan is at present modest at best. In 2018, India's exports of medical products and tea were recorded at US \$ 66.62 million and US \$ 32.6 million respectively (figure 20).

⁵⁷³ Devendra, Pratibha. *Economic Security Dimensions in Central Asia: Role of India*. K W Publishers, 2012, p. 431.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid.

Figure 19: India Import from Kazakhstan by Commodity in 2018

(Value in USD mln)⁵⁷⁶

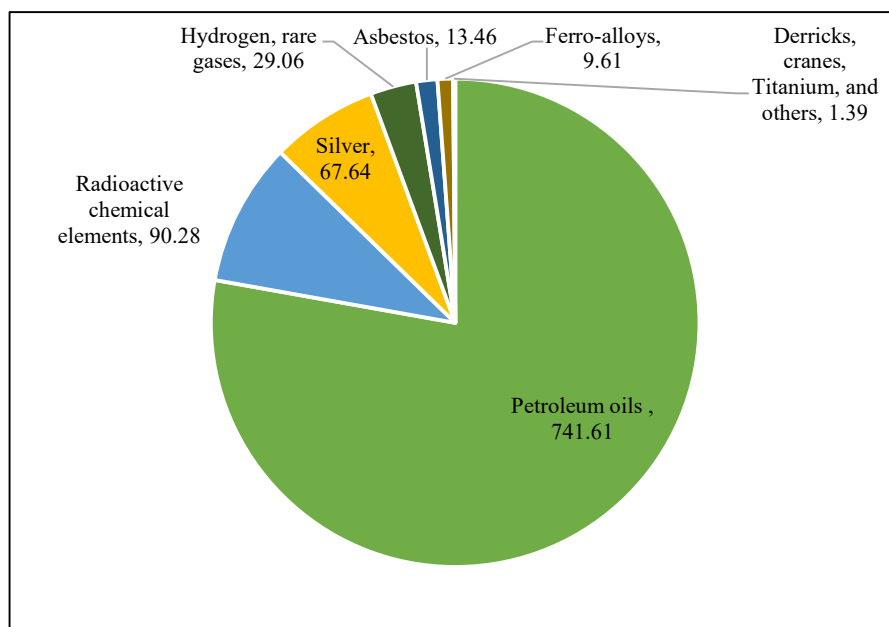
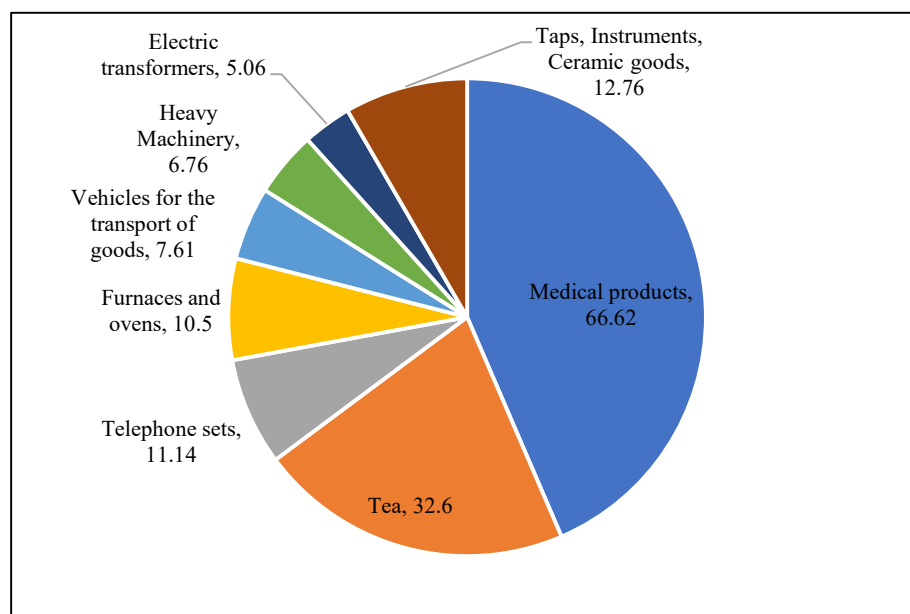


Figure 20: India Export to Kazakhstan by Commodity in 2018 (Value

in USD mln)⁵⁷⁷



⁵⁷⁶ Source: Bilateral Trade/Invest Statistics. Embassy of India, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, www.indembastana.gov.in/page/investment-statistics/. Accessed on 2 July 2019.

⁵⁷⁷ Source: Bilateral Trade/Invest Statistics. Embassy of India, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, www.indembastana.gov.in/page/investment-statistics/. Accessed on 2 July 2019.

As indicated in the chart, over the last decade, the export component of India's bilateral trade with Kazakhstan as remained static. However, import have grown steadily. A meaningful study of India's future trade prospects must mention Kazakhstan as a trading partner with a huge unexplored potential. The flow of Kazakhstan's Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) has been growing. Kazakhstan motivation for expanding its investments abroad is founded on its decision to diversify its economy beyond mining.⁵⁷⁸

Tea, pharmaceuticals, and engineering goods comprise the major items in the list of India's exports to Kazakhstan. Even so, India's tea exports to Kazakhstan has been steadily losing market share owing to deficiency in quality, packaging, marketing etc. However, the government of India has been making effort to improve India's performance in this sector. Most of the top pharmaceutical companies of India are also operating in the Kazakh market. Even so, despite India's significant quantum of operations in this sector, the Indian companies must work to improving upon quality and pricing, as also marketing, in a major way in order to capture a bigger shore of the market.⁵⁷⁹

India and Kazakhstan: Need for Mutual Economic Engagement

The global fossil fuel reserves are being constantly reduced. At the same time India's need for energy sources, particularly oil, is on the rise. Accordingly, Kazakhstan's vast energy reserves prompt India to build strong economic connections with that country, largely focused on oil and gas. Since India's domestic oil production is unable to satisfy the needs of a large and growing economy, the country is perforce dependant on foreign sources of

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid.

energy. The combined factors of a rapidly growing economy in a free-market environment have resulted in a simultaneously growing requirement for oil. These factors pose a challenge for securing the country's energy future.

The rapid increase in population is also a factor, besides a resurgence economy that causes an increase in the demand for energy, that is incomparable with earlier times. These factors, along with the short fall in domestic energy supply, propel India to explore energy sources abroad, and Kazakhstan in particular. In the, Kazakhstan can benefit from India's investment funds for the purpose of its own economic evolution. It is in Kazakhstan's interests to diversify its sources of foreign investments and reduce its dependence on China. In the light of these circumstances, Kazakhstan and India views their economic relationship as mutually rewarding.

India's foreign policy has the objective of intensifying and expanding the country's economic cooperation with Kazakhstan. In these context India's goals are four-fold. Firstly, India expects the trading mechanisms to result in balanced trade between the two countries. Secondly, by means of economic cooperation India seeks to enlarge its presence in the Kazakh market. At the same time, it proposes to use Kazakh resources to boost its domestic economy and improve the global competitiveness of its products. Thirdly, with a view to improving transport infrastructure between the two countries and across Eurasia, India desires to play its own role in building the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC).⁵⁸⁰ The INSTC is widely acknowledged as a potential force for

⁵⁸⁰ Sachdeva, Gulshan. Op. cit. pp. 137-40.

energizing India's Eurasia Policy.⁵⁸¹ Fourthly, India aims to establish multilateral cooperation between itself and the Central Asian States.

Owing to Kazakhstan's economy being in the early phase of growth, India's trade relationship with that country is relatively low key. Nevertheless, both countries recognise the huge potential for expanding on the existing trade and economic linkages. However, unrest and insecurity in Afghanistan and Pakistan are major impediments. The alternative routes are relatively circuitous. Geographical nearness, and cost-effective transportation could have been the major drivers of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries. Further, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has proven to be a useful platform for promoting bilateral exchanges and engagement between India and Kazakhstan. Both the countries recognise the SCO as an enabling platform for promoting regional cooperation.

After Kazakhstan became independent, it began to look beyond Russia for economic relationships. It welcomed India's overtures as a viable partner in the extended neighbourhood. Since then, the overall economic relationship and trading engagements have grown steadily. This is in the context of a number of countries, including neighbours, vying for access to the region's natural energy resources. China's cross-border reach and its involvement in the region may be a constraint to India's economic initiatives in Kazakhstan and the contiguous states in Central Asia. However, India may succeed in neutralising China's threat in the region by collaborating with the U.S., Russia and the Central Asian states, who all have a stake in the future of Central Asia. As a part of the

⁵⁸¹ Sarma, Hriday C and Menezes, Dwayne R. "The International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC): India's Grand Plan for Northern Connectivity", *Polar Research and Policy Initiative, The Polar Connection*, 6 June, 2018, www.polarconnection.org/india-instc-nordic-arctic/. Accessed on 22 April 2019.

Great Game, it is incumbent on India together necessary economic intelligence and take forward its relations with Central Asia.

Since Kazakhstan's independence, India has gradually intensified its energy engagements with that country. As both the countries have been growing economies and their commercial needs are largely complimentary, they have progressed to become natural trading partners. At the same time, Kazakhstan enables India to diversify its energy sources in order to satisfy its growing energy needs economic growth. The economic relationship between India and Kazakhstan largely revolves around hydrocarbon products. Both the countries have a mutual interest in developing the energy sector. The economic relationship between the two countries has great growth potential since they are jointly engaged in adding to the fields of mutual economic cooperation. In order to facilitate their engagements, the two countries are cooperating in setting up different transport and communication routes. Such as railways, airways and telecommunication systems. The improvement in economic relations since 2012 between the two countries has been achieved despite diverse challenges. In the context of their geographical proximity and historical relations, India and Kazakhstan are confident of a durable and mutually enriching partnership.

Joint Efforts of India and Kazakhstan in International Economic Organizations

India and Kazakhstan have the advantage and opportunity to discuss common issues and mutual exchanges on the platforms of several international organizations where both are members. As members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the two countries

exchange mutual views on varied issues such as labour standards, trade, investments, facilitating environment, and public health. At the WTO forum, the two countries have repeatedly stated that developed countries need to do away with agricultural subsidies so that developing countries can operate on a level playing field in the matter of export of their agricultural products. They have also demanded that the developing countries should be allowed to deal with issues relating to liberalisation in agriculture and their implementation before the WTO deliberates on new topics like investment and competition. India and Kazakhstan also collaborate with each other at the forum of the SCO. There is the potential for further deepening of ties between the two countries since they have adopted a common approach to the different negotiations conducted at the SCO.

India and Kazakhstan: Co-operation in Financial Services

The Export-Import (Exim) Bank of India facilitates the advancement of India's strategy with regard to economic and trade relations with Kazakhstan. Exim Bank acts as a conduit for the large lines of credit (LoCs) that India issues in favour of Kazakhstan as a measure for expanding cooperation in financial exchanges. The Exim Bank was selected by the Government of India in 2004 for routing its LoCs.⁵⁸² In the same year, India extends a line of credit to Kazakhstan worth US \$ 10 million.⁵⁸³ At the beginning, India had granted this facility to Kazakhstan but subsequently extended it to the entire Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in Central Asia.⁵⁸⁴ Exim Bank's objective was to make funds available to Kazakhstan for financing trade. Such access to trade finance results in

⁵⁸² Mullen, Rani D, et al. "India–Central Asia Backgrounder". *Centre for Policy Research*, 6 January, 2014, p. 7. www.cprindia.org/sites/default/files/policy-briefs/India-Central%20Asia_0.pdf. Accessed on 21 February 2020.

⁵⁸³ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid.

economic growth for India and the Central Asian economies. The bank undertakes risk mitigation measures and arranges for enhancement of credit. The net effect of these operations is expansion of trade and investment both within and outside the region.

India and Kazakhstan: Economic Relations and Foreign Direct Investment

In the matter of economic relations, Kazakhstan and India are partners in trade and direct investments. At the start, the magnitude of investments between the two countries has been on the low side. This is explainable since both countries have lately begun their transition to a market-based economy. Nevertheless, economic projections indicate significant scope and potential for engagements between the two countries, given that both countries have expressed their desire to enhance their economic relations. In addition to the initiatives taken by the respective governments, the private sector in either country have acted positively to solidify the bilateral ties and explore new opportunities.

India's dealings with Kazakhstan are largely evidenced in sectors such as oil and gas, hotel industry, light engineering, pharmaceuticals and tea. India's renowned pharmaceutical and entrepreneurial companies are currently operating in Kazakhstan and are observed to be successfully expanding their market share from year to year. To facilitate their activities, they have appointed agencies and opened their own representative offices in Kazakhstan. India's oil company ONGC Videsh Limited, has acquired a 15% holding in Alibekmola field and a 10% stake in Kurmangazi field in Kazakhstan.⁵⁸⁵ The company has also

⁵⁸⁵ Attri, Ashok K. *India and Central Asian Republics*. Regal Publications, 2010, p. 96.

obtained a five-year license to explore for in the oil and gas field of the Pavlodar region in northern Kazakhstan.

India's Ispat Karmat has made a large investment of US \$ 800 million in Kazakhstan.⁵⁸⁶ This company runs an integrated steel plant with an annual production capacity of six million tonnes of steel. In the process, it contributes about 8% to the host country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). An appreciative Kazakhstan views the Ispat Karmat plant as a model investment venture. Further, Mittal Steel Temirtau in Kazakhstan is one of the world's biggest single-site integrated steel plants with state-of-the-art equipment and top infrastructure facilities.⁵⁸⁷ In addition, over 30 Indian pharmaceutical companies have established their offices in Kazakhstan, and are engaged in investing capital in the country's economy.

As already indicated, India's investments in Kazakhstan are designed to exploit the potential existing in exploring for oil, building refineries, constructing gas pipelines, as also in connected sectors such as industrial housing, road construction, and training.⁵⁸⁸ Even so, in terms of magnitude and range, the level of India-Kazakhstan cooperation is far below the existing potential and possibilities in either country. Accordingly, there needs to be further focus on expanding presence in the areas of atomic energy, water conservation, and oil-refining. India is poised to eke enhanced future benefits from these sectors. The salient existing drawbacks are observed in the current transport arrangements, mutual payment facilities between the negotiating partners, and the narrow range of traded commodities. A two-fold approach is required to enhance trade and economic cooperation

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid. also see: Nurzhanova, M S. "Kazakhstan-India Cooperation Major Trends". *Himalayan and Central Asian Studies*, vol. 12 no 3-4, July-December 2008, pp. 156-162.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 159.

and streamline mutual payments. Firstly, bilateral agreement is warranted for inter-bank cooperation secondly, an agreement is necessary to enhance cooperation in the oil industry.⁵⁸⁹

Linkages in Science and Technology Between India and Kazakhstan

Given that science and technology have an all-encompassing presence in our modern routine, it is all the more necessary to stress on the traditional values of education, literacy and scholarship in both the developing countries of Kazakhstan and India in an increasingly demanding and sophisticated environment. There is potential for India and Kazakhstan to take their relationship forward through science and technology. Kazakhstan recognises the importance of science and technology for the development of its economy. In that light, Kazakhstan proposes to build a software Technology Park. India is already renowned as a super power in information technology (IT). Besides, it is leading experts in the fields of biotechnology, satellite imaging, etc. Such know-how will play a major role in developing the IT Sector in Kazakhstan. A Synergy has emerged between India's software expertise and Kazakhstan's capability in manufacturing computer hardware. In the event, both the countries have embarked on mutually beneficial initiatives. Kazakhstan has provided India with a bio-sensor based gadget for prediction of earthquakes that has installed in New Delhi. During the period 2009-2011, India and Kazakhstan signed an agreement to begin joint initiatives in science and technology, particularly in the areas of nano- technology, bio-technology and chemical catalysis (Chand 105-06).

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid.

Space Technology: India-Kazakhstan Cooperation

India's cutting-edge capabilities in space technology is acknowledged the world over. Such expertise can be useful to Kazakhstan,⁵⁹⁰ Where the well-known Baikonur Cosmodrome and its associated centre for space research are located.⁵⁹¹ In its partnership with Russia, Kazakhstan generally plays a passive role.⁵⁹² India's advancement in space technology is well evidenced in the manufacture and launch of a number of satellites, domestic and foreign, meant for communications and remote sensing. The satellites have proven to be successful in their missions. Since both countries have a commonality of requirements in this field, they have decided to collaborate in the furtherance of space research.

Kazakhstan and India have agreed to set up a joint working group to specify the different proposals in detail for bilateral cooperation.⁵⁹³ Accordingly the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and the Kazakh space agency, KazCosmos, have been collaborating in the field of outer space. The areas of collaboration include space communications systems, launch vehicles and systems, space engineering component, remote probing systems and small satellites.⁵⁹⁴ In 2009 among a slew of vital agreements signed by the

⁵⁹⁰ International cooperation. Department of Space, Indian Space Research Organisation, Government of India, www.isro.gov.in/international-cooperation. Accessed on 2 December 2019.

⁵⁹¹ Chukalova, Ramilya, et al. "The role of Baikonur in the context of military-political cooperation between Kazakhstan and Russia." *University of Zulia, Opción*, vol. 34, no. 85, 18 Oct. 2018, pp. 551-81, www.redalyc.org/jatsRepo/310/31055914025. Accessed on 2 December 2019.

⁵⁹² Chandra, Amiya, Op. cit. pp. 107-108.

⁵⁹³ India and Kazakhstan Relations. Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, February 2012, www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Kazakhstan-February-2012.pdf, Accessed on 4 October 2019

⁵⁹⁴ Goh, Deyana. "Kazakhstan and India establish Joint Working Group to cooperate on space systems." *SpaceTech Asia*, 8 June 2017, www.spacetechnasia.com/kazakhstan-india-establish-joint-working-group-to-cooperate-on-space-systems, Accessed on 4 October 2019.

two countries, ISRO and KazCosmos executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Subsequently India's PSLV-C37 rocket launched a record 104 satellites that included Kazakhstan's nano-satellite, Al-Farabi-1.⁵⁹⁵

In 2011, the two countries signed a further specific agreement for co-operation in space research.⁵⁹⁶ Subsequently, ISRO and Kazakh National Space Agency signed a MoU to explore the possibilities of deeper cooperation in space.⁵⁹⁷ The Kazakh space program is expected to achieve significant progress on the basis of this agreement that envisages transfer of space technology from India. The collaboration extends to the manufacture of satellites and the application of remote sensing technology to enhancing general standards of living by way of daily-medicine, geo-prospecting, etc. The two countries will be in a position to use these strengths to their mutual benefit.⁵⁹⁸

India-Kazakhstan Economic Relations: Potential Prospects

In the matter of bilateral relations, the trade between India and Kazakhstan is small in volume but is observed to be gradually growing over time. Further, there is huge potential for accelerated growth and diversification. On the general bilateral canvas, there is significant opportunity for expansion of mutual cooperation.

The republic of Kazakhstan has designed its foreign policies so as to derive optimal benefits from abroad by way of economic and technological assistance. Given this

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁷ Siddiqui, Huma. "Military and Space Cooperation is the main focus of India-Kazakh relations." Financial Express, 2 Jan. 2019, www.financialexpress.com/defence/military-and-space-cooperation-is-the-main-focus-of-india-kazakh-relations/1431693.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid.

objective it views India as an important foreign power. India is at once aware that its involvement in the region and desired goals pre-suppose significant investments. Accordingly, India's private sector will have to adapt itself to the requirements of Kazakhstan's market. While Indian entrepreneurs have taken a few initiatives with regard to Kazakhstan, there is scope for greater involvement in a larger number of business enterprises in Kazakhstan. It is for the business comprise to analyse the costs, risks and benefits of operating in Kazakhstan. The ruling dispensations in India and Kazakhstan, on their part, are tasked with creating an enabling environment for business operations. Both the countries have embarked on a continuing drive towards building durable and mutually profitable economic linkages.

As observed, there are four principal factors that enable the two countries to mutually cooperate by way of economic engagements. Firstly, they have done away with the imposition of import duties in bilateral trade. Secondly, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan are collectively proposing to establish a Central Asian Bank of Development and Cooperation (CABDC) with the objective of creating a specific economic zone for these states. Thirdly, a rising demand is expected for the deployment of skilled workers that will present Indians with the opportunity to seek the employments there. Fourthly, there is an existing market in Kazakhstan for India's consumer products. All the four factors are significant in the light of the proactive and visionary approach of the respective political leaders and Kazakhstan's keenness to forge meaningful economic ties with India. Presently, there is immense potential for economic cooperation between the two countries in the fields of Banking interactions, information technology, hill farming and food processing. Kazakhstan recognizes India's strength in industrial and technological development. All the Central Asian countries have launched economic reform initiatives

to facilitate business growth in their respective territories. India is favourably poised to share its rich experience in planning and marketing that can assist Kazakhstan to achieve its economic objectives. Again, Kazakhstan's ongoing economic reforms can prove to be a learning experience for India, in diverse sectors, particularly infrastructure. Indian technology for the development of infrastructure in Kazakhstan could be deemed to be more appropriate than Western technology. It is to be noted that Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan to provide Kazakhstan with suitable technology, sufficient volumes of consumer goods, as well as training expertise in banking, insurance and business management that are necessary for Kazakhstan to meet its developmental requirements. The joint activities that Kazakhstan and India may engage in are in the areas of oil and gas, transportation, information technology, construction, pipeline projects, light engineering goods, education, service sector, and space industries. India also possesses expertise in management and industrial projects and is in a position to collaborate with Kazakhstan in these fields. The hotel construction projects in Kazakhstan offer another possibility for collaboration. These lines for activities have opened up in Kazakhstan as a result of the economic liberalisation of the Soviet Union.⁵⁹⁹ The agricultural sector and commercial farming are other areas where the two countries may profitably cooperate.

In this perspective, collaboration in the investment market and the setting up of joint ventures in the core energy sector can potentially be greatly advantageous to both countries. Given Kazakhstan's natural resources, and India's abundance of affordable and technically competent work force, the entrepreneurs in India are keen to initiate joint

⁵⁹⁹ Attri, Ashok K. Op. cit. p. 125.

ventures in Kazakhstan. India was familiar with Central Asia as a market even before it gained independence from the Soviet Union.

However, the freight costs of sending goods by air deter India from effectively competing with other major players in terms of trade volume and pricing. Accordingly, it is relatively more feasible to trade in light consumer goods such as cosmetics and pharmaceuticals. At the same time, Kazakhstan has the opportunity to achieve economic growth by taking advantage of the ready market in India for Kazakh exports. The economies of both the countries can benefit by means of expanding trade that is logistically and commercially viable.

Therefore, joint collaboration in the exploitation of natural resources in Kazakhstan can lead to an expansion of trade. The successes achieved by both countries in expanding bilateral cooperation in the past decade provide evidence of the growing relations between India and Kazakhstan. However, the exchanges have been accompanied by various hindrances. It is necessary to take the stock of the important constraints that are in the way of India developing its relations with Kazakhstan. Successes in accomplishing objectives require a pre- determination of the challenges and limitations to be encountered and overcome. India and Kazakhstan can be in a position to take their relationship forward after examining the nature of the difficulties and the ways to overcome them.

Economic Relations between India and Kazakhstan, Transit Routes and Transportation Facilitation

The competitiveness of trade between India and Kazakhstan is adversely affected by the indirect route that requires transport by sea, transit through Iran's port of Chabahar, Bandar Abbas and overland conveyance to Central Asia via Turkmenistan.⁶⁰⁰ Adoption of this circuitous route is necessitated by the fraught-relationship between India and Pakistan. However, India and Kazakhstan will need to work out alternative trading options. An examination of the extant circumstances and the possibilities of adopting measures conducive to mutual trade between India and Kazakhstan is presented in the subsequent sections.

In addition to the measures already adopted, India and the Central Asian Republics are in the process of exploring the alternatives for establishing multilateral linkages. A number of countries are engaged in ongoing discussions with regard to exploring the oil and gas reserves in Central Asia. To India's advantage, both Iran and Afghanistan have agreed to extend their cooperation in this regard.⁶⁰¹ In 2000, India, Iran and Russia signed an agreement for a North- South Transport Corridor.⁶⁰² This followed another tripartite transport agreement in 1995 finalized among India, Iran and Turkmenistan.⁶⁰³

⁶⁰⁰ Passi, Ritika. "Money matters: Discussing the economics of the INSTC." Observer Research Foundation, 20 April 2017, www.orfonline.org/research/money-matters-discussing-the-economics-of-the-instc. Accessed on 22 December 2020.

⁶⁰¹ Berlin Donald L. "India-Iran Relations: A Deepening Entente". *Asia-Pacific Centre for Security Studies*, October 2004, pp. 1-7. www.apcss.org/Publications/SAS/AsiaBilateralRelations/India-IranRelationsBerlin.pdf. Accessed on 22 December 2020.

⁶⁰² Alexander Karavayev, and Mandana Tishehyar. "International North-South Transport Corridor and Transregional Integration Scenarios". *Valdai Discussion Club*, Report, 2019, www.valdaiclub.com/files/24967/. Accessed on 10 December, 2020

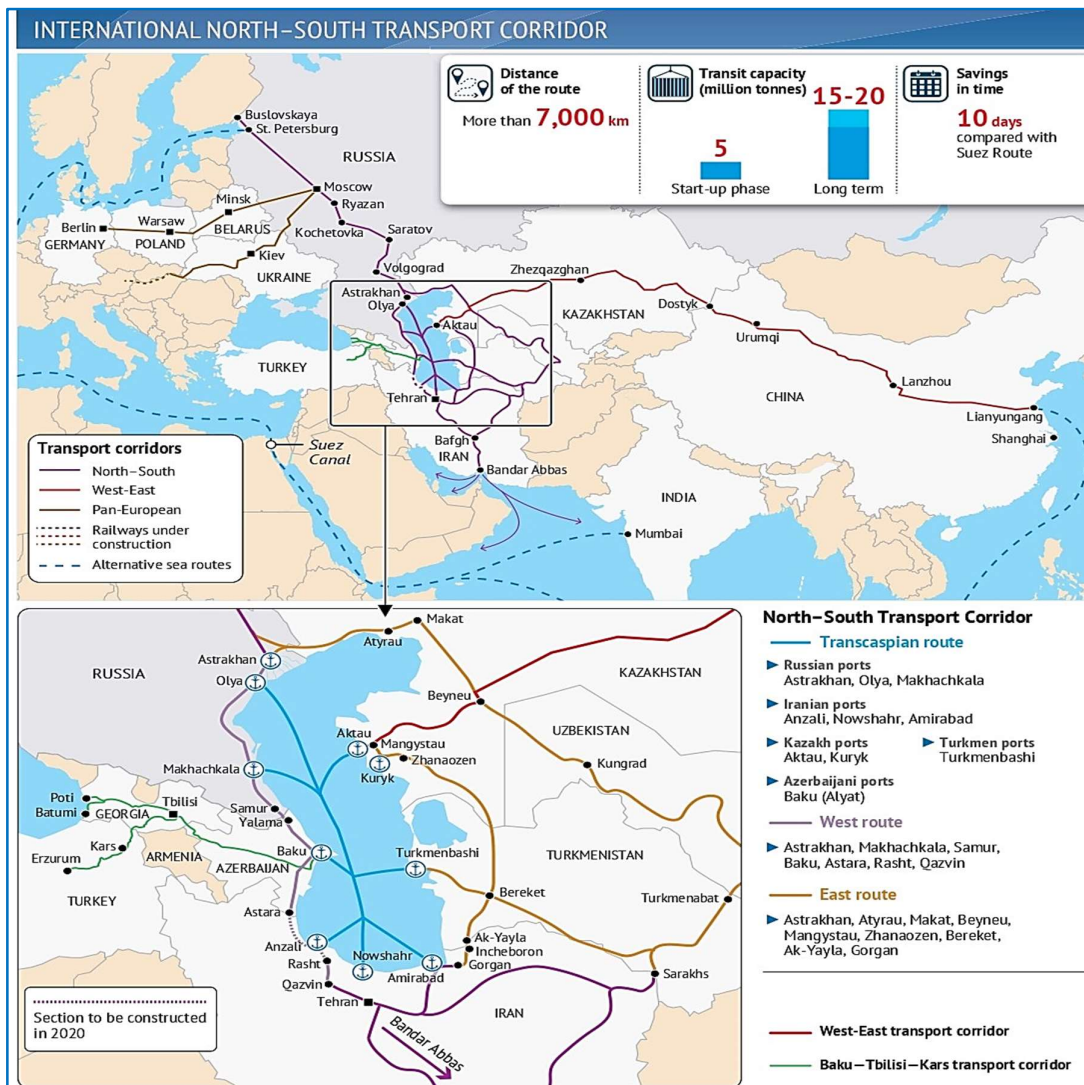
⁶⁰³ Attri, Ashok K. Op. cit. p. 123.

The International North- South Transport Corridor (INSTC) consists of a sea route from Mumbai to the Iranian port of Chabahar, and overland conveyance to Iran's Caspian Port of Bandar-e-Anzali, then across the Caspian Sea to Astrakhan in Russia, and finally by rail across Russia to Europe.⁶⁰⁴ This route will allow for Finland to connect with Iran, via Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan then proceeding to India by the Sea route from Iran's Chabahar Port. The objective of this project is to provide a link between the Indian Ocean and Northern Europe. It envisages multiple modes of transport over land and sea crossing the Persian Gulf, the Caspian Sea, Iran, Central Asia, the Caucasus and Russia (map-1).⁶⁰⁵ The countries that have subscribed to the INSTC project include Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Oman, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkey and Ukraine. An overview of the INSTC project involving successive transport routes and the facilitation provided to India and Central Asia are presented in the following paragraphs.

⁶⁰⁴ Roy, Meena S. "International North-South Transport Corridor: Re-energising India's Gateway to Eurasia". *Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses*. 18 August, 2015, www.idsa.in/issuebrief/InternationalNorthSouthTransportCorridor_msroy_180815. Accessed on 12 October 2019.

⁶⁰⁵ "India and Russia to Connect Supply Chains Via Iran's INSTC". *Silk Road Briefing*, 24 Mar. 2020, www.silkroadbriefing.com/news/2020/03/24/india-russia-connect-supply-chains-via-irans-instc. Accessed on 2 June 2020; and also see Iyer, Roshan. "Filling In the North-South Trade Corridor's Missing Links." *The Diplomat*, 28 February, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/02/filling-in-the-north-south-trade-corridors-missing-links/>. Accessed on 2 June 2020

Map 1: India and International North-South Transport Corridor and Transregional Integration Scenarios⁶⁰⁶



In 2003, India, Iran and Afghanistan entered a trilateral agreement that was a vital step for establishing the INSTC. This agreement provided for Iran to construct a new transportation link between its South-Eastern region of Melak to Zaranj in Afghanistan. Subsequently,

⁶⁰⁶ Source: Alexander Karavayev, and Mandana Tishehyar. Op. cit.

India would lay a 210 km road proceeding from Zaranj to Delaram in Afghanistan (map-2).⁶⁰⁷ In support of this project, Iran, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan have signed a separate agreement for constructing the transport corridor.⁶⁰⁸ The route envisaged in this agreement will begin at Uzbekistan's province of Termez and will head to Iran through Afghanistan's Mazar-e-Sharif and Herat to terminate at Iran's ports namely, Bandar Abbas and Chabahar.⁶⁰⁹ With a view to expanding trade in Iran's territory, India and Iran have entered into a distinctive protocol for linking Chabahar Port with Iran's national railway network.

Map 2: Transit Route from Chabahar to Afghanistan⁶¹⁰



⁶⁰⁷ Kaushiki, Nishtha. Op. cit. p. 90.

⁶⁰⁸ "Iran-Afghanistan-Uzbekistan transit corridor launched." *Iran Chamber of Commers, Newsroom*, 12 August 2020, www.en.otaghiranonline.ir/news/22516; also see "India, Iran and Uzbekistan to hold talks on Monday on joint use Chabahar port." *The Hindu*, 12 Dec. 2020. P. 6.

⁶⁰⁹ Mann, Poonam. "International North-South Transport Corridor: A Game Changer for India?" *Defence and Diplomacy Journal*, vol. 8, no. 1, October-December, 2018, pp. 19-20.

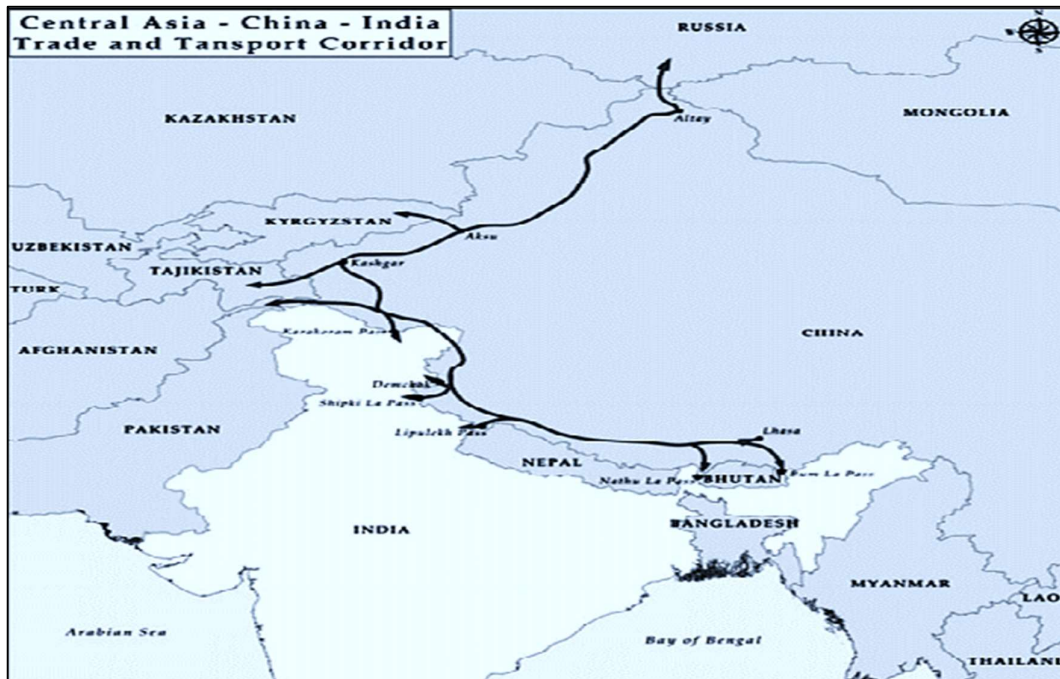
⁶¹⁰ Source: Contessi, Nicola P. "The Great Railway Game Eurasian Corridors on the North-South Axis". *Reconnecting Asia*, 2 March 2020, www.reconnectingasia.csis.org/analysis/entries/great-railway-game/. Accessed on September 2020.

India is already engaged in constructing the Chabahar Port project in Southern Iran, which will open up a new access route to Central Asia and enable India to conveniently coordinate with the resources-rich Republics in the region. In term, Iran has agreed to build the necessary transport infrastructure from Chabahar to Afghanistan and northern Iran. This route, as part of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), is more convenient and practicable than the alternative route through Bandar Abbas which is at a greater distance from India. Significantly, with active coordination among India, Afghanistan and Tajikistan, this route is envisaged to pass through Chabahar, Kabul and Kunduz Dadakhshan and enter Tajikistan.

There is another conceivable route option that Scholars discuss but is not feasible in the contemporary geopolitical situation. This theoretical concept is based on China agreeing to permit India to use a road to Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia through China's Xinjiang province. This option would require the construction of a road from Ladakh in India that would join the Tibet-Xinjiang Road (map-3). Within India Ladakh is already connected by road with Himachal Pradesh.⁶¹¹ From this opposite direction, this hypothetical energy highway, with a length of 890 miles, would link Russia to Kashmir in India through Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Xinjiang in China, and Tibet. It will finally cross the India-China Line of Control in Ladakh before proceeding to Kashmir.

⁶¹¹ Attri, Ashok K. Op. cit. p. 124.

Map 3: Central Asia-China-India Transit Route⁶¹²



There is already a usable transport infrastructure consisting of roads and railways that run in a North-South directions linking Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Further, the road network in Western China stretches up to India. Historically, the route from India crossed the Himalayan passes and Xinjiang steppes and entered Central Asia before proceeding to Eurasia.⁶¹³ However, in the current scenario, access to Eurasia via this ancient route would require China's cooperation. In its parts, China has already established necessary transit and transport infrastructure to facilitate trade with Central Asian countries. In the process, China has made its old rail link with Kazakhstan operational once again.⁶¹⁴ Moreover, under China's latest Silk Road Economic Belt Project, a number of initiatives are being undertaken by way of Railway Roads and pipelines that link its

⁶¹² Source: Stobdan, Phunchok. "Central Asia India's Northern Exposure". *Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses*, no. 44, May 2015, p. 19, www.idsa.in/system/files/monograph/monograph44.pdf. Accessed on 2 July 2019.

⁶¹³ Ibid. pp. 17-19.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid.

Xinjiang province with Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Iran. India, on its part, this developing the INSTC that will help to break the obscene of overland connectivity with the Eurasian region. The INSTC effectively bypasses the hostile nation of Pakistan.

According to diplomat Phunchok Stobdan, competition between India and China in Central Asia is already been manifest.⁶¹⁵ The major hindrance to economic cooperation between India and Kazakhstan is the absence of a convenient route for transit and transportation. This is all the more unfortunate as there is immense potential for mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries. Kazakhstan being geographically landlocked, direct access is permanently inexistent. It is unable to export its products without transiting another country's territory, nor does it have direct access to navigable international sea-routes. Kazakhstan must necessarily trade its natural resources by using trade and transportation routes across its neighbouring countries.⁶¹⁶ As it happens, India does not share a common border with any of the Central Asian Republics. In the circumstances an overland connection is presently viable through Iran and Afghanistan. Optional routes through Pakistan and China are ruled out owing to contemporary adverse geopolitics. In order for Kazakhstan and India to expand their mutual economic ties, it is essential to setup the necessary business infrastructure for example banks of both countries must forge financial connectivity in order to handle international transactions. So far, there is an absence of equity participation for Joint ventures in Banking. Indian banks have not yet launched major initiatives in Kazakhstan.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid.

⁶¹⁶ Attri, Ashok K. Op. cit. p. 126.

Concluding Observation

Global geopolitical changes affect the supply of energy and add to India's concerns about meeting its own energy needs. Accordingly, it is incumbent on India to diversify the sources of energy supply and thereby minimise the risk of a shortfall. This explains India's outreach towards Central Asia in general, and Kazakhstan in particular, with regard to energy engagements. Energy cooperation is a part of the larger economic and trade engagements. India's foreign policies are so designed as to support the nation's emergence as a significant regional and global power.

India's approach towards the Central Asian Republics takes into account the geopolitical rivalries existent in the region. In its dealing with Kazakhstan, India is yet to realise the full potential of that nation with regard to being an ideal alternative for securing India's energy future. Accordingly, there is great scope for expanding the energy-economic engagements with Kazakhstan. Diplomat P. Stobdan draws attention to the constraints in the way of India's overland access to Central Asia, as also to the competition pose by China and Russia for availing the energy resources in Central Asia particularly Kazakhstan.⁶¹⁷ Concomitant with its search for energy resources, India seeks to expand its general economic and trade ties with the greater Eurasian Region, that is necessarily dependent on interconnectivity and access through Central Asia. Besides, the energy cooperation, India seeks to broaden its engagements with Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in keeping with India's overall foreign policy approach to Central Asia.

⁶¹⁷ Stobdan, Phunchok. "The Modi factor in Central Asia." *Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses*. 24 June. 2015, www.idsa.in/issuebrief/TheModifactorinCentralAsia_pstobdan_240714. Accessed on 2 March 2019.

The chapter attempts to identify the factors that impel India to trade with Kazakhstan, the prevailing economic compulsions, the facilitating circumstances, and the motivations that drive the two nations. India's expanding trade connections with the extended neighbourhood particularly Kazakhstan, is accompanied by a partial diversion of its trade flowing to the West. At the same time, Kazakhstan proposes to diversify its economy beyond energy exports and solidify its larger economic relations with India. India stands to benefit from expanded trade engagements with Kazakhstan. To that end, India's prominent multinational companies are exploring the trade opportunities in Central Asia, particularly in Kazakhstan. The trade between India and Kazakhstan can be facilitated by the route through Iran and Afghanistan and can potentially promote stability and prosperity in the region.

However, so far, the bilateral trade between India and Kazakhstan is well below the intended level. The situation is expected to improve as India succeeds in establishing a convenient approach route to Kazakhstan, along with the creation of new trade routes. India does not view Kazakhstan and the Central Asian Region as the final target for economic engagements. Rather, it views Central Asia as a bridge for access to the greater Eurasian region. Such a reality can be made possible by the development of convenient connectivity and facilitating infrastructure. With that end in view, India has extended its support to the INSTC project and the infrastructure for other transport avenues. India's involvement in the Chabahar port project in Iran is aimed at achieving improved access to the Central Asian Republics, and also creating convenient overland connectivity to Russia and Europe. It is reasonably expected that such regional Economic integration will bring greater stability both in South Asia and Central Asia.

India and Kazakhstan propose to build upon these historical cultural links, rich heritage, and the existing wealth of natural and human resources. These favourable factors prompt the two nations to shake their economic policy so that a mutually beneficial partnership can be formed. There is great scope for cooperation in profiting from economies of scale, suitable tariff structure and custom unions, while trade volumes continue to improve. India's strategy is to facilitate the participation of the public sector, private sector, construction companies, and manufactures as suppliers of goods so that all can work in tandem to clinch deals. Over the last two decades, the economic relations between Kazakhstan and India have evinced steady growth along specific path. However, there is the need to broaden the scope and extend of the commercial relationship with a view to tapping into the vast potential that exists.

Chapter-4

Energy Resources of Kazakhstan and Pipeline Politics: India's Regional Strategy for Cooperation and Competition

Introduction

India recognises the strategic importance of the Central Asian Republics in its extended neighbourhood. India's policy makers are therefore seeking a constructive national role in the geopolitical affairs of the region. To that end India is extending financial aid,⁶¹⁸ development assistance, support to civil society and political partnership to the burgeoning Republics.⁶¹⁹ Lately, India's foreign policy has envisaged a proactive role in the promotion and support of democracy in the world.⁶²⁰ In the past, India's participation in international transactions, in the promotion of its national interests, has focussed on security, trade, and

⁶¹⁸ Wani, Ajaz. "India and China in Central Asia: Understanding the new rivalry in the heart of Eurasia," *Observer Research Foundation*. 17 February, 2020, www.orfonline.org/research/india-and-china-in-central-asia-understanding-the-new-rivalry-in-the-heart-of-eurasia-61473. Accessed on 2 December 2020.

⁶¹⁹ Menon, Rhea and Sharanya Rajiv. "Realizing India's Strategic Interests in Central Asia." *Carnegie India*, 1 December. 2019, www.carnegieindia.org/2019/12/01/realizing-india-s-strategic-interests-in-central-asia-pub-80576. Accessed on 2 December 2020.

⁶²⁰ Mazumdar, Arijit and Erin Statz. "Democracy Promotion in India's Foreign Policy: Emerging Trends and Developments." *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, vol. 42, no. 2, 3 Apr. 2015, pp. 77-98, doi:10.1080/00927678.2015.1034611.

energy issues.⁶²¹ In the pursued of its Look North Policy, India accords priority to Kazakhstan in the light its immense energy resources.

After the dissolution of Soviet Union and the formation of the five new Republics in Central Asia there was international focus on the massive energy resources in the region. Central Asia enjoys the geostrategic advantage of being located between Europe and Asia. As expected, a new Great Game soon evolved in Kazakhstan with the regional and world powers competing for the massive energy resources which potentially lead to profits, hegemony, influence and sustenance of power.

Among the Central Asian Republics, Kazakhstan is the largest. It also possesses massive reserve of oil, natural gas and Uranium, Kazakhstan's geopolitical location includes long border with Russia and China, as also three of the other Central Asian Republics, and with the Caspian Sea. In the circumstances, Kazakhstan has become the half for international relations with Central Asia. These factors, couple with its vast energy resources, give this nation a status of a regional power. There was a time in the past when Soviet Russia and Britain were engaged in a power rivalry in the region. This century long rivalry was termed the Great Game by the fanned novelist Rudyard Kipling.⁶²² In contemporary time another Great Game is being played out in Central Asia that features a number of players that have similar aims but dissimilar competing strategies. The significant countries in the tray are USA, Russia, China, India, Turkey and Iran. All these nations are scrambling for the benefits represented by Kazakhstan's huge energy reserve, particularly uranium. They are all vying for control over oil, gas and uranium for their political and economic gains. The

⁶²¹ Ibid.

⁶²² Edwards, Matthew. "The New Great Game and the new great gamers: disciples of Kipling and Mackinder". *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 22, no. 1, March 2003, pp. 83-102, DOI: 10.1080/0263493032000108644.

second decade of the 21st century has witnessed a resurgence of Great Game in Kazakhstan but with a number of players.

The chapter elaborate on how the Central Asian region, and Kazakhstan in particular, have become a significant part of the security strategy of India, Russia, and other regional nations such as Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and China. Since Russia and China have borders in Central Asia, these two nations greatly influence the regional stability, the development of energy resources, and Central Asia's strategic interactions with other global powers both within and outside the region. Importantly, this oil rich region is vulnerable to drug trafficking, and Islamic extremism. As a result, the different dynamics in the region have an effect on politics in far parts of the world.

Compare to the Great Game that was played out in the 19th century, the contemporary Great Game in Central Asia is a complex web of regional geopolitics. In the past, Britain and Soviet Russia at vied for direct and indirect territorial control. In the present time, many actors, regional and global, are competing for influence over the own needs.⁶²³ In the early 1990s, Turkey and Iran had vigorously competed for cultural influence in Central Asia.⁶²⁴ Lately, again, India and Pakistan, driven by their own volatile relations, have competed for strategic presence in Central Asia. In turn, the countries of Central Asia have sought to strategies their international relations so that they may deal with the major competing powers without diluting their cherished independence. A hundred years ago the imperial powers Soviet Russia and Britain, had often dictated the outcomes in Central Asia. Today, though Russia, China and United States significantly influence the region's

⁶²³ Menon, Rajan. "The New Great Game in Central Asia." *Survival*, vol. 45, no. 2, 1 June 2003, pp. 187-204, doi:10.1080/00396338.2003.9688581. Accessed on 12 October 2019.

⁶²⁴ Efeğil, Ertan and Leonard A Stone "Iran and Turkey in Central Asia: Opportunities for Rapprochement in The Post-Cold War". *Journal of Third World Studies*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2003, pp. 55-77.

security environment they are unable to breach the essential sovereignty of the Central Asian Republics.

At the present time, the major powers that are competing for influence in Central Asia have adopted a strategy of cooperation in their dealings with the Central Asian Republics. This strategy currently defines the New Great Game. India's strategy for strengthening its presence in the region includes active cooperation in order to curb terrorism, reduce drug trafficking and protect territorial integrity. After becoming independent from the Soviet Union, in the post-Cold War era, the Central Asian Republics had initially been economically weak and politically vulnerable. However, since then, they have preferred to adopt a strategy of cooperative diplomacy in place of the rivalries that had existed in the past.

In the past, the great imperial powers, Soviet Russia and Britain, had played a zero-sum game in the Central Asian region, in an environment of absolute geopolitical competition.⁶²⁵ In contrast, the New Great Game in the contemporary geopolitical environment envisages a situation where all the major players have devised their own geopolitical paradigms in dealing with the Central Asian region. The New Great Game is accordingly a mix of competition, influence, supremacy, domination and profits.⁶²⁶ The primary aim of the competing powers is doubtless to acquire the oil, gas and uranium resources, available in Central Asia, as these energy sources are closely connected with their own national interests. The competition for these energy resources cannot be delinked

⁶²⁵ Collins, Neil and Kristina Bekenova. "Fuelling the New Great Game: Kazakhstan, energy policy and the EU." *Asia Europe Journal*, vol. 15, no. 1, 14 April 2016, pp. 1-20, doi:10.1007/s10308-016-0451-4.

⁶²⁶ Edwards, Matthew. Op. cit.

from the religious, economic cultural and military rivalries that involve the United States, China, Turkey, India, Iran, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

Scholar David Scott believe that the New Great Game is an extension of the old power policies that existed in Asia in general.⁶²⁷ On the other hand, some scholars refer particularly to Russian's efforts to regain political influence over the former Soviet States.⁶²⁸ Within the boundaries of the New Great Game, there is a particular rivalry that has been describe as 'Great Power Chauvinism'. These refers to the competition between Russia and other major powers, especially the United States, where each nation is vying for greater influence in Central Asia (Edward 85).

The New Great Game is not merely a race to ensure economic security and hegemony. As a follow-up to their own traditional rivalries, India and Pakistan have posited cultural influence as a part of their strategy to gain a superior presence in central Asia while participating in the New Great Game (Edward 87).⁶²⁹ Apart from the economic and cultural rivalries that feature in the New Great Game, the question of security gained prominence in the woke of the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001 and the resultant US-led military action in Afghanistan. The priorities in the structure of the New Great Game underwent an inevitable shift (Edmonds 87). Western troops were actively engaged in Afghanistan and the US obtained approval to set up military bases in Central Asia. Inevitably, these changes had on effect on the regional political and power

⁶²⁷ Scott, David. "The Great Power 'Great Game' between India and China: The Logic of Geography". *Geopolitics*, vol. 13, no. 1, 5 May. 2008, pp. 1-26, doi:10.1080/14650040701783243.

⁶²⁸ Ibrahimov, Rafael. *Russia, Iran, and Turkey in Central Asia: A Nexus of Minor Tensions*. Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, 17 May. 2017, www.institute.global/policy/russia-iran-and-turkey-central-asia-nexus-minor-tensions. Accessed on 4 July August 2019.

⁶²⁹ Dar, Firdous A and Tabasum Firdous. "India's Response to New Great Game in Central Asia." *Journal of South Asian Studies*, vol. 02, no. 01, 2014. pp. 33-44, www.esciencepress.net/journals/index.php/JSAS/article/view/260/278. Accessed on 23 June 2019.

dynamics. Scholars and journalists raised the issue of the perceived dilution of Russian hegemony and Chinese influence in Central Asia. According to other observers the aim of the US in its dealings in Central Asia are not by way of military objectives.

Kazakhstan: Global Powers and the New Great Game

Standpoint of United States

The heart land of Eurasia is given its due priority in the US foreign policy projections. After suffering the terror attacks on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre on September 11, 2001, the USA formed a coalition of nations that would jointly wage War on terror in general and the Al-Qaeda terrorist forces in particular in Afghanistan. This campaign against terror drew USA to the region as a major player. The objective of the Operation Enduring Freedom was to confined terrorism within this region.⁶³⁰ In the process of conducting military operations in Afghanistan against terror groups, the US established a significant presence in central Asia. The nations in the region, intern, found if convenient to establish security relations with the west in order to better deal with their own domestic security threats. These nations accepted the US military presence in the region as supportive of their own geostrategic compulsion.

In the bargain, the US had the unstated purpose of gaining influence over the region's energy resources. From the American point of view Central Asia assumed importance both politically and economically. In general, the USA had the pious objective of rendering the region politically stable after putting down Islamic Fundamentalism. While maintaining a

⁶³⁰ Lambeth, Benjamin S. *Air Power Against Terror: America's Conduct of Operation Enduring Freedom*. RAND National Defence Research Institute, 2005, p. 16. eBook Collection (www.rand.org.)

significant military presence in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, and in order to fulfil its objectives, the US effectively promoted democracy as the favoured political structure in the region. As a means to the end, the US promoted the functioning of free markets, as well as the establishment of trade relations between the East and the West and between Central Asia and South Asia. Among the principal objectives of the USA in Kazakhstan was the elimination of nuclear and biological war weaponry inherited from the erstwhile Soviet Union. At the present time American energy companies have made investments in the furtherance of oil and natural gas exploration and extraction processes in Kazakhstan. Since its inception as an independent Republic, Kazakhstan has maintained cordial and mutually beneficial relations with USA.

According to scholar Robert Legvold, the American foreign policy toward central Asia is aims at curbing Russia's influence in the region, as also at reining in China's strategic plans through exertion of pressure on Beijing.⁶³¹ In cause of time, the US and NATO become more deeply involved in the politics of the region than originally envisaged. In the wake of the 9/11 terror attacks in the US, a coalition of western nations came into being for the campaign against terror. At the initial stage the American military presence was supported by the Central Asian States. Even Russia extended its cooperation to the US. However, often American involvement in the Iraq war in 2003, Russia withdraws its cooperation. Further, in 2005, the members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) supported a resolution urging the withdrawal of US forces from Central Asia. The SCO then emerged as an organisation that had a distinct would view of its own. Scholar Stephen Blank, among others took a dim view of all American interests in Central Asia

⁶³¹ Legvold, Robert. *Thinking Strategically: The Major Powers, Kazakhstan and the Central Asian Nexus*, MIT Press, 2003, p. 36.

and recommended their cessation.⁶³² However, the US remained intent on establishing a member of export avenues for Central Asia's oil and gas. To that end the US was committed to facilitating transport and transit infrastructure networks through Central Asia and the Caucasus to enable trade between the East and the West.

Standpoint of Russia

During the 19th century, the Great Game in Central Asia had two contestants, namely Britain and Russia, who vied for dominance, control and security in the region. Since then, and in the present period, a number of other competing powers have joined the Great Game in some territory. However, since the Central Asian States were once a part of the Soviet Union, Russia is deemed to have a natural stake in the region. Indeed, Russia considers Central Asia her Near Abroad, where it may expect to exert influence.⁶³³ As one of the most active players in the region Russia considers its role as predominant and the most legitimate relative to the status of the other concerned powers.

In Kazakhstan, Russia plays the most dominant role in the exploration and exploitation of the energy reserve. Russia imports the oil by way of the Atyrau-Samara pipeline, that has the capacity to convey 20 million tonnes of crude annually.⁶³⁴ According to scholar Marlene Laruelle, Russia has two principal objectives in central Asia. Firstly, it intends to control the vast energy resources of the region, comprising oil, natural gas, uranium etc.

⁶³² Blank, Stephen "AWOL: US Policy in Central Asia," *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analyst*, October 30, 2013, www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/12848-awol-us-policy-in-central-asia.html. Accessed on 12 October 2019.

⁶³³ Rumer, Boris. "The Search for Stability in Central Asia," *Central Asia: A Gathering Storm?* Edited by Boris Rumer, Routledge, 2002, pp. 3-68.

⁶³⁴ The World Bank. "Caucasus Transport Corridor for Oil and Oil Products". December 2008, www.documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/628261468017451524/pdf/686930ESW0P1030ort0Corridor0Dec008.pdf, Accessed on 22 July 2020.

Secondly, as a corollary to the first objective, Russia deems it necessary to maintain regional security in Central Asia.⁶³⁵ In pursuance of these objectives, Russia has rapidly expanded its presence in Central Asia's energy sector. At the beginning, Russia's involvement was limited to Kazakhstan. However, in time Russia took major steps to wider its influence in the other Central Asian States. In addition to being involved in numerous Kazak energy projects, Russia plays an important role in western Kazakhstan's Karachaganak region, which is one of the richest in all deposits. Russia figures prominently in Kazakhstan's foreign policy, largely owing to historical, geographical and economic relations. Significantly, Russia's close engagements are also spurred by a large Russian ethnic populace resident in Kazakhstan. In 2002, Russia's activities achieved success when the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) became fully operational. This pipeline conveys oil directly from the Tengiz field to Novorossiysk on the coast of the Russian Black Sea. Additionally, most of Kazakhstan's natural gas reserve of 65 trillion cubic feet is located in the area extended from Russia's Orenberg region.

So far, Kazakhstan has tilted towards Russia owing to the latter's advanced nuclear technologies that have the potential to add value to the production and development of uranium in Kazakhstan. Accordingly, many joint ventures between Russia and Kazakhstan have been initiated for mining of Kazak uranium. Russia is wary of Kazakhstan's nuclear deals with other countries that may in the long run reduce Russia's import of uranium and lessen Kazakhstan's dependence on Russian technology.

⁶³⁵ Laruelle, Marlene. "Russia and Central Asia". *The New Central Asia: The regional Impact of International Actors*, edited by Emilian Kavalski, World Scientific publishers, 2010, p. 281-303.

Standpoint of China

Starting from the mid-1990s China entered the New Great Game for gaining influence over the oil and gas resources in central Asia. The entry of such a significant competition in the ongoing geopolitical dynamics appeared to suit Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. Both these countries, often breaking away from the Soviet Union, have sought to distance themselves from Russia's traditional sphere of influence in their newly independent Republics. China's role rapidly gained importance as it stored borders with three Central Asian States, namely, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Such geographical facilitation encouraged trade in general, and engagements in oil and gas resources in particular. China had already succeeded in achieving a high and steady rate of economic growth. Since the 1990s China boasted of one of the most rapidly growing economies in the world. Consequently, China had the financial clout and entrepreneurial initiative to top into global business opportunities, more so than other competing powers. China's own deposits of oil and gas are insufficient for fuelling its economic growth. In the circumstances, China identified the contiguous states of Central Asia to the North West as potential sources for the supply of energy. If the Central Asian states could achieve geopolitical stability, their vast natural resources had the strategic potential to contribute to China's economic development and prosperity.

The natural fallout of China's rapid economic growth is a marked escalation in its need for energy resources. China has become increasingly aware of its huge energy deficit. Consequently, in China's strategic perspective, the significance of Kazakhstan as a supplier of energy has become very evident. Kazakhstan's location across China's western border is an obvious advantage. According to Chinese projections, its need for oil is

expected to more than double by 2030.⁶³⁶ In the circumstances, Kazakhstan, with its vast energy resources, is China's most convenient option for the supply of oil and gas. The common border that runs for 1700 kilometre has posited China as the second most significant player in Kazakhstan in the post-Soviet era.⁶³⁷ China's involvement in Kazakhstan can therefore be strategically view as stemming from its own growing need for energy and Kazakhstan's convenient geographical location.

Strategic Triangle of Russia, China and US in Central Asia and India's Vision in Kazakhstan

China's motivations in Kazakhstan are essentially concern with energy resources and the intent to dominate the Kazakh energy market. This is manifested in China's acquisition of an oil production company, and an oil refinery in South Kazakhstan, and in the construction of two oil pipelines.⁶³⁸ The oil pipeline that runs from Atasu in Western Kazakhstan to Alashankou in Western China now plays an important role in satisfying China's need for energy.⁶³⁹ This pipeline facilitates the access of Chinese oil companies to the oil-rich Caspian region. Kazakhstan welcomes China's significant influence in its energy markets because it effectively scales down Russia's domination.⁶⁴⁰ In the present

⁶³⁶ Gokarn, Subir, et al. "Energy 2030: Backgrounder". *Brookings Institution India Center*, 2013, www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Energy-2030-Brookings-India-Backgrounder.pdf. Accessed on 22 May 2020.

⁶³⁷ Serikkaliyeva, Azhar, et al. "Chinese Institutional Diplomacy toward Kazakhstan: The SCO and the New Silk Road Initiative." *Insight Turkey*, vol. 20, no. 4, 2018, pp. 129–152. Jstor, www.jstor.org/stable/26542177. Accessed on 19 Mar 2020.

⁶³⁸ Alvarez, Cesar B.M. "China-Kazakhstan Energy Relations Between 1997 and 2012." *Journal of International Affairs*, 1 Jan. 2016, www.jia.sipa.columbia.edu/china-kazakhstan-energy-relations-1997-2012. Accessed on 22 October 2020.

⁶³⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid.

scenario, Kazakhstan and China are jointly cooperating for the strategic development of Kazak uranium reserve for feeding China's needs for uranium fuel.⁶⁴¹

According to scholars, India views China's expanding presents in Central Asia in general, and in Kazakhstan in particular as a potential threat to its own engagements in the region. The situation is another contentious factor in the relations between India and China. India is beset with problems posed by separatist groups and Islamic fundamentalists. With this ongoing war on terror, India views Central Asia as part of its extended security zone. Central Asia has become vulnerable in its security structure following the steady dismantling of Russia's apparatus for overseeing regional security. In the circumstances, India has favourably viewed the establishment of US military presence in Central Asia.⁶⁴² India is majorly competing with China for resources and markets in Central Asia, particularly in energy rich Kazakhstan. In pursuance of its substantive objectives, India has offered military assistance and weapons deals to Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. In a strategic sense, this will help to counter Pakistan support of the Taliban, and stave off Islamist threats in Central Asia. As it happens, the shadow of Islamic extremism hangs over both India and the central Asian Republics. India's competition for political influence in Central Asia, and support of US military presence in the region have aggravated its geopolitical tension with China. While devising its foreign policy, India is conscious of China being a principal contender for strategic influence in the region.

China's military rearmament and expansionist pretensions are of concerns to US, Russia and India. It is also true, while China has lately intensified its acquisition of military might,

⁶⁴¹ Ibid.

⁶⁴² Blank, Stephen. "India's Rising Profile in Central Asia." *Comparative Strategy*, vol. 22, no. 2, 1 Jan. 2003, pp. 139-57, doi:10.1080/01495930390202607.

Russia has assisted in the sharpening of China's military capacity. The Russian defence industry is heavily dependent on its principal customers, namely, India and China. These two countries, having purchased Russian weapons platforms, look to Russia for supply of spare parts and ammunition. In the long term, such weaponry will become useless without the cooperation of the supplier. In contemporary global geopolitics, a strategic triangle may be formed by Russia, China, and Iran for the common purpose of curbing US influence in Central Asia, as also to counter Islamist extremism. Such an alliance will also serve to allay their suspicions regarding one another's economic and military expansionist strategies. Among the three potential partners, China has been moving towards global economic domination on the back of a mighty and intimidating military prowess. Iran, on its part has been attempting to establish a hegemonic presence in West Asia. On the other hand, Russia has been interested in creating a power block against the west, as also in keeping its military Industrial complex flushed with orders.

The relationship between India and Russia is long standing. Russia has consistently assisted India to modernise its military through the sale of cutting-edge weapons.⁶⁴³ The two nations also in joint military exercises from time to time. On the other hand, Russia agreed to build a strategic cooperative relationship with China offer the settlement of their border disputes, and in the backdrop of a hostile stance adopted by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). In the Central Asian region, both the countries were members of the Shanghai Five Grouping, that later evolved into the SCO.

⁶⁴³ Sharma, Ashok. "India to buy 33 Russian fighter aircraft for \$2.43 billion." *Washington Post*, 2 July 2020, www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/india-to-buy-33-russian-fighter-aircraft-for-243-billion/2020/07/02/dbca32a6-bc6e-11ea-97c1-6cf116ffe26c_story.html. Accessed on 12 September 2020.

In the Central Asian region Russia considers US as an adversary in the competition to gain regional influence. On the other hand, the US seeks to deepen its strategic relations with the energy rich Central Asian countries, particularly Kazakhstan, from where it is attempting to convey oil via the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline.⁶⁴⁴ The BTC pipeline is one of the two sources of energy supply from the East to the West that precludes Russian intervention. However, it passes through the highly volatile region South Caucasus.⁶⁴⁵ Beyond their economic involvement in Central Asia, Russia and China are both in an adversarial relationship with the US. Both the countries one advocating a withdrawal of the US from the geopolitical field of Central Asia and termination of US military presence in the region. Further, both Russia and China disapprove the extreme sanctions imposed by US on Iran. On the other hand, Russia and China have a cooperative relationship in Central Asia is coming to be increasingly dominated by the neighbouring regional powers and trans-regional organisations such as the SCO. The influence of West is seen to be gradually declining in Central Asia, while the political and economic engagements of Russia and China have been expanding. The broad parameters of the New Great Game appear to echo the power politics of the traditional Great Game in the region. A new factor that is at play in the contemporary geopolitics in Central Asia is the deepening hostility and rivalry between India and China that have escalated to military stand offs, absence of trust and heightened mutual wariness.

The engagements between India and Kazakhstan are historical, dating back to the linkages facilitated by among other routes, the Great Silk Road that originated in China and passed through Kazakhstan to the. Countries of the West. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union

⁶⁴⁴ Cherian, John. "The politics of pipelines." *Frontline*, 1 July 2005, www.frontline.thehindu.com/world-affairs/article30205162.ece. Accessed on 13 September 2020.

⁶⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

and the end of the Cold War, India was among the first countries to formally accord recognition to the Independent Republic of Kazakhstan. India is also currently supporting Kazakhstan's candidacy for membership of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). In term Kazakhstan has extended its support to India's aspiration for permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). In 1992, during the 47th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), president Nazarbayev first proposed the formation of the conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA).⁶⁴⁶ The CICA is a major Asian initiative for promoting peace, stability, and security, and preventing mistrust among the countries competing for influence in Asia. India is a proactive participant with in the CICA forum in respect of interactions that promote cooperation among different powers in the region.⁶⁴⁷ Kazakhstan is keenly aware of the contentious environment that prevails and the conflicting aspirations of major powers, and is deeply appreciative of India's initiatives in the CICA process of promoting peace and stability.

India's overall and comprehensive foreign policy strategy towards Kazakhstan adopts a multi-faceted approach that cover diverse factors and interests. India views the immediate neighbourhood and extended neighbourhood in the form of widening concentric circles where it is engaged in constructive and mutually beneficial relations with both established and emerging power centres. Central Asia is located in India's extended neighbourhood. On balance, India recognises the strategic potential that exists in the Central Asian region that comprises stable, moderate and economically prosperous states.

⁶⁴⁶ Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA). Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, October 2013, www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Conference_on_Interaction_and_Confidence_Building_Measures_in_Asia.pdf. Accessed on 20 July 2020.

⁶⁴⁷ "Evolution of CICA Process." *Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA)*, Publications, 3 March 2020, www.s-cica.org/news_detail/?newsid=3. Accessed on 21 July 2020.

In late 2020, the second India Central Asia Dialogue was convened to enable the concern countries to explore new avenues for enhance cooperation in different areas of mutual interests.⁶⁴⁸ To the benefit of the Central Asian countries, India extended a line of credit worth US\$ 1 billion to be expended on developmental projects in the areas of connectivity, energy, Information Technology (IT), healthcare, education, agriculture, etc.⁶⁴⁹ In this Dialogue, the subject of improved connectivity that would allow for increased trade and commerce, as also people to people contacts between Indian and Central Asian nations, was taken up in earnest. The attendee states were keen to act on the transit and transport potential that existed in their respective territories for the purpose of establishing an inter-regional logistics network that would promote joint operations for building regional and international transport routes. Discussions were held on ways to improve bilateral economic interactions in areas that included agriculture, pharmaceutical industry, information technology, energy, and small and medium enterprises. This session of the India-Central Asia dialogue proved to be particularly significant as Afghanistan participated in full measure, with due emphasis on the regional security structure. It was unanimously agreed that the resolution of the Afghan conflict and the conduct of the peace process should in principle be Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled.⁶⁵⁰ Finally, all attendees emphasised the need to enhance people to people contacts. Such a measure would encourage social mobility that transcended the issues of geo-economics and geo-mobility.

⁶⁴⁸ *Joint Statement of the 2nd meeting of the India-Central Asia Dialogue*. Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 28 Oct. 2020, [www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/33148/Joint Statement of the 2nd meeting of the IndiaCentral Asia Dialogue](http://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/33148/Joint_Statement_of_the_2nd_meeting_of_the_IndiaCentral_Asia_Dialogue). Accessed on 14 December 2020.

⁶⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

According to Emilian Kavalski, the growing influence of China in Central Asia could potentially have an adverse impact on India's energy engagements and commence in the region.⁶⁵¹ China's involvement in Central Asia is deep and wide in the fields of trade, energy, pipeline construction, and military agreements. China is also utilising the platform provided by the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) for enhancing its engagements. Despite the reality of such Chinese dominance, India is attempting to expand its own presence in the region. Even in Kazakhstan's energy and trade sectors India is facing a stiff challenge from China. In its strategic perspective, India sees no alternative to the expansion of its political, economic, and other engagements in Central Asia. Considering the existing ground realities, Kavalski recommends close cooperation between India and the US in Central Asia for the purpose of counter balancing the growing Chinese presence.

India's Interaction with China and Russia in Kazakhstan

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, powerful external players jockeyed for position and influence in resource rich Kazakhstan. The major powers that joined this New Great Game were USA, Russia, China, India, Turkey and Iran. All of these significant nations are continuing to compete for political and economic control over the energy reserve of Kazakhstan. The global interest in Kazakhstan owes all the more to its geostrategic location in the proximity of the energy-rich Caspian Sea region. Consequent upon the terrorist attacks in USA on September 11, 2001, it was clear to the world at large that access to the oil reserve of the Arabian Gulf might become increasingly

⁶⁵¹ Kavalski, Emilian. *India And Central Asia: The Mythmaking and International Relations of a Rising Power*. Tauris Academic Studies, 2010. pp. 158-165.

complicated.⁶⁵² In this context, the global focus shifted to the rich resources of Kazakhstan and the Caspian Sea region for meeting the international demand for energy. Accordingly, from the beginning of the 21st century, a number of world powers, principally China, Russia and USA began to play increasingly dominant roles in Kazakhstan.

Scholar Niklas Swanstrom mentions that China has chosen to have a modest security engagement in Central Asia.⁶⁵³ China's security concerns in Central Asia are related to the emergence of potential threats to its domestic security arrangements.⁶⁵⁴ China's principal security strategy in Central Asia is to help create stable and friendly nations that are supportive of its own modus operandi for curbing terrorism. To that end, China has extended and enhanced military assistance to all the Central Asian states. On the other hand, viewing how the dynamics of the New Great Game are playing out, China is gradually expanding its military cooperation with the nations of Central Asia, and evincing greater concern with the security strategies in the region.⁶⁵⁵

The region of Central Asia is located across China's Western land border. As such China enjoys the facility of permanent oil pipelines conveying energy from Central Asia directly into its own territory. Accordingly, it does not have to incur the cost of circuitous and indirect transportation. As a beneficial fallout of the arrangement, since the pipelines enter the volatile province of Western China, the economic gains may be used to quell the local political dissent. The construction of the gas pipelines from Central Asia to China started

⁶⁵² Singh, Harmeet. "India in the Regional Competition for Kazakh Energy Resources". *The Journal of Central Asian Studies*, vol. 24, 2017, pp. 87-100, www.ccas.uok.edu.in/Files/93269b6c-7f53-4439-ae9a-3bdf55a4c649/Journal/3ec1ebef-ab23-49b8-8e79-9682167e75b5.pdf. Accessed on 2 November 2020.

⁶⁵³ Swanström, Niklas. "The Security Dimension of the China-Central Asia Relationship: China's Military Engagement with Central Asian Countries". *Institute for Security & Development Policy*, March 18, 2015, www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Swanstrom%20Testimony_3.18.15.pdf. Accessed on 23 July 2020.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid.

in 2007.⁶⁵⁶ Four pipelines were installed that traversed Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan before entering Western China.⁶⁵⁷ At the sometime, China initiated the construction of road and railway connectivity from its Western border into Central Asia. Further, for the economic growth of the contiguous geographical territories, it developed a regional hydroelectric project. In keeping with these constructive enterprises, China extended its assistance to the reconstructions and development of Tajikistan and Afghanistan. In effect, China has attempted to coordinate the Central Asian economics with its own economy. With that end in view, it has encouraged the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) to play a supportive role in the region. In the opinion of scholars Chen and Fazilov, China is shaping up to be the principal foreign player in Central Asia in the years ahead.⁶⁵⁸

India and Russia, true to the old friendship treaty between India and the Soviet Union, have undertaken a number of joint projects in Central Asia, including the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). In contrast India has no direct engagement with China in that region. However, China's activities in Central Asia have an impact on India's geopolitical strategy in Central Asia. In the opinion of Rajan Kumar, while India is unable to match up to China economically and strategically, policy influences in Delhi believe that India should follow the Chinese model to eventually counter-balance China in the region.⁶⁵⁹ Members of the think tank in Delhi are of the opinion that the Central Asian

⁶⁵⁶ Hu, Bin. "Oil and gas cooperation between China and Central Asia in an environment of political and resource competition." *Petroleum Science*, vol. 11, 4 October 2014, pp. 596-605, doi:10.1007/s12182-014-0377-7.

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁸ Chen, Xiangming and Fakhmiddin Fazilov. "Re-centering Central Asia: China's "New Great Game" in the old Eurasian Heartland." *Palgrave Communications*, vol. 4, no. 71, 19 June 2018, pp. 1-12, doi:10.1057/s41599-018-0125-5.

⁶⁵⁹ Kumar, Rajan. "How India can overcome the Chinese challenge in strategically important Central Asian region". *Financial Express*, 21 Jan. 2019, www.financialexpress.com/defence/how-india-can-overcome-the-chinese-challenge-in-strategically-important-central-asian-region/1450556. Accessed on 22 March 2020.

Republics in their term, upheld India's legitimate role in the region, particularly as a counter to potential Chinese hegemony. It is observed that Asian Countries, such as China and India, are gradually expanding their geopolitical involvement in Central Asia.⁶⁶⁰

India has to contend with a number of challengers in pursuit of its foreign policy objectives in Central Asia. Firstly, the high Himalayan Mountain ranges stand as a geographical barrier between India and the regions to the North. Secondly, a hostile Pakistan and a troubled Afghanistan impede India's aspirations to develop an energy-security over land corridor with Central Asia. Thirdly, since China is also seeking to diversify the supply of its energy resources through economic enterprises and aggressive diplomatic overtures in Central Asia, it majorly competes with India for influence in the region. Given the current geopolitical dynamics, China enjoys a distinct advantage over India in the acquisition of new sources of energy, both globally and in Central Asia.⁶⁶¹ Lately, China and Iran have entered into a mutually beneficial agreement that envisages Chinese investments in Iran in multiple sectors in return for a guaranteed supply of Indian oil at discounted prices for a stipulated number of years.⁶⁶² At the present time, in Central Asia, the major powers competing for influence and market shares of energy are China, Russia, United States and India. A number of strategic thinkers and foreign policy strategists are estimating that Central Asia is heading towards a period of markedly amplified competition over its energy resources.⁶⁶³ Accordingly, it is reasonably predicted that the present competitiveness between India and China will be extended to the Central Asian region as well.

⁶⁶⁰ Pradhan, Ramakrushna. *Geopolitics of Energy in Central Asia: India's Position and Policy*. Routledge, 2021, p. 7.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶⁶² Yücesoy, Vahid. "What to Make of the Iran-China Deal - Gulf International Forum." Gulf International Forum, 3 May. 2021, www.gulfif.org/what-to-make-of-the-iran-china-deal/. Accessed on 13 June 2021.

⁶⁶³ Pradhan, Ramakrushna. Op. cit.

In the contemporary global scenario, it is now a convention that foreign companies will bear the costs of exploration at undeveloped oil sites that are under the aegis of state oil companies. In the competition for oil deals in Kazakhstan, India has lagged behind other competing countries. At the same time, India is majorly dependent on imported energy. China to seeks to sustain its rapid economic growth with the requisite supply of energy. In pursuit of its ambitions, China has acquired a number of energy assets in Kazakhstan that are supported by pipelines that convey the production to its north-western border.⁶⁶⁴ China is India's main Asian competitor for global oil reserves, including in Central Asia. India has viewed the Satpayev oil project in Kazakhstan as having huge potential. However, it has taken an inordinately long time for the deal to be finalised. India's Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Mittal Energy Limited were to have a 25 percent stake in this massive project (Pradhan 202). Kazakhstan's KazMunaiGas would hold the remaining 75 percent stake.⁶⁶⁵ In the end, since India failed to fulfil its part of the agreement, the Kazak president, by dint of his sovereign power, handed over the deal to China.⁶⁶⁶ In 2013, India once again experienced a reversal in Kazakhstan when its lost its bid to acquire on 8.4 percent stake from ConocoPhillips in the North Caspian Sea production sharing Agreement.⁶⁶⁷ ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) lost the opportunity even often obtaining its partner's approval to close the deal at 5 billion dollar. This deal had the potential to vest India with a stake in the vast Kashagan oil field in the Caspian Sea.⁶⁶⁸ In this case as well,

⁶⁶⁴ Pradhan, Ramakrushna. "Dynamics of India-Central Asia Relations Energy as A Strategic Factor." *The Journal of Central Asian Studies*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2011, pp. 143- 164. <http://ccas.uok.edu.in/Files/93269b6c-7f53-4439-ae9a-3bdf55a4c649/Journal/7d7ab93d-3f45-4449-bf29-e48d3679a332.pdf>. Accessed on 22 October 2020.

⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 202.

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

the government of Kazakhstan exercised its legal right to sole this stake to the China National Petroleum Corporation instead.⁶⁶⁹

For over a decade, India and Kazakhstan had recognised the potential for mutually beneficial energy and trade engagements. In particular, India's policy makers had envisaged a significant role for India in Central Asia, especially in Kazakhstan in order to stem the growing influence of Russia, China and United States.⁶⁷⁰ India's current felicitous relationship with Russia is a positive legacy of the Indo-Soviet friendship that existed throughout the Cold-War period. Indian governments in succession have followed a foreign policy that fostered friendly relations with the Soviet Union, and their Russia.⁶⁷¹ In the time of president Nixon in US, Pakistan facilitated a rapprochement between the US and China. At the time in terms of the global balance of Security, India and the Soviet Union viewed their own alliance as a counter weight to the US China axis. In that context, friendship with the Soviet Union was critical to India since the Soviets were the major supplier of Indian military hardware.⁶⁷² The now traditional defence cooperation continues apace as India is an important customer for Russian military army. However, with India diversifying its arms purchases, Russia's share in India's arms market has declined.⁶⁷³ In the period 2015-2019, India remained the second largest arms importer in the world.⁶⁷⁴

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 210.

⁶⁷¹ Thakur, Ramesh. "India and the Soviet Union: Conjunctions and Disjunctions of Interests." *Asian Survey*, vol. 31, no. 9, 1991, pp. 826–846.

⁶⁷² Joshi, Manoj. "India's strategy in the China-Russia-USA triangle". *Observer Research Foundation*, 20 Dec. 2019, www.orfonline.org/research/indias-strategy-in-the-china-russia-usa-triangle-59417, Accessed on 12 October 2020.; Menon, Rajan. "India and the Soviet Union: A New Stage of Relations?" *Far Eastern Survey*, vol. 18, no. 7, 6 Apr. 1949, pp. 731-50, doi:10.2307/2643528. Accessed on 14 January 2020.

⁶⁷³ "India was 2nd largest arms importer in 2015-19, Russia's share of Indian arms market declined." *Hindustan Times*, 9 Mar. 2020, p. 6.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid; also see Bakshi, Jyotsna. "India-Russia Defence Co-operation". *Strategic Analysis*, vol. 30, no. 2, Apr-Jun 2006, pp. 449-466, www.idsa.in/system/files/strategicanalysis_jbakshi_0606.pdf. Accessed on 2 October 2020.

In matters relating to Central Asia, Russia and India have historically shared similar views. Since 1992, the two countries have proactively collaborated in the context of the fast-evolving dynamics in the newly independent Central Asian Republics (CARs), particularly during the civil war in Tajikistan. In the current scenario in Central Asia, India and Russia are not jointly involved in specific projects, but they remain allies in the region and have the same objectives of establishing regional stability and security.⁶⁷⁵ India is already engage in strategic civilian infrastructure projects in Afghanistan and is supportive of efforts that will eventually bring stability in Afghanistan.⁶⁷⁶ Russia and India have common concerns regarding the potential growth of Islamic radicalism in Central Asia, and the controversial role of Pakistan in the political conflicts in Afghanistan.⁶⁷⁷ India provides training to Afghan troops on diverse security issues. A trilateral partnership exists in Central Asia among the entrepreneurs of India, Russia and Kazakhstan in the field of information technology. India and Russia are also actively engaging in Central Asia in the realm of space technology. In this connection, India, Russia and Kazakhstan have long been collaborating for joint sponsorship of space launches.⁶⁷⁸

In the present time while continuing with its traditional relations with India, Russia is also expanding its engagements with China. However, in view of their competitive interests in Central Asia, it is difficult to envisage any meaningful collaboration between China, India and Russia in the region.⁶⁷⁹ With the resolution of border conflicts, China's relations with

⁶⁷⁵ Foshko, Katherine. "India and Russia: a new Central Asian engagement." *Gateway House*, 8 Feb. 2012, www.gatewayhouse.in/india-and-russia-new-central-asian-engagement. Accessed on 22 March 2020.

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁹ Rinna, Anthony. "Central Asia and the India-Russia Partnership." *The Diplomat*, 27 Jan. 2015, www.thediplomat.com/2015/01/central-asia-and-the-india-russia-partnership/. Accessed on 12 October 2020.

Russia have improved in recent years. However, owing to the persistence of border conflicts, the relationship between China and India is seriously fraught and has the potential for escalation into military confrontation.⁶⁸⁰ In the Central Asia, China is poised as an adversary to both India and Russia, while the regional imperatives of India and Russia are not indirect conflict.⁶⁸¹ While Russia enjoys a dominant historical and geopolitical influence in the Central Asian Republics that were parts of the former Soviet Union, India is striving to enhance its role in Central Asia. The interests of India and Russia in the region are not mutually exclusive and indirect conflict. However, China's interests in the region are diametrically opposed to those of both India and Russia. Accordingly, it is likely that India and Russia will collaborate actively in Central Asia since China is a looming threat to them both.⁶⁸² A number of Central Asian republics have evinced keenness to broaden trade ties with India. India's principal motivation for enhancing its role in Central Asia is the acquisition of new energy sources to support its own economic growth strategy. In the process, India is aware of the need to contend with China while pursuing its regional objectives.⁶⁸³

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a major platform where the concerned players may deliberate on ways and means to bring security, stability and order in Central Asia given the dynamics of the new great game. In 2017, India became a member of the SCO⁶⁸⁴ owing to strong support extended by Russia from the highest echelons of power.⁶⁸⁵ China's dominant role in the SCO on the back of its increasing influence in Central Asia

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid.

⁶⁸² Ibid.

⁶⁸³ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁴ Stronski, Paul and Ng, Nicole. "Cooperation and Competition: Russia and China in Central Asia, the Russian Far East, and the Arctic." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 2 Apr. 2021, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/02/28/cooperation-and-competition-russia-and-china-in-central-asia-russian-far-east-and-arctic-pub-75673>. Accessed on 20 April 2020.

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid.

alerted Russia to the potential strategic fallout, and as such Russia welcomed India's influence in the region, since India is a major power that can strategically counter China's unchallenged bid for regional dominance.⁶⁸⁶ Central Asia has become an arena for acute competition among significant global powers owing to the region's geopolitical location and vast energy resources.⁶⁸⁷

Cooperation between India and Russia in Central Asia has been largely limited to security and terror-related issues in the region. However, there is little evidence of the two nations extending their collaboration to strategic, economic or cultural fields in Central Asia. On the contrary, Russia stood in the way of India establishing its first international airbase in Ayni.⁶⁸⁸ According to the *EurAsian Times*, India is keen to use the Ayni Airbase for its strategic purposes. However, India's operation in Tajikistan is effectively constrained by Russia's policies in the Tajikistan.⁶⁸⁹ Since the region had once been a part of the Soviet Union, Russia's established interests are more deeply embedded than the interests of India which is relatively a new player. Though there is a commonality of political strategy, Russia is unwilling to cede greater economic and energy space to India in Central Asia since it desires the region to be dependent on Russia as a destination for its resources via energy pipelines.⁶⁹⁰ While scholars attempt to analyse the convergences and divergences of Russian and India interests in Central Asia, the policy makers in India unanimously

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁸ "Will Ayni Airbase in Tajikistan Become India's 1st Overseas Military Base?" *The EurAsian Times*, 11 Oct. 2018, www.eurasiantimes.com/india-ayni-airbase-in-tajikistan-russian/. Accessed on 5 October 2020.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁰ Kavalski, Emilian. *India And Central Asia: The Mythmaking and International Relations of a Rising Power*. Tauris Academic Studies, 2010. pp. 130-132.

agree on Russia playing an important role in the implementation of India's present and future strategy in Central Asia.⁶⁹¹

India's Search for Energy Security and Pipeline Politics in Kazakhstan

The geographical positioning of Central Asia and its massive potential wealth in terms of energy resources along with an inviting investment climate, are a natural magnet to draw major global powers to the region to compete for the untapped resources. The region has accordingly become an arena for petro-politics and pipeline diplomacy. Countries such as the United States, China, the European Union, Japan, India, Israel, Iran, and Pakistan have entered the New Great Game being played out in the heartland region of Central Asia. All these countries are scrambling for a share of the resources comprising oil, gas and uranium in the main. Considering the stakes, the concerned countries resort to aggressive foreign policies and strategic moves. The New Great Game is one where the players vie to both control and administer the energy resources of the region. Unlike in the times of the old Great Game, the modern version is all about petro-politics and pipeline diplomacy.⁶⁹² The Central Asia energy resources and the potential routes for transportation of energy via pipelines are of particular importance for the likes of US, Russia, China and India. That is so because control over the resources and their transportation are not only key to economic growth but also majorly impact political and security issues.

⁶⁹¹ Sahgal, Arun and Vinod Anand, "Strategic Environment in Central Asia and India". *Reconnecting India and Central Asia Emerging Security and Economic Dimensions*, edited by Nirmala Joshi, Central Asia Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program, 2010, pp.33-79.

www.silkroadstudies.org/resources/pdf/Monographs/2010_03_MONO_Joshi_India-Central-Asia.pdf. Accessed on 21 April 2020.

⁶⁹² Pradhan, Ramakrushna. "Energy Geopolitics and Pipeline Diplomacy in Central Asia: India's Interests and Policy Options." *Jadavpur Journal of International Relations*, vol. 24, no. 2, 25 Dec. 2020, pp. 216-246.

In the Indian view, the pipelines would not only spur economic activities but also promote political amity among the countries involved. However, India's search for pipeline installed owing to a deficit of trust commitment and security, besides adverse geopolitics in its neighbourhood. Given an unexpected favourable twist in geopolitics in its neighbourhood, there may be three potential pipelines that end in India. Firstly, there is the Turkmenistan- Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) (map 4). Secondly, there may be an Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipeline (map 4). and thirdly, there may be a Russia-China-India (RCI) pipeline. However, in the context of the current regional geopolitics, these pipeline projects and proposals remain theoretical constructs.⁶⁹³

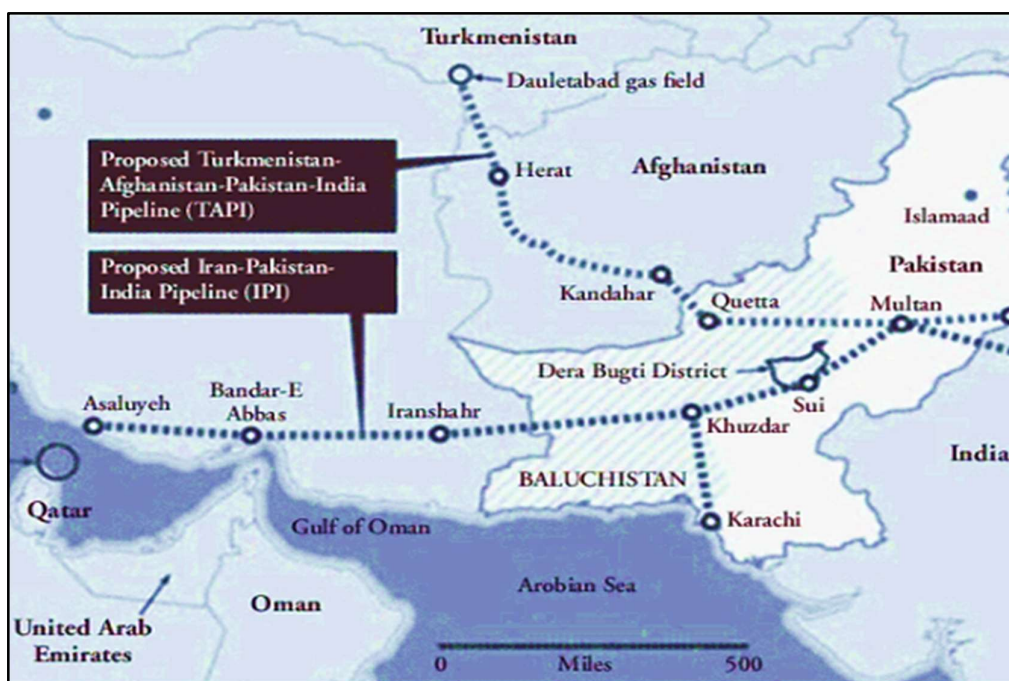
India's initiatives in playing a meaningful role in Kazakhstan energy sector is viewed favourably by Kazakhstan. India's clear intent is to diversify its energy sources. On the other hand, India's involvement is in keeping with Kazakhstan multifactor foreign policy objectives. The two countries have accordingly signed bilateral agreements designed to enhance India's presence in Kazakhstan's energy sector. Russia is no longer the only country in Eurasia to export its oil. Kazakhstan is now actively engaged in diversifying its export destinations for oil and gas. Apart from Russia, China is India's most important competition for the oil resources of Kazakhstan.

In recent year, China has increased its presence in Kazakhstan's energy sector. In the context of the volatile security situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan's continued hostility

⁶⁹³ Pradhan, Sanjay K. *India's Quest for Energy Through Oil and Natural Gas: Trade and Investment, Geopolitics, and Security*. Springer, 2020. pp. 151-153.

towards India, the proposed pipeline projects have made no headway.⁶⁹⁴ However, India is exploring other routes that will allow for heightened activity in Kazakhstan's oil sector in the next decade. Given the evolving geopolitics of Central Asia, the competition among, India, China and Russia over Kazakhstan's energy resources is expected to escalate and even spread to other countries in the region. By way of oil diplomacy, Turkmenistan features importantly in India's foreign policy as it is rich in natural gas reserves. Turkmenistan potential to be a significant part of India's energy policy gave rise to the theoretical construct of a Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline.⁶⁹⁵

Map 4: Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) and Iran- Pakistan-India (IPI) Pipeline⁶⁹⁶



⁶⁹⁴ Daly, John. "Proposed Kazakh-Indian Pipeline a Long Shot at Best." *Oil Price.com*, 14 Mar. 2013, www.oilprice.com/Geopolitics/Asia/Proposed-Kazakh-Indian-Pipeline-a-Long-Shot-at-Best.html. Accessed on 21 April 2020.

⁶⁹⁵ "Confederation of Indian Industry". *India's Energy Security and Transnational Gas Pipelines*. 2016, pp. 12-15.

⁶⁹⁶ Source: Dar, Muzammil A and Rameez Raja Mir. "The Prospects of India's Energy Security." *World Affairs*, vol. 22, no. 4, October-December 2018, pp. 86-101.

This conceptual pipeline was meant to be constructed by an international consortium of national oil companies belonging to the participating countries. The US to evinced favourable interest in the proposed TAPI pipeline project though it was not one of the regional beneficiary states.⁶⁹⁷ However, the proposal immediately conflicted with the prevailing geopolitics in the region. Firstly, the propose pipeline would be under constant threat in the areas of Afghanistan under the effective control of the Taliban. Potentially, a Taliban-ruled Afghanistan would pose a national security hazard for India.⁶⁹⁸ Secondly, the pipeline was slated to pass through Baluchistan where insurgency is an ongoing issue. Further, the forces of the Taliban have an established presence in Pakistan's border region.⁶⁹⁹ Over the years, the Taliban fighters have cross the borders into Pakistan in order to regroup and launch offensives against Afghan troops and the soldiers of the International Security Force (ISF).⁷⁰⁰ Apart from the general unrest caused by the conflict between the Taliban and the forces backing the government in Afghanistan, the Taliban fighters happen to be present along the route of the proposed pipeline.⁷⁰¹ In the circumstances, India is concern with the pipelines physical security and its very feasibility. The situation is further complicated by the unrest prevailing in the border regions between Pakistan and Afghanistan, as also by Pakistan's role in Afghanistan's internal political conflict. Specifically, the TAPI pipeline will cross the volatile Pashtun region between the two countries.⁷⁰² In any case, both the TAPI pipeline project and the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI)

⁶⁹⁷ Badan, Phool. "TAPI Gas Pipeline and Regional Cooperation". *World Focus*, vol. 38, no. 10, October 2017, pp. 35-40

⁶⁹⁸ Ghosh, Sourish. "Enemy at the Gates: An Analysis on India's Experiences with the Taliban". *Jadavpur Journal of International Relations*, vol. 24, no. 2, Dec. 2020, pp 152-171.

⁶⁹⁹ Dar, Muzammil A and Rameez Raja Mir. Op. cit.

⁷⁰⁰ Ghosh, Sourish. Op. cit.

⁷⁰¹ Zhunisbek, Abulhairkhan. "Prospects and Challenges in Realizing the TAPI Project." *Eurasian Research Institute*, www.eurasian-research.org/publication/prospects-and-challenges-in-realizing-the-tapi-project/. Accessed on 5 Apr. 2020.

⁷⁰² Foster, John. "Afghanistan, the TAPI Pipeline, and Energy Geopolitics." *Journal of Energy Security*, 23 March. 2010, www.ensec.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=233:afghanistan-the-tapi-pipeline-and-energy-geopolitics&catid= Accessed on 7 April 2020.

pipeline project cannot be viable without a transformation of Pakistan's stance against India. (Map 4)⁷⁰³

The TAPI pipeline project was mooted over Three decade ago, in 1990 and the Taliban which then ruled in Afghanistan participated in the talks.⁷⁰⁴ However, the construction was indefinitely put off owing to Afghanistan's political unrest followed by the US invasion in Afghanistan in 2001 that unseated the Taliban from power.⁷⁰⁵ In 2018, survey of the land for the TAPI pipeline project was began in the expectation that the political atmosphere would be conducive to its construction,⁷⁰⁶ particularly since the Afghan government and the Taliban were engaging in peace talk. The US government had expressed its support for the concept of a pipeline that would convey natural gas from Turkmenistan, through Afghanistan and Pakistan, to India. In that connection, in 2020, the United States convened a meeting with Turkmenistan and Afghanistan where the participants agreed to take forward important infrastructure projects,⁷⁰⁷ including the TAPI gas pipeline project that would enable Turkmenistan, Afghanistan. Pakistan and India (TAPI) to share energy resources. The US would actively assist in the implementation of the same.

While the TAPI pipeline would potentially contribute to higher energy security for Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India, it would expectedly impact energy-rich Central Asia

⁷⁰³ Mazumdar, Rononjoy. "India should reopen the IPI pipeline project". *Observer Research Foundation*, 18 June 2015, www.orfonline.org/research/india-should-reopen-the-ipi-pipeline-project. Accessed on 22 April 2020.

⁷⁰⁴ "Fact Check-U.S. has long supported natural gas pipeline in Afghanistan, predating Keystone XL cancellation." *Reuters*, 24 Mar. 2021, www.reuters.com/article/factcheck-pipeline-taliban-idUSL1N2LM201. Accessed on 30 March 2021.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁷ Ibid.

where China, Russia, and United States are competing for influence.⁷⁰⁸ For political reasons, the United States is averse to the proposed Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipeline project, that is supported by Iran and Russia.⁷⁰⁹ On the other hand, through construction of the TAPI pipeline, US expects to gain leverage in South and Central Asia.⁷¹⁰

The TAPI pipeline, if it ever become a reality, would connect India with Turkmenistan. This would render India dependant on Turkmenistan and concern with that country's political stability, in the same manner as other importing countries like China and Russia are concern. India will also need to observe the relations that China and Russia enjoy with Turkmenistan. The pipeline from India to Turkmenistan, as envisioned in the TAPI project, would then be extended to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. These two countries provide additional gas to China through the Turkmenistan-China gas pipeline. The TAPI project will, if implemented provide India with direct overland access into Central Asia, at least for the import of natural gas.

The TAPI pipeline project was envisaged as a means to unify the regions and integrate South Asia with Central Asia. It will be supportive of India's Connect Central Asia policy and allow India to enhance its presence in Central Asia. It will contribute to India's energy security and help diversify India's energy sources to the benefit of the Indian economy. Afghanistan too will be able to utilise the natural gas to satisfy its domestic consumption

⁷⁰⁸ Steiner, Corissa. "A Pipeline as Lifeline: The Environmental Benefits of TAPI." 14 August 2019, The Diplomat, www.thediplomat.com/2019/08/a-pipeline-as-lifeline-the-environmental-benefits-of-tapi/. Accessed on 4 May 2020.

⁷⁰⁹ Ahmad, Bhat Mukhtar. "America and Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) Gas Pipeline" *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, vol. 8, no. 8, November 2014, pp. 260-265, DOI: 10.5897/AJPSIR2014.0696.

⁷¹⁰ Ibid.

needs. In 2015, Kazakhstan's natural gas production increase to 42 billion cubic meters (Bcm). It thus became a significant country that could help to stabilise the world energy market.⁷¹¹ Kazakhstan could potentially use the TAPI pipeline to supply natural gas to India. This convenient route will enable it to supply at a cheaper price. The TAPI project will enhance Pakistan energy security and satisfy the domestic demand for natural gas. Presently, it suffers from acute energy shortages.⁷¹²

In respect of the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipeline, the project will have ramifications that are national bilateral, regional and global. It will be strongly supportive of the proposed International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), that will provide connectivity to Central Asia, Europe and Russia.⁷¹³ However, this project is stalled owing to unresolved and ongoing conflicts between India and Pakistan. In the event of any possible escalation of hostilities between the two nations, the natural gas supply to India will arguably be disrupted. It is unlikely that India will invest in a high-risk pipeline unless Pakistan offers sovereign guarantees with regard to its security.⁷¹⁴ In the prevailing circumstances, there is a proposal to build a subsea pipeline that will directly connect Iran with India, circumventing the territory of Pakistan.⁷¹⁵ Conceptually, the IPI and TAPI pipeline projects will greatly enhance India's energy security, encourage regional corporation and help to regulate international energy prices. At the same time, the IPI pipeline project has floundered in the weaken of the conflict between Iran and US and the sanctions imposed by US. That apart,

⁷¹¹ Pradhan, Sanjay K. 2020, Op. cit. pp. 153-156.

⁷¹² Ibid.

⁷¹³ Ibid.

⁷¹⁴ Ibid.

⁷¹⁵ "Undersea Iran-India gas pipeline, avoiding Pakistan, can bring cheaper LNG to India, says study." *Firstpost*, 6 Sept. 2017, www.firstpost.com/business/undersea-iran-india-gas-pipeline-avoiding-pakistan-can-bring-cheaper-lng-to-india-says-study-4013517.html. Accessed on 2 July 2020.

the insecurity issues in Pakistan discourage its implementation.⁷¹⁶ While the subsea pipeline project becomes feasible owing to the exclusion of Pakistan, it is overshadowed by the hostilities between Iran and the US, as also by India's increasing closeness to the US.⁷¹⁷ Given the current state of geopolitics, India is justifiably averse to pipelines that would traverse Pakistan or China, as such projects would be hostage to political and security threats.⁷¹⁸ India is embroiled in territorial disputes with both China and Pakistan. Wars have been fought over these issues and the bilateral relations are not conducive to the construction of such energy pipelines. A pipeline through Pakistan is not only fraught with territorial and political disputes, the bilateral relations are adversely affected by acts of terrorism emanating from Pakistan and internal military sponsored by that country. In respect of China, apart from the ongoing and recurring military face-offs at the border, the volatile Xinxiang province does not favour the construction of a secure pipeline.⁷¹⁹ In any case China's support to Pakistan with regard to its disputes with India rules out any pipeline projects that traverse its territory.

Along with the sharp and continued rise in the need for energy, India became increasingly interested in Central Asia as a potential source of energy. At the same time, India, became aware of China's aggressive search for energy around the world including in the Central Asian countries. India became particularly concern about diversifying its energy sources, more so in the context of encirclement by China in the Indian Ocean. Central Asia became an attractive option for sourcing energy. Oil from Kazakhstan and gas from Turkmenistan

⁷¹⁶ Dietl, Gulshan. *India and the Global Game of Gas Pipelines*. Routledge, 2017, pp. 10-20.

⁷¹⁷ Ibid.

⁷¹⁸ Ibid.

⁷¹⁹ Ibid.

could majorly contribute to India's energy supplies. In this regard, relevant pipeline projects were conceptualised.

TAPI and IPI Pipeline Politics: Entry of US and Russia

Both the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) and the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipelines were mired in the dynamics of international politics and conflicts. Iran came under severe US economy and political sanctions. India's investments in Iran and in other projects involving Iran became difficult to take forward because of the US economic embargo.⁷²⁰ However, Russia evinced strong support for the proposed IPI pipe line project. The intended flow of Iranian gas to India would enable Russia to remain the principal supplier of Russian natural gas to the European markets. Moreover, India's focus on the energy reserves in the Central Asian countries would shift if its needs were met by Iran. In this respect, taking advantage of the vacuum created in Iran by US sanctions, China entered into a deal with Iran involving large Chinese investments in multiple Iranian infrastructural projects in return for the assured supply of Iranian oil and gas to China for 25 years at a discounted rate.⁷²¹

As a consequence, the IPI project remains indefinitely suspended.⁷²² Though the proposed IPI pipeline would have benefited Iran, Pakistan and India in terms of economic growth and contributed to regional political stability, the project became mired in strategic international

⁷²⁰ Ibid.

⁷²¹ Hincks, Joseph. "What China's New Deal with Iran Says About Its Ambitions in the Region." *Time*, 29 July 2020, www.time.com/5872771/china-iran-deal/. Accessed on 2 December 2020.

⁷²² Singh, Anoop. "The Economics of Iran-Pakistan-India Natural Gas Pipeline." *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 43, no. 37, 13 Sep. 2008, pp. 7-8, www.epw.in/journal/2008/37/special-articles/economics-iran-pakistan-india-natural-gas-pipeline.html. Accessed on 2 October 2020.

conflicts. The road blocks were in the form of the traditional bilateral hostilities between India and Pakistan, as well as the US-Iran face off which inevitably imposed restrictions on other countries.⁷²³ The reality of the political conflicts over the last 25 years consigned the pipeline to the back burner. The proposed IPI pipeline project was hit hardest when the US intensified its unilateral and multilateral sanctions on Iran, that entailed adverse consequences on India and Pakistan if they persisted in advancing the project with Iran.⁷²⁴ Only encouragement for the IPI pipeline project was the support it received from Russia.⁷²⁵

In the strategic view adopted by the US, the proposed IPI pipeline would partially neutralise its sanctions on Iran.⁷²⁶ India had perforce to veer to the opinion that the potential economic gains from the IPI project were now out stripped by the adverse consequences. The only favourable factor attaching to the pipeline was the positive encouragement it received from Russia. Russia could reap major strategic advantages from the IPI pipeline projects. With its desired involvement in the IPI projects, Russia could rope in Iran, Pakistan and India as major strategic allies. Russia could indeed play the role of an arbiter between potential energy rivals. For India, the IPI pipeline project carried the promise of diversification energy sources. However, the prevailing geopolitical realities deter the IPI pipeline project to proceed and deliver its potentially favourable outcomes.

⁷²³ Sanati Reza. "Pipeline Politics." *Cairo Review of Global Affairs*, October, 2013, www.thecairoreview.com/essays/pipeline-politics/. Accessed on 2 October 2020

⁷²⁴ Ibid.

⁷²⁵ Ibid.

⁷²⁶ Ibid.

Caspian Basin Region Pipeline: India's Participation

Indian technician and experts have discovered lucrative employment opportunities in Kazakhstan and the Caspian Sea region. India's growing presence in the Central Asian region is manifested in the form of hundreds of technicians and skilled workers employed in the numerous infrastructure development projects. To illustrate, around a thousand Indians are engaged in pipeline constructions under taken by the consolidated construction company and SAIPEM company based out of Aksai and Karachaganak.⁷²⁷ As in the Gulf region where millions of Indians are gainfully employed, Kazakhstan and the Caspian Sea region evince potential for employing skilled Indians as a major component of the work force.

According to the studies conducted by geologists, the reserves of oil in the Caspian Sea are less than the deposits in the Persian Gulf. However, the oil deposits in the Central Asian region have been found to be of very good qualities. Accordingly, this region has the potential to be a major alternatives source of energy in the 21st Century.⁷²⁸ According to expert estimates; the entire basin of the Caspian Sea is replete with oil and natural gas deposits. The areas rich in energy deposits range from Azerbaijan to the opposite shore in the territories of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. In the context of the energy deposits of Alaska and the North Sea becoming depleted by 2015, as expected the deposits of Central Asia have assumed critical significance.

⁷²⁷ Pradhan, Ramakrushna. 2020, Op. cit. pp. 238-239

⁷²⁸ Pradhan, Ramakrushna. 2021, Op. cit. p. 243.

Owing to the geographical location of Central Asia in the heart of Eurasia, the transportation of energy resources from the region is a major constraint. There is no convenient route for transporting oil and gas from the Caspian Sea region via standard maritime shipping lanes to the principal global consumers of energy, namely, the United States (US), the European Union (EU), China and India. After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the five littoral countries, Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, have finally agreed that all of them may patrol the Caspian Sea and have access to the vast reserves of oil and natural gas found below the sea bed. Since 2005, an oil pipeline from Kazakhstan to China has been functional.⁷²⁹ Later, since 2009, a gas pipeline from Central Asia to China became operational.⁷³⁰ Other pipelines are currently under construction. The proposed pipeline from Central Asia through Afghanistan and Pakistan is not viable owing to the volatile politics of Afghanistan and the terrorist elements present in Pakistan. At the end of the Soviet era, the countries of the West entered the Central Asian arena and began to assert their influence, thereby eroding the influence historically enjoyed by Russia. Central Asian geopolitics took a new turn with an increase in the number of key players.

Transportation and export of its energy resources has become a major handicap for the Central Asian region. However, China, Iran and the United States have proposed a number of potential transit pipelines. Owing to geographical positioning, Russia is in support of the northern route. The Russian geostrategic framework envisages an expanded pipeline from Kazakhstan to the Russian network,⁷³¹ as well as a pipeline from Baku in Azerbaijan to

⁷²⁹ Fazilov, Fakhmiddin and Xiangming Chen. "China and Central Asia: A Significant New Energy Nexus". *The European Financial Review*, 30 April 2013, www.europeanfinancialreview.com/china-and-central-asia-a-significant-new-energy-nexus. Accessed on 2 October 2020.

⁷³⁰ *Central Asia-China Gas Pipeline*. China National Petroleum Corporation, People's Republic of China, www.cnpc.com.cn/en/CentralAsia/CentralAsia_index.shtml, Accessed on 2 October 2020.

⁷³¹ Karagiannis, Emmanuel. *Energy and Security in the Caucasus*. Routledge Curzon, 2013, pp. 180-90; and also see Hill, Fiona. "Pipelines in the Caspian: Catalyst or Cure-all?" *Georgetown Journal of International*

Novorossiysk in Russia (Map 5).⁷³² On the other hand, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Georgia and the United States are in favour of a pipeline running west. The eastern route directly connects Central Asia to China, particularly transporting oil to China from Kazakhstan. The route to the South transits Iran. Technically and economically this is an attractive option owing to Iran already possessing an extensive pipeline system. Further, the Gulf can facilitate access to the markets of Asia. In the wake of its dispute with Iran, the United States has obstructed the proposed southern route. However, a south-eastern route is conceptualised, that begins in Turkmenistan and ends in India. This route has drawn the attention of an American oil company (Union Oil Company of California) which has expressed interest in constructing pipelines for oil and gas from Turkmenistan, through Afghanistan and Pakistan, to India.⁷³³ This route is geographically viable but not politically feasible, since it proposes to run through strife-torn Afghanistan, and Pakistan that is house to numerous terror outfits.

Affairs, vol. 5, no. 1, Winter/Spring 2004, pp. 17-25.

www.ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/olj/gjia/gjia_winspr04/gjia_winspr04p.pdf. Accessed on 5 October 2020.

⁷³² *The Transportation of Oil*. Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 5 November 2019,

www.minenergy.gov.az/en/neft/baki-novorossiysk-neft-kemeri. Accessed on 5 October 2020.

⁷³³ Kocak, Konur A. "TAPI natural gas pipeline project Boosting trade and remedying instability?" *European Parliamentary Research Service*, November 2016,

[www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/593554/EPRS_BRI\(2016\)593554_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/593554/EPRS_BRI(2016)593554_EN.pdf). Accessed on 5 October 2020.

Map 5: Baku-Novorossiysk Oil Pipeline⁷³⁴



India, in the context of its rapidly growing need for energy, is engaging with the Central Asian States in multiple ways in order to gain access to their vast energy resources. India has invested funds and expertise in preparing the Chabahar Port in Iran for access to Central Asia via Afghanistan. This route would effectively bypass Pakistan. India may also join the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) that runs through Iran and Afghanistan. Again, India could have envisaged a route to Central Asia through China's Xinjiang region. However, this region is subject to political unrest. Also, China has been consistently opposing India and supporting Pakistan in different global forums, and initiating border confrontations with India. A route through China is accordingly not

⁷³⁴ Source: The State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR), www.socar.az/socar/en/activities/transportation/baku-novorossiysk-oil-pipeline. Accessed on 5 October 2020.

feasible. Nevertheless, India is in a position to explore other transit pipeline projects for accessing oil and natural gas in Kazakhstan.

India's Foreign Policy Matrix: Optional Transit Routes from Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan is position in India's extended neighbourhood and there are historical ties between the two countries. Given Kazakhstan's vast energy resources, India is looking to access the some and thereby diversify its energy sources. In the circumstances, India and Kazakhstan are exploring different areas of mutual interest and cooperation. Since Kazakhstan is land locked, any overland route from India must necessarily transit other neighbouring countries. The absence of direct access to Kazakhstan is a challenge for India. Moreover, in Central Asia, China is a major power competing for influence and control over energy sources. In effect despite extremely felicitous diplomatic and political relations between India and Kazakhstan, the economic engagement between the two countries pale into insignificance relative to the gains made by other regional and global powers. The unbroken political rapport and mutual respect between India and Kazakhstan do not translate to any significant trade and energy relationship. This owes to both geographical constraints and geopolitical rivalries, that appear to pose insuperable challenges.

As is the case with China and other regional and global powers, India is also an active player in the Great Game of oil politics being played out in Central Asia, especially in Kazakhstan. India supported proposed pipelines that would involve six other countries namely,

Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Myanmar, and Turkmenistan. In anticipation of its growing need for primary energy sources, in June 2012 India was among the first countries to initiate strategic relations with the five newly independent, erstwhile Soviet Republics, through its dedicated Connect Central Asia Policy. Subsequently, India's position in the region was strengthened by its entry in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) as a full member. India was globally considered as an alternative to Chinese hegemony in Central Asia.

Ideally, a pipeline from Central Asia in general and Kazakhstan in particular could pass through Xinjiang and Tibet and end up in Uttarakhand. Such a pipeline could be economically feasible and be free of the security concerns in Pakistan and Afghanistan.⁷³⁵ However the unrest in Xinjiang does not augur well for such a pipeline. Moreover, the adversarial stance adopted by China against India on various global platforms, including in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) leaves little hopes for such a pipeline to become a reality. It may be pertinent to note that this route is a part of the ancient trade and silk route between the two regions. While the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) is also an economically viable pipeline project connecting to Central Asia, the issue has remained dormant since the idea was first mooted in 2010.

A pipeline from Iran to Pakistan is already on the anvil. However, its extension to India may not be possible in the face of the hostilities existing between the two nations. Despite the potential economic benefits that would accrue to the concerned countries, Iran, Pakistan

⁷³⁵ Pradhan, Ramakrushna. 2021, Op. cit. p. 258.

and India, it faced political opposition from the United States that had imposed sanctions on Iran. That apart, the pipeline would have to cross the insurgency hit areas of Pakistan. India has justifiable apprehensions not only about the pipeline's security in Pakistan but also about the fate of the pipeline in times of bilateral tension between the two countries. The Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline project is also plagued with the same problems as besetting the proposed IPI project, excepting that it has the support of the United States owing to the exclusion of Iran. The proposed IPI project is supported by Russia. With regard to both the proposed project, India has reservations concerning the security issues in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Since the Xinjiang-Tibet-India pipeline project is also a non-starter, the only viable route appears to be via the Iranian ports of Chabahar and Bandar Abbas on the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC), and across the Arabian Sea to India.

In the end, all the conceptualised pipeline projects are plagued with different degrees of geopolitical risks. Needless to add, each proposal has safety mechanisms designed to address the security concerns. However, there are apparently insurmountable diplomatic hazards in the form of both incipient and state-sponsored terrorism in Pakistan, Political instability and violence in Afghanistan, undeniable uncertainties in Iran and the manifest high handedness of China. If China had been more accommodative, the Xinjiang-Tibet-Uttarakhand could have been economically viable. This route would have directly connected Kazakhstan in Central Asia to Uttarakhand in India via Western China and Tibet. However, since the pipeline would traverse different geographical features, it would have to contend with varied and extreme weather systems.

Accordingly, it is clear that all proposed routes suffer from major impediments, if of different kinds. Conceptually, the IPI and TAPI pipelines would enable India, Pakistan and Afghanistan to engage with one another in a constructive manner, there by facilitating regional geo-economic cooperation in South Asia. In the long-term strategic perspective, energy cooperation would help to iron out the political differences among nation-states and foster all-encompassing regional development.

With the emergence of India as a political, economic, and military power to reckon with, it is expected that India will be an active participant in future global energy geo-politics. Since Pakistan is not globally considered to be a responsible stakeholder and a reliable transit country it misses out on the opportunity to also become a player in international energy geopolitics and reap the economic and political benefits that accrue thereby. In the context of the volatile political dynamics of South Asia. The terror unleashed by the Islamist Taliban in Afghanistan; the headway made by militant Islamist in Pakistan coupled with the Pakistani military. Often subjugating the civilian government, the proposal for a pipeline through this strife torn territories of Afghanistan-Pakistan is apparently neither politically viable nor realistically feasible. In the circumstances, the route from Central Asia through Iran's Chabahar Port and over the Arabian Sea seems to be a relatively better option. Lately, negotiations have begun to speedily implement the International North South Transportation Corridor (INSTC) that will provide India with over land access to Europe through Iran and Central Asia. Russia is an important factor on this route and is supportive of India's strategy to re-establish connection with Central Asia. India is assured of Russian cooperation in its efforts to meet its potential energy needs through Central Asian energy resources, while circumventing the territories of neighbourhood rivals.

Concluding Observation

Major global consumers of energy, such as India-US-Russia and China, consider Central Asia's energy-rich territories to be a viable alternative to the energy sources in the middle East. The oil and gas resources in Central Asia have the potential to satisfy the national energy security objectives of these and other nations. In the era of the Soviet Union, the constituent states of Central Asia were largely limited to exporting their natural resources through Russian pipelines. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Turkmenistan's natural gas and Kazakhstan's oil continued to be exported to Russia through the old Soviet pipelines. Accordingly, Russia has inherited critical political and economic influence in Central Asia. The newly formed republics of Central Asia considered India with its resurgent economy to be an important potential customer for its oil and gas. From the early 1990s, soon after the Central Asian republics gained independence, India enjoyed an accelerated economic growth.⁷³⁶ However, India looked to the Middle East for the necessary supplies of oil and natural gas. In 2010, however India became concerned about its energy needs being met by a single geographical region.⁷³⁷ Such singular dependence was fraught with its own potential risks. Accordingly, India began to diversify its energy sources and viewed Central Asia as a viable alternative source. In that region India finds China as an already established and important rival. China is a critical competitor for India in Central Asia as it is in the process of increasing its influence in the region through the construction of additional pipelines and the acquisition of further energy assets. India's energy security

⁷³⁶ Panagariya, Arvind. "India in the 1980s and 1990s: A Triumph of Reforms". *India's and China's Recent Experience with Reform and Growth*, edited by Wanda Tseng and David Cowen, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp. 170-200.

⁷³⁷ Nandy, Debasish. "India's policy options in middle-east: challenges and opportunities". *Journal of Historical Archaeology & Anthropological Sciences*, vol. 5, no. 3, 15 May 2020, pp. 87-93.
DOI: [10.15406/jhaas.2020.05.00221](https://doi.org/10.15406/jhaas.2020.05.00221)

strategies in Central Asia are dependent on the willingness of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to start exporting their oil and gas southwards.

The US has evinced its intent to draw Central Asian energy via routes going westwards through Europe or Southwards through India. This is the broad structure of the US foreign policy objectives in Central Asia. The strategy effectively aims at curbing Russian and Chinese influence in the region. To that end, the US has offered its backing for the proposed Trans Caspian and TAPI natural gas pipelines. With regard to the proposed TAPI project, while the intermediary countries have expressed their agreement in principle, no effort has yet been initiated towards actually implementing the project on the ground. On the other hand, with the construction of a number of new Chinese pipelines, the US views China as an increasingly important player in Central Asia in the competition for establishing export routes for the energy resources of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Given the massive oil reserves in the region, particularly in Kazakhstan, this resource-rich countries have become the hot bed of political tussles among US, Russia, China and India. These major players are resorting to their own respective strategies for influencing the local decision-making processes, particularly in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. The intense scramble among US, Russia, China and India for the vast energy resources is particularly palpable in Kazakhstan.

After the end of the Cold War the geographical dynamics in Central Asia have assumed diverse and multi-faceted dimensions. The principal players are differently positioned in the region, and are often in apparent conflict with one another. The New Great Game in the region takes on a sharp edge when the manoeuvres made by the principal players transform the unspoken rivalries into a zero-sum game. In the global context, US, Russia, China and

India have woven a complex web of relationship and rivalries. When these powers get embroiled in the scramble for energy resources, the Great Game in Central Asia takes on complex characteristics. Both India and Russia are strategically inclined to cooperate with each other in the region. While nursing ambitious aims in Central Asia, both these countries have other global priorities and are constrained to apply limited resources to the pursuit of their strategies in the region. India and Russia have historically maintained a mutually beneficial and cooperative bilateral relationship. Hence, they are not inclined to pursue confrontational strategies in Central Asia that could adversely affect their overall affinity. This chapter attempts to distinguish the degrees of competition and cooperation among the major players involved in central Asia in general and Kazakhstan in particular. The New Great Game in Central Asia is reminiscent of the power politics of the original Great Game played out in the region. In the context of China's intense desire to establish its hegemony in Asia, its rapidly intensifying militaristic stance and conflict with India has long been seen as inevitable and predictable. On its part, India recognises the need for diverse energy resources to fuel its economic growth. Accordingly, its foreign policy is designed to support the country's overall ambitions, including in the Central Asian region. In this context India is not only keen to secure fresh energy deals, but is willing to invest in the extraction and processing of oil and gas at ground zero, including in the support framework. Additionally, India is agreeable to invest in related infrastructural projects, such as pipelines, roads, and Railways, that will facilitate the transport of the energy resources to India. India's proposed investments in the transportation infrastructure will bear benefits for the intermediary countries. These countries will be able to draw resources from energy rich nations and connect with their markets. Further, these intermediaries will earn transit fees on the volumes of trade operations. India has emerged as an important growth centre in the international economic landscape. Significantly, India is now one of the largest oil importers in the world.

It is experiencing a rapid growth in the need to import Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), preferably through pipelines, in order to support its projected economic growth, without adversely impacting the environment. The above discussion brings to the fore India's foreign policy strategy to support Kazakhstan and its neighbours to explore different options and exploit new opportunities to diversify the flow of energy resources in all directions.

CHAPTER-FIVE

Challenges and Opportunities in India's Quest for Energy in Kazakhstan

Introduction

India's efforts towards liberalising its economy followed the world-wide movement for globalisation. There was concurrently a renewed focus on the country's economic interests, as was propelled by the need for increased energy to enable and sustain rapid economic growth. The sharply enhanced rate of economic growth demanded uninterrupted and adequate supplies of energy. The energy supplies from the limited traditional sources proving to be potentially uncertain in meeting India's additional requirements, the need arose for the country to diversify its energy supply sources. In that context, India decided to meaningfully expand its relationship with the energy-rich countries in its extended neighbourhood. The empanelment of the Central Asian Republics as sources of energy would contribute to securing India's economic ambitions and advancement. To that end, India made necessary structural changes in its foreign policy that would enable the country to enter into bilateral agreements in the energy sector relating to hydropower, oil, natural gas and nuclear cooperation. India's policy was clearly enunciated by its former Prime

Minister, Manmohan Singh, who announced the national quest for energy security as a vital factor in diplomacy that would guide India's dealings with other countries across the world.⁷³⁸

This chapter attempts to define the challenges and opportunities that characterise India's quest for energy in the Central Asian Republic of Kazakhstan. The Central Asian region bristles with opportunities and challenges for India. The massive energy reserves that are potentially available for exploration and exploitation have given rise to complex geopolitical developments that have a bearing on India's quest for energy and the feasible initiatives that may be taken in the region, particularly in Kazakhstan. Central Asia fits into India's policy for diversifying its energy sources, an accompanying investment, and is accordingly an arena for India's energy quest. However, India does not have direct access to the energy deposits in Central Asia and needs the cooperation of other contiguous countries. In accordance with its revised foreign policy, India has embarked upon a number of initiatives in the Central Asian Region.

In 2018, Sushma Swaraj, India's former External Affairs Minister, visited Kazakhstan, and declare India's intent to expand its relations with the region.⁷³⁹ She participated in constructive discussions with Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister on bilateral, regional and global matters of mutual interest, and explore the potential opportunities for increasing bilateral energy cooperation, as well as deals in agriculture and pharmaceuticals. The two sides evinced keen interest in the potential for linking the digital India programme with

⁷³⁸ Zhao, Hong. *China and India: The Quest for Energy Resources in the 21st Century*. Routledge, 2012, p. 60.

⁷³⁹ Zafar, Athar. "Foreign Minister's Visit Reinforces India's Ties with Central Asia." *Indian Council of World Affairs*, Government of India, 28 Sep. 2018, www.icwa.in/show_content.php?lang=1&level=3&ls_id=2453&lid=1876. Accessed on 22 April 2020.

the digital Kazakhstan programme.⁷⁴⁰ The bilateral relations between the two countries are largely focused on trade and energy. Between 2005 and 2017 India's total direct investment in Kazakhstan amounted to US \$ 245 million. In the same period, Kazakhstan invested US \$ 83 million in India.⁷⁴¹

India's Quest for Energy in Kazakhstan: Challenges

Though India proudly shares cultural and civilisation linkages with Central Asia dating from the remote past, and even if there is an upward trend in contemporary relations, India has achieved relatively limited success in Central Asia in the last two decades. The following section reveals India's failure to make satisfactory headway in the energy Sector in Kazakhstan, even if measured across different parameters. This has resulted in growing dissatisfaction among Indian strategic thinkers. Even since the late 90s, and in the current times, a general sense of disappointment suffuses the subject of India's progress in expanding its presence in Kazakhstan. In the geopolitical circumstances prevailing in the 90s, India's challenges in Kazakhstan largely flowed from its own domestic political constraints, economic deficits and the preoccupation with Pakistan's belligerence. However, since then, India has strongly emerged as a rising power in Asia, that needs no larger to be held back by the negative influences in its immediate South Asian neighbourhood. Even so, interns of its declared strategy in Central Asia, India has not met with the desired degrees of success in the implementation of its game plans. In comparison, India's foreign policy in Afghanistan has been relatively more effective. India has made consistent efforts to expand its presence in Central Asia in general and

⁷⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁴¹ Ibid.

Kazakhstan in particular, in the face of formidable geopolitical constraints. In the process, India has had no option but to admit the limits of its Look North Policy. Accordingly, in 2012, India declares its Connect Central Asia Policy, that proposed to address the constraining factors.⁷⁴² More than eight years have passed since then and the consensus among the observers is that the CCA policy too has been large unsuccessful in overcoming the geopolitical and other challenges.⁷⁴³

A study of the difficulties plaguing India's quest for energy in Kazakhstan reveals that they largely stem from the Soviet era. Apart from the geographical limitations, the proposed pipelines are threatened by terrorist activities in volatile areas, an environment of instability, corruption, economic mismanagement, lack of exposure to global dynamics due to the regions long confinement within Soviet boundaries, difficulties in adjusting to the global system, and the volatile swings in bilateral relations with regard to the transit countries on the southern routes. Both the Kazakh and Indian government have attempted to surmount these challenges as best as they may but have met with limited success. In a study of India's existing and potential relations with Kazakhstan, the multiple challenges facing India need to be meaningfully discussed. In the process, the successes and failures in the implementation of the connect Central Asia Policy will come to light. It is clear that India is yet to achieve its desire level of influence in the Central Asian region in general, and Kazakhstan in particular. As a consequence, India is yet to formulate and execute a satisfactory and durable national energy security strategy.

⁷⁴² Gupta, Arvind. "India and Central Asia: Need for a Pro-active Approach". *Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses*, 14 October 2013, www.idsa.in/policybrief/IndiaandCentralAsia_agupta_141013. Accessed on 2 November 2020.

⁷⁴³ Jha, Martand. "India's Connect Central Asia Policy: A look back at India-Central Asia relations in the post-Soviet era.". *The Diplomat*, 2 December 2016, www.thediplomat.com/2016/12/indias-connect-central-asia-policy-2/. Accessed on 3 December 2020.

India's overland access to the Central Asian Republics, or the extended neighbourhood, must necessarily traverse the unstable countries in the immediate neighbourhood. Both Afghanistan and Pakistan show signs of ending up as failed states. The complexities are even more compounded by India's seriously fraught relationship with its nuclear armed neighbour, Pakistan. The confrontational stance has long exercised India's foreign and defence policy. India has consistently sought to rise above the narrow focus of this sub-continental rivalry. However, Pakistan's relentless sponsorship of terrorism within India, its own economic uncertainties, and the existence of powerful radical groups cause India to be wary of this volatile neighbour.

In hindsight, India failed to venture into the Central Asian region in the 90s after the dissolution of Soviet Union, when the newly independent republics were in need of immediate international recognition, support and cooperation. Immediately subsequent to the collapse of the Soviet Union, West Asia was rocked by the Gulf War between the coalition forces led by US and Iraq. The economic fallout of the Gulf War affected India thus necessitating an emergency response by way of economic reforms and rapid market liberalisation in the early 90s. India's inward focus on the economy and the domestic political dynamics prevented the formulation of an updated foreign policy. Consequently, India lost the opportunity to be in the reckoning in the power politics of Central Asia, especially in Kazakhstan. However, in the late 90s, with the declaration of its Look North Policy, India announced its interest to constructively engage with Central Asia.⁷⁴⁴ This new direction to India's foreign policy had little effect on the ground. Pakistan continues

⁷⁴⁴ Pradhan, Ramakrushna "India's Soft Power in Central Asia: Why it Must Act on the Look North Policy" *Mainstream*, 11 July. 2015, www.mainstreamweekly.net/article5792.html. Accessed on 22 December 2020.

to engage India's attention. In terms of long-term strategies in the greater regional and global context India's foreign policy failed to measure up to the compulsions of the big picture that transcended the national borders.

While attempting to extend and enhance its presence in Central Asia, and Kazakhstan in particular, India was mistakenly dismayed to find the region engage in economic collaboration with Pakistan. The regions relations with Pakistan were a part of its immediate economic aspirations. However, India apprehended that such engagements might lead to Islamisation of the entire region. This was in the context of India viewing the developments through the narrow prism of its own fraught ties with Pakistan. Such a flaw in India's strategic perceptions and the inability to gauge the compulsions faced by the Central Asian Republics adversely affected India's energy security policy in Kazakhstan. India's failure to forge a significant and effective energy partnership with Kazakhstan owed also to India's lack of economic muscle. Going forward, in the context of political affinity and security cooperation, Central Asia is projected to play an important role in India's security environment. The region is also expected to engage with Afghanistan and Pakistan in a limited manner. This factor will be key to India's future engagements with Kazakhstan, and will affect India's energy quest in that country.

In terms of its energy quest in Central Asia, India has met with both successes and setbacks. To illustrate India has succeeded in purchasing Uranium from Kazakhstan, and acquiring a part stake in the Satpayev oil and gas fields in the Caspian region through the ONGC. However, India has made little headway on the energy front and remains a minor player in the region, a long way behind China and Russia. While some of India's challenges can be dealt with, others are apparently insurmountable.

In the overall context, India's private sector has done little by way of advancing the nation's foreign policy strategies. With the exception of the ONGC, India's large nationalised public-sector companies have also not engaged their technological capabilities in Kazakhstan. The state-control companies of China own significant stakes in the energy sector of Kazakhstan and over the years, have established a meaningful presence in that country. In the circumstances Indian companies find it difficult to enter into Kazakhstan's energy sector by means of investment and collaboration. Though India's economic standing has been strengthening steadily and there is an intense need to diversify its energy sources, the rivalry with China has restricted India's achievements in Central Asia in general, and Kazakhstan in particular.

In the absence of a common border with the Central Asian region India is unable to establish the connectivity that is required in order to achieve a thriving trading relationship by means of a direct geographical trade access.⁷⁴⁵ Though there have been a few successful trade deals and occasional investments India's economic strategy in the region has not achieved any meaningful involvement in Central Asia's industrial and investment sectors. India's foreign policy initiatives in Central Asia comprise developmental assistance programmes, Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs), and deals made by Indian private sector companies. However, India's Foreign Policy Strategy in Kazakhstan has failed to make any notable headway in the energy sector by way of driving significant investments. In comparison both China and Russia have been able to deploy massive funds by way of private and public investments in Kazakhstan. India has not aggressively pushed for

⁷⁴⁵ Roy Meena S. "India-Tajikistan Relations: Prospect for Cooperation". *Geopolitics Dynamism of India-Tajikistan Relations*, edited by Jyotsna Bakshi, Pentagonan Press, 2013, pp. 51-71.

investment opportunities in the region. This study finds India in unfavourable comparison with the other powers that persist in projecting their visions and ideas and gaining significant clout in the region. Going forward, India needs to proactively exercise its hard-power and soft-power competencies. So as to present itself to Kazakhstan as a valuable partner. India's specific objectives can only be achieved by the use of its hard power and soft power capabilities.

This study now turns to some of the constraints that are beyond India's control in its dealings with Central Asia. These limitations are far more obstructive than the challenges that are within India's control. The uncontrollable factors stem from India's unfavourable geographical positioning in relation to Central Asia, and the adverse geopolitical circumstances obtaining in South Asia as well as in the Central Asian region. In terms of relative geographical location, India's biggest hindrance is the absence of direct access to the Central Asian states. Unlike China and Russia India does not share a common border with the region. This directly and adversely impedes India's efforts to establish energy convenient overland pipe lines also it hampers any direct security cooperation between India and Kazakhstan. The territory of Afghanistan is plagued by internal unrest and high degrees of violence. Pakistan's belligerent stance towards India rules out its territory for use as an overland corridor to Central Asia. The remaining overland option for India is the potential route through Tibet and Xinjiang in China. This route too is ruled out since China views India as a rival and is unwilling to facilitate India's economic growth and expansion of influence.⁷⁴⁶

⁷⁴⁶ Sikri, Rajiv. "Challenge and Strategy: Rethinking India's Foreign Policy". *Indian Foreign Affairs Journal*, vol. 9, no. 1, January–March 2014, pp. 56-69, www.associationdiplomats.org/Publications/ifaj/Vol9/9.1/9.1ARTICLE%204-RS.pdf. Accessed on 5 December 2020; and also see Sikri, Rajiv. *India's Foreign Policy Challenges*, Distinguished Lectures at Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee, Ministry of external Affairs, Government of India, 30 January 2017, www.mea.gov.in/distinguished-lectures-detail.htm?611. Accessed on 5 December 2020.

India finds it difficult to weather the complicated oil geopolitics of Kazakhstan and widen its presence in that country. Over the past three decades India has been unable to create a worthwhile niche for itself in Kazakhstan, or in the Central Asian region in general. China is firmly embedded in Kazakhstan and is a major player in that country. It has profitably invested in building pipelines from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan that lead directly to its Xinjiang province. In 2012 China successfully side-lined India's bids in Kazakhstan's oil market and bought an 8.4% stake in Kashgan oil field.⁷⁴⁷ Earlier, in 2005, China's CNPS enterprise pushed aside the bid of India's ONGC and won a stake in PetroKazakhstan.⁷⁴⁸ However, in order to arrange for the supply of Uranium, India is meaningfully engaged with KazAtomProm in the field of Uranium mining.⁷⁴⁹ Given its established standing in Kazakhstan's energy market, and its aggressive rivalry with India, China is manifestly unwilling to allow India to establish a presence in the region.

Owing to the fragility of the oil infrastructure and transportation facilities, India's aspirations are majorly impeded by the lack of investments. The obvious overland transit routes between India and the Central Asian states cut through Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, in order to ensure the security of the pipelines, both Afghanistan and Pakistan need to be demonstrably peaceful and non-threatening. In addition, there are other less critical issues that stand in the way of India's success in Kazakhstan's energy market. Firstly, Indian companies are unwilling to enter into new ventures that have a degree of risk and uncertainty. secondly the strict visa procedures discourage deeper involvement by

⁷⁴⁷ Singh, Ajay P., and S. K. Pandey. "Central Asian Energy in India's Quest for Energy Security". *World Focus*, vol. 38, no. 10, October 2017, pp. 23-28.

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁹ *Annual Report 2015*. National Atomic Company Kazatomprom Joint Stock Company, Republic of Kazakhstan, 2016, www.kazatomprom.kz/storage/89/896c0cda557424d01e3455fa21edff7b.pdf. Accessed on 5 December 2020.

the concerned potential Indian investors. Thirdly, the Indian government has done little to arrange for the removal of bilateral customs barriers. And fourthly, the Indian government has no schemes to motivate Indian companies to enter into joint ventures in Central Asia.

Another significant constraint faced by India is the slow pace of implementation of the two important projects, namely, the Central Asia-South Asia Power Project (CASA-1000) and the INSTC transit project. With regard to the CASA-1000 project India's involvement appears to be impractical and over-ambitious.⁷⁵⁰ In spite of the valuable support offered by international players, both the CASA-1000 and INSTC projects have failed to translate into ground realities. Both the projects have experienced inordinate delay in their implementation. According to the experts, the proposed CASA-1000 transmission line is hampered by security issues.⁷⁵¹ The concerned countries have a reasoned apprehension that militants may capture these multi-billion-dollar projects and demand hefty ransom for their release. In the light of the indefinite delay in implementing the CASA-1000 project, the stakeholders have expressed doubt about the eventual realisation of these conceptual projects. The INSTC project has also failed to make progress. The railway lines that are a main feature in the INSTC are yet incomplete over long stretches. The road network has similar gaps. The INSTC partners have not evinced sufficient interest in the project owing to the low volumes of trade among them. Some of the technical difficulties on the ground emanate from the different railway gauges used by the concerned countries.⁷⁵² So far, there has been no resolution to the problems encountered by the two projects.

⁷⁵⁰ Singh, Ajay P. Op. cit.

⁷⁵¹ Sadat, Sayed M. "TAPI and CASA-1000: Win-Win Trade Between Central Asia and South Asia". *Central Asia Security Policy Briefs*, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, OSCE Academy, no. 25, May 2015, pp. 9-12. www.osce-academy.net/upload/file/Policy_Brief_25.pdf. Accessed on 22 December 2020.

⁷⁵² Singh, Ajay P., and S. K. Pandey. Op. cit.

There are a number of issues that impede the bilateral cooperation between India and Kazakhstan in the field of nuclear technologies in general, and uranium trade in particular. The public, private and joint business structures in either country have failed to adequately coordinate with the corresponding structures in the other country, even in matters relating to long-term trade partnerships, and the production and processing of raw materials. The influences and decision makers, and even the people at large in Kazakhstan are generally unaware of India's progress towards a modern economy, and its advanced technological capacity to process uranium and operate nuclear systems. Consequently, Kazakhstan is uncertain about the benefits of cooperation with India in uranium trade, exchange of technologies, and implementation of joint projects in the peaceful uses of nuclear power. Regrettably, Kazakhstan has not yet forged a significant partnership with India with regard to strategic raw materials. In effect, they have yet to express sufficient interest in developing such sensitive trade relations with India. Additionally, since uranium is a critical raw material for the potential creation of nuclear weapon, a heightened wariness attaches to trading in this raw material.

In the event, India has achieved limited success in accessing Kazakhstan's energy sources. In the years immediately after the independence of the Central Asian States in 1991, India was not considered to be a significant player in the region. However, in the last two decades, India's engagements in Central Asia have been accelerated and intensified. In the process India has identified a number of challenges in the region that have yet to be overcome. Principally, Kazakhstan is land locked, and there is no contiguity between the territories of India and Central Asia.⁷⁵³ As a matter of State Policy Pakistan blocks India's

⁷⁵³ Attri, Ashok K. *India and Central Asia Republics*. Regal Publications, 2010, p. 195.

overland access to the region. Any conceptual pipeline between Central Asia and India must traverse third countries, and India has no control over the internal and geopolitical issues in those countries. Accordingly, India is concerned over the factors that constrain its relations with Kazakhstan, especially in the energy sector. There is the felt need to establish a reliable transit corridor between India and Central Asia. In general, owing to the vast energy resources, Kazakhstan finds itself embroiled in a complex web of international politics. The fears of a scramble for control over the energy resources expose the United States, the European Union (EU), Russia and China as the major competitors.⁷⁵⁴ All of these powers are keenly competing to build new pipeline infrastructure to carry oil and gas from the region.

In the absence of direct access or even facilitated indirect access, to the region, India remains a minor player in the New Great Game in Kazakhstan, and is far from exercising major influence in the region. Further, India is aware of the potentially adverse impact of the complex and unpredictable dynamics of the politico-security environment in the Central Asian region, and the need to be cautious so as not to jeopardise India's interests in Kazakhstan. Generally, India is held back from vigorously pursuing its interests in Kazakhstan, in the backdrop of the Big-power contests among the US, Russia and China in greater Asia in general, and Central Asia in particular. The lately emerging closeness between Russia and China does not bode well for India, as it is a signal that Russia is no longer interested to posit India to offset Chinese pre-dominance in the SCO.⁷⁵⁵ Importantly, even apart from the great-power contests, there are geopolitical uncertainties

⁷⁵⁴ Joshi, Nirmala. "India-Central Asia Energy Cooperation". *India and Central Asia: Two Decades of Transition*, edited by P. L. Dash, Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 50-61.

⁷⁵⁵ Jiang, Yuan. "Russia's Strategy in Central Asia: Inviting India to Balance China." *The Diplomat*, 23 January 2020, www.thediplomat.com/2020/01/russias-strategy-in-central-asia-inviting-india-to-balance-china/, Accessed on 22 December 2020.

that inhibit India from pressing forward for securing Central Asia energy resources, mainly in Kazakhstan. The hope for security and stability in Afghanistan continues to recede, while the Taliban and other terror groups expand their sway over larger territories.⁷⁵⁶ Keeping its own national interests in mind, India actively assists the Central Asian Republics to fend off the forces of religious extremism and terrorism.⁷⁵⁷ In these overall perspectives, the threat to security constrains India from vigorously pursuing its foreign policy objectives in Kazakhstan.

The existing government of Afghanistan maintains friendly relations with India. It also seeks to pursue normal relations with Pakistan, despite Pakistan supporting the Taliban foresees that aim to seize power in Kabul. Afghanistan aspires to revive the traditional trade with India and newly access India's vast market. Expansion of trade with India will help to lift Afghanistan's economy. Stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan is key to the consistency of India's energy relations with Kazakhstan. Admittedly, India will not be able to implement a successful Central Asia policy unless Pakistan and Afghanistan become viable and stable states.

Kazakhstan's Energy Market: Opportunities for India

The focus of the world with regard to energy sources is directed towards Asia. The Asian energy market is significant for its grave challenges and great opportunities. India's

⁷⁵⁶ United Nations Security Council. "Eleventh report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2501 (2019)". 27 May 2020, www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2020_415_e.pdf. Accessed on 3 January 2021.

⁷⁵⁷ Muni, S. D. "India and Central Asia: Towards a Co-operative Future". *Central Asia: The Great Game Replayed: An Indian Perspective*, edited by Nirmala Joshi, New Century Publications, 2003, pp. 97-132.

foreign policy in respect of energy recognises Central Asia as a key source. This region in India's extended neighbourhood is potentially important for the country's economic planning and growth. Being largely dependent on external sources of energy and owing to rapidly growing energy needs for civilian and military purposes, Central Asia features among India's strategic concerns. In 2018, India was ranked third among global energy consumers, in proportion to its size and population.⁷⁵⁸ With a view to the future, India seeks to diversify its energy sources and Central Asia's massive oil reserves are obviously attractive given their geographic proximity. In the Central Asian region, Kazakhstan stands out for its massive reserves of energy. India views that country as having strategic significance as a potentially vital energy source. The Central Asian region, and Kazakhstan in particular, is home to a large Indian Diaspora. Further, India shares historical and civilisational links with the region. These factors explain Kazakhstan's growing geopolitical significance from India's point of view and India's increasing engagement in that country. India's foreign policy recognises the need to broaden the country's engagements with its energy rich northern neighbours in Central Asia. While attempting to forge multi-faceted relationships, both India and Kazakhstan recognise that the essence of the bilateral relations revolves around energy trade. India's refineries are largely calibrated to process the high-quality crude oil available in Kazakhstan. In spite of these major factors that justify the import of oil and gas from Kazakhstan, India faces significant constraints in the form of regional security issues.

A large proportion of the world's proven oil and gas reserves is available in Kazakhstan. Importantly, most of these deposits are yet to be explored and tapped. In the circumstances,

⁷⁵⁸ U.S. Energy Information Administration. "Country Analysis Executive Summary: India". September 2020, www.eia.gov/international/content/analysis/countries_long/India/india.pdf. Accessed on 22 November 2020.

India recognises great opportunities for sourcing oil and gas from Kazakhstan. In order to secure India's energy supplies from diverse sources, India views Kazakhstan's vast untapped reserves of energy as a viable source. Kazakhstan with its huge untapped energy resources is in a position to play a vital role in India's energy security both in the short term and the long term, as India's need for energy continues to rise. As estimated by the US. Energy Information Administration, in 2018, Kazakhstan's proven oil reserves amounted to 30 billion barrels, just behind the United States reserves.⁷⁵⁹ In the same year, Kazakhstan's proven natural gas reserves amounted to 85 trillion cubic feet (Tcf).⁷⁶⁰ As more and more energy reserves are explored and exploited, Kazakhstan is expected to become one of the world's leading oil producers over the next few decades. Kazakhstan's state oil and gas company, KazMunaiGaz estimates the total investments in the offshore areas of the Caspian Sea to rise from \$ 3.8 billion in 2003-2005 to \$ 16.8 billion in 2011-2015.⁷⁶¹ The target was duly achieved. The important oil fields under reference include Tengiz, Karachaganak, Kashagan, and Kurmangazy.⁷⁶² In the Central Asian region Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan are noted for their massive deposits of oil and natural gas, that are largely waiting to be explored and tapped.⁷⁶³ In the estimates of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Kazakhstan is prominent among the five republics as the holder of 65 years of oil reserves and 308 years of coal reserves.⁷⁶⁴

⁷⁵⁹ U.S Energy Information Administration. "Background Reference: Kazakhstan." January 7, 2019, www.eia.gov/international/content/analysis/countries_long/Kazakhstan/pdf/kazakhstan_bkgd.pdf. Accessed on 22 August 2020.

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁶¹ Hussain, Mohammad S. *Redefining India's Opportunities and Challenges in Central Asia*. Mohit Publication, 2014, p. 72.

⁷⁶² Toizhavov, Yernur, et al. "Kazakhstan". *The Regulation of Decommissioning, Abandonment and Reuse Initiatives in the Oil and Gas Industry: From Obligation to Opportunities*, edited by Eduardo G. Pereira, et al. Kluwer Law International, 2020, pp. 932-45.

⁷⁶³ Pirani, Simon. "Central Asian Gas: prospects for the 2020s". *The Oxford Institute for Energy Studies*, no. 155, December 2019, pp. 1-40. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26889/9781784671525>.

⁷⁶⁴ Hussain, Mohammad S. Op. cit.

The above statistics justified India's strategic foreign policy objective to permanently engage with Kazakhstan. Based on the good will that India enjoys in Kazakhstan; India expects to overcome the existing constraints and adequately make use of the opportunities in Kazakhstan's oil and gas sector. On the one hand India has consistently contributed to Kazakhstan's developmental efforts, that has generated significant goodwill for India. On the other hand, Kazakhstan acknowledges India to be rapidly growing economic and knowledge power. India's strategy in Kazakhstan is led by its need to secure energy sources. India's continuing efforts towards boosting trading partnerships with Central Asian Countries is in conformity with its need to diversify energy sources. And among the Central Asian Republics, India accords just precedence and prominence to Kazakhstan in the context of its massive potential energy resources. Kazakhstan is already one of Central Asia's largest oil producers. Accordingly, India's foreign policy is constant in its objective to develop close ties with Kazakhstan, largely in the oil and energy sector. Other than attempting to achieve generally constructive and strategic political and developmental ties with all the five Central Asian States, India is deepening its strategic partnership with Kazakhstan. This has translated into a nuclear energy agreement that allows for joint exploration and research of Uranium, and engagement in Uranium trade. It also envisages collaboration between India and Kazakhstan in the construction and operation of nuclear power plants.

India and Kazakhstan have great opportunity to cooperate in the field of nuclear energy. India recognises that nuclear energy can play a significant role in accelerating economic growth. In 2002, nuclear power contributed only about 2% of the electricity generated in India.⁷⁶⁵ This owed largely to absence of cooperation from other countries, and the

⁷⁶⁵ Ibid.

inadequate reserves of uranium, as well as the low quality thereof. India recognised the growing need to enter into civilian nuclear cooperation agreements with other countries, such as Kazakhstan, in order to satisfy its rapidly growing energy requirements.⁷⁶⁶ In the context of India's increasing demand for Uranium and the presence of Uranium in Kazakhstan, there was enough motivation for the two countries to collaborate on this vital resource.

In 2008, the Nuclear Suppliers' Group (NSG) waived potential sanctions and permitted India to engage in nuclear trade with any country in the world.⁷⁶⁷ Accordingly, in 2009, India and Kazakhstan entered into a civilian nuclear cooperation agreement.⁷⁶⁸ This agreement facilitated the supply of nuclear fuel for India's nuclear power plants. Kazakhstan thus became the fourth global source to meet India's growing demand for uranium. Earlier, India had signed civilian nuclear cooperation agreements with the United States, France, Russia and Australia.⁷⁶⁹ The agreement with Kazakhstan is all the more significant because that country is the largest producer of uranium. In 2019, Kazakhstan produced 42% of the global supply of uranium from its mines. In comparison, the second largest producer, Canada, supplied 13% and the third largest producer, Australia, supplied 12%.⁷⁷⁰ These statistics explain while India laid great stress on its nuclear deal with Kazakhstan.

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 87.

⁷⁶⁸ India-Kazakhstan Relations. Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, December 2018, www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/december_2018.pdf. Accessed on 22 December 2020.

⁷⁶⁹ Mohan, Pulkit and Pallav Agarwal. "India's civil nuclear agreements: A new dimension in India's global diplomacy". *Observer Research Foundation*, 4 October 2019, www.orfonline.org/research/india-civil-nuclear-agreements-new-dimension-india-global-diplomacy.

⁷⁷⁰ World Nuclear Association. "World Uranium Mining Production" December 2020, www.world-nuclear.org/information-library/nuclear-fuel-cycle/mining-of-uranium/world-uranium-mining-production.aspx. Accessed on January 2021.

India's nuclear agreement with Kazakhstan enables India to produce clean energy and move away from the use of fuel that emits the gases that cause global warming. Further, nuclear energy provides India with the opportunity to sustain its economic growth. The agreement represents an important part of India's aspiration to tap into the energy resources of Kazakhstan. There is also an implied appreciation on the part of Kazakhstan of India being a responsible nuclear power. In the backdrop of this agreement, India could proceed towards a comprehensive structure for its relationship with Kazakhstan covering political, economic, trade, and cultural sectors. The nuclear agreement signified the potential for India and Kazakhstan to expand their mutual cooperation in all sectors, including energy, and for Kazakhstan to become India's important ally in Central Asia. In effect, it would bolster India's capacity as a regional power to deal with Pakistan and China in the region. By signing this agreement, Kazakhstan signalled its recognition of India as a major emerging power in the 21st Century, and the important part India could potentially play in the contemporary and long-term dynamics in Asia. Essentially, the nuclear agreement with Kazakhstan largely contributes to India's energy security. It also satisfies to a large extent quest for permanent sources of energy to help meet the country's regular need for energy and importantly ensure adequate generation of electricity.

In the last two decades, India has consistently attempted to expand its trade relations with Kazakhstan, particularly in respect of energy, nuclear cooperation, and science and technology. Nurturing the relations with Kazakhstan is an important feature in India's foreign policy. Kazakhstan is accorded the status of a strategic partner that is at once trust worthy and dependable. The mutually beneficial partnership encompasses the sectors such as hydrocarbons, defence, civil nuclear energy, space, science and technology, trade and investment. Through mutual cooperation and coordination, both India and Kazakhstan

aspire to achieve economic growth, infrastructural development and general prosperity. In the current scenario, Kazakhstan is India's most significant energy trading partner in Central Asia. India's foreign policy is geared towards enhancing its presence in Central Asia through durable strategic relationships with the Central Asian Republics, in respect of trade, economic and cultural linkages, and particularly with regard to accessing the vast energy resources, such as oil, gas and Uranium, with a view to strengthening India's energy security.

India's Opportunities in Kazakhstan and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

India's status as a full member of the SCO bolsters the collective campaign against terrorism and drug trafficking. Further, its presence India with a viable opportunity to integrate with Eurasian States, such as Kazakhstan and Russia, that would eventually lead to enhanced energy and economic partnerships. The SCO does not limit itself to issues related to energy. It is essentially an organisation for the promotion of collective security. In 2010, India enters into two agreements at Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, for the implementation of the TAPI project. However, the translation of this project into reality is subject to the establishment of peace, stability and cordiality in Afghanistan and Pakistan.⁷⁷¹ While giving value to India's cooperation in the matter, the SCO is willing to use its good offices for the purpose. The SCO provides India with a platform for cooperating with other members with regard to ensuring energy security, particularly in

⁷⁷¹ India-Turkmenistan Relations. Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, February 2020, www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India-Turkmenistan_Jun_2020.pdf. Accessed on Sep. 2020; Joshi, Nirmala. "India's Role in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation." January-March 2019, www.usiofindia.org/publication/usi-journal/indias-role-in-the-shanghai-cooperation-organisation/. Accessed on Sep. 2020.

respect of Kazakhstan. The SCO is a facilitator for initiating, encouraging and establishing regional stability. The member states readily agree to cooperate and contribute for achieving stability, that may not be possible when states act in isolation. India views the SCO as a useful forum that creates important energy, trade and investment opportunities for India and the other member states.

Both India and Kazakhstan stand to gain if the SCO admits new members. Russia, Iran, and Uzbekistan possess massive hydrocarbon fuel and other energy resources. They are important members of the SCO. Kazakhstan and Tajikistan and name to huge hydroelectric energy resources. As members of the SCO, they can contribute towards enhancing the energy security of all the countries in the region. The leading members of the SCO are committed to coordinating with other multilateral platforms such as G-20, BRICs, OPEC and the bilateral structures created by India and Kazakhstan, for promoting missile defence, nuclear safety and energy security, besides general prosperity for all concern. Among the Central Asian Republics Kazakhstan stands out for its potential as an important player and partner. It has an important status in India's foreign policy with regard to energy and strategic interests. It also plays a vital role in Asian regional groupings as the SCO. However, some of the multilateral projects of the SCO are constrained in their implementation owing to tensions and hostilities between member states. India has declared its capacity to satisfied the transportation requirements for the Caspian Sea oil and gas. The Caspian Sea region has large hydrocarbon deposits. For purposes of securing its energy future, India is determined to maintain its relations with Kazakhstan separately, as well as through meaningful participation in forums such as the SCO.

From India's stand point, the SCO not only creates new opportunities but also facilitates the strengthening and renewal of existing relationships. Importantly, for India, the SCO is an Asian platform for developmental cooperation among members, and not a military alliance. India recognises the SCO as a platform where new opportunities are broached and discussed, and new areas of cooperation are envisaged in the fields of economic growth, energy exploration and trade, developmental activities, connectivity issues, and traditional and novel security structures.⁷⁷² This platform presence India with new opportunities for engaging with member countries, particularly Kazakhstan, for diversification and development of energy sources. The forum enables India to gauge the dynamic environment prevailing in the Central Asian region. In this perspective, India lays great stress on the opportunity to intensify and expand its relations with Kazakhstan.

As an organisation, the SCO is committed to encourage economic cooperation, trade, energy exploration and regional connectivity. It also has the potential to facilitate India's access to Eurasia. Also, it can help in the implementation of projects such as TAPI and the Central Asia-South Asia Regional Electricity Market (CASAREM) that purports to act as a link between an energy-rich region and an energy-deficit region.⁷⁷³ In pursuance of its strategy to diversify energy sources in the interests of energy security, India has arranged for transport facilities through bilateral and regional agreements in order to secure oil from resource-rich Kazakhstan. India and Kazakhstan are able to meaningfully and constructively engage with each other through the good offices of the SCO, particularly on issues relating to security challenges, infrastructural development projects, and

⁷⁷² Roy, Meena S and Rajorshi Roy. "India and the SCO: A Vision for Expanding New Delhi's Engagement." *Russian International Affairs Council*, 4 December. 2019, www.russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/india-and-the-sco-a-vision-for-expanding-new-delhi-s-engagement/. Accessed on 12 October 2020.

⁷⁷³ Ibid.

installation of regional oil and gas pipelines that would be beneficial to both Central Asian and South Asian regions.⁷⁷⁴

Concluding Observation

The concluding chapter highlights India's involvement in the international dynamics being played out in Kazakhstan, and analysing the challenges and opportunities in the implementation of India's energy strategy in Kazakhstan. Regrettably as most scholars have observed India's presence in Kazakhstan's energy sector remains relatively nominal. The reasons for the slow progress are largely beyond India's control. The most significant obstacle in the way of securing energy connectivity with Central Asia is the absence of a common border with the region and the relative geographic positions. Likewise, the competitive rivalries, adverse bilateral relations and security challenges that exist among the players in the region constrain India from furthering its ties with Kazakhstan and there is little that India can do to resolve the problems. To some extent, India has lagged behind in matters relating to strategic planning, as also in respect of cutting-edge diplomacy. Consequently, its energy engagement abroad have evinced weak strategy and unsustainable project planning. Importantly, there has been little success in achieving security cooperation outside of its borders. The net effect of India's own incapacities is reflected in the unfavourable views held by Kazakhstan's opinion makers and decision takers. On the other hand, China and Russia have succeeded in creating strong and positive impressions among the people that matter in the formulation of foreign policies in Kazakhstan. To add to the adverse circumstances India and China have been less than cordial in their relations irrespective of global and bilateral issues. Owing to its

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid.

advantageous and contiguous border, China has succeeded in installing pipelines to carry oil and gas from the Central Asian region in order to bolster its own energy security, in addition to expanding its sphere of economic influence. In Kazakhstan, China has been instrumental in thwarting India's efforts to improve its presence and establish partnerships in Kazakhstan's energy sector.

India views its full membership in the SCO as a positive opportunity to carry forward its strategy to make deals that would improve its energy security. Further, within the SCO forum collective effort to combat terrorism and build structures that would ensure regional security. India's policy makers and analysts are largely unanimous in recognising the advantages enjoyed by Kazakhstan in respect of energy resources and opportunities for trade. Both India and Kazakhstan are also appreciative of their mutual, cultural, historical and civilizational linkages. Scholars have highlighted the geographical position of Central Asia, the vast oil and gas reserves, and the scramble to organise pipeline routes as the ingredients that have triggered a New Great Game in the 1990s, that echo the 19th Century international struggle for supremacy in Kazakhstan. Historically, international powers have vied to establish military bases in the region, engage in regime change operations and promote colour revolutions around the period of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. As yet it is not certain that India will translate its Connect Central Asia Policy into ground realities that would demand massive investments in terms of economic, military, and diplomatic capital, and organisational energy. While Kazakhstan features as a priority focus of engagement in India's foreign and energy security policy, India has so far not been able to establish itself as a major influential power in the region. Accordingly, analysts view Kazakhstan's importance in India's foreign policy strategy, as also India's efforts to play a major role in the region, as largely aspiration and not manifest in reality.

India's bilateral relations with Kazakhstan have not progressed beyond discussions and formulations of strategy.

Bilateral and multilateral relationships in the present scenario of globalisation are largely affected by energy linkages. India and Kazakhstan are agreed on the objective to develop a mutually enriching alliance and energy oriented economic ties. However, before the energy related strategies can be implemented on the ground, there are a number of problems that must be resolved. One of the bottlenecks is the absence of hard currency and conversion facilities. The development of tourism and business between India and Kazakhstan is impeded by the language barrier, in addition to absence of publicity by way of the main stream media, and weak marketing efforts by the respective governments. India's principal objective in respect of Central Asia, and Kazakhstan in particular, must relate to energy security, and diplomacy needs to be oriented towards achieving this objective. The present situation warrants a renewed thrust in energy and economic engagements. In order to achieve the growth envisaged by both the countries, it is necessary to strengthen their ties through considered policies and meaningful strategies to deal with all related issues.

Conclusion

Interpretation a country's foreign policy strategy is key to making sense of that nation's relations with the world outside of its borders, and to comprehend its stature and role in the arena of international politics. Further, the methodology for understanding a country's foreign policy and energy security strategy has to do with analyzing the manner in which concerned actors influence the country's foreign policy behavior. This work attempts to explore certain areas of India's strategy and performance in the Central Asian region, that have been largely been ignored or dealt with cursorily in previous studies. This dissertation favorably acknowledges the role of energy security in India's foreign policy approach towards Central Asia in general and Kazakhstan in particular. In the process, it focusses on the previously understudied areas that contribute to the formulation of India's energy security strategy. Moreover, this work covers the historical transformation of India's self-image, its salient experiences and memories, and the impact of those experiences on the contemporary leadership, in order to trace India's foreign policy strategy regarding energy security in case of the Central Asian region in general and Kazakhstan in particular.

The search for energy Security drives India's foreign policy in Kazakhstan and ensures a larger role for India on the international stage. India's foreign policy for Central Asia revolves around two vital processes dealing respectively with energy diplomacy and security issues, that are of mutual concern. Both India and the Central Asian states use the platform provided by the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in order to discuss common threat perceptions and cooperate in curbing both embedded and similar threats to

national and regional security. This study discusses India's political approach towards ensuring border security and confronting the three evils of terrorism, separatism, and religious fundamentalism. In the process it traces the gamut of tensions that exercise India's political elites with regard to national security. Such security concerns have the effect of hindering the achievement of India's objectives in Kazakhstan. Security threats at India's frontiers are a constant irritant that affect India's security policy framework. The study also examines the fall out of Afghanistan's internal conflicts and Pakistan's innate hostility towards India. These factors play their part as India's decision makers chart the nation's foreign policy objectives. The nature of the threats to national security in India and the Central Asian region quickly assume political ramifications. Both in the body of this dissertation and in the conclusion, a conscious effort has been made to address the research objectives that have been spelled out in the introductory section. This study concludes that while energy security is a principal driver of India's foreign policy, factors relating to historical legacy and contemporary security issues are no less important.

This dissertation empirically studies the preferences in India's foreign policy as has been evinced since the time India gained independence in 1947 to the contemporary period. In the post-Cold War period, with the liberalization of India's economy, the nation assumed a multifold identity that helped to shape India's current foreign policy objectives. While comprehending the foreign policy of contemporary India, this work offers a perspective of India as a rapidly rising power to be reckoned with regionally and globally. An analysis of the circumstances presently informing India's foreign policy takes into account the economic and energy paradigm. This study describes how India's foreign policy objectives are now oriented towards cooperation and mutual engagement. It also focuses on how the

threats to national Security emanate from differences in military capabilities, as also the perception of nations towards each other.

By delineating the role of the SCO, the study argues in favour of India's adoption of dynamic and innovative political responses to the extant geostrategic environment of Central Asia, while taking into account the traditional influence of Russia. India's foreign policy strategy is geared towards enhancing its presence and influence in the region. The SCO is a forum that encourages all-round economic development and bilateral or multi-lateral cooperation with regard to non-traditional security issues. Accordingly, both India and the Central Asian states view the SCO as an important regional organisation for concerted response to regional security challenges. The second chapter outlines the outcomes of India's foreign policy initiatives and political overtures with respect to Central Asia in general and Kazakhstan in particular. The chapter attempts to identify India's foreign policy objectives and constructive strategy to meaningfully engage with the Central Asian region as a whole and with Kazakhstan's specifically.

The dissertation too uses the empirical method for tracing the bilateral economic and energy relations between India and Kazakhstan. Concomitant to the end of the Cold War, India's liberalized policies from the early 1990s allowed for a pragmatic approach by Indian leaders towards national economic, energy and security issues, free from the Straitjacket of the policies in the initial decades of India's independence. Indian leaders were newly inclined towards seeking regional cooperation with states in the extended neighborhood on issues of mutual or collective concern. Chapter three of this dissertation expounds on India's foreign policy objectives that seek to deepen relations with Kazakhstan in the fields of economy, energy and trade. It was India's experience that

economic links with the extended neighborhood were hampered by volatile security circumstances in the immediate northern neighborhood. In relatively recent times India has explored the means to establish economic relations with the Republic of Kazakhstan, effectively bypassing the hostile intermediary state of Pakistan, and the unrest in Afghanistan. India is now largely viewed as a burgeoning economic power, with rapid economic development importantly contributing to ensuring national stability. Since India launched its Connect Central Asia Policy in 2012, the country's relations with the Central Asian region in general, and Kazakhstan in particular, have resulted in diverse and enhanced economic relations, as also an improved security environment. India's political elites are currently concerned with the tensions prevalent in Afghanistan and terrorism emanating from Pakistan.

The dissertation too offers an empirical study of Kazakhstan's natural resources particularly energy reserves, the stalled pipeline projects, and India's regional strategy for cooperation and competition. India's pipeline proposal has remained stuck on the drawing-board owing to Pakistan's hostility and the insecurity in Afghanistan. The study identifies and examines the strategies of other external players in Kazakhstan that aim for greater control over the energy reserves, and how they affect India's objectives in the area. India's primary concern in Kazakhstan has to do with China. Apart from threatening India's border militarily, and opposing India's moves in various world forums, China resents India's growing presence in the Central Asian region. The Chinese press, that is controlled by the government, projects India as a geopolitical competitor. United States too evinces keen interest in the Central Asian region, particularly in respect of energy reserves, in the era following the September 11, 2001 (9/11) terror attacks on its soil. In order to carry

forward its objectives in the region, the U.S. actively promotes the operation of a free market.

While pursuing the above-stated issues and developments, the study attempts to build a coherent understanding of India's strategy of securing energy sources in the Central Asian region, particularly Kazakhstan. The work attempts to blend the historical backdrop with contemporary circumstances in order to explain India's expending energy relations with the Central Asian region. In general, India's foreign policy towards Central Asia may be described as a multifrontal and multifaceted process. India's Central Asia policy is closely connected with its national security and economic objectives. The study acknowledges that India's strategy in Central Asia is aligned to the nation's comprehensive foreign policies with regard to the region and the world.

Research Questions and Reasoned Arguments

The work attempts to furnish reasoned arguments in response to the research questions, and to at once satisfy the research objectives. The Central argument of this study is introduced on the analysis of factors that drive India's strategy to secure energy sources in Central Asia, specifically Kazakhstan. These salient factors have been identified in course of a Survey of contemporary literature on the subject, and are the topics of exploration in this dissertation. The factors comprise India's economic compulsion, strategic concerns, need for diversification of energy sources, and aspirations for enhanced trade and convenient connectivity with the Central Asian region in general, and Kazakhstan in particular. The principal objectives of this dissertation are in Sync with India's strategies as out lined by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) with regard to the Connect Central

Asia Policy enunciated in 2012 and the consequent upgradation of India's relations with the region.

The reasoned arguments that drive this research are proven to be valid in the contemporary context. This dissertation highlights India's need to diversify energy sources, avail economic opportunities and promote national security as the major drivers of its engagements with Kazakhstan, especially taking into account the volatility and insecurity accompanying the political transitions in Afghanistan along with the western withdrawal from the region. India's policy makers acknowledge the long-term advantages that Central Asia offers. Firstly, it has vast natural resources that are waiting to be tapped. These reserves are vital to India's objective to achieve energy security. Secondly the Central Asian markets have the potential to be a destination for India's growing economic surpluses. Thirdly, Central Asia can provide convenient access to the greater Eurasian landmass for purposes of connectivity and trade. The principal assumptions behind this research are proven to be valid in course of answering the research questions.

Why the state of Kazakhstan occupies a Central position in India's 'Connect Central Asia Policy'?

From ancient times and through history travelers and traders have move between Kazakhstan and India. Accordingly, India and Kazakhstan have cultural and commercial ties dating back centuries. After gaining independence from the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan had sought to forge diplomatic and business links with different countries of the world. India was among the first countries to recognised Kazakhstan's sovereignty and establish diplomatic ties. In Central Asia, and in the wider world, Kazakhstan is among the few countries that possess massive deposits of oil, natural gas and uranium. Kazakhstan has

expressed its inclination to diversify the destinations for its energy exports, particularly to high-growth emerging economies. After opening its economy in the early 1990s, India has experienced rapid development and a dramatic increase in the need for energy. Policy makers also felt the need to diversify the sources of energy in order to ensure India's energy security. Kazakhstan was an obvious choice in view of its historical links, massive untapped energy reserve, and its ready willingness to trade with India.

Kazakhstan offered a direct onward connection with Russia and the region of Eurasia, and thence to Europe. Kazakhstan is a natural link in the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) as also in the corridor envisaged through the Chabahar Port in Iran, being constructed by India. While China is an aggressive competitor for the energy deposits in the region, and Russia is a historically established stake holder, Kazakhstan has yet untapped energy reserve that India can explore and exploit.

Subject to the willingness of the concern countries, Kazakhstan is willing to export its energy southwards via the TAPI pipeline project. Kazakhstan has massive reserve in the Caspian Sea region and India is in a position to lend expertise and invest in the tapping of such reserves. Kazakhstan has shown major interest in forging ties with India and have engaged in repeated Prime Ministerial visits between the two countries followed by formal agreements. Kazakhstan is also interested in partnering India in ensuring regional security and counter-terrorism operations. Both India and Kazakhstan have discovered a mutual affinity between their two countries and a convergence in their foreign policy that can lead to mutual benefits in different dimensions of their relationship. India has a critical need for uranium in order to run its nuclear power plants to full capacity, Kazakhstan has the largest

uranium deposit in the world and is agreeable to supply the precious resource to India, particularly after the approval accorded to India by the Nuclear Supply Group (NSG).

Both India and Kazakhstan can reap huge benefits from people-to-people interaction through tourism, academic, and cultural exchanges, and the sharing of technology and expertise. India finds mutuality with Kazakhstan in liberal social policies that encourage pluralism. India and Kazakhstan are both member of SCO which is a convenient platform for negotiation, coordination and furtherance of mutual policies and objectives.

What are the perceptions of intelligentsia and common people from both side the bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and India?

The intelligentsia in Kazakhstan are keenly interested in diversifying the countries energy exports to different nations, particularly those evincing strong, surging economies on a path of rapid growth. They consider India to be a potentially important partner on a mutually beneficial path. India happens to be among the fastest growing economies in the world with a strong base. Lately, the value of India's share market at 3.4 trillion has exceeded that of France and its close to fifth-ranked Britain.

On the other hand, the Indian intelligentsia see the need to diversify the countries energy sources, particularly in the context of volatile political developments in the Middle East. Kazakhstan has the advantage of being strategically located in India's extended neighbourhood and has traditional ties with India by way of trade, culture, values and history. Other than oil and natural gas, India needs uranium. Kazakhstan is rich in all three resources. The intelligentsia in Kazakhstan are desirous of opening export markets to the south. The Indian intelligentsia are interested in opening an energy and trading corridor to

the north. India's intelligentsia are concerned with nuclear energy as a vital means to achieve energy security. Kazakhstan is an important source of uranium, as India's own uranium deposits are grossly inadequate.

Kazakhstan intelligentsia are interested in exporting uranium to countries that will use the resource for peaceful and civil purposes, such as generation of electricity. They are cautious in ensuring that their uranium export is not diverted towards developing destructive weapons of war. They recognised India as a political stable democracy that is focused on economic growth and the prosperity of its citizens. India's intelligentsia are concerned with China's hegemonistic ambitions and its ongoing construction of oil and gas pipeline in Central Asia, and the aggressive competition it poses for the energy resources of Kazakhstan.

The intelligentsia of Kazakhstan are wary of allowing China to expand its control over their country's energy resources. They want to remain independent of foreign pressure on their internal and external policies. China is known for its predatory behaviour in bilateral relations with less powerful countries in terms of economy and military might. India poses no such threat and promises to be a more resilient partner. In this manner there is a convergence and correspondence in the thinking process of the intelligentsia of Kazakhstan and India.

Which aspects constitute major challenges of India's involvement in Kazakhstan?

The first major challenge for India's involvement in Kazakhstan is the absence of an overland transit route. Such a route would need to pass through Pakistan and Afghanistan. Ever since the partition of India and the creation of Pakistan in 1947, the newly formed country as

maintain a hostile attitude towards India. This has led to four wars in 1948, 1965, 1971, and 1999, between the two countries and a constant state of unrest along the border and Line of Control (LoC). Consistent with its policy, Pakistan refuses to allow Indian trade to move across its territory towards Afghanistan and Central Asia.

Afghanistan has been embroiled in internal political unrest and violence. This has rendered the country unviable as a transit route for India to access Central Asia in general and Kazakhstan in particular. The Soviet invaded Afghanistan in 1979 and occupied the country till 1989. This period was marked by constant conflict between the Soviet military and the local group known as the Taliban. The Taliban, an extremist organisation, took part in a civil war following the departure of the Soviet forces. The civil war concluded with the Taliban assuming power in 1996. Their rule was characterized by an oppressive mode of government. The American military ousted them from power in 2001 subsequent to the 9/11 terror strikes in USA. The following 20 years witnessed a period of relative political stability and development. While a democratically elected government rule Afghanistan with the support of the U.S. military. However, the Taliban continue to perpetrate violent acts of terror.

In such a scenario of prolonged violence and uncertainty India and the U.S engaged in building roads, highway and other infrastructure. India expected that its investment in Afghanistan would lead to the creation of a passage to Central Asia. However, in 2021, the U.S forces withdraw from Afghanistan the government crumbled and the Taliban stormed into Kabul and took overcontrol, after having subdued most of the outlying provinces. At the peak of the consequent uncertainties India withdraw its diplomatic staff and evacuated other Indian citizen from Afghanistan. In the circumstances, the questions

of gaining access to Central Asia and Kazakhstan through Afghanistan remain shrouded in uncertainty.

The second major challenge to India's involvement in Kazakhstan is the active competition posed by China for control over the energy resources in that country. This is an addition to Russian's historical influence in Kazakhstan and its already constructed pipelines for conveying oil and natural gas out of the country. In some cases, it is observed that China has successfully out bid India for the right to explore and exploit the energy reserve in specific fields. However, owing to Kazakhstan favourable policies India has gained entry into the energy market in Kazakhstan along with rights in certain energy fields. China is also engaged in the construction of pipelines to convey oil and natural gas across the border to its Xingiang province unfortunately for India for reasons stated earlier the TAPI pipeline, though supported by U.S, has made no headway.

The third challenge to India's involvement in Kazakhstan is to find a way to bring Kazakh oil and natural gas to India by way of Sea route via the Chabahar Port in Iran. Unfortunately, for reason already stated, the Chabahar Port, where India has invested heavily in construction, has so far failed to serve India's purpose.

How far India is successful in maintaining a balance between its own interests and interest of other powers in this region?

India has successfully initiated and promoted good relations with the government, policy makers and other elites and the society at large in Kazakhstan. Moreover, India has actively encouraged cultural activities and trade fairs in Kazakhstan. Additionally, it participates in Kazakhstan energy markets. Finally, it takes part in the legitimate bidding process

relating to the exploration and exploitation of oil and natural gas in Kazakhstan's vast untapped fields. All these activities are aimed to advance India's own interest in Kazakhstan without impinging on the activities of the other powers in the region. As matters presently stand, India is yet at the fringes of the Great Game being played out in Central Asia, particularly Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan own interest in diversifying its export is a factor working in India's favour. In tune with its foreign policy Kazakhstan welcomes India's presence on its territory and promises to facilitated the enhancement of India's involvement in the energy market. So far, there has been no conflict between India and the other major players operating in Kazakhstan. India has built a capital of goodwill in Kazakhstan. Indian companies have also expressed interest and willingness to participating developmental activities in Kazakhstan. Both India and Kazakhstan have mutually agreed to be involved in the construction and operation of nuclear power plants for peaceful purposes.

Would India ignore the stability issue in Pakistan and Afghanistan in realizing a healthy relationship with Kazakhstan?

Without any doubt or hesitation, India can ignore the stability issues in both Pakistan and Afghanistan and focus on developing mutually beneficial relations with Kazakhstan. Both the countries appreciate each other's culture and are keen to promote people-to-people contracts. Indian engineers, experts, and skill workers are already engaged meaningfully in Kazakhstan's diverse developmental projects. Some of India's prominent corporate house have invested in Kazakhstan in Kazakhstan's constructive and commercial projects. As a consequence, India has achieved substantial good will in Kazakhstan. These trends

can be carried forward irrespective of the internal and geopolitical ramifications concerning Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Limitations of this Dissertation and Scope for Further Research

A principal limitation of this research work is the fluidity attending the subject of study, particularly with regard to shifting regional and global paradigms. This dissertation analyses the motivation propelling India's energy security strategy in Central Asia over the last three decades since the creation of the five independent Central Asian Republics, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan. In this period for the sake of pragmatism, India's strategy and motivations in the region have undergone several changes and have been formally clarified in the declaration of the Connect Central Asia Policy in 2012. On a broader spectrum, India's foreign policy has experienced paradigm shifts in the wake of the 1998 Nuclear tests, 11 September 2001 terror attacks in the U.S., and, more recently, election of Narendra Modi as Prime Minister in May 2014.⁷⁷⁵ Likewise, the Central Asian Republics themselves have continued to be plagued by uncertainties, with multiple players jockeying for control over their energy assets, the fallout of economic sanctions on neighboring Iran, and the tensions accompanying the volatility across the border in Afghanistan. Even during the writing of this dissertation much has changed in the region consequent upon the withdrawal of western forces from Afghanistan, and China's aggressive push for economic dominance, with Central Asia

⁷⁷⁵ Kerttunen, Mika. Nuclear weapons and Indian Foreign Policy. Finnish National Defence University, Department of Strategic and Defence Studies, Series 1, Strategic Research No. 27, Helsinki 2009, pp. 119-122. www.core.ac.uk/download/pdf/39944282.pdf. Accessed on 22 Feb 2021; Deo, Neelam "Indian foreign policy: a paradigm shift?" *Gateway House*. 14 Dec 2016. www.gatewayhouse.in/indian-foreign-policy-a-paradigm-shift/. Accessed on 22 Feb 2021.

being located at the heart of China's Silk Road Economic Belt play.⁷⁷⁶ Accordingly, while this dissertation attempts to make a contemporary contribution to the field, there is always the possibility of factors that are valid today not being so tomorrow.

In the unfolding regional and global geopolitics, the present research assumes the potential need for further research that will take into account forthcoming events in the political processes in Central Asia and other regions. A dissertation that spans more than one region runs the risk of becoming imprecise, particularly with regard to traditional and evolving nuances in India's foreign policy. Apart from offering an understanding of India's energy security strategy in Central Asia, particularly in Kazakhstan this research introduces a new approach to a comprehensive study of the nuances of India's foreign policy in the region, as well as a holistic overview and perspective of the opportunities and challenges that currently obtain there. Further, this research has dealt exclusively with India's perspective in the matter of connecting to the energy rich region that is located in the extended neighborhood. Such focus precludes any detailed analysis of the gamut of geopolitical features and ramifications that drive the policies of the five Central Asian republics, especially Kazakhstan. Since the factors that influence the decision makers within that region are not comprehensively included in this dissertation, they become the grist for future research into the strategic thinking of Central Asian elites towards enhancing ties with India with regard to energy exports, multi-dimensional trade and a concerted approach to curbing terrorism.

⁷⁷⁶ Bitabarova, Assel G. "Unpacking Sino-Central Asian engagement along the New Silk Road: a case study of Kazakhstan." *Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2, 13 Jan 2019, pp. 149-73, doi:10.1080/24761028.2018.1553226.

This research makes it clear that India needs to depart from its traditional regional approach and focus on sustained and committed engagements at a bilateral level with each of the Central Asian republics, particularly Kazakhstan. In the light of Kazakhstan's status as the richest and most developed republic in Central Asia, it is empowered to exercise significant influence in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the Eurasian Economic Union. Since the five Central Asian republics became independent in the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Union Kazakhstan has emerged as the de facto leader of the region. So far, there has been little study of Kazakhstan evolution as a republic. There is also much scope to analyse and explore the bilateral relationships the country maintains with the major external powers that are at play in the region. There is thus great potential for research by academics and strategists in India with regard to this vital geopolitical arena.

Finally, an argument may be made for using the frame work of this dissertation for understanding India's strategy for engaging with the larger Eurasian land mass that lies beyond the five Central Asian republics. This research makes it clear that India's objectives with regard to national security, diversification of energy sources, push for economic growth, diplomatic overtures, and great-power ambitions are not exclusively focused on Central Asia. India has concomitant interests in other resource-rich and strategically important areas like Africa and the Middle East. The East Coast of Africa, for example, has a geopolitical context that is similar to the milieu obtaining in Central Asia, by virtue of its location in the extended neighborhood of the Indian Ocean, its abundant natural resources and fast growing economies. Further, the growing presence of China and other world powers, as also the existence of a large Indian diaspora, add to the region's similarities with the circumstances prevailing in Central Asia. As such, the east coast of

Africa offers the scope for similar exploration and analysis by researchers and policy-makers.

While tracing the historical evolution of India's relations with the Central Asian region, especially Kazakhstan, and analyzing the contemporary level of India's engagement in that extended neighborhood, this research attempts to explore the avenues for deepening of ties that are multifaceted, even though energy security is a primary concern. With its burgeoning economy, India is evincing the traits of a major power that is increasingly dependent on energy sources. India is aware that its growing strength will progressively impact the geopolitical environment in both its immediate and extended neighborhoods. However, its engagements in Central Asia are subject to the establishment of convenient mutual access and communication. Adverse geopolitical circumstances preclude the construction of an overland corridor through unstable intermediary countries. Nevertheless, India is committed to securing access to land locked Central Asia partly by sea and partly over land. Cultural exchanges represent the influence of soft power, just as the deployment of engineers and other experts promotes felicitous bilateral relations. While India offers a huge market for foreign investors and exporters, its own energy reserves fall far short of the needs of its rapidly growing economy. Accordingly, it looks to achieve and sustain energy security by diversifying its foreign energy sources. Central Asia in general, and Kazakhstan in particular, have vast energy reserves waiting to be tapped. For India to establish a presence in Central Asia in pursuit of energy, security, it must contend with big powers like Russia, China and United States who are already competing for control over those resources. Both China and Russia have the advantage of transporting oil and gas through pipe lines directly across their respective borders with Central Asia. In this context it must be noted that Kazakhstan and its neighboring republics

to not desire to be shackled to a couple of big buyers of its energy resources, but are interested in diversifying their energy export destinations. To that end India is an attractive destination by dint of its status as a major economy and a thriving democracy. It is relevant to mention that the regular mutual visits by Indian and Central Asian leaders have contributed to felicitous political relationships.

Contributions of the Research to the Literature on the Subject of India's Relations with Central Asia

By means of a discussion of the existing, relevant literature, and the gaps in the prevailing research with regard to India's strategy of energy security in Kazakhstan, the contributions made by this study are now identified. One of the gaps in the prevailing literature is the absence of a rational, India-specific conceptual framework for India's strategy and influence in Central Asia in general and Kazakhstan in particular.

This work contains an overall survey of the prevailing literature, particularly the contribution made by scholars and experts such as P. Stobdan, Angira Sen Sharma, Devendra Kaushik and Amiya Chandra, in which concern relating to national security and the country's economy are identified as the driving forces behind India's strategy in Central Asia. This dissertation agrees that the motivations shaking India's foreign policy in Kazakhstan in particular, and Central Asia in general, relate to energy supply that drives the economy, the need to safeguard national security by curbing extremism and terrorism emanating from outside India's borders, and enveloping the Central Asian region as well, the cultural affinities with the said region, and India's aspirations to be a great power. This work argues that India's growing economy and great-power aspirations are critically dependent on its strategy for energy security.

Such energy security, in turn depends entirely on the diversification of energy sources. Central Asia plays a vital role in India's strategy for such diversification. The achievement of energy security is also the final determinant of India's progress towards a great power status. This treatise unlike the works of contemporary scholars and experts lays emphasis on the absence of overland connectivity and the yet unresolved challenges in the way of establishing a North-South corridor through Chabahar port in Iran. This dissertation brings to the fore China's footprints in India's infrastructure including roads and ports. However, Iran may not allow this to detract from its friendly relations with India. India has had traditionally friendly relations with Iran. A significant amount of India's oil imports is sourced from Iran. Further, for India, Iran's strategic location makes it a gateway to Central Asia. Based on the mutual friendships between the two countries Iran has permitted India to develop the Chabahar Port as a conduit for India's Trade with Central Asia. Between the West Coast of India and the Chabahar Port in Iran a sea lane is already in existence. The most felicitous route from Kazakhstan appears to be by way of a trans-Caspian pipeline to an Iranian Port, and thence rail transportation across Iran to Chabahar Port, from where oil and gas may be shipped to India's Western coast.

The Chabahar Port offers India two options for accessing Central Asia. The first Corridor from the port can run through a part of Iran before branching off to Afghanistan. The route will cut across Afghanistan before reaching the Central Asian Republics of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Uzbekistan, in turn offers the best access to Kazakhstan. However, this option may not be viable owing to recurring instabilities in Afghanistan. The second corridor from Chabahar Port can potentially run across Iran and reach both Turkmenistan and the Caspian Sea in Central Asia. Both these destinations offer access to Kazakhstan.

Besides India's historical relations with Iran, energy is the dominant factor in the contemporary relations between the two countries. Further, India and Iran are mutually interested in maritime cooperation. However, two important geopolitical developments have come in the way of their intent to enhance bilateral relation and expand the scope of mutual cooperation. Firstly, United States has imposed sanctions on Iran and has threaten other countries with sanctions if they engage in trade with Iran. This situation has forced India to temporarily reduce its oil imports from Iran. While being committed to developing ties with Iran, India is a no position to scale down its relations with United States. Both Iran and India have had to contend with this geopolitical reality. India happens to be an important member of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), comprising United States, India, Australia, and Japan.⁷⁷⁷ Nevertheless, India continues to view Iran as a vital source of its energy imports as also a potential gateway to Central Asia.

Consequent upon the imposition of U.S. sanction, there has been a void in Iran's foreign engagement that China has come forward to fill. Ignoring the threat of U.S. sanction, China has invested US\$ 280 billion in Iran's oil industry. It also buys 6% of its oil need from Iran, thus becoming the longest buyer of Iranian Oil.⁷⁷⁸ China's rapidly growing clout in Iran may work to the potential detriment of India's interests significantly, Iran and China entered into a 25-year strategic partnership agreement spanning trade, politics, infrastructure, and security.⁷⁷⁹ Considering China's belligerent adversarial attitude towards India, there is the likelihood of it attempting to block India's access to Central

⁷⁷⁷ Honrada, Gabriel and Ranjbar, Daniyal. "US Sanctions against Iran and Their Implications for the Indo-Pacific." *E-International Relations*, 15 Dec. 2020, www.e-ir.info/2020/12/15/us-sanctions-against-iran-and-their-implications-for-the-indo-pacific/. Accessed on 30 December 2021.

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid.

Asia via Iran.⁷⁸⁰ India however is keen to tap into the immense market potential and oil reserve of Central Asia.⁷⁸¹

To that end, India remains keen to cooperate with Iran to obtain overland access to Central Asia. According, while India-Iran ties are strong and durable. The foreign policy of U.S. and China pose challenges that need to be overcome.⁷⁸² While Pakistan may try to enhance its influence in Afghanistan and effectively block India's access to Central Asia through that country, China may attempt to impede India's access to Central Asia through Iran.⁷⁸³

This work brings to attention the shifting dynamics in Afghanistan that have brought India's usage of a corridor through that country to an indefinite halt. As such, Pakistan hostility and Afghanistan volatility do not augur well for an overland gas pipeline from Central Asia to India, or an overland trade route between India and that region. This work argues in favour of a pipeline from Russia with which India has friendly relations, old treaties and diverse connections. This work also recommends a linkage with a trans-Caspian pipeline and corridor. China's adversarial approach towards India has not only been expressed by opposition to India's proposals in all world forums, but has culminated in serious and ongoing military stand offs at Ladakh in India, after a military standoff at Doklam in Bhutan. These standoffs have the potential to escalate to a war and a Low-intensity conflict. Considering China's attitudes towards India and its increasing influence in Iran, there is little hope of activating the Chabahar port for establishing a North-South

⁷⁸⁰ Mishra, Saaranish. "India's Options Amidst Continued Sanctions on Iran." in *Iran Under Ebrahim Raisi: The View from India*, edited by Kabir Taneja, *Observer Research Foundation*, Special Report, no. 154, August 2021, pp. 28-32. www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ORF_SpecialReport_154_Iran.pdf.

⁷⁸¹ Ibid.

⁷⁸² Ibid.

⁷⁸³ Shah, Kriti M. "Iran in Post-U.S. Afghanistan". in *Iran Under Ebrahim Raisi: The View from India*, edited by Kabir Taneja, *Observer Research Foundation*, Special Report, no. 154, August 2021, pp. 23-27. www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ORF_SpecialReport_154_Iran.pdf.

corridor. The situation has been aggravated by the seizure of power in Afghanistan by the radicalised Taliban. The proposed TAPI pipeline has been reduce to pipedream.

As depicted in chapter two and three it is important for India to adopt a foreign policy objective for enhancing economic, energy and trade relations with the Central Asian region. India's favourable diplomatic and political relations with the five Central Asian Republics namely, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, allow India access to yet untapped energy reserves that can play a vital role empowering and sustaining India's economy. The Central Asian Republics view India as on important, emerging economic power that has the advantages of stability and legitimacy. It is also in the interest of India and the Central Asian powers to jointly frame policies to curb the menace of terrorism. The Indian strategic discourse about Central Asia strongly favours the establishment of connectivity with that region and the exploration of investment avenues there. India's own strategy for energy security and the need to diversify energy sources determine India's initiatives in Central Asia. Further India recognises the Central Asian region as a conduit for reaching into the greater Eurasian region.

An alternative route for transporting oil and natural gas from Kazakhstan to India, that bypasses volatile Afghanistan, has not sufficiently engage the attention of interested scholars, policy makers and think-tanks. This dissertation advocates the building of a pipeline under the Caspian Sea from Kazakhstan to Iran. Oil and natural gas from this pipeline may be transported by rail overland across Iran to Chabahar port. From Chabahar Port these resources may be transported by tankers across the Arabian Sea to India. This alternative route will bypass both Pakistan and Afghanistan. Since India maintain friendly relations with Iran, this route is more feasible that the other routes through China and

Afghanistan. Also, Iran may not permit China to impede the transportation of energy resources meant for India across the territory of Iran. This owes to Iran consistently friendly relations between India and Iran. This alternative route has not yet been given due weightage by scholars, influences and policy makers in India. Nevertheless, in the contemporary context of regional and global geopolitics, this is the best possible option.

Regrettably, much energy and effort have been avoidably expended on the idea of transporting energy resources through pipeline via Afghanistan and Pakistan (TAPI) that is not at all feasible in the existing geopolitical scenario. Further, any proposal to transport energy resources from Kazakhstan to India over Chinese territory is also not viable, given China's hegemonistic and openly hostile attitude towards India. Accordingly, it is the considered finding of this dissertation that India's favourable relations with Kazakhstan can be taken forward by means of the practical proposals given above. The suggestion offered in this work in respect of the diverse avenues of cooperation between India and Kazakhstan including in energy resources, can be made practicable going forward and will obviate the need to negotiate with multiple intermediary countries that are steeped in their own internal and geopolitical problems.

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