

## **IRAN'S OUTREACH IN CENTRAL ASIA: PRIORITIES, POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

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**Abstract:** This study discusses relations between Iran and Central Asia in two phases: the first begins subsequent to the disintegration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR). IN 1991 and lasts till 2000; and the second phase elaborates its dimension since 2000. Since 1991, Iran has been seeking to establish ties with Central Asian States bilaterally as well as through different regional forums. Iran's approach has been partially focused on regionalism which has been evident from Iran's foreign policy since the early 1990s. The objective has been to develop business, infrastructure and cultural relations with the countries of the Central Asian region, a strategic crossroads that may reduce its international isolation. The article will discuss Iran's position in its core diplomacy concerns, viz., economic cooperation at the regional level, pipeline strategy, the status of the Caspian Sea, security cooperation, and cultural diplomacy. This is a possible case study of how Iran sees itself as a critical player in the region, with the goal of stressing, after the nuclear agreement, its geostrategic position, its relative stability and its extended international position.

**Key Words:** Central Asia, Strategic Pursuits, USSR, Caspian Sea, Pipeline Strategy

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## **Introduction:**

Sir Halford Mackinder declared the Eurasian steppe the "heartland of the world," and contended that those who control the regions control world affairs. The fact that the dominance of Central Asia appears to be important in conquering the Eurasian region has also affected the behavior of nations. The Russian-Turkish alliance has led to the cultural and political transformation in Central Asia. The power battle over this mass proved to be a perfect match between the teams.<sup>1</sup>The New Great Game has witnessed Central Asian region as the latest battlefield for geopolitical dominance. The fall of the USSR led to a fresh battle for Central Asia. This lonely location was the chess board, where for much of the 19th century Russia constantly moved its Empire to the south – to look at the British who were searching for their Indian fortress to the north. The game changed when the Bolsheviks formed several fictional republics like Turkistan used to exist in the 1920s. Afterwards, the West managed to contain communism from spreading further south by helping the Afghan rebels in the 1980s.

The culmination of the Cold War and the administrative disintegration of the defunct Soviet Union had a major effect on the world. The phase of 1945 to 1991 characterized by bipolarity is now a part of history. The activities of major international political states and regional powers mold and control newly created Central Asian autonomous states. Two regional powers, Islamic Republic of Iran and secular Turkey, have their own specific and conspicuous political and security views and viewpoints. The next study will address Iran's status and policy towards the Central Asia from 1990 to 2000. Subsequent to the demise of the USSR, the appearance of Central Asia and the rise of the Turkish Republics may give opportunities for more study in this regard. To deepen the differences between Iran and the different countries' views on Central Asia, the resources required for a coherent analysis are given. In contrast, the main thrust of the competition of Iran and Turkey in Central Asia will simplify the matter under consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> Post, T. (2/3/1992), "The Great Game Chapter Two", *Newsweek*, P. 28

Neither just one theory can be bought into practices in Iran's correlations with Central Asia, as the approach of Iran's foreign policy has already been hostile to its neighboring countries as well as hegemonic powers of the world. Iran's practices the theory of realism in its realm and also partially uses English school contemporary theory for better requisite of international relations. In the context of realism generally assumptions are made that, first, intrinsic disorder characterize the international system and, secondly, relations between states are anarchic primarily due to the fact that there exists perpetual struggle for power and security between principal players. States desire power to ensure self-preservation.

That's why Iran bids to fill in the power vacuum in the region because this might be its only chance to promote itself as the new economic gate way for central Asia into the trading lines and gain its status as the regional player. Despite that fact Iran is previously under US sanctions for their nuclear burgeoning tensions, and there seems no likelihood of its resolution anytime soon, faces towards power strategies of soft power or even smart power strategies because the time has changed and the world doesn't promote hard power strategy (realistically).

Secondly, according to the proponents of the English School contemporary theory, the international politics is characterized by three distinctive features: first, states vie for power; secondly, the international society has reached a stage where commonality of interests is expressed by institutionalization, and, finally, identity amongst states. It furnishes means for analysis by synthesizing principles of liberalism and realism. Here the concept of pipelinistan can be taken under consideration where the common interests of energy projects is shared, or even notice that Tajikistan is close to Iran linguistically. Shared identities and power play by Iran delivers narrow gateway to central Asian republics economically and culturally genetic roots in Tajikistan.

## **Iran's interest in Central Asia:**

Iran concerns Central Asia, which influences its regional foreign policy, from economic integration to cooperation in different fields, such as security and culture. The bulk of the article, therefore, focuses on the core issues that Iran believes are relevant in the peace and growth of regions.

**Economic integration:** Iran gives importance to the development of enhanced economic cooperation with Central Asia under the expanded ECO as well as mutual agricultural agreements with the countries of Central Asia in the post-collapse phase of the USSR. It began when Tehran designed calculated policy of enhanced regional cooperation, and President Hashmi Rafsanjani's tenure witnessed emphasis on regionalism in the Iranian foreign policy in the 1990s.<sup>2</sup> Iran saw building ties with Central Asia in the new world order as a means of mitigating its isolation from US hostility. This has big explanations for Iran's domestic economic needs, as well as for counter-sanctions against Iranian development that are exempt. The newly independent countries offered a tremendous potential for Iranian new trade and provided Iran with resources for developments in the resource field. More cooperation was also seen as essential for regional stability and security by Iranian officials. When the dynamics of Iranian relations with Central Asian countries is evaluated, debate regarding its geostrategic role stands out.

Iran is also known as a buffer zone for the landlocked Central Asian countries in the world's oceans. This is particularly useful in highly resourceful countries such as Asia and Turkmenistan, in as much as it furnishes the world's shortest outlet for its hydrocarbons. In addition to its use as a transport country for such utilities and pipelines, the ongoing involvement of the United States in the Caspian region has been hampered. The Soviet Union had a major legacy under its rule with its industrial transportation and communications infrastructures centered on Russia and serving the Soviet Union. Growing economic partnership and convergence with Iran is a crucial obstacle to southern communication and trade ties. The construction in 1996 of the rail link between Tejen (Turkmenistan) and Mashhad (Iran) is regarded a major happening in improving the situation. Central Asia was thus related to the Iranian rail system and Central Asia was connected to the Persian Gulf. Iran still wanted to gain expanded opening to Central Asia. The construction of the rail connection also demonstrates that commodities are grown Iran-Turkmenistan relations in the 1990s and the new millennium.

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<sup>2</sup>Herzig, "Regionalism, Iran and Central Asia," 504.

## **Phase I**

The breakup of the defunct USSR and the appearance of Central Asian States of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan created distance between historical rivals,<sup>3</sup> on the one hand between Turkey and Iran; and on the other the Russian-Soviet Empire. The growth of new areas between these countries has resulted in new relations, new areas of rivalry and conflict persisting on the agenda. SU's collapse has created an extensive buffer zone in Transcausia and Central Asia, with Russia on one side, and Turkey and Iran on the other<sup>4</sup>. This region is no longer recognized as part of the Soviet Union's dissolution. The power of one hegemon, but the field actually goes beyond the areas of effective foreign influence<sup>5</sup> and global force. The prevailing was just one actor before the death of Soviet Russia. In the most current power configuration, the recently developing countries have been considered to be a center of rivalry and economic dispute among participants<sup>6</sup>. The "Big Game," as engaged by the imperial dictator of the 19th century, is the word "e." Another one was seen in Central Asian strategic chess with a new collection of players in the late 20th century, the great game model<sup>7</sup>. It's called a diminished appreciation. It could be represented as, subsequent to the demise of the SU, a vacuum emerged in the region of defunct USSR and this gap must be filled.

Externally, countries vied to manipulate this situation by pushing their own models in the region to improve their global influence and prestige. Russia, Turkey and Iran emerged as three influential players in the region. They affected the new structure differently. Throughout the Cold War years, Russia was able to share with others the extent of its political and economic power. Turkey is now the most popular country in the global world and has found a new opportunity to establish ties with family and friends. While this is a dubious accomplishment,

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<sup>3</sup>Criss, Nur Bilge And GünerSerdar, (1999), "Geopolitical Configurations The Russia-Turkey-IranTriangle", *Security Dialogue*, Vol.30, No.3, P. 268

<sup>4</sup> Roy, Oliver. (2000), *YeniOrtaAsya Ya Da Ulusların İmalEdilişi*, İstanbul: Metis Yay, P. 258

<sup>5</sup> Malik, Hafeez. (1994), "Central Asias' Geopolitical Significance And Problems Of Independence: An Introduction", (Ed.) Malik, Hafeez. *Central Asia: Its Strategic Importance And Future Prospects*, New York:

St.Martin's Press, P. 7

<sup>6</sup> Rubinstein, Alvin. (1994), "The Geopolitical Full On Russia", *Orbis*, Vol.38, No.4, P. 569

<sup>7</sup>Economist, (1/30/1993) "Great Games", P. 38

Turkey is undeniably the owner of a social, political and regional economic power. Iran saw the Central Asian countries as an invaluable weapon for ending international isolation<sup>8</sup>. Iran was at the same time in a position to develop new anti-Turkey policies with a high level of influence and cooperation in the region. In its own countries, the West, particularly the United States, welcomed Turkey as a means for establishing ties with the region<sup>9</sup>. By enhancing its cooperation with Russia, Iran reacted.

## **Iran's Central Asian Foreign Policy Dimensions:**

The dissolution of the defunct Soviet Union in 1991 produced two broader implications: first, it resulted in the independence of new states in the region of Central Asia, and, secondly, the dynamic structural shifts in the geopolitics of the region. These improvements are really necessary affected neighboring countries defense policies and international relations. Iran is seeking to develop ties with the new independent countries and with Russia and looking for a new role in this new context<sup>10</sup>the economic and geopolitical position. These connections affect Iran's operations and policies in other countries such as Russia and in particular the United States Turkey, the Arab States and their regional countries such as Pakistan, Israel and their countries bilateral relations with Iran are the regions under the control of this affair<sup>11</sup>.These elements hinder and limit Iran's efforts to achieve its objectives. Moreover, these causes will continue to

<sup>8</sup>Afrozaabi, K.L. (1994), *After Khomeini New Directions In Iran's Foreign Policy*, Boulder: Westview Press, P.

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<sup>9</sup>Olcott, Martha Brill. (1992), "Central Asia's Catapult To Independence", Foreign Affairs, Vol.71, No.3,P. 112

<sup>10</sup> Aras, Bülent.

(1996), "Iran'ın Değişen Güvenlik Dengesi Çerçeve Sindedeki Orta Asya ve Kafkasya Cumhuriyetleriyle İlişkileri", *Avrasya Dosyası*, Vol.3, No.3, P. 169

<sup>11</sup>Piacentini, Valeria. (1994). "Islam Iranian And Saudi Arabian Religious And Geopolitical Competition In Central Asia", (Ed.), Ehteshami, Anoushirvan., *From Gulf To Central Asia*, Exeter: University Of Exeter Press, P. 29

be affected as Iranians Developing Central Asian relations<sup>12</sup>. While the degree of close ties seems to be declining Russia and Iran crashed after the Soviet attitude and the new strategy West to Russia, Iran and Russia are led by the popular place act together in international affairs. One of Russia's main explanations Western – especially American – willingness to cooperate with Iran with Turkey in this area. Turkey has a strong national connection, historically distinct thecultural links of the region<sup>13</sup>. Iran appeared a radical challenge during the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Iran's potential to fill the empty sphere in the Central Asian region since the dissolution of the Soviet Union is seen by the United States as a big concern.<sup>14</sup> In a recent area diagram, Iran has a big advantage. Iran has a major advantage. This understanding is a crucial factor in the support of Iran ambitions. The key advantage of Iran is that accessing the area is quick. Iran offers a bridge to its strategic supremacy into the world country. The disappearance of the Soviet Union seriously affected Iranian stability. As a result, Iran's defense and geopolitical balance had to shift. At the end, it seemed unavoidable to pursue a multidimensional character in politics. An area quest points to principal reason of Tehran's interest in European relations to ensure the state of isolation of United States. The "Dual Containment Strategy" of America introduced after the Gulf War started to be criticized seriously. Few American politicians would want a complex solution of Policy of Iran<sup>15</sup>. The relations between Iran and the new republics have fundamentally improved. At the start, it thought of the region as an ideological model, but now it is struggling to find a better balancing position by growing its economic effect the dominant player in the area. When new spheres of power emerge, new tactics were included in the agenda. While the proposed model was thought of as Iran, political Islam in principle was against secular-

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<sup>12</sup> Pipes, Daniel. (199/1994), "Ambitious Iran, Troubled Neighbours", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.72, No.1, P.129

<sup>13</sup>Dikkaya, Mehmet. (1999), "OrtaAsya'da YeniBüyükOyun: Türkiye, RusyaVe Iran", *AvrasyaDosyasi*, Vol.5, No.3, P. 191

<sup>14</sup>Bulliet, Richard. (1999), "Twenty Years Of Islamic Politics", *The Middle East Journal*, Vol.53, No.2, P.193

<sup>15</sup>Brzezinsky, Zbigniew., Scowcroft, Brent And Murphy, Richard. (1997), "Differentiated Containment", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.76, No.3, P. 22

democratic Islam. Iran also knows well that the Turkish republics are to support a gradual kind of change, not a radical one, and decided to enter a model for economies of western type.<sup>16</sup>

### (a) Uzbekistan

Links between Uzbek and Iran are more commercial. Uzbek government appears uncomfortable of Tehran's efforts to export strong Islam.<sup>17</sup> The President of Uzbekistan constantly expresses its support Socio-economic and political growth of the "Turkish model" Strategies. But the Turkish propensity of Uzbeks did not preclude both financial bilateral and multilateral arrangements. This is the case Other Central Asian Turkish republics are still seeking to esteem chances Cooperation in the needs of them. Political and economic partnership through the Caspian Cooperation Association (ECO) and Economic industrial and technological assistance policy of Kerimovs; Iran negotiated under the banner of Iranian cooperation<sup>18</sup>. On economic, technical and science cooperation November 1992 Iran has not always stressed cultural and historical closeness evitating tensions over Bucharest and Samarkand between Uzbek and Tajik.<sup>19</sup> In contrast, considering its central position in Asia Uzbekistan, republics, has not been as enticing to Iran as other republics. Some of them for reasons Uzbekistan is neighboring the Persians. Nevertheless, Uzbekistan supports the establishment of ties with Turkey and Russia and relations with Iran are increasingly improving.

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<sup>16</sup> Howell, Nathaniel. (1996), "Iran's Policy In Northwest Asia: Opportunities, Challenges And Implication", (Ed.), Al-Suwadi, *Iran And The Gulf: A Search For Stability*, Abu Dhabi: The Emirates Centre

For Strategic Studies And Resarch, P. 179

<sup>17</sup>Afrasiabi, K.L. (1994), *After Khomeini New Directions In Irans' Foreign Policy*, Boulder: Westview Press, P.

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<sup>18</sup>Çolak, İhsan. (1999), "Değişen Stratejiler İşığında Iran-Türk Cumhuriyetleri İlişkilerinde Yeni Gelişmeler" *Avrasya Dosyası*, Vol.5, No.3, P. 216

<sup>19</sup>Sajadpour, Seyed Kazem. (1994), "Iran, The Caucasus And Central Asia", (Ed.), Banvazizi, Ali And Weiner, Myron., *New Geopolitics Of Central Asia And Its Borderlands*, London: Ib Tauris Co, P. 211

**(b) Kyrgyzstan:**

The ties between Kyrgyzstan and Iran appear to be the least established between the Asian republics and Iran, presumably due to the remoteness of Iran. Geopolitical problems the supremacy of Iran served her no great benefit. The power of Iran hampered by Turkish influence and the Kyrgyz policies of Israel. Owing to lack of Kyrgyzstan's Caspian Sea boundaries Tehran maintains a strategy of supplying Kyrgyzstan with the door or bridge her joining the planet. This regional downside is not strategic opportunities for Iran.<sup>20</sup> However, Iran was one of the few countries that opened an embassy. Bishkek supported ties with Israel and tended to them. Their policies can be called pro-Russia<sup>21</sup>. Iran and Kyrgyz have opened the way it's a pleasant feeling.

**(c) Turkmenistan:**

Ties between Iran and Turkmenistan were the strongest among the post-Soviet Republics, lack of serious security issues and limited political problems Turkmenistan's stability<sup>22</sup>. For strategic purposes, Turkmenistan needs to collaborate on the sale of its gas supplies with Iran. Iran is a technological advisor and an economic investor. Turkish-Iranian relations depend on economic factors. Economic bilateral benefits and he export regime is not valid in this respect and Turkmenistan's condition is not a declining threat to the links. Culturally, Iran in Turkmenistan does not seem to be very active.<sup>23</sup> Pragmatic approach to Iran and relations between Turkmenistan as an additional expansion can be predicted.

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<sup>20</sup>Çolak, İhsan. (1999), "Değişen Stratejiler İşığında Iran-Türk Cumhuriyetleri İlişkilerinde Yeni Gelişmeler" *Avrasya Dosyası*, Vol.5, No.3, P. 219

<sup>21</sup>Savetz, Carol. (1994), "Central Asia: Emerging Relations With The Arab States And Israel", (Ed.), Malik, Hafeez., *Central Asia Its Strategic Importance And Future Prospects*, New York: St.Martin's Press, New York, P. 317

<sup>22</sup>Herzig, Edmund. (1995), *Iran And The Former Soviet South*, London: The Royal Institute Of International Affairs, P. 23

<sup>23</sup>Sajadpour, SeyedKazem. (1994), "Iran, The Caucasus And Central Asia", (Ed.), Banvazizi, Ali And Weiner, Myron., *New Geopolitics Of Central Asia And Its Borderlands*, London: IbTauris Co, P. 209

**(d) Kazakhstan:**

Kazakhstan has nuclear missiles in the foreground. The country is an essential part of the security balance of the region. Despite the suspicious views of Nazarbaiev on the regime issue, Iranian companies are involved in Kazakhstan. Successful few deals have been concluded by Kazakhstan and Iran in the building of harbors and oil pipelines. Both the countries attended the Caspian Sea International Forum signed for the common use arrangement for the Caspian Sea. Iran seems to know the link is not easy Kazakhstan by itself. That is why she stresses on regional significance. Cooperation groups, such as ECO, are working for this aim. Cooperation will help to improve ties with Turkey in particular Iran and Kazakhstan. Apart from these measures for global integration, a memorandum of Understanding on Kazakh Labor Business Cooperation was signed in February 1993, the concerned Kazakh minister and his Iranian counterpart were the signatories. The culture minister of Kazakhstan signed a letter of understanding to extend Ethnic relations with his counterpart from Iran, Tehran on 12 April 1992. Cultural and political ties helped in shaping up and the eventually improving the economic cooperation among the two countries.

**(e) The condition of Tajikistan:**

The reality that Tajikistan is the only Republic of Persia in the world Central Asia can help clarify not just the response of Tehran to Tajikistan, but also Iranians live outside their country in general. It is necessary immediately notice that although linguistically Tajikistan is close to Iran but do not religiously converge with Iran because Muslim Tajikistan is Sunni<sup>24</sup>, There's the Shia sect in Iran. The Persian society does not have deep roots in Tajikistan and the Tajiks treat it as part of their culture and as a source. However, in the context of internal political milieu of Tajikistan, any cultural effort by Iran appears to be viewed politically. Agreements between Tajikistan and Iran are cultural in nature. In terms of diplomatic ties, apart from the formation of an embassy Key diplomatic missions Dushanbe, like the President Tours of the summit. Different deals have been concluded in the economic sector. Tajiran Joint Company

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<sup>24</sup>Atkin, Muriel. (1989), "The Survival Of Islam In Soviet Tajikistan", *The Middle East Journal*, Vol.43, No.4, P. 608

Formation. There's even the Iranian Tajik involvement of finance. Civil war and instability in Tajikistan late Relations between these countries did not keep them from strengthening in 1992. It The Iranian-speaking policy should not be difficult to perceive Societies (including Afghanistan) will lead to and strengthen Links between Tajikistan and Iran.

## **Phase II:**

### **Iranian foreign policy dimension since 2000:**

The phenomenal convergence of significant incidents contributed to the development of Iranian relations with Central Asian states. Iran's end – Iraq's war, Khomeini's death and the takeover of in a more powerful presidency Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani and the most important was the rise of more pragmatic foreign policy in the Islamic Republic. This change has seen the situation idealist themes such as exports of Iran and its own national interests Organization for Co-operation (ECO). Iran's focus on building these relations until very recently had two important dimensions: one of which was to reduce its international dimension isolation and relationship development with their new neighbors to reduce the burden of the US containment policy; the other maintained good relations with key weapons provider, Russia, and not Central Asia policy that would confront her. These are the following:

‘Key considerations remain in the landscape of post-sanctions, and if sanctions are relieved hopefully, considering that the implementation hurdle has hit,<sup>25</sup> it will become important

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<sup>25</sup> ‘Iran’s Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has claimed that the US is not fulfilling its obligations in terms of sanctions relief’ Following the JCPOA. See, for example <http://www.almonitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/01/khamenei-implementation-nuclear-dealus-deceit.html>. Also international banks have been nervous about fully engaging in the Iranian economy due to continuing financial sanctions, see “Sanctions confusion leaves European banks wary of Iran business,” *Financial Times*, 17 January 2016, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/62b84874-bd01-11e5-9fdb-87b8d15baec2.html#axzz48GsgF21e>.

area for enhanced cooperation in a variety of areas. Iranian foreign policy studies reflecting the new realities in the 1990s and early 2000s The international situation of Iran following the Soviet Union's break-up was demonstrated Iran established the Central Asia and Caucasus Study Centre, with the Foreign Ministry Publishing the Amu Darya and Persian languages in 1992 and Motaleretale e Asia-ye markazivaqafqas journals.<sup>26</sup>"Motaleretaletat-e asia-ye markazivaqafqa" The relations between Iran and the newly independent Central Asian states and the Caucasus and their efforts to "reconnect" with a region that is key to their history have made Iran an important part of analysis as demonstrated ably by the works by Ehteshami, Herzog and others. These activities range from security, economic connections and broader regional initiatives. They all share a common feature of Central Asia, which offers significant opportunities, whether real or unrealized for Iran.

Another common and repeated subject is that the United States has always blocked Iranian efforts to expand influence in the region and the countries subsequent sanctions regimes. This is probably changing now, so ideas are changed and initiatives that seemed moribund before now have greater potential. In particular, the works from Iran have a clearly regionalist tendency. The geopolitical position of Iran vis-à - vis Central Asia on broader relations with other countries;for example, Russia and the US<sup>27</sup> and the potential of regional initiatives like ECO, which Iran was especially interested in using in Central Asia as a vehicle for its own interest. Iran has a long association with the region at different points in its history; up until Czarists they exercised nominal control of large parts of Caucasus and Central Asia the expansion of Russia there. In Iranian writing on the region with this is reflected emphasis on their geographical and,

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<sup>26</sup>Edward Wastnidge, "Pragmatic Politics: Iran, Central Asia and Cultural Foreign Policy," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, 2014, 15 (4):119–130 (121).

<sup>27</sup> Ali-Reza Akbari, "Security Considerations and Iran-Russia Cooperation," *Amu Darya*, 2001, 6 (8): 83–92; Ali AsgharSaharkhiz, "Central Asia and Great Powers: Evolution of the Northern Tier," *Amu Darya*, 2004–2005, 8 (18): 235–251; SekhavatRezazadeh, "Reesheha-ye hamgeraivavageraidarmonasebat-e jomhouri-ye eslami-ye iranvarousieh (Roots of Convergence and Divergence inthe Islamic Republic of Iran's Relations with Russia)," *Motale'at-e asia-ye markazivaqafqaz* (Central Asia and Caucasus Review),2006, 52: 61–90.

in some cases, cultural proximity. It is the cultural and, in certain cases, linguistic commonalities that discuss this long history here.

The Iranian narratives of building relations with the region are a common characteristic. Cultural and common language are used as some kind of vector to form and build on relationships by investment, which is particularly obvious in view of Iran's relations Tajikistan and Afghanistan fellow Persian-speaking nations. The emphasis on geopolitical approaches to Central Asia and in a sense "geo-cultural" is certainly understandable when contextualizing in Iranian academic and political circles there, his approach. After all, geopolitics provides a neutral, objective and ideologically free tool to be used by experts in foreign policy<sup>28</sup>, which explains why it is helpful to set up the Iranian foreign policy in the region in a pragmatic way.

The concept of Iran as a bridge to Central Asia is also one of Key to the Geopolitical thought of Iran. But despite the geographical and certain advantages Iran has yet to develop fully into a regional power in Eurasia in cases, cultural proximity. The landscape after the sanctions in which the international the community is entering tentatively, Iran has finally affirmed its geographical position over a long period possibility of becoming a reality. Some argued that Iran would conduct its foreign policy "aggressively" in the region because of their supposed actions in the Middle East misplaced and ignored Iranian foreign policy's pragmatic approach to the region for the last twenty-five years last. Now it is able to take advantage of its gradual reintegration into the world Post-JCPOA economy. However, such reintegration is not problem-free and a problem that many seek to promote more foreign direct services in the Muslim Republic. The continued perception of the US is investment in Iran and Iran elsewhere.

When the threat has been lifted, the potential Iran will become a more attractive central partner for further integration into the global economy the countries of Asia. Iran has also had part of its potential for increased involvement in the region The US presence there was assisted by the drawing down and the Taliban remain a safety hazard. The US presence in Afghanistan scaling back, and with it the military for the wider region. The US is well suited to Iran's

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<sup>28</sup>Phil Kelly, Classical Geopolitics: A New Analytical Model (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016), 25.

objectives in the region by using logistical support in Central Asia. Iran's military alliance with Russia is also moving closer. In combination with its "near abroad" so-called, increasingly assertive Russian policy towards States Iran remains aware in Central Asia, as always, of Russia's position. In addition, the revival a major Iranian ally in China is assisting Iran with the Silk Road as a viable trading route following the nuclear deal, gradual reintegration into the world economy. This is an important characteristic of the strategic Iranian thinking, the position of Central Asia and Iran with these countries the most important part of his broader geopolitical imagination.

### **Economic and regional ties via ECO:**

The ECO continues to be a large regional community with capacity and scope combined population of almost 370 million,<sup>29</sup> although this has not yet been done. It is also a powerful regional forum that Iran has historically used to continue its ties with the republics of Central Asia. ECO Member States have signed 1993 action plan for intra-regional travel and Communication systems. The ECO has put this sector high on the agenda. Intra-regional exchange facilitation, promotion of foreign exports of goods and the connection between landlocked States and international ports<sup>30</sup> was founded.

Iran stressed the importance of its geographical role in the following address to the ECO Council by Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi Ministers at Dushanbe, 2001: "We will concentrate on the area of Transport and communications, especially with the seven members in mind "<sup>31</sup> Creating better ECO transportation connections, Like the Tejen-Mashhad link, the need for better connections is emphasized. It represents the concept of resurrecting the Silk Road between the Member States. New Silk Lane Several roads were developed and the territories of what are now ECO States restored the concept is, of course, endorsed by regional officials, not just to boost the region Connections, but also to bring prestige and strengthen the trade position of the region of

<sup>29</sup>ECO Secretariat, Statistics, [online], available at [http://www.ecosecretariat.org/Statistics/Stat\\_02\\_01.htm](http://www.ecosecretariat.org/Statistics/Stat_02_01.htm).

<sup>30</sup>Shirin O. Entezari and Babak Bagheri, "Regional Economic Developments in the Middle East and Central Asia," *Caspian Crossroads*, 1998, 3 (4): 25–32 (29).

<sup>31</sup> Speech by Kamal Karrazi at the 11th meeting of ECO Council of Ministers, Dushanbe, 2–4 May 2001, republished in *Iranian Journal of International Affairs*, 2001, 13 (1): 164–167 (167).

probable global value. A significant factor in the identification of ECO as a working regional body relation with other foreign organizations is being established. As a way to do this, ECO took part in the UN General Assembly and interacted with various UNOs UN Economic and Social Commission organizations such as the United Nations Asia-Pacific, UN Community Fund Growth Plan.

ECO has also made contacts with other international bodies, such as the Southeast Asian Nations Organization, The Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the Southern African Group for Development. Since the company earned many from the several ECO treaties and agreements institutionalization with an incorporated regional body considered necessary and more important than the concrete accomplishments. Trade intra-regional is low in accordance with other regional bodies. This is also true in Iran itself. Historically low, trade rate with Central Asian countries<sup>32</sup>Iran – Central Asian trading figures continue this very dreadful appraisal. The most recent estimates released in 2015, Iran was the seventh nation to put together the five economies of Central Asia. This constitutes 1.9% of overall trade. No more as an export market in Central Asia States are 2.9%, while Iranian imports are just 1.1%. China controls the economy in Central Asia, Russia, and the EU. Russia. Iran is also poorly related to Turkey, which comprises 5.6% overall exchange in Central Asia.<sup>33</sup> One of the main drawbacks of economic integration is that many ECO countries are mainly oil and service exporters. Savings are competitive, not additive. There remain still tensions between member states over matters such as the Caspian Sea and Iran has voiced concern for Azerbaijan's relations with the United States in the past.

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<sup>32</sup> Marlene Laruelle and Sébastien Peyrouse, *Globalizing Central Asia: Geopolitics and the Challenges of Economic Development*(London: ME Sharpe, 2015), 84. According to Laurelle and Peyrouse, in 2010, Iran represented under 1% of the whole of Central Asia'sforeign trade.

<sup>33</sup> "European Union, Trade in goods with Central Asia," *European Commission*, 2015. Available online at: [http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/november/tradoc\\_151896.pdf](http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/november/tradoc_151896.pdf).

ECO appeared to unravel in the mid-1990s Uzbekistan has accused Iran of seeking to politicize it, using its meetings as a basis for launching attacks on America and Israel.<sup>34</sup> The ECO is also affected by the lack of actual involvement by certain Member States; Example who has a long-standing desire to join the EU, ECO is not the concern of their country. In comparison, Iran was keen Encourage anywhere ECO can. With the Tehran permanent secretariat and the geographical position of Iran, Iran sees itself as an ECO center. The place of key ECOs in Tehran, such as the secretariat of the party, represents Iran's readiness to shoulder the burden and, even more importantly, cost them<sup>35</sup>. Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Pakistan and Turkey are main U.S. allies. Security ties with the US lead Iran to try to develop its regional ties ECO System Agenda. In addition, various bilateral and multilateral China-linked regional agreements, particularly in its Silk Road – Inspired by One Belt, One Lane, and ECO faces an ongoing pertinent challenge in a fast-growing area. What it displayed in the 1990s and early years however, in the 2000s, Iran was prepared to invest time and resources into a regional community it shows his willingness in the field to behave pragmatically and rationally. It may be the charge for the Islamic Republic to better incorporate into the world economy and modern forums (or forums) the aged / dead resurrection) aims to strengthen collaboration.

## **Pipelines for Petrol:**

The pipeline paths are a "key concern in geographical regions"<sup>36</sup>. Historically speaking, despite Iran, that the Islamic Republic should avoid routes it provides the shortest path to the Caspian Ocean, primarily landlocked. Iran made "creative" what Deukmejian and

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<sup>34</sup> Uzbekistan's president, Islam Karimov stated "If there are attempts to use this forum for political means . . . we will terminate our membership," cited in Edward Wastnidge, *Diplomacy and Reform in Iran: Foreign Policy under Khatami* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016), 182.

<sup>35</sup> Wastnidge, *Diplomacy and Reform in Iran*, 107.

<sup>36</sup> R. Hrair Dekmejian and Hovann H. Simonian, *Troubled Waters: The Geopolitics of the Caspian Region* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 35.

Simonian<sup>37</sup> call moves "to stop attempts by the United States to exclude Caspian oil transactions. Connect the Caspian with Tehran, Tehran with Isfahan and Isfahan finally by reversing existing pipelines and constructing incomplete ties to the Persian Gulf. Small-scale commodity-swap negotiations with Kazakhstan and Kazakh energy Transported through the Caspian Sea to the populated northern regions of Iran. Southern fields are exported to the international markets in Kazakhstan. It is the only Central Asian country with which it shares a land boundary and some residents live Turkmenistan, the largest gas deposits in the country, was a primary priority for Iran. Financed development of the Turkmen Korpeszhe – Kurd – Kuy gas pipeline.

The second pipeline, Dauletabad-Sarakhs-Khangiran, was opened in Northern Iran In 2010, Turkmen gas will enter markets in Turkey and Europe via Iran will reduce dependency on Russian pipelines. Although largely positive ties between Iran and Turkmenistan Tone, a contribution to Turkmenistan's perpetual neutrality status, relationships cooled after Saparmat Niyazov 's death in 2007; gas supplies in Northern Iran were decreased in 2007-2008, though the agreement was renewed 2009. After tensions between the government of Turkmenistan and Gazprom further diversification of exports through TAPI pipeline route (Turkmenistan – TAPI) Afghanistan-Pakistan-India. Some people have also argued that Iran could lift sanctions recently Encourage renewed urgency in Turkmenistan,<sup>38</sup> as India and Pakistan aim to deepen Their commercial and hydrocarbon ties with Iran. In the context of the lifting, Sanctions can also be used as a potential strategic feature.

Iran has a range of central Asian interests, from economic integration to cooperation in a variety of ways, such as security and culture that shape Iran's foreign policies in the region. Thus, Iran often positions its economic presence in the work on the key issues that Iran considers to be crucial to the areas of peace and development. The need for greater economic cooperation between Iran and Central Asia was emphasized in the sense of more expanded ECO and also in its bilateral agrarian agreements with central Asian countries, beginning with the collapse of the

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<sup>37</sup>Dekmejian and Simonian, *Troubled Waters*, 38–39.

<sup>38</sup>RohullahOsmani, "TAPI pipeline – is the Iran nuclear deal a threat or an opportunity?", *The Central Asia Caucasus Analyst*, 18September 2015, <http://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13278-tapi-pipeline-%E2%80%93-is-the-iran-nuclear-deal-a-threat-or-an-opportunity?.html>.

Soviet Union. The construction of the rail link also shows good agriculture ties between Iran and Turkmenistan in the 1990s and the new millennium.

## **The Caspian Sea:**

The Caspian oil and gas surplus adds to the need for coastal countries explore ways to explore it. Oil production began in Baku in the mid-19th and turn of the 20th centuries. Azerbaijan was a major nation global fuel market source. Caspian oil was also important for colonial industrialization. Azerbaijan's importance has steadily deteriorated during the 20th century, large oil deposits were found in the north The Caspian. The break-up of the Soviet Union resulted in five sovereign states contrary to its former Soviet Union-dominated status as a bay. That's the case. The root of the latter was Rasht (1729), Gulistan (1813) and Turkmenhai (1828). The Russian and Persian empires were both present, and no Caspian frontiers could be formed.

The foundation for Iran and the Soviet Union were also additional treaties for Iran's position on the Caspian's after the USSR was sometimes invoked. Iran says that maritime legal status arrangements would limitits Caspian share to a minimum unlike in the Soviet period. The legal status of the Caspian was not defined due to its "specificity" place and intersection the geographical and economic interests of riparian states. There are two major ideas, whether maritime separation into national or conventional management industries a lot of other issues come from the first alternative options as a method of division have been mentioned.

## **Conclusion:**

The study emphasized Central Asia's position in Iranian changing geopolitics. Iranian foreign policy started changing through its core for race in the Central Asian regions within the presence of its rivals. It is an area that affects the Islamic Republic in several respects, including establishing of security and cultural economic ties. Iran therefore takes a lot of stance significant to Central Asia, further enhanced by its deep and long-term awareness relationship between the area and history and culture. The geopolitical situation in contrast

Proximity and prospects from and to Central Asia as a gateway together with China's increased investment in its new One Loop, One Lane Silk Road Programmed. Central Asia also

helps to develop further Iran-China relations and the sense of reviving an old trading route in the form of a new Silk Road not only speaks of the deep history of both countries' geopolitical imaginations, but also of the practical ones Realism in western international policy. Iran has been proactive since the independence of Central Asia.

For 25 years Iran has repeatedly attempted to improve it. Regionalist initiatives have persisted, but little momentum to date. That's because of these countries' new freedoms and Iran so frequently treated as alien Pariah – who requires its articulation in the resulting paralyzing sanctions regimes and sustainable progress has stopped. Though Iran was keen to foster regional development organizations such as ECO and SCO, Central Asian Nations invest in these projects, they expressed their support for a "multifactorial" foreign policy. "Since their comparatively recent independence gives them an opportunity to succeed to follow separate goals for foreign policy, there is indeed a dubious engagement such interventions, especially if they are seen to protect another power to assert their rights and hegemony over the field, much in the way of statement. But now Iran actually has the potential to recognize these dreams of increased engagement honestly very bluntly. More movement in Iran's closer integration can be expected region after JCPOA and eventually lifting the sanctions regime. When Iran takes what is needed rewards in its proper location have also been located in significant international and regional organizations it is expected that its reintegration would enable further action. This was offset by the raising a major ally in China's regional project that sees Iran as a major part of the larger region Strategy for Central Asia and abroad. Iran can't lead, but it cannot for time being.