

Editor's Note

The current issue of the *Caucasus International* (CI) journal entitled “*Connectivity in Eurasia: Implications for South Caucasus Region*” is dedicated to the transportation and transit routes in Eurasia, the new transport initiatives of the regional and small countries, and the repercussions of all these for the economic stability and security of the South Caucasus states. While analyzing the transportation routes, the authors also reflected their views on the utilization of these projects as soft power instruments over the bilateral relations of these countries with other international/regional actors.

The issue starts with the Colloquy with **Eugene Seah**, Chief Operating Officer of Baku International Sea Trade Port who articulated the achievements Azerbaijan hitherto made in transforming itself to transportation hub and the country's prospective plans in this regard. The issue continues with twelve more articles. **Deqiang Ji** and **Xuezhi Du's** joint piece “The Belt and Road Initiative and Its Implications for Communicating China–Europe Relations” presented the geopolitical dynamics that accompany the Belt and Road Initiative, as well as the theoretical framework for the complex communication relationship between China and the EU. **Ozgun Tufekci's** “China's Belt and Road Initiative: Rise of Chinese Eurasianism as a Eurasian Integration Strategy against Atlanticism?” examined whether the ‘Belt and Road Initiative’ represent a Eurasian integration strategy which is based on the ideology of Eurasianism against Atlanticism. **Ali Ihsan Kahraman's** “Belt and Road Initiative: The Eurasian Cold War?” argued that BRI will lead to some indication of the emergence of a Cold War-like conflict in Eurasia, although the main promise of this initiative is to accelerate cooperation in this inter-regional area. **Gülşen Aydin** and **Müge Yüce's** joint article “China's Hard Power versus Soft Power in Central Asia: An Analysis of the

‘One Belt-One Road Initiative’ as a Soft Power Instrument” provided an analysis of the OBOR project from the perspective of discussions on soft power in International Relations. **Vasif Huseynov’s** “Use of Soft Power in Tandem with Economic Expansion: Examining the Case of Chinese Soft Power in South Caucasus” examined the use of soft power in China’s foreign policy concerning the South Caucasian countries that are involved in Beijing’s giant economic project called Belt and Road.

Michael Clarke and **Matthew Sussex’s** joint piece “The Belt and Road Initiative and the Future of Sino-Russian Relations in Central Asia” explored the certain dilemmas via the discussion of a number of possible future scenarios for Sino-Russian relations and their implications for regional order in Central Asia. **Mahir Humbatov’s** “A Hub of Hubs Initiative and Its Successful Implementation: The case of Azerbaijan” provided how Azerbaijan transformed and upgraded its transport infrastructures in accordance with the international standards that rendered the country an emerging hub in Eurasia. **Hamidreza Azizi’s** “Iran and the Eurasian Transport Initiatives: Short-term Challenges, Long-term Opportunities” studied the place of Iran in two important Eurasian transport initiatives, namely the Chinese-led Belt and Road Initiative and the International North–South Transport Corridor.

Hao Tian’s “Central Asia–China Pipeline Politics: Turkmenistan at a Crossroad” outlined Turkmenistan’s gas export policy to China and argued that despite Ashgabat’s attempts to diversify energy export, its current loan repayment arrangement with China and heavy export dependence on China have locked up the country. **Ilgar Gurbanov’s** “Caspian Convention and Perspective of Turkmenistan’s Gas Export to Europe” analyzed the prospects for the Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline project,

principally by analysing the positions of the EU, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Russia in terms of dependent variables and independent variables. **Azad Garibov's** "Legal Status of the Caspian Sea is Finally Defined What is Next" assessed the negotiation process over the division of the Caspian Sea and the positions of each littoral state in it, identified the key milestones passed in this process.

Journal also presents one subject-matter and two off-topic commentaries. **Temuri Yakobashvili's** "Belt and Road Initiative: Implications for Georgia" argued that China's transport initiatives will create a sense of engagement with the global economy for the South Caucasus Region. **Aleksandre Kvakhadze's** "Georgia After the Presidential Elections" overviewed the pre-election campaign, the statistics, and future trends in Georgian domestic politics. **Gela Vasadze's** "Analysis of the Domestic Political Situation in Armenia" narrated the recent political developments in Armenia's domestic politics and the process of forming a new Armenian political elite.

The current issue also includes a comprehensive review of S. Frederick Starr & Svante E. Cornell's "The Long Game on the Silk Road: US and EU Strategy for Central Asia and the Caucasus" reviewed by **Polad Muradli**. The book features an overview of the 25 year-long policies of the US and the EU toward Central Asia and the Caucasus. Last, but not least, the CI journal presents readers with reviews of recently published books on the South Caucasus countries, Geopolitics and Security, Sovereignty, Nationalism, the EU's role in Central Asia, New World Order, Transformations in Eurasia, etc.

Finally, on behalf of the CI team, we hope this issue provides food for thought and contributes to and enriches the discussion.

Sincerely,

***Javid Valiyev**, Editor-in-Chief*

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