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Russia and “The Belt and Road Initiative” of China (2013-2020)

*Mohammad Hasan Sheikholeslami*¹

*Hamid Reza Ashrafi*²

Abstract

The Belt and Road Initiative was launched in 2013 by Chinese President Xi Jinping. This initiative is one of the important aspects of China's foreign policy. On the other hand, due to the geographical extent, extensive infrastructural dimensions and subsequent developments of this project, different countries have studied and paid special attention to it at both academic and executive levels. The study of the relations between Russia and China has always been the focus of international relations experts. In this light, the Russian Federation has also considered the Belt-Road Initiative and has followed a certain pattern of behavior in relation to it. Therefore, understanding the behavior pattern and Moscow's approach to the Belt and Road Initiative will reveal important aspects of the dynamics of mutual relations between these two countries. The present study examines and evaluates the approach of the Russian Federation towards China's Belt and Road Initiative in the period of 2013-2020. To analyze the root of this behavioral pattern, Russia's grand strategy towards China is examined. Therefore, the current research seeks to answer the main question, how can the behavioral pattern of the Russian Federation be explained towards China's Belt and Road initiative in the mentioned time frame? The findings of the article show that Russia considers the Belt-Road as a project aimed at increasing China's geopolitical influence in both the international and Central Asian regions, and by following the model of competition and cooperation for this project, it seeks to coordinate it with the Eurasian Economic Union and prevent influence. Most of China is in Central Asia. The research method used in this study is qualitative content analysis and library and internet sources were used to collect data.

▪ **Keywords:**

China's Belt and Road Initiative, Russian Federation, National security, Balance of power, Defensive Realism.

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“Middle Corridor” and Interests of Iran in the South Caucasus

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Abstract

In a realistic approach, Iran's security interests in the South Caucasus are guaranteed by maintaining the regional balance of power. Therefore, the plan to build the Zangezur Corridor has led to some speculations about the changing balance of power in this region against Iran. The article examines the possible threats of this corridor against the interests of Iran and answers the below question: What threats does the plan of Zangezur Corridor pose against the interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran? The findings of the research show that the construction of the Zangezur Corridor in Armenia, based on the plan announced by the Azerbaijan-Turkey axis, changes the regional balance of power against the interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Therefore, the development of this project is considered as a security threat against Iran's geopolitical and economic interests, the most important of which include the following: The possibility of changing the geopolitics of the borders through blocking the territorial border of Iran and Armenia; The possibility of Armenia's convergence with the Western bloc and the intensification of the strategic isolation of the Islamic Republic of Iran; Reducing Iran's transit advantages in the North-South corridor; increasing Turkish influence in the region; jeopardizing the territorial integrity of Iran through the incitement of pan-Turkic sentiments and the revival of Azeri ethno-nationalism; Strengthening the presence of NATO, Israel.

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Pan Turkism and Baku-Ankara Strategic Alliance

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Abstract

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkey was the first country that recognised the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan. This country uses the geopolitical vacuum to increase its influence in the Republic of Azerbaijan, which have many cultural and linguistic similarities in common. The Nagorno-Karabakh crisis was one of the most important issues in Turkey's foreign policy after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Therefore, in the 1990s, the main relations between the two countries were related to Turkey's support for the Republic of Azerbaijan against Armenia. Since the appearance of this century, Ankara and Baku have expanded their cooperation in the field of infrastructure projects and energy. These relations increased during the Second Karabakh War and reached its peak with the Shushi Declaration. This declaration outlines the role of the future relations between the two countries and endorses the slogan of "one nation and two governments". Therefore, this article tries to answer this question with a descriptive analytical method of relationships and by using the constructivist theory as one of the international perspectives that especially pays attention to the "identity" and its role in shaping policies. What is the role of panturkism The development and deepening of the Baku-Ankara strategic alliance? and how and in what ways does this alliance affect the national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran? The hypotheses raised in response to this question is that pan-Turkism creates important functions in the alliance of Baku and Ankara, which puts these two in the in a new array of geopolitical, geoeconomic and geocultural in front of the the national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In this research, the method of data collecting is using written sources e.g. books, articles, documents and internet data.

▪ **Key words:**

Ankara, Baku, Islamic Republic of Iran, National Security, Pan-Turkism

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The Trasica Rail Corridor and Commercial Relations of Iran and Central Asia

Moslem Ansarinasab¹

Abstract

Trasica Corridor is one of the most important corridors connecting East Asia to Europe. This article seeks to investigate the effect of Iran's geo-economic position on the use of the Thracian rail corridor for the convergence of Iran with four Central Asian countries. In this study, the convergence of Iran with these four Central Asian countries Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan for the years 2015 to 2020 has been investigated. The results of Grobel and Lloyd index of Iran's trade with Kazakhstan (0.565) showed that Iran has the most intra-industry trade with Kazakhstan. After that was the country of Uzbekistan, whose index of industrial trade with Iran was obtained (0.343). The results of Grobel and Lloyd's index for the two countries of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (0.067 and 0.062) indicate that these two mentioned countries had the least intra-industry trade with Iran. The above findings clearly show that Iran's economy can make good use of the Trasica Corridor rail route for the transfer of goods and economic integration with Central Asian countries. In order to encourage businessmen to make more use of the Trasica rail corridor in order for Iran's economy to reach the markets of Central Asia, it is suggested that bilateral agreements be concluded with Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan to reduce bilateral tariffs for businessmen of both sides, and a joint commission on Monitor the implementation of these obligations.

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The Russia- Ukraine War from JUS AD BELLUM Perspective

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Abstract

The Russia-Ukraine war began on February 25, 2022, after months of tension and the presence of Russian military forces on the border of Ukraine, with the order of the Russian president's all-out military attack. Putin's justifications for the military attack on "special military operations" in Donbas and the non-occupation of Ukraine by Russia were based on humanitarian intervention due to the commission of the crime of genocide by the Ukrainian government in the east of this country. But Putin's most important justification is based on individual legitimate defense in advance due to imminent threats from Ukraine and NATO, and collective legitimate defense in support of the self-proclaimed states of the Donbas region, which Russia previously recognized as independent states. Had been recognized and a treaty of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance was established with the leaders of Donetsk and Luhansk. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the war between Russia and Ukraine from the perspective of the right to resort to force. Therefore, this research seeks to answer the question: Are Russian legal arguments for resorting to force justified from the point of view of international law? is The research method of this article is descriptive-analytical and the method of collecting information is library-reference. The findings of the research indicate that Russia violates the rules of international law and the right to territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine, and Russia's reasons for legitimizing military aggression against Ukraine are not justified.

▪ **Keywords:**

Aggression, JUS AD BELLUM, Russia, Ukraine, War.

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The Political Stability in the Caucasus and OECD Countries: A Comparative Comparison

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Abstract

Political conditions, as one of the most important factors affecting all aspects of the country, have been the focus of researchers for years. Political stability as a multidimensional issue can be examined from different aspects. The basic challenge of this research is to investigate what the concept of political stability is and comprehensively identify its related components using data mining methods. For this purpose, in this study, the similarity of the political stability index and the indicators presented in the World Bank for the two regions of the Caucasus countries and the OECD have been measured and compared. The time interval of these time series is from 2000-2020. Among the first 30 variables with the highest degree of similarity to the political stability index in the Caucasus region, economic variables have the largest number. This is while in the OECD countries, population, health and environmental indicators have taken the first ranks. Based on the obtained results, due to the geopolitical differences of the two regions, these factors are different in the two regions.

▪ **Keywords:**

political stability, world bank, Caucasus, OECD.

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