

The Editorial Note

The United States and Central Asia Cooperation Prospects



Almost thirty years ago, five countries of Central Asia (CA) region gained their independence and became prominent political players in Eurasia. During this period, their strategic position often changes and bounced back and forth between Russia, China, and the West. As countries matured, they started to pursue various forms of multi-directional foreign relationships.

The strategic geographic location and richness in various mineral resources of the CA region, have presented to the American government numerous foreign policy challenges and opportunities. The United States' economic cooperation with countries of the Central Asian region started immediately after the republics proclaimed independence in 1992-1995. In the last two decades, through various circumstances, the U.S. administration attempted to

promote market economic and democratic reforms that often were not met with understanding by the post-Soviet political elite.

In addition, the tension with neighboring Afghanistan and Iran present another strategic value for the United States in establishing its presence in the region. The Central Asian region has been considered by NATO as a vital transit center to support logistical operations in the Afghan war. However, a strong Russian influence in the area continues to play a crucial role in regional stability. On the other side, China is successfully exploiting the Central Asian consumer-driven market and is actively investing in Turkmen gas and Kazakh oil energy-related sectors.

Central Asia gained attention from several angles: U.S. Silk Road Policy, the Russian led Customs Union, the Chinese economic integration actions plan, and the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA).

All this creates an excellent opportunity for American and Central Asian professors and researchers to engage in academic cooperation and studies to focus on evaluating current policy-economic collaboration between the U.S. and CA regional states. For this reason, the Journal JEECAR may serve as a valuable platform where academicians from both sides, West and East, can evaluate the existing policies and proposed a path toward mutually beneficial cooperation.

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