

CONNECT CENTRAL ASIA POLICY AND INDIAN OUTFOXING

Bawasingh

Abstract

With the breakup of Soviet Union in December 1991, the landscape of the Eurasian heartland has been changed and Central Asia rediscovered itself in the comity of nations with the dawn of the twenty first century. But after the breakup, Central Asia did not remain in the priority of the Russian foreign policy as Central Asia being considered as its natural backyard. This vacuum gave birth to the 'New Great Game', thus, the major powers-US, China, Russia and European Union (EU) involved in Central Asian geopolitics was further substantiated by Zbigniew Brzezinski. Following the geopolitical thinkers-Huntington and Mackinder, Zbigniew Brzezinski in his book entitled "The Grand Chessboard: American Primary and its Geostrategic Imperatives" (1997), renamed the Eurasian Heartland as a Chessboard. According to him, five countries- France, Germany, Russia, China, and India are as "pivots" to control the Eurasian landmass. For the given rich mineral resources and its geostrategic location, the 'pivots' have been making efforts to control Central Asia for their vested interests. Though, India and Central Asia had been sharing historical and civilizational relations, even after its independence, the fact is that Central Asia did not find pivotal place in Indian foreign policy. Some perceptible scholars are of the opinion that during the last decade, India has been outfoxed from Central Asia because of the geopolitics of the region. In the very beginning of the 21st century, India realized this diplomatic mistake and redesigned its foreign policy under various frameworks vis-à-vis Central Asia. Connect Central Asia Policy is one of them. Against this background, the main focus of this paper is to find out how geopolitical and geostrategic interests of India are being effected in Central Asia; how India is being outfoxed from Central Asia; how and to what extent Connect Central Asia Policy be helpful in engaging India more positively and constructively with Central Asia to check its outfoxing?

Keywords

Geographical Proximity, Post-cold War, Pivots, Geo-politics, New Great Game, Paradigm Shift, Outfox, Regional Organization, Connect Central Asia Policy, Indian Foreign Policy, Soft Power, Asian Century, Security Issues, Central Asian Republics.

Introduction

India and Central Asia had been enjoying civilizational and historical relations since millennia. India has remained dormant to extend cordial and bilateral

relations with Central Asian republics after the breakup of the USSR. But the endowed natural resources made it very crucial for India from geopolitical and geo-economic perspective. Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, three of the five Central Asian countries are sharing borders with Afghanistan which further attaches strategic significance to the region for the Indian foreign policy. Despite India's geostrategic and geopolitical interests in this region, unfortunately, the bilateral cooperation did not realize to the full potential. In the 1990s, some important events took place in the international relations. Withdrawal of USSR from Afghanistan, the end of the Cold War, breakup of USSR– all left indelible ramifications for Indian security in the changing geostrategic environment. Although, India had shared very deep relations in the remote past with Central Asia but it failed to concretize its relations with the regions in the post-Cold War era because of its internal political and economic dynamics. With the onset of the New Great Game and some drastic changes in the international politics such as withdrawal of USSR from Afghanistan in 1989 and end of the Cold War brought India closer to Central Asia. Geopolitical and geostrategic importance of Central Asia for India has been enhanced by these internal and external dynamics. The geopolitical and geostrategic salience of the region for the Indian foreign policy has been highlighted in the Indian's Ministry of Defence's Annual Report (2009-10) on account of its geographical proximity, historical and cultural links etc. The Indian Prime Minister's address to the Combined Commanders Conference in October 2010 highlighted the importance of Central Asia in these words:

“.... The discovery of large reserves of hydrocarbons and other resources needed for sustaining economic growth makes the Central Asian region immensely attractive for forging a mutually beneficial cooperative relationship.”¹

India's Geostrategic Interests in Central Asia

Central Asia holds a paramount strategic significance for India. It is lying between the two nuclear powers of Russia and China. Afghanistan is falling in the 'Arc of Turbulence' and Central Asia has been sharing long border with Afghanistan. As pointed out by the some strategic commentators, Afghanistan is known for its religious extremism in both the regions South and Central Asia. From Kashmir point of view, it is a major cause of concern for India. Similarly, many terrorist outfits from Afghanistan share ethnic and religious proximity with the Central Asian terrorist groups. Thus, both the regions have vital interests in each other's political and strategic stability. Seeing Kashmir problem, India cannot afford to be isolated itself from the geostrategic and geopolitical dynamics of the regions. Central Asian experts have pointed out that uncontrolled religious extremism in the CARs could invigorate the same in Kashmir.² Sharing geographical proximity, it is considered that India's strategic concerns are closely tied up with the regions bordering its north and

northwest parts. Under such circumstances, India cannot afford to remain segregated from this region.³ Peace, stability and security are considered important elements for the development of the economy of any region. Afghanistan is a sharing geographical proximity with both India and Central Asian countries. Instability in Afghanistan has adversely influenced peace and security and is the potential threat to destabilize the whole region.⁴ India's major concern is that Taliban's re-emergence in Afghanistan and support from Pakistan would amplify the pressure on Kashmir and facilitate Pakistan's strategic outreach to South Asia.⁵ If both the regions do not cooperate with each other, the security environment of both the regions which is already under severe stresses, is likely to become more explosive.⁶ In order to control this explosive strategic environment and protection of long-term strategic interests, bilateral cooperation becomes paramount significant. After the end of the Cold War and break up of USSR, the New Great Game has set in the Central Asia. Some of the major powers and regional players are competing with each other to spread their influence in Central Asia. The US is making efforts to weaken the Russian and Iranian gains on the one hand whereas on the other hand, China has extended magnificent economic aid for the development of oil fields in Central Asia for its future demands. Exploiting the Afghan political and strategic instability, EU has been extending its influence through NATO's Partnership for Peace (PFP) programme.

Drug trafficking is another problem, being faced by India and Central Asia. Drug trafficking has become a money-making trade and posing a serious security and social challenge for both the regions. Central Asia is also highly vulnerable for smuggling of fissile material for Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD), as the custom checkpoints are lacking detection equipment for intercepting such material. Though Kazakhstan has closed nuclear test range after its independence and committed to be non-nuclear state under the international regime, but still it has potential for nuclear power as it is richly endowed with uranium.⁷ With the onset of economic reforms, Indian economy has been metamorphosed to good growth rate but India lacks sources of energy by which it can maintain this growth rate. Most of its energy requirements are coming from the Middle East Asia but with the intervention of external powers for their vested interests in this region, the strategic environment has been very explosive. On account of this, India has to diversify its energy sources to Central Asia that is rich in hydrocarbon resources.⁸

Central Asia in Indian Foreign Policy: Paradigmatic Shift

Soon after independence of CARs, both India and the CARs renewed their contacts. The Presidents of CARs visited India in quick succession seeking high order bilateral and multilateral cooperation. In the pursuance of the comprehensive relationship, many MoUs and policy frameworks have been put in place by both the sides. Both regions have been committed to

open democratic and secular polities. Both regions committed to heighten cooperation to root out religious extremism and terrorism. Sharing many commonalities of interests, Central Asia is being considered as a part of Indian Extended Neighbourhood. Many official frameworks i.e. Immediate and Strategic Neighbourhood and Look North Policy have been launched to further heighten the cooperation with Central Asia.⁹ Having congruence of geopolitical, geostrategic and geo-economic interests, unfortunately Central Asia did not find pivotal position in Indian foreign policy. Most of the scholars of the Indian foreign policy holding views that Indian foreign policy have always been reactive rather than pro-active policy vis-à-vis Central Asia.¹⁰ India has failed to capitalize the amount of goodwill, enjoying in Central Asia on account of its historical engagement and during the Cold War era. Whereas on the other hand, Indian foreign policy had been largely remained obsessed with Western world and primarily pre-occupied with Pakistan and China. Other areas of the world such as Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia did not figured prominently in Indian foreign policy. India's concerns have been rooted in Pakistan. Pakistan's strategy is to spread the religious agenda not only in South Asia but in Central Asia in order to form an Islamic State from the arc of Islamic countries starting from Iraq to Pakistan was viewed with tremendous circumspection and concern by Indian policy-makers and strategists alongwith the Central Asian scholars.¹¹

Throughout the Cold War, India and erstwhile USSR had been sharing very strong relations. With the breakup of USSR, India lost a strong ally that has always been supporting India in the international fora. The breakup changed the Eurasian geopolitical landscape. About 16 countries emerged on the Eurasian political map. However, after getting independence from Soviet Union, this region still remained under the Russian influence and known as backyard of Russia.¹² Although India established diplomatic relations with these countries in the very beginning but substance and constructive cooperation were absent between both the regions. With the launch of the New Great Game in the Central Asia, it has become chessboard of external powers. Meanwhile, Indian economy was on higher trajectory and it has converted to higher growth rate and in order to maintain this growth rate, it required a lot of energy as itself is deficient in energy source whereas Central Asia is very rich in the same. Against this background, Central Asia is a region where India has geopolitical and geo-economic interests. Thus, India started giving prime importance to Central Asia in its foreign policy.

The dawn of the twenty first century saw major changes in India's strategic thinking. With the end of the Cold War coinciding with lot of geopolitical and geostrategic changes in the international politics, paradigmatic shift has been witnessed in Indian foreign policy. Now it is not only loosening its obsession with Pakistan and China, rather it is opening up to many other parts of the world. India was willing to play a significant role in Asia alongwith the global

aspirations. Against this background, India reoriented and energized its foreign policy by fortifying it with frameworks, such as, “Look East”, “Look Central Asia” etc. In the beginning of the 21st century, India has been following two pronged strategy- multilateral and bilateral engagements with Central Asia. India has become observer of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and also pursuing its goal to elevate its engagement as a full member. Except Turkmenistan, all other Central Asia republics are members of this regional organization. India is engaging with Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) for its security interests. Central Asia countries have been strongly advocating elevation of Indian observer status to full membership for checking one country’s hegemony. India has also become the member of the Kazakh initiative Conference on Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA). There will be possibility of terrorism’s shifting bases from Afghanistan to Central Asian republics and this will have drastic impact on the stability of the both the regions.¹³ In view of this, both the regions have lot of scope in furthering strategic cooperation.

Alongwith multilateralism, India is also concretizing bilateral relations with the Central Asian republics. Bilateral relations between both the regions are based on open, pluralism, and progressive societies. Both are committed to secularism and democracy. Bilateral relations have been fortified because of homogeneity in commitment to root out terrorism, drug smuggling, small arms trafficking and other non-conventional security threats. Central Asian republics have responded to Indian concerns very positively and brought India out of claustrophobic confines of South Asia.¹⁴ Look North Policy, Strategic Partnership and Central Asia Connect Policy frame-works have been devised to make Indian foreign policy *vis-a-vis* this region more proactive in the region. But the fact is that India is being outfoxed from Central Asian geo-economic and geostrategic dynamics. In addition to this, bilateral trade is at very low ebb, FDI being very negligible. Because of these enervated bilateral relations, India strategically and economically, has not become able to make any indelible impressions in the region.

Outfoxing of India from Central Asia: Wake Up Call

Notwithstanding, strong historical and civilizational engagements alongwith constructive policy frameworks, in the recent years, India is being outfoxed from Central Asia. After the announcement of its ‘Connect Central Asia Policy’, India has been taken up seriously by the Central Asian countries. This policy was directed to enhance its cooperation in many potential sectors. Concerns and connection on part of both sides provided vital strength and urgency to the bilateral relations. Despite this urgency India, has been failed to keep pace with external players, in general, and with China and Russia, in particular.¹⁵ Economically, Central Asian countries are not in a good position but their cooperation with India is holding paramount importance

in the evolving geostrategic and geo-economic environment for the mutual economic development. These countries required a lot of economic assistance for sorting out their socio-economic problems. India was not in a position to bail out these countries from such crisis whereas, on the other hand, other external players, particularly, China and Russia have been investing in the Central Asian region to build road, railways, pipelines etc. Despite many foreign policy initiative, Indian profile is declining in Central Asia on account of the New Great Game. However, it was not completely out of race in game.

Energy security is a major concern of India whereas Central Asia is very rich in energy. Thus, India and Central Asia are complementary to each other. But the fact is that the major initiatives on part of India in Central Asia to ensure energy security have been in limbo. Though roots of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipe line project was laid in the 1990s but yet has not taken off. Turkmenistan and Pakistan signed MoU in 1995. Later on, India also joined this project. Afghanistan, India and Pakistan signed a framework agreement in June 2008 to import gas from Turkmenistan.¹⁶ Contention regarding transit fees between India-Afghanistan and Pakistan-India made the prospects of the realizing this project very dismal. Geopolitics of the region further derailed the project. Following the visit of Chinese President, Xi's visit to Turkmenistan in September 2013, there is a speculation that the TAPI project may be limited up to Pakistan only.

However, in a significant step towards achieving energy security, India signed agreement with hydrocarbon-rich Kazakhstan in April, 2011, for acquisition of 25 per cent stake in its Satpayev exploration block in the Caspian Sea. But very shortly, the Kazakhstani state-owned energy firm KazMunaiGas bought some stakes in the Kashagan field. The same stake about 8.33 percent was sold to China's CNPC for the same sum of US\$ 5 billion. As reported, India lost 8.4 percent stake in Kazakhstan's Kashagan oil field to the CNPC.¹⁷ Half of the cost of financing of the second phase of Kashagan's development will be given by CNPC and because of this smart diplomacy, India met with outfoxing in this project. China has shown smart energy and trade diplomacy related to energy projects. It has become successful in making Turkmenistan's Galkynysh gas field, the world's second-largest gas field operational. It is a major accomplishment for China because this project was developed by a CNPC-led consortium without any external participation from major Western energy companies. Now, there is an indication on part of Turkmenistan that the successful accomplishment of Galkynysh field, China will have more control over the future of TAPI pipeline project.¹⁸

Lack of connectivity between India and Eurasia is also resulting in many problems for both the regions. In order to enhance connectivity between both the regions, India, Russia and Iran mooted an idea of a very important and ambitious project known as International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) in 2000. In this regard, nothing much has happened practically

but has become more complicated with the rapidly changing geopolitical dynamics of the region. The ongoing problems of Afghanistan and geopolitics over the involvement of Iran have been affecting the prospects of the project. On the other hand, China and Russia are also creating the network of energy and security relations in Central Asia through the SCO. According to one perceptible scholar, Debidatta Aurobinda Mahapatra, this network would have serious implications for INSTC. Michael Tanchum is also holding the same opinion. According to him, concerns are growing in India that INSTC probably may step into the shoes of SCO-managed trade and transport corridor stretching from the Pacific to the Baltic. India's poor maneuvering of proposed projects will have serious implications for its next engagements in regional cooperation in Central Asia. India may be sidelined by Chinese and Russian assertiveness in energy-rich Central Asian republics.¹⁹

China has an edge over India in Central Asia. China has extended economic aid to these countries at two levels – bilateral and through the mechanism of the SCO by providing substantial loans to the five states. In addition to energy, China is also expanding its footprints in many other sectors, such as, tungsten and uranium mining sector. Meena Singh Roy, an expert on India-Central Asian issues says that, “While India is accepted by all five Central Asian Republics, India's delivery mechanism is very slow. Indian private companies do not take enough interest in this region, and China with its economic might is, obviously, able to penetrate into the region faster than India. While India invests in millions, Beijing invests in billions in Central Asia.”²⁰ Indian trade and investment in Central Asia is very insignificant.

Strategically, India and Central Asia shared same kind of threat perceptions. However, strategically, the bilateral or regional engagements between India and Central Asia are very weaker ones. Both the regions shared geographical proximity with the highly terrorism infested country and the centre of drug smuggling. Thus, strategic cooperation is holding paramount importance for both the regions. Whatever the standing strategic cooperation is there between both the regions are being outmaneuvered by Russia. India has renovated Ayni Air Base in Tajikistan which was serving as a major military base for the Soviet Union since its intervention in Afghanistan. But when Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan, this Air Base lost its geostrategic importance for Russia. Its infrastructure had been deteriorated seriously. India offered to renovate it as Tajikistan per se is not interested in maintaining and repairing it. Joshua Kocera, an eminent scholar on Eurasia argued in one of his papers quoting some perceptible analysts that India's strategic foray into base politics was motivated by a desire to play the role of great power.²¹ India renovated this Air Base by spending US\$70 million during the 2002 and 2010. Though, India and Central Asia have been looking toward Russia as a sole guarantor of security in the Central Asian region but expanding strategic influence of India in the region is disliked by Russia. Blocking of obtaining a military base in

Kyrgyzstan and renewing the lease of lease on Ayni Air Base in Tajikistan can be seen in this direction.

The below table depicts the true picture of India and Central Asian economic cooperation. In comparison with other powers, India is standing at the lowest ebb. China, Russia and USA are the important trading partner of Central Asia. In 2000, bilateral trade between USA and Central Asia stood at US\$ 8472.75 million followed by Russia, China and India with US\$ 6472.75 million, US\$ 1819.36 million, US\$ 89.67 million respectively. By 2013, China has emerged as the major trading partner of Central Asia, valuing at US\$ 50 billion, followed by US, Russia and India at US\$ 33 billion, US\$ 31 billion and US\$ 1.2 billion respectively. This comparison shows that economically India is almost an insignificant player in Central Asia as compared to USA, China and Russia.

**Trade Trends of Central Asia with Big Powers
(Value in Millions \$)**

Years	China	Russia	USA	India
2000	1819.36	6472.75	8472.75	89.67
2005	8726.76	24358.57	26363.57	246.33
2006	11183.41	16765.97	18771.97	311.34
2007	12523.47	21718.69	23725.69	303.66
2008	30822.71	26752.72	28760.72	518.59
2009	23546.45	18488.95	20497.95	481.64
2010	24989.65	21437.18	23447.18	495.82
2011	39605.90	28342.41	30353.41	687.66
2012	45943.59	31988.00	34000.00	746.31
2013	50274.12	31415.03	33428.03	1241.44
Total Trade	263250.93	266794.25	294885.25	5692.9

Source: UN Comtrade Database (2013)

Central Asia is undergoing the influence of the New Great Game and the US, China, Russia and NATO are the important players of this game. US's main interests are involving around checking China and Russia's expanding influence and vice versa. Out of this game, Indian interests are seriously being affected. India has been out of many mutual beneficial economic and strategic projects on account of these players intervention. Now, a question comes up, how these interests can be protected and can India's latest policy framework Connect Central Asia Policy cope up with these challenges.

Connect Central Asia Policy and India's Outfoxing

Though India and Central Asia had been enjoying relations since the recorded history, but presently despite historical and civilizational bounds, these lacked substance. Despite having lot of scope in economic relations, bilateral trade

did not take off. It still stood at US\$ 1 billion which speaks the low volume of multilateral and bilateral relations. Investment is also not encouraging one. Both the regions having congruence of interests related to security but failed to enhance their strategic partnership. Connectivity is one of the major blocks for heightening the regional engagements. Central Asia is very rich in mineral and energy whereas India is deficient in the same. Moreover, with the onset of the New Great Game, India is being outfoxed from Central Asia in mutual beneficial projects. Against this background, India started dialogue with Central Asia in June, 2012, in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan). The objective of this dialogue was to start a regular annual discussion among the academics, scholars, government officials and business representatives from both the sides to provide inputs to respective governments in order to heighten comprehensive engagements. During the conference, Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. E. Ahmad, launched India's new 'Connect Central Asia' Policy.²² E. Ahmad stating that India is now looking closely at the region through the framework of its 'Connect Central Asia' Policy, which is based on pro-active political, economic and people-to-people engagement with Central Asian Countries, both individually and collectively.²³ This policy got further impetus giving emphasis on the four 'Cs,' namely 'Commerce, Connectivity and Community.' While during the External Affairs Minister, S. M. Krishna's two-day visit to Tajikistan in the same year.

In order to speed up the bilateral cooperation, Connect Central Asia Policy (CCAP), prioritized many areas for enhancing bilateral and multilateral engagement which included strategic and security cooperation, military training, joint research, counter-terrorism coordination, long term partner in energy & natural resources, multilateral engagement, setting up civil hospitals/clinics, IT, management, philosophy and languages, setting up a Central Asian e-network, tele-education and tele-medicine connectivity and developing banking infrastructure in the region.²⁴ But in view of this comprehensive policy many unwanted geopolitical incidents took place which speaks about Indian profile and failures in the region. India has shown its interests in heightening multilateral cooperation with the region. Its major concern is extending cooperation with Central Asia as a long term partner in energy and natural resources. Economically and strategically, India cannot compete with Russia and China in the Central Asia region. Diplomatic maneuvers can help out India. Through this policy, India has been stepping up its diplomatic engagements with Central Asia and multilateral fora in the Eurasian regions. India is already on SCO board as an observer. India is focusing to elevate its engagement with SCO. This has been interpreted by some scholars as India's ability to check its outfoxing from Central Asia. China is blocking its elevation whereas Russia is supporting this move in order to balancing factor for Chinese and US's influence. Salman Khurshid, Indian External Affairs Minister visited Kyrgyzstan in September 2013 to attend the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO). He expressed Indian interest

to heighten security co-operation with the SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS).²⁵ Moreover, Russia has negative perception of China and US. Exploiting this, India using Connect Central Asia Policy, can check the influence of many external powers. India is fortifying its bound with Eurasian Economic Community (EEC) and the Custom Union and it is also moving in this direction by proposing a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement to integrate its markets with the unifying Eurasian space.²⁶

In comparison to external powers, the economic cooperation between both the regions comparatively is still dormant. Trade and investment are at very low ebb. In 2013, bilateral trade stood at US\$ 1.2 billion. In reciprocation, SCO is proposing Free Trade Area which will be in place by 2020. It will integrate economically all the members of the SCO. Scholars are of the opinion that it will be more attractive to join SCO and FTA than the developed countries' offer to include India in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.²⁷ Both the regions have geo-economic complementarities. Connect Central Asia has focused upon in enhancing cooperation in terms of natural resources; human resources and markets. Alongwith these sectors, there are huge opportunities existing fo expanding cooperation in banking, insurance, agriculture, IT and pharmaceuticals. Private sectors of India are doing well over there in the steel and construction sector. Hydropower potential has lot of scope and India is exploring the construction of small and medium sized hydroelectric plants mainly in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.²⁸

Under this policy, India has also been focusing to enhance its soft power in Central Asia. Apart from India plans to set up Indian-Central Asia University in Kyrgyzstan and military hospital in Tajikistan. IT centres of excellence are working in Tashkent, Ashgabat, Dushanbe, Bishkek, Fruit Processing Plant in Dushanbe and a Potato Processing Plant in Talas (Kyrgyzstan), are worth mentioning. Computerization of post offices in Uzbekistan; an EntrepreneurshipDevelopment Centre in Tashkent and a Tool Room in Dushanbe were also some of the important projects undertaken by India in Central Asia. About 645 slots under its ITEC programme were allotted to Eurasia in 2012–13. Out of these slots, 435 were sanctioned to Central Asia.²⁹ By these soft power projects, India has developed lot of goodwill fund by which it can check its outfoxing from Central Asia. High level visits between both the countries can contribute in strengthening the cooperation in many sectors. As these diplomatic engagements become ideal forums for discussing geopolitical issues and provided space for decision making regarding heightening of bilateral cooperation. Joint research programs related to energy and trade can fortify India's engagements with the Central Asian countries. Connect Central Asia Policy also emphasized on the people to people contact alongwith humanitarian concerns, such as, opening hospitals and education systems through which they can know about each other and win the political favour.³⁰ These diplomatic engagements ultimately will prove helpful in checking Indian outfoxing from Central Asia.

Conclusion

India and Central Asia had been enjoying geo-cultural and civilizational relations since the recoded history. These relations have become enervated owing to the colonization of both the regions. After USSR breakup, Central Asia emerged on the Eurasian map. Though, geopolitical and geostrategic interests have been intertwined between India and Central Asia, even then Indian foreign policy overlooked this region. This region also did not figure prominently in Russian foreign policy. This lukewarm approach on part of its colonial master Russia, gave a space for the power play for external powers, known as the New Great Game. Against this background, India is expanding its footprints in Central Asia to achieve its geo-economic and geopolitical interests. Energy and security are the major interests. India has tried to get energy projects in Central Asia. It is also trying to expand its strategic infrastructure in the forms of air bases such as Ayni and Farkhor Air bases. But because of external power great game, India is being outfoxed from these energy and strategic projects. India launched Connect Central Asia Policy in 2012 to expand its engagements in various sectors such as energy, security, land, air and sea connectivity, health, education and in many other sectors. This policy will, hopefully, prove panacea to check the Indian outfoxing only if proposed projects are translated into reality. The present Indian political leadership should strive hard for improving its foreign relations with extended neighbourhood i.e. Central Asian States, owing the fact that both the regions are independent upon each other for manufacturing and market. In order to supplement the market-manufacture dilemma and to realize the dream for making 21st century as Asian Century, not only India and CAS but all the major regional powers have to share a common platform for this purpose. In this developmental game India's Connect Central Asia Policy which also can play a significant role, has to be translated into a reality.

References & Notes

1. For full reference see, Prime Minister Exhorts Armed Forces Modernisation, Oct 12, 2010, "Security Trends in South Asia," India Defense on Security Risks.com.
2. Balci, Bayram (2010): *China and India in Central Asia: A New Great Game*, ed., Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 132.
3. Ibid.
4. Taliban's Winter Offensive to Destabilise Region, BBC New, 7 March, 2011. Accessed from -<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/mobile/world-south-asia-12664486>.
5. Rashid, A (2010): *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (2nd ed), Yale University Press, New Haven, 187.
6. Blank, S (2003): "India's Rising Profile in Central Asia," *Comparative Strategy*, 22 (2), 141.
7. India Looking to Import Uranium From Uzbekistan, *The Economic Times*, 6 October, 2013.
8. Rao, V. Nagendra and Mohammad MonirAlam (2005): "Central Asia - Present Challenges and Future Prospects," *Knowledge World*, ed., New Delhi, 227.

Connect Central Asia Policy and Indian Outfoxing

- 9 Bal, Suryakant Nijanand (2004): *Central Asia - A Strategy For India's Look-North Policy*, Lancer Publishers, New Delhi, 29.
- 10 Hall, Ian (2014): *The Engagement of India - Strategies and Responses*, ed., Georgetown University Press, 91.
- 11 Ibid., p. 93.
- 12 Rashid, Ahmed (2002): *Taliban - Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, I. B Tauris, London, 156.
- 13 Singh, Ravi Shekhar Narain: *Asian Strategic and Military Perspective*, Lancer International, New Delhi, 8.
- 14 Bhabani Sen Gupta (1997): "India in the Twenty-first Century," *International Affairs*, 73(2), 309.
- 15 Blank, S (2013): "India's Strategic Failure in Central Asia," *The Diplomat*; <http://thediplomat.com/2013/06/11/indias-strategic-failure-in-central-asia/?all=true>.
- 16 BBC News South Asia (December 11, 2010): Turkmen Natural Gas Pipeline TAPI to Cross Afghanistan; www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-11977744.
- 17 India Loses \$5 bn bid for Kashagan oil Field to China, *The Economic Times*, 2 July, 2013.
- 18 Dadwal, Shebonti Ray: "Now China May Play Spoiler to TAPI," 31 July, 2012. Accessed from-http://www.idsa.in/idsacomment/NowChinamayplayspoilertoTAPI_ShebontiRDadwal_310712.html, 2 January, 2015.
- 19 Tanchum, Michael: "India's Central Asia Ambitions Outfoxed by China and Russia, South Asia Masala," 16 October, 2013. Accessed from- <http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/blogs/southasiamasala/2013/10/16/indias-central-asia-ambitions-outfoxed-by-china-and-russia/>, 2 January, 2015.
- 20 Chaudhury, Dipanjan Roy: "Economic Relations with Central Asia - China Steals a March, But India Undeterred," Quoted in, *The Economic Times*, Oct. 13, 2013.
- 21 Kucera, Joshua: "Why is Tajikistan's Ayni Air Base Idle?" 9 July, 2010. Accessed from <<http://www.eurasianet.org/node/61503>> 13 November, 2014.
- 22 Bisaria, Ajay: "India Reworking Its Strategy towards Central Asia Through New Connect Central Asia Policy." Accessed from- <http://idsa.in/pressrelease/IndiaReworkingItsStrategytowardsCentralAsia>, 2 January, 2015.
- 23 Extracted from the Keynote Address by MOS Shri E. Ahamed at "First India-Central Asia Dialogue - India's 'Connect Central Asia' Policy." Accessed from-<http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/19791/Keynote+address+by+MOS+Shri+E+Ahamed+at+First+IndiaCentral+Asia+Dialogue>, 2 Jan., 2015.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Pant, Harsh V: "India on Central Asia's Fringes," *The New Indian Express*, 22 September, 2013.
- 26 Seethi, K.M: "India's Connect Central Asia Policy." *The Diplomat*, 13 December, 2013. Accessed from- <http://thediplomat.com/2013/12/indias-connect-central-asia-policy/>, 2 January 2015.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Anita Sengupta (2012): *Eurasia - Twenty Years After*, ed., MAKAIS, Kolkata, 524-40.
- 29 Roy, M.S (2013): "India's Connect Central Asia Policy - Building Cooperative Partnership," *Indian Foreign Affairs Journal*, 8(3), July-September, 301-316.
- 30 Op.cit. 23.