

# Central Asian Integration and Regional Development

## A Greater Central Asian Approach

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### **Abstract**

*Two things determine the nature of a state's behaviour and relations with the world. A good economy with smooth borders brings a positive atmosphere in the relations among nations thus leading to cooperation. The otherwise is also the case i.e. bad economy and porous borders that shut the door for good neighborliness, soar relations and give rise to conflict. How Greater Central Asia concept (as an Approach) in the midst of fragile economy and porous borders-where ethnic tensions always simmer fits into the mechanism for security and development (trade-economics and security) in the light of theories of conflict and cooperation. There is another dimension involved i.e. the role of external and internal actors in this adventure. External powers like the U.S. (and others) have integrated Central Asia into 'Operation Enduring Freedom of Afghanistan'. India has played a constructive role in reconstruction and rehabilitation in post-war Afghanistan. The paper is an attempt to analyze how both the actors (internal and external) play in the adventure of Greater Central Asia.*

### **Keywords**

Greater Central Asia, Central Asia, Central Asia Republics, Central Asian Cooperation, Central Asian Energy, Afghanistan.

### **Introduction**

Post-September 11 introduced a paradigm shift in the conduct of international politics. The 'war on terror' 'opened up' Central Asia region, which was in the lowest margins of the world where no human being was interested in (Hill, Aug., 2002). Afghanistan war brought geo-political significance to Central Asia and received further attention and importance with the discovery of natural resources-gas and oil (Warikoo, 1995). In this situation, India has played its role to promote, and benefit itself, the regional development of Central Asia linking Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics. A historical and cultural understanding of relations among nations always helps to create a cooperative pace in the present context of the relationship. The ancient pre-colonial era was marked with trade links enhancing cultural and historical ties and post-colonial period had characterized with cooperation based on strategic equations

to benefit their national aspirations. In this dispensation, India and Central Asia including Afghanistan are part of that understanding by way of sharing strong historical, cultural relationships since ancient times. India and Central Asia also share common and contiguous borders, climate, and geographical; even religion provided a great kind of affinity as well. While ‘*Silk route*’ (term coined by Ferdinand Freiherr von Richtig in 1877) (Sreemati, 2011) represented a web of communication, peace and cultural exchanges among the countries present in Central Asia and South Asia; the “Great Game”(Arthur Conolly’s term) concept involved power conflict among great powers for influence in the region(Sloan, 1999). The ‘*New Great Game*’ is a conceptualized-a modern geopolitical situation in the CARs including the Middle East. Thus to explore India’s role and reconstruction, and development of Greater Central Asia concept is the purpose of this paper. In this connection, I will be exploring India’s policy of using soft power approach to delineate the significances of Greater Central Asia concept and its development; and the advantages it has for Indian interests.

In the discussion on Central Asia, two ancient concepts are of contemporary importance when it comes to the role of big powers in the Central Asian region: “Great Game” and “Silk Route”. The imperial powers exploited the geopolitical significance to their advantage and used concepts like *Mackinder’s ‘Pivot’*. Sir, H. Mackinder in his book ‘*Democratic Ideals and Reality*’ in 1919 described Eurasia including Afghanistan as world Pivot and Heartland---vast landmass. His remarks led to new foundations like rimland, heartland which were further developed into the theory like Spykman’s rimland theory etc. ‘*Heartland*’, ‘*Rimland*’ (in Nicholas John Spykman concept), ‘*Crossroads*’ etc. for their imperial gains (Marlene, 2011). The geo-strategic and geo-economic significance and the great powers interest have made Central Asia region an arena of great importance (Warikoo, 2011). In this way, the role of external powers in the management of the Central Asian affairs has to do with the Greater Central Asian concept will be explored. This paper will be divided into two sections one, India’s role of integrating the South and Central Asian countries within the conceptual framework of Greater Central Asia concept as regional development and cooperative instrument and second, Greater Central Asia Concept and the great powers rivalry in Central Asia in the light of conflict.

### **Greater Central Asia Concept (GCA)-An Approach: Conflict or Cooperation**

The discovery of natural gas and oil introduced geo-economic importance of Central Asia region in the world. America's 'war on terror' in Afghanistan (due to the geographical proximity of Afghanistan with Central Asia) induced a new dimension in the importance of Central Asia *i.e.* geo-political and geo-strategic importance (Michel Hess, March 2004). Greater Central Asia concept is a geo-strategic construct involving the proximities of the South and Central Asian countries. That proximity is geographical, historical and cultural illustrates a fine reason for clubbing of the countries with common interest-economic and political. The Greater Central Asia besides five Central Asian Republics comprises Afghanistan, the Turkic Xinjiang region of China. It also extends to geo-strategically to Northern parts of Pakistan, *Khorasan* province of Iran, *Tatarstan* in Russia and even northern India (Joshi, 2011).

The propounder of GCA concept, Fredrick Starr, stated the basics to "development" of the Central Asian region is "trade" however, requires a good transportation system. Commenting on the troubles that the region had he added the prosperity of Afghanistan and its neighbours would never be possible in isolation (Starr, 2008). Linking Afghanistan's development and stability with Central Asia and of other neighboring countries, the Greater Central Asia (GCA) definition introduced by Barnett and Ahmed Rashid aimed at taking an inclusive view of the region. What they did was a re-look on the priorities of the region. This was done by reshuffling of focus into the region earlier based on security and democracy first, turn into development first and security, democracy the next. The belief was according to Ahmad Rashid, development is a key to human security and hence a path towards democracy. This has brought the necessity of thinking overall development of all Central Asian regional countries and the peripheries around especially Afghanistan. The positive aspect of GCA is that it treats South Asia and Central Asia into a single unit. Besides cultural, historical ties all countries of South Asia and Central Asia have common concerns; proxy wars, war on terror, energy security and above all achieving economic development and prosperity (Joshi, 2011). Common objectives and concerns find expression in cooperation. Thus in the midst of common concerns and various types of proximities for both the countries of South Asian and Central Asian region Greater

Central Asia concept is an endorsement and India has played a positive role in enhancing security and stability in the regional countries like Afghanistan and strengthening ties with Central Asian Republics through multi-pronged policy. Thus, India's role has an advantage to the GCA concept. Therefore, GCA concept is a cooperative mechanism that helps to ameliorate 'insecurity' and tensions between proximate countries and enhances prospects for two main issues: 'development' and 'security' or 'stability' via commercialization and connectivity of border interdependence.

***a) GCA and the Silk Route: Mechanism of Cooperation for Central Asia***

A necessary condition needed for regional development is linking trade and commerce through means of communication. Communication brings commercial ties among countries making trade and economics interdependent. The old silk route in ancient times provided a sufficient reason for the vast regional integration through trade and commerce. Silk route about 7000 miles was a good source of communication connecting Asia and Europe (Sharma, 2009). The silk route consisted of a series or web of inter-connected trade routes linking China, Central Asia, Northern India, the Parthian and Roman empire, Pakistan, Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran. In this way, it was not only a trade route but also a way of cultural mix thus providing further integration to the countries contiguous to each other. However, the Silk route lasted 15<sup>th</sup> century until newly discovered sea routes to Asia opened up (Warikoo, 2011). Post-colonization era introduced new trends in world economics and trade system noticeable as 'cooperation' with 'competition' that affected the nature and behaviour of nation-states. This required doing away with traditional routes of Central and South Asia and hence a concept of a renewed *silk route* strategy. However, in order to initiate a new kind of system of transport that links regions together also needs state-to-state cooperation. GCA in this way has nation-to-nation bilateral cooperation. For example, Uzbekistan signed an analogous memorandum of cooperation in the field of energy with Afghanistan in 2006. India in this manner got TAPI-1800 km (Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and India-Dec 13, 2015) pipeline project is also a part of GCA (Joshi, 2011).

Another transportation set-up between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan is "Friendship Bridge" or "Freedom-Bridge" constructed over the *Amu Darya* connecting *Balkh* (Afghanistan) and *Termez* (Uzbekistan). From 2010 onwards, efforts were on to connect this bridge via a railway

to *Mazar-i-Sharief*. In this mode of cooperation, Tajikistan signed an agreement with Afghanistan and Pakistan for the exportation of hydro-based power (Starr, 2008). In this perspective building interconnectivity between Central and South Asian countries brings cooperation among them also do complements GCA concept.

***b) Silk Route Strategy (The New Great Game): An Invitation to the Conflict in Central Asia***

The “New Great Game” that is renewed in the form of a strategy involves major powers to fight for influence in Central Asia and more properly Eurasia. The “New Great Game” is a competition of influence over Central Asian region between great powers; the US, UK, including NATO members and the Russia and China on the other side of the spectrum. The influence is about to have actual control over the “pipelines, tanker routes, petroleum, consortium, and contracts” (Rob, 2007).

**Indian Efforts in the Integration of GCA: GCA Approach**

***Adding Afghanistan- South Asian Country into GCA***

Linking Afghanistan adds further significance to the landlocked region of Central Asia and hence beneficial to regional development (Mc Lachlan, 2000). Central Asia holds a key position because of its centrally located position. Scholars define Central Asia as such due to its centrality occupying an important space connecting civilizations-East and West. However, without Afghanistan described as ‘cross-roads’ of Asia renders Central Asia as trade route handicapped (Khan, 1998). Thus, any trade route could not avoid Afghanistan. Afghanistan and the famous *Silk Route* around Central Asia for their location turn to be a perfect meeting point. Moreover, Afghanistan shares borders with Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. Better connectivity will enhance good neighborly relations ameliorating security threats providing stability and development of the countries (Dutta, 2008). This is possible only when cooperation among the countries is strengthened and GCA concept bears that perspective of strength. India, in an environment of instability and crisis in Afghanistan, has been successful to increase significantly to the maintenance of ties between the two countries that to benefit for regional development. It was by the efforts made by India that Afghanistan became a member of SAARC (MEA, GoI, 2013).

***Indian Efforts for GCA in Central Asia-Internal Player-GCA Cooperative Approach***

Former Prime Ministers of India had a very low consideration of Central Asia and therefore ‘neglect’ in India’s regional policy. It was in P.M. Narasimha Rao’s tenure that India looked to the region as strategically important. Narasimha Rao held four visits, in 1992 to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and to Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan in 1995. In 2003 Vajpayee was the first Indian P.M. to visit Tajikistan and to Kazakhstan in 2002. P.M. Manmohan Singh paid a visit to Uzbekistan in 2006 and to Kazakhstan in April 2011. However, the “perceived neglect” ended up in 2014 with the NDA-II under Modi reinvigorated the regional policy re-emphasizing on the extended and regional neighbors (Ashok, 2016).

In India’s policy of extended neighbourhood, the first thing to do was to overcome natural bottlenecks to connect India and Central Asia region. As no direct route from India to these countries is available without Pakistan, bypassing it became a necessity (Roy, 2011). To overcome bottlenecks in promoting links and conduct trade with Central Asia, Indian efforts ended up with the opening of many alternate routes that ultimately resulted in increased integration of the region with India’s ‘Connect Central Asia policy’. The establishment of The North-South Transport Corridor (NSTC) that link India with Central Asia made possible to bypass its transit dependence on Pakistan (Roy, August, 2015). Moreover, to overcome such hurdles, the construction, with India’s assistance, of the Iranian port of *Chahbahar* (opened for trade in 2018) connecting with *Zaranj–Delaram Roadway (ZDR)* in *Nimroz* Province will serve as “India’s gateway” to Central Asia. India has another alternate sea-to-land route option available running through the Iranian port of *Bandar Anzali* on the Caspian coast to gain access to the CARs and Russia. Such a project will also boost India’s commercial trade ties with Russia and the Russian goods and minerals and agricultural products will be available in Indian markets hassle-free. That will ultimately help realize New Delhi’s goal to expand its strategic reach northwards (Das, Oct. 2012).

***Kazakhstan and India***

India has highest trade with Kazakhstan among all the CARs and exports major commodities like tea, medical equipments, pharmaceutical, machinery, tobacco, valves etc. and imports in turn asbestos, soft wheat, steel, aluminum, wool and raw hides. Major trade cooperation (MOU

India's with Kazakhstan's Kazatomprom) between both the countries is in the field of export of Uranium from Kazakhstan for India's civil nuclear purposes and India will be able to import 120 tons of Kazakh Uranium annually (Mullen, 2011). Both countries have identified several sectors of cooperation necessary for the development of a strong relationship. They have thus identified major sectors and signed MOU's for cooperation in the "Space research, agriculture, products production, petrochemical complex, sulphuric acid plant, gold mining, and thermal plant". Kazakhstan and India cooperated and participated in International North-South Transport Corridor projects for enhancing future commercial and trade cooperation (MEA, GoI, 2013).

### ***India and Uzbekistan***

India, after two years Uzbekistan achieved independence, developed relations by signing a trade agreement that included "Avoidance of Double taxation", promotion of economic, industrial, and trade cooperation. In this way, India attained a major objective in linking Uzbekistan with South Asian partner for future trade and commerce activities. India has considerably invested in Uzbekistan in terms of trade, transfer of technology and IT sector investment. India assisted the establishment of IT parks and financed 30 million in the establishment of one of the IT centres at Tashkent named after Indian P.M. Jawaharlal Nehru (MEA, GoI, 2013).

Geographical proximity with Afghanistan determines the strategic significance of Uzbekistan. It is an active partner in the U.S. war on terror. Uzbekistan increases its cooperation with India in almost all fields and supports India's inclusion as a permanent member in the UNSC. Both the countries had joint ventures in automobiles and energy sector. "OZMinda LLC" is a joint venture concept (Ashok Minda Group-India and *Uzavtosanoat-Uzbekistan*) for the production of the driver information system and security system of automobiles. Both the country's Oil companies (ONGC Videsh limited-India & *Uzbekneftegaz-Uzbekistan*) signed MoU-2011 for cooperation in the exploration of oil and other sectors (MEA, GoI, 2013).

### ***Kyrgyzstan and India***

Both Kyrgyzstan and India have developed strong cultural ties. Kyrgyzstan's poor economy, lack of resources, geographical disadvantages as compared to other nations of Central Asia has limited its scope for further integration into the regional development system.

India, which is interested in the development of telemedicine and tele-education, e-network in Central Asia, also includes Kyrgyzstan. India desired to open a university-India-Central Asia University, a super-specialty hospital, and a diagnostic center in Kyrgyzstan. In the field of defense and security, India did provide help Kyrgyzstan's military personnel assistance in military training and assistance in the UN peacekeeping operations (MEA, GoI, 2013).

### ***Tajikistan and India***

Tajikistan holds a very important place in the "India's Connect Central Asia policy". The trade and commerce between the two since years have grown up touching US\$ 31.22mn. Both had sign a joint declaration on "strategic partnership" in 2012 during the Tajikistan president's visit to India. In that visit, many MOU's were signed bringing two countries more close to many sectors like education, sports, energy, industry, textiles, labour and employment (Sarma, 2012). India successfully commissioned the renovation and modernization of Tajikistan's two units of *Varzob-I* hydro power plant through "BHEL" and "NHPC" and made an agreement to establish 100 MW hydroelectric power project on *Zeravshan River* in Tajikistan. Tajikistan also holds primacy among Central Asian Republics in terms of receiving the highest humanitarian assistance from India (Sarma, 2012). Tajikistan's location also finds very important for India due to its proximity with POK that also shares the longest border with Afghanistan. In this way, Afghanistan's stability is a common concern for India and Tajikistan (Kaushiki, 2013).

### ***Turkmenistan and India***

Turkmenistan sharing its borders with Iran and Afghanistan; rich in natural gas further improves its strategic significance in the GCA concept for cooperation and development. India's efforts to fit Afghanistan into the geo-political and geo-economic connectivity setting will be a connecting link in the maturation of GCA concept. It also fulfills India's security and energy needs in the coming future and a test of India's extended and regional outreach policies towards regional countries. Despite Turkmenistan's *neutral policy*, (Michael Denison, 2009) it has acted in a balanced way to carve out a favorable and conducive relationship with CARs and India. India's major energy investment TAPI may serve an important channel to link the economies of all these countries with each other thus turning to a mutual benefit and development discourse possible in all the fields but not the least in



Oil economy (MEA, GoI, 2013). In this way, India's past historical ties and cultural affiliations with the Central Asian region has acted as a catalyst in bringing Central and South Asia cooperation and economic integration. It can be said that the approach of cultural affinity and historical ties happen to be basic foreign policy (right now its regional policy) tools-Soft power tools in the hands of India to approach its regional countries and neighbours.

***Cooperation in the Energy Sector: India and Central Asia Integration***

Building connectivity to global markets, reviving the ancient 'Silk Route' with the help of China, the Kazakh-China gas pipeline connectivity project and using Old Russian connection and building new ones are all part of facilitating Central Asia's connectivity with rest of the world (Das, Oct. 2012). On the other hand, energy security is also an important arena that requires cooperation. India is enhancing its relations with Central Asia for want of energy security (Sarma, 2009) & (Sachdeva, 2011).

***Indian Efforts on Forum-Wise Towards Central Asia***

Indian has occupied a permanent and full membership at SCO forum, which greatly channelizes its efforts to bring cooperative atmosphere for GCA concept where nation's behaviour leads to constructive relationship and development. Annual SCO summits will provide a forum to leaders of these countries to meet and discuss issues of bilateral and regional interest. India has been consistent and active in providing support on various forums to Central Asia's new initiatives and processes like CICA, Kazakhstan's membership in ASEAN Regional forum, and accession in WTO. In case of Afghanistan, India put serious efforts for its membership in SAARC forum and in April 2007, Afghanistan got admitted in the organization as a new member (Ashok, 2016).

**Greater Central Asia Concept and External Players: GCA Conflict Approach**

***China-Russia vs. US-West: Conflict within Cooperation***

Chinese constructive programme provides major commercial and communicative links facilitating greater integration of Central Asian countries necessary for regional development. The Chinese infrastructure cooperation; "efforts to revive the ancient 'Silk Route', offer of \$10 billion grant and aid, and construction of China-Central

Asia Gas Pipeline Project” (1st August, 2012) all point to Chinese infrastructure investment policy of bringing Central Asia together under its reach more close in the event of growing competition called New Great Game (Shiping Tang, 2000). This China impact factor is all part of China’s efforts in the field of Oil pipelines (from the Caspian Sea across Kazakhstan) gas pipelines (from Turkmenistan) and other planned roads and railways across Russia down to the Pakistani port of *Gwadar* wanting “to turn the region into a transit hub between the East and West”. China’s coherent Central Asia strategy has become more forceful in the wake of China’s deepening engagement in Afghanistan notwithstanding Russia’s ‘sphere of influence’ more coherently since its (Russia’s) promotion of the Eurasian Project (Das, Oct. 2012) and (IDSA, Oct. 2013).

Russia regards CARs *near abroad*. It has floated a number of institutions including the CSTO, EURASEC etc. to maintain and further develop its ties with the Central Asian countries. Central Asian countries fall squarely within the Russian security parameter. Central Asian gas exports are through the Russian network of oil & gas pipelines. Russia has been taking steps to build new pipelines to preserve its markets in European countries (Shiping Tang, Mar.-Apr., 2000). This has been looked by the U.S. as Russia’s occupy instincts towards European Markets. The U.S. and West with the result were promoting their own project of “Multiple pipeline policy”. The West has thus invested in the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline to reduce its dependence on Russia (Majeed, 2008, 23). The U.S. presence in Afghanistan formed the pillar of its influence in the Central Asian region. Advocating its (the U.S.) aims to strengthen democratic institutions and economic reforms, the U.S. policy, would have been a welcome in Central Asian region but any effort to disturb the regional configuration that may disturb Russia and China may further heighten the chance of instability. Moreover, the over-heated arguments over issues that the CARs regarded internal issues (human rights violations and rigging in elections) further caused the vent to the U.S. influence in the region (Sanjay, 2011). Now the general position with respect to America, it wants to play the role of the balancer. This may further heighten the chances of conflict if the cooperation between Russia and China lift the balance in their favour aimed great powers policy position with respect to Central Asia and South Asia-Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. The U.S. conducted Turkey experiment—as a model of the future political structure in the immediate of post-Central Asian independent era to reach to *Russia’s*

belly (Troitskiy, 2007). In recent years, the configuration has rather twisted into zigzag of cooperation within the conflict. While, there is a side of cooperative mechanism brought by China and Russia (regional players)—with the U.S. on the global fight against terrorism in Afghanistan. Economically with Asian giants (like Japan) and others (EU), the U.S. designed to expand its influence and cut the others has eventually twisted the course of cooperation into conflict and camp-sized Central Asian region into US-Japan-EU vs. China-Russia-Iran poles. Whereas geo-politically the nature of scramble for control over the region aptly redefined as New Great Game economically the Russia-China efforts through SCO, BRICS and other Asian forums are trying to balance the Western-dominated—the U.S.-EU and other allies—world economic model. This, in turn, has further turned Central Asia into a mode of scramble economically looking for aid and grant to boost their fragile economic system. Whether newly developed China-Russia (we can say Asian model now) international economic model provides a better attraction to Central Asian regional countries or the Western model of World Bank, IMF etc. is the new line of a scramble. Notwithstanding China's experiment with Pakistan providing aid and loan like CPEC, has proved attractive to Pakistan, at least volcanizing India's fears. Whereas the U.S. deepening relations with India and its (U.S.) desire that India to play an effective role in Central Asia has ignited Pakistan's fears have caught the Greater Central Asia concept into vulnerability. Moreover, the great powers growing interests in the region has further given rise to conflict within cooperative efforts made by India to bring Central Asia integration a developmental plank through the GCA approach. Thus within cooperation among China and Russia over the geo-politics of oil and energy is growing a deep conflict over Greater Central Asian region due to great powers desire wanting to influence the region (Shiping Tang, 2000). The net configuration has been a camp division of U.S.-West on one side and the Russia-China on the other side. Seen within the GCA approach great powers invest in the Greater Central Asia (Central Asian and South Asian-Afghanistan countries) signifies a fight leading to conflict. Whereas the regional players like Russia, China play a cooperative role at least to block U.S. expansion leads to conflict. India's role of using the GCA approach has tried to integrate borders and economy of Central Asia and South Asia leading to greater regional development.

## **Conclusion**

It can be said that whereas India's position with the new "Connect Central Asia policy" has reinvigorated to intensify its foreign (here regional) relations (policy) with a strong and rejuvenating friendship corroborates to India strong connect with the regional countries. Washington and Iran see India's role as extended neighborhood very friendly and important for tightening screws of Central Asia stability. While the U.S. has taken on board India as an important partner fighting terrorism, fundamentalism, extremism, and counter China. In this connection, India's new approach of integrating its foreign relations has gone well within the perspective of its extended neighbor and regional policy.

Using the GCA approach one would easily find India's role of the Central and South Asia integration. Therefore in the GCA concept, India has provided a cooperative environment in which the commercialization and communications between Central and South Asian countries have given rise to interconnectedness adding further prospects of regional development. Further India emphatically has tried to develop through the bi-lateral system a web of communication easing out trade and security vulnerabilities. In Afghanistan, India's role has been appreciated by all the Central Asian countries. Its policy towards its immediate neighbours has also earned fame internationally with the U.S. wanting to play its better role further in Central Asia. In this sense seen in the light of the GCA, the approach highlights the prospects of development and minimization of insecurity. Therefore, one would find a cooperative mechanism developing within the confrontational politics seen in the light of Central Asian fragility and presence of Pakistan in geo-strategic politics.

However, seen in the light of external power's invest a series of development has led to giving rise to conflict in the form of a scramble among great powers. For example, the 'Moscow and Beijing coordination' has led to a convergence of engagement on several issues. Russia and China have cooperated with the U.S. and willingly accepted the U.S. presence in Central Asia on the issue of fighting terrorism and extremism, instead of balancing the U.S. in the region while the bigger fratricidal tussle remains. Since the U.S. (and the allies) is a common enemy and an intruder into the regional dynamics of Russia's sphere of influence and China's economic corridor has led to both (China & Russia) cooperate. However, China's infrastructure

investment and connectivity politics to open Central Asia for its market seem uncomfortable for Russia. Russia had ‘accused China of “quietly conquering” the ‘Russian Far East’. Apart from confronting a common enemy in international arena—the U.S. dominance fears, (of being encircled) “Russia’s China fear” and “China’s Russia fears” (Unnikrishnan, Nandan & Purushothaman, Uma, 2015) - has a tendency of risk and suspicion. Therefore, GCA as an approach of Central Asian integration has given rise to conflict among the great powers owing to all wanting the influence over it. In their search for influence they have, mapped Greater Central Asia in their policies has caused concern among all of them. The U.S. long-term presence in Afghanistan to influence Central Asia, China is deepening engagement in Afghanistan and Central Asia and Russia’s Central Asia and Afghanistan as *near abroad* have given rise to fears among all on the scramble over Greater Central Asia.

### **Implications**

‘The rupture of the relationships over a conflict of interest in Central Asia is a real possibility that would spell disaster for the region and beyond.’

Central Asia integration a developmental plank through GCA approach has two probable implications:

1. Great powers approach towards Greater Central Asia has a zigzag line of co-relationship. China and Russia cooperate to downsize U.S.-West influence. Therefore, there is a simmering zigzag line of cooperation dominated by conflict.
2. Aimed its role in reconstruction and rehabilitation in Afghanistan India’s imagination to play a constructive role in Central Asian Republics is a good take. Using the GCA approach to integrate borders and economy of Central Asia and South Asia—Afghanistan—leading to greater regional development has been well taken in Central Asia and South Asia.

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