



## The Influence of the Location and Wealth of Central Asian Countries on their Relationship with Countries of the World (Russia, China, The United States of America) (1992-2013)

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### Abstract

Energy is power. From a political, economic and environmental point of view, energy's security is one of the most important issues facing all countries of the world. In recent years, the competition between the United States, Russia and China for energy sources has become noticeably intense, with rapid growth in energy's costs and geopolitical considerations including energy's security. In this context, energy's security becomes a global concern due to the rapid increase in demand for natural fuels. Indeed, Central Asia is one of the regions where the geopolitical influence and competition between the United States, Russia and China is most affected due to its rich energy resources and strategic location. Therefore, Central Asia was of particular interest to the United States, Russia and China. Moreover, Central Asia and the Caucasus are two of the best options for great powers such as Russia, China, and the United States. This conflict is not expected to end in the near future, but this may be one of the most important battlefields for the production of a new world order, which is required now more than ever.

**Keywords:** Influence; location; wealth; Central Asia; Russia; China; United States.

### تأثير موقع وثروات دول آسيا الوسطى على علاقتها بدول العالم (روسيا، الصين، الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية 1992-2013)

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### ملخص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في اكتساب متعلقي اللغة الإنجليزية والعربية للجمل الموصولة باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية. وتدرس إلى أي الطاقة قوة، من وجهة نظر سياسية واقتصادية وبيئية، يعد من الطاقة أحد أهم القضايا التي تواجه جميع دول العالم، في السنوات الأخيرة؛ إذ أصبحت المنافسة بين الولايات المتحدة وروسيا والصين على مصادر الطاقة شديدة على نحو ملحوظ، مع النمو السريع في تكاليف الطاقة والاعتبارات الجيوسياسية بما في ذلك أمن الطاقة. في هذا السياق، يصبح أمن الطاقة مصدر قلق عالي بسبب الزيادة السريعة في الطلب على الوقود الطبيعي؛ إذ تُعد آسيا الوسطى إحدى المناطق التي يأثر فيها التأثير الجيوسياسي والمنافسة بين الولايات المتحدة وروسيا والصين على نحو أكبر بسبب موارد الطاقة الغنية والموقع الاستراتيجي. لذلك كانت آسيا الوسطى ذات أهمية خاصة للولايات المتحدة وروسيا والصين. علاوة على ذلك، تُعد آسيا الوسطى والقوقاز من أفضل الخيارات للقوى العظمى مثل روسيا والصين والولايات المتحدة. لا يُتوقع أن ينتهي هذا الصراع في المستقبل القريب، لكن قد يكون هذا أحد أهم ساحات القتال لإنتاج نظام عالمي جديد، وهو أمر مطلوب الآن أكثر من أي وقت مضى.

الكلمات الدالة: التأثير، الموقع، الثروة، آسيا الوسطى، روسيا، الصين، الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية.

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**Introduction:**

Central Asia, which represents the heart of the world, has been a key point in the global strategies of great powers. It is a competitive framework for interests and goals, and it can be a starting point for reconsidering the form and future of the international system and international relations.

Based on the economic, military, and technological capabilities of the republics of Central Asia, in addition to their strategic location, we find, and through the extrapolation of the events that followed the declaration of these republics their independence, especially by the active international powers, starting with the recognition of these republics, passing by providing them with assistance and reaching agreements with them, that these The republics have become an important turning point in the course of international relations, especially between the major powers. From competition to cooperation, it may reach the struggle for the sake of obtaining the region's resources and influence over them and preventing the other party and depriving it of these resources.

One of the most prominent results of the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union was the emergence of republics that belong to the religious dimension to Islam in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan) As effective tools in international relations, this activity does not come from a vacuum, but rather from what these republics possess in terms of great economic and military capabilities and abilities in addition to the important geostrategic position. (Metwally, 2000, p17), made these republics, the focus of the attention of the major powers in the world, notably the US and Russia, and China.

Instead of the Central Asia region adopting the democratic values that the West adopts and supports and the market mechanisms through which economic development and political stability can be achieved, we find that this region is still subject to the growing influence of authoritarian regimes, individual rule regimes and organized crime networks, which impedes its progress.

Despite the repeated criticisms of Central Asian countries due to their lack of progress in the democratic process or their inability to control organized crime, insurgency, and extremism (Khaled Abdel Azim, 2005 p.210), The practices of external parties contribute to the persistence of authoritarian rule and corruption in these countries, which in turn feeds the social, political and economic instability there.

Historically, Central Asia has become important because it is the meeting point of East and West, a region surrounded by empires and adjacent to regions suffering from conflict and insecurity (Such as Afghanistan, Chinese Xinjiang, and Iran). Although this area was largely neglected during the Cold War, its vital importance was rapidly rediscovered. (Hussin, 2013, 115)

There is increasing recognition of Central Asia as an important party in the game of competition for the energy reserves of the Caspian Sea, as one of the tributaries of Chinese energy security, as a theater for Russian political influence, and as a transit area for criminal activity and religious extremism, which reached its peak in Afghanistan. (Rashid, 2001, 56).

In view of these regional realities, Central Asia is part of many conflicts that witness, from time to time, intense competition between international parties seeking to attract the region's interest and, in the end, access its natural resources. Often, the bilateral and multilateral economic and military agreements sought to be concluded with the countries of Central Asia are cited as clear evidence of competition for control of the region's resources.

And while outside powers were able to dictate the terms of dealing with the countries of this region, their elites have come to realize that they can use competing interests to their advantage (mostly personal). As a result, many basic concepts are often considered, such as the rule of law, participation in governance, and transparency in commercial transactions, as matters that can be dispensed with to protect the national interest.

The review of political influence is not limited to the level of relations between states but also includes demonstrating the ability of states to achieve their commercial interests and reduce the control of organized crime over specific economic areas, without threatening stability in the near term. If we analyze the practices of China, Russia, and the United States separately, we will find that each of these countries contributed to the continuation of the status quo in the Central Asian republics. Controlling the region's resources and infrastructure is one of the priorities of these countries because they consider them an effective tool to enhance their political and diplomatic influence in the region. (Adel Abd, 2012, 29).

**Statement of the Problem:**

After the fall of the Soviet Union, its secession, and the attempt to independence, the Central Asian countries faced many challenges related to the ambitions and interests of major countries to impose relations or open projects and investments with the republics of Central Asia, which led to the entry of these countries in a state of instability and a non-democratic approach to governance.

**Research Questions**

This article will answer the following questions:

- What is the impact of the geographical location of Central Asian countries on their international relations?
- What are the wealth and economic potential of Central Asian countries?
- What are ambitions and interests of the world's countries in the Central Asia region: reasons and strategies?

**Research Hypothesis:**

This study seeks to present the following hypothesis: The geographical location and economic potential of the Central Asian republics constituted an influential and great importance in the strategic relations with the countries of influence (Russia, China, and the United States of America), which affects the future of the international relations of the republics of Central Asia.

To prove the hypothesis and answer the research question, I will answer the central problem, which revolves around the fact that the importance of Central Asia to the great powers in particular United States, Russia and China leads to complex international and regional interactions and their impact on the overall regional and international situation.

By answering the central question of the study

**Research Question:** What is the impact of the location and wealth of Central Asian countries on their relationship with countries of the world: Russia, China, and USA?

**Aim of the Study:**

This study aims to closely examine the conditions of Central Asian countries after they gained their independence from the former Soviet Union, and the economic and political obstacles these countries face, especially in the presence of large oil wealth, as we will explain in this paper.

**Major Concepts**

**Geopolitics:** analysis of the geographic influences on power relationships in international relations. The word geopolitics was originally coined by the Swedish political scientist Rudolf Kjellén about the turn of the 20th century.

**Wealth:** National net wealth, also known as national net worth, is the total sum of the value of a nation's assets minus its liabilities. It refers to the total value of net wealth possessed by the citizens of a nation at a set point in time.

**Limits of the study**

- Temporal boundaries: the period discussed in the research paper and extends from 1992 to 2013, when Central Asian countries underwent many changes in this period that show the features of their relationship with surrounding countries and regional and international conflicts with major countries.
- Geographical boundaries: Where the research discusses the relationship of Central Asian countries with a group of countries with influence in the region, namely: China, Russia, and the United States of America.

**Literature review****Nour Alwan's study 2020**

Entitled "A Whirlpool of Fears and Interests ... on Russia's Relations with the Central Asian Republics" The Central

Asian republics have relied heavily on Russia since its independence in 1991, not only in terms of economy and energy but also on the military and political levels. It hadn't another alternative, so she kept throwing herself into Russia's arms.

The situation gradually changed with the emergence of new players in the region such as America, China, Iran, and Turkey, who came to Central Asian countries with many ambitions and aspiration, but Russia soon woke up to its interests in this big game and imposed its control over spheres of influence, shocking ambitious competitors with its sweeping influence on the Soviet ocean the former, and its power over the keys to strength and sources of natural wealth.

In addition, it seized the loyalties of the heads of the Central Asian republics, as the leaders of isolated countries - specifically in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan - relied on Russia to keep their tyrannical regimes robust and impregnable from any unpredictable popular revolutions or protests. Its survival or demise remained dependent in the first place on Russia's approval, which at the same time explains the failure of these countries to approach the West, which avoids dealing with dictatorial governments that are an extension of the tyrannical Soviet rule.

#### **Osama Abu Arshid's study 2020**

The US-Chinese meetings, in the city of Anchorage, Alaska, revealed the extent and depth of tension in relations between the international economic and military giants. This dashed the hopes of some for calm between them under the administration of President Joe Biden, after years of tension and commercial battles that normalized their relations during the administration of former President Donald Trump. The meetings consisted of three sessions, on March 18 and 19, 2021, which brought together on the American side, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan, with the Chinese Communist Party's top diplomatic official Yang Jiechi, and Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

Although the Chinese military power remains, until now, less than its American counterpart, the fact that any potential war will be fought in the geopolitical space of China makes the two parties very careful about it, especially since any miscalculation may lead to a devastating nuclear war with no winner. In conclusion, the world may be witnessing signs of the emergence of new world order. China could overtake the United States economically in the coming years, with the second-largest military power remaining for many long years.

#### **Muhammad Najeeb Al-Saad's study 2015**

The study aims to clarify the domination of neoliberal ideology over US foreign policy in Central Asia since the region's independence in the early 1990s. This policy is based on the principles of spreading democracy and expanding free trade, applying a free market economy, respecting human rights, isolating anti-democratic countries, and the free market, and besieging them economically, politically, diplomatically, and even militarily. However, the events of September 11, 2001, prompted US foreign policy to adopt the preemptive attack theory. The United States of America considers Central Asia the key to controlling Eurasia, as indicated by Alan Gowas, who believes that the United States will, through its presence in Central Asia, succeed where the British, Europeans, and Russians failed, not for political occupation, but the purpose of strategic control and filling the strategic void.

#### **Sorour's Study, (2009)**

Entitled "The US-Russian Strategic Conflict in Central Asia and the Caspian Sea and its Repercussions on the Countries of the Region" The study aimed to review the evolution of the strategic conflict between the United States and Russia in Central Asia and the Caspian Sea. The two countries aspiration, the objectives of each of them, the implementation mechanisms, the extent of their success in achieving their strategies, the nature of the obstacles, and finally the implications for the countries of the region.

As for the main joints of the study, they are the strategic importance of Central Asia and the Caspian Sea and the factors behind the development of the US-Russian strategic conflict.

#### **Younus' study (2009)**

Entitled "The Militarization of the Caspian Sea ... Oil, the Arms Race, and International Intervention" The first part of the study deals with the nature of the relations between the five countries bordering the Caspian Sea (Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan), which are dominated by the conflict pattern, not only because of competition between the major powers, but also because of the deep differences between these countries, which are characterized by a great deal of

Complexity and intertwining, and the conflict between these countries revolved around two basic issues: the first is the legal status of the Caspian Sea, and the second is the demarcation of borders. As for the second part, it dealt with the naval arms race between the Caspian Sea states, and the capabilities and potencies of each fleet of those countries. And the last part of this study dealt with the rivalry of the great powers, especially the United States of America and Russia, over the Caspian Sea region and the role that NATO plays in the region.

#### **Townsend & King's Study (2007)**

"The Sino-Japanese Energy Competition In Central Asia: China's Winning Game." The study aimed to uncover the competition between China and Japan to impose power, control, and influence on the Central Asia region, as each of the two countries seeks to impose its control over Central Asia by trying to possess the largest amount of energy resources. During commercial activities, foreign aid, and diplomatic security cooperation, the study showed that, compared with China, Japan's relations with the region are superficial and low, and as a result of the deep Chinese military, political and economic relations, the study concluded that Japan has lost its control in the game of competition with China in the region. Central Asia was won by China, which would thus achieve great success in obtaining energy sources in Central Asia.

#### **Fikri's Study, (2007)**

Entitled "The International Competition for the Caspian Sea Region", this study deals with the sources of the conflict over the Caspian Sea region (the Gold Cake). This conflict is mainly based on the Caspian Sea, which has a huge range of strategic wealth, on top of which is oil and gas, as well as the position of the conflicting parties on each other, and these parties are mainly represented in the three powers regionally and externally, these are Russia, Iran, and the United States of America. Then it also dealt with the old new role of Russia in this region. Then this study reviewed the strategic options of the United States of America to preserve its interests in this region and how to seize them.

#### **Al-Afouri's study, (2006)**

Entitled "The future of international competition for oil in the Caspian Sea region" determines the time of this study in the period 1991-2006 and has shown the importance of the Caspian Sea region and the identification of the neighboring countries, the former Soviet Union and Iran, and this study focused on how to enter the region. The Caspian is the arena of the international economy as a region rich in oil and natural gas, as analysts believe that it occupies the second place in the world in terms of oil reserves after the Middle East region, and the study clarified the geographical nature of the region, as it is far from consumption centers because it is a closed area, which causes great competition between neighboring countries for Oil pipelines projects so that each of the neighboring countries seeks to have their territories conduit for the quantities of oil and natural gas, for the sake of fees, in addition to political and strategic gains, foremost of which is the exercise of influence over the Caspian countries, which led to the entry of forces from outside the area of conflict, on top of which The United States of America, the study showed the relationship of oil to ethnic conflicts.

#### **Safinaz's Study, (2005)**

Entitled: "Caspian Sea Wealth... International Rivalry in Central Asia", this study deals with the sources of conflict that is mainly based on the Caspian Sea's wealth, which has a huge set of strategic wealth, on top of which is oil and gas. International competition in the region may rise to the point of conflict, as well as the positions of the parties represented by the three strongest powers regionally and externally, namely Russia, Iran and the United States of America.

#### **Shalaby Study, (2005)**

Entitled "America and the World, follow-ups in American foreign policy 2000-2005", The focus of this study has been focused on the period between the year 2000 -2005 on the American arena and the issues they produced and the questions they raised about the future of these policies and the ideas behind them, and in parallel with this, an analysis of the reflection of these policies on the United States' relations with the world and its various powers such as its relationship with Russia and China, and the study shows how the transformation that took place after the events of September 11 and their impact on Russian-American relations, and the study also showed that the change in the structure of the international system by the end of the Cold War placed the United States of America in a new framework so that the United States of America emerged

as the only superpower in the world and became the concern of strategic thought in it is how to maintain the example this situation and maintaining it for as long as possible and preventing any force from challenging it or participating in it.

This study dealt with the role of the collapse of the former Soviet Union in creating a strategic vacuum in the Central Asia region, as it was not prepared for independence, which led to international competition around it, which used all available tools to achieve its goals, taking advantage of the conditions of the region, which includes modern states with weak economies and fragile political systems, in addition to the ethnic conflicts that have characterized most of the countries of the region. The study reached conclusions that the United States of America and Russia are the two most prominent powers in this international game, and concerning indicators of stability, the region suffers from a state of instability represented by multiple political and military tendencies, and it is moving upward towards more conflict and instability.

**The study of the Sheikh, Ahmed Ibrahim, (2004)**

Entitled "The American - Russian Rivalry in the Central Asian Region", the researcher's conclusion came in conformity with the main purpose of the study, which was represented in: that the US-Russian rivalry over Central Asia is the main actor of competition. This is since competition came between two great powers, as this competition does not negate the existence of another competition between international powers and other regional interests, even if the goals and interests differed, and the means varied. The researcher concluded with recommendations supporting the necessity of Arab and Egyptian relations with that region.

**Diab's Study, (2002)**

Entitled "The Conflict for Wealth in Central Asia and the Caucasus", This study deals with the importance of oil wealth and its renaissance role when it is better used and employed in political, economic, and social development and the promotion of independence. This wealth may be a curse so that it becomes a threat to the independence and stability of the country or the region in which it is embraced and a source of attraction for international interventions and global powers seeking to gain control over this wealth and a place of heated competition and conflict between these powers, as well as the study showed the size of oil wealth and its importance as this wealth and the ongoing conflict between the major countries and the giant global oil companies have become a very important factor in the geopolitical situation. The study clarified the previous legal status of the Caspian Sea and the method of dealing with and exploiting its wealth, subject to the provisions of the treaties signed between the former Soviet Union and Iran, in 1921 and 1940, which stipulate that the lake is shared between them, and the study also showed something of the American strategy to limit the aspirations of the big players in the region. As for China and Russia, the study showed that China represents for Russia the main future opponent that it should fear in the first place, as analysts see, whether because of the conflict over vast border areas or because of competition for leadership in Asia, as the history of the conflict between the two countries is burdened with political conflicts and military. The study concluded that the conflict will not end in this region, as it is a deep-rooted conflict and has economic, geopolitical, and strategic dimensions because the region's wealth and its strategic location always attract competitors.

**Al-Khatlan's Study, (2000)**

Entitled: "The Caspian Conflict, a study of the strategic dimensions of competition for oil and gas wealth in the Caspian Sea region", this study aimed to demonstrate the strategic importance that the Caspian Sea region has enjoyed in light of the discovery of large reserves of natural resources, as well as the various estimates of the size of these wealth in contrast to the existence of a large discrepancy in the different and disparate estimates, and the study shows how Western companies competed to exploit the wealth of that region and announce their investments and enormous projects amounting to billions of dollars and providing huge projects to build a network of pipelines to transport those resources to global markets, the regions of Central Asia and the Caucasus have received great international attention since the beginning of the nineties, and the study discussed the strategic importance of the region adjacent to the Caspian Sea in light of the large discoveries of oil and natural gas, as well as clarifying its strategic position in the international arena, this importance is due to the fact that its geographical location gives it a unique role in the game of hegemony and influence, and makes it an essential element in the process of reshaping the international system, and the study spoke about some of the difficulties facing the oil industry and its export, in addition to the legal dispute between the countries of that region over ownership Natural wealth and pipeline

competition, the study reached a recommendation that the Arab countries should adopt an active Arab policy towards the countries of the Caspian Sea region that is based on common economic interests in light of the great transformations taking place in the international economy, and to reinforce those interests in order to contribute to creating a strategic bloc based on the ties of history, culture and the convergence of interests.

### **Significance of the Study**

I would like, through this study, to reach the most important international commercial interests that the major countries (the United States of America, Russia, and China) are trying to obtain through the exercise of the geo-economic game and the most important repercussions of the policies of these three countries towards the region in general and the direction of Central Asian countries in particular, especially with regard to stability and peace in the region, which may be directly affected by prejudice to the interests of the three major countries, and as long as the United States, Russia and China continue in the geo-economic game in the region, something like stability will remain; Which will serve the interests of these three countries

This study is concerned in particular with the two concepts: Influence and Balance, and their intertwine and style and dynamics of their impact on stability in Central Asia, and the speed or slowdown of progress and development and prosperity in the countries of this region. Perhaps the most important thing that distinguishes them from other studies is the result that they combined with several factors to come to the conclusion that the status quo In Central Asia is quite a direct product of intense international competition that raises the values of fear of others at the expense of the values of democracy, peace, and cooperation.

### **First Topic: Geographical Location of Central Asian Countries and its International Importance:**

The geography of Central Asia is considered from the perspectives of geopolitical scholars, who crystallized a thought focusing on the importance of the geographical location of this region as one of the most important strategic geographic regions in the world, which attracted the interest of international powers in the form of a strategic international conflict that began in the nineteenth century between Britain and Tsarist Russia, and it was called "The Great Game", where this conflict was controlled by the geographical dimension as the most prominent dimension of controlling this vital area, and then controlling Afghanistan and expanding towards the Indian subcontinent, in the context of the struggle between the continental (land) power and the naval force, and this Game was renewed (New Great) in the twentieth and twenty-first century, especially after the disintegration of the Soviet Union between Russia and the United States of America in the form of international competition, in which the new geopolitical situation that created new international borders in the region must be dealt with in terms of attempts to fill the power vacuum for control. In this geographical area, including the domination of Eurasia, where Central Asia was classified as a vital part of the heart of the world, controlling it means controlling the whole world. From an empirical point of view, the international competition over Central Asia is, in fact, an application of some geopolitical theories that have paid great attention to the geography of the region as the geographical axis of history in the thought of the British geopolitical scientist "Halford Mackinder", which is the edge of the vital land in the view of the American "Nicholas Spykman" As for the American contemporary theorist "Zbigniew Brzezinski", he revived geopolitical thought by focusing on the importance of Central Asia, as it constitutes the middle area of the Eurasia continent, as its geography contributed to the emergence of strategic international competitions aimed at imposing global hegemony.

This region occupies an important and sensitive geographical position; It is located between China, Russia, Afghanistan, and Iran, and is close to the Persian Gulf and Turkey, a rising economic power. It is also of interest to other global and regional powers such as America and India for the following reasons:

Huge munitions for minerals, oil, natural gas, and coal, the reserves of the republics in Central Asia and the Caucasus of a natural gas amount to 34% of the global total, and the largest discoveries are located in Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan. (Natural gas and its position in international politics)

In addition, this region contains about 27% of the total global oil reserves, and most of these munitions are located in Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan.

Although the countries of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan do not possess large reserves for oil and natural gas, Tajikistan

alone has huge sources of water, as it owns 60% of the water sources in Central Asia, and these sources can be used to generate 527 billion watts of electricity, and only so far has been benefited from 5% of these sources (Zamani, 2005, 65) This is in addition to the huge munitions for minerals and other products that these countries produce on their cotton and other farms.

These countries inherited huge facilities for heavy and light military industries from the former Soviet Union after its dissolution, Uzbekistan was an important industrial and agricultural center, and Kazakhstan inherited 104 ballistic missiles of the type: (SS-19) with more than a thousand nuclear warheads, in addition to the "Baikonur" space missile launch center, and the "Semipalatinsk" nuclear weapons testing center that it inherited from the former Soviet Union (Nour Alwan, 2020, 38)

These countries have a huge base of scientists and specialists in many vital fields, including physics, chemistry, and weapons industries of all kinds.

Because of this utmost importance, these countries were the subject of competition between international players and the countries of the region. The U.S.A seeks to extend its influence, and Russia is trying to keep it revolving in its orbit as it was in past eras, and China seeks to enter its gigantic companies as well as India, Iran, Turkey, and other countries. There is competition between these countries, and at the same time, it seems that the international players are agreed to keep these countries away from the influence of Islamic parties. Because it believes that, the control of the Islamic political parties over the region will cause a great danger to the security of the world, especially if it falls into their possession of the huge capabilities that these countries possess. The despotic rulers of these countries fear that the rise of Islamic parties will make them lose power, and for this, they are besieging and restricting them, and from here the interests of the major countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus met with the interests of the region's autocratic rulers, so Islamist parties faced systematic repressive policies.

### **Second Topic: Economic Importance of Central Asian Countries**

Central Asia is located in the area extending from the coast of the eastern Caspian Sea to the borders of Mongolia, between China and Russia. Central Asia is located in the region extending from northern Afghanistan to the borders of southern Russia. The Central Asian political region includes five states: Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Historical information says that this region for a long time bore the name Turkestan, but after its annexation to the former Soviet Union, specifically during the period of Joseph Stalin's rule, Soviet geography books launched the name on its Central Asia, which was within the Soviet Union and became independent after its collapse, forming the five Central Asian countries. (Xuetang, 2006, 27)

Its total area is about 4 million square kilometers, which is equivalent to 29.5% of the total area of the Arab countries, and the region has different definitions that add to the above other countries and lands, so Central Asia is not a static geographical area, but rather a regional system that expands and narrows according to the standard that takes by the researchers, and the standard that the study adopts and adopts many foreign ministries around the world is a pure political standard that considers that these five countries in particular constitute a stand-alone region because the political power relations that linked them to Russia changed 180 degrees by the year 1991, and Russia, although it was accustomed to intervene in Areas close to those republics, such as Afghanistan, the five countries alone were the ones that fell behind the Iron Curtain for more than a century until it fell to find themselves suddenly in the stage of regional liquidity, which allowed many regional and international powers to have access to it, a situation imposed by the landlocked geography of the region, and its need for new foreign partners besides Russia that enable it to reach the world through their lands, and provide it with a support that can counterbalance the Russian influence, towards which the republics of the region still carry deep historical doubts. (Arafat, 2007, 42)

The importance of Central Asia is that it represents the necessary geopolitical variable that represents the key to controlling the world. Concentration in Central Asia provides the easiest and least expensive view towards the Russian vital depth towards the north, Moreover, the dynamic depth of China towards the southeast, in addition to the vital depth of the Indian subcontinent towards the south and the dynamic depth of Iran towards the southwest. And the vital depth of the entire

Caspian region to the west, in addition to controlling the resources of Central Asia allows control of the supply of oil, gas, minerals, and agricultural resources to Russia, China, the Indian subcontinent, and the countries of the European Union. Controlling the Central Asian corridors allows control of the land and air corridors linking the Indian subcontinent, Russia, and China, and other routes and corridors that allow controlling interactions and interactions between the regions surrounding the Central Asian region. (Previous reference, 2007, 46) It also enjoys oil reserves equivalent in quantity to those in the Gulf region (For example, Kazakhstan possesses great scientific capabilities and capacities. It was one of the most scientifically advanced Soviet republics. In the Kazakh desert, there is also the famous Baikonur space airport, which is a center for launching space ships, missile experiments, and Star Wars research in the Soviet era, and Russia is still renting and using it for the same purposes until now. And Uzbekistan has great natural resources of gold, silver, uranium, copper, and zinc, as well as natural gas, oil, coal, and others, and it is considered the sixth country in the world in producing gold and fourth in terms of silver ore reserves, and it is known that it has the ability to enrich uranium, and Tajikistan has large mines of uranium. Discovered in the 1930s, Kyrgyzstan rests on huge gold mines (Will Central Asia escape the ambitions of the great powers, April 1, 2009)

The mountain ranges that extend over vast areas and have soaring peaks conceal a huge wealth of minerals. Its plains and valleys are fertile and rich in abundant agricultural production, but whatever the talk about the wealth of Central Asia and the Caucasus, the oil riches are hidden under the surface of the Caspian Sea always cover any other conversation. (Definition of Central Asia and the Caucasus 2009).

The Caspian Sea was considered a Soviet Iranian sea from 1920 until 1970, and in 1970 the Soviet Oil Ministry divided the "Soviet sector" of the Caspian Sea into sectors between the Soviet republics of Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan, and in the meantime, the maritime mediation line was taken as the basis for the division Which is the common method followed in international practices when delineating borders on international lakes, and since that date, each of the four Soviet republics bordering the Caspian has become a sector on this sea, a sector that, after the administrative borders turned into international borders with the fall of the Soviet Union, a sector related to this the independent state. (Al-Saifi, 2007, 51) The design of the borders between the Central Asian republics is one of the most important causes of security tensions, as it did not take into account social formations and their homogeneity, which caused separatist movements and instability for these new countries. For example, more than a million Tajiks are residing in Uzbekistan, and a million Uzbeks live on the other side is in Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan also has problems with Uzbekistan, as the old Turkmen capital Khwarazm has entered the reins of the Uzbek border. (Medhat Ayoub, 2007, 28). And the ruling elites do not give priority to the issue of democracy, which makes foreign policies the preserve of a controlling minority. This minority usually searches abroad and not internally for a protection umbrella, whether it is for the security of the system or the security of the homeland. They also look for ways to sell their products, which opens the door In Central Asia wide open in the face of external penetration; this region does not govern its regional interactions by itself but is decided by major global competitions that exceed its capacity (Al-Saad, 2015, 41)

### **Third Topic: Forms of Conflict and its Analysis**

Three of the major conflicting powers in Central Asia have put forward their vision of the future prospects for Central Asia, and these powers are China, the United States, and Russia, and concerning China, their strategic vision revolves around the framework of the New Silk Road Initiative for the 21st Century, which was what the Chinese president said during his visit to Kazakhstan in November / October 2013, this road and the surrounding economic belt will create trade corridors linking East and Southeast Asia with the rest of Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, and then the Chinese vision seeks to achieve the integration of Central Asia with the rest of the Asian continent, and other regions of the world associated with it. This vision includes transportation via railways, land, air, and marine pipelines, and China provides funding of \$ 40 billion for this initiative, in addition to what can be obtained from financing from new development institutions such as the Asian Bank for Infrastructure Development and the New Development Bank, in which China is the leader. This initiative will achieve many benefits for China, including encouraging economic development and increasing Chinese exports to Central

Asia, in addition to expanding and increasing land traffic that allows China to diversify import and export channels, and defuse the danger from the sea-lanes still controlled by the United States. Investing in new infrastructure is cementing Chinese economic and political influence.

It is noticeable that China focuses in the first stage on the economic side, hoping that long-term developments will pave the way for the Chinese leadership of Asian security cooperation, and for Russia, its vision towards Central Asia is directly related to Russian national security, and with regard to the American strategic vision, it came through what she called a minister former US State Department Hillary Clinton, in her speech in 2011 of the new "Silk Road" initiative designed to transform post-war Afghanistan into a trade center between Central and South Asia, and in this it shares the Chinese vision in terms of emphasizing comprehensive trade and cross-border integration, but it differs from As it encouraged market liberalization and political pluralism, and the United States did not provide sufficient political and financial support to activate this initiative, and the absence of China and Russia from this initiative made them interpret it, as a clear strategy to reorient the economies of Afghanistan and Central Asia away from the current partners in the North (Russia) and the East (China). The American retreat in Central Asia and the Caucasus was clearly and unequivocally clear.

The American administration towards the region since its emergence as independent countries in the early nineties believes that although Obama's speech lacked a direct reference to the region of Central Asia and the Caucasus, the region occupies special importance for the United States for geopolitical, strategic, and economic considerations, and the American policy towards the region has witnessed remarkable activation in various fields. Over the past two decades, the US military and economic penetrations into it have reached an unprecedented level.

The countries of Central Asia have responded to the US policy for domestic economic and political considerations. However, recent years have witnessed several reservations on the part of these countries regarding this policy in an attempt to curb US interference in their affairs, as was the Russian awakening, which became clear after the 2008 South Ossetia crisis and what it took from measures in the period that followed to restore its influence in the region, its primary role in the decline of American influence in the region, as the current balance of power reflected the harbingers of an international understanding to divide areas of influence in the world, and an implicit US acceptance of the region's return to Russian influence. This confirms several indicators, perhaps the last of which is the reaction of the American approach to the events of Kyrgyzstan that toppled an ally that pushed him to power in 2005.

We recall here that the United States had previously sought to penetrate Central Asia and the Caucasus when a group of factors combined from the early 1990s to the mid-2000s, which led to the penetration It was clear to the United States in the region of Central Asia and the Caucasus in an unprecedented way, and it was not imagined in a region that years earlier was part of the Soviet Union, and which remains at once. But It always remains of paramount importance for the security of the Russian Federation, and it hoped to establish a commonwealth that would include the three Slavic states: Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, and heading west to include the countries of East and Central Europe, but the Commonwealth did not go west, but east, and expanded to include the republics of the former Soviet Union, but the Commonwealth did not go west, but east, and expanded to include the republics of the former Soviet Union, especially since there are 25 million Russians spread in the republics of the former Soviet Union, and they represent a significant proportion of the population of the republics of Central Asia and the Caucasus, as they represent 37.8% of the population of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan (21%), Turkmenistan (9%), Uzbekistan (8%), and Tajikistan (8%) It is noticeable that the US State Department in 2015 put forward a strategy of the American approach, which is based on the preference for integrating Central Asia into a global system based on the rules, especially the rules of the World Trade Organization, and it is less focused on the centrality of Afghanistan. This followed, especially after Vladimir Putin's ascension to power in Russia, a Russian vision that was working hard to restore Russia to its position as a major superpower, and this Russian rise and American retreat under the Obama administration and its floundering policies reduced the intensity of the conflict in Central Asia and kept it away from the country, and the aspect of media interest, but this does not change the strategic importance of the region, which may return to the fore after solving the crisis in Syria, or with the arrival of a Republican administration to power in America that sees Central Asia as an important region for America's interests.

#### **Fourth Topic: International Competition in Central Asia at the Level of Major Powers**

This level of competition includes several players, namely Russia, the United States, China, and the European Union, and they are dealt with as follows:

**Russia:** Central Asia is the vital sphere for Russia and the main axis of its influence, and Russia defends the interests of the Russian citizens scattered in the countries of Central Asia, and they represent a significant proportion of the population of these countries, such as Kazakhstan, which represents 23.7% of the population, and in each of Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan they represent 12.5%, and in Uzbekistan it represents 5.5 % (Abdullah Falah Odeh, 2011) Since the collapse of the Union, Russia has sought to preserve its position as a great power, and Russian foreign policy has mainly targeted the republics of Central Asia, and Russia considers the borders of those countries as security borders, especially on the one hand of the Republic of Tajikistan, which has a large number of Russian forces on the border with Afghanistan, which prompted The Kremlin is to exaggerate the dangers facing Central Asian security from "terrorist groups", and the possibility of wars and power struggles in some of its countries, and that foreign countries may intervene to support extremism, and Moscow uses these cards to increase its influence and military presence there. (Abdel Hadi, 2010, 24)

A combination of factors have improved Russia's position vis-à-vis its neighbors; Where he recovered from the economic crisis, and increased surpluses have as a result of the continued increase in oil prices, and saw that it must secure the former Soviet republics as a market of the activity of the Russian business sector, and must preserve these states to prevent the expansion of their military and political alliances such as NATO, and it was incumbent on Moscow is to be able to mediate and manage conflicts between its neighbors, and to exercise political leadership within the Commonwealth of Nations (Abu Arshid, 2020, 72) In light of the US military presence in Afghanistan due to the war on terror, Russia realized that Obama wanted to strengthen the US presence in Afghanistan to turn into a platform for action towards the Central Asian republics, reaching the Caspian Basin through them, and in order to control the large quantities of oil and gas in those areas. Therefore, Russia took the initiative to take steps to strengthen its positions in Central Asia, by linking the republics of that region with agreements and commitments that serve the interests of Russia and the interests of these republics at the same time. (al-Wahid, 2000, 18)

Russia's efforts to achieve its interests in Central Asia can be viewed at the political, security, economic, and geo-cultural level, politically and on the security front, and Moscow is working to establish a security system in the region through the "Collective Security Treaty Organization" to protect Russia from challenges coming from all directions, including the system (Armenia, Belarus, Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan), and this treaty allows political consultation and some degree of coordination between the defense and security institutions of member states, and Russia exploits this security alliance to achieve a kind of diplomatic solidarity between members, that is, its allies, for example, the member states issue in this alliance shared statements during the OSCE meetings.

Russia is trying to establish formal relations between NATO and the Collective Security Treaty Organization, which is an acknowledgment of Russia's military and political hegemony over the region.

It can be said; Russia's military interests in this region are mainly negative in nature, which is preventing these countries from entering NATO or from hosting new US military bases; it can be asserted that the reason for the war on Georgia was Tbilisi's desire to join NATO. Russia is also trying to stop the spread of democracy in the Commonwealth of Independent States; What Russia fears are not democracy, but American efforts to spread it. Among the most important Russian military bases in the region is the Dushanbe base in Tajikistan, the Kant base, and the Kulob base, and Russia has signed an agreement with Kyrgyzstan under which the latter allows Russian warplanes to land at the Kant airbase in the Bishkek region, the capital of Kyrgyzstan and is considered the first exclusive airbase in the region. It contains an intense Russian air and ground military presence, as well as Russian military garrisons in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, and Russia affirms that the Russian military bases in Central Asia and the Caucasus aim to secure and defend the southern borders of Russia and its neighbors, and the most prominent of the security arrangements made by the Central Asian countries with Russia, Entry into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the GUAM Group, the NATO Partnership for Peace program, the Interaction Initiative and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (SICA)(Marwa Nazeer, 2009) And the armies of the weak Central Asian

countries will continue to be in urgent need of Russian military support, given their dependence on the Russian arsenal for the supply of spare parts, aircraft capacity, and other service aids.

At the economic level, Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan have established the Organization (Euro-Asian Space) In 2000, intending to consolidate economic relations between the participating countries, leading to the establishment of a customs union between them. However, the customs union that was established based on this organization in 2006 only included three republics: Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan (Hossam Sweilem, 2006) The elites in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan are cautious about the integrative project led by Russia, for fear of compromising part of the national sovereignty and falling under the influence of Russia. (Russia and Central Asia ... Towards True Integration, 24 May 2012). The Russian leadership tries to establish joint banks and has many investments with these countries, and promotes the idea of adopting the Russian ruble as a currency to preserve financial reserves in the region, and Russian oil companies such as Lukoil have extensive concessions in oil exploration projects, and Russia proposes several lines that transport oil across its territory. Russia has concluded an agreement with Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan to establish a natural gas pipeline parallel to the Caspian Sea to transport Turkmenistan gas to the western and European markets in particular (Salah Al-Saifi, 2007). Russia also began laying the South Stream pipeline in December 2012 and hopes to start transporting gas to Europe before 2019, which is the date scheduled for the start of gas flow from Azerbaijan to the European Union, which is a competing project for Hosea. The South Stream project led by Gazprom Black Sea will follow then Baku-Novorossiysk pipeline (A Russian pipeline threatening the Nabucco project to deliver gas from the Caspian Sea countries to the European Union, Al-Quds Newspaper, May 28, 2013).

As for the ecocultural level, despite the high status of national languages in the newly independent countries, as well as the spread of the English language in them, the Russian language still dominates in former Soviet countries; The Russian language is the second language among the elites in the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia, and Russian channels are still available via satellite and Russian television and film artworks enjoy high popularity, and Russian folk music dominates radio programs in many Central Asian countries (Nazeer, 2007, 29). After the crisis in Ukraine and Crimea, Russian President Putin sought Central Asian leaders, especially Nursultan Nazarbayev, the Kazakh leader, in an effort to achieve his goal of establishing a Euro-Asian Union from the countries of the former Soviet Union within the framework of integration based on new foundations. (America strengthen its support for Central Asia after the crisis of the Crimean March 29, 2014)

**The United States:** Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States has been active in rapprochement with the republics of the Caucasus and Central Asia and has sought to consolidate its political and economic relations with them and work to establish friendly systems of government in these republics to secure their oil interests in the region. With the occurrence of the events of September 11, 2001, and the start of the American campaign against terrorism, Washington began to strengthen its military presence in the region, and it signed many agreements to establish military bases in some republics, including Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, to be used in its war against the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, And to consolidate the American influence and presence in the region, allowing the establishment of many oil and gas projects that secure American energy needs (Abu Arshid's, 2020, 70) The Baku-Ceyhan pipeline has received great attention from the United States, which considered it a lifeline to escape from the absolute Western dependence on Gulf oil, and an end to Russia's long control over oil supplies coming from the Caspian Sea, thus weakening its economic and political influence.

That is why much of the pressure on the exerted countries and companies to contribute to accelerating the implementation of the tube, and a pipeline "Baku - Ceyhan" called the "project of the century", begins the oil pipeline giant march near the capital Baku on the Caspian Sea coast, passing the middle of Azerbaijan from the east to the west, Then it cuts Georgia almost in the middle of it from east to west, before heading south to split the Turkish Anatolian Mountains diagonally from the northeast towards the south to the city of Ceyhan on the Mediterranean coast. Work on this project began in 2002 after four years of disputes over it, due to The countries of Europe and the Caucasus fear its environmental impacts, and the objections of the World Bank also to its establishment, in addition to the concerns raised by many joint-stock companies about the negative effects of the turmoil in Azerbaijan and Georgia on the progress of the project, in addition to what Turkey

suffers from unrest due to the Kurdish minority trying to establish Its independent state. (Abdullah Saleh, 2005)

The events of September 11th have provided the American administration with an additional incentive to tighten its grip on the oil regions. The American administration believes that the map of what it calls "terrorist havens" or what it calls "rogue states" may be the same as the map of the main energy resources in the world. Afghanistan is of utmost importance, as it is within its territories that potential lines of oil and gas exports pass from Central Asia to the Arabian Sea (Muhammad Ali Al-Farra, 2011). The US Department of Defense established relations with the armed forces in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, and began to secure weapons and training for these forces. The United States owns an airbase "Manas" in Kyrgyzstan, located north of the capital, Bishkek, where this base includes more than a thousand American soldiers. The second base is the "Khanabad" airbase in Uzbekistan. In addition, the United States has several agreements with these countries, allowing them to use their airspace and forced landing for refueling. (Saleh, 2005, 17) In addition to the siege of Iran from the north and east, in preparation for subjecting it to US control, and preventing the leakage of nuclear technology, materials, and expertise, as well as missile technology and other advanced conventional or super-conventional weapons inherited from the Soviet era from Central Asian countries, especially Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, to rogue states such as Iran (Can Central Asia escape the ambitions of the great powers, previous reference, 2009) The United States adopts a soft power policy through diplomacy, aid, and support for reform trends.

**China:** China is considered one of the first countries to recognize the countries of Central Asia after their independence from the former Soviet Union, and established strong diplomatic relations with them and exchanged official visits with them, and the features of the new Chinese policy towards this region appeared in 1996 when Beijing moved to create an official framework linking it to the region. The idea of the Shanghai Economic Cooperation Organization in cooperation with Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, which Uzbekistan joined in 2001, and it was clear that Beijing was exploiting Russia's influence to move towards Central Asia while Moscow was looking for a strong ally in Asia to stop the European-American advance towards its areas of influence (Jafar Hasan, 2008) With China's increasingly urgent energy needs and rising oil and gas prices, Beijing has had to search for cheap and safer alternatives that meet its needs. Hence, the energy sources in Central Asia, which are close to it, emerged in front of it in order for this dream to come true, but it needs more trade-offs with Russia, which fears that China is competing with it in controlling oil and gas transmission lines. At the same time, Central Asia is a popular consumer market for Chinese goods, and most of China's imports from Central Asia are the raw materials that China lacks, and China exports consumer goods to these countries and Chinese investments in Central Asia have played a role in solving the shortages suffered by these countries.

Capital, and for China, Central Asia is an indispensable crossing for Europe and the West Asian region, as it is the artery of its transportation, and unlike the goals of other countries in Central Asia, China does not seek a military presence in it, but rather it is seen as areas of influence for it, but rather hopes for cooperation Economic and stabilization in these countries, which will be reflected in the Chinese national security, and in 1999 China concluded a series of agreements to redraw the common borders with the countries of the region (Abdullah Falah Odeh, Previous Reference, 100-106), China is the second-largest trade partner with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and Central Asia is currently rich in hundreds of large and small projects that the Chinese implement in various fields, the most important of which are: exploration and construction of power transmission pipelines, road, and railway construction, and there are preliminary agreements with each of Uzbekistan and Iran on projects to transport gas to China or even other countries, such as the project to transport Turkmen gas through Afghanistan to Pakistan and India.

Despite these economic motives for the Chinese move towards Central Asia, the political and security aspects of this move cannot be overlooked. On the security front, Beijing was able to persuade the Central Asian countries to put pressure on the Uyghur opposition activists who are fighting for more freedoms in the Xinjiang region (East Turkestan), which remained active in Central Asia, which angered many institutions working in the field of human rights. The Chinese economic penetration helped limit American influence in Central Asia, as was the closure of the US base in Uzbekistan in 2006, as well as the review of the lease contract for the US base in Kyrgyzstan, and then the official call of the Shanghai

Organization in 2006 to close US bases in Central Asia. For its part, the Shanghai Organization has succeeded in polarizing Central Asian countries largely against Western trends that seek to impose their agenda on regimes that do not want to submit to Western pressure regarding human rights and democracy issues. Central Asian leaders often announce their statements against Western and American criticism of the Chinese capital, Beijing. (Mutie allah altaayib, China, Iran, and Turkey. New players in Central Asia, August 12, 2007)

### **Conclusion:**

Geopolitical interactions represent the main determinant of Central Asian security because external parties use their lands as a stage for struggles for political influence. In view of the increasing importance of Central Asia in the post-September 11th era, a change occurred in the realities of this region, bearing in mind that this change did not occur in the basic international game, but rather in the methods of its practice. Although the direct impact of this slight shift is clear, building a fragile economic structure in Central Asia reinforces the direct threats to regional stability.

It cannot be denied that the emergence of legitimate business interests and real investment opportunities inevitably contributes to the creation of a form of widespread economic stability; this is what happened in Central Asia since the independence of its republics from the defunct Soviet Union. At the same time, however, this commercial environment was established on a fragile foundation - a foundation riven by corruption and shaken by competing political interests, internal turmoil, populist frustration, and organized crime. Welfare remains restricted to those with influence, while capital accumulation continues in foreign banks (which often facilitate the movement of illegally acquired funds). As for civil society, it is shackled by the contradictory policies pursued by internal and external political parties.

As long as the United States, Russia, and China continue in the geo-economic game in the region, something like stability will remain; which will serve the interests of these three countries. However, one must wonder about the possibility of continuing with such a policy and acknowledge that prejudice to the regional interests of any one of these countries - even if only slightly - may plunge the region into a cycle of worsening instability.

But the longing of the peoples of the region for freedom should not be ignored.

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