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## THE ROLE OF TRANSPORT CORRIDORS IN STRENGTHENING IRANIAN REGIONAL COOPERATION IN CENTRAL ASIA

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**Abstract.** The role of transport corridors in strengthening regional cooperation in Central Asia is critical, especially in the context of Iran's evolving foreign policy. Amidst the backdrop of the Russian-Ukrainian confrontation and the expansion of major infrastructure projects like the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), Iran's strategic initiatives in Central Asia have gained prominence. This article aims to explore how transport corridors can enhance Iran's regional influence and cooperation with Central Asian countries.

The main question addressed is: how do these transport corridors contribute to regional stability and economic integration? The hypothesis is that Iran's active participation in developing these corridors, particularly through key projects like the Chabahar Port, not only boosts trade and connectivity but also counters geopolitical isolation and fosters long-term regional cooperation. The research utilizes the theory of regional integration and interdependence, supported by qualitative content analysis of documents, texts, and expert interviews related to regional transport strategies.

The findings indicate that efficient transport infrastructure is fundamental for economic development and political stability in Central Asia. Iran's collaboration with Russia and China further amplifies the benefits of these corridors, providing a strategic counterbalance to Western influence. Ultimately, the study highlights that Iran's role in Central Asia is pivotal for broader regional integration and sustainable development.

**Keywords:** transport corridors, regional cooperation, economic integration, geopolitical strategy, trade routes, Iran, Central Asia, regional stability

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### Basic provisions

Today, Central Asia serves as an important region of cooperation and interaction between the world's major players. Iran's participation in these processes is inevitable. Since, historically, the country actively participated in significant events that shaped the modern development of Central Asia. This region is a relatively safe zone for Iran because there is no direct hostility towards it from regional actors.

Iran's policy in Central Asia is gaining momentum amidst the backdrop of the Russian-Ukrainian confrontation. Central Asian republics are landlocked with no

access to open sea. They depend on their neighbors, including Iran, to transport commodities to and from the outside worlds.

### **Introduction**

The development of transport infrastructure contributes not only to increasing trade turnover but also to strengthening cultural and social ties between countries. In the context of globalization and increasing interdependence of states, efficient transport systems become the basis of a stable and prosperous region. Often, location has played a decisive role in the fate of entire countries and peoples.

Iran's maritime borders include the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman in the south, and the Caspian Sea in the north, making it an important geopolitical and geostrategic center. While surrounded by many coastal neighbors, Iran has not fully leveraged its potential ties. Today, Iran is taking steps to exploit its potential, especially in Central Asia. Iran's ocean Chabahar Port not only enhances cooperation between Central Asian countries and Iran but also provides better access to the open waters of the world. In addition, the North-South corridor can improve Iran's regional strategy and develop closer relationships between Iran and the countries of Central Asia [1].

International transport corridors represent not only transport and logistics, but also economics and politics. The location and natural conditions of the countries through which transport corridors pass determine their socio-economic and political significance.

Central Asia is an important space for cooperation between Iran's main partners and allies – Russia and China. In addition, two key routes of the Belt and Road Initiative pass through its countries. Therefore, the significance of this region for Iran is evident in terms of bypassing international sanctions and overcoming international isolation.

### **Description of materials and methods**

The purpose of the article is to analyze the impact of transport routes on strengthening regional cooperation between Iran and Central Asian countries. To achieve this goal, an analysis of scientific works devoted to the development of transport corridors and their impact on strengthening economic and political ties between countries was carried out. The article also highlights Iran's political and economic interests in Central Asia, taking into account energy and logistics factors. Particular attention is paid to the modern foreign policy of Iran, as well as the influence of Russia and China on this cooperation.

The methodological basis of this study is the theory of regional integration and the theory of interdependence. Interdependence theory posits that states depend on each other economically and politically, creating incentives for cooperation. Regional integration, in turn, is a form of such cooperation where states join forces to achieve common goals and enhance their collective stability and prosperity.

Keohane, one of the founders of liberal institutionalism, studied how states can cooperate on equal terms, avoiding domination. Unlike the narrow approach of realists, liberal institutionalists tend to take economic factors into account.

According to Keohane [2], states can cooperate on equal terms, avoiding dominance by one party. Interdependence arises from the opportunities that cooperation provides and the increased wealth of the partners. Maintaining and increasing prosperity depends on international political cooperation, making violence irrelevant. Thus, the interdependence of states promotes peace [3].

Joseph Nye argues that the new world order should be based on multi-level interdependence of states. However, interdependence has its drawbacks. The more a state gains from trade, the more dependent it becomes on others. Asymmetrical interdependence can have serious consequences. Interdependence links the well-being of countries to the policies of others, which they cannot control. The benefits acquired can be offset by the loss of economic and political independence [4].

Regarding regional cooperation, the theory proposed by Louis J. Cantori and Steven F. Spiegel stands out. They describe regional integration as a process driven by neighboring countries' desire to collaborate within a component system of the larger international framework [5]. To achieve effective regional integration, they emphasize the importance of frequent interactions, exchanges, and communication among people as essential indicators of success [6]. Moreover, Cantori and Spiegel assert that the political, economic, and social connections established through these interactions help create a more cohesive and stable regional environment, fostering long-term cooperation and reducing the likelihood of conflict.

The research also includes content analysis of official documents, statistical data, and political reports related to the Central Asian region, as well as those concerning Iran.

### **Literature review**

The literature review brings together ideas from well-known researchers such as R. Keohane [2] and J. Nye [4], who delve into the role of international institutions and the global political economy in shaping both cooperation and conflict. Additionally, the work of L. Cantori and S. Spiegel provides a detailed examination of regional politics and various systemic approaches within international relations [5].

The article also analyzes Iran's significant political and economic interests in Central Asia, with a particular focus on energy and logistics, as explored in A.V. Grozin's study [7]. This perspective highlights how these factors influence Iran's strategic engagements in the region.

Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of regional cooperation within the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), as discussed by Amir Abdollahian [8], and critically assessed in V. Schensnovich's analytical overview. These analyses provide valuable insights into the political and economic dimensions of Iran's regional strategies and engagements.

Mesamed's (2008) exploration from 2008 examines Iran's interactions with Central Asian states, offering contextual understanding of Iran's regional economic and political initiatives within a broader international framework.

### **Results**

After the collapse of the bipolar world, Iran's traditional foreign policy became irrelevant in the new system of international relations. Previously, Iranian policy was based on the principle of “Neither West, nor East”, which lost its significance with the disappearance of the Eastern Bloc. Changes in the geopolitical situation have affected the Iran-Iraq-Saudi Arabia triad, reducing its importance of this region as a source of danger and threats. Instead, threats to Iran emerged from Israeli military statements and the presence of American troops on Iran's borders [9].

According to A. Grozin, the region's republics and Iran have mutual interests and dependence. The further development of these relations will allow Iran to break out of isolation, benefit from economic, and trade relations with the region. Meanwhile, Central Asian countries, which lack access to international waters, can address their transport and energy problems through these strengthened ties [7].

From 1990's Iran established diplomatic relations with Central Asian republics. From the outset of their diplomatic relations with Iran, the Central Asian states resisted Iran's agenda of promoting the Islamic revolution in Muslim countries. During Hashemi Rafsanjani's presidency, Iran's foreign policy shifted away from its revolutionary aspirations toward a more pragmatic approach, even though there had been previous efforts to export the Islamic revolution to Tajikistan. This shift was especially evident in economic initiatives, with a focus on fostering regional partnerships, particularly in the energy sector. Among these efforts, a prominent project aimed to link the Turkmenistan-Turkey gas pipeline through Iran. However, this initiative was not implemented due to the Turkmen administration's refusal to participate in the project [10].

Since the Islamic Revolution, Iran has worked hard to build relationships with neighboring countries through various regional organizations. Similarly, Russia started bringing together former Soviet countries and some Asian states into organizations like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). These efforts aimed to regain influence lost after the USSR fell apart and to push back against Western influence in those regions. In response, Iran showed a keen interest in cooperating with these integration associations [11].

After the Islamic Revolution, the new regime abandoned the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) due to its alignment with Western foreign policy. In its place, Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan formed the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in 1985, aiming to establish a dynamic and efficient regional economic structure. However, Iran has tried to strengthen its relations with countries in the region. Together with Pakistan and Turkey, Iran supported the expansion of the ECO as a result of the accession of the Central Asian republics. The organization subsequently received observer status at the UN and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The Economic Cooperation Organization is a significant priority for Iran in terms of regional economic cooperation. Iranian representatives have emphasized that the ECO remains a key focus for the Islamic Republic's economic collaboration with regional countries [8]. After the Central Asian countries joined, Iran sought to leverage this platform to express its anti-Western stance. However, other members

were not inclined to politicize the organization and insisted on maintaining a focus on economic cooperation [12]. Today, the ECO has not yet evolved into a second European Union with a single market for goods and services or an anti-Western platform [13].

The trend towards increased activity of Iranian diplomacy in the Eurasian space is intensifying. In 2023, Iran became the ninth member of the SCO, which also includes India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Joining the SCO symbolized the turn of Iranian foreign policy to the East.

Iran became an observer to the organization in 2005 and applied for membership in 2007, but UN Security Council sanctions prevented it. Since 2005, Iran has had observer state status in the SCO. In 2021, the process of his joining the organization began. In September 2022, at the SCO summit in Samarkand, a memorandum of Iran's obligations to join the organization was signed. In January 2023, the Iranian parliament approved a bill on a memorandum on the country's obligations necessary to obtain the status of a member of the SCO. This is Iran's first experience of participating in a multilateral organization dealing with collective security [14].

The main purpose of Iran's membership in the SCO is cooperation for regional security. Since 1991, Iran has sought to promote security in Central Asia and the South Caucasus. Examples of such efforts include mediating the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (1991-1993), promoting peace in Tajikistan (1992-1996) and working with Russia to support the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan against the Taliban (1996-2001). Strengthening ties with other Central Asian countries is also noted.

Iran's role in ensuring the security of Afghanistan, Central Asia, the Caspian region and the South Caucasus is becoming increasingly important for the stabilization of Eurasia. Iran's entry as an official member of the SCO could strengthen the security and cultural ties of this organization, as well as contribute to its economic development. The accession of ancient civilizations to the SCO can contribute to the formation of an Asian dialogue aimed at developing political, economic and cultural cooperation, which will lead to the creation of a joint security system.

In addition to the experience of recent decades, the Iranian President is actively resisting the influence of Western powers and developing cooperation with Russia, China and other countries in the region, which contributes to the institutionalization of these relations within the SCO.

In a challenging foreign policy environment shaped by Western sanctions, regional alliances can significantly bolster Iran's geopolitical position. Consequently, cooperation with members of these unions is critically important for Tehran. For a long time, economic sanctions from the EU and the United States hindered the development of bilateral ties, deterring businessmen from EAEU countries from engaging with Iran. However, demonstrating political resolve, a temporary agreement on a free trade zone between the EAEU and Iran was signed in 2018, two years after negotiations began, and it came into force in October 2019.

Following the agreement's activation, trade turnover between the EAEU and Iran has grown steadily, surpassing \$5 billion by 2023. In 2023, the EAEU and Iran signed a comprehensive free trade agreement, eliminating import customs duties on almost 90% of goods, covering more than 95% of mutual trade. Iran aims to increase this figure to \$10 billion following the signing of the free trade agreement. This agreement will not only strengthen trade and economic relations but also stimulate projects in transportation and communications across Eurasia.

Additionally, the agreement includes provisions for cooperation in areas such as mining, energy efficiency, research and innovation, education, medicine, and telecommunications [18]. So, A free trade zone with the EAEU helps both Iran and the EAEU. It allows Iran to reach Eurasian markets and lets EAEU goods and businesses expand into new areas in the East and the Global South.

The agreement on a free trade zone between the EAEU and Iran effectively unites the economic space from Iran to China, with which the EAEU already has a trade and economic cooperation agreement. In this context, Central Asia will gain significant importance as transport corridors will traverse this region under the framework of the EAEU and the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative.

### **Iran's transport strategy in Central Asia**

Since ancient times, the rulers of landlocked Central Asian countries have sought to create safe and economical routes for travel and trade. Iran can assist Central Asian republics to enter world markets. Its land and sea borders, extending approximately 5,000 km from the eastern border with Armenia to the Gulf of Oman, enable it to play a vital role in providing access to the waters of the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman, and the Indian Ocean for landlocked countries like Afghanistan, Central Asia, and the South Caucasus. In this context, Iran and Central Asian countries place significant importance on the Southern Corridor project, which links regional markets to the Indian Ocean via Iranian ports.

As expert Georgiy Machatidze highlights that Iran's political relations with Central Asian states are marked by intense contacts and the expansion of legal frameworks. This means that Iran's importance as a transit country is not just about its ability to facilitate the movement of goods through its territory. It also includes the valuable role Iran plays in providing access to the internal markets of Central Asia [21]. In this regard, Iran is interested in a free trade area with the EAEU, with which it has already signed a preferential trade agreement, granting Iran access to a market of nearly 200 million people.

Regional countries have great hopes for international transport corridors, especially the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). The flow of cargo along this corridor is steadily increasing, and with the shift in Russian logistics towards the East, its importance grows significantly.

Russia, Iran, and India signed an agreement on the INSTC project in 2002. This transit project is a multimodal network of sea, rail, and road routes to move goods between the three countries. It is being developed along three main routes: the middle, or trans-Caspian route via the ports of Astrakhan, Olya, and Makhachkala, the eastern route – direct rail connection through Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan with the Iranian railway network, and the western route – Astrakhan

- Makhachkala - Samur, then through Azerbaijan to the planned border station Astara.

The Central Asian country Turkmenistan already has an operational railway line connecting it with Iran along the Tejen - Serakhs - Mashhad route. Container transportation from Kazakhstan to Turkey via Turkmenistan and Iran has also been established, and the Iran-Afghanistan-Tajikistan-Kyrgyzstan road transport corridor is operational.

The eastern branch of the INSTC, connected by a single railway network, is economically advantageous. In 2023, transportation reached 18 million tons, with 32% routed through the Trans-Caspian, 28% through the Eastern branch, and 40% via the Western branch. Challenges on the Western and Trans-Caspian routes, such as the absence of direct rail links and port congestion, open up more opportunities for the Eastern line.

This eastern route is crucial as it links eastern and central Russia through Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to Iran's southern ports, and further to India and the Arab countries on the southern Persian Gulf. Officially launched in July 2022 with the departure of the first train, this branch marked a significant milestone for commercial cargo through the INSTC.

The port of Chabahar, in the southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchistan, is closer to the eastern part of the INSTC than Bandar Abbas in Hormozgan province are. Chabahar is Iran's only ocean port and could become one of the world's top ten megaports. However, it has faced sanctions for many years. During the presidency of Afghanistan's former leader Ashraf Ghani, the sanctions were temporarily lifted to help Kabul.

Political scientist Farkhod Karimov highlights that the key factor is the position of the West and the United States. Washington might consider easing sanctions on Iran as part of India's strategy, recognizing India's role as a significant regional player capable of countering China, the US's main rival. Chabahar is the first foreign port to come under Indian management. Despite generally tense relations with Iran, the United States made an exception for Chabahar, exempting it from sanctions, likely to maintain positive relations with India.

Seeing the strategic advantages of Chabahar, which offers access to Afghanistan, the southern post-Soviet region, and the vast Euro-Asian area, India decided to invest in it over twenty years ago. Talks with Iran about jointly developing the port began in 2003, but the project was delayed for years because of international sanctions on Tehran. In 2016, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, announced that Delhi would invest \$500 million in Chabahar's port infrastructure.

In May 2016, India signed an agreement with Iran and Afghanistan to build the Shahid Beheshti terminal at Chabahar port, which became operational in 2018. This project has enabled the delivery of 2.5 million tons of wheat and 2,000 tons of legumes from India to Afghanistan through Chabahar port in recent years.

In 2024, India signed a ten-year agreement with Iran to operate the Chabahar port in the Indian Ocean. India Ports Global (IPGL) will manage transit operations for Indian goods through this port to Afghanistan and Central Asia and back. Indian media call Chabahar a “trade gateway” to Central Asia. This port could become an

alternative to Pakistan's strategic port of Gwadar, which is currently the main hub for cargo between China and Central Asia with the Indian Ocean. Iranian officials have noted that the Chabahar port could play a pivotal role in completing the construction of North-South Corridor.

## **Discussion**

### **Benefits of transport corridors for participating countries**

Iran's position and role as a major regional power have significantly changed in recent years. Responding to US sanctions, Iran is diversifying its foreign trade, focusing on Eurasian countries, especially China, as its main economic partners. Improved transport infrastructure is expected to boost trade between Russia, Central Asia, Iran, and India.

Iran, Russia, China, and India aim to be active players in Central Asia. Internationally, these countries support each other despite Western criticism. Historically, in 1998, Russia proposed a strategic triangle with China and India, which Iran later showed interest in joining. Although this specific alliance did not materialize, Russia, China, Iran, and other countries opposing the current global order often support each other in international forums, especially at the UN, driven by their common opposition to the American-led order. Russia opposes NATO expansion, Iran opposes the American presence in the Middle East, and China opposes the AUKUS alliance in the Pacific, with each supporting the other's positions.

However, there are serious challenges to forming a stable alliance. Iran's nuclear program is a major concern, as neither Russia nor China wants another nuclear power in the region, although they support Iran's civilian nuclear development. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has further strained relations, with Russia turning to Iran for economic and military support due to Western sanctions, but this also leads to potential clashes over oil market shares. China's position is complicated by its principle of territorial integrity, making it wary of fully supporting Russia's actions in Ukraine. Moreover, economic interdependence with the West limits China's willingness to confront the United States and its allies.

The need for alternative logistics routes has been particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2021 Suez Canal crisis. The escalation of the conflict in Ukraine has intensified competition between the EAEU and the EU for the economic integration of Eastern Europe. The North-South transport corridor is crucial for the EAEU and the SCO as an alternative path for economic development and a counter to the European Union's influence. Since May 2018, following the signing of a free trade agreement with Iran, countries along this corridor have shown interest in cooperating with the EAEU, and similar negotiations are underway with India.

The importance of the SCO and its member countries along the North-South corridor lies in their potential for increased integration. Opportunities include regionalization, improved economic and political ties, reduced tensions, and sharing economic and commercial benefits. The SCO covers half the world's population and includes major energy producers and consumers such as Iran, Russia, and China,

with a combined economy of \$23 trillion and domestic trade of more than \$300 billion. These countries also hold significant reserves of rare minerals.

Political scientist Nargiza Umarova emphasized that the nearby ports of Gwadar and Chabahar are in competition, as they are supported by major powers like China and India. India's interest in Chabahar is a source of concern for Beijing. In this context, China might involve itself through the mediation of Islamabad (KUN, 2024). Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have expressed interest in using the Chabahar port to supply their goods to India. India's trade with Central Asia is only \$2 billion, while China's trade with the region has reached \$90 billion. India seeks routes to Central Asia that bypass rivals China and Pakistan, making the Iranian port crucial for the country. Kazakhstan is strengthening relations with India using the Chabahar port, aiming to connect its railway network with Iran's railways for cost-effective and fast access. Kazakhstan plans to export agricultural products through Chabahar, building warehouses and facilities in the port. Participation in China's Silk Road project also opens opportunities for Kazakhstan [7].

Chabahar is vital for Uzbekistan's foreign trade, offering a chance to diversify trade routes. Uzbekistan also seeks access to Pakistan through Afghanistan and explores alternative routes, mindful of partners like Turkmenistan. Uzbekistan plans to invest in the Chabahar Free Economic Zone and connect its railways with Afghanistan for better access to Iran. Turkmenistan also shows interest in Chabahar for global market access, with two border crossings linking it to Iran's railway network.

Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, being landlocked and having weak economies, also need access to Chabahar to diversify their economic ties. To implement this project, international investment is needed, especially from China, which has proposed connecting China with Iran through Central Asia.

Strategic use of transport corridors underscores Iran's pivotal role in Central Asia's development. By enhancing regional connectivity and economic interdependence, Iran contributes to a more integrated and stable region, promoting long-term peace and cooperation.

The development of transport corridors plays a crucial role in enhancing regional cooperation between Iran and Central Asian countries. Given the strategic significance of Central Asia, both economically and geopolitically, Iran's active participation in establishing and promoting transport infrastructure has fostered stronger economic ties and political relationships within the region.

## **Conclusion**

Central Asian countries, landlocked and reliant on neighboring states for access to global markets, benefit significantly from Iran's strategic positioning. The ports of Chabahar and Bandar Abbas serve as vital gateways, facilitating the flow of goods and resources. The North-South Corridor exemplifies how transport routes can transform regional dynamics by providing efficient, cost-effective pathways for trade.

Iran's foreign policy, shaped by interdependence and regional integration theories, underscores the mutual benefits of cooperation. By leveraging its

geographical advantages and aligning its transport strategy with regional needs, Iran supports the economic development of its Central Asian neighbors. This cooperation not only enhances trade but also strengthens cultural and social ties, contributing to regional stability and prosperity.

The collaboration within frameworks like the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) illustrates Iran's commitment to regional integration. Despite challenges, such as international sanctions and geopolitical tensions, Iran continues to seek innovative solutions to enhance its regional influence and economic resilience.

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## ИРАНЫҢ ОРТАЛЫҚ АЗИЯДАҒЫ АЙМАҚТЫҚ ЫНТЫМАҚТАСТЫҒЫННЫҒАЙТУДАҒЫ КӨЛІК ДӘЛІЗДЕРІНІҢ РӨЛІ

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**Андағпа.** Иранның дамып келе жатқан сыртқы саясаты контекстіндегі Орталық Азиядағы аймақтық ынтымақтастықты нығайтудағы көлік дәліздерінің рөлі маңызды екені сөзсіз. Ресей-Украина қарама-қайшылықтарының ушығуы және Халықаралық Солтүстік-Оңтүстік көлік дәлізі (INSTC) сияқты ірі инфрақұрылымдық жобалардың кеңеюі жағдайында Иранның Орталық Азиядағы стратегиялық бастамаларының өзектілігін арттыра түсті. Бұл мақала Иранның аймақтық ықпалын және Орталық Азия елдерімен ынтымақтастығын арттыруға көлік дәліздерінің әсерін зерттеуге бағытталған.

Зерттеудің негізгі сұрағы: Көлік дәліздері аймақтық тұрақтылық пен экономикалық интеграцияға қалай әсер етеді? Зерттеу гипотезасы – Иранның осы дәліздерді дамытуға белсенді қатысуы, Чабахар порты сияқты маңызды жобалар арқылы сауда мен байланысты арттырып қана қоймай, сонымен қатар геосаяси оқшаулануға қарсы тұрып, ұзақ мерзімді аймақтық ынтымақтастықты дамытады. Зерттеуде құжаттардың, мәтіндердің және аймақтық көлік стратегияларына қатысты сарапшылардың сұхбаттарының контент-анализ әдісімен талданған, аймақтық интеграция және өзара тәуелділік теориясы қолданылған.

Нәтижелер тиімді көлік инфрақұрылымының Орталық Азиядағы экономикалық даму мен саяси тұрақтылық үшін негіз бола алатынын зерделейді. Иранның Ресеймен және Қытаймен ынтымақтастығы осыкөлік дәліздерінің тиімділігін одан әрі күшейтіп қана қоймай, Батыстың ықпалына стратегиялық қарсы тұруын қамтамасыз етеді. Сайып келгенде, зерттеу Иранның Орталық Азиядағы рөлінің кеңірек аймақтық интеграция және тұрақты даму үшін өте маңызды екенін көрсетеді.

**Тірек сөздер:** көлік дәліздері, аймақтық ынтымақтастық, экономикалық интеграция, геосаяси стратегия, сауда жолдары, Иран, Орталық Азия, аймақтық тұрақтылық

## **РОЛЬ ТРАНСПОРТНЫХ КОРИДОРОВ В УКРЕПЛЕНИИ РЕГИОНАЛЬНОГО СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА ИРАНА В ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОЙ АЗИИ**

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**Аннотация.** Роль транспортных коридоров в укреплении регионального сотрудничества в Центральной Азии имеет решающее значение, особенно в контексте развивающейся внешней политики Ирана. На фоне российско-украинского противостояния и расширения крупных инфраструктурных проектов, таких как Международный транспортный коридор Север-Юг (INSTC), стратегические инициативы Ирана в Центральной Азии приобрели особую значимость. Целью данной статьи является изучение того, как транспортные коридоры могут усилить региональное влияние Ирана и сотрудничество со странами Центральной Азии.

Главный рассматриваемый вопрос: как эти транспортные коридоры способствуют региональной стабильности и экономической интеграции? Гипотеза заключается в том, что активное участие Ирана в развитии этих коридоров, особенно посредством таких ключевых проектов, как порт Чабахар, не только способствует развитию торговли и связей, но также противодействует геополитической изоляции и способствует долгосрочному

региональному сотрудничеству. В исследовании используется теория региональной интеграции и взаимозависимости, подкрепленная качественным контент-анализом документов, текстов и экспертных интервью, связанных с региональными транспортными стратегиями.

Результаты показывают, что эффективная транспортная инфраструктура имеет основополагающее значение для экономического развития и политической стабильности в Центральной Азии. Сотрудничество Ирана с Россией и Китаем еще больше усиливает преимущества этих коридоров, обеспечивая стратегический противовес западному влиянию. В конечном итоге исследование подчеркивает, что роль Ирана в Центральной Азии имеет решающее значение для более широкой региональной интеграции и устойчивого развития.

**Ключевые слова:** транспортные коридоры, региональное сотрудничество, экономическая интеграция, геополитическая стратегия, торговые пути, Иран, Центральная Азия, региональная стабильность

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