

**International Conference on  
Energy, Transportation and Economic Links in Eurasia  
Emerging Partnerships  
January 16-17, 2012**

Concept Note

Historically, Eurasia has been very important geopolitically, as evidenced by the Great Game and the Cold War played out between the Soviet Union and the Euro- Atlantic powers. After the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union, the discovery of large oil and gas fields spurred a new Great Game in this region. Central Asia witnessed a geopolitical seesaw between the United States, Russia, China and even the EU, with the earlier quest for territorial domination shifting to a competition for energy and other resources. There were rapid shifts in the region – starting with the Russian legacy presence, succeeded by entry by the United States, and followed by a rising China. The EU and Japan are also active today in the region. China is focusing on the development of energy resources, building trans-Eurasian pipelines and transportation networks, and extending cooperation in a number of other sectors, leveraging the complementarities between the region's economies. Russia, China and countries in the region have signed several bilateral deals for collaborations in energy and transportation projects/ corridors while consolidating their strategic partnership in Eurasia through the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. Countries as far as Turkey are being connected through these networks. The ADB and other international organisations have outlined a roadmap for physical connectivity in order to support economic growth in Eurasia.

India and Central Asia were closely connected from Sakan, Grecian and Kushan times. The advent of the Europeans led to an attenuation and gradual disappearance of India's historical connectivity with Central Asia, with Great Britain actively preventing contact in order to forestall Russian advance to the warm waters through Afghanistan. Due to lack of physical connectivity and low levels of bilateral trade and investments and people-to-people contacts – India was not focusing sufficiently on developments in Eurasia, the Central Asian countries and Mongolia.

India cannot afford to be insulated from its extended neighbourhood in which many crucial developments are taking place. It is time India also renewed its links and took active initiatives to examine forms of engagement and involvement in the various regional and extra-regional initiatives taking shape, going beyond TAPI and similar plans.

India has much to contribute to the economic development of the region. Central Asian countries + Mongolia would welcome a more active role by India in the region. From the point of view too of building a stable, prosperous and peaceful Asia, India should join in dialogue with all the countries in order to demonstrate its interest in full participation in the economic affairs of the region and in establishing mutually beneficial forms of cooperation to set in motion virtuous cycles of growth. Physical connectivity and access

to energy supplies will be one of the important elements in India's calculus, but not exclusively.

India is increasing bilateral cooperation with countries in the region - in hydrocarbons and energy including civil nuclear energy and uranium supply, transport and energy pipelines connectivity, space research, economic, military, education, information technology, as also in countering common security threats like religious extremism, terrorism and drug trafficking. Several Indian VVIPs have visited this region over the past few years. Indian Prime Minister visited Kazakhstan in April 2010, Uzbek President Islam Karimov paid visit to Delhi in May 2011, Defence Minister AK Antony visited Kyrgyzstan in July 2011 and Foreign Minister SM Krishna paid visit to Astana in June 2011 to participate in the SCO summit.

Given India's growing focus on this strategically important region, IDSA plans to hold an international conference on India and Eurasia covering "Energy, Transportation and Economic Links with Eurasia in the context of ongoing and new initiatives", with participants from all Central Asian Republics, Mongolia, Russia, Japan, the EU, China, Turkey, Iran, the US and international organizations like the ADB/ESCAP. The conference plans to address the following questions:

- What are the existing and planned transport and energy corridors and how can India link up with them?
- What are the prospects for economic cooperation and development in Eurasia and how should the goals be achieved?
- What is the contribution of major players like Russia, US, Japan, the EU and China?
- How should regional and sub-regional organisations address the challenges of the region and work towards a better future?
- What role can India play in contributing to and strengthening cooperative frameworks in Eurasia?