
A LOOK AT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN RAIL TRANSPORT CORRIDOR

Ayattillo Sharustamov,

TSTU researcher PhD,

e-mail: Ayattillo_2007@mail.ru, tel.: (90) 321-36-38

Abstract: This article discusses the International Transport Corridors TMTM (Trans-Siberian Main Transport Route) and the Southern Corridor are important routes for transporting goods between the countries of Europe and Asia. The TMTM extends across Russian territory and provides connections between Asia and Europe via rail and road routes. The Southern Corridor also plays a significant role in transport infrastructure, connecting the countries of South-Eastern Europe with Asian countries through sea and land routes.

Keywords: international transport corridor, logistics, railway, international transport route, cargo transportation.

Introduction

The regional study ‘Development of Transport Corridors in Central Asia and the Effect of the Belt and Road Initiative’ was initiated by the Development Strategy Center in the Republic of Uzbekistan, and conducted by a group of regional experts representing analytical centers of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, with financial and expert support from the PeaceNexus Foundation and Roland Berger International Consulting Company.

The study is an analysis of the current state and development prospects of transport corridors in Central Asia. It is relevant due to the shared interest of all countries of the region in the joint development of transport and communication links. The study is aimed at presenting the latest trends in the field of transport and infrastructure in the Central Asian region (specifically in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan), at assessing separate key infrastructure projects in these countries in terms of their potential capacities and risks for social and economic development, security of states of the region, and in terms of enhancing overall connectivity in the region. The conclusions proposed by the study might play an important role in developing proposals for further improvement of the transport policies of the region’s states.

Experts believe that the development of economic relations between the countries of Central Asia and their neighbors, as well as with other world players, is a positive factor for increasing the volume of cargo transportation. Investments in infrastructure, such as the construction or modernization of roads, railways, ports and cargo transportation terminals, the signing of trade agreements between countries in the region or with other countries can stimulate cargo transportation and transit through Central Asia. Political stability in the region also plays a key role in ensuring security and predictability for cargo transportation.

It is noteworthy that the geopolitical turbulence in the world has expanded the opportunities of Central Asian countries to attract new sources of investment and conclude transport agreements

with the European Union. The package of contracts will include not only transport issues, but also insurance, security, information support and other capital-intensive areas of cooperation.

Central Asian countries are ready for significant changes in their logistics, as plans to create new transport corridors gain momentum. Among the key ones is the start of construction of the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway for multimodal freight transport, which will be an important milestone in the development of regional ties and trade facilitation.



As a follow-up to this initiative, two additional routes are being developed. The southbound route, starting from Bishkek via the Dostuk checkpoint in Osh province, will pass through Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan before crossing the Caspian Sea by ferry and reaching the port of Olya in Russia's Astrakhan region. It is noteworthy that the transit of goods from Uzbekistan to Turkmenistan will be carried out through the Uzbek checkpoint "Alat-Farap", which underlines the strategic importance of this emerging transport corridor.

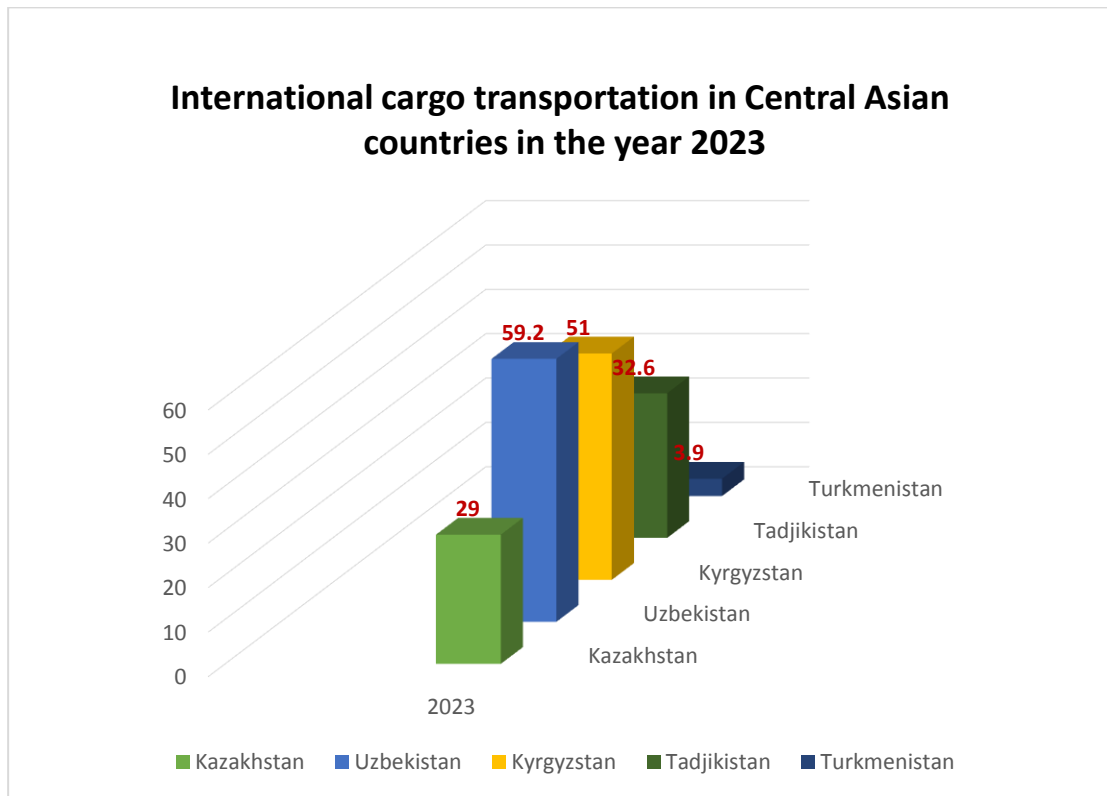
Against this background, the upcoming summit of the heads of state of Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in Ashgabat, scheduled for August 4, is intended to intensify discussions on the development of transport corridors, especially relevant for landlocked Uzbekistan.

Central Asian countries record an increase in cargo transportation. Cargo transit through the territory of Kazakhstan in January-November 2023 alone increased by 21% compared to 2022 and amounted to 29 million tons. Overall, 980.7 million tons of cargo were transported in 2023, which is 4.4% more than in 2022. The volume of investments in the industry increased by more than one and a half times to 1.8 trillion tenge. Most of them are spent on infrastructure development to increase the volume and quality of transportation.

In Uzbekistan, in 2023, international cargo transportation reached 59.2 million tons, or 110.4% of the 2022 figure. At the same time, the flow of imported goods is almost twice as high as exports. 29.7 million tons of cargo were delivered to Uzbekistan, and 15.5 million tons were exported. The

growth of indicators is 114.1% and 100.8%, respectively. The volume of transit cargo transported through the territory of Uzbekistan amounted to 13.9 million tons.

In Kyrgyzstan, in 2023, the total volume of cargo transported by all modes of transport amounted to 51 million tons, which is 6.7 million tons more than in the previous year. Of the total cargo volume, 41.2 million tons were transported by road, which confirms the high activity of road traffic. Rail transportation also accounted for a significant share, amounting to 9.3 million tons of cargo.



The head of the Ministry of Transport of Tajikistan reported that in January–November 2023, the volume of cargo transportation amounted to 32.6 million tons, which is 14% more than in the same period in 2022. The volume of international cargo transportation amounted to 2.2 million tons, or 100.5% of the same period last year. International transportation was mainly carried out with China, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkey and Iran.

One of the most dynamically developing sectors of Turkmenistan's economy in 2023 is the transport sector. In the first 11 months of 2023, a significant increase in the volume of works and services was recorded in this area – by 21.3%. As the publication *vestiabad.ru* reports, cargo transportation volumes increased by 3.9%. All sectors showed high growth rates: railway transport – 6.5%, automobile-17%, air-almost twice, sea and river transport-5.2%.

The Trans–Afghan railway along the Termez–Mazar–I–Sharif– Kabul–Peshawar route, connecting the South Asian railway system with the Central Asian and Eurasian, will benefit about 15 million people across the region.

The rail line will be fully electrified, electric locomotives will run along the route. The capacity of the road will be up to 10 million tons per year with a growth prospect up to 15 million tons per year. Most importantly, it will take only 3-5 days to carry commodities from Pakistan to Uzbekistan instead of 35 days.

In turn, this will reduce the cost of transporting one TEU container by almost 3 times.

REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY РЕГИОНАЛЬНАЯ СВЯЗЬ



You can see several overland routes for mutual supplies:

- via Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and using seaports through the Middle Corridor
- via Iran
- through China via the Karakoram Highway through Kyrgyzstan, China and further to Pakistan.

Why are South and Central Asia so essential to one another? With a population of 2 billion people, South Asia is a massive consumer market. With an annual GDP growth rate of 6-7%, it is the most rapidly developing sub-region. In turn, Central Asia, which has built industrial capacities through three decades of independence and has saturated home markets, is attempting to access overseas markets.

South Asia is also interesting for Central Asian countries in terms of access to the open seas. After all, landlocked countries spend 18% of export revenues on transportation costs.

It should be taken into account that today in the country all the necessary conditions have been created for the further development of the transport and transit potential.

The country is making efforts to increase the capacity of the transport system, remove existing barriers to unimpeded transit through the territory of Uzbekistan, which plays great importance for the development of international transport corridors in Central Asia.

In order to implement key issues of regional development, in November 2017 Samarkand hosted the international conference, "Central Asia: One past and common future, cooperation for sustainable development and mutual prosperity." Addressing the conference, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev spoke about the latest trends in the development of regional cooperation in all relevant areas and initiated a number of proposals on Central Asia. One of the key initiatives of the Head of Uzbekistan — the adoption of the U.N. resolution on Central Asia has triggered international support for its implementation and in June this year the U.N. General Assembly adopted the resolution on "Strengthening regional and international cooperation for ensuring peace, stability and sustainable development in the Central Asian region." The resolution envisages the development of sustainable, best-value infrastructure supporting transport and transit corridors and the strengthening of links between all modes of transport, including by opening new roads and railways, as well as flight routes, as well as the implementation of transport and transit agreements encompassing Central Asia.

References

1. South & Central Asia- Interest Amid Regional Tensions- <https://www.voanews.com>, 2023.
2. Roman Muzalevsky, Unblocking India's Strategic Potential in Central Asia, Carlisle Barracks, Pa. Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2015.
3. Naveed Qazi, "India's Connect Central Asia Policy," <https://countercurrents.org/2021/06/indias-connect-central-asia-policy/> June 5, 2021.
4. Aparna Pande, "Russia Ties Will Not Impede India's Growing US Partnership," www.thediplomat.com, November 17, 2022
5. Benjamin Parkin and Chloe Cornish, "India's Answer To the Belt and Road," www.ft.com, December 2, 2022/
6. Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, "Kazakhstan Aspires To India's Hub For Regional Investment," <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com>, 2021
7. Eom Gu Ho, "Impact Of the Ukrainian War On South Korea's Diplomacy In Central Asia," *Journal Of Eurasian Studies* XIII, No. 2, 2022,
8. Yorqinoy, B. (2024). SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS OF EMOTIONAL RELATIONS IN THE PEDAGOGICAL COMMUNITY. *American Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences*, 21, 18-22.
9. Axmad o'g'li, X. S. (2023). OILAVIY AJIRIMLARGA OLIB KELUVCHI SABABLAR VA UNING SALBIY OQIBATLARI. SCIENTIFIC ASPECTS AND TRENDS IN THE FIELD OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, 2(15), 104-108.
10. Botirova, Y., & Toshtemirova, M. (2024). SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS OF EMOTIONAL RELATIONS OF THE PEDOGOGICAL COMMUNITY. *Modern Science and Research*, 3(1), 972-976.