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Choi Han-Woo**

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Korea University of International Studies
17, Imjeong-ro, Yongsan-gu, Seoul 140-897, Korea
Fax: +82-2-707-3116 Email: kuis@kuis.ac.kr
Homepage: <http://www.kuis.ac.kr>

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India's Involvement with Tajikistan in the Perspective of Strategic-Economic Relations

Mohd Younus Wani, Aijez A. Bandey

University of Kashmir, India.

Abstract: Central Asia has been seen with promising prospect for nations. It has housed multi-cultural and multi ethnic people from time immemorial. It has equally been hub of economy since from ancient past, for it had served great powers with the then 'Silk Route' which had provided lavish economic avenues. The era of globalization has brought in rapid changes in the geo-political situation the world over. The axis of power has seen shifts and new centers of power have emerged to the fore. The aftermath of 9/11 gave India a strong reason to free her arms of power and stand critical against nations acting as 'haven of terrorism'. In this dynamics of international politics, India too re-oriented her foreign policy and forced certain initiatives to play on the tune of strategic situations. The first step in this orientation was consolidation of her position in some of the key areas that would plead Indian economic cum political issues with great motivation. After cold war India's foreign policy drifted and showed affinity for new relations. In connection with this India tied their knot with Tajikistan to rescue, attain or secure some of the key advantages that provide India an upper hand to guard against neighbors like Pakistan China, Taliban etc. This relation also reaps a

wide link for India in Central Asia and gives her chance to use Central Asian resources without much difficulty. India in her policy of 'Connect Central Asia' unleashed wanton of projects that would benefit Tajikistan in healthy manner. The main purpose of this research is to analyze the bilateral relations between Indian and Tajikistan through the prism of mutual interest at the policy level which is reflected in the bilateral trade and commerce and created a win-win situation for both sides. It also reflected India's necessity to remain in Central Asia for securing her borders and stand united to counter any breach or be party to 'New Great Game'.

Keywords: India, Tajikistan, Central Asia, Silk Route, Heaven of terrorism, Pakistan, China, politics

The meaning of Tajikistan on the international screen and the interest shown by both great Asian powers (China, India, Pakistan, and Iran) and by the West (USA and EU), is gradually gaining momentum. This is not limited just to the security issue (although the matters of "soft security" of Tajikistan may become more and more important for the EU). This also covers infrastructure-related and economic projects, which provides a great chance for reconstruction of the country, gradual overcoming of the crisis and economic development. Tajikistan has been seen as a transit for drug, weapons, people smuggling across borders from Afghanistan to Russia, hence leaves a wide importance for Tajikistan. The United States of America also pokes their nose into Tajikistan in one way or the other. Sometimes they support the presidential elections in Tajikistan. Their attention loomed large after

September 11, when USA troops created their military base in Tajikistan. This helped Tajikistan significantly as it opened it to world; this was followed by exchange of high level diplomats; and it became a school of international politics. Above all it cleft Russian monopoly and created a void which every nation tried to make up. It seems as a 'knot of nerves' which is very sensitive and susceptible to stimuli-response. Therefore, India has to prove and learn to live in Central Asia particularly under hot climatic conditions.

India's cultural similarity with Central Asia bears the fact that the two regions were in very close knit. The two regions were found in cultural exchange since from ancient times.¹ Cultural and people to people ties between two countries dated back centuries. The archeological findings at various places in Central Asia did reveal that the two regions were involved in exchange of culture.

Central Asia forms India's extended neighbourhood and various factors like strategic location of the regions for India's bright prospect, the demand for energy resources and the contest that takes place on Central Asia region for different pipeline routes are enough reasons for India to take adequate measures and craft a policy to take care of region with vigilant eye. Furthermore, India's access to Afghanistan, which is crucial factor for India's stability, becomes strong once it can succeed to erect a straight path to Central Asia. India, in order to soak herself with these advantages carved out a policy to defend its purposes in Central Asia. Hence, India's 'Connect Central Asia' policy is about to start with

¹ Historically India enjoyed closer relations with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. During the Soviet period many Indian students were seen seeking technical education; Tellis J, Ashley & Taylor, M. (2011). *Asia Responds to its Rising Powers: China and India*. USA. p. 276.

a good note. And this 'Connect Central Asia Policy', held in June 2012, reflects India's greater interest in connecting with its 'extended neighborhood'.² India's engagement with the region in the last twenty years has been limited and the new policy aims to promote pro-active engagement with the five "stans". India's approach to engage with the region both bilaterally and multilaterally is a positive step. It has not only emanated new canvas of hope but also reminded age old cultural ties that were operation between Central Asia and India. It has also shown the vivacity and necessity of Central Asia and India being as partners in different capacities. India is longing earnestly to reach to the gate of Central Asia not only for economic reasons or cultural exchange but for political reasons as well.³ It has to bear in mind the powers that are playing on the soil of Central Asia and has to take into account their policies visa-via Central Asia. Any relation that falls beyond outside Indian consultation can hit hard Indian objectives in Central Asia or otherwise can be no less than a honeymoon phase for India.

² It is a broad based, unfurled on 12 June, 2012, approach including political, economic, security and cultural connections. It is to promote stability in the Central Asia and south Asia, to extirpate Islamic extremism, to checkmate Pakistan and arrest growing China's growing influence in the region, to ensure safety to energy resources and maintain their use for growth and development; Laruelle, Marlene. & Peyrouse, Sebastien. (2011). *Mapping Central Asia: Indian Perceptions and Strategies*. UK. p. 110.

³ After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Central Asian republics (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) emerged as new neighbors to India. Central Asia's abundant energy resources and India's relentless energy needs, better economic performance combined with India's aspirations to be a major regional and global player, have been the key driving forces behind India's growing presence in the region. Central Asia is also important as an avenue for access to Afghanistan, where India wants to be a significant player and to blunt Pakistani and Chinese influence. India's involvement in Central Asia includes energy ties, trade and investment, and the beginnings of a military relationship; Blank, J, Stephen. (2005). *Natural Allies? : Regional Security in Asia and Prospects for Indo-American*. USA. pp. 53-54.

Following India's independence in 1947, then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru embarked on a foreign policy that was based on principles of socialism and remaining noncommittal to the then suicidal struggle between the Soviet Union and the countries forming the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the post-World War II period. Eventually, this policy led to India becoming one of the founding members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in 1955. In practical terms, it placed India in a position of securing bilateral international commitments only in situations that were clearly neutral in nature or in cases of last resort. The basic principles of non-alignment also governed the military relationships of the Indian defense establishment, resulting in limited military-to military contacts, usually through United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions or training at foreign military schools.

These practices were generally followed by his successors until the early 1990s when a changing geopolitical structure and an internal

The Caucasus and Central Asia



economic crisis began to challenge these principles. India began to answer these crises and it resorted to idea of, 'Friendly Foreign Countries'. It negotiated India's multi-lateralism and non-alignment compromise.

Bilateralism and multilateralism or 'poly alignment' are reckoned key to reveal Indian potentialities of reaching the globe and exploring the opportunities of varied nature, ranging from economic to political, social to cultural, etc. This deal with the powers, both smaller and bigger ones, made India aligned despite non-aligned. Developing strategic relationship with the powers perceived as partners of global world was seen order of the day. India understood the significance of the situation and took no time to sink into it for better harvest and good prospect. India in her policy brought lot of flexibility and entered into alliances of neutral to aligned and non-aligned ones. This dynamism in Indian was felt a departure from past policies and practices. India is firmly cementing its relation with all powers to gain leadership qualities that have become inevitable to remain on axis of great powers. This attempt was limitedly taken during the Soviet period as well when Indian students for technical education were seen Central Asia.

Central Asia has become vibrant point of global politics and Indian presence is necessary to participate into the mainstream of development. "Look West Policy" has had its eye on Central Asia for a long time.⁴ Its primary interests there are in energy, minimizing Pakistani

⁴ The policy that became necessity for India after Cold War and after leaving aside some of the basic principles like Non alignment Policy, Nehru's Socialism and India moved towards economic liberalism. The five independent countries of Central Asia also came in this range, for any change in Central Asia had its bearing on relation of India and west Asia or Gulf countries. Therefore, Central Asia also became an important concern of Look West policy; Oommen, Ginu Zacharia & Imam, Khurshid. (2010). India's 'Look

influence, and establishing itself as a significant player in the interplay of outside powers that is taking shape. The main difficulties lie in connecting Central Asian resources to the Indian market—a familiar problem for the Central Asians. U.S. and Indian interests overlap, but the U.S. is more focused on sustaining the independence of the Central Asian states.

The President of the Republic of Tajikistan ‘Emomali Rahmon’ has this year sent ‘Pranab Mukherjee’ the President of the Republic of India, a congratulatory message on the occasion of the anniversary of ‘Independence of India’, which bears historicity and reconciles the vitality of India-Tajik relation as well. The message reads as:-

“During many centuries our countries had multidimensional historical relations. This useful and great experience requires that in the present conditions we also develop our mutually beneficial and wide-ranging cooperation, as well as elevate its level to higher stages. The Republic of Tajikistan, as earlier, remains confident that the broad and mutually advantageous cooperation between the two friendly states not only answers their national interests, but also it is an important factor of regional stability, progress and prosperity. I am sure that both sides will take consistent efforts for promotion of this constructive process in future”

The Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Sing also in his joint conference with Tajik president ‘Emomali Rahmon’ did accept that Tajikistan showering besides other benefits on India is first a strategic partner for India and India can be in devoted venture to enhance her security concerns. To quote him

*“Tajikistan is a key partner of India in the Central Asian region. We recently commemorated two decades of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries. President Rahmon and I agreed that in view of the broad progress made in our bilateral relations, particularly in defence and security cooperation, we should elevate our relations to a ‘strategic partnership’”*⁵

Among the Central Asian republics, Tajikistan has a special geostrategic significance for India because of being very close to India.⁶ The geopolitical location of Tajikistan has invited its neighboring powers like Pakistan, India, Iran and China to play on the chess board of Tajikistan. This invitation was not an easy as it was progress linked problem. This location of Tajikistan dictated terms to countries and countries are interwoven together, for their interests overlapped with each other. They came in domain of Tajik relation and it encouraged them to grow stronger for attaining an edge or advantage for serving specific purposes. The politics of India’s effort to secure its presence at

⁵ The Hindu News paper. (3 Sep. 2012). New Delhi. p. 4. <http://www.thehindu.Com/news/resources/article3854781.ece>

⁶ Tajikistan is only 20 kilometers away from Greater Kashmir; Sharma Sen, Angira. (2010). India and Central Asia: Redefining Energy and Trade links. New Delhi. p. 55.

Ayani airbase is a caricature of larger competition in Central Asia among key outside powers. This base in Tajikistan was expected to monitor and deal future threats to India and India felt it very imperative to share their military tactics with Tajikistan for deepening their roots at *Ayani* base for better show.⁷ In return India looked quite happy to sink in Tajik proposals. India offered to provide Tajikistan information on various aspects of terrorism, including the financing of terrorism that affects the two countries, and shared knowledge about counter-terrorism training.

India's role in Tajikistan made other countries very restive and they began to talk through their deeds. A great game surfaced that motivated some powers to respond and some remained silent but for political objectives. USA appeased and felt India's presence lightly so as to cultivate Indian friendship against Russia and China. India's role in Tajikistan grew so strong that it mounted pressure on their unexpected quarter Russia, the well wisher of India since from Cold War. Tajikistan became meeting ground for great powers. Pakistan and China negotiated this move with their keen interest in Tajikistan. Pakistan exercised hard to develop their influence in Tajikistan keeping in view their art rival India in significant position.⁸ After seeing India's foothold at *Ayani*

⁷ There are several reasons India's interest in a base at Tajikistan, one being the Pakistan factor. The Pakistani incursion at Kargil in 1999 laid bare the failure of Indian intelligence and underpinning opened India's eyes to the need for a military presence outside its borders. Such a presence in Tajikistan, India realized, would enable it to monitor anti-India activities in the region; Jonson, Lena. (2006). *Tajikistan in the New Central Asia: Geopolitics, Great Power Rivalry and Radical Islam*. New York. pp. 88-89.

⁸ Not surprisingly, India's "forward policy" in Central Asia has generated unease in Islamabad and Beijing. Pakistan has perceived India's air base at *Ayni* as part of the Indian attempt to "encircle Pakistan". Ramachandran, Sudha. (12 Augst, 2006). *India Foray into South Asia*. Asian Times Online. Thailand. p. 3.

airbase, China increased its political and economic activities in Tajikistan.⁹

The regional organizations and treaties entered into were mobilized to outshine one another on the ground of Tajikistan.¹⁰



⁹ As for China, steps are afoot to counterbalance India's rising profile in Tajikistan. Chinese-Tajik cooperation is growing as is reflected in visits of senior Chinese leaders to Tajikistan followed up with generous military assistance to that country. While growing Chinese engagement with the Tajik's is perhaps motivated more by the increasing US presence in the region, India is no doubt a factor weighing on Chinese minds; Ramachandran, Sudha. (12 Augst, 2006). India Foray into South Asia. Asian Times Online.Thailand. p. 4.

¹⁰ SCO (Shanghai Co-operation Organization) and CSTO (Collective Security treaty Organization) were put in action to tighten the screws of hegemony and co-operation in Tajikistan; Bailies J K, Alyson, Baranovsky, Vladimir, and Dunay, Pal. (2006). Regional Security Cooperation in the former Soviet Area. Security and Conflicts. Oxford. pp. 27-18.

India has become the fourth power after Russia, USA and Germany to have a base in Central Asia. As a small but not insignificant player in the "New Great Game" in Central Asia, India announced that it had interests beyond its immediate neighborhood. With the air base at Ayni, India has signaled that it is a keen contestant in Central Asia's "great base race" as well.¹¹ Firstly, Tajikistan borders Afghanistan, so it provides for a possibility of conducting an active policy from there to negotiate regional instability: Iran and India used this occasion during the war in Afghanistan, supporting the North Alliance¹² against Taliban.¹³ For China (whose enormous activity in the entire Central Asia deserves special attention) Tajikistan is, additionally, a place of potential development for fundamentalism, being the base for "terrorism" in the neighboring turbulent Chinese Turkistan; hence the great and active role of China in strengthening the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and bilateral initiatives. Some of the factors like the advantage of occupying a base in Tajikistan, and critical situation in Afghanistan and the convenient slogan of war on terror is a good occasion to tighten political and military cooperation among Tajikistan, Pakistan and India.

¹¹ Ayani Air base in Tajikistan. (March 24, 2011). p. 3. <http://cautionindiablogspot.in/2011/03important-of-ayani-air-base-for-india.html>

¹² One of the factions, headed by 'Ahmad Shah Masood and Abdur Rashid Doostum', that was also responsible for ousting Russia out of Afghanistan; Ahmad, Shakil Qazi. Reconstruction of Afghanistan: Problems and Prospects. (January-April 2002). Pakistan Institute of International Affairs. Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 55, No. 1/2. pp. 43, 47.

¹³ This was another group, the hard core that held strong claim under 'Mulla Umr' to implement Islamic *Sharia* In Afghanistan; Travis, Hannibal. (2005). Freedom or Theocracy? Constitutionalism in Afghanistan and Iraq. Northwestern University Journal of International Human Rights. Vol. 3. Chicago, USA. pp. 2, 6, 10, 12.

Tajikistan is conceived as India's gateway to Central Asia and it suggests good tonic for India's political and economic health.¹⁴ Of course India is not immediately contiguous to any of the new states, but Tajikistan comes close to India in Kashmir which is few kilometers away. Tajikistan is a linchpin in India's security requirements in Central Asia. It is Tajikistan's geographic location that has drawn India to this former Soviet republic. It borders China, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, and provides an additional advantage to India to monitor activities of their most grave rival Pakistan. In a conflict a position in Tajikistan would offer India better position to strike Pakistan from the rear. In order to contain Pakistan¹⁵ India turned to Tajikistan to acquire its military air base at *Ayani*¹⁶ and it is this base that showered Indian efforts to quell Taliban at the hands of Northern Alliance. India supported particularly in medical facilities to Northern Alliance against Taliban at *Farkhor*. The Northern Alliance also received input on strategy from Indian "advisers". India also lent hand to Northern Alliance in the garb of technicians from the Aviation Research Center of

¹⁴ The significance of this region for India's security is immense. It is close to areas where scores of camps for jihadist and anti-India terrorist groups are based, and it is in the proximity of territory where Pakistan and China are engaged in massive military cooperation. Besides, Tajikistan is in Central Asia, a gas-rich region in which India has growing interests; Ayani Air base in Tajikistan. (March, 24, 2011). p. 5. <http://cautionindiablogspot.in/2011/03important-of-ayani-air-base-for-india.html>

¹⁵ Pakistan, has expressed its serious thought on investments in the Tajik hydropower engineering sector. A part of such projects were taken over in June by Russia, anxious of losing them; Jonson, Lena. (2006). Tajikistan in the New Central Asia: Geopolitics, Great Power Rivalry and Radical Islam. New York. pp. 89-90.

¹⁶ Ayani base served Soviets and after their collapse a trilateral treaty (Tajikistan, India and Russia) gave India a chance to reinforce their strength not only in Central Asia but also to sink voice of regional powers like Pakistan and China. Indians in 2006 loaded it with some of horrendous weapons like MIG 29s fighter jets, Mi-17, VI helicopters, trainer air craft allowed by 2002 defense agreement; Hedrick K, Brian. (2009). India's Strategic defense transformation: Expanding Global Relations. UK. p. 28.

the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW, India's external intelligence agency). Tajikistan was a part of the Indian strategy to enter into the power hunt game. Similarly, Iran stood by the side of India and reinforced Indian attempts to contain Taliban at the hands of Northern Alliance. This gave a chance to India to find in its pool a new amicable country that hosts similar programme. Therefore, India finds herself in an environment where the pendulum will swing to any side. India's presence in Tajikistan among the great powers is to create a good climate for India and Iran, and this presence will act as bedrock for India's development in Central Asia.

Secondly, India's presence in Tajikistan will bring some significant changes covering political benefits, economic incentives and India above all will be able to carry with her louder say that will smell an echo of power. Tajikistan a bit has an advantage to be in good trim as far her relations with regional powers are concerned. Tajikistan is blessed with a good location at the intersection of the East-West and North-South axes, which either go past Afghanistan or provide easier access to it. Recently, the first Tajik-Chinese border crossing point (*Kulma-Karasu*) has been opened on the East-West axis, which gives Tajikistan temporary access to the road connecting China and Pakistan (*Karakorum Highway*) and provides a way out, even if narrow, to the ports of the Indian Ocean; a new road from Dushanbe (crossing the *Kulab* region) to *Khorog* is almost finished. Interest in the renovation of roads going from Dushanbe through Rasht to Kyrgyzstan and China is simultaneously expressed by the EU, China and Iran. The East-West direction is important both for the countries of the region, which have poor infrastructure, and for China and Iran (which are implementing similar

projects in western and northern Afghanistan). The North-South corridor, apart from its importance for Tajikistan (the earlier mentioned construction of the tunnel under the ‘Anzob Pass’ with the aid of Iranians), also has an immense geopolitical meaning. Pakistan has for years been trying to persuade Tajikistan to build a road connecting both countries, which would go through the ‘Vakhan Corridor’ in Afghanistan (just more than ten-kilometers-wide, which divides both of the countries) and, simultaneously, a power supply main; implementation of projects would create the first direct and relatively secure corridor connecting Central and South Asia. Russia has been also a key player in Tajikistan even though its shrinking or narrower place faces a stiff challenge. This challenge put to Russian domination is pleading cause of others like India, Iran, and China. Russia has now come up with some concrete actions¹⁷ to facilitate smooth and healthy play in Tajikistan. However, other powers also grabbed the opportunity and opened a new relation to cater to their needs. India has now decided to remain close to Tajikistan, i-e through economic corridor.

India and Tajikistan in their recent meetings showed great curiosity to address various issues related to economy, polity, culture¹⁸

¹⁷ Russia has extended its lease of a key military base in Tajikistan for 30 years (till 2042) in a deal that strengthens Moscow’s strategic position in the region ahead of NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan. Mr. Putin and Tajik President Imomali Rakhmon said in a joint statement they considered “stopping the threat of terrorism and drug trafficking from the territory of Afghanistan as one of their priorities in efforts to maintain regional stability; Russia Seals Tajikistan with an eye on Afghanistan; The Hindu News paper. (8 October, 2012). New Delhi, p. 3; <http://www.thehindu.com/news/>

¹⁸ The sides emphasized the centrality of culture in further deepening close bonds between the peoples of India and Tajikistan and expressed satisfaction with the. Besides countering great menace, terrorism, the two countries also agreed to undertake joint film production and training in cinematography. In keeping with its commitment to developing human resource capacity in Tajikistan, the Indian side offered to increase the

etc, for, the two sides argued that such issues would take into account wide spectrum of areas. The addressing of these issues is not only to negotiate economic lacunas but also to minimize the gulf between Tajikistan and India for the sake of stability, peace and regional integrity. India and Tajikistan understood the importance of their relation. They noted that they had stakes in mutual progress, prosperity and regional peace and stability, and expressed their determination to impart greater dynamism to the relationship through all-round cooperation and engagement. They gave significant position to economic development, other than political, economic, education, health, human resource development, defence, counter-terrorism, science and technology, culture and tourism. This economic development will recognize them long term strategic partners, and note the similarity of their positions on bilateral, regional and global issues. Both sides agreed that the Foreign Ministries and other line ministries of both countries would continue to hold regular consultations, including exchange of visits and bring to light under trade of below potential. The sides noted with satisfaction the broadening of the legal framework for bilateral cooperation in recent years. In this context, they welcomed the signing of bilateral agreements in a range of spheres including textiles, culture, education, sport, health and labor. They also agreed to discuss and finalize in the near future more bilateral documents in spheres such as air services; double taxation; consular issues; justice; mining; social security; finance and banking; industry and

existing number of training slots under the ITEC Programme to 150 slots.. They emphasized the need for enhanced dialogue between security agencies; Bandyopadhyay, Dr. Lopamudra. (2012). India and Tajikistan: Towards a New Strategic Partnership. New Delhi. pp. 1-4. [www.globalindia foundation.org/ India%20 Tajikistan %5B1 %5D.pdf](http://www.globalindiafoundation.org/India%20Tajikistan%5B1%5D.pdf)

energy; and transport and communications. They underscored the need for increasing the volume and base of mutual trade through concrete supportive measures and mechanisms. They agreed that the Joint Commission on 'Trade, Economic, and Scientific & Technical Cooperation' was an important mechanism for implementation of agreements and memoranda agreed upon, and underlined the need to increase the quality and level of trade and economic cooperation.

Both India and Tajikistan expressed satisfaction over the signing of the Protocol on bilateral negotiations for Tajikistan's access to the 'World Trade Organization'. This would reinforce the economic development of both the countries. The sides also gave consent to implementation of projects such as the 'Trans-Afghan Corridor', INSTC and the project to establish the 'Central Asia-Persian Gulf Corridor'. They held that implementation of these projects may considerably cut down the distance and costs for transportation of goods between India and Tajikistan, as well as provide third countries in these projects the opportunity to integrate into the regional system of transport connectivity. They expressed their sincerity in deepening their cultural links through signature of the 'Cultural Exchange Programme' (CEP) for the period 2012-2015 by taking into hand multiple prosperous projects.¹⁹ The

¹⁹ India, as part of its ongoing developmental partnership with Tajikistan, announced new development projects like an IT Centre of excellence; an e-network, including tele-education and tele-medicine; medical centers; language laboratories; an Entrepreneurship Development Institute; supply of agricultural machinery; poultry & animal husbandry; hydropower plants; railway lines; textiles; mining; and sharing of science & technical information in agriculture and farming. Both sides agreed to set up an India-Tajik Friendship Hospital in Tajikistan. The sides noted the untapped potential of scientific and technical cooperation between the scientific centers of the two countries on organization of joint research in the spheres of biotechnology, material science, solar power, laser technologies, mining of minerals and automation of production process.

exchange of Air flights under the 'Civil Aviation Agreement' was also reckoned one of the positive signs to grow India-Tajik relation.²⁰

This kind of intimacy would narrow the gulf between Tajikistan and India, and would prosper their economic climate. The two nations called upon their respective business communities to launch mutually beneficial investments in major joint projects in some promising sectors such as information technology and e-connectivity; pharmaceuticals and biotechnology; textiles, silk and leather goods; mining and exploration; hydropower and renewable energy sources; and tourism. Both private and public sector investments in free economic zones in the territory of Tajikistan is agreed up on and fresh initiatives for cooperation in the banking and financial sectors is discussed. Tajikistan expressed its deep appreciation to India for ensuring the completion of modernization of the '*Varzob Hydel*' power station near Dushanbe. The sides stated their intention to further strengthen cooperation in the energy sector, including in hyel power, solar and other forms of renewable energy and to start discussions on a regional energy infrastructure network. This kind of atmosphere is also giving a promising fillip to political stability and restoration of peace.²¹ The recent visit of Tajik president also shed light

Joint Statement on Strategic Partnership between the Republic of India and the Republic of Tajikistan. pp. 1-3. <http://www.tajikembassy.in/News7.html>.

²⁰ The Tajik side expressed gratitude to the Indian side for permission to increase the number of flights per week. The Indian side welcomed commercial flight operations by Tajik aviation companies on the Delhi-Dushanbe sector and hoped that the frequency of these flights would be further increased and would facilitate bilateral trade and broader people-to-people contacts.

²¹ Re-affirming that international terrorism is a threat to global peace and security, the sides condemned those who support terrorism and underscored that those aiding, abetting and sheltering terrorists were as guilty of acts of terrorism as their actual perpetrators. They stressed the need to work jointly towards eliminating the menace of terrorism including exchange of information, data, financing of terrorism and related matters. Both

on the security concerns in Afghanistan that need to be discussed at length and refurbished political cum economic welfare of the two countries in particular and world in general. The emphasize of Tajik government on India's candidature in UN security Council is all set to reveal the seriousness of the relationship. Some of the grave concerns were boiling in their speech as these scorching concerns were treated scornful to peace and stability.²² The dialogue between the two countries understood regional security pre-requisite for the good prospect of the region as a whole. It also underscored the importance of further strengthening cooperation in the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) for conquering difficulties and minimizing hurdle and cultivating benefits.

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sides further emphasized the need for adoption of "Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism" by the UN General Assembly in the near future.

²² The situation in Afghanistan and the challenges emanating from the region, including the existence of safe havens and sanctuaries for terrorism, drug trafficking, etc reaffirmed the importance of sustained peace and stability in the country, particularly, in the context of the proposed withdrawal of ISAF forces in 2014 from Afghanistan. The sides stressed that the issue of restoring peace and stability in Afghanistan was inseparably linked with regional security. The sides emphasized their support to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in establishing an independent, peaceful, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan.

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Fetisova 3, Mirobod, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Tel: (99871)-291-9540 E - mail: iacas1996@gmail.com

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