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COMMUNICATION UNIVERSITY OF CHINA



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How the Middle Corridor Complements the Belt and Road Initiative



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Published on 13th September 2025

When it comes to Eurasian connectivity, few leaders have shown as much foresight and persistence as His Excellency **President Ilham Aliyev** of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Middle Corridor, formally known as the **Trans-Caspian International Transport Route** (TITR), is not just a regional



infrastructure idea but a vision championed and relentlessly advanced by President Aliyev himself. H.E. President Ilham Aliyev envisioned the Middle Corridor and he has worked tirelessly to make it a reality. His focus on modernizing railways, expanding port capacities, and fostering regional cooperation has elevated the Middle Corridor from a concept to a strategic reality. Because of his steady push, Azerbaijan has transformed into a genuine hub, connecting regions that once seemed far apart. Thanks to H.E. President Aliyev's consistent efforts, the route is currently at the forefront of discussions about connectivity in Eurasia, and now the Middle Corridor is seen as a reliable alternative and complement to other global transport initiatives.

Middle Corridor: A Bridge between Continents

The Middle Corridor is a vital artery that connects East Asia to Europe through Central Asia, the Caspian Sea, the South Caucasus, eventually reaching Turkey and beyond. In contrast to traditional northern routes, which pass through crowded and politically sensitive areas, the Middle Corridor offers both efficiency and stability. What makes it special is not

geography but what it offers: shorter transport times, lower costs, and reliable alternatives to existing routes.

This corridor is the symbol of connectivity. For the landlocked Central Asian republics it opens the door to global trade.

For Europe, it provides a faster access to Asian markets without having to rely solely on sea transport. Azerbaijan's own projects such as the



expansion of the Baku port, the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway, and a network of logistics centers, show how the corridor is becoming more than a plan on paper. To the countries along the corridor, it provides greater access to world trade, new opportunities for investment, and enhanced economic resilience. For firms, the corridor offers shorter delivery time, less reliance on single routes, and more flexibility in logistics planning.

Furthermore, the Middle Corridor is not limited to trade and transport only. It promotes cultural exchange, regional cooperation, political dialogue, and boosts tourism too. By weaving together nations from different continents, it paves the way for collaboration on energy, digital infrastructure, and green transition projects. In a world where prosperity is determined by increased connectivity, the Middle Corridor offers a path toward inclusive and sustainable growth.

Complementing the Belt and Road Initiative

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has already redefined how the world understands connectivity. But like any grand project, it needs diversification and complementary routes so that it can continue to be resilient. That is exactly where the Middle Corridor comes into play. It does not compete with the BRI but complements it.

First, the Middle Corridor brings diversity to the BRI and makes the entire system more secure. By providing an alternative route through Azerbaijan and its surrounding countries, it helps reduce risks associated with over-dependence on any single corridor. This is particularly important given geopolitical uncertainties, regional conflicts, or logistical bottlenecks that may arise elsewhere.



Second, it speeds up the BRI's primary goal of linking Asia with Europe. With the help of Middle Corridor, goods can move from China to Europe in nearly half the time it takes by sea and is more politically stable than the northern routes. This speed and efficiency directly reinforce the BRI's aim to make the global trade smoother and faster.

Third, the Middle Corridor opens new doors for cooperation. Chinese companies and investors engaged in the BRI can find natural partners in Azerbaijan and other corridor



states. Joint projects in ports, railways, digital networks, or renewable energy would not only serve the Middle Corridor but also expand the reach of the BRI's infrastructure network. It is a win-win situation where both initiatives help each other grow.

In short, the Middle Corridor strengthens the Belt and Road Initiative by broadening its scope, diversifying its pathways, and making it more inclusive. It creates a more balanced Eurasian connectivity system, where no single route dominates but all routes support each other.

From Vision to Reality: The Middle Corridor's Rising Importance

Led and advanced by His Excellency President Ilham Aliyev, the Middle Corridor goes far beyond being just a transport route. It is a visionary project that redefines Eurasia's position in global connectivity. By connecting continents, reducing barriers, and opening up new opportunities for collaboration, it embodies immense potential for regional growth and global trade. Equally important, it complements and supports the Belt and Road Initiative, making it stronger, more resilient, and more inclusive. During the times when connectivity is both economic necessity and geopolitical challenge, the Middle Corridor is an example of how vision, leadership, and collaboration can shape the future. Due to His Excellency's leadership and the joint efforts of the countries that it passes through, the Middle Corridor is not merely a road between East and West—it is a bridge to a more connected and prosperous world.