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COMMUNICATION UNIVERSITY OF CHINA



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Strategic Importance of Caspian Sea and The Great Silk Route

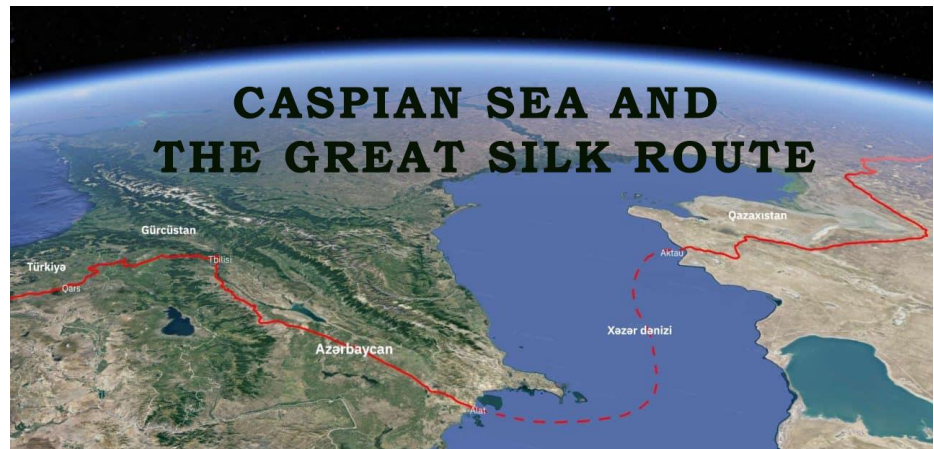


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The Caspian Sea and the Silk Road are important trade routes that affect the geopolitical dynamics and trade of the region. The Caspian Sea borders five countries Azerbaijan, Iran,

Kazakhstan, Russia, and Turkmenistan. It is a major hub for energy, especially oil and gas. Its massive investment has attracted international



attention by bringing investment and infrastructure, increasing energy exports to Europe and Asia, and improving regional connectivity and electricity security. The Silk Road is an ancient trade route connecting East Asia and Europe, promoting cultural and economic exchange. From a contemporary perspective, it has been reformed by projects such as China's Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to promote economic connectivity and infrastructure development in Central Asia, the Middle East and beyond. The Silk Road not only promotes trade, but also fosters good relations between participating countries and encourages cooperation in various areas such as transportation, technology policies and business.

Energy Hub

In many ways, the Caspian Sea is strategically important due to its wealth in energy and role in regional geopolitics. It has a cost of about 48 billion barrels of oil and more than 8.7 trillion cubic meters of natural gas. Countries around the Caspian Sea, namely Russia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan, are involved in such extractions and transportation. Caspian energy routes, mainly the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline play an

important role for distributing energy supplies to Europe, thus averting dependence on Middle Eastern oil. Apart from the energy factor, the Caspian Sea is, therefore important because of its geographical location in regard to the ancient Silk Road and this was a trade network connecting East and West. Modern infrastructure projects like China's Belt and Road Initiative have been set to strengthen the ties of trade across Eurasia.

Trade Corridor

This area of the Caspian Sea is one of the most significant transport knots between Europe,

Asia, and the Middle East. An example of this route is the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR), which goes under the name Middle East Route, running from China to Europe via Central Asia, the Caspian



Sea, and the Caucasus. The main part of this road falls into the framework of China's "One Belt, One Road," along which transit times between Asia and Europe are reduced by two weeks as opposed to maritime regulations. Large cargo containers have been moving through this corridor, but the main gateways are in either Aktau, Kazakhstan or Baku, Azerbaijan. The volume of the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR) is likely to increase by 40% in 2022 compared with the previous years as it manifests its importance. The strategic location and investments in infrastructure will make the Caspian Sea an important hub for international trade, spurring regional cooperation across Eurasia and economic development.



Geopolitical Significance

The region considers it a key aspect in the energy sector. It is estimated that the reserve of oil in the Caspian Sea is 48 billion barrels, and the reserve of the natural gas there reaches 8.7 trillion cubic meters. For these coastal states that also wish to control energy production and export, the management of these resources and associated transportation is a serious matter of interest. International markets have also made the ocean a strategic geopolitical platform due to its position in international markets. Caspian Sea region, which is part of the Silk Road, China wants to restore ancient trade connections and link China to Europe through this Belt and Road initiative.

Economic Integration

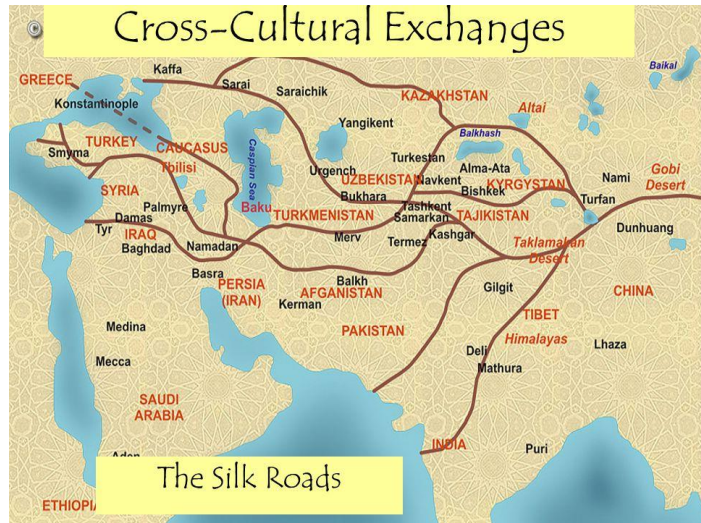
This brings out the key role of the Caspian Sea in supporting the economic integration of Eurasia and now serves as an important link between Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. This region has traditionally been a crossroads for historical trade, this has been one of the parts of the ancient Silk Road. Now the Caspian Sea has emerged as a leading center for modern trans-regional trade under the title of the framework set by China's Belt and Road Initiative. Located in a strategic position, the Caspian Sea represents an important transportation route between Chinese and European markets for the whole African continent.

Military Strategy

Caspian region becomes more of an area of international military cooperation and energy security. However, it should be recalled that all five coastal states have already signed the 2018 Convention on the Status of the Caspian Sea, according to which countries outside of the sea are not allowed to deploy troops and create military theatre records.

Cultural Exchange

India, and Europe that had enriched the local culture. Major cities along the Caspian Sea, such as Baku in Azerbaijan and Astrakhan in Russia, soon became a cultural center. Located at the crossroads of the Silk Road, Baku was historically an important center for the trade and cultural exchange between Europe and Central Asia and the Middle East. Now the city reflects this rich heritage in a way blend of Islamic, Russian and European architecture.



Today, the Caspian Sea region is important for cultural exchange since China launched BRI. More and more events and festivals are held to celebrate the Silk Road heritage, and still, attempts are made to preserve cultural heritage of the trading network. This exchange going on between Eurasian nations lays strong bonds with each country and maintains the history of bond making in this region. On 17-18 October 2023, representatives of 130 countries gathered in China for BRI's 10th year celebrations.

Global Connectivity

Strategic importance The Caspian Sea and the Great Silk Route are very important in enhancing global connectivity. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) represents an immediate communication channel between China and Europe without passing long traditional sea routes, thus saving long transit time. The region's large volume of energy



resources, including oil and natural gas, is also essential for global energy security. The combination of Caspian and Silk Routes enhances trade, economic integration, and cooperation, which makes the route significantly in changing the trend of a global supply chain.

In the ultimate analysis, the Caspian Sea and the Great Silk Route underline the growing importance of link in the global economy in determining the shape of future trade, energy, and diplomacy. With global connectivity unfolding, the Caspian region is a focal area both for economic and strategic developments in Eurasia.