

# Central Asian Factor in India-Pakistan Competition (1990-2019)

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**Abstract---** *The purpose of this article is to provide literature on three main periods (1990-2001, 2001-2010, 2010-2019) on the relationship between India, Pakistan and Central Asia over the past 30 years, including regional security and study and analyse groups based on regional, political, economic, and ethnic-religious issues learned from them. The article also examines the relationship between India and Pakistan, the causes and effects of the unresolved regional, political and religious conflicts and their impact on the geopolitical, economic and social spheres in Central and South Asia. The relations of the two countries and the interests of the United States, Russia, China, Afghanistan and Central Asia, and Uzbekistan in particular, have been studied. The article consists of annotation, keywords, introduction, main part, conclusion and list of references. Problem-chronological, comparative and general scientific analysis methods were used in writing the article. The novelty is that today India-Pakistan relations have been greatly influenced by the process of comprehensive modernization of Central Asian countries in international relations, but it has not been studied in Uzbekistan in the years of independence. The literature on this topic is grouped according to its regional, chronological, and problematic features and provides the necessary conclusions.*

**Keywords---** *India, Pakistan, Kashmir, Central Asia, Afghanistan, Regional Security, Political-military, Economic and Religious-ethnic Factors.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Kashmir issue, caused by Britain's poor demarcation of India's distribution, has been causing intense tension between India and Pakistan for more than 70 years. This region has caused many wars and conflicts between the countries (major wars of 1947-48, 1965, 1972, 1999 [61], crisis situation in 2001-2002, February and March 2019). Repeated attempts to resolve the ownership of the region have been unsuccessful at the Delhi-Islamabad talks or internationally, and the situation in the region remains unstable. Bilateral tension was further exacerbated by the disintegration of the Soviet Union by the 1990s, thereby opening up new opportunities for India and Pakistan in Central Asia. Both Delhi and Islamabad have sought to rebuild lost cultural and historical ties with the five Central Asian states and gain a foothold in the region. At the same time, each of them has acted as a key transit gateway for Central Asia to enter Afghanistan and then into the maritime trade route.

## II. METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

The study of the influence of India-Pakistan relations on the MO was used by a number of experts - politicians, historians, sociologists, conflictologists and lawyers who studied the formation process at various levels of the international relations system, UN documents and UN Security Council resolutions. This article focuses on three groups - the United States and the European Union (EU), the Eurasian countries (China, India, the CIS countries,

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including Russia and the Central Asian republics) and the Islamic world (Turkey, UAE, Pakistan, and others) were studied by dividing them into three main groups, such as ethnic-religious, military-political and economic, over the decades studied - 1990-2001, 2001-2010, 2010-2019.

Since independence from the Soviet Union, five Central Asian republics - Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan - have become important platforms for the diplomatic and economic development of India and Pakistan. These two countries are also seen as competing forces in the region because of Central Asia's vast energy resources and its geostrategic location, which has a special role and influence in relations between Russia and China and the Kashmir problem [27].

According to Laraulle and Peyrous, English experts on the history of Central and South Asia, the years 1990-2000 have been the years of independence for Central Asian countries, as well as in all other areas of their foreign policy. The literature on the interactions of India and Pakistan with Central Asia during this period is quite significant [45].

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, due to several unrest in Central Asia (ethnic problems, Russians migration, civil war in Tajikistan, economic hardships, difficult and lengthy process of transition to a free market economy) India initially did not sympathize with the region. Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, who visited the region in 1993, was limited to declaring several small loans. However, the MO became an important region in India's foreign policy, which sought to establish friendly relations with Afghanistan in 1992-1996 after the Taliban movement gained power in Afghanistan and Pakistan's policy of rapprochement with Afghanistan. Thus, by the mid-1990s, India's policy in Central Asia was largely determined by the Afghan factor.

India's steady economic growth since the early 1990s, along with its emergence as the world's largest consumer of oil and gas, has begun to revive its traditional relationship with the Central Asian region. India's interests in the region were the implementation of energy security, trade and infrastructure development programs. At the same time, he initiated a strong cooperation with the Central Asian republics on security in the region. In the implementation of its strategic goals in Central Asia, it had to compete with external players such as the US, Russia and China. In particular, Pakistan's entry into the region gave India an impetus to operate in a highly competitive environment [54].

### ***Ethnic-religious Factors***

India's interest in Central Asia was of strategic importance not only in terms of energy resources use, but also in terms of national security. We are talking about the border of the former Soviet Union with Afghanistan, which is close to Pakistan and where religious extremism is rooted in its territory. Such growing global threats in the region include terrorism, drug trafficking, weapons and human trafficking, ethnic and social tensions, political instability and more.

It should be noted that although Pakistan was the first to recognize the independence of Central Asian states and establish diplomatic relations with them, it lagged far behind India in developing relations. One of the main reasons for this is that the Central Asian states have expressed a lack of confidence in Pakistan because of its role in

supporting terrorist groups and the Taliban in Afghanistan. The active Taliban in Afghanistan directly influenced Pakistan's influence in the region [24].

Pakistan initially viewed Central Asia as a natural enlargement area and hoped that Islam would play a leading role in the region. Despite the fact that this idea is not transparent, the Pakistani government's idea has always been to prevail. The construction of highways by Islamabad has provided the basis for the formation of the largest Islamic groups in the world, from the Arabian Sea to the Black Sea in the west, and Pakistan aims to benefit from it.

Following the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the spread of terrorist groups in the Central Asian republics has increased dramatically due to the weakening of borders, political instability and economic hardship. New Delhi, on the other hand, was concerned about its support of extremist groups in neighboring countries, as it posed a direct threat to India's national security, especially as it aggravated the Kashmir problem. In addition, India was trying to strengthen its geopolitical position in the international arena. This, in turn, required the country to join international efforts to address global issues such as terrorism and religious conflict. Following the terrorist act in the United States on September 11, 2001, India expanded its cooperation with the United States to combat international terrorism and extremism. In turn, India has actively developed cooperation with the Central Asian republics in this area.

### ***Economic Factors***

From the first years of independence, the MO market has attracted the attention of Indian entrepreneurs. On the one hand, people with insufficient living conditions and material resources could not afford expensive Western-made goods, and, on the other hand, the region's population was almost tired of cheap and low-quality products imported from China. Kazakhstan accounted for almost half of the total trade turnover between India and Central Asia in the 1990s.

The five Central Asian countries, rich in natural mineral resources, such as uranium ore, hydrocarbon deposits, and large hydropower potential, became the focus of international forces in the early 1990s. In particular, New Delhi has begun to develop cooperation in addressing issues of energy security, trade, investment, infrastructure development, the fight against Islamic fundamentalism and other issues in the region. India and Pakistan's relations with Central Asia, which began in the early 1990s, have become culturally economical or strategic in the late decades.

Since independence, Central Asia's transition from a centralized economy to a market economy coincided with a program of radical economic reforms aimed at liberalizing India's large market economy. Since 1992, India has been able to move from an overly-focused economy to a globally integrated country. Despite serious problems such as energy security, poverty, poor infrastructure, regional conflicts and internal security, India today is one of the fastest growing economies in the world. However, after a slow and lame growth period, all MO countries also grew rapidly, especially after 2000 [56].

Since the early 1990s, ties with Central Asian states have been a quarter of Pakistan's politics. They have a long history of developing relations with Tajikistan, which has the closest border with Pakistan. The Central Asian

republics have also established trade and economic relations with Pakistan, considering that it is the perfect route for maritime trade. (The closest ports to Central Asia are Karachi (Pakistan) - 2,720 km, Bandar Abbas (Iran) - 3400 km, Rostov (Russia) - 4200 km). However, Pakistan's goals in this area have been virtually unfulfilled due to regional problems with India and the complicated situation in Afghanistan.

Geographically deprived landlocked and resource-rich Central Asian republics have signed a number of agreements with Pakistan, which lacks energy resources and wants to meet this demand at the expense of Central Asia. The agreements, agreements and memorandums signed by them were at the forefront of efforts to mitigate the instability and tension in Afghanistan [3].

In the early 2000s, India signed numerous memorandums to enhance energy cooperation with Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. However, gas supply agreements with Turkmenistan and several infrastructure projects with Kazakhstan have not been met. That is why India has not been among the top ten investors in the energy sector in Central Asia.

Finding international markets for natural gas and oil was one of the key issues facing the MO leadership. This relevance has been confirmed by India and Pakistan. Specifically, Islamabad was able to build a trans-Afghan gas pipeline by 1997, thereby facilitating the import of natural gas from Central Asia to Afghanistan. India also hoped to extend the pipeline to its territory and developed a new 'interconnection' project. He sought to approach Pakistan and persuade him to extend this gas pipeline. But the geopolitical landscape in Afghanistan has changed as a result of the terrorist attacks on America on 9/11. India's efforts by itself were ineffective. Pakistan's gas imports have also been suspended.

Thus, India and Pakistan's competition in Central Asia between 1990 and 2000 can be divided into three main areas:

1. Strengthen political rapprochement with the region, as the MOE has the geostrategic power to influence existing problems in Kashmir;
2. Development of trade promotion efforts in the MO;
3. Attempt to use gas and oil fields in Central Asia and implement projects in this area.

Both India and Pakistan have pursued their interests in the Central Asian region and have achieved this to a certain extent. While Pakistan's objectives in the region are driven by its political and security, economic and commercial views, India's movement in the region is largely determined by its desire to develop a power transit corridor.

In 2001-2010, the relations between India and Pakistan with the Central Asian republics rose to a new level. In particular, Uzbekistan has recognized Pakistan as one of its important partners in South Asia. During the visit of President Islam Karimov to Pakistan in May 2006, it was agreed to expand financial and trade relations and joint fight against terrorism. During the meeting, President Islam Karimov said that the majority of young people joining terrorism and religious extremism from Uzbekistan are recruited by extremists operating in Pakistan and are being trained in special camps. It has also been reported that the vast majority of refugees fleeing their countries are taking refuge in and around Pakistan.

### ***Military-political Factors***

As a result of its efforts to exert its influence in the Central Asian region, by the 2000s, the triangle of Russia, China and India was in the region. During his visit to New Delhi in February 2002, Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov noted that "the development of this triangle in the Central Asian region is slow but steady". India's influence in Central Asia has been increasing year by year, and it relied on Russia's best friend in its history in the region. In July 2002, a joint India-Russia working group was established, which aims to take practical measures to combat terrorism, religious extremism and organized crime in Central Asia and Afghanistan.

In April 2002, an agreement was reached to build an Indian military base in Farkhor with the official visit of the Indian Defense Minister to Tajikistan. This military base to be built was also important for Pakistan (Pakistan is very close to Tajikistan, separated by Afghanistan's only Wahan corridor). According to the agreement of the three countries (India, Pakistan and Tajikistan) it was determined that the military base would operate independently of the national security of Tajikistan, taking into account the sovereignty of Tajikistan.

India-Kazakhstan relations play a special role in the development of relations. Particularly, one of the main tasks of the India-Kazakhstan cooperation is to ensure security and fight against modern threats in the region. In particular, since 2001, there has been active cooperation between the military and the politicians. As a result, several agreements and agreements were signed. The main objectives in the fight against bilateral military-technical and international terrorism are reflected in the Memorandum on military-technical cooperation signed between the governments of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Republic of India [5]. At a meeting of Defense Ministers of the two countries in 2003, Indian Minister of Defense George Fernandez said: "... we will focus on the fight against terrorism ...". India and Kazakhstan jointly established a counter-terrorism working group. At the initiative of Kazakhstan, the Council for Cooperation and Confidence Building in Asia was established, which includes not only India and Kazakhstan, but also Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The Indian strategy for enhancing military-technical and military-political influence in the region has continued in recent years. India has been actively involved in the construction and equipping of hospitals for Tajik servicemen. Initiated a joint high-level military research center in neighboring Kyrgyzstan and organized training for Kyrgyz troops to serve in UN peacekeeping missions. India has been able to get along well with Uzbekistan. Meanwhile, India's support for Uzbekistan and its desire to fight extremist religious organizations in Pakistan, which seeks to spread religious extremism in its territory, has helped India.

By this time, terrorist groups threatening Central Asia from Afghanistan and Pakistan were becoming more and more dangerous for India. Despite India's high-profile efforts to strengthen its military and political influence in the region and instability in Afghanistan and Pakistan, it has been relatively soft with its Central Asian foreign policy counterparts. Therefore, India has not been able to compare itself with Russia, China, and Americans in the Central Asian region, but also with the European Union, Iran and Turkey.

### ***Economic Factors***

Since the early 2000s, India has traditionally been supplying pharmaceuticals, tea, clothing, leather goods, cosmetics, cotton yarn, textiles, rice, electronics, fertilizers and more. New Delhi has begun to become one of the

region's largest trade partners. Trade between India and Central Asia reached \$ 500 million. However, despite the growing trade volume between India and Central Asia, there were some serious problems in this regard. The main one is the problem of trade routes. Small trade flows linking the two territories went through Myanmar, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Indian specialists have also developed many directions through Iran [26].

By this time Pakistan had two main areas of activity in the Central Asian region. The first is economic objectives: the development of new markets, access to new and cheap energy sources, and the enhancement of mutually beneficial cooperation. The second dimension was related to issues of military and strategic importance. Pakistan regarded its northern neighbors Afghanistan and the Central Asian states as a "security belt" that creates "strategic depth" in the event of conflict and conflict with India. Islamabad has sought to strengthen its presence in the region, fearing the success of Delhi in the Afghan and Central Asian regions, and the formation of a loyal relationship with India in the north [31].

In July 2002, the participants of the Trans-Afghan Gas Pipeline Project - representatives from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan met and agreed to remove the obstacles to rebuilding the project. To do this, they applied to the Asian Development Bank and borrowed US \$ 3 billion. In turn, India joined the talks and justified its demand for its natural gas and energy needs. (India is one of the world's largest energy consumers in the last 30 years. It consumed 26 billion cubic meters of natural gas in 2002 alone. That is why India's relations with Central Asian countries, which have rich energy resources, are geo strategically and economically important [33]. In 2002 alone, India signed more than 10 trade agreements with the Central Asian republics.

From 2000 to 2010, Central Asia played a very important role in India's foreign policy. The region has also become one of the strategic regions of the world where politically the interests of several major powers in Russia, China and the Middle East are intertwined. At the same time, the region has emerged as a region rich in oil, natural gas, gold, copper, aluminum, iron and other important natural resources. The geographical proximity of foreign players like Russia, China, the United States, and even Afghanistan and Pakistan has had a significant impact on India's bilateral relations in the MO. Soon the phrase "New Games in Central Asia" appeared in the analysis of the world's leading politicians. Regional competition has been mixed with religious radicalism and terrorism. This has led to an atmosphere of mistrust in the Central Asian region of Central Asia [30].

Historically and culturally, MO has had close relationships with its southern neighbors. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, traditional proximity could have been a solid basis for expanding trade, economic and diplomatic ties. However, the moderate Turkey movement in the MO, the radical movements of Iran and Saudi Arabia, the Pakistani support of the Taliban movement in Afghanistan, and its direct threat to the MO, had a negative impact on the development of relations.

India's efforts to strengthen its relations with Central Asia in these years are based on its own political, strategic, economic, peace and security system, based on its "extended neighborliness," addressing terrorism and Afghanistan, its energy supply, and its trade and economic ties was done.

Pakistan's interest in Central Asia is characterized by Afghanistan's common border with the region, its rich mineral resources, its geostrategic location and its potential for cross-border trade revenues.

### **III. ANALYSIS**

An analysis of the literature on relations between India and Pakistan and their activities in Central Asia from 2010 to the present day shows that this topic is being studied and analyzed in different parts of the world during this period.

#### ***Ethnicity-religious Factors***

The Central Asian states favor Pakistan because the people of the region are Muslim, and believe that Pakistani politics is completely in control of the region. New Delhi has responded by saying: "The rise of terrorism and religious extremism in Afghanistan and Pakistan has a direct impact on Kashmir and has become a constant concern for regional security." India and Central Asian countries are cooperating in the fight against the same problems and in combating them [67].

With the renewed US presence in Afghanistan, the rise of religious extremism and terrorism in Pakistan, and the growing influence of China on the former Soviet Union, Central Asian-South Asian relations play an important role in determining the future of the Eurasian continent. Mapping Central Asia Over the next decade, three major conflict zones will play a major role in defining trends and relationships in Central Asia - India and Pakistan: the Kashmir issue, the situation in Afghanistan, and the instability in Xinjiang [45].

Apart from the three key players (Russia, China and the US) that are important in the strategic calculations of Afghanistan and Pakistan in Central Asia, India is also important. Afghanistan and Central Asia have a common ethnic, cultural and linguistic history. Three of the five Central Asian states (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) share common borders with Afghanistan. Experts point out that Afghanistan is the most convenient link between Central and South Asian trade routes. Through it, the MO will have the closest access to the seaport in Karachi, Pakistan. Afghanistan also plays an important role in promoting peace and security in the Middle East, Central and South Asia, including India. Therefore, India's goal is to promote friendship and cooperation with Afghanistan [14].

From history, Afghanistan has actually been a bridge to India for Central Asia. During the stabilization of the country, India's trade and economic ties with Afghanistan will be strengthened and Kabul could become a channel for further expansion of ties with Central Asian countries. While there is significant cooperation in trade, economic, political, cultural and social spheres, New Delhi is seeking to strengthen its energy cooperation with MO primarily to meet its growing energy needs. However, the future of initiatives will depend on what political and security scenarios will emerge in Afghanistan in the coming years. All countries should undertake political initiatives to minimize the conflicting characteristics of regional politics in South Asia [66].

Pakistan's Mezb-i-Jihad, Dukdas al-Irshad and other non-governmental religious and extremist organizations teach more than 100 young people from Central Asia each year to engage in terrorist attacks and to overthrow their governments. They organize courses and conduct their own destructive agitation. In particular, Uzbekistan has for many years been working closely with the Pakistani terrorist forces and fighting insurgents in the southern border with Afghanistan.

The drug trade, which is closely linked to terrorism, is also one of the most difficult issues facing the region. The extent of the problem in Central Asia can be clearly illustrated by the fact that Kyrgyzstan has been ranked third in Asia for drug imports over the past 2-3 years, after Myanmar and Thailand. At present, more than five million people in Kyrgyzstan are engaged in the production, supply, or processing of raw drugs. The amount of drugs coming into Uzbekistan from Afghanistan has increased by 11 percent in the last five years. 50-65% of the drugs exported from Afghanistan are smuggled through Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Today, both India and Pakistan are booming and the illegal drug trade has been able to find permanent partners in Central Asia. As a result, the rate of black drug trafficking is growing across a very large network. Attempts to commit banned crimes due to the large profits of their activities lead to the spread of corruption in the countries and the violation of the economic balance [21].

At the World Economic Forum (BIF) held in Davos 2017, 15 countries with the highest incidence of organized crime were announced. Pakistan ranked 10th in this rating. According to the BIF expert, the organized crime associated with terrorism has worsened the situation not only in Pakistan but also in Afghanistan and has a direct impact on Central Asia.

The situation in Afghanistan, bordering Pakistan, which threatens regional security and hinders its sustainable development, can only reduce its militarization in the region and its economic recovery in Central Asia, and India, especially Pakistan, is hoping to address these issues. It should be noted that Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, the two largest Central Asian states, have modern projects to help stabilize the situation in Afghanistan between 2000 and 2018, including the construction and repair of new roads, electricity, railways, mining and metallurgy, education and specialists exchange experience. That is why Uzbekistan's direct links with India and Pakistan to help solve the Afghan problem is very effective.

In addition, the accession of India and Pakistan to the SCO also required its member states to cooperate in the fight against terrorism, drug business, extremism and religious separatism in the region. Then India offered its practical help in solving the following problems:

- Establishment of a Joint Working Group on Combating Terrorism in Central Asia;
- Development of information and intelligence sharing mechanisms;
- Training and providing modern weaponry for the Central Asian military;
- Helping to address the root causes of terrorism, unemployment, poverty, poverty and other factors;
- A positive impact on the fight against terrorism is the cooperation with the Central Asian countries to stabilize Afghanistan [10].

### ***Military-political Factors***

The main problem in relations between Central Asia and Pakistan is that there is a sharp difference in approaches to the role of Islam in the life of the state and society. It is well known that Pakistan is a country with a clearly defined Islamic ideology and one of the main foundations of foreign policy is to support Islamic movements and organizations in the neighboring regional space. It is well known that the Pakistani security services are interacting with the Taliban in Afghanistan, which means that Islamabad has a permanent influence on the situation in

Afghanistan. Despite all the promises made by the Pakistani authorities to renounce terrorism and extremism, Pakistan's stance on the issue remains uncertain.

The reasons for relations between the Central Asian republics and Pakistan with relatively low development rates are the lack of sufficient political will of the parties and the inability to attract large-scale resources for serious projects. This is mainly due to the fact that Central Asian countries today have many alternative choices. For example, they are developing cooperation with Turkey and Iran in terms of transport and energy transit, which will create the most favorable conditions for cooperation. Traditional economic relations with the Russian Federation are continuing and cooperation with China is growing. The West is also showing great interest in the resource-rich and profitable geostrategic position of Central Asian republics. In Central Asia, India is characterized by an active movement with more resources than Pakistan, and is concerned with the leadership of the republics against terrorism and extremism [6]. Due to all these factors, Islamabad is getting less attention and opportunities in the region. However, it should be noted that Islamabad's activities in Central Asia have a direct impact on the significant reduction of Pakistan's internal problems, including political instability, widespread extremism and terrorism.

There is a convergence of views and interests on fundamental issues between the republics of Central Asia and India: a) commitment to secular and democracy and the fight against religious fundamentalism; (b) recognizing the threat of transboundary terrorism, arms and drug trafficking, religious extremism, and ethnic and religious separatism to regional security and stability; (c) comply with the principles of the territorial integrity of States and the inviolability of national borders; (d) the development of economic, scientific and cultural cooperation; d) ensuring a peaceful and peaceful neighborliness in Afghanistan, etc. [51].

If India and Pakistan work together on Afghanistan, the region will directly connect the two countries with the Central Asian states. Also, the boundary between them may become a border of agreement and cooperation. In particular, the rapprochement between Pakistan and Afghanistan is critical to the establishment of stability in both countries. The Pakistani-Afghan border has become one of the most virulent areas of narcotics, illegal weapons, and militant activity. Both have to tackle serious issues in the common border areas.

Describing trade and economic relations of Central Asian countries with Pakistan, they are relatively weak today. Pakistan cannot enter into the top five countries with a strong export-import relationship with the Central Asian republics.

Despite the geographical proximity of the countries, the relative weakness of relations between the MO and Pakistan is also directly related to the absence of direct air communication. At the beginning of 2014, Uzbekistan Airways canceled the only route Tashkent-Lahore, connecting Central Asia and Pakistan. The reason for this decision is the visa restrictions between Tashkent and Islamabad, which have led to a significant drop in passenger traffic.

In 2010-2011 Pakistan attempted to sign a number of agreements with the Central Asian states aimed at strengthening trade and economic cooperation. Perhaps Pakistan has the most successful and close economic cooperation with Uzbekistan among the Central Asian republics. In March 2011, a comprehensive protocol was signed between the two countries on bilateral economic cooperation, including trade, finance, scientific and

technical cooperation, telecommunications, transport and investment. At a meeting with the chairman of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Pakistan in August this year, the Ambassador of Uzbekistan called on Pakistani businessmen to invest in the textile and pharmaceutical industry of Uzbekistan, as well as in agriculture.

Different agreements were signed with other countries - Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In its relations with Pakistan, Bishkek has established itself as a country with a liberal economic system, and has served as a bridge to export “cheap and quality Pakistani goods” to the Russian Federation and Europe. In particular, cooperation in the field of electricity plays an important role in Pakistan's economic relations with Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan [3].

#### **IV. DISCUSSION**

Note that the idea of regional economic cooperation between the countries of Central Asia, Afghanistan and Pakistan is actively supported by the United States, which is interpreted as a step towards overcoming the consequences of years of armed conflict and stabilizing the economic situation in Afghanistan. Washington is currently funding the construction and repair of a 900-kilometer highway that connects the MO, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Most of them are in Afghanistan. Improved transport communications will help rebuild cross-border economic cooperation [47]. Islamabad believes that the economic convergence of Pakistan and Central Asia will benefit both parties. Pakistan's access to Central Asia's energy resources will solve the energy shortage problem that is the most pressing for the region. Central Asia has a large market in the South Asian region and can access the sea.

Uzbekistan exports electricity, cotton, gas, gold, copper, iron, lead and chromium to Pakistan, and imports cement, textiles, footwear, medicine, clothing, telecommunications and military equipment.

Pakistan has to compete not only with India but also with Iran and Saudi Arabia in the use of transit trade through the Central Asian region.

In addition, the main obstacles for Pakistan to strengthen its direct political, economic and social cooperation with Central Asia are its common borders with the region, the instability in Afghanistan that connects it, and the escalation of various conflicts with its neighbors. In addition, the growing geopolitical interest of Central Asian countries in the United States, Russia, China, Europe, Turkey, Iran, Japan, South Korea, and India also diminishes Pakistan's ability to develop relations with the countries of the region. Nevertheless, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan wants to expand friendly neighborly relations and partnerships with Central Asia, with its large human resources and a growing military potential. At the same time Pakistan is confident that the countries of the region are also hoping to use its port of Guadar. Built by China in 2007, the port is strategically important, with 40% of world oil sales going through that port, allowing Pakistan to expand trade and economic ties with North Asia, Africa and Europe.

Despite the uneven development dynamics in 2006-2016, the volume of trade between Pakistan and the Central Asian countries doubled (reaching \$ 84.4 million in 2016). This figure was 0.13% of Pakistan's total foreign trade (0.2% in exports, 0.1% in imports) [18].

Currently, Pakistan has no major investment projects in Central Asia.

However, the Pakistani government has said that in the foreseeable future, several textile leather textile factories in Uzbekistan will open and Uzbekistan will launch agricultural processing plants. At present, Pakistani investors have established effective cooperation with local producers in the banking, tourism, hotel and restaurant business. There are also branches of the National Bank of Pakistan in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

In May 2016, Dushanbe announced the CASA-1000 project (Central Asia - South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade / Central Asia - South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade), which was launched and started construction in Dushanbe. Must be completed by 2020. This project involves connecting the power systems of the Central Asian republics and the South Asian states and delivering electricity from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan via Afghanistan. Thus, while Pakistan does not currently have the status and influence in Central Asia as the United States, Russia, China, India or Turkey, it has made the implementation of many important activities in the region a priority in its foreign policy.

India's relations with Central Asia have not been developed successfully in the economic, strategic and security issues, although there is a longstanding relationship with Central Asia. Only in 2009 the relationship has reached a new level. In 2009-2013, the heads of the five Central Asian republics visited India several times. Also, the Prime Minister of India and the heads of several ministries have been in Central Asia several times to sign agreements and agreements and develop cooperation in many areas.

The first India-Central Asia Dialogue "Track-II", organized on June 12-13, 2012 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, was an important step towards establishing long-term cooperation with the region. The main purpose of this conference was to launch an annual forum of discussions between academics, scientists, government representatives and business people in India and Central Asia. They also build new universities, hospitals, information technology centers in the Central Asian region and create new electronic networks, improve air communication for mutual trade and tourism, organize joint research, strategic partnerships in defense and security, and more agreements were signed. At a conference titled "India and Central Asia's First Dialogue" in Bishkek in June 2012, Indian Foreign Minister Edapat Ahmed announced the Central Asia Connect Policy project, which defines India's current strategy in Central Asia. As part of this project, work is underway to build and improve modern hospitals, universities, information technology centers and e-site development centers. In 2014, a military hospital was built and commissioned in Farkhor district on the border between Tajikistan and Pakistan. By the end of 2018, more than 350 contracts and experiences have been signed between the Ministry of Education of India and several universities of Uzbekistan with the aim of strengthening scientific and cultural cooperation between universities. India, after joining the III (Asian Bank for Infrastructure Investment), provided a \$ 27.5 million loan to build the largest highway in the northeast of Central Asia, which directly connects Tajikistan and Uzbekistan [56].

The 2015 Renewal Energy Summit and the 35th Indian International Trade Fair were also significant.

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi's fifth visit to Central Asia in June 2015 has resulted in a number of economic and strategic agreements. In particular, an agreement was signed with Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev to supply 5,000 tons of uranium to India over the next five years. Also, ONGC-Videsh Ltd of India has started drilling for oil exploration on Satpayev block on July 7 of this year.

On December 13, 2015, Vice President of India Hamid Ansari, Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif and the leaders of Turkmenistan and Afghanistan signed a \$ 7.6 billion TAPI gas pipeline project. Some problems are hindering this project from: a) security issues in Afghanistan; b) Conflicts in India-Pakistan Relations, etc.

In December 2016, President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon visited India and a number of agreements and agreements were signed during the visit: 1) Memorandum of Cooperation between the Committees of Television and Broadcasting of India and Tajikistan; 2) Agreement between the Financial Intelligence Department of India and the Financial Monitoring Department under the National Bank of Tajikistan on exchange of experience in combating crime related to the industry; 3) agreement on the development of bilateral investments, etc.

During the official visit of the President of Kyrgyzstan Almazbek Atambayev to India earlier this year, India also had a number of effective agreements and agreements with the Kyrgyz Republic. In particular, the Tourism Cooperation Agreement between the two countries, the Cooperation Agreements between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the Ministries of Defense, the India National Security Organization's agreements with the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic on enhancing cooperation between the youth, increasing bilateral investments, etc. [51].

Developed jointly by India, China and Russia, the North-South Transport Corridor project, covering 7,200 km to the north of the Eurasian region, fully meets the interests of not only these countries, but also the Central Asian countries, including Uzbekistan. The trade corridor extends from India to Russia, the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea, according to which goods and products exceed the ports of Kandla and Jawaharlal Nehru in northern India and to the port of Bander-Abbas in Iran.

It is then transported by road and rail to Moscow and St. Petersburg, Russia. The continuation of the project is expected to build the northern part of the Caspian Sea and a new railway linking Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran. This project will reduce the time it takes to transport goods by 30% in the region and reduce the prices by up to 40%.

India and Pakistan must support the strong integration of three countries in the region - Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, as well as Afghanistan to the south, in order to enhance their economic influence in Central Asia. The construction of the underground gas pipeline Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) will play an important role in ensuring such a regional economic complex, providing India and Pakistan with a rich supply of gas, as well as for their raw exports to Central Asia and gain access to the Afghan market.

India is connected to the Great Silk Road by the Jammu and Kashmir subcontinent, the Greater Kashmir Railway, which links Pakistan's Free Kashmir region. The revival of the Great Silk Road across Kashmir is the basis for positive economic and geopolitical changes not only in the region but around the world. The reopening of traditional trade routes facilitates the reconciliation of the Silk Road partners' interests, the creation of a free trade zone, and, most importantly, the peaceful settlement of intercultural and ideological conflicts [67].

When it comes to India's Central Asian politics, New Delhi has made a significant contribution to ensuring sustainable development in the region, enhancing trade and investment opportunities, addressing terrorism, drug trafficking and religious extremism, and energy security to promote cooperation without harming any third country.

It should be noted that while MO is not a direct neighbor of India, the region is of strategic importance to New Delhi. In recent years, both sides have done much to strengthen their relationship, but there is still much to be done. India's full-fledged membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization since June 2017 has also opened up new opportunities for New Delhi on the MO route.

In summary, Central Asia's strategic location can serve as a corridor between India, Pakistan and Russia, on the one hand, between the CIS countries and the European Union. Undoubtedly, India has a special place in the region and in the regional political and economic processes. This is mainly due to the geostrategic location of the country. India's growing interest in the Central Asian region represents India's efforts to strengthen its position not only in the Asian region but also around the world. India has been able to overcome its domestic problems of the 1990s. It now appears as a force seeking to be among the leading nations in the world seeking to expand their interests. In addition, since the MO is a strategically important region adjacent to it, its attempts to develop relations with it have become one of the priorities of India's foreign policy. India's 13th Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral spoke of the importance of the region, noting that "Central Asian countries are India's closest foreign partners".

Another major reason India seeks to strengthen its position in Central Asia is the efforts of its traditional foreign policy opponents - China and Pakistan - to succeed in the region. While competition with China in the region is economically driven, tensions with Pakistan are linked to security issues in Central Asia. Here, India faces two challenges: reducing Pakistan's influence and combating terrorism and extremism. But for some reason India is still unsuccessful in the Central Asian region. A number of experts have used the term "delayed fate" in relation to Indian policy in the region. Two French researchers from Washington, DC, in their book *Central Asia on the World Map: Indian Ideas and Strategies*, examine several of the causes of the situation. According to the authors, India is a democratic state and cannot fully support the internal regulations in Central Asia, which are criticized for lack of human rights and political freedoms. On the other hand, the United States and the EU are interested in gaining supporters in the opposition. In addition, more than one billion people in India who are not satisfied with their most basic needs (drinking water, housing, education, health care, etc.) cannot be an example of the economic and political development of the country. India, for its part, cannot give Central Asia solutions to these problems. According to experts, the main factor that undermines India's role is its geographical distance from the region. It will take time to resolve its longstanding problems and confrontations with Pakistan, as well as consolidate regional instability. All this will make India a "small player". Nevertheless, political predictors point to the development potential of India-Central Asia relations. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, mutual interests have not diminished, the scope of cooperation has expanded, future plans have been developed, successful joint projects have been emerged. An atmosphere of understanding and co-operation on key international and regional issues has emerged. As a result of hundreds of years of interreligious cultural, political and economic interactions between these countries, close human ties have emerged.

## V. CONCLUSION

As noted above, today the relations between Pakistan and Central Asia are rather stable and have the potential for development. However, their level is relatively low, as weak and relatively small projects are currently being

implemented in the trade and economic sectors. The key to success in evaluating the development of bilateral relations is normalizing the situation in Afghanistan. In general, despite the mutual desire to bring economic relations to a new level, conferences and signing various agreements, trade and economic cooperation between Central Asia and Pakistan remains very low today. The reasons for this are the weakness of regional transport infrastructure, instability in Afghanistan and the influence of China, the US, the Persian Gulf and the European Union on the Central Asian trade markets.

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