



2024 REGIONAL TRENDS REPORT

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Key Points:

- In 2024, governments across the Caspian region worked to increase their regional connectivity, improving on transport infrastructure and economic integration to form a more regional economy and take advantage of the growing attention paid to the Middle Corridor.
- Foreign actors and governments are increasingly engaging with the region on a multi-lateral basis, investing in cross-border projects and regional connectivity, using formats such as the PGI, the C5+1, and B5+1 to organize relations.
- The Organization of Turkic States (OTS), as well as the C5, are providing the primary multi-lateral frameworks through which most governments in the region are building relations. Groups like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS are becoming more important, but do not appear to have reached the level of OTS and the C5+1 structures.
- Central Asian states are becoming acutely aware of shared problems relating to water

and climate change in the region and appear to be working together to greater degrees to manage the issue.

- Central Asian countries are engaging in de-facto recognition of the Taliban government in Afghanistan, particularly Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan.
- In Russia, where there are millions of Central Asian migrant workers, 2024 saw a spike in intense anti-Central Asian and anti-migrant sentiment following the Crocus City Hall shooting, claimed by ISKP and conducted by Tajik citizens. This has appeared both in Russian state policy and in widespread street-violence in Russia against Central Asians.
- In the South Caucasus, Armenia and Azerbaijan continue to work toward a final peace and normalization agreement, which would likely allow greater trade across the South Caucasus and better connect the Caspian region to European markets.

Chronological Reporting:

U.S. Coordinator on Global Anti-Corruption Travels to Armenia and Georgia

On January 15, Richard Nephew, the U.S. Coordinator on Global Anti-Corruption, embarked on a three-day trip to Armenia and Georgia to discuss tackling corruption and identify more avenues for working together with the United States. In Armenia, Nephews participated in a roundtable focusing on civil society, as well as met with members of the justice sector and law enforcement. In Georgia, Nephews met with government officials, members of anti-corruption institutions, investigative bodies, and civil society representatives.

Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)

Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan Reach 38.35 km Border Demarcation Agreement

After working groups convened in Batken January 10 – 16, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan reached a significant agreement over a 38.35 km stretch of their shared border. The topographic groups signed a protocol outlining the border delimitation of the area. They will reconvene in Tajikistan at a later date to negotiate on remaining areas that still require legal demarcation.

Source: [AKI Press](#)

UAE and Türkiye Collaborate on Bombs for Drones

Abu Dhabi-based Edge Group has finalized the integration of its Desert String 16 precision-guided munition on the Turkish Bayraktar TB2 drone. This was announced on the X platform, formerly Twitter, on January 17, with a video showing the TB2 take off from a Baykar facility and dropping munitions during the flight. The successful completion of this collaboration signaled a strengthened relationship between the Emirati and Turkish defense sectors.

Source: [Defense News](#)

Türkiye and Iran Sign Economic Cooperation Deals and Discuss Opening of New Border Crossings

Following President Ebrahim Raisi's visit to Ankara, Türkiye and Iran signed ten cooperation agreements to increase bilateral economic and trade relations. The agreements were signed after President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan met with his Iranian counterpart for the 8th Türkiye-Iran High-Level Cooperation Council on January 24. Their discussions and the signed agreements centered around increasing collaboration in the energy, transportation, culture, media, and trade sectors. President Erdoğan also said that the two countries are due for further discussions to explore the potential to open new border gates.

Source: [Caspian News](#), [Reuters](#)

European and International Financial Institutions to Invest \$10 Billion in the Middle Corridor

On January 29, the Investors Forum for the European Union – Central Asia Transport Connectivity kicked off in Brussels. During the forum, the European Commission's Executive Vice President Valdis Dombrovskis announced that European and international financial institutions have pledged to invest \$10 billion to develop sustainable transport connectivity in Central Asia. The European Investment Bank (EIB) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and the Development Bank of Kazakhstan to invest 1.5 billion euros (\$1.6 billion) in developing transport connectivity between Europe and Central Asia. Similarly, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) announced a MoU with Kazakhstan to invest \$1.6 billion in ongoing connectivity projects. The pledged investment is expected to be allocated towards the development of the Middle Corridor, also known as the Trans-Caspian International Route (TITR).

Source: [European Commission](#), [The Astana Times](#)

Armenia and Georgia Sign “Strategic Partnership”

On January 26, during the visit to Tbilisi of an Armenian delegation headed by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Georgia and Armenia signed a “strategic partnership” memorandum. The leaders did not report the specific components of the memorandum, but speaking at a press conference afterward, Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili stated, “Historically, we are very strong allies; not only neighbors, but friends. We have a good partnership in all areas. De facto, we were strategic friends and partners. Today, this has been [made official].”

Source: [RFE/RL](#)

Foreign Ministers of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan Meet in Bishkek

On January 28, Kazakhstan Foreign Minister Murat Nurtleu began an official two-day visit to Kyrgyzstan. On January 29, Nurtleu held talks with his Kyrgyz counterpart, Jeenbek Kulubaev, in Bishkek. During the meeting, the two ministers discussed deepening economic, political, and cultural ties between the two countries and the prospects for regular engagement between leaders. Specifically, the discussion focused on the upcoming visit of Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov to Kazakhstan. A 2024–2026 “Cooperation Program” was signed at the culmination of the talks.

Source: [AkiPress](#)

Türkiye’s BOTA Discusses Natural Gas Delivery with Turkmenistan

On January 29, officials from Turkish energy company BOTA held meetings with Turkmen government officials and a delegation from Turkmengaz to discuss the transportation of gas from Turkmenistan to Türkiye. BOTA expressed its “determination and desire to deliver Turkmen gas to Türkiye” and “the importance of maintaining constant communication between the two state-owned companies in order to bring Turkmen gas to the Turkish and the world markets.”

Source: [BOTA](#)

Armenia and Azerbaijan Meet for Border Delineation Talks

On January 31, Azerbaijani and Armenian officials met for another round of bilateral talks on border delineation, the sixth of their kind. The two sides released identical statements following the meeting, but they shed little light on any possible progress.

Source: [RFE/RL](#)

Turkmenistan Sends 2000 Tons of Gas to Kyrgyzstan

After an explosion at one of Kyrgyzstan's thermal power plants on February 2, Turkmenistan sent 57 tank railcars with 2000 tons of liquified gas to Kyrgyzstan. After the explosion, Kazakhstan also agreed to increase the supply of electricity from its Zhambyl power plant to support Kyr-

gyzstan's energy sector. Engineers from Russia also arrived in Bishkek to help rebuild and repair the power plant.

Source: [The Times of Central Asia](#)

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan Address Border Issues and Water Security

On February 1, the Prime Minister of Kazakhstan, Alikhan Smailov, and the Chairman of Kyrgyzstan's Cabinet of Ministers, Akylbek Japarov, met in Almaty to discuss border checkpoints and water security. They also discussed their water and energy security issues and plans to work together to open additional checkpoints for transit on their shared border

Source: [The Times of Central Asia](#)

Meeting of Eurasian Economic Union Takes Place in Kazakhstan

On February 2, the heads of government of the five Eurasian Economic Union member states, which include Russia, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Belarus, met in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The meeting was chaired by Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. Pashinyan's chairmanship came after Armenia's passing on its turn to chair the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

Source: [ArmenPress](#)

Türkiye And Russia Meet to Discuss Grain Deals

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan announced on February 4 that Russian President Vladimir Putin will visit Türkiye to visit his Turkish counterpart, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The meeting's discussions were expected primarily focus on finding a new approach to facilitate the transport of Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea. However, the meeting was delayed and the two did not meet until September, in Russia.

Source: [US News](#)

President Rahmon Announces Large-Scale Border Agreement with Kyrgyzstan

Following a February 5 meeting of President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon with Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Jeenbek Kulubaev, Rahmon's official website announced an agreement with Kyrgyzstan had been reached addressing 196 kilometers of the border between the two countries, roughly 90% of their undelimited border. The agreement came as a result of four months of meetings between the two sides, shortly after it seemed tensions were rising again. In 2022, fighting erupted between Kyrgyz and Tajik forces on the border, killing over 100 security personnel and civilians.

Source: [AKIPress](#)

State Department Hosts Inaugural C5+1 Critical Minerals Dialogue

On February 8, the U.S. Department of State hosted the first C5+1 Critical Minerals Dialogue (CMD) to discuss the region's potential for greater involvement in the global critical minerals market—a follow-up meeting after the September 19, 2023, C5+1 Presidential Summit in New York. Assistant Secretary of State for Energy Resources Geoffrey Pyatt moderated along with Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Central Asian Affairs John Mark Pommersheim. Officials from the five Central Asian countries expressed enthusiasm for working to invest in this sector.

Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)

World Bank Announces Initiative to Research Declining Caspian Sea Levels

The World Bank announced a plan to facilitate a research initiative to study the Caspian Sea levels' decline. The announcement lays out the 18-month plan, with experts from HR Wallingford

analyzing data from past studies on the Caspian Sea, as well as findings from regional climate models. The insights and suggestions derived from this research will inform future projects aimed at the renovation and enhancement of infrastructure and equipment at the Aktau port.

Source: [Astana Times](#)

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to Construct Industrial Cooperation Center

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan agreed on February 16 to start the construction of an Industrial Cooperation Center along the Uzbekistan-Kazakhstan border this summer. The center will be located on the border where the Turkistan region in Kazakhstan meets the Syrdarya region in Uzbekistan. This facility will help develop trade and economic relations between the countries, intensify business ties between manufacturers and entrepreneurs, and accelerate the growth of trade turnover between the two countries. Officials have stated that the technical launch of the center is planned for the fourth quarter of 2026, with the official opening will be in the first half of 2027.

Source: [Astana Times](#)

Blinken Meets with Aliyev and Pashinyan

On February 17, U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken met separately with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference. The meeting with President Aliyev focused on human rights, a durable peace agreement with Armenia, and November's COP29 climate conference in Baku, according to a statement released by the Secretary's office. Secretary Blinken reported that his conversation with Prime Minister Pashinyan centered around a peace agreement with Azerbaijan and democracy within the country.

Source: [U.S. Department of State](#), [U.S. Department of State](#)

Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan Agreement on Military Intelligence

In February, according to Azerbaijani and Kazakhstani media reports, the two countries agreed to sign an agreement on cooperation in the field of military intelligence. A draft agreement of normative legal acts was published on Kazakhstan's government internet portal.

Source: [Apa.az](#)

Oil Flow Between Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan Through BTC Pipeline Increases

In January 2024, oil transport between Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan through Azerbaijan's Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline saw a significant uptick. Kazakh and Turkmen oil transfers accounted for about 17.3% of the total volume of oil transport via the BTC pipeline last month, with the remaining 82.7% of oil shipped originating from Azerbaijan. The increase came after last year's agreement between Azerbaijan's SOCAR and Kazakhstan's KazMunayGas to transit 1.5 million tons of oil annually.

Source: [Caspian News](#)

Tajikistan and Uzbekistan Open Water-Monitoring Station

On February 23, Tajikistan's Ministry of Energy and Water Resources released a statement announcing the opening of border water flow monitoring stations on the canals that mark the border between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The stations, which take and transmit data, are hoped to be the groundwork for more comprehensive regional water management. Uzbekistan and Tajikistan have a bilateral working group on the topic of water management in Tajikistan's northern districts.

Source: [EurasiaNet](#)

OPEC+ Members Agree to Extend Oil Production Cuts in Q2

In late February, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its allied bloc OPEC+ agreed to extend their voluntary crude oil cuts until the second quarter of 2024. Kazakhstan, a member of OPEC+, extended its oil production cuts by 82,000 barrels per day. In total, production cuts among the members amounted to approximately 2 million barrels per day.

Source: [Rigzone](#), [Vestnik Kavkaza](#)

Germany Hosts Armenia-Azerbaijan Peace Talks

On February 28, the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia attended two days of tri-lateral meetings hosted in Berlin by German Foreign Secretary Annalena Baerbock. Secretary Baerbock spoke positively of the talks and stated that Azerbaijan and Armenia had agreed to continue discussions. However, it is not clear that any concrete agreement was reached on contentious issues currently dividing the parties.

Source: [Euronews](#), [Arab News](#)

Russia Continues to Source Chips and Other Dual-Use Goods from China Through Central Asia

According to Chinese customs data reported in late February, China's exports of "dual-use" goods—including U.S. chips, routers, ball bearings used in tanks, and drones—to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have seen a significant surge since February 2022. These goods are then transferred to Russia to be used in their war against Ukraine and for domestic consumption.

Source: [The Wall Street Journal](#)

U.S. CDC and Uzbekistan Jointly Launch Central Asia Field Epidemiology Training Program

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in collaboration with Uzbekistan's Committee for Sanitary and Epidemiologic Welfare and Public Health, launched the Central Asia Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) on March 4. The new program, in collaboration with Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, will provide specialized training to health professionals working to improve public health threat responses in the region.

Source: [US Embassy in Uzbekistan](#)

UN Warns Land Degradation Poses Significant Threat to Central Asia

In early March, The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has warned that "landscapes in Central Asia are among the most rapidly degrading and climate-vulnerable areas worldwide." The report attributed unsustainable agriculture practices as a main cause of the degradation of over 20% of Central Asia's land mass.

Source: [Astana Times](#)

Türkiye and Turkmenistan Sign Major Gas Deals

Türkiye and Turkmenistan reached a gas export cooperation agreement aimed at accelerating natural gas exchanges and forming the basis of future hydrocarbon partnerships. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Chairman of Turkmenistan People's Council Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow signed the deal on the sidelines of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum that took place from March 1-2.

Source: [Caspian News](#), [Voice of America](#)

CASA-1000 Back on Track

The 1,300-megawatt power grid from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Afghanistan and Pakistan, CASA-1000, resumed development after the World Bank announced its intention to resume its \$1.2 billion backing during March's Antalya Diplomacy Forum. Progress on this project, also known as the Central Asia-South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project, was halted in August 2021 due to the Taliban takeover.

Source: [TOLO News](#)

Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan Sign Agreements on Oil Transportation

During Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's trip to Azerbaijan on March 11, state-owned energy companies of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan signed cooperation agreements on oil transportation. The State Oil Company of the Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR) and KazMunayGas signed memoranda on "the purchase and sale of Kazakh oil," as well as on "the staged increase of volumes of Kazakh oil transported through the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan."

Source: [Apa.az](#)

Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev Visits Azerbaijan

On March 11, President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev conducted an official visit to Azerbaijan. During the visit, President Tokayev held meetings with his Azerbaijani counterpart, Ilham Aliyev, in both limited and extended formats. The first meeting of the Azerbaijan-Kazakhstan High-Level Intergovernmental Council was held, following which several cooperation documents were signed between the two heads of states in the fields of energy, connectivity, aerospace, and education. The two leaders also attended a virtual ceremony marking the arrival of a container train from China's Xi'an terminal to Baku's Absheron as a part of the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR), also known as the Middle Corridor.

Source: [President of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#), [President of the Republic of Kazakhstan](#), [Apa.az](#)

The United States Launches the B5+1 Initiative in Central Asia

The governments of the United States, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan brought together both government and private-sector representatives for the first B5+1 Forum in Almaty, the private sector-oriented counterpart to the C5+1. The United State's delegation was led by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Central Asian Affairs John Mark Pommersheim and National Security Council Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Russia and Central Asia Nicholas Berliner. This forum offered recommendations for improving the business operation environment in Central Asia and advancing regional economic integration, competitive markets, and foreign investments to the region.

Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)

In a First, Cargo Containers from China Reach Azerbaijan via Kazakhstan

On March 11, 61 freight-train containers arrived in Azerbaijan after originating in China and transversing Kazakhstan before crossing the Caspian Sea and arriving in Baku, Azerbaijan. The overall trip took 11 days. Azerbaijani authorities now expect 10 such trains to arrive in Azerbaijan from Kazakhstan every month. To commemorate the milestone in the development of trans-Caspian transit, Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev visited Baku and signed several commercial agreements with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev.

Source: [RFE/RL](#)

Kazakhstan to Expand Exports to Uzbekistan

At a March 15 meeting between Kazakhstan Prime Minister Olzhas Bektenov and Uzbekistan Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov in Tashkent, Bektenov indicated that Kazakhstan was prepared to

increase exports to its neighbor by nearly \$500 million. Trade between the two countries has grown rapidly in recent years, evidence of a trend towards broader regional economic cooperation across Central Asia. At the meeting, the leaders discussed new investment and industrial projects to further increase the countries' economic partnership.

Source: [The Astana Times](#)

NATO Secretary General Begins Tour of South Caucasus

Jens Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary General, visited the South Caucasus capitals beginning on March 17 with a stop in Baku, Azerbaijan. There he met with Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev, where discussions focused on Azerbaijan-Armenia peace building and energy ties between Europe and Azerbaijan. On March 18 Stoltenberg visited Tbilisi, Georgia, where he held meetings with President Salome Zourabichvili and Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze. On March 19, Stoltenberg visited Yerevan, Armenia.

Sources: [North Atlantic Treaty Organization](#), [JAM News](#)

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan Agree to Install Transboundary Water Meters

Kazakhstan's Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation announced that it had reached an agreement to install water meters in Uzbekistan and that Uzbekistan's Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources would do the same in Kazakhstan. The announcement came as [experts continue to highlight](#) Central Asia's water insecurity, a threat exacerbated by climate change. Accurate shared data will allow the countries to make better decisions about the allocation of increasingly scarce water resources. The agreement illustrates how climate change provides an opportunity for international collaboration on solutions, including the sustainable management of water supplies.

Source: [The Diplomat](#)

Shooters in Crocus City Attack Tajik Nationals, Anti-Central Asian Sentiment Rising in Russia

Following the March 23 attack on the Crocus City concert hall just outside of Moscow that killed roughly 140 people, Russian security forces apprehended 11 people they believe responsible for the terror attack, including four shooters. The 11 suspects were citizens of Tajikistan. Days following saw a number of racially motivated attacks, including the assault of three Tajik men in the Russian city of Kaluga and an arson attack on a cafeteria run by Tajik migrants in the eastern city of Blagoveshchensk. Dozens of Kyrgyz men were detained upon arrival at the Sheremet'yev Moscow airport on March 23, where the travelers were reportedly held for 24 hours without food or water. The Afghanistan-based branch of ISIS claimed responsibility for the Crocus City attacks.

Source: [RFE/RL](#)

Georgian PM Kobakhidze Visits Armenia

On March 25, Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze embarked on an official visit to Armenia. In Yerevan, Kobakhidze held meetings with his Armenian counterpart Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. The two sides discussed cooperation in various fields and support for each other's territorial integrity, as well as normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Source: [ITV Georgia](#)

Turkmenistan Offers to Supply Electricity and Gas to Tajikistan

Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, Chairman of the Turkmen People's Council (Halk Maslahaty), offered to supply gas to Tajikistan via Uzbekistan during an official visit on April 4. "Today there is every opportunity to intensify cooperation to create a transport route from Tajikistan to Turkmenistan's Caspian coast, with further access to Iran and on to the Persian Gulf and Turkey,"

said Berdimuhamedov. According to a local TV channel, Altyn Asyr, Turkmenistan signaled its readiness to begin organizing a trilateral union, including Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, to carry out the supply.

Source: [Daryo](#), [Times of Central Asia](#)

Russia's Lukoil Hires Uzbek Workers

Lukoil, Russia's second-largest oil producer, announced a deal with Uzbekistan to hire workers on temporary contracts, evincing Russia's struggles to meet basic labor demands. As the war in Ukraine continues, Russia's army and weapons factories have absorbed a steadily growing number of workers. While the shortages represent an opportunity for laborers in neighboring countries, Central Asians living in Russia face heightened suspicion and hostility after the Crocus City Hall attack.

Source: [Investing.com](#)

Azerbaijan and Armenia Trade Fire in Border Region

Gunfire was reported April 5–7 on the de facto border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Both sides reported major firefights, and both sides blamed the other for the cease-fire violations. On April 5, Azerbaijani media released videos showing the Armed Forces of Armenia building up equipment and forces along the border near Eastern Zangezur. On April 6, the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry reported that Azerbaijan's forces were fired upon 16 times by Armenian armed forces, and again on April 7, Armenian forces shot in the direction of Azerbaijan's military. According to Azerbaijan's Ministry of Defense, "the Azerbaijani Army Units took adequate retaliatory measures in the mentioned directions." The Armenian Ministry of Defense has reported fighting in three locations in two separate provinces. Western partners have cautioned against military escalation.

Source: [Politico](#), [RFE/RL](#), [News.am](#), [Trend.az](#)

Masses of Central Asian Migrants Wait at Immigrant Centers as Russia Cracks Down on Visas

Following the March terror attack in Moscow which was reportedly carried out by Tajik nationals, Russia cracked down on Central Asian Migrants. The Kremlin placed a halt on visa distribution leading to masses of seasonal workers trying to enter the country waiting at immigrant centers for days. Many Central Asians who travel to or live in Russia for work are facing an increase in discrimination, with reports of a spike in xenophobic acts throughout the country since the attacks.

Source: RFE/RL, [The NYTimes](#)

World Bank Predicts High Growth for Uzbekistan, Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan in 2024

The World Bank's 2024 GDP growth predictions rank Uzbekistan (5.3%), Armenia (5.5%), Georgia (5.2%), Kyrgyzstan (4.5%), and Tajikistan (6.5%) as the five fastest growing countries out of 20 developing economies in Central and Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans, Central Asia, and the South Caucasus. The report also notes generally high growth across Central Asia at 5.5% in 2024, compared to 4.2% in 2022. Fueling much of this growth across the Caspian region appears to be high oil prices, reductions in inflation, strong currencies, and growth in trade.

Source: [World Bank](#)

Representatives from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan Participate in the World Bank and IMF Spring Meetings this week

Representatives from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were in Washington D.C for the Spring Meetings of the IMF and World Bank. The Kazakh delegation was led by Timur Suleimenov, Chairman of the National Bank, and Madina Abylkassymova, Chairman of the Agency for Regulation and Development of Financial Markets. The Kyrgyz delegation was led by Chairman of the Cabinet Akylbek Japarov. Main topics for this year's meetings included the return of industrial policy, developing countries' debt vulnerability, and climate finance. The Kyrgyz team expressed an interest in discussing progress on the Kambarata-1 hydropower plant, one of Central Asia's largest hydropower ventures, that has received technical assistance from the World Bank.

Sources: [Trend News Agency](#), [Trend News Agency](#)

Kazakhstan to Increase Exports to Armenia to \$350 Million

Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev told reporters during a media briefing that Kazakhstan is ready to increase its exports to Armenia to \$350 million. This announcement came during Tokayev's official visit to Yerevan on April 15. "We are interested in further developing a comprehensive partnership with Armenia," President Tokayev said during his joint media briefing with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

Source: [Astana Times](#)

South and Central Asian Countries Conduct Mine-Clearing and Secure Weapons with U.S. Support

The U.S. Department of State announced that it continues to conduct humanitarian mine action programs in collaboration with Central Asian countries near Afghanistan. They noted that Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan face substantial risk of unsecured and deteriorating weapons through stockpile reduction and disposal. Tajikistan has played a leading role in clearing dangerous and aging explosives.

Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)

Ministerial Meeting for the "Central Asia – Gulf Cooperation Council" Strategic Dialogue in Uzbekistan

On April 15, the Ministerial Meeting for the "Central Asia – Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)" Strategic Dialogue took place in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Delegations from the five Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan), as well as from the GCC (Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Saudi Arabia) attended the meetings. For the first time ever, Azerbaijan was represented in the strategic dialogue, with its foreign minister attending as an honored guest. The next Central Asia-GCC Summit is expected to take place in Samarkand, Uzbekistan in 2025.

Source: [Kun.uz](#)

Azerbaijan Increases Imports of Turkmen Gas by 2.5 Times in January

According to the data published in the trade bulletin of the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in January 2024, Azerbaijan increased its natural gas imports from Turkmenistan by 2.5 times. Throughout the month, a total of 161 million 309.35 thousand cubic meters of gas was imported from Turkmenistan in the amount of approximately \$24 million.

Source: [Caspian Barrel](#)

Armenia Returns Four Villages to Azerbaijan in Gazakh Region

During the 8th meeting between the state commissions for border demarcation between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the two sides reached a preliminary agreement, including determining the border along Azerbaijan's Gazakh province in line with the border that existed when the Soviet Union collapsed. According to the agreement, the border line will pass through the villages Ba-

ganis Ayrim, Ashagi Askipara, Kheyrimli, and Gizilhajili, which have been under Armenian control since the First Karabakh War. The parties also agreed that a draft regulation on the commissions' joint activities should be signed by July 1.

Source: [Daily Sabah](#)

David Cameron Central Asia Trip

On April 22, British Foreign Secretary David Cameron began a seven-day trip throughout Central Asia, starting in Tajikistan. Cameron visited all five post-Soviet Central Asian states as well as Mongolia and stated that the trip heralded a “new era” in British–Central Asian relations. The diplomatic trip aimed to improve cooperation on economic growth, counterterrorism, and climate concerns. Meetings likely also focused on anti-Russian sanctions evasion.

Source: [The Standard](#)

Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Afghan Taliban Government Agree to Boost Transport

At an April 27 meeting in Astana, Kazakhstan, the governments of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Taliban-ruled Afghanistan reached an agreement to improve transportation infrastructure within Afghanistan. The three parties also agreed to ease tariffs on goods transiting from China through Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Afghanistan before exiting to Indian, Pakistani, and Middle Eastern markets. The agreement also allows more goods to enter Afghanistan at lower cost.

Source: [Astana Times](#)

Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan Sign MoUs

During Kyrgyzstan President Sadyr Japarov's working visit to Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan signed several memoranda of understanding (MoUs). Following bilateral meetings between the presidents and the second meeting of the Interstate Council of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Kyrgyz Republic, the two sides signed MoUs in the fields of health, energy, transportation, customs harmonization, migration, and legal affairs. Additionally, the economy ministers of the two countries signed an agreement on the establishment of the Joint Azerbaijani–Kyrgyz Development Fund.

Source: [President of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

Türkiye Eyes LNG Deal with ExxonMobil

In an interview with the Financial Times, Türkiye's Energy Minister Alparslan Bayraktar stated that talks are underway between Türkiye and ExxonMobil for the purchase of up to 2.5 million tons of LNG a year through a long-term deal. According to Bayraktar, Türkiye is aiming to build “a new supply portfolio” to reduce its dependence on a single supplier. The deal was eventually signed in early May.

Source: [Reuters](#), [Gasworld](#)

Secretary Blinken Holds Phone Calls with Aliyev and Pashinyan

On April 28, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke by phone with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. Secretary Blinken welcomed Armenia's and Azerbaijan's agreement to use the 1991 Alma Ata Declaration as a basis for border delimitation, and reiterated U.S. support for the progress between the two sides to reach a durable peace. During the call with President Aliyev, it was mentioned that the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan will soon hold a meeting in Almaty, Kazakhstan, as per the proposal of the Kazakh side, to further negotiations on the peace treaty.

Source: [U.S. Department of State](#), [President of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

Shanghai Cooperation Council Ministerial Meeting Held in Kazakhstan

On April 26, Kazakhstan hosted the Ministerial Meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Council, an intergovernmental organization comprised of Asian and Middle Eastern countries. While there, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu met with his Iranian counterpart and announced their countries would be upgrading security cooperation. Shoigu also met with Chinese military officials.

Source: [Al-Monitor](#), [Associated Press](#)

Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan Agree to Merge Energy Systems

At the Tashkent International Forum on May 1, the energy ministries of Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and Uzbekistan signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to determine the foundational terms of cooperation for the ambitious project of linking the energy systems of the three countries. As a part of the agreement, the parties agreed to study the feasibility of connecting energy systems by laying a high-voltage submarine cable across the Caspian Sea. According to Azerbaijan's Minister of Economy Mikayil Jabbarov, this agreement allows the countries to interact in the production of green energy and organize its export through Azerbaijan to Europe.

Source: [The Astana Times](#), [Caspian News](#)

Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway Expansion Completed

Rovshan Rustamov, Chairman of Azerbaijan Railways (ADY), announced that the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway will resume cargo transport operation on May 20. Refurbishments to the Georgian section of the railway have been underway since 2022. With this recent expansion completed, the BTK railway's annual capacity is expected to increase from one million tons to five million tons. The BTK railway transports goods from Azerbaijan, through Georgia, and into Türkiye.

Source: [Caspian News](#)

Round of Armenia-Azerbaijan Peace Talks in Almaty

On May 11, Almaty, Kazakhstan hosted talks between Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers. Following the meeting, both countries' foreign ministries released near-identical statements in which they said, "The parties agreed to continue negotiations on open issues where there are still differences." The statement did not outline specific disagreements or results of the peace talks. Yerevan and Baku on April 19 agreed to delineate their borders using the Soviet-era borderline as their standard.

Source: [RFE/RL](#)

Deadly Floods in Armenia and Georgia Claim the Lives of Four People

On May 26, flooding caused by heavy rains and rivers bursting their banks in northern Armenia and Georgia claimed the lives of at least four people. Hundreds of homes have been flooded, and rescue workers were dispatched to the area. The Russian Ministry of Defense offered help to Armenia to mitigate the impact of the flooding, although Armenia did not request help from Russia.

Source: [Reuters](#), [RFE/RL](#), [ISW](#)

Under Secretary Uzra Zeya Visits Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan

Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights Uzra Zeya traveled to Astana and Tashkent May 19–23. Zeya headed a U.S. delegation that took part meetings with officials and civil society focused on support for human rights and democratic reforms in the two countries.

Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)

China, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan Officiate Agreement on New Railway Project

On June 6th, Chinese, Uzbek, and Kyrgyz leaders signed an agreement on a new railway infrastructure project that will better connect the three countries. President Xi Jinping described the plan as “strategic” for China, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan, and important in furthering the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The project is estimated to cost up to \$8 billion.

Source: [RFE/RL](#), [EurasiaNet](#)

Uzbekistan Hosted the 19th Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Meeting

On June 5, Tashkent hosted the 19th SCO forum. The program’s theme was “The Role of the SCO in New Conditions: Uniting Efforts for Universal Security, Stability, and Prosperity,” and included participants from ten countries.

Source: [Daryo](#)

U.S. Trade Representative Visits Central Asia

United States Trade Representative Katherine Tai traveled to Central Asia from June 11 to June 15, 2024. Tai participated in high-level meetings and engagements with government officials and stakeholders in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

Source: [Daryo](#)

U.S.-Central Asia TIFA Council Meeting Takes Place in Astana

The 15th meeting of the U.S.-Central Asia Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Council took place in Astana, Kazakhstan, on June 13. U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai co-chaired the meeting with officials from Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. During the talks, the sides emphasized the need to coordinate joint efforts to ensure sustainable growth of TIFA economies and jointly develop traditional supply chains.

Source: [The Times of Central Asia](#)

South Korean President Tours Central Asia

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol visited Central Asia June 11-15, holding bilateral meetings in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. During his visits, President Yoon signed various bilateral agreements in the energy and mineral sectors aimed at enhancing economic partnerships in the region.

Source: [Reuters](#)

High-level Officials Participate in Central Asian Forum on Water and Climate Change

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in coordination with the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources of the Republic of Tajikistan and the European Union (EU), hosted a forum aimed at addressing the region’s pressing water and climate crisis. The forum was held on June 14 in Dushanbe and focused on diminishing water resources and regional cooperation to address and mitigate climate change.

Source: [UNDP](#)

EU Adopts 14th Package of Sanctions Against Russia

On June 24, the European Union (EU) introduced its 14th package of sanctions against Russia. It imposed new restrictions on the transit of Russian LNG through European ports and prohibits its investments into Russia’s Arctic LNG 2 and Murmansk LNG projects. Additionally, 61 entities, including some located in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Türkiye, were added to the list of export restrictions on dual-use goods and technologies, as well as “goods and technology which might contribute to the technological enhancement of Russia’s defense and security sector.”

Source: [European Commission](#)

Iran and Russia Inaugurate Rasht-Caspian Railroad

Senior officials from Iran and Russia participated in the inauguration of the Rasht-Caspian Railroad on June 20. The 23-mile rail line links to the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) that serves a multimodal 4,473-mile-long transport route connecting India, Azerbaijan, Iran, Russia, Central Asia, and Europe.

Source: [Caspian News](#), [Trend](#)

Russia-Iran Trade Turnover Grows by 48% in First Quarter of 2024

Russian state press service TASS has reported that Russia-Iran trade grew by 48% percent in the first quarter of 2024 compared to the same period in 2023. TASS also claimed that Russian exports to Iran grew by 77%, while imports from Iran grew by 13%. Recently, Russia and Iran have sought to foster economic and political ties, with President Vladimir Putin approving on June 12 a free trade agreement between Iran and the Russian backed Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). On June 16, Russia, Azerbaijan, and Iran announced the creation of a working group on North-South Caspian Sea trade.

Source: [TASS](#), [Eurasianet](#)

Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan Among Countries Invited to NATO Summit

Officials of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan were invited to the July 9-11 NATO Summit in Washington, DC. On June 28, Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed that a delegation led by Foreign Minister Ilia Darchiashvili would participate in the Summit. Similarly, the Armenian Foreign Ministry also confirmed the country's participation in the summit.

Source: [Caucasus Watch](#), [TASS](#), [Azertag](#)

Putin Calls to Resume Production of Intermediate Range Missiles

Speaking on June 28 to Russia's national security council, President Vladimir Putin called for the resumption of intermediate range missile production. Intermediate range missiles were banned under the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty, from which the United States withdrew in 2019 as U.S.-Russia relations deteriorated. The United States has long claimed that Russian 9M729 cruise missiles, also known as SSC-8 missiles, violate the treaty as well.

Source: [Associated Press](#), [Caspian News](#)

Informal Summit of the Heads of State of OTS Takes Place in Azerbaijan

On July 6, the Informal Summit of the Heads of States of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) took place in Shusha, Azerbaijan, with the theme of "Building a Sustainable Future through Transport, Connectivity, and Climate Action." The summit, hosted by President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, was attended by President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Japarov, President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Vice President of Türkiye Cevdet Yılmaz, Prime Minister of Hungary Viktor Orbán, President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Ersin Tatar, and Secretary General of the OTS Ambassador Kubanychbek Omuraliev. The sides signed several important documents, including the Karabakh Declaration, which highlight strategies for future regional cooperation.

Source: [The Organization of Turkic States](#)

SCO and UN Summit Results

The first week of July, Astana hosted two major political events – the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit and the visit by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres. Throughout his tour of the five Central Asian nations, Secretary Guterres emphasized the oppor-

tunities afforded by Central Asia's young population and the importance of youth engagement. He also discussed climate issues with the regional leaders, veering away more than expected from topics on human rights. At the same time, the SCO Summit produced some notable agreements. After accepting Belarus as the latest fully-fledged member, SCO leaders agreed on a security cooperation program that included efforts to combat extremism and drug trafficking.

Source: [Times of Central Asia](#)

Iranian Elections Deliver Win for Reformer

On July 6, Masoud Pezeshkian won a run-off election to secure Iran's presidency. Pezeshkian, who is of an ethnic Azeri and Kurdish background, is viewed as a moderate and reformer in comparison to his opposing candidates and has proposed diplomatic outreach to the West and relaxed enforcement of his country's mandatory female modesty laws.

Source: [Associated Press](#)

Four Central Asian States and Azerbaijan Begin Joint Military Exercise

On July 8, armed forces from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan began joint military maneuvers on the shore of the Caspian Sea, according to the Kazakhstan Defense Ministry. The exercises are being held under the title " (Unity) - 2024." The exercise lasted until July 17 and included 4,000 servicemen and about 700 weapons with a mix of ground, air, and sea forces.

Source: [RFE/RL](#)

EU Greenlights Military, De-mining Aid for Armenia and Azerbaijan

The European Union has agreed to deliver 10 million in non-lethal military aid to Armenia while also providing an unspecified, but likely comparable, amount of funding for Azerbaijan to assist with de-mining of reclaimed territory in Karabakh.

Source: [OC Media](#)

Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan Plan to Switch to a Full Free Trade Regime

Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan intend to move to a full free trade regime following the 21st session of the Intergovernmental Joint Commission for the Bilateral Cooperation chaired by both countries' prime ministers, according to a statement from the Uzbekistan Prime Minister's press service. The countries intend to increase trade turnover to \$10 billion annually in the coming years, up from current levels of roughly \$4.5 billion a year.

Source: [Eurasianet](#), [Kazinform](#)

U.S. Acting Special Coordinator for the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment Travels to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan

U.S. Acting Special Coordinator for the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGI) Helaina Matza traveled on July 14–19 to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Matza met with government officials and private-sector representatives in an effort to advance strategic infrastructure investments in the region based on commitments made at the 2023 C5+I Summit.

Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)

G7 Official Announces \$200 billion Investment in Central Asian Infrastructure

In a meeting with Kazakhstan's Deputy Foreign Minister, the Acting Special Coordinator for the Partnership on Global Infrastructure Investment in the United States Department of State announced that G7 countries are prepared to make investments valued up to \$200 billion in Central Asia. The aim is to expand trade within the region and to European countries. The in-

vestment is slated to include infrastructure for transportation, clean energy, and critical mineral extraction.

Source: [Astana Times](#)

Russia Attempts to Ease Migrant Concerns

After several months of slowed Central Asian labor migration to Russia following Moscow's increased xenophobic sentiment, Russia put forth several new labor policies. This included tightened labor restrictions and increased penalties for illegal migrants. On July 15, Russia released a new program to help "assimilate" migrants and ease legal concerns. The course will be required for all new migrants and will attempt to educate newcomers to Russian labor laws and cultural norms.

Source: [Times of Central Asia](#)

Azerbaijan-Armenia Meeting on Sidelines of NATO Summit

U.S. Secretary of state Antony Blinken held talks with Azerbaijani and Armenian foreign ministers on the sidelines of the July NATO summit in Washington. According to a statement released by the spokesman of Armenia's foreign minister, no progress was made on a peace agreement during the discussions. During the meeting, Secretary Blinken stressed the "importance of peace in promoting regional connectivity." Armenia and Azerbaijan have been engaged in a peace process since September 2023.

Source: [RFE/RL](#), [Eurasianet](#)

Azerbaijan, Georgia, Romania, and Turkmenistan Agree to Sign Agreement on Caspian-Black Sea Transport Route

On July 18, during political consultations held in Bucharest between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan and the Transport and Infrastructure Ministry of Romania, the sides confirmed their intention to sign a quadripartite intergovernmental agreement among Turkmenistan, Romania Azerbaijan, and Georgia on the creation of a Caspian Sea-Black Sea international transport route. The initiative aims to enhance the movement of goods between the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea, ultimately connecting these regions more closely with European markets.

Source: [Golden Age State News Agency of Turkmenistan](#)

Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan Pledge to Increase Bilateral Trade

On a state visit to Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan President Sadyr Japarov announced a package of trade deals worth \$2 billion with his counterpart, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. The agreement called for the establishment of trading houses in Bishkek and Tashkent and easing regulations in trading agricultural products. The visit also launched several jointly owned projects, such as a fabric factory, a vehicle manufacturing plant, and two solar plants.

Source: [Times of Central Asia](#), [Uzbekistan Press Office](#)

Azerbaijan Formally Invites Armenia to COP29

On July 21, Hikmet Hajiyev, Assistant to the President of Azerbaijan and head of the foreign policy department of the head of state's administration Head of the Foreign Policy Affairs Department of the Presidential Administration, announced that Azerbaijan had formally sent an invitation to Armenia for COP29. "COP29 president-designate Mukhtar Babayev has sent a letter of invitation to the Armenian Foreign Minister," Hajiyev told journalists on the sidelines of the 2nd Shusha Global Media Forum.

Source: [News.az](#)

Early August Railway Developments in Central Asia

Tajikistan's Ministry of Transport reported that the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KO-ICA) has signed a MOU to develop the Jaloliddini-Balkhi-Panji Poyon railway project. The line is part of the larger Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Tajikistan (TAT) railway project and estimated at \$4 million. In Kazakhstan, the national railway company KTZ announced the successful completion of the fastest cargo train service yet on the China-Kazakhstan-Uzbekistan route. Departing from Xi'an, the train took five days to travel 4,486 km (about the width of the United States) to its destination in Tashkent. KTZ attributed the success to enhanced border infrastructure between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

Source: [Times of Central Asia](#)

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan Enhance Intraregional and International Trade

On August 9, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan signed bilateral trade agreements during a joint business forum with the aim to increase mutual trade turnover to \$10 billion. The agreements covered a range of industries, including packaged food, pharmaceuticals, industrial materials, energy, and transportation. In other trade news, it was announced on August 9 that the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) invested about \$3.3 million in a 17.36% shareholding of the Kazakh graphite company, Sarytogan Graphite Limited. This is in line with the European Union's strategic partnership with Central Asia on critical raw materials.

Sources: [Daryo](#), [Times of Central Asia](#), [KazPravda](#)

Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan Prepare for CASA-1000 with Key Infrastructure Tests

On August 9, the Energy Ministers of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan agreed on a plan to test overhead lines, transformers, and substations ahead of the Central Asia-South Asia (CASA-1000) electricity transmission project's launch. Scheduled for completion by the end of 2024, a 500 kV transmission line with a length of 456kms is now nearing completion in Kyrgyzstan.

Source: [The Times of Central Asia](#)

SCO Attempts to Reduce Dollar Dependency

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization announced a new initiative to promote more non-dollar currency exchanges among its member states. The "Foreign Exchange Transaction Union" will trade yuan, rubles, and tenge through streamlined transactions and enhanced digital infrastructure for trading. For Russia and China, de-dollarizing international trade is a long-standing goal.

Source: [The Times of Central Asia](#)

Kazakhstan Hosts 6th Meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia and Azerbaijan

On August 9, leaders of the five Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) and Azerbaijan convened in Astana, Kazakhstan, for the 6th Consultative Meeting of the Central Asian states. During the summit, the five Central Asian leaders signed the "Central Asia 2040" regional cooperation development concept. Additionally, the "Roadmap for Regional Cooperation Development 2025-2027" and the "Action Plan for Industrial Cooperation of Central Asian States 2025-2027" were approved, in which Azerbaijan was designated as a key ally. The leaders discussed cooperation in trade, transportation, agriculture, and energy. Among the initiatives discussed, a "green power plan" by Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan to export solar- and wind-generated electricity across the Caspian Sea to Western markets was specifically mentioned.

Source: [Eurasianet](#)

Meta Takes Down Russian Information Operation in South Caucasus

In August, Meta identified and took down a Russian network on social media that was conduct-

ing an information campaign in Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. The network consisted of 76 Facebook accounts, 30 Pages, and 11 Instagram accounts. Reportedly, the Georgian pages were supportive of the governing Georgian Dream party, while the Armenian pages opposed the government of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. The Azerbaijani pages reportedly pushed anti-Western messaging and was attuned to local issues.

Source: [Meta](#), [Georgia Today](#)

Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan Conduct Joint Military Exercises

According to the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan, the Altyn Kyran – 2024 (Golden Eagle) joint tactical-special exercises took place at the Koktal training ground in Zharkent, Kazakhstan, between the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. The military exercises ended on August 24.

Source: [Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan](#)

Bulgaria Seizes Large Heroin Shipment, Says it Originated in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan

Bulgarian police seized 436 kilograms of heroin, worth an estimated \$38 million, at the Black Sea port of Burgas. Bulgarian authorities claimed that the narcotics originated in Kyrgyzstan and crossed the Black Sea via Georgia's Batumi port. Kyrgyz officials denied that the heroin originated within their country.

Source: [RFE/RL](#)

Azerbaijan Accuses Armenia of Shelling Positions

Azerbaijani authorities accused Armenian forces of shelling Azerbaijani positions within Azerbaijan's Nakhchivan exclave on two separate occasions on August 15 and August 16. Armenia has denied the allegations, accusing Baku of using escalatory rhetoric, and re-iterated its request to form a joint monitoring mechanism force to assess claims of cease-fire violations.

Source: [OC-Media](#)

Azerbaijani and Uzbek State-Owned Energy Companies Sign an Agreement on Exploration in Uzbekistan

On August 22, at the Uzbek-Azerbaijani business forum held during President Aliyev of Azerbaijan's visit to Uzbekistan, an agreement on exploration was signed between the state-owned energy companies of the two countries. SOCAR and Uzbekneftegaz signed an agreement on "geological exploration at investment blocks in Uzbekistan." The two companies signed an agreement in August 2023 on participation in oil and gas projects in both countries.

Source: [Interfax](#)

Tender Announced for Roads Connecting Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan

On August 21, the Roads Department of Georgia announced an international tender for the construction of new roads connecting Georgia with Armenia and Azerbaijan. The project, financed with a 250 million loan from the European Investment Bank, involves the construction of the Rustavi-Red Bridge Road section connecting to the Azerbaijan border and the Algeti-Sadakhlo road to the Armenia border.

Source: [Agenda Georgia](#)

Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan Forge Alliance

On August 22, Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev conducted a two-day state visit to Uzbekistan. In Tashkent, President Aliyev and his counterpart, Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev,

attended a meeting with representatives from the business communities of both countries. The two leaders also held meetings in limited format, in addition to holding the first meeting of the High Intergovernmental Council. Aliyev and Mirziyoyev signed the Treaty on Allied Relations. The delegations of the two countries signed agreements in the areas of tourism, trade, education, science, and labor rights.

Source: [President of Azerbaijan](#)

Pashinyan: Armenia and Azerbaijan Close to Peace Agreement

At an August 31 press conference, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan announced that Armenia has made a formal offer to sign a peace treaty after judging enough progress had been made on issues like border-demarcation. Pashinyan stated, “We have 17 articles in the latest draft of the peace treaty. Thirteen of them, including the preamble, are fully agreed on.” The announcement came two days after Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed to the creation of a joint commission on border demarcation.

Source: [Politico](#)

Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan Agree to Joint Ferry Production

Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan agreed to allocate \$150 million for a joint venture aimed at Caspian Sea transit ferry production. The ferries will be used to meet Uzbek needs relating to trans-Caspian commerce. Reportedly, the two countries are also preparing a joint venture to develop transportation along the Middle Corridor and warehouse infrastructure development.

Source: [Daryo](#)

Azerbaijan, Georgia, Romania, and Hungary Establish a Joint Venture on the Green Energy Corridor

On September 3, ministers from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Romania, and Hungary launched a joint venture to install a power line under the Black Sea aimed at increasing renewable energy supply to the European Union from the South Caucasus. The leaders of the four countries approved the project in 2022 in an effort to help strengthen energy security and drive down electricity prices for consumers. The cable will connect Azerbaijan, with significant potential for wind-power generation at Caspian Sea farms, to EU members Romania and Hungary through Georgia.

Source: [AP News](#)

Russia to Host Second C5 Russia Summit

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has announced that Russia is preparing to host a second summit of Russia and the five Central Asian heads of state. This “C5+” format has been regularly used by Central Asians in recent years, with the five Central Asian heads of state meeting with leaders from Japan, the European Union, and the United States. Commenting on Western relations with Central Asia, Lavrov remarked, “When our Central Asian partners and allies engage with the West, it is clear that while the West may have legitimate goals, it also seeks to diminish Russian influence.”

Source: [Daryo](#)

Medvedev Proposes Bans on Migrants Bringing Families to Russia

Former Russian President and current Deputy Chairman of the Russian Security Council, Dmitry Medvedev, proposed in a September 5 interview with Russian news service TASS that Russia ban labor migrants from bringing their families to Russia. The statement was made amid claims that migrant children who do not speak Russian are attending Russian schools. It is uncommon for seasonal migrants to bring their families to Russia. There are believed to be 5 million Central

Asian migrants currently working in Russia.

Source: [ASIA – Plus](#)

Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan Issue Warnings Against Travel to Russia

On September 10, the Embassy of Tajikistan in Moscow warned citizens against travel to Russia a week after Kyrgyzstan's Foreign Ministry made a similar announcement. The embassy's statement cited increased security measures and document checks. Recent months have seen an increasingly racist atmosphere develop toward Central Asians in Russia in the aftermath of the major Crocus City Hall terror attack, likely conducted by Tajik nationals. Over a million Kyrgyz and Tajik citizens are in Russia at any given moment, most often as migrant workers.

Source: [RFE/RL](#)

Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan Sign Agreement on Gas Cooperation

On September 11, Kazakhstan's Minister of Energy Almassadam Satkaliyev signed a Memorandum of Intent with Deputy Chairman of Turkmenistan's Cabinet of Ministers Batyr Amanov and the Chairman of Turkmenistan's state-owned energy company, Türkmengaz Maksat Babayev. The agreement is intended to strengthen cooperation in the natural gas industry.

Source: [The Astana Times](#)

Secretary Blinken Holds Phone Call with President Aliyev and Prime Minister Pashinyan

On September 12 and 16, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken held phone calls with Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev, respectively. According to the press statements, Blinken welcomed progress achieved between Armenia and Azerbaijan in peace negotiations, namely the agreement on border delimitation. Secretary Blinken reaffirmed the importance of a sustainable and dignified peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Aliyev emphasized the need for Armenia to renounce its territorial claims against Azerbaijan, which he views as embedded in its Constitution and other legislative acts. He also called for the dissolution of the OSCE Minsk Group and related institutions, considering them outdated remnants of the past.

Blinken discussed U.S.-Armenia cooperation in the fields of energy, trade, and education with Pashinyan.

Source: [U.S. Department of State](#) , [President of Azerbaijan](#)

BBC Russia Identifies 124 Central Asians Killed in Action in Ukraine

An investigation by BBC's Russian language Service, published on September 6, identified 124 Central Asian nationals killed in action while fighting for Russia in Ukraine. This number includes 51 Tajiks, 47 Uzbeks, and 26 Kyrgyz. This number is likely an underestimation, given the difficulty in accurately assessing battlefield casualties. Russian officials have become notorious since 2022 for coercing thousands of Central Asian labor migrants into military service in Ukraine.

Source: [BBC Russian](#)

Organization of Turkic States Body Announces Shared Turkic Alphabet

The Turkic Academy Organization of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) has announced a 34-character shared Turkic alphabet, inspired by the Latin alphabet. The process of formulating a common alphabet had been in the works since May 2023 and came amidst OTS members working to increase political and cultural ties. It is unclear how this common alphabet might be implemented in the coming years.

Source: [Anadolu](#)

EBRD Releases Economic Projections for South Caucasus and Central Asia

According to the September edition of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development's Regional Economic Prospects report, Central Asia was projected to have 5.1% growth in 2024 and 5.9% in 2025 (this includes Mongolia). In the Caucasus, which the report did not group together, Armenia was forecast for 6.2% growth in 2024 and 4.8% growth in 2025, while Azerbaijan was forecast for 3.8% growth in 2024 and 2.7% growth in 2025, and Georgia was predicted to have 6.5% growth in 2024 and 4.6% growth in 2025.

Source: [EBRD](#)

German Chancellor Scholz's Visit to Central Asia Concluded with Deals

Another C5+1 format concluded this in September with Germany, marking the first time in 14 years that a German chancellor had visited Central Asia. Reflecting the deepening economic ties between Germany and Kazakhstan, most of the deals achieved during the visit involved investment projects and education collaboration between the two nations. Uzbekistan also made strides in deepening connections with Germany through deals to facilitate labor migration and receive development investment.

Source: Astana [Times](#), [Daryo](#)

Türkiye Signs Deal to Import 1.6 bcm of LNG per year from the United States

On September 18, Türkiye's state gas importer, Botas, signed an agreement with France's TotalEnergies to import 1.6 billion cubic meters (bcm) of LNG per year from the United States. The deal would start in 2027 and follows similar agreements signed by Botas with Shell for 4 bcm a year and ExxonMobil for an undisclosed amount earlier in September and last May, respectively.

Source: [Eurasianet](#)

Blinken Holds Talks with Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken held tri-partite discussions with Armenia's Foreign Minister Mirzoyan and Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Bayramov on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly. The discussion focused on the ongoing Armenia-Azerbaijan peace and normalization process, with Blinken commending both parties for the progress made thus far.

Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)

Russia Removes Taliban from Terror List

In what would appear to be part of a larger trend of Taliban de facto recognition, Russia became the latest country on October 4 to remove the Taliban from its official list of terrorist groups. The finalization of the removal was announced by Russia's envoy to Afghanistan, who delivered the statements the same day as a conference in Moscow on Afghanistan. The conference featured a meeting between Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi.

Source: [Voice of America](#)

Turkic Investment Fund to Begin Financing Projects

On October 16 Kyrgyzstan's Chamber of Commerce and Industry announced that in January of 2025, the Organization of Turkic State's (OTS) new investment fund would begin financing projects in Kyrgyzstan. The Turkic Investment Fund, currently equipped with \$1 billion in investment capital, was founded in 2023 by OTS member states. Hungary, an OTS observer state, joined the investment fund in 2024.

Source: [Times of Central Asia](#)

BRICS Summit in Russia

Russia hosted an October 22–24 a summit of the BRICS intergovernmental group in the city of Kazan. The heads of state of all BRICS members, Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates, attended. Additionally, leaders from a number of states that are set to join BRICS, such as Azerbaijan and Türkiye, and non-members like Armenia, Kazakhstan, and others attended the event.

Source: [Sputnik](#)

Armenia and Azerbaijan Meet on Border Delimitation

On November 1, the 10th meeting of the State Commission on the Delimitation of the State Border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as the Commission on the Delimitation of the State Border and Border Security Issues between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan, took place on the border between the two countries. Meetings were held under the chairmanship of deputy prime ministers of the two countries. Discussions centered around outlining sections of the borderline for further delimitation, as well as the completion of the necessary domestic procedures for formalizing the rules of delimitation and regional transportation.

Source: [Apa.az](#), [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia](#)

U.S. Applauds Armenia and Azerbaijan Progress on Border Delimitation

On October 31, U.S. State Department spokesman Matthew Miller wrote the following on platform X: “The U.S. commends Armenia and Azerbaijan for formalizing the rules of procedure for border delimitation, demonstrating that progress is possible through sustained dialogue. We support both sides’ work towards a durable, dignified peace for security and prosperity in the region.” The statement followed Azerbaijan and Armenia’s ratification of their first-ever bilateral agreement on the statute governing the joint activities of border delimitation commissions.

Source: [Anadolu Agency](#), [X](#)

COP29 Kicks-Off

The United Nations’ annual Climate Change Conference for this year (COP29) commenced on November 11 in Baku, Azerbaijan. The conference aimed to focus on financing the transition away from carbon-based energy, a multi-trillion-dollar project. On November 12, the two-day World Leaders Action Summit at COP29 got under way, with about 100 leaders taking part, including Prime Minister Keir Starmer of the United Kingdom, European Council President Charles Michel, and high-level representatives from the United States, China, Russia, and other countries.

Source: [Time Magazine](#)

U.S. Facilitating Armenia-Azerbaijan Cooperation on Shared Rivers

On November 12, seemingly on the sidelines of the COP 29 summit in Baku, Azerbaijan, U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan Mark Libby released a statement that “A group of hydrologists and engineers from Azerbaijan and Armenia are working together—with our active support—on an integrated water management scheme for trans-boundary rivers.”

Source: [U.S. Embassy in Azerbaijan](#)

Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, China Announce New Cargo Terminal

On the sidelines of the COP 29 conference, Azerbaijani, Chinese, and Kazakh officials signed an agreement on the establishment of a new joint cargo terminal located at the port of Baku at Alat. The terminal will include a universal cargo yard, a 5,000 square kilo-meter covered warehouse complex, and a container yard with a capacity of over 1,000 containers.

Source: [Times of Central Asia](#)

Caspian Leaders Attend World Leaders Action Summit at COP29

On November 12, leaders of the greater Caspian region attended the World Leaders Action Summit and the opening ceremony for COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan. Presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Türkiye and Uzbekistan, as well as prime minister of Georgia participated in the ceremony.

Source: [The Times of Central Asia](#), [Agenda.ge](#), [Daily Sabah](#)

Russia and North Korea Sign Mutual Defense Agreement

On November 12, North Korean state media reported that Kim Jun Un had ratified a mutual defense treaty with Russia, meaning that each country would assist the other if it came under attack. North Korea has recently committed thousands of troops to Russia, reportedly to be deployed into Ukraine. There are reports of clashes between North Korean and Ukrainian troops in Russia's Kursk oblast.

Source: [Kyiv Independent](#)

Tajikistan to Consider Joining Green Corridor Between Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan

Speaking to journalists on the sidelines of COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, Minister of Energy and Water Resources of Tajikistan Daler Juma stated that Tajikistan is "generally ready to consider" joining the green-corridor project with Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan. Daler said that although Tajikistan has yet to be approached regarding the project, "It is obvious that for Central Asian countries, such as Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, such initiatives are important and require development." The week before, in Azerbaijan, the presidents of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan signed a strategic partnership to establish a Caspian green-energy corridor, via which green energy from Central Asia would be exported to Europe.

Source: [Trend News Agency](#)

Officials: Final Agreement Between Armenia and Azerbaijan "Very Close"

Speaking to Armenia's parliament on November 13, Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan described a final-status agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia as "very close." He added, "There are still one or two bits of wording, articles, on which work continues more intensively than in the previous period." An Azerbaijani official that same day reportedly stated to the Russian news service, TASS, that a final document agreement would likely be drafted in early December.

Source: [OC-Media](#)

COP29 Concludes in Baku

On November 24, the United Nations COP29 climate conference concluded in Baku, Azerbaijan. The conference negotiations had run over time with countries debating the parameters of global climate financing, the system through which richer countries would contribute funds for poorer countries to adapt to climate change and transition to green energy. The result of the negotiations was a plan to transfer \$300 billion annually until 2035, a far cry from the \$1.3 trillion that many believed was necessary. President of the United States Joe Biden released a statement congratulating the parties and the COP29 presidency on reaching this outcome.

Source: [BBC](#), [The White House](#)

Azerbaijani Energy Company Acquires Gas Pipelines in Western Georgia

On December 7, the Georgian government approved the direct sale of gas pipelines in western Georgia to Azerbaijan's state-owned energy company SOCAR for 19.8 million Georgian laris

(approximately \$7 million). Based on the order signed by Georgia's Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze, 41 gas pipelines in villages of Imereti, Guria and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti regions will be privatized by SOCAR who will pay approximately 2 million Georgian laris (approximately \$712,000) per year for ten years to the Georgian state. Currently, SOCAR is the main supplier of both natural gas, oil and oil products to Georgia. SOCAR also owns an oil terminal in the Georgian Black Sea port of Kulevi, through which Azerbaijani oil and oil products are transshipped to the European markets.

Source: [Sputnik Georgia](#)

COP29 Gave a Platform for Caspian Countries to Show their Commitment to Energy Transition

At CPC's Energy Security and Post-COP29 Conference in London, CPC CEO Efgan Nifti spoke on the role of COP29 in providing a platform for the Caspian countries to demonstrate their commitment to energy transition, renewable energy, and tackling global challenges. Nifti also highlighted the growing importance of energy security and environment as top priorities in the region: "The challenge of energy security is one of the issues that require common action. The Caspian region has played an important role in providing traditional energy resources, and looking into the future, it is poised to contribute to global energy security with sustainable, secure, and affordable clean energy."

Source: [Trend News Agency](#)

UK Wants to See Further Green Energy Cooperation with the Caspian Region

While delivering her keynote remarks at CPC's Energy Security and Post-COP29 Conference in London, Sophie Westlake, Deputy Director for the UK government's International Energy Unit, which spans across the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), highlighted the need for further cooperation between the UK and the Caspian region: "We have seen the important role of the Caspian region in energy security and gas, but we want to see further cooperation on green energy in the future... There are about 845 gigawatts of energy potential in the Caspian Sea, that is massive potential there for the export of green power to Europe – that is the growing area of interest."

Source: [Trend News Agency](#)

Azerbaijan FM: "15 out of 17 Articles for the Peace Agreement Agreed Upon Between Armenia and Azerbaijan"

On December 12, during his interview with local journalists, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov stated that Armenia and Azerbaijan have agreed on 15 articles of the peace agreement between the two nations. He noted that the agreement consists of 17 articles, and assured that the work on the remaining two articles is ongoing. Armenia and Azerbaijan have continued peace negotiations in the post-conflict period, with sides continuing to hold meetings on the peace agreement. "Despite the open questions, there has been noticeable progress," said Bayramov.

Source: [APA](#)

Azerbaijan Requests Removal of EU Monitors from Armenia, as Parties Work Towards a Peace Agreement

In December 12 statements to the Azerbaijani press, presidential foreign policy adviser Hikmet Hajiyev stated that Baku wishes the European Union monitoring mission to Armenia to end. Hajiyev said, "The deployment of forces of any third country on the territory of Armenia is a worrying factor.... We do not see a need for the deployment of any European Union mission on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. The activities of said mission should be completed by now." Azerbai-

jan and Armenia have been working toward a final peace and normalization agreement since September 2023, when Azerbaijan restored its sovereignty over Karabakh.

Source: [APA](#)

Oil Spill in the Black Sea is Caused by Two Wrecked Oil Tankers

Two Russian oil tankers wrecked in the Kerch Strait separating Russia from Crimea, causing an oil spill in the Black Sea. A rescue operation mounted by Russia rescued 13 crew members from one tanker but was called off due to bad weather, leaving 14 crew members aboard the second tanker. Russian authorities are investigating the incident for criminal negligence.

Source: [BBC](#)

World Bank Ready to Support Green Energy Exports from Central Asia to EU

During a session led by the Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on December 16, Regional Project Coordinator at the World Bank's Central Asia office Dmitry Petrin said: ""The World Bank is fully committed to supporting green energy and energy-trade initiatives. We are actively engaged in projects across Central Asia, including efforts to create a regional energy-trade market." Petrin noted that thorough economic feasibility assessments still need to be conducted about the project. During the recent COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan signed a high-level intergovernmental agreement to establish a strategic partnership for the development and transmission of green energy to world markets.

Source: [Trend News Agency](#)

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