

„NEW SILK ROAD” – CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract. Populations, conquerors, cultures and ideas have swept across the steppes, deserts and mountains of Central Asia for thousands of years, and the region has been the focus of ancient East-West trade routes collectively called “The Silk Road”; it was the board on which the “Great Game” between big actors was played. The region represents the most concentrated mass of wealth in the world; these riches are becoming the stake in a new economic Great Game and new Silk Road. The study presents the situation, risks and challenges the countries involved are facing with, interests, involvement and strategies of different players. The area remains a ground of increased interests and competition between them, indicating perspectives for building a new Silk Road.

Keywords: Eurasia, new Silk Road, Great Game, areas of interests, objectives and strategies, regional security, challenges and cooperation, future perspective.

The region known loosely as Central Asia is a vast arena of desert, steppe and knotted mountain ranges stretching from the Caspian Sea in the west to Mongolia in the east. It spans five former Soviet republics – Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan – and parts of western China. Until just a few years ago it was an inaccessible and unfamiliar area to the outside world. For centuries, Central Asia has been the locus of ancient east-west trade routes collectively called the Silk Road. The notion of the Silk Road stresses Central Asia’s important linking role as the territory through which the great civilisations of the east and west made contact and carried on cultural, economic and other exchange. The Silk Road gave rise to unprecedented trade, but its true glory and unique status in human history were the result of the interchange of ideas, technologies and religions that occurred among the very different cultures that used it.

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