

**End of Geopolitics and the Beginnings of Geopolinomics:
United States in Central and Southwest Asia**

By

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Late 2005 witnessed the reorganization of the Department of State merging Central Asia with the bureau of South Asian Affairs. Complimented with the Silk Road Act II passed by the U.S. House of Representatives, and a follow-up conference on Trade and Development in Greater Central Asia in Kabul April 2006, the policy shift under the Greater Central Asia Partnership (GCAP) defined the new policy patterns in Central and South Asia, unlike the policy in the region since 1992. The new policy draws upon geopolinomics with emphasis on regional and cross-continental trade and development through Central Asia’s historical traditional transportation routes in Southwest Asia on the Arabian Sea coast, rather than the military presence.

George Demko a geographer at the Department of State and his friend William Woods, also a geographer at the Dartmouth College first conceptualized the term geopolinomics in 1994 as an analytical tool to explain policy issues confronted by the post Cold War world and the 21st century. Geopolinomics is differentiated from the 19th century oriented geopolitics and geopolitical economics in the sense that its interdisciplinary nature simultaneously combines the influences of geography, politics and economics. Instead of the search for energy resources, it focuses upon the energy outlet corridors, a 21st century phenomenon, besides the problems confronted by environmental damage, informational technology, hence geo-stationary, and the problems and prospects for the export of electricity and water through electric grids and pipelines. None of the traditional analytical tools of political realism effectively explain the post-Soviet realities. Issues may range from energy corridors to Ethnopolitics and nationalism in the post-Soviet space. It also

helps to explain that the post-Soviet landlocked states in Central Asia and Caucasus have their own geopolitical personalities that often rely upon regional interdependence than international assistance.

It thus changes the very concept of New Great Game in the region that most analysts seem to be applying to Central Asia in tradition of the 19th century British-Russia competition for influence. New scenario may reflect conflicting interests of several world powers in the region; regional personalities are actually defining the emerging political order than many world powers would wish. In the aftermath of the break-up of the former Soviet Union, very few expected that the inner power changes in the region would define the political terms than the competing power relationships. New balance of power in the region leaded by China and Russia under Shanghai Cooperation Organization reflects the geopolitical patterns and personalities of landlocked states shaping regional future.

In fact, very few seem to realize that the post-Soviet space was not simply a geopolitical shaking, but initiation of new geopolinomic realms and new ecumen in the region. The Chinese geopolitical realm is traditionally defined in terms of Southeast Asia, by now has extended in Southwest Asia, with Pakistan providing a window to the Arabian Sea ports, just as it reflects the search of Central Asia for alternative routes of transportation through its traditional commercial corridors. Unlike the dream of Czarist Russia and the Soviet Union, the new geopolinomic simultaneously extends the Pakistani port facilities for Central Russia, Mongolia, Western China, Afghanistan and entire Central Asia. Although history does not repeat itself per se, the emerging regional political order in Central and South Asia resembles some historical epochs of trade patterns and competition for transport routes in recorded history that existed approximately four thousand years ago, and during the early and medieval time periods. It is within this frame that I suggest the EU and U.S. relationships with energy rich Central Asia are likely to develop.

Ancient Silk routes are often perceived to be land based. Seas borne silk routes are often forgotten. Approximately 4,000 years ago, the Chinese and Central Asian civilizations together with the Indus civilization traded with Mesopotamia through the Southwest seaports of areas that comprise modern Pakistan, historically called by Mesopotamians as Melloha, but as Sindh indigenously. The Indus Basin has historically served as the traditional boundary between Central Asia and Bharat, which since the 19th century was called as India only by the British following the tradition of Alexander of Macedonia. But that India in fact, comprises the territory of modern Pakistan, not Bharat that is called India. Historical Sindh stretched from Kashmir to modern

Karachi and Baluchistan regions. The word India has derived from the word Indus associated with the great ancient civilization of Moen-jo-Darro and Harrapa in Southwest Asia with constituencies and interrelationships with similar civilizations in China, Central Asia, Persia and Mesopotamia. IN early A.D. the great Kushan Empire carried out its cross-continental trade through the Arabian Sea port Barbarikon (Indigenously called Bhambhore now in ruins some 60 kilometers nearby modern Karachi) with Egypt, Greek states and the Roman Empire. Suez Canal did not exist then. Ships sailed from Barbarikon, crossed the modern Arabian Sea to Red Sea and entered the Mediterranean via the river Niles Red Sea Canal to reach Greece and Roman Empire. This sea borne trade carried products from Chinese Silk to indigo, cotton products, popular in Egypt and Europe those days.

New Silk Roads are being planned along the old passages through road, railway and maritime transportation, albeit with the advantage of modern science and technology.

Central Asian dimensions: search for alternate routes of transportation, energy transportation, and incentives for electricity and water export and potential for a Central and Southwest Asia cotton cartel. Currently functioning new silk routes include Almaty-Karachi route (from Almaty to Bishkek to Kashgar to Pakistani Karakurams all the way through the Indus highway and Pakistani road network to Karachi and Gawadar. Other routes are via Afghanistan, from Termez to Mazar Sharif and Jalalabad to Peshawar all the way through Indus Highway to Karachi and Gawadar. ADB and CAREC are financing a trans-Asian road and Railway network via Afghanistan connecting all CA states all the way to Europe. The new geopolinomics of transit routes aims to connect Central Asia with the world economy.

U.S. dimensions: despite the earlier theories of a New Great Game based upon the possible U.S. involvement in the region through military means, major policy shift toward trade under the GCAP doctrine is a major development, aiming an economic presence. Until now investments from EU and USA to the region have been largely restricted to energy sector. Future such geopolinomic investments are likely to vary in nature and scope. EU and USA would have to balance between demands for democratization and human rights and the operating levels of political culture in the region for long-term cooperation. The relationships with Central Asia and surrounding regions need to be perceived through the lenses of the emerging geopolinomic order based upon regional geopolitical personalities, where China and Russia are likely to be in ascendancy.

Explain the competitive distances between Pakistan's Southwest Asian ports to the emerging ecumens in Central Asia. Discuss the geopolinomic importance of Gawadar and Karachi as a transnational hub to connect, China, Russia, Central Asia with the Middle East and world.

(Time constraints during the presentation did not allow elaborating explanations below, for which I apologize) **Explain:** Energy corridors, such as TAPI, IPI; the potential Pakistan-Central Asia Cotton Cartel; investments by the Gulf states as well as Japan, China, Singapore, etc in Gawadar and the current pace of investments

However, CA needs major investments in infrastructure to be competitive in world trade. So far, China, Russia and Kazakhstan appear to be major investors in the Kyrgyz Republic, albeit with somewhat little amounts. The other international assistance often comes in the form of little grants or is aimed for specific purposes. It is here that the EU and USA could play an important role in trade related infrastructural developments. It is also there that the CA republics need to shake rid themselves from the post-colonial symptoms of regression, which most states experience under similar circumstances. The knowledge, skills and talent already persist. It is the political will to plan and implement appropriate policies from nation and state building to national and regional economic integration for economic and social development. Also, it is time that the civil society groups integrate hundreds of local associations into their framework. It is also prime time that CA states take a stock of the emerging rebellious tendencies by taking significant steps to re-order domestic socio-economic and political order.

How the old geopolitics is gradually evolving into geopolinomics? Geopolinomics is a gradually developed evolutionary process of geopolitics, as conceptualized by Mackinder, Haushofer and others often found its way to military competition, hence became the integrated part of defense and foreign policies. In the 19th century, the British and Russian dominated regional balance of power with British actually controlling the sub-continent. Present day balance of power is largely shaped by regional powers. Throughout the 19th century and even during the Cold War era 21st century geopolitics served the confronting positions of two super powers. However, geopolinomics, with emphasis on transit routes, for the first time offers the opportunities for cooperation. Briefly, the new Silk Roads

And cross-continental trade is likely to help bridge the gaps among the conflicting interests in the region. Thus, our generation of scholars is witnessing the end of traditional patterns of geopolitics replaced with interdependently oriented global geopolinomics.

