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CONCERNING THE POSITION OF CENTRAL ASIA IN THE FORMAT OF C5+1

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Abstract: C5 framework has been quite popular among the international community thanks to its collective approach as a regional entity to one state at a time, dealing with intricacies of diplomacy while surpassing their opposing views internally. In this paper, we examine the current position and future trajectory of the format as well as its position held in other external parties' observation. The research aims to scrutinize differentiated worldviews, find conjunctions between the subjective opinion and real situation. The unity of CAS is put into scrutiny while the explanation for this somewhat impulsive methods is simple reality. The optimism of the authors carries the evocation of collective interests and intentions to sincere cooperation; external pressure, indecisiveness and strategic shortcomings are true reality and important variables, though.

Keywords: Central Asia, collateral, C5+1, foreign partners, national interests, opposing views.

Introduction

In geopolitical scale, Central Asian region might seem of tiny importance. Current centers of power revolve around energy resources, strategically important crossroads, open markets and the positions of vital trade routes. Truly, CAS are landlocked, economically underdeveloped and politically second-row countries, for the most part. Mostly, people recall them as post-soviet states in discussions and attach their subjective view by associating their potential movements with other soviet-derived countries. However, would this five states with fluctuated background, mild economic might and frail unity be a regionally competent entity with a distinguished voice in global stage? Ever since the formation of new states in the region, a new format is established with the intentions of collective reckoning. It was not the first time the states form an official platform. But, over the 10 years of its existence saw the evolutional changes in the nature and bearing of the participatory states as they came to tacit realization. With the shared power and standing and voice of each other can the states of Central Asia protect their national interests. "C5+1" thus became a new stage for collective approach, agreements and perspectives. However, because the framework is relatively young and institutionally rigid, there are various and contradictory views for the future of C5 unity and

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international conduct. Implications are not precise and require consideration, calling for effort to be sorted out.

Literature review

Despite the fact that the format is relatively new in politically analytical circles' discussions, a few of the local authors of note have been elaborating with the position of C5+1. After some research of the publishing papers, the results are yielded in the form of writers who have done extensive study on the matter recently. Their views are mostly optimistic towards the prospects of the forum gaining the attention of the global community both politically and economically, further resonating with the mood of local researchers and the real situation in the CAS. For example, while authors like Farrukh Khakimov of Development Strategy Center based on Tashkent argues for the multi-vector stance of the de-facto organization to be the natural course of collective action for the end means of trade and economic ties with all foreign partners, Dr. Farkhod Tolipov of Education and Research Institution "Knowledge Caravan" in Tashkent scrutinizes the format, finalizing the situation to be complex than thought to be as many foreign factors are in play and the responsiveness of the CAS also determine the course of action.

However, some observers like Ibrohimjon Abdullayev greatly focuses on the economic discourses and implications the existence of the framework can provide collectively and positively. His optimism mirrors the aforementioned persons but the method of achieving the prosperous regional stability and coordination lies with the economic side of cooperation, he argues. In addition, from the perspective of Rashid Ibragimov of IAIS, the success of the political structure will be determined by its navigation between global superpowers, concerning the nature of agreements signed.

And there are those like Dr. Vasif Huseynov of AIR Center who considers the thorough formation of regional unity is incomplete without the participation and recognition of other regional subjects mainly Azerbaijan, activating the region as a solid entity with enough resources to make others aware of their economic, political and cultural presence.

Methodology

This research into the Central Asian states in the format of C5+1 deals with various approaches to accelerate the collective, social understanding of the forum, its position as viewed by foreign partners/observers, and future implications of their political and economic standing. However, the paper is done only by extension with the assistance of qualitative outline, hinting at the relatively new existence of the format and popularity or lack thereof of it among non-academic circles. Through the deployment of the approach came the satisfactory research results than can be associated with the trend's real-time, progressively interconnecting economic trajectory, collateral, political collectiveness and the use of discourse which frames the image of expanding organization. The methodology focuses on the conceptual side of theoretical formatting instead of reviewing individual state relations. Its positive influence on the CAS population to upgrade to regional consciousness, evolving economic opportunities and wide variety of partner options make for a promising foundation to spread root in the global arena of contradictory interests that is subject to change.

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Another limit to the research's methodological approach is that "C5+1" format is relatively new and localized in the main time. Thus, the academic papers of conceptual use are the officially published secondary materials, which is mainly based on the region itself. Be that as it may, after close scrutiny of the research papers concerning the thesis in hand, one cannot help but be reminded of author objectivity and impartiality toward the local platform, showcasing the righteous, negative outcomes and positive consequences for the states involved. The objective of using the qualitative methodology, then, is to ensure the conceptual framework around the idea that the format in theoretical level can be analyzed to its extreme. With the findings bearing fruitful results, one can point out the semblance of progressive future research and effective perspectives are in the vicinity, promising boastful cooperation between interest groups in dealing with a foreign entity by showing united front.

The data collected constitute, mostly, secondary materials including analytical reports, research papers and individual stance essays within the academic circle. It is advisable to note that the intel that is gathered are purposefully diversified and cover the issues related to foreign, economic, political, and admittance policy of the format, which in turn affects the utilitarian means of qualitative methodology as the latter being connected with theoretical observance.

Discussion

What shortcuts, implications and conclusions, can we make from the findings so far? Do the findings and results of the research can be successfully related/integrated to the main argument of the paper? Where are the limitations of our paper stand and which direction the future research should be dedicated to? From what we understand in Emyr Jones Parry's words:

The realization that comprehensive solutions to certain challenges for a State could not be met by that State acting alone, but required cooperative action by several States, fueled the need for multilateral approaches. Indeed, the responses required cooperative action by many. Paradoxically, this evolution of cooperative action was firmly anchored on the territorial integrity and the equality of States, while nevertheless helping to facilitate peaceful change.

This so-called multilateral diplomatic framework positively applies to the C5+1 framework too. However, the main argument of the paper was that the prospective future outcomes of the cooperation platform are still equivocal, thus including the possibility for multiple scenarios and interpretations. This argument is originated mainly from the observations of Farkhod Tolipov who made claims of ambiguity concerning the format. He logically argues that if not maneuvered successfully, the multi-vector and multilateral trajectory of the platform itself will make it so that the Central Asian Five would be caught up in the triumvirate of belligerence (2024). That is because along with several middle powers, CAS also prioritizes USA, Russia and China to direct their diplomatic approaches, international relations and financial strategies. In turn, the trio recognizes the importance of Central Asia as a hidden card in geopolitics which makes the vying for the ultimate presence in the region fierce. In fact, personal domination in the region is naturally a favored possibility; so the superpowers are overly sensitive to every external, political action/transaction of CAS both collectively and separately.

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Therefore, taking favors or subjectivity and even inactiveness might be interpreted as a loss of valuable opportunity from the superpowers, urging them to act as a counter measurement. At least, a superpower would not allow the other to succeed even if it means the cost of instability and underdevelopment of the concerned location. Which is why from Farkhod Tolipov and Rashid Ibragimov's perspectives, a real, careful navigation of superpowers is central to the policy of the format (2025). It is contended that the platform has gained massive popularity and a trace of actual agenda to pursue. However, it is still too early to assume that the hardest stage of its formational existence had passed. Conversely, because of the current dealings of geopolitics combined with the aforementioned issue, the prospects of the format are positive but still unclear.

Moreover, other observers are also stress the use of balance-of-power politics. For example, while Farrukh Khakimov may be in positive light to cherish the multi-vector policy of the framework, what he means by that is the unspoken reality. There are no ways in geopolitical arena without risk involved; however, choosing deliberately, and with partners, the most fit approach would at least provide for political maneuvering, necessary scheming and a piece of bargaining chip (2025). Considering the situation in global, political interactions, it is mandatory for the CAS to participate carefully and capriciously, using the adaptation of the format.

Meanwhile, some authors are more concerned with the economic relations of the Central Asian Five with other major players to be a driving factor of decisive outcomes for the regional states. Stating "A summary table of the largest transactions of C5+1 linked, and a conceptual map of the C5+1 funnel of investment marketing, demonstrates how narrative, policy, and capital flows are supportive of each other (2025)", Ibrohimjon Abdullayev makes it clear that if overlooked, unwanted, economic ties would entangle the thriving economy and finance system, heralding the backlash of the negative implications of the existence of the platform.

Then there are those who believe in the optimistic, utilitarian means of expanding policy. Vasif Huseynov (2025) states that "What had long been a C5 grouping transformed into a C6, marking a historic moment: Caspian was no longer a frontier separating two regions but the center of a unified geopolitical and geo-economic space." Looking at it from that angle, it is not merely exclusive for only Azerbaijan as a benefit for the platform to absorb, but the continuation of the trend in expansion that makes it a worthwhile thought and trajectory. Thus, from the author's intentions, we can deduce that it is another way of politicking expectantly with external bodies to expand, make alliances with neighbors, and integrate objectively.

Conclusion

The platform is still new and constantly adapting to the geopolitical environment, while the other parties are also in a rush to reap the benefits of carelessness and inactiveness for maximum interests' sake. Therefore, C5+1 as a political, discourse-based framework need to adapt, learn to assist and act in the most suitable momentum, differentiating and recognizing every participatory state's interests and rights at the same time. Currently, even though optimistic observers claim of successful future and consequent recognition of CAS and there are truly merit for their opinion, the C5+ of present is a recuperation stage for the states. It is to be noted that current, chaotic atmosphere of geopolitics are unreliable and variable to the point of unpredictability. With that in mind, we ventured in this paper to

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lay out the reasons, machinations and possible consequences of equivocal environment. As it turned out, there are several scenarios of the outcomes to play out with political variables involved. However, C5+1 format has both its benefit and drawback as it its political navigation is multi-vector approach.

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