

China-Tajikistan Economic Cooperation Plan a Geoeconomic Closed Door on the Belt and Road

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Abstract: The bilateral *China-Tajikistan Economic Cooperation Plan* remains classified. It is an important document outlining the geoeconomic, geoindustrial, and trade relationship between China and Tajikistan. While the core agreement is classified, several surrounding documents are in the public domain. This article presents primary-source research from China's public administration side of the bilateral economic relationship focusing on Party-state policy, foreign policy, the *Belt and Road* and *International Capacity Cooperation* policies, and external industrial policy—arguing for a parallax viewing. It details some of the key areas of policy cooperation, demonstrates the spatial planning and public administrative architecture that Tajikistan is expected to dock with on the China side, and places China-Tajikistan foreign policy in relation to other regional economies in China's developing international relations hierarchy. The article is framed within China's *International Capacity Cooperation* outward FDI policy and details some key areas of industrial, science and technology and agroindustrial cooperation. It concludes that the geoindustrial policy deployed by China in Tajikistan and wider Central Asia is as yet malformed, but that a geoeconomic approach to future geoindustrial policy analysis is essential.

Keywords: Geoeconomics; Geoindustrial policy; Geopolitics; Belt and Road; International Capacity Cooperation; Central Asia; China; Tajikistan

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Introduction

Belt and Road is not simply an 'infrastructure' project. It is China's principal trade and investment policy and guiding foreign policy. And it is interwoven with a wider geoeconomic strategy and a geoindustrial policy – *International Capacity Cooperation* (ICC). However it is insufficient to categorise China's regional geoeconomic policy as simply debt-trap diplomacy or classical geopolitical spheres of influence. China's geoindustrial policy in Eurasia is primarily a sophisticated piece of political economy for exporting China's closed-model of industrial development into new host economies. It is also designed with an embedded ideological shift to accommodate China as a new bilateral regional player in host economic macroregions, and the process of institutional change that this inherently brings. China-Tajikistan patron-client economic international relations is fundamentally part of a wider shift in Central Asia and Eurasia from the dichotomy between the classical geopolitics of Russia and the functionalism of the European Union to a new form of geoeconomic policy practiced by China.

China's geoindustrial policy in Eurasia is a sophisticated political economy policy which exports China's closed-model of industrial development into new host economies. However the practical underlying policy mechanisms and economic institutions are ignored by scholars working on *Belt and Road*, often in favour of simplistic analyses of grand strategy. There are many political economic institutions at work in China's Central Asia geoeconomic strategy, and many national and subnational policies already deployed. This paper analyses the core geoeconomic policy agreements between China PRC and Republic of Tajikistan, shedding light on difficult to find primary-source policy documents.

In Tajikistan, China is running multiple policy narratives, and China's Tajikistan policy must be read in line with wider regional policies such as the China-Central Asia or China-Iran policy suites and China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor development policy, and ultimately China's Indian Ocean and East Africa geoeconomic strategy. This paper is a survey of recent Chinese geoeconomic and geoindustrial policy towards Tajikistan. While traditional geopolitical axes and China's military strategy in Tajikistan deserves attention and analysis (Shih 2019; Mumin, 2019; Putz 2019), the wider macropolicy should not be framed in the classical geopolitical clichés of 'spheres of influence' 'imperial graveyard's' or the hyper-simplistic 'Great Game' narrative. Regional economic integration is both more important and more dangerous than simple 20th century proto-geopolitics. China's *Belt and Road* and *International Capacity Cooperation* policy deployment in Eurasia is more like China's 21st Century late phase finance capital (Hilferding, 2010; Minsky, 1986) but expressed in a novel geoeconomic policy form.

This paper presents several ideas that have not had geoeconomic analysis before, including an analysis of categorisation of China's foreign policy hierarchies in the region, China's southward sphere of influence towards the Indian Ocean, and geoeconomic analysis of China's offshore Special Economic Zone (SEZ) system. The paper also employs a post-Keynesian financial capital analysis of China's geoeconomic policy in the region, arguing that the institutional inter-relationship of China's domestic industrial infrastructure, regional foreign policy, and domestic financial risks combine to form something akin to a debt-deflation risk behind a closed-capital

account but in an external geography. The twin argument is that China's domestically accumulated capital poses endogenous risks to any institution exposed to it, and that its use is institutionally connected to China's domestic industrial economy. This makes a China *International Capacity Cooperation* investment in a Tajikistan aluminium smelter an institutionally very different form of capital than an Asian Development Bank loan (Eurasianet, 2019a). This post-Keynesian geoeconomic argument is that China's capital investment in the region poses an endogenous risk, regardless of any geopolitical motivations that may be attached to it. The institutionalised activity of investing China policy bank capital into *International Capacity Cooperation* fixed-capital transfers, carries within it its own form of geoeconomic risk.

The paper is organised into five sections. Firstly a discussion of the evolution of theoretical geoeconomics places it as a subdiscipline alongside critical geopolitics and Marxian geopolitics of transnational capital. The following four sections argue for a parallax viewing of China's geospatial policy in the Central Asian region generally and Tajikistan in particular. That is, that the objects of analysis, China's foreign policy in Tajikistan, should be viewed as moveable against the immovable background of a public administrative geospatial policy with endogenous financial risks, rather than against a variable geopolitical background with exogenous political risks. The paper is structured around four 'look left, not look right'. These are: 'do not look at the *Belt and Road*, look at *International Capacity Cooperation*'; 'do not look at the Chinese State, look at subnational provinces'; 'do not look North to the Moscow axis, look South to the Indian Ocean axis'; and finally 'do not follow the liquid-capital investment, instead follow fixed-capital investment'. The paper concludes with some suggestions about upgrading foreign policy thinking about Tajikistan in China's Central Asia and Middle East external spatial planning narrative and questions the future direction of China's geospatial policy.

Geoeconomics and State Capital in Eurasia

21st Century geopolitics in a globalised economy, a neoliberal world order, and multilateral institutional settings is not about ownership or use, but about access. This is the critical geopolitics theory that is positioned as the primary subdiscipline in contemporary geopolitics. This section seeks instead to reengage with the early works of geoeconomic theory and to place contemporary geoeconomic theory in contrast to contemporary critical geopolitics as a more useful analytical tool for examining China's geopolitical, geoeconomic and geospatial policies.

Geopolitical theory in its application to geoeconomics is still intellectually nascent, thirty years after Luttwak's seminal essay, there is plenty of academic work on critical geopolitics in the region moving passed classical geopolitical assessments but not nearly as much geoeconomics applied to the region, and work that does apply geopolitics theory to Tajikistan or China's role in Tajikistan are few and far between. In deploying extant geoeconomic theory, this study seeks to argue against the reductionist analyses of Great Game, neocolonialism, and neomercantilism. In assessing the current form of geoeconomics and arguing for its expansion, the paper asks for the possibility of introducing spatiality into post-Keynesian economic theory so that it may push geoeconomics and critical geopolitics forwards as subdisciplines.

In revisiting the origins of geoeconomic thought, this paper principally contrasts two conflicting conceptions of what would grow into a subdiscipline: Edward Luttwak's *From Geopolitics to Geo-Economics: Logic of Conflict, Grammar of Commerce* (1990) and David Harvey's *The Geopolitics of Capitalism* (1985). The ideas in these two essays are contrasted with theoretical work in the contemporary subfields of both geoeconomics and geopolitics. This geoeconomic framework is aligned with Historical Institutional methodology for the data selection and analysis in this paper, and finally the paper argues for a conceptualisation of a post-Keynesian geoeconomics.

Luttwak's 1990 essay makes the political philosophy extremely clear: 'mercantilism was a subordinated modality' while 'geoeconomics...is emerging in a world where no higher modality exists.' This is why arguments of China being 'neomercantilist' are facile, because they presume a higher order of modality, namely that if China persistently engages in neomercantilist practices that the United States, European Union, Japan or Russia could escalate the order of modalities to conflict and thence possibly to war. This is true in both classical and critical geopolitics, as well as all forms of international relations theory even including complex interdependence. Luttwak's original conception of geoeconomics invokes economics at a higher order of modality than complex interdependence (Keohane & Nye, 1977). Complex interdependence holds that the economic interrelationships are so important that states would be withheld from escalating into a higher modality of conflict. Luttwak's argument by contrast is that the economic conflict between states is already the highest order modality, and that any other conflict would be subordinate rather than superordinate to it.

Luttwak is careful to separate out the causes and instruments of conflict. In the past, some instruments of conflict were economic, but the superordinate causes were not. In the era of globalisation 1.0 from 1990 to 2020 the superordinate causes of conflict were all economic, while the instruments also became mostly economic. That's why actions like Russia in Donbass or Trump's national rejuvenation program grate at the senses of those who see geoeconomics as the superordinate modality — both Putin and Trump play subordinate modality instruments, in a time that has passed them by. However they remain playing the wrong subordinate game within a system that does remain superordinately state-centric. Luttwak's geoeconomic argument invokes Clausewitz when he says geoeconomics is the 'logic of war in the grammar of commerce.' This logic of conflict maintains that traditional states would not disappear, but rather that the traditional states that did not institutionally adapt to the new forms of geoeconomic state competition would become weakened and brittle, using 20th Century plays on 21st Century games. This 20th and 21st Century statecraft is excellently demonstrated by our China-Tajikistan case—China can be argued to be weaponising capital, while Tajikistan, along with the rest of Central Asia, is still playing a reactionary game to 20th Century Sovietism, appropriating the institutional wreckage for replication and capture by elites (Markowitz, 2013), while other nations move forwards into planes of geoeconomic competition.

More than subordinate or superordinate modality though, neither Luttwak's geoeconomics nor complex interdependence theory adequately explain state behaviour in economic conflict, as neither are capable of taking into consideration financialisation. China exporting financialised institutions and financialised risk to Central Asian economies is a new geoeconomic

phenomenon, but no geoeconomic theory is prepared for the institutional intricacies of this cross-border financialisation process. This is a huge flaw in the Luttwakian form of geoeconomics as it emerged from classical geopolitics and international relations theory.

Harvey's *Geopolitics of Capitalism* (1985) lays out excellent paradigms for the future study of geoeconomics, claiming that all social theory, in an attempt to understand the world in time and space, inordinately prioritises time, history, and institutionalism, over space, geography, and structuralism, simply because it is easier. Introducing space in to any social theory which operates under temporal preconditions tends to unhinge the theory. This is why geoeconomics as a subfield or the phenomenon that this article tackles, China's geoindustrial policy in external geographies, is so difficult to reckon with. Political economy theory holds reasonably true within a bordered economy, but we no longer live in bordered economies (space); geopolitics explains great power international relations in Eurasia in the 20th Century, but we no longer live in the 20th Century (time).

Harvey's essay is interesting for its blue-sky thinking, he cites only himself, Marx and Nicholas Kaldor. Kaldor is one of the best economic theorists to invoke in order to bring spatiality into economic reasoning, but Kaldor does fall short in explaining spatiality in international economics, his work holds best in national systems of economics (Kaldor, 1970). Harvey's Marxian analysis crosses borders well into the international institutions of land, labour and capital, and the formation of class institutions, but it is very prescriptive in the narrowness of the institutions which it will entertain. Analysing the geoeconomics of China's Indian Ocean port lease with Sri Lanka through a purely Marxist analysis would yield terrible results and would likely distort the reality of the subject studied.

If classical geopolitics is concerned with space and land, Marxist geopolitics was always concerned with economic power. Both Harvey's Marxist and Luttwak's geopolitical forms of a theory of geoeconomics and are inherently unsatisfactory though. While classical geopolitics has moved on from MacKinder (1904), so too do geoeconomic analyses need to move on from Marx. Harvey's Marxist argument is a good one, but as Jaeger and Brites (2020) argue, Marxist geopolitics leaves too much unresolved or in hyperbole. For a political economy-based geoeconomics, this paper proposes a post-Keynesian geoeconomics. Post-Keynesianism, like economic Marxism, is concerned with the endogenous risks of crises in industrial and post-industrial capitalism. Similarly to Harvey, Kaldor is one of the few bridges towards introducing spatiality into the theory. Post-Keynesianism has not had any attempt to spatialise it. So geoeconomics is a spatialised theory which does not adequately explain financialisation, and post-Keynesianism is a temporal explanation of financialisation that is yet to be spatialised.

Finally, this study stems from textual cataloguing of China domestic policy documents in the State Council public administration system, and connects the dots to present a coherent geoeconomic narrative from an internal analysis of the institutions and instruments of public administration in China applied to external economic geographies. For that the study employs Historical Institutional (HI) theory to define the institutions of economic regulation. Historical Institutionalism forms the data points on which to perform geoeconomic analysis. The theory

behind Historical Institutionalism is established as expressed by leading scholars (Skocpol & Pierson, 2002; Skocpol 1979; Steinmo 2008; Thelen, 2002). But the spatiality of historical development, institutional formation, path-dependency, the German Historical School of economics, the Historical Institutional school of political science, or the geoeconomic budding subfield all struggle with incorporating spatiality into their forms. The modern methodology is to construct a linear narrative from qualitative data points, in short to create an historical record. Primary analyses in the Historical Institutional tradition then are to determine which data points are path-dependent (linear) and which data points are path-independent (critical junctures). A good treatment on path-dependency in economic development and industrialisation is Zysman (1994).

In the China-Tajikistan relationship, we see more structural change than institutional continuity. And the macro analysis is one of geoeconomics and endogenous financial risk in spatial dimensions, while the microanalysis is the institutional and policy matrices that carry out China's economic and foreign policy objectives. So we take the case of China's geoeconomic policy in Tajikistan from an internal analysis of the institutions and instruments of public administration in China applied to external economic geographies. In building a geoeconomic analysis we step through three philosophical stages: public administration data collection and institutional form analysis; Historical Institutional analysis of the development of a China-Tajikistan public administration economic and foreign policy narrative, and a final layer of geoeconomic analysis.

Do not look at Belt and Road, look at International Capacity Cooperation

While *Belt and Road* is the Xi Jinping administration's key foreign and trade policy, much of the practical economic groundwork has been done by Li Keqiang and, before his retirement, by Zhang Gaoli through the more practical *International Capacity Cooperation* (ICC). ICC is essentially the industrial transfer strategy and economic blueprint at the foundation of the *Belt and Road* geoeconomic policy (Liu 2019).

ICC was essentially an upgrade to the nearly twenty-year-old *Go Global* policy which saw both domestic Chinese firms strengthened to compete in international marketplaces, as well as takeovers of strategic foreign enterprises and institutions—such as the successful purchase of Kuka industrial robotics, or the unsuccessful takeover of the Chicago Stock Exchange (Bai and Liu, 2015; Taylor and Burger 2016; McCrank 2018). ICC was formed as China had excess capacity across all industrial sectors, GDP growth was slowing, and FDI investment into outside economies was beginning to ramp up. China was also able to take advantage of a unique position within the WTO framework—the world's workshop within the system, but able to dump commodities with impunity outside the system. And China was able to both accumulate tradeable capital behind a closed capital account while also still investing abroad.

International Capacity Cooperation was then designed to lift up whole industrial clusters from the Chinese mainland—where they were responsible for overcapacity and slower legacy-industry style growth, and transplant them as FDI into China's emerging market trading partners—where they would count as greenfield investment and where the outputs of these new factories would

become new exports from the host economy, either back into China's consumer markets or onwards to third economies. It was a system designed to be a network of offshore industrial bases that could operate as *renminbi* islands, outside the walls of China's closed capital account, but still controllable by the Party's financial and state-owned enterprise institutions. Overarchingly this was a trade policy designed to further China's domestic industrial policy.

International Capacity Cooperation in Central Asia is a very different trade and industry policy world to the one of trade war with the United States. The obvious parallel in Chinese imperial history is of the maritime school and the continental schools of defence, China having been in policy frictions between focusing on the Pacific Ocean or Central Asia for over 150 years through the late Qing Dynasty, with the Pacific maritime policy school usually winning over. Trade policy is then still bifurcated between the Continental and Maritime strategies, two separate policy narratives that come together as part of the *Belt and Road* macropolicy. *International Capacity Cooperation* and industrial enterprise alliances in China's external economies in Central Asia and the Middle East is Beijing's answer to this problem. However Fickling sees parallels with the overextension of communist planning economics at the point of Soviet collapse (Fickling, 2018). While on the domestic capital accumulation side, China is ending its Lewisian surplus labour-dependent economic growth period (Lewis, 1954), and moving its domestically accumulated capital into the world as FDI, something the Soviet Union was never able to effectively attempt. This means that China's contemporary policy both has parallels with the demise of the Soviet Union and is at the same time unapparelled.

Tajikistan was the first Central Asian nation to formally sign on to China's *Belt and Road Initiative*. However the full-fledged bilateral economic plan remains classified. The three public policy documents that blueprint China's geoeconomic relationship with Tajikistan are the 2015 *Memorandum of Understanding on Establishing China-Tajikistan Cooperation Plan Outline* (关于编制中塔合作规划纲要的谅解备忘录); the 2016 *13th Five-year Plan on International Capacity Cooperation* (十三五"国际产能合作专项指引, Guo Fa (2016) No. 83); and the 2017 bilateral Treaty *China-Tajikistan Economic Cooperation Plan Outline* (中塔合作规划纲要). The *China-Tajikistan Economic Cooperation Plan* is the bilateral document detailing the broad macro strokes of the economic relationship and presumably the initial project cooperation areas. Meanwhile, the *13th Five-year Plan on International Capacity Cooperation* detailing the geoindustrial policy underpinning *Belt and Road*, is also classified (Kenderdine 2017). These are three extremely important documents that are not on the public record. Knowing the serial number of the *International Capacity Cooperation* document means that it is at least in wide circulation within the public administration in China. It is not uncommon for such documents to be classified, for example here, 83, 84, and 85 are unlisted entries. But in combination with the Tajikistan-specific geoeconomic policies, these documents would spell out clearly China's geoeconomic strategy in Tajikistan if they were public.

Figure 1. ABOUT HERE. The position that Guo Fa (2016) No. 83 should occupy in the State Council policy repository is missing, indicating that it is classified.

108	国务院关于印发“十三五”国家知识产权保护和运用规划的通知	国发〔2016〕86号	2016年12月30日	2017年01月13日
109	国务院关于开展全民所有自然资源资产有偿使用制度改革指导意见	国发〔2016〕82号	2016年12月29日	2017年01月16日
110	国务院关于鼓励社会力量兴办教育促进民办教育健康发展的若干意见	国发〔2016〕81号	2016年12月29日	2017年01月18日

The *China-Tajikistan Economic Cooperation Plan* was signed in Beijing on August 31 2017. The plan consists of six parts: cooperation scope, cooperation principle, cooperation vision, cooperation focus, implementation mechanism and miscellany (NDRC 2017). Xi Jinping and Emomali Rahmon witnessed the signing of the agreement between the two public administrative counterparts responsible for its development: China's National Development and Reform Commission Director He Lifeng and the Tajikistan Minister of Economic Development and Trade Nematullo Hikmatullozoda (NDRC 2017). This is an important distinction to make: these agreements are between the public administrative arms of government. They are inter-bureaucratic memos, not conventional international treaties, which means that they at least attempt to bypass the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties.

While the bilateral China-Tajikistan Economic Plan document is classified, on the public record is the 'Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Tajikistan on Establishing a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership' from around the same time in September 2017 (China Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017). A 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership' is an hierarchical rank within China's foreign policy framework. It comes with a range of policy assumptions and priorities within the domestic public administration in China. For Tajikistan, a 'Comprehensive Partnership' is an upgrade on the 'Strategic Partnership' agreement of 2013 (see below for further discussion).

In December 2018 Rahmon then set out four national strategic goals on Tajikistan's path to industrialise. The goals are energy independence, reducing traffic congestion, achieving food security and national industrialisation (Ministry of Commerce Department of Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation (2018d). China's investment plays to both industrial goals, agroindustrial development and energy independence. The Tajik plan is clearly formed as a reaction to the 'development-investment' offerings of China.

Key policy plans which must surely mirror the China-Tajikistan Economic Plan are: *Belt and Road* docking with Tajikistan's National Development Strategy to 2030; the establishment of the China-Tajikistan Intergovernmental Economic and Trade Cooperation Committee; promotion of *International Capacity Cooperation* in industrial parks and joint ventures with Chinese enterprises; establishment of the China-Tajikistan Agricultural Cooperation Committee; expanded cooperation in agriculture, agricultural science and technology, and agriculture research; improved quality inspection and quarantine cooperation; and mutual establishment of banking institutions (China Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017). The idea of Chinese banks in Tajikistan is

attractive for China, but China holds an extremely tight control on the entry of foreign banks and foreign capital into China.

The China-Tajikistan economic model also surely mirrors the China-Kazakhstan model which, while also still largely classified, has more open aspects that allow for triangulation, which is insightful for applying a model of China's geospatial policy to other Central Asian geographies. For example the 51 joint Kazakh-Chinese industrial investment projects in Kazakhstan are mostly in either infrastructure or legacy overcapacity industries, such as aluminium. Much of the public policy disseminated on ICC in general and economic and trade policy for Central Asia in particular was publicly available at the Ministry of Commerce's 'Go Global' Public Service Platform from 2016-2020 (Ministry of Commerce Department of Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation 2020). This service platform also connected to the global network of embassy Economic and Commercial Section websites in *Belt and Road* economies, also run by MofCOM. It is again telling that the policy and economics advice being given to the embassies is done through the Ministry of Commerce, not the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Tracking policy, news, and economic press releases from these embassy websites, coordinated by Ministry of Commerce Department of Foreign Economic Cooperation, gives quite a clear picture of what central government policy was towards specific regions. Cross-referencing these outputs by industrial sector and also subnational government in China gave an exceedingly clear idea of both the China government policy intention, as well as the amount of on-the-ground knowledge that was available, or unavailable to them. The MofCOM FEC landing page still categorises countries and macroregions by order of importance, with China's bordering home countries in Asia (including Pakistan and Iran) first, West Asia and Africa second in importance and Eurasian countries at the bottom. Following the 'business news' feed on the MofCOM Tajikistan website gives a pretty good account of where Chinese geoeconomic interests in the region are, because this is the advice compiled by MofCOM and the embassies for the public, ie for Chinese businesses in the targeted economies.

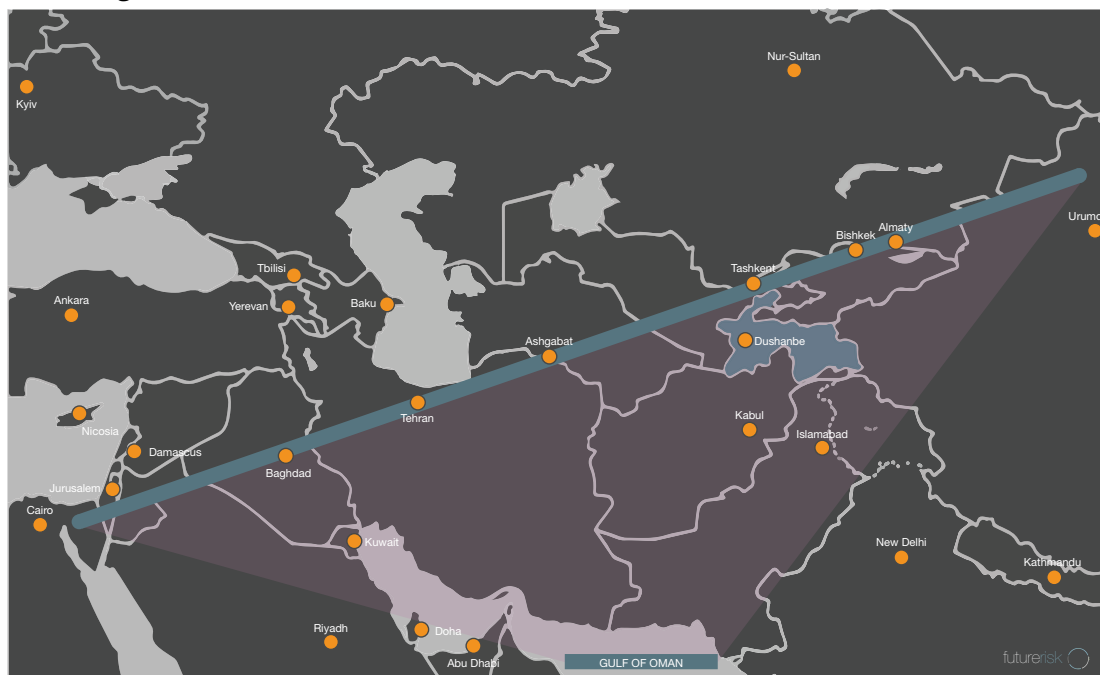
In terms of actually implementing the bilateral geoeconomic relationship, China's Premier Li Keqiang met with Tajik Prime Minister Kokhir Rasulzoda in October 2018 to push forward implementation of the *China-Tajikistan Economic Plan*, including expansion of agricultural exports to China, particularly more agricultural processing on the Tajik side (PRC Embassy in Senegal). Li Keqiang talked up the success of the projects such as the completed Yawan-Wahdat railway tunnel and bridge; the Dushanbe No. 2 Thermal Power Station; the first phase of the China-Tajikistan Highway, and the ongoing second phase (Xinhua 2018b). Li also extolled the value of Tajik cherries and almonds to the China market and the expectation of increased lemon imports. In April 2019 President Rahmon visited Beijing and met with Chairman Xi Jinping, discussing economic integration, enhanced customs clearance measures, and increased transport capacity in ports. (Sun Yiming, 2019). China's capital has an undoubted state-capitalist central direction in the region. But it is being combined with a strategy of coordinating individual small investors into a wider state strategy. Policy banks for government projects and commercial banks for small-holders — a strong state-driven economy in industrials, and a looser 'private capital' investment strategy, with an overall transition to China as an import-driven economy in the region. Most of this trade development is lost to the general Tajikistan population though, with open allegations

that China-Tajikistan trade revenues are being skimmed off by the Tajikistan elite, to the tune of nearly USD 1.5 billion missing annually (Ozodandishon, 2019).

Do not look North, look South

Naturally China has little geoeconomic use for Tajikistan alone. Beijing appears to be attempting to redefine Moscow's traditional geoeconomic influence in the Central Asian region, though with direction towards the Middle East and East Africa rather than towards European Russia. Tajikistan is thus just one weight in Beijing's geoeconomic gravity basket. China is here attempting to pull the regional geoeconomic gravity south, where Moscow's traditional regional sphere pulls the geoeconomic gravity north. If we examine China's bilateral relations in the region as paths towards Iran or Turkey, and as access to the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean then we see a different geoeconomic stress on the inert gravity of the Central Asian region. If the old Russian world was centred on the three key geographies of Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan (Trenin, 2017), then China's strategy in the region is too, but in a pull towards the south, not Russia's pull towards the north. Given the strategic nature of Pakistan for China in the region, it would be fairer to categorise China's big three in the region as Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey. For China, a Pakistan-Iran-Turkey nexus connects China to Europe across only three jurisdictions and also provides port access to the Indian Ocean, Persian Gulf and Mediterranean Sea. China-Tajikistan geoeconomic relations should then be read in the context of working towards these southward and westward axes of access. Afghanistan is geopolitically crucial to China's Indian Ocean access strategy, but China is hedging with Pakistan directly, and Iran via Central Asia.

Figure 2. ABOUT HERE China geopolitical axis line through the region and southward influence arc (Wang, 2018).



Wang Yangshu at Lanzhou University Central Asian Institute, has argued that China's interaction with Central Asian and Middle Eastern economies will primarily be with States along this line. One

step farther would be to accept Wang's premise of an Urumqi to Cairo axis, but to argue that China investment, influence, and action will pull state and economic activity southwards from this axial line towards the Indian Ocean. Basically that north of the Wang-line China would leave to the Moscow northwards political and economic gravity, whereas south of the Wang-line China's influence will pull actors, agents and infrastructure southwards to align with China's Indian Ocean trade and investment geoeconomic policy. This puts Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan as auxiliary patron-client state units to China's principal agents: Pakistan and Iran.

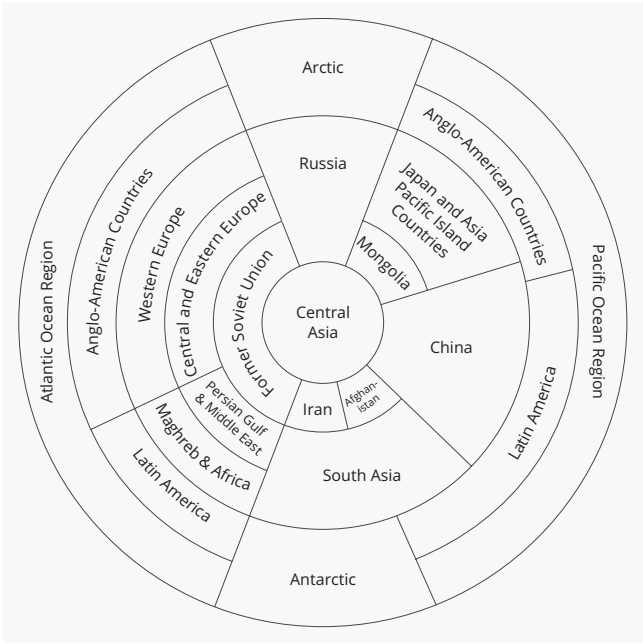
This southward axial development is important, it means reframing the influence debate from an East-West axial friction, to a North-South axial friction. China appears to want to pull its influence towards the Indian Ocean. So expect roads, pipelines, electricity transmission infrastructure to follow roughly southwards and play to China's Indian Ocean access than to any regional economic comparative advantages.

Luttwak in a 2012 book specifically on China explored a great idea: Great-State autism and juxtaposed this with concepts of situational awareness and mirror imaging. Great-state autism is the idea that nation state of a certain size have their bureaucracies so preoccupied with internal crises that their foreign policies both become weakened and also increasingly reflect domestic governance paradigms. Mirror imaging and the problems of cognitive distortions on foreign policy assumptions have been well researched by the United States in guarding against cultural biases in formulation and analysis of foreign policy (Richard, 1999). Luttwak talks about China creating these schema of other countries so that China's way of thinking, negotiating, bargaining, and winning can be employed. However China institutionally knows very little of Central Asia, has almost no situational awareness and, arguably, zero situational competence. And yet creating play-dough versions of these polities in the Beijing policy mind, can help to create a China-centric viewpoint carry institutional weight within China's foreign policy apparatus. If we contrast mirror imaging with a parallax view, or multiple reciprocal parallax views, then we start to see where the myriad misunderstandings come from (Zizek, 2006). Conflicts are then not born of miscommunication, but of misunderstanding. This mirror imaging problem is subjective as well as objective though, China is expanding its 'we system', its 'inside group' for projection onto other geographies. If foreign policy-makers in those geographies begin to take the Sino-centric viewpoint and apply it to their own institutions, then a reciprocal feedback-loop of mirror imaging could take hold.

An example of this mirror imaging the conception of a Central Asian sphere of geopolitical priorities developed by Li and Long (2014) that projects a China world-view onto a Central Asia mirror. Li and Long employ Cohen (2008) for their global geopolitical divisions of Eurasia, Ocean, and East Asia. But they seem to have formed an original conception of Central Asia in their China concentric circle and fan-shaped model. A translation is reproduced below. It is a classic case of the mirror imaging discussed above. The concentric circle map with China in the centre of the world is the most natural way for China theorists to conceptualise their geopolitical world, therefore it is unsurprising that they project this form of thinking on to a region that has shown no inclination to approach world politics like this since the Chagatai Khanate and Timurid Empire in the 14th Century (Subtelny, 2007). For example the concept of Mongolia being a close

geography to Central Asia demonstrates a Sino-centric world-view, rather than how any policy-maker in Central Asia would actually think. Rather than this fan-shaped concentric circle formation, from personal experience in the region, I would suggest that Central Asia has four geopolitical axes that run from the region to Moscow, Istanbul, Vienna, and New Delhi.

Figure 3. ABOUT HERE. Li and Long's Fan-shaped Concentric Circle model of Central Asia's geopolitical priority relationships.




It is also important to remember when arbitrarily applying motives or reasoning to China's foreign policy relations in the region that China, through the majority of the PRC period, had an avowed position of non-alignment through the Cold War. That means very limited interaction with other countries, a very poorly developed foreign relations ministry and related architecture, and that with an opening up and going out policy that China needed to rewrite and often create from scratch an international relations public administration and public policy architecture.

Figure 4. ABOUT HERE China's Foreign Policy Hierarchies in Eurasia

China Foreign Policy Hierarchies in Eurasia			
State	Partnership Status	Chinese	Year
Russian Federation	1. Comprehensive Collaborative Strategic Partnership	全面战略协作伙伴关系	2014
Pakistan	2. All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership	全天候战略合作伙伴关系	2015
Kazakhstan	4. Comprehensive Strategic Partnership	全面战略伙伴关系	2011
Iran			2016
Uzbekistan			2019
Afghanistan	6. Strategic Cooperative Partnership	战略合作夥伴關係	2012
Turkmenistan	8. Strategic Partnership	战略伙伴关系	2013
Kyrgyzstan			2018
Tajikistan			2013
Armenia	12. Friendly Cooperative Partnership	友好合作伙伴关系	2000
Azerbaijan			2015
Georgia			(2006)*

* Georgia's Joint Statement seems to predate the current categorisation syem

Wood System of China Foreign Relations	
1. Comprehensive Collaborative Strategic Partnership	全面战略协作伙伴关系
2. All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership	全天候战略合作伙伴关系
3. Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership	全面战略合作伙伴关系
4. Comprehensive Strategic Partnership	全面战略伙伴关系
5. All-Round Strategic Partnership	全方位战略伙伴关系
6. Strategic Cooperative Partnership	战略合作伙伴关系
7. Important Strategic Partner	重要战略伙伴
8. Strategic Partnership	战略伙伴关系
9. All-Round Cooperative Partnership	全面合作关系
10. Comprehensive Cooperative Partnership	
11. Comprehensive Friendly Cooperative Partnership	
12. Friendly Cooperative Partnership	友好合作关系
13. Friendly Cooperative Relationship	友好合作关系
14. Friendly Partnership	友好伙伴关系
15. New Type of Cooperative Partnership	新型合作关系
16. New Type of Great Power Relationship	新型大国关系
17. [China's] Just Position [on Syria]	正义立场
18. [Sino-Norwegian Relations are] In History's Most Difficult Period	在历史上最困难时期
19. [Kosovar or Palestinian] 'Question'	科索沃/巴勒斯坦的问题
20. No Specific Relationship	(The Philippines)
21	
22. Japan 'Mutual Cooperative Partners', 'Mutually Non-Threatening, Mutually Supporting Partners in Each Other's Development'	互为合作伙伴”、“互不构成威胁，相互支持对方的和平发展

 Relevant status in the diplomatic hierarchy to Eurasian states

For the *Go Global* period now, China is entering uncharted territory: how to form, maintain and engineer optimal outcomes in foreign relations. The systematic categorisation of China's foreign relations hierarchies above of Wood is a great attempt to square a circle that China has not done itself yet. If we see the Norway or Syrian foreign relations status, there is still a Confucian element in describing a moral relationship rather than ascribing a strict public policy hierarchy in a systemic way. The MFA website system of categorising China's diplomatic status with these States does not neatly align with either Wood's system or the primary documents.

Wood categorised China's external alliance system in great categorical and hierarchical detail. This work is very important and has probably not reached as large an audience as it deserves, with many commentators on China's regional political and economic relations unsure of the meanings of the words used in the joint statements without an understanding of the systematic categorisation behind it. It is important to remember here too, that through China's position of political and economic isolation through the Mao period, that China did not have a diplomatic, alliance, or treaty system. Consequently, emerging through the reform period onto the global economic stage, China has an institutional dearth in foreign relations. China, now one of the world's largest economies, does not have as sophisticated an external security, political, or economic relations structure as say, Belgium or Denmark. So understanding the language and categorical structure behind this developing macroregional geoeconomic architecture is significant beyond simply the regions under study here.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs for example, due to the lack of an alliance system above, is a very weak ministry, and not generally proactive in forming or deploying foreign policy. Foreign policy in China can come from a variety of domestic state ministerial and Party institutions. Trade, industry and investment policy has historically been the domain of the Ministry of Commerce for example. And for *International Capacity Cooperation*, MofCOM FEC has been the principal government agent. Foreign policy is generally understood to be a wholly Party domain, often excluding state ministerial actors.

Wood's systematic approach to China's foreign relations protocols though is an external analysis, not a Party-sanctioned or State government accepted hierarchy, but it is the most sophisticated analysis of China's external relations documentation in the public domain. Rather than a formal system, it more resembles a formal system couched in diplomatic linguistic ambiguity. Using Wood's system, this paper used a reconstructed simple matrix of the Eurasian regional State actors and their place within China's foreign policy hierarchy. The lack of a formal hierarchy and direct and transparent foreign policy structure is actually a detriment to China itself. Individual researchers cobbling together obviously extant systems from disparate MFA and MofCOM website reports invites misunderstanding rather than clarity. However in future geopolitical complications, obfuscations of this categorical system may hurt China's foreign policy rather than help it.

For now, while Central Asia and the Middle East are important geoeconomic and geostrategic partners for China, Tajikistan's comprehensive strategic partnership status puts Tajikistan below Eritrea and Mozambique in the Chinese hierarchy (both Comprehensive Strategic Cooperation Partnerships); at the same level as Kyrgyzstan and Iran, Saudi Arabia and Egypt; and above Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania. Indeed for China's Indian Ocean foreign policy ambitions, Tajikistan is geoeconomically closer to Eritrea than to Moscow, requiring a paradigm shift in geoeconomic thinking on Central Asia.

For Tajikistan, this means a geoeconomic balancing act between Russia and China. In April 2019 seventeen new cooperation agreements were signed between Tajikistan and Russia. Rahmon

was in Moscow meeting with Putin ahead of Rahmon's 26 April attendance of Xi's *Belt and Road* forum in Beijing (PRC Ministry of Commerce Department of Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation (2019a). In Moscow Rahmon agreed a range of practical measures including an aluminium industry cooperation agreement signed by Tajik Aluminium Company Talco and VTB Bank, a local wholly-owned subsidiary of the Russian bank; development of a simplified customs corridor; new phytosanitary arrangements for fruit and vegetable imports; and five new schools in Dushanbe, Kulyab, Huzhande, Pokhtar and Tursunzaj (Eurasianet, 2019b). The week later, Rahmon was in Beijing talking up Tajikistan's investment potential in hydropower, communications, industry, agriculture, tourism, and resource extraction (Asia Plus, 2019).

For Tajikistan a 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership' with China is a hierarchical rank within the China's evolving foreign policy framework. It comes with a range of policy assumptions and priorities within the domestic public administration in China. 'Comprehensive' is an upgrade on the 'Strategic Partnership' of 2013, and in 2017, officials from the Chinese ministerial and vice-ministerial levels visited ten times. Tajikistan's exposure and important to China is growing in public administration terms as well as geoeconomic. And it is fair to expect a growing competence from Beijing as ministerial coordination, bilateral trade, and foreign policy alignment all increase. The next institutional development in the bilateral relationship though is likely to be greater geoeconomic integration at the China provincial level as Gansu's provincial administration, state capital and earmarked enterprises begin to integrate Tajikistan into their operations.

Do not look at China, look at Gansu

International Capacity Cooperation is organised at the provincial and prefectural levels of government with China's local regional governments being paired with nation states for economic cooperation. In this provincial international planned economy matrix, Tajikistan is paired with Gansu province.

Gansu is geopolitically located as the rail choke-point for domestic freight carriage to Europe, as well as geopolitically close to China's Central Asian border economies. Gansu historically is a geographically flat valley, control of the Gansu (Hexi) Corridor being integral to China's historical control of Xinjiang, and protection from nomadic invasion in Imperial times. Economically, Gansu is a centre of renewable energy production, and the logical hub for a future potential intercontinental Ultra-High Voltage (UHV) electricity transmission network. Gansu is traditionally agriculturally poor, but agricultural science advances in cotton and tubers have increased production there in recent years.

Figure 5. China-Eurasia ICC one country-one province docking system

State Directed International Capacity CooperationIndustrial Transfers					
Target Economy	Principal Province	Secondary Province	ICC Fund	Industrial Sectors	
Middle East	Pakistan	Guangdong	Shandong, Sichuan	Solar, Infrastructure Construction	
	Iran	Gansu	Silk Road Science Foundation Fund	Steel, Petroleum, Chemicals, Automobiles	
	Saudi Arabia	Fujian	Jiangsu, Yunnan	Civil Nuclear, Oil Refining	
	Egypt	Hubei	Gansu	China-Arab Investment Fund	Infrastructure Construction, Food
	Oman	Ningxia		Infrastructure Construction	
	Dubai	Hainan	China Marine Strategic Industry Investment Fund	Marine Industries	
Central Asia	Kazakhstan	Hebei	China Kazakhstan Production Capacity Cooperation Fund	Infrastructure Construction, Coal, Nonferrous Metals	
	Uzbekistan	Henan	Jiangsu,Sichuan,Shandong	Solar, Communication	
	Turkmenistan	Qinghai	Gansu, Hubei	Petroleum, Gas, Investment	
	Kyrgyzstan	Shaanxi	Shandong		
	Tajikistan	Gansu			

This Central public administration-provincial government-local embassy-local enterprise matching system runs right down to the most local enterprise level possible. This is in effect the same command economy model as China practices at home, with five levels of public administration receiving vertical industrial policy and matching horizontally down the hierarchy across to productive enterprises. While capitalist economy governments must maintain a level of distance between ministerial advice and enterprise autonomy, the Chinese embassy in Tajikistan advertises enterprise-matching as part of its official policy, regulation and economic news feeds. For example, a Tajik Company *Ordi Nov* 'looking for flour mills, vegetable oil processing plants and milling plant partners (PRC Ministry of Commerce Department of Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation (2017) The embassy provides the mobile number of the Tajik enterprise and warning to would-be investors to 'pay attention to investment risks.'

Aside from energy and agriculture, improving science and technology ties are an important part of the Gansu-Tajik economic relationship. Science and Technology Daily reported in April 2018 the first high technology exports from Gansu to Tajikistan (Science and Technology Daily, 2018). Science and Technology, was an integral development policy of China, and techno-industrial policy continues to dominate state development strategies. The first meeting of the China-Tajikistan Science and Technology Cooperation Committee was held in Beijing on 29th March 2018 with a return meeting in Dushanbe in April 2018 (PRC China Ministry of Science and Technology, 2018). The committee was established as part of the *China-Tajikistan Agreement on Science and Technology Cooperation*, under which Gansu has exported high technology goods such as integrated solar street lamps and collapsible solar lithium battery mobile power supplies (PRC China Ministry of Science and Technology, 2018). But this is not simply about exports, it is about building an institutional conduit for technology transfers through connections between government-universities-enterprises involved in high technology. Li Wenqing, director of Gansu's Science and Technology Department talked up the value and prospects of Gansu's potential for international cooperation in food inspection and agricultural product processing (Science and Technology Daily, 2018).

The principal institutions for industrial transfer though is still the bilateral industrial park system. The China already has major industrial parks as part of the ICC policy rollout in neighbouring Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan: the Kyrgyzstan 'Asia Star' Agricultural Industry Cooperation Zone, paired with Henan Guiyou Industrial Group Co., Ltd. and Uzbekistan's 'Pengsheng' Industrial Park,

paired with Wenzhou Jinsheng Trading Co., Ltd. In Agriculture, Tajikistan was China 's first *Belt and Road International Capacity Cooperation* park, Tajikistan-China Agricultural Cooperation Demonstration Park, paired with Xinjiang Lihua Cotton Industry Co., Ltd. And the Tajikistan Industrial park is paired with Tacheng International Resources Limited. But for any future developments in geindustrial investment in Tajikistan, expect it to be coordinated through Gansu provincial government, and paired with a major local Gansu state-owned enterprise in a science and technology related field.

Figure 6. ABOUT HERE China Overseas 'ODI SEZ' Industrial Parks (PRC Ministry of Commerce Department of Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation, 2020)

List of 'Overseas Economic and Trade Cooperation Zones'			
Overseas Economic Trade and Cooperation Zones (ODI SEZ)		China enterprise partner	Geobloc
★			
1	Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone, Cambodia	Jiangsu Taihu Cambodia International Economic Cooperation Zone Investment Co., Ltd.	Southeast Asia
2	Thai-Chinese Rayong Industrial Park	Huali Industry Group Co., Ltd.	Southeast Asia
3	Vietnam Longjiang Industrial Park	Qianjiang Investment Management Co., Ltd.	Southeast Asia
15	Vientiane Saiseta Comprehensive Development Zone, Laos	Yunnan Overseas Investment Co., Ltd.	Southeast Asia
18	China-Indonesia Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone	Guangxi Nongken Group Co., Ltd.	Southeast Asia
19	China-Indonesia Comprehensive Industrial Park	Shanghai Dingxin Investment (Group) Co., Ltd.	Southeast Asia
20	China-Indonesia Julong Agricultural Industrial Cooperation Zone	Tianjin Julong Group	Southeast Asia
8	Ussuriysk Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone, Russia	Kangji International Investment Co., Ltd.	Eurasia
9	Russia-China Tomsk Timber Industry and Trade Cooperation Zone	AVIC Forestry Co., Ltd.	Eurasia
11	China-Russia (Primorsky Krai) Agricultural Industry Cooperation Zone	Heilongjiang Dongning Huaxin Economic and Trade Co., Ltd.	Eurasia
12	Russian Longyue Forestry Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone	Heilongjiang Mudanjiang Longyue Trading Co., Ltd.	Eurasia
14	Kyrgyzstan Asia Star Agricultural Industry Cooperation Zone	Henan Guiyou Industrial Group Co., Ltd.	Eurasia
16	Uzbekistan "Pengsheng" Industrial Park	Wenzhou Jinsheng Trading Co., Ltd.	Eurasia
5	Zambia China Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone	China Nonferrous Mining Group Co., Ltd.	Africa
6	Egyptian Suez Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone	China Africa Teda Investment Co., Ltd.	Africa
7	Nigeria's Lekki Free Trade Zone (China-Nigeria Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone)	China-Africa Legacy Investment Co., Ltd.	Africa
10	Ethiopian Oriental Industrial Park	Jiangsu Yongyuan Investment Co., Ltd.	Africa
4	Haier-Ruba Economic Zone, Pakistan	Haier Group Electrical Industry Co., Ltd.	CPEC
13	Hungary Central Europe Trade Logistics Park	Shandong Dihao International Investment Co., Ltd.	East Europe
17	China-Hungary Basid Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone	Yantai Xinyi Investment Co., Ltd.	East Europe
★ Order of assessment confirmation			
Source: China Ministry of Commerce			

Figure 7. CCPIT Listed China Overseas 'ODI SEZ' Industrial Parks in Central Asia 2020

Central Asia Industrial and Agroindustrial Parks		
Country	Industrial Park	Implementing Enterprise
Tajikistan	Tajikistan Industrial Park	Tacheng International Resources Limited
Tajikistan	Tajikistan Agriculture Textile Industrial Park	Xinjiang Zhongtai Chemical Co., Ltd.
Uzbekistan	Uzbekistan 'Pengsheng' Industrial Park	Wenzhou Jinsheng Trade Co., Ltd.
Kazakhstan	Kazakhstan-China Industrial Park	Xinjiang Sambo Group and Zone Construction Investment and Development Co., Ltd.
Kazakhstan	China-Kazakhstan Border Cooperation Center	Local government (KITZ Express)
Kyrgyzstan	Kyrgyzstan Asia Star Agricultural Industry Cooperation	-
Georgia	Hualing Georgia Free Industrial Park	Xinjiang Hualing Group

The MoFCOM's emphasis is now on China's external SEZs that are being set up along the Belt and Road economies (PRC Ministry of Commerce Department of Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation (2019). These are essentially ODI SEZs, offshoring the SEZ industrial park system that China had used in its Listian or Hamiltonian industrial development strategy. The Tajikistan agricultural park is the first serial number on the first list of overseas agricultural SEZs. This demonstrates the geoeconomic aspect of the geoindustrial policy—from where goods originates matters in this spatialised economic exercise. The rebranding of the ICC policy does not mean that the core mission changes or that mechanisms and institutions developed to facilitate it will not remain in effective operation. This centres on the continued expansion of the Overseas Economic and Trade Cooperation Zones, essentially moving China's reform-era export processing zones abroad (Pei and Zheng, 2015). Hu has said explicitly that the construction of these overseas industrial parks 'is to drive China's equipment, technology and standards to go abroad.' (Xinhua, 2019).

In the wider geopolitical imagination, consider a future China-Central Asian policy with a rail hub, UHV hub, and an agroindustrial processing hub all feeding in to the Chinese home provinces behind the natural geopolitical protection of the Gansu Corridor. To envision the trade policy closer to its end game, imagine what commodities China will be bringing-in to an industrial, agroindustrially and sci-tech developed import hub of Xinjiang-Gansu. The geoeconomic future of China's Central Asia policy is ultimately an import-strategy.

Do not Follow the Money; Follow the Cement

While foreign aid and ADB loans still account for a larger proportion of external debt than Chinese loans do, it is the institutional nature of the China loans that changes the geoeconomic game. They are usually for more practical infrastructure spending that promises to open tangible trade benefits, and yet they also play directly to solving China's domestic industrial weaknesses and external trade needs. China's *Belt and Road* loans are a state-capitalist business transaction. These loans may appear on the capital account alongside aid, but they are not aid. However to host economies such as Tajikistan, China's capital is appealing wherever the Bretton Woods system has failed.

The narrative on the China side of microeconomic engagement with Tajikistan is mixed. It seems small-holders and entrepreneurs being enticed out there are facing a hard time actually making businesses and surviving in Tajikistan (Huang, 2017). And yet, the big-ticket items like TALCO aluminium smelter or the Pamir silver mining concession are seemingly state capital coordinated, with political repercussions for debt-obligations pre-planned (Eurasianet, 2019c; Najibullah, 2019). Aluminium again, is one of the principal heavy industrial plant exports that China is pushing into Central Asia. Other aluminium projects are in Bukhara, Uzbekistan and Pavlodar, Kazakhstan and China is interested in bolstering Tajikistan's aluminium capacity with a plan to complete USD 545 million upgrade to the single Tajik aluminium smelter (Daily Star, 2019). This demonstrates the simplicity of much of China's geoeconomic strategy in the region, simply offshoring old heavy industry capacity into greenfield economic geographies.

Classical geopolitical analyses see land as a useful commodity for an expansionist state power. From informal conversations with people in Central Asian republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, this fear of a China land-grab is clear. Political discontent on the ground has been expressed in demonstrations such as 2016 in Kazakhstan against planned land privatisation which stirred nationalist sentiment, though more astute observers pointed to the real foment behind the popular shows of dissatisfaction being domestic economic conditions (Pannier, 2016). There have been popular demonstrations against China in Kyrgyzstan too, resulting in cancellation of the Kyrgyz-Chinese Ata-Bashi Free Economic Zone Joint Venture logistics project (RFE/RL 2020).

China's agricultural geoeconomics in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan is most genuinely about importing clean products: meat, grain, oilseeds, dairy, produce. Such food products in trading markets are usually termed 'soft commodities' as opposed to the 'hard commodities' of metals, and the *sui generis* commodity of hydrocarbons. However, China's commodity hedging strategy in Tajikistan is more about water and electricity. In this analysis it is easier to think of water and electricity as 'super-soft commodities' because their use and transport is so different from either soft, hard or hydrocarbon commodities. If we include water and electricity into the soft commodity basket, then China's geoeconomic policy in Tajikistan could be best thought of as a softs-hedging strategy. This is much more sophisticated geoeconomic state strategy than the bludgeoning hand of land-grabs against which local protesters have been coopted into.

Figure 8 China's Belt and Road Agricultural SEZ Cooperation Zones (abroad) and Agricultural Opening and Cooperation Zones (domestic) (PRC Ministry of Agriculture, 2017).

Belt and Road Agriculture Cooperation Zones		
First Batch of Pilot Projects for Overseas Agricultural Cooperation Demonstration Zones		
No.	Project	Implementation Enterprise
1	Tajikistan—China Agricultural Cooperation Demonstration Park	Xinjiang Lihua Cotton Industry Co., Ltd.
2	Mozambique—China Agricultural Technology Demonstration Centre	Hubei Lianfeng Overseas Agricultural Development Group Co., Ltd.
3	Jiangsu—Xinyang Ga Agriculture, Industry and Trade Industrial Park (Tanzania)	Jiangsu Haiqi Technology Engineering Co., Ltd.
4	Uganda—China Agricultural Cooperation Industrial Park	Sichuan Youhao Hengyuan Agricultural Development Co., Ltd.
5	Asia Star Agricultural Industry Cooperation Zone (Kyrgyzstan)	Henan Guiyou Industrial Group Co., Ltd.
6	Sudan—China Agricultural Cooperative Development Zone	Shandong International Economic and Technical Cooperation Corporation
7	Laos—China Modern Agricultural Science and Technology Demonstration Park	Shenzhen Huada Gene Technology Co., Ltd.
8	Cambodia—China Tropical Ecological Agriculture Demonstration Zone	Hainan Dingyi Oasis Ecological Agriculture Co., Ltd.
9	Fiji—China Comprehensive Fisheries Industrial Park	Shandong Jingdao Ocean Technology Co., Ltd.
10	Zambia Agricultural Products Processing Cooperation Park	Qingdao Ruichang Technology Industry Co., Ltd.
First Batch of Domestic Agricultural Opening and Cooperation Pilot Zones		
No.	Project	Implementation Enterprise
1	Qionghai Agricultural Opening and Cooperation Pilot Zone	People's Government of Qionghai City, Hainan Province
2	Tropical Agriculture Opening and Cooperation Pilot Zone	Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences
3	Lianyungang Agricultural Opening and Cooperation Pilot Zone	People's Government of Lianyungang City, Jiangsu Province
4	Jilin Zhongxin Food Zone's Agricultural Opening and Cooperation Pilot Zone	Jilin (China-Singapore) Food District Management Committee
5	Jeminay Agricultural Opening and Cooperation Pilot Zone	People's Government of Jeminay County, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region
6	Raoping Agricultural Opening and Cooperation Pilot Zone	Raoping County People's Government of Guangdong Province
7	Weifang Agricultural Opening and Cooperation Pilot Zone	Weifang People's Government of Shandong Province
8	Dongning Agricultural Opening and Cooperation Pilot Zone	People's Government of Dongning City, Heilongjiang Province
9	Rongcheng Agricultural Opening and Cooperation Pilot Zone	Rongcheng People's Government of Shandong Province
10	Binhai New Area Agricultural Opening and Cooperation Pilot Zone	People's Government of Tianjin Binhai New Area

The *Belt and Road* agricultural dimension in developing offshore agroindustrial complexes to provide alternate import sources to China has had a clear development. Yet despite the anti-landholding protests in host economies in Central Asia, the agroindustrial aspect of China's agricultural cooperation policy seem largely under-researched (Xinhua, 2019). China is developing a system of both industrial and agroindustrial bases from which to import quality commodities and value-added products into China, into new import hubs in Xinjiang. This is a distributed system, much more like a multilateral engagement strategy, and yet undertaken on clearly bilateral lines.

Conclusion – A Geoindustrial Policy in Flux

China appears to be practicing geoeconomic hedging. What we can see empirically is the emerging pattern of China's geoeconomic spatial planning in external geographies. Post-Soviet economies are likely to be more amenable to docking with Communist economic spatial planning, which is what China is doing in the region. Simply uplifting and transferring the institutions of its domestic industrial economy to the region in the hope of being able to continue the same type of state-capitalism that it practiced at home. For that, it does not need the Bretton Woods international trade institutions, and it does not really need much in the way of private enterprise or stakeholder engagement in Tajikistan or other regional economies that it is deploying this geoindustrial policy to.

China's institutional development of relevant trade, industry and investment organs for Tajikistan and Central Asia will become increasingly important to both regional and global economies, as will the development of bilateral committees to coordinate project investment and future geoeconomic integration. These institutional developments are likely to occur along the lines of Party organisation than on any established European, Japanese or American multilateral political or economic institutional engagement with the region. The transparency risks of which are obvious.

China's Eurasian regional trade policy is becoming more sophisticated though and the parallel planning of the external trade policy being based on domestic industrial policy will likely continue. In the wider geopolitical sense though, Tajikistan is a node in a large geoindustrial operation. Do not look simply at China-Tajikistan or China-Central Asia, look rather at China-Central Asia-Middle East-East Africa. The geoeconomic path to the Indian Ocean is one that is being strategised without any need for land claims in the classical geopolitical sense. Critical geopolitics provides for access, China's geoeconomic activity in the region pulls the gravity of access towards itself and redefines the gatekeepers of access to become financial institutions.

Economically, the China strategy carries with it an endogenous credit risk. But the greatest risk is not to recipient countries, but to China itself if the project fails. Small economies like Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan should be wary of taking on too much debt from China, and cognizant of the axial impetus of China's geoeconomic investments. But the greater economic risk to the global order is not that China gains a geoeconomic foothold in the region, but that China's domestic economic

problems force a sudden capital withdrawal, leaving regional economies with only cement paths to nowhere.

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