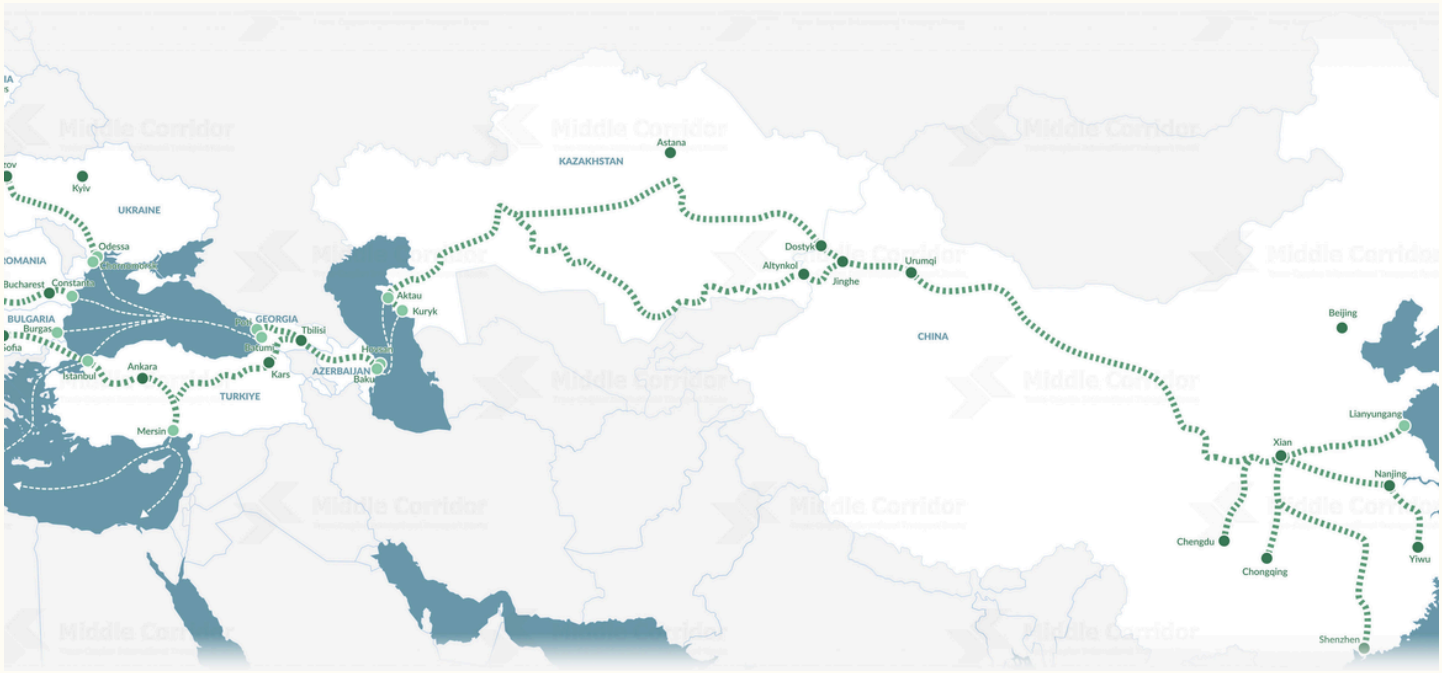
Strategic Snapshot: Middle Corridor Expansion Reshapes Eurasian Connectivity

11.24.2026



Jamestown
Eurasia Daily Monitor



Source: Trans-Caspian International Transport Route

Middle Corridor Expansion Reshapes Eurasian Connectivity

The Jamestown Foundation
November 24, 2026

The Middle Corridor has gained geopolitical and economic importance in 2026 as Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine and the conflict in Iran have exposed vulnerabilities in established Eurasian trade routes. The Middle Corridor, also known as the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR), connects the People's Republic of China (PRC) to Europe through Central Asia, the Caspian Sea, and the South Caucasus on to Türkiye, bypassing Russia and Iran. Regional states are working to transform the corridor from an alternative transit route into an integrated economic and logistics network.

Central Asian and South Caucasus countries have accelerated investments in transportation infrastructure while working to harmonize customs procedures and digitize freight transportation. Kazakhstan is expanding its Caspian Sea ports at Aktau and Kuryk, while Azerbaijan plans to increase the Port of Baku's annual cargo-handling capacity from 15 million to 25 million tons. Modernizing the

Baku–Tbilisi–Kars railway and potentially integrating it with the China–Kyrgyzstan–Uzbekistan railway will further facilitate trans-Eurasian trade.

Azerbaijan has emerged as a central player in Eurasian connectivity, strengthening its economic and political integration with Central Asia. Azerbaijan joined the Consultative Meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia at an October 8 summit in Avaza, Turkmenistan, for the first time as a full member within the expanded C6 framework. The format focuses on coordinating infrastructure development, industrial production, energy connectivity, and investment.

The normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan is creating new opportunities to expand the Middle Corridor. The U.S.-backed Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP) would establish a southern branch of the Middle Corridor through Armenia, further reducing Russia's influence over regional transportation networks and increasing Western engagement in the South Caucasus. These developments have raised questions about Georgia's traditional position as a regional transit hub, particularly as uncertainties surrounding the development of its Anaklia Deep Sea Port persists.

The Middle Corridor continues to face significant structural challenges despite growing political and economic momentum. Infrastructure bottlenecks, inconsistent customs procedures, limited Caspian shipping capacity, and the absence of a comprehensive security framework threaten the corridor's reliability.

The development of the Middle Corridor reflects a broader reconfiguration of Eurasian geopolitics as regional states seek to diversify their economic partnerships and reduce their dependence on Moscow. The corridor's long-term success, however, will depend on whether participating countries can translate growing political cooperation into reliable and secure transportation networks. For the United States and Europe, the Middle Corridor presents an opportunity to strengthen engagement with Central Asia and the South Caucasus while further diminishing Russia's traditional economic and geopolitical leverage across Eurasia.

Middle Corridor Expansion Reshapes Eurasian Connectivity

Infrastructure Development and Operational Integration

- Zangezur Energy Corridor Enhancing Regional Energy Connectivity, Vusal Guliyev, February 19
- Southern Branch of Middle Corridor Gains Eurasian Connectivity Momentum,Vusal Guliyev, March 17
- Middle Corridor Makes Progress Toward Operational Reality, Sertaç Canalp Korkmaz, April 28
- Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan Move to Institutionalize the Middle Corridor, Vusal Guliyev, April 30
- Türkiye Promotes Eurasian Transit Development, Aybaniz Ismayilova, May 21
- Uzbekistan–Azerbaijan–Georgia Partnership Advances Middle Corridor Integration, Roza Bayramli, July 15
- Georgia's Anaklia Pivots to State Ownership, Salome Mamuladze, July 16
- Türkiye–PRC Railway Partnership Bolsters Middle Corridor, Vusal Guliyev, July 23
- EU-Backed Infrastructure Strengthens Azerbaijan–Central Asia Connectivity, Roza Bayramli, October 20

Regional Integration and International Partnerships

- Japan Deepens Cooperation with Central Asian States, Vusal Guliyev, January 26
- Kazakhstan Embraces Connectivity with the South Caucasus, Emil Avdaliani, February 11
- Kazakhstan and Oman Sign Preliminary Strategic Partnership Agreement,Emil Avdaliani, May 12
- Regional States Consolidate the Resilience of the Middle Corridor (Part 1), (Part 2), Vusal Guliyev, June 2, June 17
- Summer Diplomacy Deepens Azerbaijan's Integration with Central Asia, Roza Bayramli, September 10
- Kazakhstan and European Union Strengthen Economic Cooperation, Emil Avdaliani, September 22
- South Korea Broadens Multifaceted Ties with Central Asia, Vusal Guliyev, October 19
- Avaza Summit Turns C6 Format Toward Practical Cooperation, Roza Bayramli, November 4

Middle Corridor Expansion Reshapes Eurasian Connectivity

Geopolitical Competition and the Reorientation of Eurasian Trade

- Türkiye's Progress on Railway to Nakhchivan Alarms Moscow, Paul Goble, January 22
- Georgia Considers Position in New South Caucasus Transit Era, Beka Chedia, January 29
- Georgia's Black Sea Coast Catches U.S. Attention as PRC Port Pact Stalls, Nicholas Chkhaidze, May 20
- Pashinyan Receives Western Endorsements Ahead of Parliamentary Elections, Vasif Huseynov, June 3
- Armenia's Election Results Telling for Azerbaijan Peace Process, Vasif Huseynov, June 22
- TRIPP Plays Role in Reordering of Eurasian Trade Routes, Irakli Laitadze, July 28
- South Caucasus Navigates a New Order, Salome Mamuladze, September 13
- The PRC and Central Asia Now Focusing on Iran as Additional Route West, Paul Goble, September 15
- TRIPP Reorienting Armenia and Azerbaijan Toward the West, Fuad Shahbazov, October 7

Security Challenges and Structural Vulnerabilities

- Iran Conflict Disrupts Central Asian Trade Routes, Syed Fazl-e-Haider, March 24
- Iran Conflict Derails Eurasian Transport Development, John C. K. Daly, March 31
- South Caucasus Navigating Economic and Security Effects of Iran Conflict, Irakli Laitadze, May 19
- Aliyev's Digital Silk Road and Middle Corridor Experiences Reliability Gap, Sertaç Canalp Korkmaz, June 4
- Death of Caspian Sea Affecting More Than Just Littoral Countries, Paul Goble, July 21
- Middle Corridor Development Lacks Security Component, Emil Avdaliani, July 22
- Central Asia's Border Regime Creates New Distance and Connection, Alexander Diener and Nargiza Muratalieva, September 30
- OTS Expands Agenda From Connectivity to Security, Roza Bayramli, September 30
- Middle Corridor Grows in Volume but Not in Cohesion, Megi Benia, October 22

The Jamestown Foundation is an independent, nonpartisan organization supported by tax-deductible contributions from corporations, foundations and individuals. To donate to Jamestown, please call (202)483-8888 or donate through our website: **www.jamestown.org**

A: 1310 L Street, NW, Suite 810,
Washington DC 20005
T: (202) 483-8888
F: 202 483-8377
W: jamestown.org