

Trans-Caspian Route: Its Significance and Challenges

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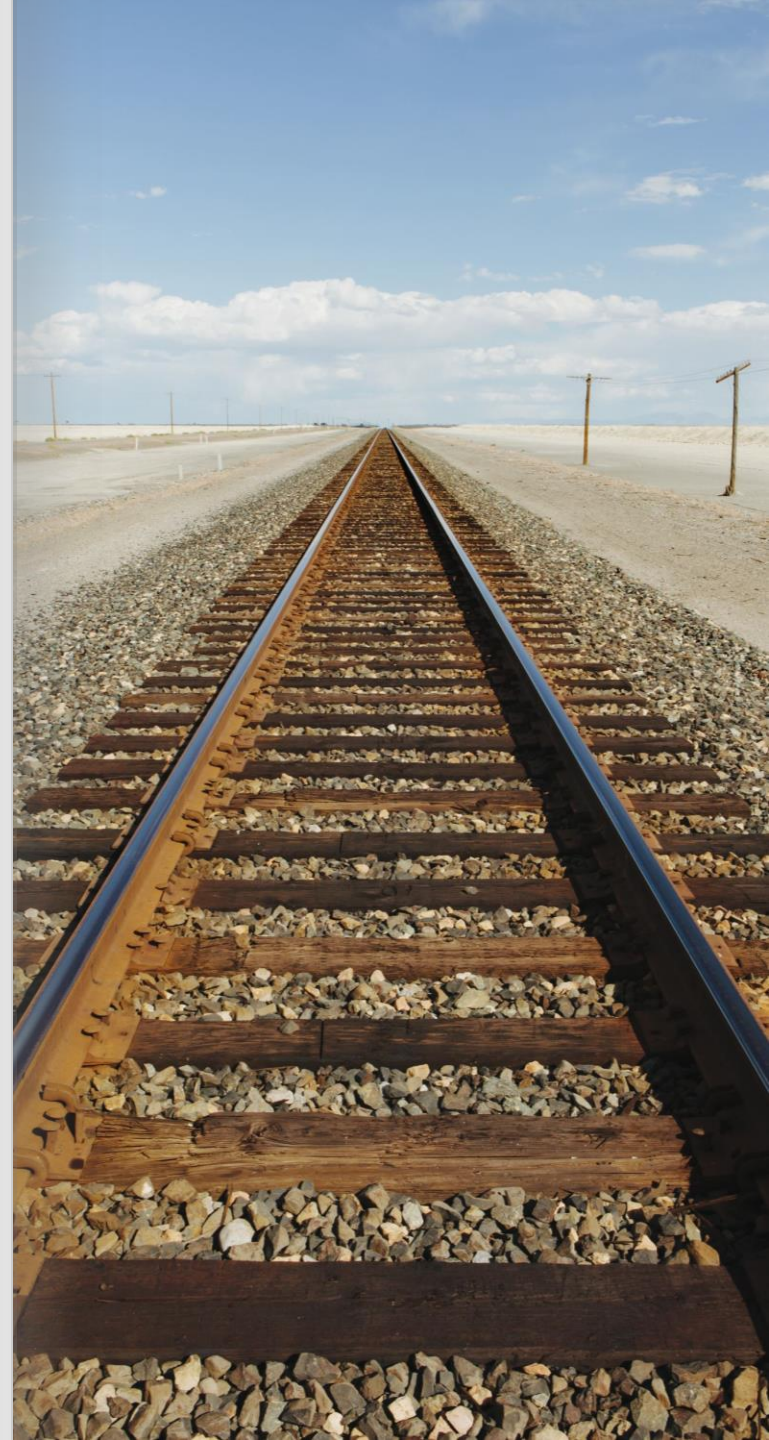
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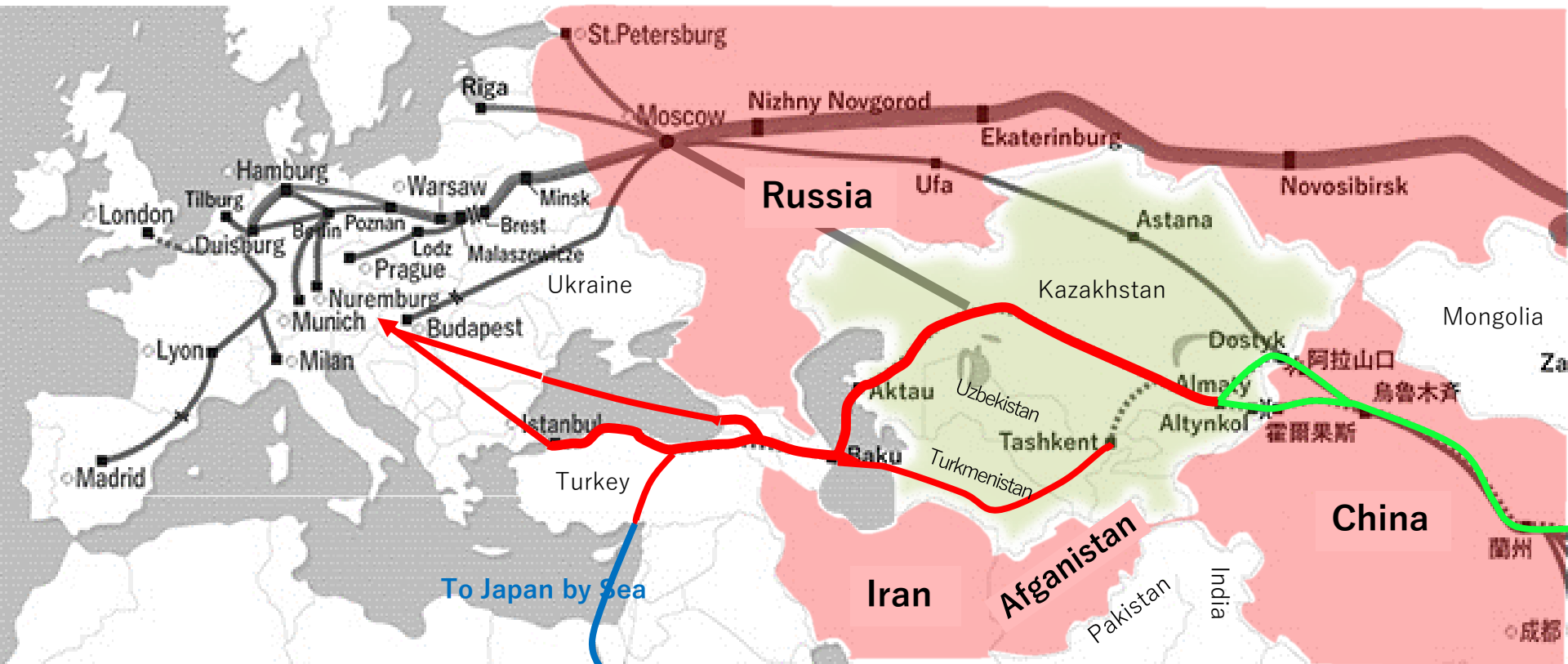
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1. Significance of Trans-Caspian Route

Trans-Caspian Route is a Central Asia-Europe transport route that does not go through Russia.



2. Growing international interest

EU

Nov. 2022

EU-Central Asia Connectivity Conference

Initiatives on new transport corridors for Central Asian countries

Jun. 2023

EU - Central Asia Summit meeting

Jun. 2023

**EU-EBRD Study on Sustainable Transport
Connections between Europe and Central Asia**

Jan. 2024

**EU-Central Asia Investment Forum on sustainable
transport corridors connecting Europe and Central Asia**

2. Growing international interest

USA

Sep. 2023

"C5+1" Summit meeting

"To diversify transportation routes, including the Trans-Caspian Route (Middle Corridor), the United States supports infrastructure development in the region through the State Department, the Development Finance Corporation (DFC), the Export-Import Bank, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)."

Oct. 2023

"C5+1" Regional Connectivity Ministerial

3. Significance to Japan

① Transportation route between Japan and Central Asia

green line

+

red line

blue line

+

red line

② Alternative land-based logistics routes between **Europe and Japan**

green line

+

red line



4. Challenges



Hardware (Transportation infrastructure)

- Due to **lack of infrastructure capacity** (port facilities, railroads, vessels), the **lead time and cost are not competitive.**



Software

- **Lack of harmonization of rules, lack of electronically shared data**
- **Lack of approach to manage as one consistent route**

5. Efforts of Central Asian Countries to Overcome Challenges

Central Asia and Caucasus countries are working to overcome bottlenecks by

➤ Addressing Common Challenges

- Improved infrastructure capacity
- Reduction of costs and number of days required through digitization
- Harmonization of procedures in the region
- Single point of contact

➤ Discussions continue through various meetings

- Nov. 2022 Ministerial Meeting on Trans-Caspian Connectivity
(Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Turkey)
- Jun. 2023 Astana International Forum (in Aktau)
- TITR (Trans-Caspian International Transport Route) Working Group

6. Japan's Efforts

➤ **Joint survey mission of the government of Japan and companies on Trans-Caspian Route (Oct. 2022)**

➤ **12th Tokyo Dialogue of "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue on "Connectivity with Central Asia and the Caucasus" (Mar. 2023)**

- Experts and practitioners from Central Asian countries, Azerbaijan, and Georgia participated.
- World Customs Organization (WCO) introduced initiatives in the region.

➤ **Future Initiatives**

- JICA training program for government officials
- JICA and international organizations are collaborating on a project to facilitate customs clearance



**Ensuring openness and transparency of infrastructure
(Introduction of international standards)**