

STRATIGMA

Central Asia & Caucasus Outlook Series

The Rise of the Middle Corridor

How supply chain diversification, regional cooperation and multimodal transport are reshaping Eurasian connectivity through Central Asia and the Caucasus

A strategic briefing on the Middle Corridor's emerging role as a complementary route within the broader Eurasian trade network.

Context

Global trade routes are undergoing a gradual but significant transformation. For decades, the majority of Asia–Europe trade has relied on maritime shipping, with sea routes providing the most cost-efficient way to move goods between continents.

However, recent disruptions — including pandemic-era logistics shocks, geopolitical tensions and growing demand for supply chain resilience — have revived interest in alternative overland corridors connecting Asia to Europe.

Within this evolving landscape, the Middle Corridor has gained increasing strategic attention. Stretching from China through Central Asia and the Caspian region toward the Caucasus, Türkiye and Europe, the corridor is emerging as a complementary route within the broader Eurasian trade network.

The Middle Corridor is not a new concept. What is new is the urgency surrounding its development.

What's Changing?

1) Supply Chain Resilience Is Reshaping Trade Routes

Global trade is no longer driven solely by cost efficiency. Reliability, redundancy and risk diversification are becoming equally important.

Recent disruptions revealed vulnerabilities in both maritime shipping and traditional overland routes. As a result, governments and logistics providers are exploring alternative corridors to reduce dependency on a limited number of transit routes.

The Middle Corridor is increasingly viewed as part of this diversification strategy.

2) Regional Cooperation Is Accelerating Infrastructure Investment

The corridor spans multiple countries, including:

- Kazakhstan
- Azerbaijan
- Georgia
- Türkiye
- And connections into European markets

Developing a functioning trade corridor requires coordination across rail networks, ports, customs systems and logistics infrastructure.

Recent years have seen growing efforts to improve connectivity across these systems, reflecting rising interest in strengthening trans-Eurasian transport links.

3) Multimodal Transport Is Gaining Importance

Unlike traditional single-route corridors, the Middle Corridor relies on a multimodal transport system. Goods move across:

- Rail networks in Central Asia
- Maritime routes across the Caspian Sea
- Rail and road connections through the Caucasus and Türkiye

This hybrid structure introduces complexity but also creates flexibility and redundancy.

4) Strategic Geography Is Becoming a Competitive Advantage

The countries along the corridor occupy a unique geographic position between major economic regions. As global supply chains diversify, geographic location becomes an increasingly valuable asset.

Countries positioned along key transit routes gain strategic relevance as logistics hubs and trade facilitators.

Why It Matters

The Middle Corridor has the potential to reshape Eurasian connectivity by providing an additional route linking Asian production centers with European markets.

Improved connectivity can:

- Reduce transit times
- Diversify logistics options
- Strengthen regional cooperation
- Increase investment attractiveness

Trade corridors influence how regions integrate into global supply chains.

Strategic Insight

The Middle Corridor is not expected to replace existing trade routes.

Its strategic importance lies in complementarity.

In an era of supply chain diversification, alternative routes become strategic assets rather than backup options.

*As infrastructure improves and coordination deepens,
the Middle Corridor may play an increasingly important role
in shaping the future of Eurasian trade.*