

Teze disertační práce

Pracoviště: Institut politologických studií FSV UK Praha

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Název disertační práce: The Geopolitical Determinants of India's Central Asia Strategy

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Termín a místo obhajoby: FSV UK, 11/2015

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1. Abstract

This dissertation aims to identify the drivers and determinants of Indian strategy and policy with regard to the five post-Soviet, Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan within a geopolitical framework. Contemporary scholarship recognizes three determinants (drivers) of Indian strategy in the region – security and strategic necessity, energy diversification given Central Asia's abundant natural resources, and, economic engagement and connectivity. Using this identification as a stepping-stone, the dissertation seeks to rest the validity of these assumptions, and explore these determinants in detail. In addition, it attempts to identify other determinants of Indian strategy, and offers a conceptual framework through which to comprehend Indian agency in Central Asia.

In its exploration, the dissertation finds the initial hypothesis to be valid, and in addition suggests India's great-power ambitions (and its subsequent use of soft power in the region) as an additional determinant of its strategy. It further argues that not only can Indian agency in Central Asia, be conceptually framed within a classical geopolitical perspective, but also suggests that the motivations for Indian agency in the region should be viewed from the lens of a nascent all-encompassing Indian grand strategy. As an ancillary objective, the dissertation offers commentary on India's interactions with two status-quo powers in the region Russia and China, and offers some thoughts on the limited efficacy of Indian strategy and its way forward in the region. Using a qualitative case-study paradigm, empirical data was sourced from interviews conducted with Indian and Central Asian elites, and official Indian documentation and narratives on the subject in the last two decades. As its contribution to the literature the dissertation offers a contemporary insight into Indian thinking on the region, and postulates an alternative conceptual framework using Indian grand strategy and India's great power ambitions as explanation for its agency in the region.