

How Geopolitics Reshapes Oil Routes Across Eurasia

By Aiman Nakispekova - The Astana Times

After decades of competition over dwindling resources in Central Asia's agricultural heartland, the leaders of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are embracing a spirit of cooperation as they jointly confront global warming-related challenges.

That spirit of cooperation was on display January 8, when the prime ministers of the three states gathered at a remote location in the Ferghana Valley where the three nations' frontiers meet, to mark progress on settling long-standing border disputes.

Helping to pave the way for the gathering was a border demarcation agreement reached by Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in December. The two countries had engaged in armed clashes over the disputed frontier as recently as 2021 and 2022. And in 2023, reports that the two states were engaging in an arms buildup raised fears of renewed conflict.

The resolution of border disputes sets the stage for joint efforts to expand economic cooperation in 2025. "The prime ministers of the three countries emphasized that the countries have great potential for strengthening cooperation in such key areas as trade, logistics, water-energy and cultural-humanitarian ties," a Kyrgyz government statement issued after the meeting noted. Managing dwindling water resources was a major topic of discussion during the January 8 meeting.

With the region's borders settled, barriers to cross-border trade should start coming down. The three states are participating in a US-sponsored initiative, dubbed the B5+1 process, that promotes regional trade connectivity. A report published on a World Bank blog in December touted the regional potential for e-commerce. "E-commerce development is a viable way to reduce poverty in Central Asia," the item stated. "Except for the payment sector, which requires financial experts, the e-commerce ecosystem, particularly in production, marketing, and delivery, offers job opportunities that facilitate the participation of the poor and less skilled in online markets."



Uzbek prime minister Abdulla Aripov (left) shakes hands with his Kyrgyz counterpart Adylbek Kasymaliev