China’s Expansion into Kazakhstan

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China’s economic growth will affect the world in profound ways because of its increasing demand for energy and raw materials. The country has 1.3 billion people and in order to satisfy the needs of its population it must search continuously for resources throughout the world. Chinese corporations and government owned companies are involved in the economic affairs of five republics of central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Central Asian states possess abundant supplies of natural gas and oil. Current scholarship on Central Asia speaks of the emergence of a “New Great Game,” where great and regional powers such as the United States, China, Russia, Turkey and Iran engage in rivalry and competition over resources. This research challenges the concept of the “Great Game.” The original “Great Game” was simply a struggle for political domination and territorial control between Russia and Britain in Central Asia in the nineteenth century. However, the original meaning of the phrase has been lost. I believe such terminology maintains the possibility of masking the significance of today’s realities in Central Asia. A major component in China’s plan to transition to the modern world is expansion into Central Asia. Contrary to conventional wisdom, China’s objective in Central Asia, particularly Kazakhstan, is not to engage in a great game with other regional powers but to secure regional states’ support in suppressing Uighur nationalists, and to facilitate Chinese investment in Kazakhstan’s energy resources.