



## **Geopolitical Change in the World System: The Emergence of Corridors and Environmental Orders**

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### **ARTICLE INFO**

**Article History:**

Received: 31/1/2024

Accepted: 24/3/2024

Published: Spring 2025

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**Keywords:**

Corridors, Environment change, Corridor Order, Environmental Order, dilemma.

**Doi:**

10.25212/lfu.qzj.10.1.54

### **ABSTRACT**

The world is turning into an environmental, political, and economic upheaval. The ideological and superpower conflicts throughout the twentieth century created some orders on the international level, most notably the Cold War's bipolar order and the post-Cold War unipolar order, which was recognized as the New World Order. Besides these orders, more or less, there was another order called a regional order. However, by entering the 20th century, China's rise as an economic power, the importance of energy to revive the economy and how to transfer this energy to other parts of the world on the one hand, and climate change that is causing environmental disasters on the other, the world seems to be moving towards a new order, which can be called the 'Corridors Order' and the 'Environmental Order'. This research includes three sections. The first section is a gateway to presenting the topic; the second topic focuses on the corridors and their order; and the third one deals with the environmental order. Theoretically, the two orders are separated, but practically, they are mutually connected.



## **Section One: An Overview**

### **1. Introduction**

Due to events and upheavals, the world is moving towards both convergence and divergence. For example, the coronavirus has brought the world both closer and further apart. So, it is people and states that decide to cooperate or conflict with each other on the same event. Currently, both environmental changes and trade expansion caused by the rise of China on the one hand and population growth on the other, as well as global energy demand, are important global events. China's economic growth, demand for energy, and expansion of trade are changing the global transportation map, and corridors are playing a key role. Along with the rise of the power of corridors, environmental changes are adding a new round of conflict and cooperation between states. Through reading the available data and information, this study attempts to show that, conceptually, in terms of trade and economy, a new global order is emerging, which can be named the corridor order, and in terms of climate change that has impacted all countries in the world, it witnesses the emergence of an environmental order. The concept of environment in this study refers to all climate changes that affect human life and the functions of states.

According to these two orders, states face two challenges, defined here as the 'Corridor Dilemma' and the 'Environmental Dilemma'. The researcher to achieve the objective of the study defined the corridor dilemma as a situation in which Country A tries to cross the corridor through its territory in order to achieve economic development and geopolitical position, while the neighboring country (Country B) tries to cross the corridor through its own territory. This situation creates a kind of geopolitical conflict, while the economic development of each country (A or B) will also benefit each of them and the neighboring country.

The environmental dilemma is a situation in which a country tries to achieve and sustain economic development, but environmental factors prevent it. In this situation, the state must strike a balance between economic development and environmental change. If it tries to protect the environment, there will be no desirable economic development (or less economic development), which is a



kind of environmental dilemma that countries face. Economic development is the junction of the corridor dilemma and the environmental dilemma.

## **2. Research Objectives**

The purpose of this study is not to analyze the corridors and environmental events one by one, but to assume that these two phenomena are producing a new order at the level of world politics. Therefore, the study depicts a future study by addressing the available data and through interdisciplinary research and analysis of these variables. These corridors have both geopolitical and non-geopolitical meanings, such as the North Stream Corridor. The number and type of these corridors are also increasing gradually. For example, the electricity transmission corridor between Russia, Iran, the Caucasus, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. There are many other corridors with various function. In this paper, we emphasize five major corridors extending from Asia to Europe.

## **3. Methodology and Data Collection**

The research is a descriptive-based one and a future study at the same time, trying to develop a new conceptual framework in world politics, which is environmental order and corridor order. The study was based on analyzing secondary data from news websites, databases, and academic research to illustrate the impact of trade corridors, environmental change, conflict, risks, and cooperation opportunities among states. The data were also collected in all three languages: English, Arabic and Persian. Many of the sources are journalistic sources on related issues used in this study. Also, Beside the original text, the name of author and the title of non-English sources translated into English language.

## **4. Theoretical Framework**

This study attempts to prove the statement that the world is moving towards a new order governed by corridors and the environment; that means, although cooperation and conflict between states will continue, the factors of



cooperation or conflict are different from ideological ones. In terms of theoretical framework, the study employed geopolitics and political science, and the concept of security dilemma in the field of international relations has been utilized in which it has been widely used in the theories of offensive realism, defensive realism, neoliberalism, and constructivism to build peace or to break up war (Tang, 2009). Since concepts such as global warming, climate change, biodiversity degradation, deforestation, conflict over natural resources fall within the framework of (geo) study and the political relationships associated with these changes 'politics' (Kaviani Rad, 2012) and to what extent these relationships affect cooperation and conflict among countries. Also, critical environmental theory is used to deal with environmental order. The reason for using this theory is that it believes there is a strong relationship between economic issues, human activity, and the environment, and ultimately, it is the environment that governs the relationship between people themselves and between people and the environment (Jones, 2019); By other words, they are mutually connected.

## **5. Literature Review**

The current study and the previous one are not directly related. Nonetheless, this study can be connected to a few scholarly works, one of which is titled "Future Challenges of Cities in Asia" and was written by a number of researchers. The study's main focus is on the challenges that Asia's megacities will face in terms of ecology and the environment as a result of their expanding populations; especially the article titled 'Large Infrastructure Projects: The Emergence of Corridors in Asia' has been written by Arakali and Koduganti (2020) focused the Asian cities environmental challenges. But that also implies that future cities from many nations will have to deal with the same issue—namely, environmental degradation—so they will need to work together more. One potential answer is the creation of trade corridors, which is the primary focus of our study.



The relationship between the environment and human behavior was the subject of another article with the title "The structure of environmental attitudes: A first- and second-order confirmatory factor analysis" (Milfont and Duckitt, 2004). The study looked at how the environment might affect people's attitudes and found that human activity was causing environmental problems that affected natural resources. In order to combat environmental changes, human collaboration was required in the conclusion.

Another attempt to demonstrate how ecology and the environment will govern international relations is presented in the book "The New Ecological Order" authored by Ferry (1995). The book clarified various aspects of the term, particularly the Third World, which describes how underdeveloped nations misused their natural resources in an effort to advance their economies and ultimately ran into ecological destruction. The author makes an effort to demonstrate that the environment must always be seen as the focal point of human activities in any development.

Under the purview of international environmental law, an influential book titled "International Environmental Law: Contemporary Issues and the Emergence of a New World Order" written by Weiss (1993) attempts to establish new international law that may regulate relations between nations in the international arena. According to the author, this rule will boost international cooperation in the future, resulting in less conflict and greater cooperation within the international system.

Less research has been done on the significance of international corridors and how they affect state cooperation and conflict. A noteworthy study titled "Global Logistics and Local Dilemmas" examined the significance of corridors for boosting trade and generating economic advantages. The study aims to illustrate the main challenges faced by communities that serve as international passageways. Furthermore, the study attempts to establish a link between corridors and the environment.

Another study titled 'Economic Benefits and Importance of TAPI Project', (mehrazi, 2019) shed light on the consequence of TAPI corridor in increasing cooperation among benefited countries that the corridor passes through. The

researcher believes that TAPI will expand its commercial and economic ties with the project's partner nations; additionally, it will gain a unique position in the world trade market and generate a substantial income from the export of gas to other nations.

## **Section Two: Corridors Order**

### **Corridor Order Definition**

According to Axford Dictionary (2024) corridor mean “a long piece of one country's land that goes through another country”; also, in Axford Lerner’s Dictionary (2024) it defined as “a long narrow piece of land belonging to one country that passes through the land of another country; a part of the sky over a country that planes, for example from another country, can fly through”. However, in political and geopolitical literature there is no even a single definition on corridor order; so the researcher to achieve the purpose of this study defined the corridor order in length as follows: “the economic, political, military, and security policies imposed by the corridors (rail, road, and marine) on the countries through which these corridors pass in their territory for the purpose of transporting energy, goods, and services, intended to increase the level of comprehensive coordination between these countries and create competition or conflict with countries through which these corridors do not pass within their territory and face their economic interests at risk”. The following parts shed light on five more important corridors.

### **1. New Silk Road Corridors**

The origins of this order can be traced back to China's idea of rebuilding the New Silk Road, since it is one of the largest global connectivity projects. In 2013, the idea of One Road, One Belt (BRI) emerged. This idea consists of six main corridors (OBOReuropa, No Date):

- The New Eurasia Land Bridge Economic Corridor starts in China and passes through Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus, and Europe.
- The China-Mongolia-Russia economic corridor.

- The China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor. (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, and Turkey).
- The China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor.
- The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.
- The Bangladesh, China, India, and Myanmar Economic Corridor.

This is in addition to the sea corridors (the New Maritime Silk Road) that link China to the nations of Southeast Asia, the Gulf Countries, North Africa, and on to Europe (Ruta, 2018).



Source: Mint (2018) Why India is wary of China's Belt and Road Initiative, <https://www.livemint.com/Politics/TZRhWKgO64W9XbXbVLDuYI/Why-India-is-wary-of-Chinas-Belt-and-Road-Initiative.html>

The new Silk Road will start in Southern China's Xi'an region, go to the city of Urumchi on the Kazakh border, and then pass through Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. Another branch of the line runs from Turkey to Bulgaria, Romania, the Czech Republic, Germany and then Northern Europe. The project is a complex network of highways, high-speed railways, power pipelines and fiber optic



networks between Asia and Europe. China is trying to link its economic and political security to all Asian and European countries, even making its currency stronger than the US dollar and the European euro. The total cost of the BRI project is \$957 billion, accounting for about 26 percent of China's total annual trade and includes about one-third of world trade and two-thirds of the world's population (BRIP, No Date).

The BRI project has created problems for the United States and NATO, the world's largest military/economic alliance. In (China's Belt and Road Initiative: A Strategic and Economic Assessment) report mentioned that China's rise poses a threat to NATO. The report says “this is not about moving NATO into the South China Sea, but it’s about taking into account that China is coming closer to us – in the Arctic, in Africa, investing heavily in our infrastructure in Europe, in cyberspace” (Brzowski, 2019). Contrary to the World Bank report that claims the BRI will reduce poverty in the poor countries where the project will pass, which means economic cooperation between countries, However, the developed powers consider the arrival of this project a detriment to their interests, especially in developing countries; so, it is possible that, along with regional economic cooperation, economic conflict at the global level will emerge. Therefore, these corridors may become factors of coordination and conflict, coordination at the regional level and conflict at the global level. China is aware of this threat to countries such as the United States and Western Europe, for this reason, it has officially announced that:

“The Belt and Road Initiative is in line with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. It upholds the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence: mutual respect for each other’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual nonaggression, mutual noninterference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence” (PRC, 2015).

However, issuing a statement does not change the certainty and policy that these countries are pursuing in reality by building corridors against each other. The G7 states have unveiled an initiative named ‘Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment’ in opposition to the New Silk Road (Rew G7, No Date). With the arrival of projects like mentioned-one as a competition for New





Silk Road, it is expected to exacerbate conflict among countries even if each project would promote economic cooperation. This is especially true among the economic powers; in which every strong country seeks to strengthen its framework for collaboration with several regional countries, causing competition and cooperation to emerge simultaneously and having an impact on the regional and global geopolitical order.

## **2. TAPI Corridor**

The Tapi Corridor\* passes through Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and India. The total population of these countries is about 1.8 billion, or about a quarter of the world's population. Interestingly, apart from Turkmenistan, all three other countries have deep tensions with each other, especially on the Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan. More importantly, Afghanistan is currently ruled by an internationally unrecognized government, the Taliban. But economic interests outweigh political considerations. Therefore, the regional states are ready to meet with the Taliban government on economic interests; consequently, this corridor will finally give the Taliban a kind of international legitimacy because there is a reality: out of the total length of 1,800 kilometers of this corridor, about 774 kilometers pass through Afghan territory (Mehrazi, 2019). Prior to capturing power, the Taliban said they would not cause problems for the corridor because it accounts for a 'national and public interest'. According to traditional international theories, particularly classical realism, states—especially powerful states—are the primary agents in the construction of international systems. However, it can be argued that, when corridors are passed through various countries, political systems do not supersede economic interests. This paradigm shift can help to strengthen the new order, which this article refers to as the "corridor order," and it will redefine the geopolitical

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\* This corridor is basically pipeline. However, this analysis qualifies it as a corridor because it crosses through multiple countries and needs cooperation, protection, security, and repair services.

significance of each nation based on how many states it can connect to pass through its land and how important it is in the context of international trade.



Source: The Daily Afghanistan Ma (2015), TAPI Project: Corridor to Politico-economical Riches, [http://outlookafghanistan.net/topics.php?post\\_id=11693](http://outlookafghanistan.net/topics.php?post_id=11693)

The main energy supplier in the TAPI corridor is Turkmenistan. But Turkmenistan also has other options. Turkmenistan can export gas to the Trans-Caspian Pipeline via the East-West Pipeline, and from there to the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline and the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline via the South Caucasian Pipeline (Shana, 2021). But here, Turkmenistan will face resistance from Iran and Russia, which also have rights in managing how to use the Caspian Sea resources and routes; as well, in terms of gas supply and energy to the world markets, they are considered Turkmenistan's rivals. Iran has a gas swap project with Turkmenistan. This means that alongside conflict, there are opportunities – for cooperation. However, on the international level and by looking at the situation of Iran, which is under international sanction and embargo, with the opening of the TAPI

Corridor and the Trans-Caspian Pipeline, there is a probability that sanctions will be imposed on Iran's energy sector again, which means Turkey's dependence on Iranian gas will be reduced by using Turkmenistan gas via the Trans-Caspian Pipeline corridor (Sharq Network, 2022). On the other side, Russia is finding a new competitor by exporting Turkmen gas to the world market. But this corridor is also beneficial for China and Turkey. China is present at the starting point of the corridor, and Turkey is present at the end of the corridor.

Thus, although these corridors increase cooperation, they are also likely to increase tension and conflict. For example, considering the Khaf-Herat railway corridor between Iran and Afghanistan, there are more opportunities for cooperation and convergence than conflict. It completes a two-thousand-kilometer rail corridor from China, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey to Europe and will facilitate the economic interactions between these countries, from East Asia to the west of this continent. At the same time, this corridor can be competed with by the middle corridor, which runs through China, Central Asia, and Turkey to Europe, rather than being obstructed. Because along with this corridor, there is another corridor called the Five Nations Railway Corridor (FNRC) that passes in China, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, and Iran, and connecting China with the Iranian port of Chabahar (Mantraya, 2018). Interestingly, Chabahar is the starting point of Iran's North-South corridor, which runs through the south of Iran to Mumbai in India, and from the north to Russia via Azerbaijan or Armenia. So, China is present in this corridor as well. Therefore, if China is in a conflicting situation with India, for example, it is more in a position to cooperate with other countries in the region in order to develop its economy. In all cases, the common denominator, both in conflict and cooperation, is economic interests, followed by political and security issues.

### **3. North-South Transportation Corridor (NSTC)**

In 2000, an agreement was signed between Iran, India, and Russia to open the North-South Corridor in Islamic Republic of Iran. But other countries (Oman, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Belarus, Ukraine, Syria, and

Bulgaria) expressed willingness to join the corridor. If opened, it will compete with the Suez Channel (Alaraby Aljadeed, 2023). This corridor starts in southern Iran (Chabahar) and heads to the north of Iran. Through this corridor, India reaches Russian markets via Iran and Azerbaijan, and from there to Europe and vice versa. The challenge with this corridor is that Iran is under international sanctions from the United States; also, relations between Azerbaijan and Iran have deteriorated after the Armenia-Azerbaijan war; and tensions between Iran and Azerbaijan have escalated with the opening of the Zangzour corridor. With all this, it is a useful corridor for India to escape China's economic dominance. The problem is that, after the Ukraine-Russia war, Russia itself is under international sanctions. This corridor could replace the China Central Corridor, which starts in China, passes through Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, and links to European markets. The ability of corridor operations increased after the Ukraine-Russia war (Chourasia, 2023).



Source: The India (2023) North-South Transport Corridor | Connecting continents, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/north-south-transport-corridor-connecting-continents/article66875206.ece>



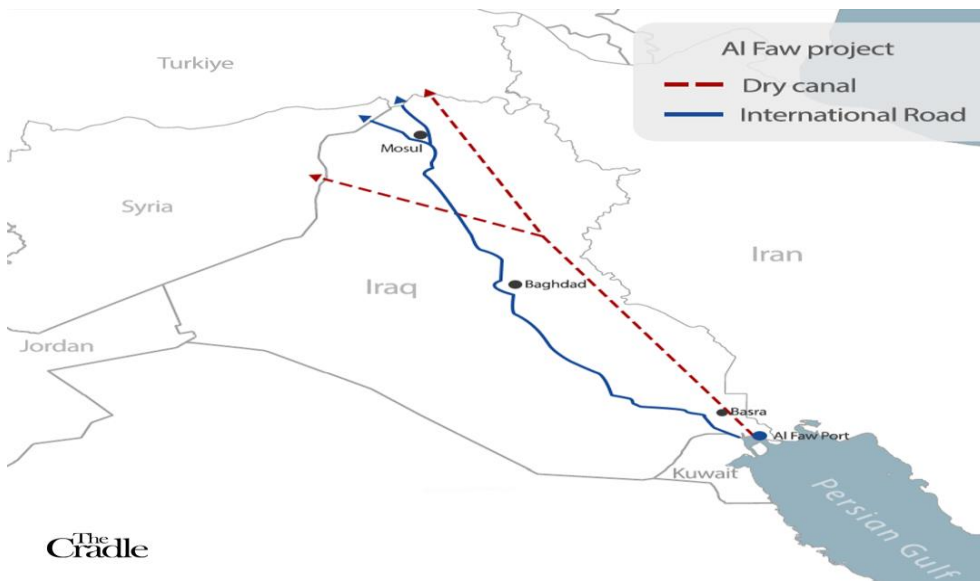
However, by activating the North-South Corridor, it could replace or compete with China's Central Corridor; even with Russia's presence in the corridor, it could be seen as an obstacle to Western/US domination on regional equations. Consequently, while this corridor will lead to economic and political coordination among the countries of the region, it could also cause the resurgence of a tripartite conflict between China, the West, and the four main countries that the corridor passes through. In addition, Armenia currently has another proposal that this corridor should pass through Armenia in the opposite direction of the North-South corridor, connecting India, Iran, Armenia, and Georgia to Europe. India is likely to welcome the project because it supported Armenia during the Armenia-Azerbaijan war and wants to have several alternatives to reach Europe along the Suez Corridor.

As for Iran, as the hub of the corridors, in the International Transit and Transport Corridors: Interaction and Development 2023 conference, the Turkmenistan President mentioned a new corridor: "In the future, a transport corridor from east to west will be launched, connecting Turkmenistan, Iran, Iraq, and Turkey" (Financial Tribune, 2023). currently, the corridor conflict/cooperation is a strong subject between countries and creates a kind of divergence and convergence between them. However, there is still no consensus on how to operate the corridors as a new tool for international division of labor in order to reduce conflict and increase cooperation. What is important is that these corridors have become a reality of political life at the international level.

#### **4. Development Road/Dry Channel**

The idea of the dry channel, which Iraq calls the Development Road, dates back to 2017 in the meeting between the third Turkey-Iraq High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (Altas and Uslu, 2017). This corridor runs from Al-Faw Grand Port in southernmost Iraq, into Turkey, and via Istanbul to Europe. Both Turkey and Iraq, for various reasons, insist on completing the project. In 2022, the trade between Turkey and Iraq exceeded \$24 billion. Therefore, the Turkish president called the corridor the "New Silk Road" (Amwaj Media, 2023). However, there are a number of other political and security reasons.

First, after the Kurdistan Region's independence referendum in 2017, both Turkey and Iraq are trying to punish the Kurdistan Region. Especially after Turkey and Iraq failed to open the Avako corridor. The development corridor does not pass through the Kurdistan Region to shrink it economically and politically. Second, Iraq, to some extent, wants to get out of Iranian domination, and this corridor is an opportunity. Although Iran can be connected by railway from Shalamcha in Iran, to Basra in Iraq, and then linked to the Development Corridor, Therefore, if Iran feels threatened, it can create problems for this corridor through its influence in Iraq. The corridor will also allow the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to reach Europe (Duman and Alaca, 2023). As the Iraqi Prime Minister Al-Sudani stressed, the development corridor not only connects Iraq to Turkey, but also connects the east to the west and the goods and energy of the Arabian Gulf pass through this corridor to the world markets (IMN, 2023). By 2022, the UAE and Turkey signed 13 agreements in various fields, but both of them have some deep concerns about Iran's activities in the region (Altaş, 2022). These tensions can impact the ability of the Development Corridor. So, again, the opportunity for cooperation and conflict exists in the same context.





Source: The Cradle (2023) Iraq's Silk Road: Port and canal project set to transform Baghdad's geopolitical clout, <https://thecradle.co/articles-id/1473>

In December 2022, the conference "Grand Faw Port and Dry Channel" was held in Basra. As mentioned in the conference, by opening the Development Corridor, it will reduce transit times for ships traveling through the West Asian and Red Sea waterways by an average of 20 to 25 days; this will result in millions of dollars in cost savings. So, similar to many countries in the region, Iraq tries to become a transit hub between Asia and Europe. According to estimates, if the project is completed, the ships loaded from the Chinese port of Shanghai to the port of Rotterdam need 15 days to transport the goods (Aygün, 2023); if the goods are transported from Shanghai to the port of Gwadar in Pakistan, then to the Faw port, and from there via the Dry Channel to Mediterranean ports in Syria, into Turkey, and then to the port of Rotterdam in the southern Netherlands, This means that transportation through Iraq provides a significant reduction in the cost of transporting goods by more than half.

This reduction in cost will be a gateway for more cooperation between the mentioned countries. The foundations of the project were laid when China announced the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in 2013 as part of a "Belt and Road" initiative that connects northwestern China's Xinjiang province with Pakistan's port of Gwadar on the Indian Ocean. The port is only 400 km from the Strait of Hormuz, in the southern part of Iraq's sea border. So, East Asian countries are directly connected to this project and are likely to become part of China's Silk Road corridor. According to a report by the Center for Green Finance and Development at Fudan University in Shanghai, by 2021, Iraq received \$10.5 billion to invest in infrastructure under the Belt and Road Initiative. Iraq became the third-largest Belt and Road partner in energy supply for China after Russia and Pakistan (Nedopil, 2022). China itself is supporting this project because, although China can reach European markets through the North-South Corridor of Iran, China is always looking for alternatives. On the other hand, as mentioned, due to international sanctions on Iran, China is sensitive to Iran, so the Development Corridor of Iraq is a suitable alternative for China.



### **5. Baharat Corridor (IME)**

During the G20 meeting in New Delhi in September 2023, the US president revealed the inauguration of a new corridor. Starting in India, the corridor passes through the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, and eventually enters Europe via Italy and France. The new corridor called India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (White House, 2023).

The United States has direct involvement in the project. In contrast to Middle Eastern projects, this one is carrying out by several politically and economically powerful states on a global and regional scale. According to Jake Sullivan, Biden's national security adviser, the goal of IME corridor is to unite Middle Eastern countries and transform the region into an economic center instead of as a "source of challenge, conflict or crisis." (Madhani and Boak, 2023) The India-Middle East-Europe corridor is a challenge to several other corridors that have been decided to operate in the region, such as the North-South Iran Corridor, the Iraqi Development Road Corridor and, most importantly, China's One Road-One Belt initiative.

In reality, by achieving the IME corridor, the main US intention is to contain China's trade growth. Interestingly, part of this corridor is located in the Strait of Hormuz and near the port of Chabahar in Iran, which is the end of the North-South Corridor and from Chabahar, Iran is connected to India. Therefore, the IME corridor is expected to widen tensions in the region and this corridor will lead to intensification of conflicts between the countries of the region, especially with Iran, Iraq and Turkey, which will be the first to suffer (Romano, 2023).





Source: The Hindu Business Line (2023) A corridor of immense promise - The Hindu Business Line, <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/acorridorofimmensepromise/article67296263.ece>

Even though Israel is not currently included in the corridor, it will eventually be part of it, leading to the normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel. So, if this corridor increases cooperation among some countries in Asia, Africa and the United States (the designer of the project), it will also create conflict with other countries. Consequently, the dilemma of the corridors is created again in the political-economic equations for the countries of the region; however, regarding the Baharat/IME corridor, it is true that it will create corridor dilemmas for Iraq (due to the collapse of the development corridor/Dry Channel), Iran (due to the weakening of the North-South corridor), Turkey (which is trying to become an international trade terminal, but at the same time, it may force these countries to move closer together or join the Baharat corridor to address the dilemma. Therefore, the cycle of cooperation and competition will continue.

By studying these corridors, it can be argued that Asia is going through an important economic turning point in terms of increasing the number of

corridors. These corridors will have a special position at the international level and can influence political and economic decisions.

### **Third Section: Environmental Order**

#### **Environmental Order Definition**

If considering the environmental events of July 2023, the headlines were forest fires in Iran, Syria, Turkey, Cyprus, Italy, and France. Despite floods in Indonesia, temperatures rose above 50 degrees in some cities in Iraq and the United States, which caused the melting of car lights and several other environmental incidents. So not just research but also human feelings show that the world is changing environmentally. Despite the academy's literature on climate change dating back more than five decades, however, the environmental order has not yet been defined. The Law Insider website has several definitions of environmental order, which mostly refer to laws and decisions related to conserving the environment locally. One definition is:

"Environmental Order means any prosecution, order, decision, notice, direction, report, recommendation, or request issued, rendered, or made by any government authority in connection with environmental laws or environmental orders" (Law Insider, No Date).

Most of the definitions are specific to corporate activities and the local environment, but as mentioned internationally, there is no definition of environmental order that related to climate change. Therefore, in order to fulfill the study's objectives, the researcher defined environmental order as "environmental changes at the regional and global levels that can affect relations among countries." Unlike the corridor order, which is characterized by cooperation and conflict, the environmental order, at least theoretically, emphasizes cooperation.

#### **Environment and Global Consensus**

Human economic activities have caused environmental degradation. Urbanization, roads, railways and infrastructure projects have not only degraded



the environment, but also destroyed biodiversity and fragmented habitat (Chauhan, 2021). Environmental degradation poses threats at three levels; individual, state and global; and all three levels are interconnected. Therefore, environmental degradation not only affects the domestic security of countries but also affects global security (Alizade and Pishgahifar, 2012). Environmental changes are anticipating to have dual effects, increasing the probability of cooperation between states while also raising the risk of heightened conflict and potential warfare. Consequently, discussing the establishment of collective security, whether on a regional or international level, becomes arduous without considering environmental security and the challenges countries face with regard to the environment. Notably, individuals confronted with the food security dilemma even before countries are (Ziervogel and Ericksen, 2010). The key point is that environmental change needs to be dissociate from politics and treat as a separate issue or de-politicized (Dalby, 2012). Because the main question is: What is the environment, and what are the consequences of environmental changes? These two questions lead to de-politicization and consensus on environmental risks.

There is a global consensus that environmental changes are threatening human life and the entire planet; Environmental changes, not ideological conflicts, are becoming the main factor in the “historical end of humanity”. It could be argued that environmental changes, not ideological conflicts, are becoming the main factor in the “end of human history.”

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, known as the Earth Summit, and was attended by 179 national governments. It was defined as the first step in the emergence of an environmental order. At the Rio de Janeiro conference, the United Nations uses the concept of ‘coordinated solutions’ to combat environmental change and calls on governments to work together to reduce environmental threats (United Nations, 1997). So, the UN attempts to create a new environmental order, and this new order cannot be achieved without at least the consensus of governments. This also means that states are still the main actors in the global order and also the main actors in keeping the environmental order. The UN holds



an annual global conference on environmental change called the Conference of the Parties (COP), which has continued from 1995 up until now. The last conference (COP27) was held in 2022. The continuation of these conferences themselves is a sign of a new environmental order. But the rule of this new order is that states work together, and the rule of this new order is cooperation among states. The most important environmental consensus can be seen in the Paris Agreement of 2015, with the participation of 196 parties. Article 1 of the Paris Convention states that:

“This Agreement, in enhancing the implementation of the Convention [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, adopted in New York on May 9, 1992], including its objective, aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty” (United Nations, 2015).

What is important in the first paragraph of this agreement is the phrase “global response.” In the sense that consensus is needed to address environmental risk, this consensus creates a kind of convergence between countries, even if it does not reach the necessary level of cooperation. However, if environmental issues are not addressed, not only the possibility of conflict among states will emerge, but war is the main option as environmental change will lead to hunger, migration, drought, demographic change, and many other challenges (Valdai Discussion Club, 2020). According to scientific research, one standard variation in increasing temperatures will lead to a rise in interpersonal violence by 4% and intergroup conflict by 14% (Hsiang; *et al*, 2013). That means political instability. Political instability affects not only a country but also a wide geographical area. For example, based on another report, the cost of environmental degradation in Arab countries amounts to 5% of their gross national product (GDP) (Sida, 2010). To address this instability, the countries of the region are forced to take a number of measures to cooperate with each other in order to meet the new challenge posed by environmental change. In a study that conducted by Middle East Institute, the study found out that the common environmental challenges faced by regional states present opportunities for improved policy-making and closer cooperation at regional and, especially, subregional levels (Stang, 2016).



However, political and ideological barriers continue to hinder this collaboration. For instance, in Iraq, the presence of multiple militia groups and challenges in strengthening state institutions pose significant obstacles. Similarly, in Yemen, Syria, and Lebanon the same situation can be witnessed. Also, the regional conflicts involving Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Iran further impede efforts to address environmental challenges.

It is true that, practically there is no cooperation to tackle environmental challenges, but theoretically, it could be argued that there is a consensus on environmental threats worldwide and that these threats are creating a new order in which environmental change and laws to combat those changes will prevail. The best example is the two-week Cop 27 conference, which emphasized all previous agreements on combating climate change (United Nations, 2023). Even with regard to the corridor order, countries take into account environmental risks. For example, in the Trans-Caspian Corridor, which connects Turkmenistan's energy to Azerbaijan and Europe via the Caspian Sea, despite Iranian and Russian political concerns about the corridor, both countries have environmental concerns as well.

In addition, environmental changes have affected the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were supposed to be implemented by 2030; however, the UN reports indicate that the mentioned goals are difficult to achieve in that span of time, and one of the main obstacles is environmental changes that have affected food security in many countries, especially in Asia and Africa (UN Food Systems Summit, 2021). According to all UN reports, environmental changes are global or at least regional upheavals, and their impact goes beyond the borders of many countries. Even in *A New Climate for Peace: Taking Action on Climate and Fragility Risks*, an independent report commissioned by members of the G7, published in 2015, out of seven risk factors facing the global community, six of them are related to environmental change. The report itself refers to a collective policy among states called 'The Need for an Integrated Agenda' to address these environmental challenges (G7 Germany, 2015). Even at the World Economic Forum in 2017, one of the main issues threatening the global economy and



security was environmental threats. The report mentioned that (World Economic Forum, 2017):

"With power and influence increasingly distributed, however, there is a growing recognition that the response to environmental risks cannot be delivered by international agencies and governments alone. It requires new approaches that take a wider "systems view" of the interconnected challenges and that involve a larger and more diverse set of actors".

What is important is that the environment is imposing on the world a new order and forcing countries to act within this order. The environmental order produces both conflict and cooperation. What has existed so far is a number of local environmental consequences, such as drought, that have led to internal migration, but these changes will no longer be limited to one country in the future, creating regional and collective impacts and confronting countries with the environmental dilemma of which solution to choose: collective cooperation or ignoring environmental disasters. What has been observed so far, at least in theory, is an insistence on collective cooperation, but in reality, economic conflict among countries will remain.

## **Conclusion**

Several regional and international contests are currently being fueled by the drive to develop corridors. particularly when it comes to corridors where China or Russia are essential players. In addition to the rivalry that already exists between China and the US, which both see the Middle East as an essential transit route, the rivalry between a number of Middle East regional countries has also been more intense under the guise of this plan, taking the form of a corridor conflict. Also, regarding corridors, it is noted that corridors (rail, land, and sea) lead to new alliances and restructuring of economic, customs, and financial rules to enhance coordination between the countries through which the corridors pass. Since corridors play a political and economic role and become one of the pillars of diplomatic channels and the establishment of new rules of cooperation



and conflict, we must expect a new order in the international system in which corridors play a major role.

Regarding to environment, short-term or long-term environmental changes can impact human activities like agriculture, water scarcity, food security, and create competition among nations to supply basic necessities, but this equation essentially applies to all nations. influenced by Thus, worldwide gains in combating environmental problems can be achieved through greater cooperation rather than coemption.

If theoretically, the corridor order and the environmental order are separate, practically, however, they are interconnected. Corridors pose environmental threats that, in turn, lead to cooperation or conflict between countries. What is important is that if countries are not directly affected by the corridor dilemma and the environmental dilemma, they are indirectly affected, so they will seek a new order to overcome the new challenges.

Based on the map of corridors, the corridor order emerges mostly in Eurasia; most of the corridors connect Far Asia to Europe, and the corridor traffic is mostly in the Middle East and the Caucasus. Africa could be included in the corridor map in the future, meaning that the corridor order is more efficient within the international system. However, the environmental order is a global one and operates mostly at the global level. At the same time, both orders complement each other.

With regard to the corridor dilemma, China will be under the greatest challenge because these corridors are directly or indirectly connected to China, and due to its economic development, China is forced to cooperate with all these corridors because competition will harm China's economy. As for the environmental dilemma, the consequences are not the same for all countries due to their geographical location and the degree of economic development, but they also challenge all countries. Therefore, although corridors are of economic and trade importance, however, they play a major role in policy making and geopolitical changes.

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## گۆرآنکارییه جیوئۆلیتیکیه کانی سیسته می جیهانی: سه ره له لدانی نه زمی کۆریدۆره کان و نه زمی ژینگه یی

### پوخته

جیهان خه ریکه به ره و گۆرآنکاری ژینگه یی، سیاسی و ئابووری هه نگاوده نیت. مملانییه ئایدیۆلۆژییه کان و ناکۆکی نیوان زله یزه کان به درێژایی سه ده ی بیسته م بوونه هۆی هینانه دی کۆمه لیک نه زمی سیاسی له سه ر ئاستی نیوده وه له تی که دیارترینیان نه زمی دوو جه مسه ری جه نگی سارد و نه زمی تاک جه مسه ری دوا ی جه نگی سارد بوو که وه ک نه زمی نوێ جیهانی ناسرا. جگه له م نه زمانه که م تا زۆر کۆمه لیک نه زمیتر بوونیان هه بوو هه بوو که به نه زمی ناوچه یی/هه ریمایه تی ناوده بردری. به هاتی سه ده ی بیسته م و سه ره له لدانی چین وه ک ه یژیک ئابووری، گرنگی وزه بۆ بوژاندنه وه ی ئابووری و چۆنییه تی گواسته وه ی ئه م وزه یه بۆ ناوچه کانی دیکه ی جیهان له لایه ک و گۆرانی که شوه وا که خه ریکه کاره ساتی ژینگه یی لیده که و پته وه له لایه کیتر، پیده چیت جیهان به ره و نه زمیکه نوێ هه نگا و بنیت، که ده توانریت ناوی لێ بنریت 'نه زمی کۆریدۆره کان' و 'نه زمی ژینگه یی'. ئه م توێژینه وه یه سه به ش له خۆده گریت. به شی یه که م ده روازه یه که بۆ پیشکه شکردنی بابه ته که؛ ته وه ری دووهم تیشکه خاته سه ر کۆریدۆره کان و نه زمی کۆریدۆره کان؛ و سییه میان باس له نه زمی ژینگه یی ده کات. ئه گه رچی له رووی تیۆریه وه ئه و دوو پرسه له یه کتر جیاوازن، به لام له رووی کرداریه وه، به یه که وه گریدراون.

## التغيير الجيوسياسي في النظام العالمي: ظهور الممرات والأنظمة البيئية

### الملخص

يتحول العالم نحو التغييرات البيئية، السياسية واقتصادية العميقة. طوال القرن العشرين، خلقت الصراعات الأيديولوجية وصراع فيما بين القوى العظمى بعض الأنظمة على المستوى الدولي، أبرزها النظام الثنائية القطب للحرب الباردة، والنظام الأحادي القطب ما بعد الحرب الباردة، والذي عرف بالنظام العالمي الجديد؛ وإلى جانب هذه الأنظمة، كان هناك، بشكل أو بآخر، نظام آخر يسمى بالنظام الإقليمي. لكن مع دخول القرن العشرين، ظهر صعود الصين كقوة اقتصادية، وأهمية الطاقة في إنعاش الاقتصاد وكيفية نقل هذه الطاقة إلى أجزاء أخرى من العالم من ناحية، والتغير المناخي الذي يسبب كوارث البيئية على الصعيد العالم من الناحية الأخرى، يبدو أن العالم يتجه نحو نظام عالمي جديد، يمكن أن نطلق عليه "النظام الممرات" و"النظام البيئي". يشتمل هذا البحث على ثلاثة أقسام. القسم الأول هو بوابة لعرض الموضوع؛ المبحث الثاني فيركز على الممرات وترتيبها؛ والثالث يتناول النظام البيئي. من الناحية النظرية، فإن الأمرين منفصلان، لكن من الناحية العملية، فإنهما مترابطان بشكل متبادل.