

## RESOLUTION OF WATER ISSUES IN CENTRAL ASIA: STEPPING TOWARDS REGIONAL INTEGRATION

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### ABSTRACT

Throughout the annals of human history, the evolution of civilisations has been significantly influenced by the ubiquitous presence of water and its intricate interplay with diverse aspects of human existence. Water is an essential and important resource that is globally shared by all inhabitants of the Earth. The implementation of strategies aimed at forcefully segregating communities has consistently resulted in armed conflicts and disastrous occurrences. The Central Asian region has been continually impacted by water in the context of wars and border conflicts. Water plays a significant role in Central Asia, acting as a unifying and segregating element. Central Asia, despite its extensive geographical area, exhibits a limited amount of water resources. The dispute over water shortage in Central Asia has persisted for a significant period of time, rather than being a recent occurrence. The resource-sharing system that was developed in the region by the Soviet Union became obsolete after its disintegration.

**Keywords:** Central Asia, Regionalism, Integration, Water, Soviet Union, Conflicts

### INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, the development of civilisations has been profoundly shaped by the presence of water and its interconnectedness with various facets of human existence. Political boundaries are not present within hydrological basins. Water is a fundamental and indispensable

resource that all inhabitants of the Earth universally share. Efforts to forcibly divide the community have consistently led to armed conflicts and catastrophic events. The nations of this region are characterised by the presence of two prominent rivers, namely the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya. Agricultural area in Central Asia, encompassing a substantial amount of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan, is predominantly situated along both rivers. These waterways serve as the primary sources of river water for the region.

Water has consistently exerted a significant influence on warfare and border conflicts in this region. Water serves as the primary connecting and dividing factor in Central Asia. Despite its vast geographical expanse, Central Asia is characterised by a restricted availability of water resources. The region's contemporary history has been marked by a multitude of ethnic and territorial disputes. The primary factors contributing to disputes include attempts to assert dominance over ample water resources, insufficiency of water supply, degradation of water quality, and an inequitable framework for the management of water reserves in the context of electricity generation. The scarcity of water reservoirs has been a longstanding issue, rather than a recent phenomenon. The resource-sharing system implemented by the Soviet Union in the region was rendered defunct following its dissolution. The primary water sources in Central Asia are derived from the nations of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, serving as the fundamental base of the matter at hand. Tajikistan has recently restarted the building of the Rogun dam on the Vakhsh River, a project that was previously halted due to insufficient money and strained relations with Uzbekistan. In contrast, Kyrgyzstan now maintains control over the downstream Syr-Darya flow through the Toktogul dam. Once completed, the Rogun Dam will have the capacity to provide much-needed energy to the mountainous region of Tajikistan. Despite its geographically fortunate location in an energy-rich region, the Central Asian nation faces challenges in the

realm of energy. The establishment of a collaborative management approach for the waterways in the region, which are utilised by all inhabitants of the five Central Asian republics situated in the surrounding areas of the main rivers Syr Darya and Amu Darya, is imperative in order to uphold regional stability. In addition to the inherent difficulties in managing the distribution of water within a given territory, the regulation of water supply in a timely manner is a particularly complex task due to the diverse temporal requirements of individual water consumers. The inclusion of balanced activities is also crucial in this context. Over the course of the last five decades, nations have been actively engaged in the pursuit of identifying the most effective approach to water resource management.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research study primarily adopts a qualitative approach, utilising a descriptive research design to analyse the collected data. The utilisation of a historical descriptive and analytical model is employed to assess the potential for regionalism in Central Asia. Various sources of data collection are utilised in this research study. Both primary and secondary sources are utilised in academic research, however, the primary emphasis is placed on the analysis and interpretation of secondary sources. The key sources of data utilised in this study encompass the comments and speeches delivered by leaders of member republics, documents in the form of treaties, and official papers originating from regional nations. The acquisition of primary data primarily involves accessing official websites of the affiliated republics. They provide to uncover the primary advancements, prospects, and obstacles in the process of regionalism and the official stance of member states. The secondary literature sourced from books, journals, and internet pieces has yielded significant insights into the potential for regionalism in Central Asia.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The notion of regionalism is characterised by its complexity, and it can be analysed through the use of different theoretical frameworks in order to better understand its essence and the way it operates. However, the current study utilises the Liberal Intergovernmentalism paradigm. This theory is based on two fundamental assumptions that are relevant to the field of international politics. Based on the theoretical framework under consideration, it is posited that nations play a pivotal role as actors within the international system, which is characterised by the absence of a central authority. States commonly prioritise the achievement of their goals through intergovernmental bargaining and negotiation, rather than relying on a centralised authority to create and enforce political decisions. Moreover, this theoretical framework prioritises empirical analysis of the treaty-making process, although its basic assumptions also apply to legislative and decision-making environments (Moravcsik, 1998).

## **MAJOR WATER ISSUES IN THE REGION**

The allotment of transboundary water resources is one of the elements that determines peace and regional security in the Central Asian region. The potential for escalation is increasing, both at the national and municipal levels among riparian governments, as well as at the regional level, including within river basins. The traditional theory of political realism also encompasses this idea (Morgenthau, 1954; Aron, 1962). Water disputes in Central Asia arise due to divergent interests among the parties concerned, similar to other conflicts. The allotment of water in Central Asia is a crucial strategic concern for each country that shares a border with a river, and it is frequently utilized as a means of exerting influence in their diplomatic interactions.

(Khakimov, 2013). Water is still commonly regarded as being free of cost, in contrast to oil and gas. It is frequently employed without regard for the crucial interests of other countries sharing the same water resources, and without considering the needs of different sectors that rely on water, as well as the interconnectedness between them.



Source: [www.mdpi.com](http://www.mdpi.com)

Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have made the decision to optimize the utilization of their current hydropower plants and construct additional large-scale hydropower projects to guarantee their energy security. Tajikistan hosts the Rogun hydropower facilities on the Vakhsh River and the Dastidzumskaa Hydropower plant on the Panj River. Additionally, Kyrgyzstan is home to two Kambar Ata Hydropower plants situated on the Naryn River. The neighboring country of Uzbekistan finds these plans concerning. Uzbekistan is concerned with further management that would grant Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan complete authority over water flow. Consequently, the

energy preferences of the countries located upstream clash with the agricultural concerns of the countries located downstream. Upstream countries rely on water for electrical generation, whereas downstream countries depend on water for cultivation. Consequently, countries blame one another for fostering disintegration rather than convergence.

The allocation of water resources in Central Asia has become a contentious issue among the countries that share the same river, leading to national and regional instability and hindering efforts towards regional cooperation. There was situation of unrest that took place in the Fergana Valley in 1998 due to unsolved problems related to the distribution of water. The battle precipitated a crisis among the Central Asian nations. The European Union recognizes that the ongoing mismanagement of the water sector is leading to regional instability, the possibility of conflict, and increasing security challenges in the broader Central Asian region (Council of the European Union, 2010).

## **WATER ISSUES BETWEEN UZBEKISTAN AND KYRGYZSTAN**

The enduring nature of conflicts between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan has been well-documented. Uzbekistan stands as the primary consumer of water resources within the Central Asian region, particularly with regard to water sourced from Kyrgyzstan. It is important to acknowledge that Kyrgyzstan stands as the sole country within Central Asia whose water resources are predominantly sourced from its own land. The region possesses a substantial number of small rivers and streams, which have noteworthy water and hydropower resources, constituting a primary economic asset.



## TOKTOGUL DAM ISSUE

In the summer, Uzbekistan enforces the requirement for the discharge of water from the Toktogul dam, which is the largest water reserve in the region located in Kyrgyzstan. This measure is implemented to facilitate the process of irrigation. In contrast, Kyrgyzstan actively consumes gas that is obtained from Uzbekistan. Kyrgyzstan opted to release water in off season in order to generate electricity during the winter months due to a lack of finances to pay for gas supplies in a timely manner. The alteration in the operational patterns of the Toktogul reservoir resulted in the inundation of human settlements and agricultural areas in the Fergana Valley. As a result, there have been occurrences of drought throughout the summer season because of insufficient water discharge (Valentini et al., 2004).



Source: Eurasianet

Kyrgyzstan brought up the matter of remuneration for the water it provided to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. At a meeting held in Dushanbe in 2015, Temir Sariiev, the Prime Minister of

Kyrgyzstan, discussed the absence of a financial structure for Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in relation to supplying water to nations downstream. The increasing interstate tension can be ascribed to a deficiency in substantial political dialogue on water allocation, leading to the intensification of conflicts. Interstate disputes over water and energy resources are commonly noticed in connection with this issue. Recent military exercises were conducted by Uzbekistan's airborne divisions along its border with Kyrgyzstan and in the Toktogul dam region. In 2006, Kyrgyzstan issued a warning against the potential ramifications of destroying water facilities, emphasizing that the following water flow could result in the total annihilation of the Fergana Zarafshan Valley in Uzbekistan (Kirsanov, 2006).

## **WATER ISSUES BETWEEN UZBEKISTAN AND TAJIKISTAN**

The substantial reserves of water resources in Tajikistan have become a contentious issue, leading to political disagreements and reciprocal threats between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Tajikistan has undertaken efforts to address the persistent issue of electricity provision for its populace and industrial sector by reviving a Soviet initiative to construct a hydroelectric power plant near Rogun. The strong hostility exhibited by Uzbekistan towards this idea emerged as a significant challenge to regional security (Blank, 2012). The dispute over the Rogun hydroelectric power plant project transcended the boundaries of Central Asia. Afghanistan, Iran, India and Pakistan have shown a strong interest in investment. The dispute between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan attained its zenith in 2010, with both sides issuing reciprocal threats. The intervention of international mediators has successfully stemmed the advancement of the war. As requested by Tajikistan, the World Bank conducted an evaluation of the Rogun project in 2014. On the basis of the available information, it has been proposed that a hydroelectric power plant can be constructed under normal security conditions. Tajikistan was



confronted with a contentious hydroelectric project, which provided a strong argument and permitted for the exploration of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan's potential participation in the said project (Faskhutdinov, 2014).

## **WATER ISSUES BETWEEN UZBEKISTAN AND KAZAKHSTAN**

The problem of water contamination exemplifies the legal and territorial conflicts that emerge among Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and other countries in Central Asia. Presidents Nazarbayev and Karimov acknowledged the necessity of establishing political arrangements between both republics at various levels, covering statutory and organizational measures pertaining to water-related matters. The alignment of both republics on this issue can be ascribed, partially, to the physical location of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan as countries situated downstream in relation to the significant rivers of the region, specifically the Amu Darya and Syr Darya. As a result, these countries rely on Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan for water supplies.

Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan are now engaged in disputes around the alleged violation of the intergovernmental agreement concerning the fair utilization of the Naryn-Syr Darya reservoirs system. Dispute involves the management of the Syr Darya area and Kazakhstan's want to build a water storage facility at Koksarai to safeguard its southern region from potentially disastrous floods (Kudryashov, 2008). Scale of the problem became specious in 2004, resulting in difference among these republics on the administration of water reserves. (Uzhulis, 2004).

## **WATER ISSUES BETWEEN KYRGYZSTAN AND KAZAKHSTAN**

Promoting collaboration between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in the Chu and Talas river valleys, which they both share, is seen as a significant means for Central Asian nations to demonstrate their harmonious relations in the water domain. The genesis of this agreement can be traced back to a treaty that was ratified in the year 2000. The pact focused on the utilization of infrastructure for intergovernmental management of water resources, namely for the Chu and Talas rivers. Noncompliance with a commitment does not invariably lead to achievement (Wegerich, 2008). The process assisted by the creation of regional commission. Engagements amid Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan on water issues have occurred sporadically. An element that played a role in miscommunication was the execution of a project by Kyrgyzstan with the objective of building two extra hydroelectric power units in close proximity. The Kazakh administration is against the proposal.

## **WATER ISSUES BETWEEN UZBEKISTAN AND TURKMENISTAN**

Turkmenistan has a significant dearth of drinkable water in contrast to neighboring countries in the region. Two suggested initiatives aimed at resolving the said issue involves implementation of Karakum Waterway and the establishment of water reserve AltynAsyr, a man-made reservoir located in the desert. The main goal of these activities is to restore the reservoir by replacing it by obtaining water from the Amu Darya (Zonn & Kostianoy, 2014, p. 100). The potential repercussions of this situation include the depletion of the Aral Sea area, that could have significant effects on environments and fresh water availability throughout the region, particularly in Uzbekistan (McCray, 2004, p. 68).

## INCREASE IN COMPETITION OVER WATER IN THE REGION

The escalation of competition over water in Central Asia is occurring at a concerning pace, exacerbating existing tensions within the region. The region's economy heavily relies on agriculture, with crops like cotton and rice that have high water requirements necessitating extensive irrigation practices. The use of water has experienced a significant surge after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, reaching a level that is deemed unsustainable. The deterioration of irrigation systems has reached a critical state, resulting in a significant loss of water, where about fifty percent fails to reach the intended crops. Furthermore, the situation is exacerbated by consecutive years of drought, which have further reduced the available water supply by twenty percent, despite a simultaneous increase in demand. The efforts to reconstruct Afghanistan will impose further pressure on existing resources.

The challenges arising from the rise in demand and decrease in supplies have been further exacerbated by the lack of collaboration among the regional governments. During the era of the Soviet Union, there was a system in place where water and energy resources were transferred without restrictions across administrative borders. The central authority in Moscow assumed the responsibility of providing financial resources and overseeing the construction and maintenance of infrastructure. The lack of cohesive regional efforts to change the Soviet system of administration in Central Asia can be attributed to the emergence of rising nationalism and increased competitiveness among the five republics in the region. Undoubtedly, the interconnectedness of water and energy concerns has emerged as a significant cause of stress, ranking closely behind Islamic radicalism in recent times.

There has been a recurring pattern of tensions every year among the three countries downstream, namely the Republic of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. All of these countries are significant water consumers for the growing of cotton. Similarly, both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the countries located upstream, exhibit similar characteristics. The downstream nations need additional water supplies to support their growing agricultural industries and increasing populations. Conversely, the economically disadvantaged nations situated upstream are striving to gain greater authority over their resources and attempt to allocate a greater quantity of water for the explicit purposes of power generation and agricultural support. The primary cause of conflicts lies in the two predominant rivers in the region, both of which ultimately ended in the Aral Sea.

## **MAJOR CHALLENGES**

The following are major causes of water issues in Central Asia;

1. Lack of coherent water management.
2. Failure to abide by or adapt water quotas.
3. Non-implemented and untimely barter agreements and payments.
4. Uncertainty over future infrastructure plans.

The field of water management has been adversely affected by the enduring influence of the Soviet system, characterised by centralised control and interregional competition. The Interstate Coordinating Water Commission (ICWC), established in 1992, has demonstrated a lack of consideration for evolving political and economic dynamics. The organisation in question is an inter-governmental entity characterised by little openness, primarily dedicated to the allocation of water resources. The absence of participation from agricultural or industrial users,

non-governmental organisations, and other relevant stakeholders is evident. The composition of management is predominantly comprised of officials hailing from Uzbekistan, hence raising concerns over potential favouritism towards the national interests of said country. The aforementioned factor has led to diminished political dedication from other nations towards the commission, thus leading to a significant deficit in financial resources. Meanwhile, the respective nations have made minimal efforts in terms of contributing to the upkeep of water systems that provide advantages to the region.

Western donors have initiated the development of alternative management systems, such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF) programme, in collaboration with the International Fund to Save the Aral Sea (IFAS). The Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), which is supported by the United Nations, is now engaged in efforts associated with water administration. Nevertheless, despite implementation of several efforts, little progress has been achieved in addressing the primary political challenges, notably the government's reluctance to collaborate. Following their attainment of independence, the aforementioned five nations reached a consensus to uphold the quota system that had been established during the Soviet era. However, it has proven increasingly impractical to sustain this arrangement. The deterioration of water monitoring facilities can be attributed to the civil conflict in Tajikistan and the economic decline in Kyrgyzstan. The efficacy of control and enforcement measures has become compromised, leading to frequent accusations among countries regarding the violation of quotas. Turkmenistan's excessive utilisation of water resources has resulted in adverse consequences for Uzbekistan, prompting allegations from Kazakhstan on the latter's disproportionate water consumption. According to the governments of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, it has been seen that the three nations downstream are beyond their allocated quotas.

Even within the country of Uzbekistan, there have been instances where provinces have levied accusations against each other for excessive water usage. One of the most significant sources of friction arises from barter agreements and payment issues. The upstream nations engage in water trading with Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, wherein they exchange water resources for energy commodities such as gas, coal, or power. In response to the issue of inconsistent electricity delivery, Kyrgyzstan has implemented a strategy of increasing water release through its hydropower dam during winter months. However, this approach has led to adverse consequences such as downstream flooding and reduced availability of water for summer irrigation purposes. The downstream countries have shown resistance towards Kyrgyzstan's efforts to assert payment for water. As the issue has been perceived by individual nations as a zero-sum game, each government has undertaken measures to enhance its authority over water resources, often at the expense of other nations.

The region of Central Asia is currently experiencing a growing sense of uneasiness around the proposed construction of additional reservoirs and dams, as well as the potential expansion of irrigation systems. Insufficient consultation has been observed in the majority of these initiatives, resulting in heightened concerns among governments. Since the overthrow of the Taliban regime in November 2001, there has been a growing apprehension regarding the potential consequences associated with the efforts aimed at reconstructing the agricultural sector in Afghanistan. At present, the use of water from the Amu Darya by the country in question is little. However, the impending restoration of irrigation systems is expected to exert further strain on the river. The presence of water and energy-related conflicts has significantly contributed to a prevailing atmosphere of political unease in the Central Asian region. In addition to inciting antagonistic discourse, these actions have also engendered proposals that the nations are



prepared to safeguard their interests by the use of military means, if required. Uzbekistan has conducted military drills that bear resemblance to simulated operations aimed at capturing the Toktogul Reservoir, raising concerns of potential ulterior motives. The reciprocal gas shortages and winter flooding experienced between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have significant ramifications for the affected populations in both countries, with the potential to exacerbate ethnic tensions in the Farghana Valley. The competition for water resources is anticipated to intensify, leading to heightened tensions, unless more effective methods are implemented to address and manage these challenges.

A comprehensive regional strategy is required to effectively tackle the various dimensions of water usage, encompassing energy, agricultural, and demographic factors. To yet, the focus has primarily been on bilateral accords that possess limited political significance and are insufficient to address the significant regional issue at hand. There is a need for change in the management of water resources in order to enhance accountability and transparency. Presently, limited access to information and the decision-making process is granted to the public, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the media. The implementation of sustainable quotas, supported by robust enforcement measures and penalties for non-compliance, is vital for the effective management of water resources. The nations of Central Asia continue to primarily view the issue as an engineering challenge, rather than one that necessitates the management of other political, social, and economic variables. There exists a significant degree of skepticism within the Central Asian region over the role of foreign entities in addressing water-related matters. Donors have exhibited a preference for technical solutions over political ones, allocating funding specifically for the purpose of repairing and replacing ineffective irrigation systems. The efficacy of technical solutions is constrained unless they are complemented by political initiatives.

## TEAMWORK FOR WATER SUPERVISION IN THE REGION

Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, many states' efforts to collaborate on the supervision of water reserves that cross their borders in the region have evolved. The fundamental challenge that the recently established framework faced was effectively maintaining the operational functionality of the "water vs. energy" regional cooperation mechanism. (Granita et al., 2012). Since the 1990s, there has been a development of a legal and institutional agenda to deal with conflicts of interest, but it has been proven to be insufficient. However, it has successfully maintained its effectiveness in preventing the conflict from going any further. There is an urgent requirement to improve and modernize the existing system of collaboration in order to successfully implement the joint method to control the Aral Sea Basin.

The Agreement on Cooperation in the Joint Management, Use and Protection of Water Resources of Interstate Sources is now the only complete regional legislative framework in Central Asia. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1992, all republics agreed to adopt it, as it replaced the previously established unified water management system. This text, among others, had a substantial impact on the establishment of the legal structure that regulates water and its associated resources. It dealt with urgent issues involving the use and distribution of resources among the newly formed countries in Central Asia. Unfortunately, the current system is primarily declarative, making it outdated or poorly implemented, and hence unable to effectively represent the modern interconnections (UNECE, GTZ, EC IFAS, 2010). The existing regional legislative framework includes cooperation between states in different features of bond, such as agriculture, environment, and energy. However, it is crucial to emphasize that this paradigm is not without its limitations. The declaration makes no explicit reference to the legal principles of equitable and reasonable resource utilization, nor does it discuss basin management.

The study focuses on the Aral Sea basin but excludes Afghanistan's surface water and does not regulate the groundwater regime. The legal framework includes regulations for protecting international watercourses and their ecosystems and aims to assure the prohibition of causing significant harm. Nevertheless, it is essential to recognize that these regulations are primarily expansive and all-encompassing. Environmental impact assessment (EIA) procedures necessitate the harmonization of national EIA protocols. However, the presence of varying thresholds for determining the obligations under the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has resulted in a limited and inefficient implementation of this process. The efficiency of the difference-solving arrangement remains unaffected despite the absence of concrete regulations regarding the monitoring of non-compliance and its resulting repercussions. The regional agreements recognize the need to create cooperating entities.

- The principles of contemporary law can be identified in three types of region-wide texts that lack legal enforceability, despite the fact that they are not explicitly stated in fundamental binding documents. The Framework Convention for the Protection of the Environment for Sustainable Development in Central Asia (2006) is currently not in effect.
- Although their legal character may be ambiguous, the regulations established by the heads of government have a significant impact on the cooperation between the institutions of different governments.
- Additional non-binding legislative documents, issued by the heads of states in Central Asia, offer political direction for the comprehensive advancement of the entire Aral Sea Basin.

## CONCLUSION

The matter concerning the distribution and administration of water resources is complex in its essence, carrying extensive consequences for the Central Asian Republics and their neighbouring administrations. The perception of water resource utilisation in this region is progressively being recognised as a potential factor that could present a threat to regional security. The matter of water allocation is situated within the wider framework of political security. The possibility of a significant level of threat often emerges from claims of dominance and a tendency to employ military action in order to address both international and domestic disputes. The aforementioned developments are deteriorated by the inherent shortcomings of democratic institutions, as well as the insufficient progress in promoting pluralism and maintaining the ideals of the rule of law

The relationship between water and energy has become a prominent factor in the context of both domestic and international security. The nations located downstream participate in the commercial transactions of natural gas and electricity with their neighbouring countries, wherein these resources are traded at the current market prices. Furthermore, in the case of unresolved financial obligations, the recipient nations retain the prerogative to halt the provision of gas and energy to their counterparts. This dynamic gives rise to disputes that manifest themselves across multiple levels. The existing structure for water settlements and compensation, which has been operational since the Soviet era, is presently seeing a decline in its effectiveness. Therefore, it is crucial to devise an innovative mechanism. According to studies undertaken by multiple international agencies, it has been concluded that Central Asia experiences significant annual economic losses, reaching billions of dollars. These losses are attributed to the absence of coherence in decision-making processes related to transboundary water coordination. Currently,

the states in Central Asia are individually attempting to address their water-related challenges without adequately considering the concerns and interests of the governments that share the same river basin. Nevertheless, water has the potential to function as a cohesive factor within the region. It is imperative to foster an increased level of political resolve among leaders in Central Asia, alongside the development of the current legal framework founded on international laws that govern shared water resources.

The countries in the region have made substantial efforts to strengthen diplomatic relations and have resolved various problems related to long-standing border disputes. Presently, the focal point of investigation pertains to conflicts related to water allocation, accompanied by simultaneous efforts to develop tactics for cooperative management of water resources. The successful resolution of the border issue requires a simultaneous resolution of the ownership of infrastructure. Nevertheless, many authorities representing the concerned parties have offered elucidation, specifically directed towards the local populace, underscoring their unwavering commitment to retaining their respective territorial assertions. Fundamentally, the existence of limits does not hold inherent attributes of being either positive or negative. Instead, the assessment of barriers depends on the quality of relationships between states. The resolution of the ongoing conflict regarding water resources in the Aral Sea basin is dependent on the desire of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan to actively participate in collaborative attempts. The economic revitalization of Central Asia is poised to exert a discernible influence on the accessibility of water resources within the region.

**Funding:** None

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