

Panel: China, Central Asia and the Middle East (Lilac & Tulip Room)

Date/Time: Tuesday, December 11, 2012 / 14:15-15:30

Talking Points for: Guner Ozkan, Deputy Director, Eurasian Department, International Strategic Research Organization

China has economically been growing fast for a long time and this trend seems to continue in years to come. As energy is the main source of Chinese economic growth, energy rich Central Asian states become a centre of attention for political leadership in China. In comparison with the Middle East countries, energy rich Central Asian states appear to have been much more advantageous for Chinese energy demand and supply lines. Unlike energy rich states in the Gulf which have now faced serious domestic and international security and stability challenges with the “Arab Spring” and had strong engagements and disengagements with the United States, Central Asian states have displayed a relatively stable environment, needed capital for regime stability and sought for alternative options alongside Russia and the West. Most importantly, China has a direct access to Central Asian energy rich states, and thus does not have to worry about crossing oceans that are, at least for now, ruled by the US. However, Central Asia consists of states which have their own domestic political and economic differences and dynamics. These divergences, as well as external presence (Russia, the US, EU, Turkey, Iran, India and so on) in the region, can be increasingly challenging for the energy security of China.

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