

## **Abstract**

The countries in Central Asia – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan- have struggled with state-building since their establishment in 1991. This paper will explore possible reasons for that, looking at how changes in the geopolitical environment, resulting from major events such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, the terrorist attacks on 9/11, and the announcement of the Belt and Road Initiative, have shaped how Great Powers—the US, China, and Russia—interact with the region and facilitate or limit various state-building practices. This research builds on an extensive body of literature surrounding the nature and viability of state-building practices, as well as literature exploring the unique geopolitical particularities of the Central Asian region that have made it central to narratives about the Great Power competition for more than a century. In all, this research aims to contribute to a better understanding of Central Asia's development and the effect changes in the geopolitical environment have had on that development.